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Chapter One is concerned with the theoretical issues that this study raises, both as an analysis of satire, and as an analysis of eighteenth-century literature. I see satire -- including and in some cases especially the satire of the eighteenth century -- as being of special importance and concern. This is a concern that extends outside of the institution, and has led me to be critical of the current institutional attitude to satire, to institutional readings of eighteenth-century satire, and with those critics and theorists who have already expressed a dissident position that is critical of the institution itself.

In Chapter Two (A Tale of a Tub) and Chapter Three (The Rape of the Lock), I look at two early satires which have a very different sense of their relationship with the social world. These are Swift's A Tale of a Tub, a prose satire in the Renaissance humanist, Menippean tradition, and a poem, Pope's The Rape of the Lock, that follows more clearly literary conventions of formal verse satire and mock-heroical.

In my analysis of A Tale of a Tub I explore the element of satirical imposture that takes place through the creation of the Hack narrator, attempting to situate the Hack in relation to the social and intellectual forces that he represents. In drawing attention to the anarchic, and violent qualities of the Tale, I raise the question central to Swift's project: as to whether satire and religion are at all compatible, and the deeper question of the relationship between the sacred and secular texts. Swift's text, meant to act as a defence of the Anglican faith, reveals itself to be strangely deconstructive and iconoclastic in relation to the notion of religious truth and the sacred quality of the religious word. Ultimately the power of the Tale comes in its tour-de-
force satirical critique of analogical and allegorical thinking, pointing as it does to dangerous 'modern' and 'mass' uses of allegory and analogy in relation to the question of power.

The Rape of The Lock deals with seemingly insignificant issues which, far from being trivial, go to the heart of the contradictions in the sexual politics of a society standing on the verge of its imperial future. As I see it, the poem, like so much of the satire of the period, has concerns that are of an epistemological kind, that relate to the issue of perception and knowledge, but which are bound up with the other concerns that are more immediately social and political. This analysis of the epistemological dimension to the poem involves an exploration of the possibility that Pope is invoking the old, alchemical-hermetic tradition, as a different 'voice' to the Lockean-Newtonian 'scientific' voice that is so strong in the poem. This a point made by Ruth Salvaggio in her exciting feminist reading of the poem. Through my analysis of this dimension to the poem, I am led to suggest that the poem points towards a new social role and meaning for the satirical poet in the light of the change in the mode of literary production away from the old system of aristocratic patronage towards the capitalist market.

Chapter Four is the central chapter and like the rest that follow, the final chapter excluded, deals with the satire written during the rule of Sir Robert Walpole, which is deeply informed by the political issues of this period. Here the notion of 'space' is explored and its relationship to the question of a role for satire and the satirist during a period when they were under diverse but related threats of restriction and closure. The central focus of this chapter is the Horatian Imitations, which I analyze as sharply political satire masquerading under the protective
disguise of being faithful imitations of the satires and epistles of the Roman poet Horace, one of the mildest of all satirists.

The analysis of Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* is spread across two chapters, since this is far and away the most well-known and important satire written during the eighteenth century. Chapter Five is concerned with the politics of the *Travels* as a Menippean satire that is challenging the scientific rationality of the Enlightenment from the perspective of the Renaissance humanist tradition. I raise the issue of the role of the reader in the text, particularly in relation to the position of Gulliver as satirical target as much as satirical medium. The way in which Swift critiques the epistemological presuppositions of Gulliver’s social class, the class of scientific professionals, seems to have a strong connection with the text’s satire on political absolutism, and on the colonialist ideology beginning to develop in England at the time.

The sixth chapter is reserved for an analysis of the disturbing satire of the Fourth Voyage. Here I explore, and attempt to connect the text’s satires on human nature (and on the capitalism that Swift saw corrupting human nature), and its satire on the notion of intellectual and physical ‘purity’ espoused by the Houyhnhnms. The relationship between the satirical narrative and the reader is explored in relation to Freud’s notion of the ‘uncanny’, and Swift’s critique of the new notion of nature that the Houyhnhnms seem to embody, is also explored.

The last chapter on *The Dunciad* echoes some of the concerns of the second, on *A Tale of a Tub*. In this chapter I analyze Pope’s exploration of what Alvin B. Kernan sees as the essential narrative, and key archetype of satirical writing, the idea of the narrative action/logical progression of what, following Pope, he christens, ‘dullness’, the name for what he
sees as the primal force of human stupidity and corruption. I explore the degenerative logic of The Dunciad in relation to Marshall McLuhan’s observation that the poem is, as a response to the great printing revolution that takes place during the century, an important piece of cultural analysis. In the light of the mythic and apocalyptic qualities of the poem I raise the question of the validity of the satirical vision -- in relation to the current deauthorizing strategies of the institution, and suggest ways in which the text can speak to readers and textual analysts regarding the issue of a critical culture as it is impinged upon by the most powerful social and cultural trends within this postmodern/late-capitalist period.
Lo, a MAN has come, of skill and craft
whose wit cuts like a knife,
and to the Birds he brings the Word
of more abundant life.

Aristophanes, The Birds
(trans. William Arrowsmith)

'The shrewdest pieces of this treatise were conceived in a bed in a garret, at other times (for a reason best known to myself) I thought fit to sharpen my invention with hunger; and in general the whole work was begun, continued, and extended, under a long course of physick and a great want of money.'

Jonathan Swift, A Tale of a Tub
Chapter One: Materialism, Satire and the Literary Institution.

The sorcerer's apprentice who takes the risk of looking into native sorcery and its fetishes, instead of departing to seek the comforting charms of exotic magic, must expect to see turned against him the violence he has unleashed.'

Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*

'Whatever cannot stand satire is false.'

Peter Sloterdijk *The Critique of Cynical Reason*
This thesis presents an attempt to engage materialist literary analysis in a serious reconsideration of eighteenth-century satire as satire. In the process I see myself as challenging received notions of how the satire of the period is to be contextualized, as well as the way in which the category ‘satire’ has been constituted.

I do not think it is possible to provide any reading of any satire today without initiating a reappraisal of the very form itself. Here I am attempting to integrate an ancient practice with new methodologies. This would seem to demand a perspective which is opposed to, and involves a critique of, not only the accepted institutional views of satire, but of aspects of the academic literary institution itself. Satire is, I believe, a term or category that should not be historicized and relativized out of existence. It has a significance and importance which is lost in attempts to make it a label of convenience: a convenient name that different literary cultures use to differentiate a particular form from the others available to them.

In this thesis I will be focusing predominantly on Swift and Pope, who are not only the great satirists of this crucial period, but who are, arguably, the most subtle (Pope) and the most disturbing (Swift) of satirists who ever wrote.

Swift is a far more politically provocative and intellectually subversive satirist than Pope is. Swift’s concern with the idea often leads him, as I shall show, away from the immediate political concerns of the moment, via a problematization and confounding of the key concepts of his world to issues of a more deep-rooted and far-reaching nature that produces a critical politics that is often utopian (Darko Suvin terms him the ‘bitter ally of utopia’) and anarchistic. The ideas and values that Swift’s satire
so disturbs and threatens are often ones that Pope is deeply committed to. Pope is, for all that they have in common: their Tory politics, friendship and close Scriblerian collaborations, quite a different satirist -- beyond the obvious differences that are brought about through the primary use of prose by Swift, and the exclusive use of poetry by Pope as their respective satirical mediums. Pope is the more subtle satirist: where he does not use irony in the way that Swift does, his sense of the subtleties of innuendo, and what can be achieved through its use is quite unparalleled. As Clive T. Probyn and Pat Rogers have separately pointed out, Pope is the master of an insinuating 'guerilla'/'fifth columnist' satire: a satire of infiltration, rather than of impersonation (at which Swift is the acknowledged master), one in which the victims should preferably condemn themselves out of their own mouths.3

There is also a huge political difference between Swift and Pope over the issue of colonialism. Whereas Pope's early poems -- preceding the period of political disillusionment that comes with the long period of government by a Whig ministry and a Hanover Court commandeered by Sir Robert Walpole -- have an idealistic attitude towards British imperialism, celebrating it in terms that suggest that Pope has largely swallowed what was to become the standard ideological line4, Swift was not only implacably hostile to anything that smacked of colonial domination, but became actively involved in a satirical campaign in defence of Irish interests against those of England, the ruling, and constantly interfering, colonial power.

The individual satires that I have chosen for this study are those which seem to me to raise the issue of the textual politics most directly, and offer the greatest yield for an investigation of the satirist's
in 'Literature and the Grub Street Myth', which argue that the satirists are in some ways trying to distance and differentiate themselves from new mass society and burgeoning popular literary and cultural forms, mythologizing their relationship with and unavoidable involvement in the new conditions of production, whilst fighting a reactionary battle against those forces challenging the old established order.

On the other hand we have those critics who see the satirists of the period as in some ways directly involved in the satirical struggles and battles that they are fighting, either as a function of the special role they see themselves called upon to play as satirists (as in Said's account of Swift as, in Gramsci's terms, an 'organic' intellectual) or as implied by the very nature of satire as parasitical, or 'viral' medium that operates in a deconstructive/demythologizing relationship of conjunction and proximity to that which it is attacking. Though most of the criticism adopting this position has been on Swift -- of particular importance in this regard is Carole Fabricant's Swift's Landscape -- there would seem to be possibilities for developing readings of Pope along similar lines, and indeed a sense of Pope as engaged satirist is something that I have tried to convey in the chapters devoted to his work.

That these two positions are so clearly at odds in terms of the basic way in which the satire should be read suggests that there are major problems faced in any attempt to provide a new literary history of the eighteenth century, or even to establish a foundation for less ambitious alternative readings and histories to challenge or overturn well-established accounts of the relationship between the literature of the time and its social, historical and political context.
There are I believe two reasons for the fundamental disagreement regarding the eighteenth century that has obviously surfaced in the diametrically opposed positions on the politics of the satire of the period. (This is to exclude for the time being the great differences in attitude towards satire, which I shall address later in this chapter).

The first reason for this fundamental disagreement is the lack of any unified or coherent picture of the relationship between eighteenth-century literature on the one hand, and society on the other. This is unlike the situation with Renaissance literature, where much of the critical thrust seems to be directed to reassessing the relationship between the literature of the time (drama especially) and the ruling ideas of the day, ideas that have been clearly identified to the extent that it has been argued they can be formulated as a comprehensive ideological narrative, what has been referred to as ‘The Elizabethan World Picture’.

Unfortunately no such ‘world picture’ or ‘world order’ exists in the eighteenth century, only what would appear to be a set of conflicting pictures that would seem to be very difficult to reconcile, short of the corrective and coercive hand of the disciplinary ‘regimes’ that Michel Foucault has written about (and in so doing has ‘exposed’) within the literary institution deciding exactly what the appropriate ‘line’ is going to be. One of the reasons for the eighteenth century not having a single political or intellectual discourse occupying a central, ruling position for writers to react against or become engaged with, could well be the explosion of ideas that occurs with the proliferation of writing and information with the revolution in literary production. When talking about the eighteenth century, one cannot speak of the established order in as unproblematic a way as one can when talking about Shakespeare’s time.
The second reason for this situation is that as Dominic La Capra and others have argued, our sense of the past emerges through its dialogue with the present. What we bring to this dialogue are our own ideas about ourselves, our practices, politics and history that have emerged out of or have been informed by events and developments during our own historical period. The problem is that we have very different perspectives on our own century, and these differences, which may be very deep-rootedly contentious, must of necessity influence the way in which we see the past (La Capra, *History and Criticism*, p.40).

There is a sense in which, when compared to the Renaissance, the eighteenth century is a lot closer to us than the two-hundred years that separate the two periods. This is because the break between a time that we can call 'modern' and the time that precedes it, the 'pre-modern', occurs during the eighteenth century. We clearly enter an age that is 'modern' with the development of all the things I mentioned earlier: capitalism, science and the change in mode of production that brings about, what is in effect, the first information revolution, as well as one of crucial importance that I did not refer to: the development of colonialism. One might also argue (and the more one buys into the satire of the time, the more one will be likely to) that the whole nature of the English political order changes dramatically with the political victory of the Whigs and the rise to power of Sir Robert Walpole during the third, fourth and part of the fifth decades of the century.

In my mind it is the question of the rise of the new capitalist mode of literary production, which raises the issue of the politics of mass-produced, popular literary and cultural forms that has much to do with the great differences of position on eighteenth-century satire. This issue would seem to be not
unconnected with that of the relationship between the
notion of the 'intellectual' on the one hand, and that
of the economic conflict between the different classes
of society on the other.

The extent of the division here over the issue of
mass/popular literary and cultural forms, a division to
be found within Marxism itself, should not be
underplayed. The very terms themselves have different
political connotations: 'mass' suggesting control (and
possible manipulation) as well as the power of the
capitalist economic system to reify/commodify/
fetishize; 'popular' suggesting that which is open,
vital and accessible, and which constitutes a breaking
down of the association between literature and the
dominant social classes/ruling political order.

The issue of the textual politics of satire in
relation to the new popular forms, that patently did
not survive their time, will be addressed in the
chapters on Swift's *A Tale of a Tub*, and Pope's *The
Dunciad*. The related, and to my mind prior issue of
satire and the politics of space, is one that I shall
address both directly and indirectly during the course
of this thesis, particularly in the third chapter,
which is devoted primarily to Pope's *Horatian
Imitations*.

The kind of politics that we find in the satire of
the period such as that in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*
and Pope's *Horatian Imitations*, the most political of
the satires that I am dealing with in this
dissertation, is crucially different from that of
earlier political satire such as that of Andrew
Marvell. Whereas the earlier political satire is
directed primarily against figures and personalities,
the satires with which I am dealing here raise deep
moral issues regarding the nature of the political
itself, and raise these issues as part of their attack
on the fundamental and well-established practices and
But even if Marxism’s will to bare itself on the materialist ground of real history remains a dream, it is a dream -- or for some, a nightmare -- arising from the guilty political unconscious of our over-privileged institutions, and one that thankfully shows no signs of going away. For Marxism is the secular conscience of our western liberal democracies; its appeal, as it is coming to see itself, is not theoretical or logical, but moral and rhetorical, and no less powerful on that account.

(Beyond Deconstruction: The Uses and Abuses of Literary Theory p.73)

As a conflictual form, satire needs the kind of social conflict that engenders a critical spirit and produces ideas and writing, rather than warfare, revolution or oppression, though these by no means result in a disappearance of satire, which can still speak potently but with less security, during such extreme times. Enlightenment satire is a good historical example of how satire can flourish during an intellectually unsettled period, and then wane during the social revolution that follows, and which it could be said to have helped initiate. Eighteenth-century satire, both English and French (since the former had a significant influence on the latter) might have been influential or even played a definite role in bringing the end of the Ancien Regime, but it is not likely to have been tolerated by the exceedingly earnest citizens of the new revolutionary France.

Since he is involved in so conflictual a practice, it would be hard for a satirist not to be aware that ideas are in conflict with each other and that ideology is not a passive set of values and ideas but a dynamic and active process aiming at social control and reproduction, where the dominance of an idea means the marginalization and/or suppression of another. There is no writing that is not in some way committed to struggles over power and taking sides in the controversies that are germane to the institutions and
'bodies' that provide the spaces and the contexts within which such writing takes place. This satire itself has shown with its pervasive connecting of the pen and the sword (even in the hilarious transformation of intellectual and cultural struggles into 'battles of the books'). Hence the importance to satire of the military metaphor of the battle in presenting the conflict between old and new philosophical ideas or literary styles. Swift's classic satire on the struggle between ancient and modern styles and knowledge in his *Battle of the Books* finds an unexpected companion here in Tony Bennett's ostensibly far more serious assault on the intellectual fallacies and failings of established critical and theoretical literary positions in *Outside Literature*, where his ruling metaphor is one of a critical invasion of institutional spaces in order to shape a new critical politics within the field.  

To fully contextualize and thus to fully understand the satire of the eighteenth century, we need to examine the political and intellectual traditions that satire is historically either a part of, or closely connected with. Here the project is indebted to the kind of philosophy of satire produced by Peter Sloterdijk in his *Critique of Cynical Reason*, a seminal text in which he examines the role that satire has played in western thinking prior to the Enlightenment. Sloterdijk's central argument is that, historically, satire has been excluded from the central position that it enjoyed in intellectual life prior to the Enlightenment, which serves to explain the current absence of a sense of the intellectual dimension to satire, as well as of the role that satire has played within philosophical discourse, with its structural affinities with dialectical forms of speculative and critical thought.
Because of the fundamental reappraisal of the whole idea of satire that I am engaged in, it follows that what the reader of this thesis is not going to get is a materialist analysis of satire which explores satire without questioning its own assumptions, a materialism that does not challenge the whole notion of materialist practice itself (since satire seems the great protean counter-example which causes such problems for institutional categories). I am not producing a 'materialist' ideological reading of eighteenth-century satire that sees the satire as a form of discourse like any other, focusing on the gaps and contradictions in the text that reveal the 'flesh' of ideological meaning. It would be difficult to read satire in scientific materialist terms without treating the very term itself (and with it all its mythic and traditional associations) as an essentialist delusion or fiction. The Althusserian position in its concern with those ideologically unconscious meanings found in the gaps and silence beyond the political 'reach' of the texts and their authors themselves, is one that would seem to have problems accommodating the kind of conscious social and political critiques that the satirist has always seen himself called upon to perform. From the perspective of the satirist such things are quite fundamental: the textual politics of satire would be premised upon its right to exist and be practised.  

In raising this distinction I am not suggesting that the satirist has clear conscious knowledge of the world -- in the sense that the Althusserian critic implicitly claims privileged access to a realm of 'truth' above the play and distortion of 'unconscious' ideology. What I would suggest is that the satirist being ipso facto an oppositional figure, often riven with his own deep internal conflicts (Swift being a prime example here), has a complicated and intense
relationship with the social unconscious -- often using the satirical fiction, or acts of satirical impersonation or projection in order to explore what this unconscious means. It is here where the traditional notion of the 'satirical vision' begins to make good political and psychoanalytical sense.

Both 'obvious' and 'strange', satire is a paradoxical thing, which a focus on the satirist helps to show. This paradoxical nature of satire creates problems for those materialist positions that would identify satire as a site for the production and defence of dominant ideology, since satire always involves a degree of what we might call 'disturbance', we can rest assured that there will always be a non-commensurability, 'distance' between the ideology that satire is supposed to espouse (or even actively lends itself to) and what appears in the satire itself. We need to take a different approach to satire -- to see it not as a literary genre or a social document, but as a phenomenon, a social intervention, a force within the social -- what Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle term a 'performative' (An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory, pp.163-9). The very word 'satire' seems to have a meaning which implies a relationship to an object, and to carry a sense of verbal agency: as if it is a form that must act upon or be directed towards something else, or conversely, that it is the process that the satirized object must undergo.

A new metaphor of our postmodern period, that of the virus, as it is articulated by Douglas Rushkoff in his book, Media Virus!, suggests that we rethink our understanding of satire -- which has always played a role in the battles over information and over the control of information -- as is very clear in Pope's The Dunciad (1743), or Swift's A Tale of a Tub (1704). The 'viral' model for satire suggests that satire is
inescapably a subtle combatant in the power battles over the control of information. In The Gutenberg Galaxy, Marshall McLuhan argues, as I make clear in the final chapter of the thesis, that the key concerns of Pope's The Dunciad are the implications of the information revolution brought about by the somewhat delayed impact of the revolution in printing technology (accompanied by the legal and governmental easing of restrictions on publishing with the repeal of the Licensing Act). For McLuhan Pope's largely metaphorical and mytho-poetical investigation of the new 'mass' culture that the new technology brings into being, makes him an astute cultural critic, intuitively aware of what the new conditions of production 'mean'. McLuhan's sense of the significance of Pope here, can, I think, be extended to Swift's earlier satire that deals with similar concerns, A Tale of a Tub.

The dire concern regarding the future of a politically critical culture in the time of late capitalist technocracy and the postmodern 'hyperreal', as expressed by Edward W. Said in his article, 'Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies and Community' and by Dick Hebdige in his article, 'The Bottom Line on Planet One', would seem to suggest that a viral agent like satire, so concerned with critical alternatives as it has to be because of its very nature, has a particularly important role to play.

Rushkoff's notion of the virus is closely associated with chaos theory and suits the anti-systemic fluidity that we find in satire. According to Douglas Rushkoff, viruses 'target the systems and faulty code that have taken control of culture and inhibited the natural, chaotic flow of energy and information' (Media Virus, p.15). Implicit in the metaphor of the virus is the idea of the impact of the small -- that small forces can ultimately bring about powerful transformations. This suits satire, a form
whose power as an intervention lies in its capacity for disturbance, made all the more formidable by the depth of its awareness, as deeply social form of critical expression, of the power of unconscious social pressures and forces. Here it is significant to note G.S. Rousseau’s observation that it is with the satire of the eighteenth century that the idea of the unconscious enters literature (*Enlightenment Crossings*, p.71).

The suitability of the idea of the virus as an explanatory metaphor for satire should not come as too great a surprise, since satire has already been linked to biology (Alvin Kernan’s ‘Aggression and Satire’) anthropology (Robert C. Elliott’s *The Power of Satire*) and medicine -- the last of these being the most traditional association, one that has been made at various points in the history of satire by the satirists themselves, most notably with the idea of satirist as surgeon in Jacobean satire (Mary Claire Randolph’s ‘The Medical Concept in English Renaissance Satiric Theory’). Northrop Frye writes of irony in a way that suggests this kind of subtle, invidious and invisible viral action.

> For irony is not simply the small man’s way of fighting a bigger one: it is a kind of intellectual tear-gas that breaks the nerves and paralyses the muscles of everyone in its vicinity, an acid that will corrode healthy as well as decayed tissues. ('The Nature of Satire', pp.331-2)

With its more subtle notion of influence the notion of the virus is better suited to an understanding of the politics of satire than narrow, basically Newtonian notions of political effectiveness that rely on mechanistic concepts of force, agency and pressure. Consistent with the idea of satire as a virus whose destructive agency is natural is the way in
which the satirists of the period treat their own practice. In the *Horatian Imitations* (1733-1738) Pope presents his satire as an unavoidable natural response to the huge array of social and political deviations and abuses with which he is confronted. In the light of all of these satire is simply the course that his pen must take, the only writing that is possible in such provocative circumstances.

With the new interest in categories such as 'carnival', 'laughter' and the 'uncanny', not to speak of the already well-established interest in those literary forms that give expression to the 'fantastic', satire would appear to be ripe for reappraisal, particularly in the light of this period of neglect of which I have been speaking. In their recent introduction to the interrelated fields of literary studies and literary theory, Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle argue that the 'uncanny' is central to any definition of the literary (*An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, p.34). This seems to me to indicate a radical shift in thinking about literature and literary meaning.

I see satire as a problem case for all theories that claim total explanatory power, and the acid test of their openness and flexibility, or alternately, their rigidity and closure. A sense of the psychic importance and power of laughter has found its way into critical thinking, helped by the contribution of Bakhtin's notion of carnival. In Bennett and Royle's recent introduction to literature and literary theory strong emphasis is placed upon the liberating power of laughter (p.81), a point echoed by A.P. Foulkes in *Literature and Propaganda*, with his emphasis on the political importance of laughter in its power to resist authoritarianism (p.38). Bennett and Royle stress the threat posed to institutional seriousness by laughter, with its power to confound (the word they use is
'discombobulate') neatness and regularity of structures and forms (p.74). Bennett and Royle's text is the first literary theory text to not only take cognisance of laughter, but to see laughter as having a central role in the reshaping thinking regarding our notions of literature, theory, the institution and the nature of the field. Their view on laughter could not be more radical, and has a distinctly postmodernist quality to it. They see laughter as a violent, overruling energy linked to death and bliss -- categories that escape any form of characterization (except if we turn to literary tropes to express them). The implications for satire are profound: satire, being of this powerful and uncertain realm of laughter, becomes something deeper, more powerful, and yet more undecidable than we might have imagined, or been able to imagine.

A very different politics of irony is emerging now with Linda Hutcheon's rewriting of that concept in her book Irony's Edge. She sees irony as 'transideological', able to play a number of different roles and assume a number of different positions but always involving an interplay between a said and unsaid, and always carrying a critical 'edge' (the 'edge' of the title of her book) which can be used in quite subversive ways. She asserts that this makes it a quite contentious form, indeed she cites with approval a theorist who speaks of irony as a 'mode of combat'. Contrary to arguments that irony is elitist since it fits in with and justifies a fixed hierarchic order, Hutcheon suggests that irony is a plural form which operates because of the variety of discursive groupings or communities that people belong to. Her position could not be more different here from that of J.M. Coetzee, who speaks of irony (the trope of satire) as being essentially aristocratic, and implying a clear-cut distinction between elites who can decode ironical meanings and those who cannot ('The Agentless
Sentence as Rhetorical Device'). For Hutcheon irony is a form that can be a subversive weapon against dominant authority by articulating its politics in the ‘space’ of uncertainty that exists between what is said and what is unsaid (Irony’s Edge, p.27).

Marxist thought that emphasizes the human, and the need to resist the dehumanizing processes associated with capitalism, is easily reconcilable with these new emphases. In his essay on the grotesque in the modern American Novel (‘‘What a Dirty Way to Get Clean”’), Tim Libretti presents a most exciting exploration of the politics of the grotesque, suggesting that it has the power to act as a positive force for the restoration of the human in the face of the human alienation created by capitalism, particularly insofar as it reaffirms the importance in human life of the physical dimensions of death and renewal. Libretti links the grotesque subversion of the whole, the closed and the complete to the bourgeois control over the means of cultural production and the practice of concealment and effacement which characterises this control. He further links the grotesque to the social and physical alienation (away from a sense of self as physical whole and part of a social whole) created by capitalism and the development of the ‘atomised bourgeois individual’ (p.182). Grotesque laughter here serves as a ‘disalienating’ force (p.187) restoring the wholeness shattered with the radical division of labour within the capitalist system.

There has hardly been any significant development in satire criticism and the theory of satire since Ronald Paulson issued a state of the nation statement in 1971 that critical writing on satire was at that stage very much ‘in media res’ (Modern Essays in Criticism: Satire, p.xv.). Since this appraisal critical material on satire has been sparse. It is surprising that The New Eighteenth Century, Nussbaum
and Brown’s recent anthology of re-readings of the period, which sets itself up as a seminal document in the construction of a new eighteenth century, fails to make mention of the satire of the period. This failure is all the more surprising given the authors’ emphasis on wide-views, critical and theoretical pluralism within a materialist framework, and general redefinition of the terrain. This marks a really significant waning of interest in satire from that expressed in Leopold Damrosch Jnr.’s anthology (Modern Essays on Eighteenth-Century Literature), which was published in 1988, just a year before that of Nussbaum and Brown’s. Damrosch’s anthology includes both new critical readings of the field, such as Michael McKeon’s brilliant account of the relationship between ideological and literary developments during the century, ‘A Generic Transformation and Social Change: Rethinking the Rise of the Novel’ (which shows how complex, and easily misread a thing the ‘conservative ideology’ of eighteenth-century satire truly is), as well as the great ‘modernist’ readings of the century’s literature that date from over a decade earlier, of which the majority are devoted to, or have quite a direct bearing on Pope or Swift, including articles by key critics in the field such as Paulson, Traugott and Rawson.

With the advent and dominance within literary thinking of powerful arguments against the tendency within bourgeois culture to essentialize, universalize, and hypostatize, it is understandable that the interest in generic studies has waned considerably. A generic approach looks for connections that are ahistorical and suggests continuities and traditions which would seem to put it in conflict with notions of epistemic breaks and historical disjunctures that have been powerfully articulated by Michel Foucault (Barry Smart, Michel Foucault, pp.32-4, 38).
I think that the word 'satire' has lost significance not because of any decline of the form or of our sense of the form, but because of reasons very pertinent to the politics of the institution itself. Historically the literary institution, emerging as part of the wider process of institutionalization at work in the eighteenth century, assumed the critical position previously occupied by satire, which it then appropriated as a minor genre, when it was, as Sloterdijk makes clear, very much a part of intellectual life. Writing at the time that this process was beginning to take place, it is understandable that, as is clearly evidenced in A Tale of a Tub and The Dunciad, they should see this as representing a closing down of critical space that threatened the kind of directness and unmediated targeting that satire has always exercised.¹⁷

Such fears were vindicated. As is clear from recent developments in literary theory and critical practice the politics of writing has become a completely 'in house' thing. Tony Bennett, one of those most influential of contemporary critics and theorists has argued that literature, the site of intersecting social discourses, has no 'outside': its politics are not something to be discovered and articulated (as in most revisionist thinking), but to be 'made'.¹⁸ For the Bennett of Outside Literature, his deconstructive reformulation of materialist theory and practice, the meanings and politics of texts are determined by the institution, and controlled through the institution's construction of its own political readers. Whilst this marks an application of their thinking that in all probability would, were they still alive, have caused the 'dissident' Foucault¹⁹, or the libertarian Bakhtin some discomfort, it is also a position that is startlingly at odds with the way in which Bennett actually responds to satire, ironically
castigating critics who fail to acknowledge the subversive political voice that satire can find.

A.P. Foulkes has expressed concern at the actual neglect of any reference to real politics in Bennett’s articulation of his position and with his failure to reveal how his model is able to determine which political re-readings are justifiable and which are not. He quotes David Bellos’s cutting review of Tony Bennett’s *Formalism and Marxism* (from the *Journal of Literary Semantics*, vol. IX, no 2., 121-2):

> From the viewpoint of text-related interpretation his study has been described as ‘sinister’, and ‘no-more bothered with the niceties of what books actually say than was the old Marxist critic in chief, Andrey Zhadanov. (David Bellos, p.122 quoted in Foulkes, *Literature and Propaganda*, p.20)

For Foulkes what is required is a ‘demystifying art’ one that is subversive and questioning, not one that can easily be appropriated by institutions. This he describes at length as

> by its nature a subversive and questioning art. It challenges habits and modes of perception, and produces new ways of seeing and interpreting processes and relationships. To do this successfully, it must be unpredictable, surprising, even shocking, and it must be inventive enough to avoid being submerged by an integration propaganda which will naturalize its techniques in the guise of reproducing them. (p.56)

I don’t agree with his privileging of the term ‘art’—but what he says here of the subversive value of literature can be applied *far less problematically* to satire. Satire is, as I have already suggested, the form that the institution has had least success in attempting to appropriate.
Opposed to Bennett’s position on the politics of texts, Foulkes nevertheless attempts to incorporate the most powerful of Bennett’s objections to epistemological thinking in devising the notion of the ‘interpretant’, the dispositions to see/read/interpret signs in a particular way (p.23), in an attempt to try to provide some kind of bridge between the idea that the text is the locus of its own politics, and the position that the politics of a text lie within the surrounding interpretative contexts. In Bennett’s argument, these surrounding contexts, embodied in institutional forms and structures, impose their politics upon the texts rather than elicit them through some dialogical, hermeneutical or other process. Foulkes attempts to establish, though not entirely satisfactorily, a correspondence between a demystifying art, an art that realizes its capacity to challenge habits and modes of perception by changing interpretants, and a demystifying critical practice, of the kind of ideological analysis performed by, amongst others, Roland Barthes and Catherine Belsey.

The whole thrust of Foulkes’s book, in breaking down absolute distinctions such as that between literature and propaganda, suits satire since it serves to emphasize the extra-literary, social and political dimension to all writing: that it exists in a wide context that is not controlled by institutional academics.

The epistemological and discursive subversiveness that Foulkes identifies with literature is something that we should expect to find especially well developed in satire, that most battle-hardened of literary and cultural forms. This is something that has never really been considered as relevant to a discussion of eighteenth-century satire. The initial move has tended to be one in which it is assumed that satire is a conservative and culturally central form, defensive of
the dominant or well-established ideas, practices and values of the time, rather than when the diametrically opposed position is taken as a starting point, to look for ways in which the satire subverts/unsettles/confronts/challenges these things.

My basic assumption regarding satire is that it is not a 'simple' form at all but one of complexity and power -- by its very nature violent, aggressive and oppositional and resistant to being ideologically 'placed'. This suggests that satire would in its political nature, be thoroughly resistant to Althusserian readings, which attempt to ideologically 'place' forms of literary and cultural expression, and use them as levers to unhinge ideological meanings, exposing (from the assured vantage point of a scientific materialism) the gaps and silences that are indicative of ideological contradiction or naturalization.

Tony Bennett, Howard Felperin and a number of modern theorists have pointed to the failings of materialist thinking within a Marxist tradition committed to the idea of scientific explanation.20 Strongly influenced by post-structuralist notions of textuality, these theorists challenge those materialisms that are epistemological (and therefore metaphysical) in their presumption that they have access to fundamental realities, structures or processes. Such positions, presupposing a fixed and solid world of 'knowns,' would no longer seem to have either philosophical or scientific validity.21

That theory is 'textual' is a postmodern realization that has been paralleled by the realization that the institution and its practices can be contextualized. Both of these developments have important implications for any study of satire since they strip theoretical discourses of the absolute faith that they might have in their controlling disciplinary
and interpretative power, suggesting that theory and critical practices are open to a self-reflexive or recursive interrogation, and that, as is expressed in the criticism such as that by Dominic La Capra in *History and Criticism*, they have lost a sense of contact with the wider social and political world that they are a part of; he speaks of the academic literary institution as part of 'an elite culture often oblivious to its implication in a larger socio-cultural and political matrix' (p.112).

Whilst I follow Bennett in his contestation of scientific materialisms, my basic position on materialism is fundamentally at odds with his. Where Bennett's position is one that blends deconstructive thought with the genealogical and dialogical cultural critiques of Foucault and Bakhtin, my position is one that is closer to the humanist Marxist tradition. When I speak of materialism I am thus talking about a self-alert and questioning materialism that is able to avoid the kind of metaphysical and epistemological traps into which according to Bennett much materialist critical theory falls. For me the word 'materialist' carries with it an implicitly political meaning — as critical and theoretical strategy, as a style of thinking and of analysis that is demystificatory in unravelling the processes through which signs and meanings are produced.

What this notion of materialism has in common with satire is a strong connection with the social, and with the human. My understanding of what the word 'materialist' means is one that is compatible with, rather than inimical to satire, since it is rooted in a sense of the social as something having primacy, and also the ultimate gauge of the importance and value of ideas. By its very nature, satire has a concern with the social and the physical, with the rootedness of
ideas, values, institutions, practices in the material world (meaning the human, social world).

The feminist emphasis on the plurality and openness of a textuality that they see as analogous to female sexuality, a site of resistance to the 'phallic' desire for limitation, fixity and closure, has interesting implications for satire, a practice which would seem to be caught between its male and female 'selves, as it were. In this view satire is both the art of the instant judgement and the clear-cut label, that serves to police the patriarchal order, and, as one of the most protean, generically unstable, open and pervasively critical forms -- a site of subversion and opposition which threatens the fixities and definites upon which the patriarchal symbolic order depends.

Ruth Salvaggio's application of feminist psychoanalytic analysis to the satirical texts (as well as other, non-satirical texts) of the eighteenth century has great value for this project (Enlightened Absence). Her sense that the satire of the period (in the case of Swift and Pope) is subversive of the central 'patriarchal' categories of the Enlightenment has greatly influenced my thinking regarding the textual politics of the satire of the period, as is revealed particularly in the chapter on The Rape of the Lock. In her reading of the textual politics of their satire Salvaggio sees Swift and Pope as providing an interesting dialectic between the dominant patriarchal voice of Enlightenment, and the subversive 'feminine' voice of textual play and plurality, its critical, and I may add, satirical, 'Other'.

Salvaggio's position gives a feminist slant on the subversiveness of the Menippean form that I refer to in the course of this dissertation. This kind of 'materialist' reading does not, I feel, fall foul of the accusation that Howard Felperin (Beyond Deconstruction) levels at Althusserian ideological
analysis: that this form of political reading is paradoxically characterised by a necessary avoidance of textuality (see pp.62-72, 106). Felperin's critique here seems to be making the same point made differently by Alex Callinicos. Callinicos also takes Althusserian theory to task for ignoring the specific conditions of ideology production in its reliance on a specific general model (Marxism and Philosophy, p.134). This is of course an example of the kind of Structuralist error: the faith in a fixed methodology, be it system or grammar, which is so strongly rejected by post-structuralist thinking.22

In raising the issue of materialism I have, I believe, pointed to a great divide within the institution between those liberating theories that suit satire -- and those 'placing' theories that don't. A basic question can be raised here, which, put crudely, is whether writers know anything, whether they have knowledge and vision or whether they are just vehicles for wider social articulations of meaning, that need readers to realize their meanings.

I do believe that writers and satirists have something to say, that there is a truth to their vision, which in the case of satire has been given a special kind of status and significance as the 'satiric vision', which refers to that often fantastical sense of a world exposed: stripped of its comforting delusions and ideological pretensions and exposed to the harsh light of moral approbation in order to reveal the stupidity, oppression and moral corruption often actively or unconsciously masquerading as ordered, sane and rational.

The divide between writers and theorists and critics over the issue of imaginative 'vision' could not be wider: whilst the postcolonial novelist and satirist, Salman Rushdie argues that the literary imagination is a political force of world-shattering
capabilities, we find that the word is hardly ever used within the academic institution (where most critics and theorists, especially those who style themselves as materialists, are likely to see it as a relic of nineteenth-century Romanticism). One of the most striking exceptions here is Carole Fabricant, whose very important re-reading of Swift avoids the kind of pitfalls of the cultural materialist approach of Peter Stallybrass and Allon White.

Strongly influenced by Said’s work on Swift, and by Rawson and Traugott’s analysis of Swift’s anarchic modernism, Fabricant contextualizes her work in the widest possible terms, this being in relation to what she terms his ‘all-encompassing ideological landscape’(Swift’s Landscape, p.1). It is in terms of this ‘landscape’ and its radical departure from the ruling aesthetic, socio-economic and political presuppositions of the day that Fabricant explores Swift’s critical articulation of the period’s central contradictions.

In articulating her sense of Swift’s commitment to ‘continued struggle’ (here she is clearly developing the position advanced by Edward W. Said in ‘Swift as Tory Intellectual’), Fabricant comes surprisingly close to the comment made by Salman Rushdie that a true politics of literature should in its commitment to the ideas of ‘inconstancy’ and ‘metamorphosis’, involve what he calls (adapting Trotsky’s political position) the ‘perpetual revolution’ of the aesthetic imagination (‘Is Nothing Sacred’, p.418). Here is Fabricant expressing her view:

Swift’s landscape and writings stand as a witness to the radically provisional nature of all human structures, creations, and would-be solutions, and thereby testify above all to the continuing need for morally informed passion and political struggle: for a commitment to ‘perpetual revolution’ both within the human heart -- manifested by that
'savage indignation' ready to be reignited at the spectacle of each new outrage -- and on the larger stage of human history. (p.271)

My view of satire is one that is very different from that which seems to have long predominated within the institution: one which tends to assume that satire is a conservative, established, licensed form operating within strict aesthetic and/or moral confines.

Such 'narrow' or 'weak' notions of satire do not take account of the truly protean nature of the beast, that seemingly refuses or confounds labels and definitions. Satire encompasses a wide range of different modes and tones (of which the textual politics can be quite different) that stretch from the gentler, more ordered forms of satire at the one pole of the spectrum, to the wilder, darker and more feared forms at the other (which would include satires that are anarchic and/or subversive, as well as those that are brutally demolishing/deconstructive). It is here that we find much of the satire of the twentieth-century, as well as (it is my contention) practically all of Swift's satires.

The most powerful satires often explode our very sense of the 'real', exploring often under the cover of what initially appears to be ludicrous fantasy, the psycho-social and sexual processes upon which our sense of social reality is founded. Producing disturbing revelations regarding the unconscious agencies and forces that lie at the root of our social practices, satire can be a powerful mode of culture critique in its own right, and a means of psychological and intellectual liberation. As Rene Girard's work on the foundational and symbolic violence inherent in civilized societies attests, an understanding of the powerful, irrational forces at work in the social body is essential (Violence and the Sacred). The grotesque, distorted and misshapen monsters that the satirists...
confront in their visions of satirical horror are all embodiments of the kinds of destructive and violent aberrations that societies can produce.

The view of satire as a stolid, straightforward, moral, didactic form under firm authorial control is a severely limited view that ignores the fact that satire is often (perhaps more often than not) stylistically innovative or experimental. Being so strongly controlled and regular a form of poetry, formal satire, the more well-known of the two great classical traditions of satire (the other being Menippean satire) is the great exception here. Unfortunately it is also the exception that the institution has tended to take as the model for satire, ignoring its particular political history, something of which Pope, the eighteenth-century satirist most versed in the formal tradition, was well aware of, and prepared to exploit. Formal satire was invented by the Roman poet Horace, who smoothed out the rougher satirical forms of poetry available to him, and softened the satirical subject matter considerably in order to produce a form both socially and politically acceptable. In the Horatian Imitations, Pope’s political satires that employ Horace as their model as well as their ‘cover’, Pope is careful to distance himself from the kind of politics with which the ‘tamed’ satire of Horace was associated with.25

Prior to the ground-breaking interventions of people like Robert Elliott, Northrop Frye, and Mikhail Bakhtin, the emphasis on the classical tradition of formal satire produced readings of satire that now appear so strikingly limited and dated in the assumptions that they reflect. Ian Jack’s Augustan Satire, which used have the status of an official handbook on eighteenth-century satire (it is a pretty slim volume), reveals the extent to which this assumption held. Whereas the temptation today might be
to see the prose satire of the period, particularly that of Swift's, to be of central importance, Jack excludes prose satire completely. Jack clearly sees the satirical poetry that he is analysing as being written for a narrowly constituted audience, who read these texts within the fixed aesthetic and poetic norms and conventions of the tradition. The thought that The Rape of the Lock, The Dunciad, and even The Imitations of Horace might be addressing a political context into which they are making a satirical intervention does not occur to him.

Jack also makes no mention of the influence of Renaissance humanism or of Menippean satire on the satirists he discusses. Renaissance humanism is one of the most important of the contexts within which the satire of the period operates (see Emrys Jones 'Pope and Dulness ', p.129). Not to be confused with modern liberal humanism, Renaissance humanism is an intellectual movement which has very little to do with capitalism and bourgeois ideology (indeed it is deeply antagonistic towards them), and which is characterised by a critical independence from Church and State religious and political ideologies, and a strong association with Menippean satire and with utopian writing. Quite contrary to the bourgeois politics of liberal humanism, Renaissance humanism has, as Jonathan Dollimore has shown, a strong anti-essentialist quality, that puts it at odds with certain tendencies in the scientific Enlightenment, and was as Antonio Gramsci (no less) has claimed, concerned in its utopian thinking with trying to build a bridge between an intellectual critique of Church and State autocracy, and popular movements for social justice.26

What makes the narrow and limited institutional view of satire most problematical is that it tends to detach the form from its intellectual and political connections and implications, as is the case with the
satire of Swift and Pope and the Renaissance humanist tradition.

Arguing from a position that combines Nietzschean moral genealogy, Frankfurt School critical theory and Bakhtinian notions in interesting and productive ways, the philosopher Peter Sloterdijk asserts in his book *The Critique of Cynical Reason* that the ideology critique of twentieth-century political thought has not just assumed the critical and political space of satire, but that it *is* satire (p.19), that is satire that has disavowed its true identity and which reflects the anti-dialectical and anti-dialogical qualities of post-Enlightenment thought.

I quote him at length here in order to convey how strongly he asserts the idea that satire (with the polemic) once had a central intellectual role and position within the Western Philosophical tradition.

Here it becomes clearer than anywhere else that 'philosophical' ideology critique is truly the heir of a great satirical tradition in which the motif of unmasking, exposing, baring has served for aeons now as a weapon. But modern ideology critique -- according to our thesis has ominously cut itself off from the powerful traditions of laughter in satirical knowledge, which have their roots in ancient kynicism. Recent ideology critique already appears in respectable garb, and in Marxism and especially in psychoanalysis it has even put on suit and tie so as to completely assume an air of bourgeois respectability. It has given up its life as satire, in order to win its position in books as 'theory'. From the lively form of heated polemic it has retreated to those positions taken in a cold war of consciousness. Heinrich Heine was one of the last authors of classical enlightenment who literally defended, in open satire, the rights of ideology critique to 'just atrocities'; here, the public has not followed him. The bourgeois transformation of satire into ideology critique was the inevitable as the bourgeois transformation of society, in general, together with its oppositional forces. (p.16)
Sloterdijk presents an extreme argument for satire being special not because it is different, but because it is both primary, and essential -- that the whole of our Western philosophical tradition has suffered because of its demotion from the central position it once occupied. As Schechter's *Durov's Pig* has shown, it is not difficult to see points of contact between Marxist theory and satirical practice. For Schechter there is a close and complementary relationship between Marxist dialectical theory, and the critical politics of satirical theatre of twentieth -century figures like Brecht and Fo. In his preface to Karl Marx and Joseph Engels *On Literature and Art*, B.Krylov quotes the fiery German Marxist, Rudolf Liebknecht, who makes the link between the satirical *saevo indignatio*, and Marx's own strong sense of political outrage quite explicit:

'If ever hatred, scorn and passionate love of liberty were expressed in burning, devastating, lofty words,' wrote Liebknecht, 'it is in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, which combines the indignant severity of a Tacitus with the deadly satire of a Juvenal and the holy wrath of a Dante. Style here is the *stilus* that it was of old in the hand of the Romans, a sharp stiletto, used to write and to stab. Style is a dagger which strikes unerringly at the heart' (From *Reminiscences on Marx and Engels*, quoted by B. Krylov in preface to Karl Marx and Joseph Engels, *On Literature and Art*, p.16)

This sense of the narrowness of the distance between satire and intellectual critique is further supported by Sean Sayers in his Marxist analysis of the epistemological positions within the Western Philosophical tradition. Characterizing himself as a materialist-realist, he argues that the ideas of critical thinkers like Marx and Freud are 'iconoclastic' in the way that they trample on cherished, but erroneous beliefs in challenging established assumptions:
There is, of course, truth in the idea that the ideas of these thinkers are radical and iconoclastic in their implications. Freud does expose the unconsciousness and irrationality at the basis of human life; and he thereby undermines the Cartesian idea of the purely self-conscious and rational subject. Hegel and Marx reveal the historical and ideological -- the partial, limited and relative -- character of our beliefs and ideas of our science and knowledge. (p. 94)

On so many counts it is difficult to say what satire is. Any critic or theorist who is foolish enough to rush into making unguarded or unqualified assertions about satire can rest assured that there are examples of the form that if they do not openly contradict what he or she has said, would immediately point to its limitations and incompleteness.

One thing can be said with confidence, and without fear of being essentialist, universalizing or hypostatizing (the dangers that face any generic study when the current fashion is so thoroughly historicist) is that satire is special: and for those who accept this evaluation, something of an acid test for the political and intellectual discourses and practices with which it comes into contact.

_Satire, I would argue, is a special case, an oppositional critical form_ which can range in tone from an earthy directness and irreverence as it expresses a spirit of critical laughter in a rumbustious, mocking, pants-pulling-down politics of inversion and exaggeration, to thoroughly more modulated and refined forms in which protective irony 'screens' their more provocative meanings. Satire is something that is quite distinctive, perhaps even too 'unliterary' for the institution to successfully appropriate it, and, particularly when it comes to its unique textual politics, something very special: a form that for some people at least is as compulsive and important a thing as the satirists themselves are
constantly claiming. Juvenal expressed the claims of satire more succinctly than any other satirist: 'Difficile est saturam non scribere' (Satire I, 30).

The very use of the term 'satire' carries its own claim to legitimacy, that it should be considered as a special practice and be accorded a special social status. For all its scepticism, irreverence, parodic playfulness, and exploitation of form, satire is serious stuff and takes itself very seriously. It is, in its most extreme and powerful forms, possibly the most provocative and extreme form of writing, a critical, direct, in-your-face form of cultural expression that immediately raises questions not so much as to how texts intervene in the world, as to what kind of intervention the world allows.

What I intend to demonstrate in the chapters that follow is that the satire of the eighteenth century, operating in a period of radical intellectual and economic transformation, can (and should) be read as being primarily oppositional and critical, as providing a place for social, political and intellectual alternatives to the rapidly developing mercantile capitalism, bringing social and cultural commodification and destabilization, political absolutism, and colonial imperialism in its wake. In the course of arguing against the Frankfurt School suspicion of the reactionary ideological content of popular culture Tony Bennett turns to popular satire as a clear counter-example to the critical opponents of popular culture. In making his case Bennett shows an instinctive feeling for satire, and a capacity to respond to its subversiveness and irreverence. What is more interesting, even astonishing, is that Bennett makes satire a counter example against theory, as a form that seems quite naturally to show up the manifest limitations of a particular literary perspective or theoretical orientation. This is also what happens
its construction of radically different times/worlds/attitudes, providing a place for moral alternatives to the politics of power and corruption witnessed in European history. It is a powerfully imaginative, category-hopping and boundary-breaking form which begins in the very cosmopolitan fantastic voyage satires of the Roman writer Lucian of Samosata, has close historical links to the alternative critical politics and utopian writings of the Renaissance humanists, and continues into the twentieth century in various mutated forms, such as the form of science fiction termed 'conceptual breakthrough', and the postcolonial writing that oscillates between magical realism and fantastical satire, the *Satanic Verses* of Salman Rushdie being the finest example of this kind of Menippean mutation.

In its hostility to the abstract and the formal, and to essentialist thinking in every shape and form, Menippean satire would appear not only to have a fundamental affinity with the idea of materialist thinking, but also to raise issues that go to the very heart of the debates surrounding the notion of a materialist practice, issues such as textuality/intertextuality, textual politics, and the relationship between marginalized and dominant voices and authorities.

Though the term was coined by Northrop Frye (in *An Anatomy of Criticism*), Mikhail Bakhtin is, of course, the central figure in the current reappraisal of Menippean satire. In the extract that follows he shows how protean a form it is -- and how important a literary tradition.

Menippean satire exercised a very great influence on old Christian literature (of the ancient period) and on Byzantine literature (and through it on ancient Russian writing as well). In diverse variants and under diverse generic labels it also continued its development into the post-
classical epochs: into the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Reformation, and modern times; in fact it continues to develop even now (both with and without a clear-cut awareness of itself as a genre). This carnivalized genre, extraordinarily flexible and as changeable as Proteus, capable of penetrating other genres, has had an enormous and as yet insufficiently appreciated importance for the development of European literatures. Menippean satire became one of the main carriers and channels for the carnival sense of the world in literature and remains so to the present day. (M.M. Bakhtin, in The Bakhtin Reader, ed. by Pam Morris, p.189)

With the eighteenth century’s strong commitment to neo-classical poetics, and to the search for solid epistemological foundations, there is bound to be something somewhat paradoxical about the presence of Menippean satire. The distinction between the neo-classical and the Menippean seems to coincide quite neatly with the distinction between the prose and verse satire of the period (in this regard they are quite different creatures, satirically speaking). There do seem to be conflicting tendencies within eighteenth-century satire, with the ‘pull’ towards clarity and transparency, counterbalanced or countermanded by an inclination towards fantasy. The resulting tension is sometimes resolved in the generation of crazy satirical fantasies, that keep to a supremely ‘rational’ and ‘logical’ shape (such as the Cave of Spleen section of Pope’s The Rape of the Lock). Swift’s logical satires are however more likely to be subversions, consciously or unconsciously, of the age’s presumptions of rationality and of epistemological certainty.

In this Swift seems to be that anachronism, an old-school Renaissance humanist in an age in which economic concerns take on a supreme importance, and science and mathematical abstraction are suddenly seen as the keys to social control and political manipulation. Most ironically it is because of an old
world anachronism that marks him as in some way 'out' of his age, so capable of satirizing it down to its very foundations, that he not only survives his time\textsuperscript{33}, but becomes, in terms of his powerful influence on twentieth-century satirists at least, a man of our time. One of the most powerful things in Swift’s satire that appears to have had such a powerful influence upon his twentieth-century descendants is his sense of the way in which intellectual distortions produce worlds of social and political nightmare, such as is the case in the final voyage of \textit{Gulliver’s Travels}, where when talk of genocide slips out of those sweetly reasonable Houyhnhnm mouths we have, in the course of a paragraph slipped from the sweet groves of Plato’s Academy to Pol Pot and the killing fields of Cambodia.

Whilst being careful not to hypostatize and to essentialize, in the way we approach the idea of satire, we must, at the same time resist the opposing tendency to overly historicize. The logical conclusion of an over-rigorous historicization is the relativism which argues that there is no ‘satire’, only ‘satires’: that the meaning of the word is totally defined by its historical use within a particular historical context. Too rigid a historicism can lose an important sense of tradition, closing off an important dimension of the past from the present, most importantly, a dimension of the past that continues into and impacts upon the present, helping to shape its own sense of identity. To be a good and valuable historicist one should avoid established literary histories and historical periodizations that place a preconceived ‘grid’ over the past, and prevent the right kind of dialogical encounter with the past that Dominic La Capra explores in \textit{History and Criticism}.

One notion likely to interfere with any historicist reconstruction of the past is that great
fetish of the academic literary institution, the 'canon'. As Edward W. Said has rightly pointed out, the notion of the canon has no historical validity, there is no connection between the canonical position that a text has been assigned within traditions and literary histories and political agendas constructed by the institution, and what texts meant and how they were received, and what kinds of social and political influence they exercised or were meant to exercise in the periods in which they were written ('Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies and Community', pp.149-50).

Unfortunately the canon is an idea that the institution has bought into very deeply. The notion of the canon and the canonical has been so dominant within the institution since the rise of the notion of a moral and aesthetic tradition within literature, that begins with Matthew Arnold, reaches its fruition with Cambridge and American New Critics, and which has now become one of the key terrains of battle between the old guard and new guard within literature departments.

When viewed from the perspective of satire it is evident that the notion of the canon has had two most unfortunate effects. Firstly it has effectively marginalized important literary/cultural forms such as satire, fantasy and science fiction, forms that it could be argued are the most interesting and important because of the intellectual and political issues that they raise. Secondly -- and this returns us to the point I made earlier regarding the 'contextualization' of the institution -- the notion of the canon has made the study of literature a terribly in-house kind of thing and in so doing has served to 'ghettoize' literary academics by separating them from wider areas of debate. Howard Felperin's book Beyond Deconstruction addresses itself primarily to this issue, and to the possibility of finding a new politics for literature, criticism and the institution.\textsuperscript{34}
This brings me back to my main 'materialist' contention, one that simultaneously elevates satire and casts serious doubt on current thinking and practice within the academic literary institution. For me the basis of any materialism is textual, but is also profoundly social. Whereas the deconstructive strategy of reducing the social to the textual results in obvious problems in trying to then define a politics for texts (it is not easy to develop a 'mechanics' -- in the Newtonian sense of the word -- of texts and of discourses), the Bakhtinian strategy of making language (and with it generic types and forms) social, would appear to avoid all such problems. Indeed Allon White has argued from a Bakhtinian perspective (most unkindly I might add) that the kind of textual play and intellectual subversion which deconstructive criticism and analysis exhibits, turns out to be, at the end of the day, little more than the displaced, narrowed and thoroughly rationalized/intellectualized version of an important social and cultural force and phenomenon: that of carnival ('Bakhtin, Sociolinguistics, and Deconstruction' pp.138-45). This observation of White's would seem to shed an interesting light on the suggestion by Srinivas Aravamudan, in a major article on the satire of Salman Rushdie (previously mentioned), that satire and deconstruction have much in common.

A materialist theory which ignores the social as an important terrain of meaning and value is not in any way adequate to contribute to an understanding of satire. The importance assigned to the social in contemporary thinking can vary between the position of Rene Girard, the social genealogist, who sees the social as built upon deep-rooted and ingrained transformations of real and symbolic violence, and positions like the contextualist position of Tony Bennett that we have already discussed, in which the notion of the social is collapsed into the textual.
This whole project depends on a strong notion of the social that does not reduce the social to something abstract, textual or theoretical.

With the issue of the social basis of satire and the consideration of satire as a social practice, the focus upon the satirist becomes important. It is very important to bear in mind that the satirist is not an institutional category, and so the developments in literary theory that argue for the 'death of the author' (in Roland Barthes's phrase) or for the author as a discursive category, as in Foucault's essay 'What is an Author?,' the 'principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning (p.159)' do not immediately apply. The label 'satirist' is one that is self-given. It is not a label of convenience for the producer of a particular class of literature, nor is it a kind of narrative mask worn to facilitate the construction of a particular kind of fiction. For the satirist there is a powerful identification with satire, that it is compulsive, a 'calling' that cannot be resisted.

In his provocative essay on Swift entitled 'Swift's Tory Anarchy' Said argues that for Swift, satire exists not as a genre but as a mode of existence, a compulsion ('Swift's Tory Anarchy', p.70). For the satirist writing is a process of self-definition and self-declaration; the identity of the satirist is not that of the fixed and stable Cartesian subject contemporary theory has decentred; it is far more mythic and anthropological, something implicitly and absolutely caught up in the practice of satire, in its traditions and mythologies.

The satirist is always difficult to place ideologically and theoretically because there is always something paradoxical or contradictory about his position, being involved in the social world, and yet attempting to keep a critical distance, sometimes out of what would appear to be a fear of moral
contamination. The moral authority claimed by the satirist often means that he occupies the strange position of the anti-social defender of the social, particularly given the deliberate use of 'shock' tones/styles/issues that are likely to be deemed socially offensive. Satirists are invariably odd mixtures of ideological opposites, and as such are difficult to categorize, putting strain on existing categories as Orwell's seemingly paradoxical, yet ever so apt term for Swift, the term 'Tory anarchist' makes clear.

Initially this use of the term 'anarchist' seems to be somewhat baffling: mixing eighteenth-century and nineteenth/twentieth-century categories in a way that is quite unhistorical. Yet there is always something rebellious and anti-authoritarian about the satirist, behind that very assumption of moral authority implicit in the very act of writing a satire.

The distinction between culture and nature would seem to be have a very important bearing on satire since the practice seems to be such a strange combination of the cultural and the natural. Being so deeply rooted in the social world (in the widest sense of the word) it is a sophisticated form that is alert to the range of cultural codes and conventions with which it is surrounded. On the other hand, it is a form that sees itself as closely linked to the human body, that can easily stand outside the codes and conventions that it is so immersed in, and that whilst it points to social and cultural arbitrariness as it deconstructs, demythologizes and relativizes left, right, and centre, its own voice is a natural one, an expression of the thankless and unavoidable task that is the satirist's by nature.

In a post-Saussurean age the term 'nature' is one that cannot be used with any confidence whatsoever. The term 'nature' has been recognised as a word used to
challenge particular social/cultural values, institutions etc by positing something that lies outside of the realm of the social and cultural, and is thus untainted by the problems or malaise affecting this realm. Of course, what this means is another, and different notion of the social and the cultural.

However there does seem to be something about satire that does have the kind of primacy and level of cultural 'transcendence' previously associated with the word 'nature'. As Freud in his famous essay *Jokes and their Relation with the Unconscious*, and Robert C Elliott in his seminal study of satire *The Power of Satire* have separately suggested: there is something socially and psychologically very rooted and basic about satire. It is not simply a term for different times to use differently in labelling what literary forms they see as fitting into the mould.

Freud's argument in *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* is that the joke is serious psychic business, involving powerful discharges of cathectic energy as anxieties are sublimated and psychological barriers overcome, particularly in the case of what he terms 'tendentious' jokes (and satire is nothing if not a species of the tendentious joke). Freud's account of the psychic structure of the joke would seem to imply that for satire, as a developed form of what Freud speaks of as the 'tendentious' joke, the assumption or production of a role or position that involves a very close relationship with its chosen readers is of crucial importance. For Freud the psychic structure of the joke produces a deep-rooted, special kind of psychological interaction between the joke teller and the joke listener who are united in the tension-releasing displacement of aggression towards a third-party (the satirical target) for the duration of the joke (pp.146-9).
In the light of Freudian thinking on such things as jokes and laughter, and other areas of human psychic activity/arousal a massive rethinking of literature, such as the one that Bennett and Royle seem to be tentatively suggesting, would seem to be possible: one which is more interested in discourses like satire, fantasy, allegory and the fantastic because they are greater sites of desire, and consequently, of textual power. In this regard we must also consider the contention of Bakhtinian theorists and critics who point to the centrality of the notion of carnival to any understanding of literature: a move which is in itself a powerful strategy against the presence of bourgeois aestheticism within the institution since as Peter Stallybrass and Allon White view the matter, 'carnival is too disgusting for the bourgeoisie to endure' (The Politics and Poetics of Transgression, p.292). They express their belief in the centrality of carnival to the notion of literature in a manner that is quite clear-cut:

'On the other hand recent literary criticism following Bakhtin, has found elements of the carnivalesque everywhere it looked in modern as well as traditional literature.'
(The Politics and Poetics of Transgression, p.177)

In his The Power of Satire, Robert C. Elliott argues that satire is something that can be traced back to powerful rituals and social practices within oral and so-called 'primitive' non-literate communities. In such oral communities satire has a central and vitally important symbolic role, and the satirist is accorded a high status as a shaman or word-magician, whose distinctive power with words is essential to warding off evil and protecting the tribe against its enemies. In Elliott’s anthropological account satire is a power that has been recognised from ancient times, the embodiment of the dangerous and subversive 'magic' of
the word, so feared and admired that it is held in religious awe by pre-literate, animist communities.

Elliott is, as Alvin B. Kernan has shown in his assessment, a seminal figure in the study of satire. He writes that *The Power of Satire*

provides the crucial linkage between certain kinds of primitive satiric activities, which have long been known, and the literary satire which begins with Aristophanes and runs to the present day. As a result, satire now has a continuous history, and we can trace it back to its origins in magic and ancient times.

(Kernan, *The Plot of Satire*, p.11)

The implications for satire of this power and importance that Elliott has 'rediscovered' are considerable. Whilst Elliott's study shows the depth of the relationship between satire and the social world, which would argue that the developing history of this relationship is something decidedly complex, he seems to want to avoid considering the possibility that satire continues to have a social power, position and meaning outside of the literary institution, revealing an inability to accept the full implications of the notion of the power of the satirist, which he sees as being surrendered in a kind of 'deal' struck with the literary world. In this 'deal' the old satirical power is surrendered for the cultural capital that comes with being accepted as an author (the very position that has been demolished by contemporary theory). The satirist in accepting his literary status divests himself of his religious robes and joins the ranks of respectable writers for whom the desire for fame, wealth and/or immortality has supplanted the need to verbally annihilate the tribal enemy. As an argument it is curiously similar to the original contract theories of sovereignty which were very popular in seventeenth-century England. Unfortunately, it also shares the fundamental logical weaknesses that have long been
exposed in such theories. Exactly how and when and exactly with whom this deal is made is left unclear. It is hard to believe that, even in the mists of pre-history, satirists would surrender power, status, and a licence to inflict verbal violence in order to become 'ordinary'.

Both Edward W. Rosenheim (Swift and the Satirist's Art,) and Srinivas Aravamudan ('"Being God's postman is no fun, yaar": Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses'), have integrated Elliott's anthropological arguments into their own work, and both reject Elliott's explanation of the surrendering of the power of the satirist as the price for his social integration into a literate world where linguistic violence is frowned upon, however magical or shamanic. For Rosenheim powerful satire is something that cannot be appropriated by social institutions, or more narrowly by the literary-academic institution. In arguing his case, Rosenheim rejects many of the traditional/new critical assumptions about satire, such as that it is conservative, moral (in the sense of being aligned with established social morality), realistic, subject to aesthetic principles, and to tight authorial control (p.186). He sees powerful satire as anti-social and the satirist as often occupying the seemingly contradictory position of the social guardian/social rebel that I characterised earlier as being so typically produced by the form. Rosenheim's view of the power of satire not being surrendered or contained coincides with Aravamudan's anti-institutional, deconstructive view of satire as parasitic, deconstructive and thoroughly political.

Given the way in which deconstruction liberates the textual by abolishing traditional categories, barriers, divisions and demarcations, and given that satire is a protean form that crosses such boundaries, particularly, as we saw, Menippean satire, it would
seem that an exploration of the affinities between satire and deconstruction, and of the possibility of a common intellectual heritage could well be a most profitable undertaking (though one well outside of the confines of this project). Certainly at the stylistic level deconstruction and satire show themselves to be strangely similar in that both are simultaneously playful and violent; both invoke the play of text and discourse, what Howard Felperin terms a ‘duplicitous textuality’ (Beyond Deconstruction, p.61) against the ‘serious’ concerns of the institution.

Whilst satire is undeniably a rhetorical form, close to propaganda in its exaggeration and slanting of its images of the kind of social and political evils that I described earlier, it is also, in its commitment to exposing what is false, sham and hidden, that creative form of expression (if creative is the word for something that can be quite destructive) that comes closest to Marxist ‘materialist’ practice (according to Schechter) and to the subversive ‘play’ of deconstruction (according to Aravamudan).

Where satire is most ‘materialist’ is as a formidable opponent of uncritical notions of scientific or philosophical certainty, relativizing such notions and metaphorically ‘deconstructing’ them, using the whole rhetorical armoury at its disposal. In true materialist style the satirist deflates the pretensions of the human intellect showing how ideas are grounded in social trends, dispositions and inclinations, that their truth is really nothing but a reflection of the dominant perspective within the current intellectual fashion. In conversation with Gulliver, Aristotle ‘this great philosopher’ freely acknowledges his own mistakes in natural philosophy, because he proceeded in many things upon conjecture, as all men must do; and he found that Gassendi, who had
made the doctrine of Epicurus as palatable as he could, and the vortices of Descartes, were equally exploded. He predicted the same fate to attraction, whereof the present learned are such zealous asserters. He said, that new systems of nature were but new fashions, which would vary in every age; and even those who pretended to demonstrate them from mathematical principles would flourish but a short period of time, and be out of vogue when that was determined.

(Gulliver's Travels, pp.242-3)

With the impact of revisionist history, Foucauldian genealogy, and Bakhtinian cultural materialism, we are beginning to get a different sense of the literature of the period, to see it as less stable, less 'rational', and to look for signs of a conflict between the way the eighteenth century liked to see itself and things that were happening at the time. The eighteenth century marks the beginning of that period in which scientific and rationalist approaches to human problems and human life emerges -- the forward-looking, optimistic spirit known as 'The Enlightenment' -- so savagely criticised in contemporary political thought as underlying the Scientific and Technological -- as well as political nightmare we seem to have created for ourselves in the Twentieth century. According to the German thinker Jurgen Habermas: it is only in our period, the period known as postmodern that the Enlightenment dream of knowledge and progress disappears ('Modernity -- An Incomplete Project').

Christopher Hill emphasizes the extent to which the sleepy old eighteenth century, the age of stability and settlement, is in fact an age of dynamic social and cultural developments, an 'epochal' age that stands between the old Renaissance world and our modern industrial (now postindustrial and postcolonial) world, and in which the modern world as we know it emerges. Donald Greene's The Age of Exuberance, as its title suggests, emphasizes the age's dynamic qualities, particularly its interest in the new and the different.
living memory, that the satire of the period should play a solidly conservative and defensive role. It certainly has been read in such terms -- to the extent that notions regarding the conservatism of eighteenth-century satire, and the ways in which its forms (the balanced heroic couplet and verse paragraph) have become so well-established that many literary critics and analysts, of very different political persuasions (in the wider, and narrower institutional sense of the word) take this for granted. To suggest a very different picture, and to emphasize very different things in the satire of the period would be to run against a number of different grains. The idea that eighteenth-century satire can be reread in a way that emphasizes its challenging and subversive qualities is something that is not only in conflict with the traditional view of the satire of the period, but also with the new political/ideological forms of analysis that want to displace the traditional view, and the canons that it has constructed, such as the very notion of an 'age of satire', yet in so doing very often accept, explicitly or implicitly, the way in which the satire of the period has been traditionally constituted. This 'age of satire' is only an age of satire courtesy, as Kropf has shown, of a legal nicety which prevented the heavy-handed censorship of the government of Sir Robert Walpole from totally suppressing their satirical opponents ('Libel and Satire in the Eighteenth Century').

If we had swallowed the traditional line on satire, such as expressed by Ian Jack, we would have found it difficult to believe not just how serious eighteenth-century satire turns out to be, but also the extent to which it is self-consciously aware of itself as satire, defining itself as such in relation to the social and cultural forces to which it is opposed. Jack's analysis of the satire of the period (which
tellingly and quite astoundingly concerns itself with verse alone, omitting prose satire entirely) reveals this very failure to understand the depth of these moral concerns, and their decidedly political implications. We should also take cognisance of the fact that, as is clear from the sudden transformation in relative size that Gulliver experiences in the first two of his four voyages, for the eighteenth century the moral, the political, the social and the human are far more intimately connected than they are considered to be from a twentieth-century perspective.  

The position of the satirist turns out to be quite a tenuous one, with the change in literary sensibility away from satire (the history of which is explored in Ronald Paulson's *Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth-century England*) and with the growing middle-class suspicion of and opposition to the perceived anti-social offensiveness of satire. P.K. Elkin (*The Augustan Defence of Satire*) and Brean S. Hammond (*Pope and Bolingbroke*) have both dealt with the threatened status of the eighteenth-century satirist. As Hammond expresses the matter (with reference to Elkin): 'The status of satire was far from assured. It operated within an area that included terms like libel, lampoon and slander' (p.156).

With social developments producing a profound sense of dislocation (the impact of which I deal with in the third chapter), the satirist was invariably under threat and on the defensive against the social and cultural forces that form part of the wider movements that would lead to middle-class economic dominance and cultural hegemony. Losing a sense of Swift and Pope as canonical figures allows us to take the combative and oppositional quality of their satire into account -- the qualities that make it satire. If the eighteenth century seems a good or perfect time for satire because it provides the satirists with a
comfortable situation in which satire is perfectly integrated into the social, political, it also needs to be a 'good' time for satire since its pressures, anomalies and contradictions produce the satirical response, the outrage and contempt of the saevo indignatio. The eighteenth century was an age conducive to satire on both these counts. Eighteenth-century society is one in which people are concerned with ideas, aware of the issues, and in which there are well-established networks of social communication that facilitate the rapid dissemination of the word, which is vital for satire. The coffee houses, which are the crucial point of contact between the development of capitalist enterprise and the establishment of the literary institution, play a key role in this regard, as do the long-established traditions of popular political expression, including the popular iconographic traditions of political expression that Carretta deals with in his book The Snarling Muse.

All-in-all eighteenth-century England is a world that is in Pat Rogers's phrase 'Janus-like' (The Augustan Vision, p.9): full of the kind of contradictions both major and minor that satirists thrive upon. In terms of its intellectual and cultural temper it appears rational, moral, scientific and utopian. At the social and economic levels however, as we can instantly see from the urban chaos of the crowded Hogarth prints, it is as far from these ideals as can be imagined.

The changes that occur during the century produce a most intriguing political situation, and one that I do not think easily translates into the clear-cut class terms that the old style materialist analysis used to demand. Here we have the plural, sceptical, anti-essentialist world of Menippean satire and utopian political alternatives set against the new scientific, middle-class, capitalist, essentialist but also
As has, I hope, become quite clear, some of my basic presumptions regarding the satire of the period are quite different from those that have been dominant in those traditional approaches to satire that predate the 'Copernican' or post-Saussurean revolution in literary theory and critical practice. Whereas other critics and theorists of the satire of the period seem quick to see the satire of the period as manifesting polite Augustan proprieties and standards, my concern with the satire of the period as satire has lead me to emphasize the dissidently critical and the irreverent, and to find moments both of a laughing anarchic spirit and of a dark moral outrage in this supposedly most correct and conservative form of writing.

The position that I am putting forward in the thesis is one that I think brings a number of key contentions that are being disputed and fought out within the institution. If the thesis speaks with a dissident voice -- it is because of my strong feeling for satire*. And the satire of the eighteenth century is the most powerful and important satire in the whole of English literature. The institution may not readily acknowledge this, or even acknowledge that satire has any real importance, but the influence on later satire, including, in the case of Swift, modern and contemporary political satire, has been considerable.
Any attempt to construct a new literary history of the eighteenth century must negotiate Swift, a problem case for any critic or literary historian wishing to generalize about the eighteenth century, yet a writer without whom any account of the literature of the period, not to speak of its satire, is hopelessly incomplete.

A notoriously difficult, and yet, as paradoxical as it may seem, an exceptionally powerful writer, in his resistance to categorization he constitutes a kind of 'acid test' for all attempts to explain, and 'place' the literature of the period. Facile notions regarding what ideological forces are at work, and what positions are being adopted in the literature of the time, reveal the extent of their limitations as soon as Swift's anomalous, and yet absolutely central, satiric writing is brought into the picture.

Of all of Swift's satire, it is *A Tale of a Tub* that is the most inaccessible and yet challenging for the twentieth-century reader, and which was the most controversial in the eighteenth century itself. This is a satire written in an experimental 'modernist' style that is meant to reflect the values and perspectives of the targets it is parodying, and this parodic 'licence' results in a satire where Swift's disruptive energies and anarchic impulses are at their strongest. In *Swift's Landscape*, Carole Fabricant echoes John Traugott's sense of Swift as a dangerous satirist, a figure of deeply-rooted anarchic and subversive inclinations, when she depicts him as a deconstructive figure, operating on the intellectual and textual 'margins' of the dominant ideologies, inhabiting a landscape which could not be more challenging to the age's faith in notions of order, balance and propriety. For Fabricant, Swift is a figure of 'excess', whose eighteenth-century landscape is a chaotic, and ideologically contrary one of a
'metamorphosis and confusion' that 'verges on chaos', is profoundly unstable, and above all, that threatens rather than conforms to the aesthetic principles of the time (pp.6-7)

The Tale is a category breaking phenomenon, anti-modern but revelling in the modernism it produces. It has a self-reflexive parodic subversiveness that makes the satire so disturbing -- since it parodies and subverts religious authority and meaning, things which are beyond satire for so many people, at such a fundamental level. The difficulty of this satire would seem to centre on the Hack narrator that Swift creates as its supposed author. Everett Zimmerman points to the narrative (and satirical) significance of the figure of the Hack:

The assumption in this book, is that the question of narrator's status is closely related to the larger hermeneutical and epistemological issues in Swift’s satires; it is not a narrowly rhetorical concern that must be disposed of as quickly as possible in order to arrive expeditiously at Swift's opinions. *(Swift’s Narrative Satires pp.12-13)*

What is perhaps most problematical for the Tale's contemporary reader (and what appeared to baffle many of Swift’s own contemporaries) is the way in which the serious and the playful seem so inseparably connected: producing sudden shifts in tone and voice that confuse the reader (as they seem calculated to do). The two most well-known ‘modernist’ critics of Swift, Claude Rawson, and John Traugott have both addressed this ‘bewildering’ quality of Swift’s, and his ability to move from a satiric comedy characterised by a zany, comic absurdity, to the darkest, most violent and disturbing kinds of satirical ‘implication’.

The difficulty of drawing a clear-cut dividing line between the playful and the serious -- which I suggested in the previous chapter, is pretty much a
false distinction, at least from the perspective of satire -- lies at the heart of the Tale. Indeed the Tale itself has a playfulness that is as delightful as it is dangerous very much at its core, being one of Swift's satirical 'impersonations', the absolute fulfilment of which tendency, revealed in The Drapier's Letters and in Gulliver's Travels, is the 'invention' of the astrologer Isaac Bickerstaff in order to humiliate the pro-Whig astrologer Partridge. In its attempt to penetrate 'enemy' space through impersonation, the Tale has much in common, at the tactical level at least, with Pope's Horatian Imitations, satires of infiltration which I discuss in a later chapter.

A confounding mixture of the surreptitious, the flamboyant and the brutal, the crucial problem of this satire (and its strength) is that the vehicle of the satire is part of what is being satirized. This is compounded by the way in which the satire attacks the idea of arbitrariness, but also exploits the notion as part of its relativization of those ideas, values and institutions which it is itself attacking. Together these help to explain the notorious deceptiveness of this satire, and its continual exploitation of its reader, whose sense of direction and firm ground is soon lost, as he or she is carried off by the satirical whirlwind.

As David Ward has pointed out, Swift needs to express a sense of an 'Other', something that lies outside of the self-satirizing parody and will provide a strong sense of the values, ideas, styles and forms of the great inherited literary and intellectual traditions that the 'Hack' narrator's world denies. As Ward expresses it: 'Swift contrives to place the satire in the context of truths and values which outlast the writer and the reader' (p.57). Here there is a sense that the values of the Hack's world are so dominant
that they have pushed satire (which the Hack, ironically completely disavows) out of the picture. Satire is thus that which is 'unsaid', the voice behind the text to which the irony is constantly pointing. One of the most subtle ironies of the Tale is what is said about the disappearance of the Hack, the Tale's narrator and ostensible author, seems to comment on the position of its true author, operating in an invisible space that is neither entirely within the text, nor entirely without, a position that breaks the distinction between inclusion and exclusion as if it were one of the many false binary oppositions that the Hack structures his world in terms of. Of these, the opposition between the two exclusive forms of wit, the 'good' wit that defends the status quo, and the 'bad' destructive wit that wishes to tear down values and institutions, is important since it so obviously excludes the kind of wit and satire to which Swift is committed.

Whilst exposing from within the world of the Hack, the Tale's purported author/narrator, the satire at the same time uses the often quite accidental or unintentional outspokenness of the Hack to score hits against practically all the institutions of the day, including the very Anglican Church that Swift was supposed to be defending. With such a loose cannon at the heart of things every conceivable target is under threat.

In the Tale Swift juxtaposes the pretensions of the age, particularly its less self-critical, if not self-congratulatory view of itself with a hint of the banter, hurly-burly, pell-mell violence of Billingsgate, Covent Garden and Bedlam, captured in the Hack's account of the emptily riotous life of the decadent aristocracy to which the three brothers in the fable were strongly attracted,
with an element of perverse fascination and dark glee entirely missing from the Voyage to Laputa.

In speaking of the Tale as that 'tub' which is meant to divert or deflect the violence aimed at the Church and State by the nastier wits of the time, he is clearly identifying himself as a defender of these institutions, which constituted the two great enemies of the Renaissance humanists. The Hack narrator, the text's ostensible author, is a figure that is being impersonated by Swift, but who is, in a sense, also impersonating a swift-like satirist in defending the established religion.

There is quite a startling ironical inversion here: from the humanist perspective the Church and State were the greatest perpetrators of real violence, rather than the poor recipients and victims of verbal, rhetorical and symbolic violence that the Hack makes them out to be.

Swift seems to recognise the irony in his commitment to the old humanist satirical politics, whilst having such a clear connection with these institutions, both as clergyman and as political agent of the Tory Government of Queen Anne, recruited by Bolingbroke and Harley. What we would appear to have is two very different views of Church and State: firstly that of the Hack, a lackey of the status quo and of established power, one of (as his name suggests) the 'prostitute' writers of Gulliver's Travels, whose natural allegiances are towards his own Grub Street fraternity, their milieu and implicit political agendas; and secondly that of Swift himself, hidden behind and within what the Hack has to say -- both as its implicit contradiction, but also sometimes in what the Hack himself reveals through acts of a kind of satirical parataxis. Swift is, like the Hack, a sensationalist, a 'stirrer' who loves being provocative and who cannot resist exceeding himself, since he is so
caught up in the inevitable inclination of satire to exceed its immediate targets. If the printing revolution brings the dangers of the new, which the Tale is profoundly conscious of, it also seems to provide the opportunity for Swift's satire to revel in itself as parody, exceeding the very thing it is satirizing in a tour-de-force spoofing of modernist forms that is itself modernist, and which delights in the explosive energies of the new, exploiting the free-wheeling, digressive modern style to the full. Parodying the modern from within would seem to be a natural move to make, seeing that the Hack's Tale (the Tale within the Tale) is attempting to replace the old, in this case the encyclopedic form of the humanist tradition (as in Rabelais or Burton) with its modern Grub Street equivalent, in preference to the possible production of a radically new, innovative form that clearly expresses the pressures and temper of the time.

What this cultural revolution brings is less an introduction of the new, than an appropriation and inversion of the old. The need for the Hack and his co-revolutionaries to redefine everything to their own advantage results in a complete turning upside down of the meanings of words: most noticeably the word 'universal' is used again and again to suggest that which is limited and closed.

David Ward's analysis of the Tale in Jonathan Swift: An Introductory Essay foregrounds the centrality of Swift's interest in and concern with wit and the imagination: the natural antagonists to the kind of closure that I have just referred to. Both wit and the imagination were under attack by the scientific rationality of the empiricist line of thought that emerges out of the writings of Francis Bacon. Ward sees the imagination as the focus of the Tale's conflicting conservative and radical elements. According to Ward the conservative side to the Tale...
results in an emphasis on the dangers of the imagination. As a result religious and intellectual absurdities are presented as connected with over-stimulation, sublimation and other forms of malaise involving the human imagination. On the other hand there is the radical aspect of the Tale in which emphasizes the dangers inherent in the repression or controlling of the imagination. In Ward's words we are given 'a deeply-felt sense of the joys and dangers of the mind's adventure into the forbidden territories of the Imagination' (p. 49). There is, however, an inwardness to the imagination of the Tale, an inwardness that has suggested to the psychoanalytic critic Norman O. Brown, and through Brown an 'existential' critic like John Traugott, a powerful concern with the processes of the human unconscious and their relationship with the logic of intellectual (i.e. religious and philosophical) discourse, particularly the hidden processes that generate the metaphoric and analogical logics that religious and other systems depend on.

As is the case with the Voyage to Laputa in Gulliver's Travels, systems and system-building are important satirical targets. By ridiculing the way in which philosophies and religions are constructed -- suggesting that they are prey to the arbitrariness of the sign, and the ruthless power of metaphor -- Swift subverts the idea of truth as something texts can contain in an absolute form. Nowhere is this more evident than in Swift's satirical attack on the modern scolasticism of Catholic Peter and his Cartesian brethren, an attack that is clearly within the humanist tradition. Here a crazy logical essentialism is employed to prove that an object is that which it is not, even if the second object is totally different from the first. As a result a lunatic universe of religious essences is produced in which anything can be
proved to be anything else. The subversive fantasy of Menippean satire is transformed into an obsessive fixatedness, where in an insane one-upmanship of symbolism, even the transformative magic of the Christian eucharist becomes grotesquely perverted.

'Gentlemen,' said he, 'I will prove this very skin of parchment to be meat, drink and cloth, to be the philosopher's stone, and the universal medicine.'(p.154)

Wit, the very figure/quality that the Tale so exemplifies, was very much under attack during the eighteenth century, as is clear from D. Judson Milburn's analysis of the history of the term during its heyday from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century. Milburn draws attention to the strong opposition to wit and metaphor expressed from either religious/moralistic or scientific perspectives, and associated with the middle class (The Age of Wit 1650-1750, pp.53-5). His analysis suggests that during the period under study certain influential groups asserted the necessity of making a clear distinction between prose and poetry, asserting that wit, metaphor, play and all other signs of textuality and the imagination should be confined to poetry, its proper linguistic sphere, and that prose be kept 'pure' as the medium of moral truth and/or scientific knowledge.

In prose, the very medium at issue, the Tale exploits to the full the conflict between a limited notion of wit as a stylistic pleasure, and the 'strong' epistemological notion of wit, of wit as a form of perceptive intelligence, a notion that goes back to the original meaning of the word in its Old English form 'witan' (Milburn, p.81).

The vehicle of the Tale's deconstructive wit, the Hack ironically represents those forces historically opposed to the Tale's irresspressible imagination. Where
the Hack exemplifies the idea of process and open-endedness is where he would seem to be closest to Swift, or at least that part of Swift that strongly identified with these qualities, or was strongly pulled in this direction. Where the Hack speaks as a man concerned with establishing himself as a figure of absolute power and authority is where the distance between narrator and true author would seem to be the greatest.

The Hack however would seem far too disingenuous and 'open' for power. He is after all a type (if not the archetype itself), a personification of historical trends and forces, and as such has to be true to his nature and to his history. If he is the archetype then he is a phenomenon the full significance of whose words and ideas have a meaning which waits upon the future to be discovered. In time the world will no doubt reach the point at which it is capable of fully understanding what the Hack is saying, him being so much a product of the fashions of his time (the text is full of references to clothes, styles and fashions).

In a sense this is exactly what has happened, the Hack's text has strangely reappeared after having been lost for a good few years, and its author has mysteriously disappeared. To make the situation even more strange, as alluded to in the prefatory text, commentaries have appeared 'explaining' the Tale before it even appeared.

All of this puts pressure on the Hack and his writing: his text has to be more than just a personal statement or testimony: it has to speak his essence, capturing the whole spirit of the Grub Street milieu that he embodies. Thus there must be something special, essential and above all, complete about his text; that it must be, as we shall see, the final and absolute word.
What is most disturbing for the reader of the Tale is the extent to which the boundary lines between the Hack narrator and the satirist author (between the parodic host and satiric parasite) are constantly being blurred in order to baffle, confound and above all, to implicate the reader in the satirical attacks being conducted. Indeed so ingrained is this tendency in Swift to camouflage the direction of the satirical attack, and to leave his ironies pointedly open and unresolved, that when he came to write the Apology that acts as a preface to the Tale he was clearly unable to depart from the play of voices and ironic layering that is to be found in the rest of the Tale, and which had already resulted in much confusion, incomprehension and negative reaction amongst his readers. The Apology, there to explain the workings of the satire, is where it is pointed out that the Tale is a satire on 'the abuses of learning and religion', and where it is claimed that the text has 'an irony'. The claim that the Tale has 'an irony', and the alerting of the reader to be on the look out for its presence could be considered an injunction to misread the text, which is in reality absolutely shot through with irony, as close to being totally ironical as any text could possibly be.

In its attempt to clear things up, the Apology, if anything, makes things worse, making it clear that like the textual equivalent of two siamese twins, or two selves imprisoned in the same split psyche, satirist and spokesman cannot be separated. It is as if this satire proves that the location of the satirist does not lie outside or behind the text, in the person of the author (the Ehrenpreis view) or in the persona of the satirist (the Maynard Mack/Alvin B. Kernan view) but in some undefined and perhaps even uncanny space of interaction. We might think of this as the realm of satirical creation, the place where all the conflicts
and tensions that give rise to the satire are shaped and resolved: where the high morality, the laughter and humanity, and anger and violence of satire (the saevo indignatio) are coded, mediated and aimed at target, in that scapegoating ritual of externalization that the psychic action of satire would seem to involve.

No work in the eighteenth century raises the issue of the relationship between textual politics and mode of production like Swift's *A Tale of a Tub*. Setting up analogies with religion and politics, which are presented as companion discourses of power and control, the *Tale* explores the issue of textual politics in an age of mass cultural production and communication, crucially focusing upon the relationship between text and interpretation in relation to power. Here the central fable presents in allegorical form the central struggles over textual power between author and reader and between text and world, implicitly posing the great problems of meaning and interpretation: whether texts are able to speak beyond their contexts, or whether they are themselves just the expression of an age's fantasies and its fashions. The text also poses the related question as to whether texts have the power to impose themselves upon and control their readers (as the father wishes to control the son, and the Hack his reader) or whether the world and its textual interpreters have the power to totally transform the original message to suit their own ends (as the wayward brothers contrive to do).

The story of the father and the sons would also seem to have a particular resonance that relates to the change in the mode of literary production. The 'fatherlessness' of the sons (the validity and power of the will is premised upon the death of the father) would seem to reflect the uncertainty and licence that emerges with the ending of patronage and the beginnings of a new patron-free 'fatherless' writing. In terms of
the fable the writer is now in a position analogous to that of the sons, who are released from the father of the fable, but ironically forced into a new rigid conformity: the need to conform to the ruthless dictates of fashion.

With the new cultural revolution and the impact of market capitalism and individualism upon the literary producers, expression tends to be characterised as assertion (and exertion), as the necessary response to the urge to establish and propagate the self. This is why the Hack must be true to his calling as that peculiar combination of writer and propagator/propagandist. Hence so much of the text is concerned with the reader, and with maintaining or exploiting the channel of communication in order to convince the reader of the need to continue reading, and of the value and importance in what is being read. Swift has the Hack cite the authority of the poet Dryden on the score of literary self-advancement:

He has often said to me in confidence, that the world would have never suspected him to be so great a poet, if he had not assured them so frequently in his prefaces that it was impossible they could either doubt or forget it (p.124).

What the Tale reveals is that writing cannot help but enter into relations of power, that the written text (as thing rather than as process) fixes meanings and is a site of power in its capacity to do so. In his 'historico-theo-physiological' account of zeal the Hack presents the metamorphic process of transformation through which zeal the 'notion' becomes zeal the 'tangible substance' and active agent in the social world (p.127). Interestingly Jack, the Puritan brother who is the embodiment of this zeal, finds its powers totally unsuited to living in the very social world with which he is associated. With his religious
fervour fuelling his outrageous impatience with anything normal or ordinary, since these include the objects that he crashes into in trying to walk around blindfolded, guided only by his internal 'lantern' (p.155), Jack is not at all suited for the social world, though his ragged appearance and abusive speech makes it easy for him to blend in with the lowest stratum of society.

Swift's Tale is (like the 1728 and 1743 versions of Pope's later poem The Dunciad) engaged in that longstanding cultural and intellectual battle between ancients and moderns. However this particular battle of the books is less purely abstract and methodological than those in the Medieval and Renaissance periods: its concerns are those that relate less to ideas themselves than to their mode of production and dissemination in textual form -- the key issue emerging from the process of cultural revolution brought into being through the impact of mass-production printing technology.

In the Apology Swift reveals that the satire is targeting the abuses in religion and learning that have come into being as part of this revolutionary transformation, facilitated by the relaxing of the strict State control over publications with the suspension of the Licensing Act in 1696, and the consequent explosive proliferation of published material, much of which, viewed from Swift's Anglican perspective, could not be more dangerous in its religious or political implications. As Isaac Asimov points out in his history of the development of science, the success of Luther's revolt against the Catholic Church and the entire Protestant Reformation was dependent upon the printing revolution, and the mass availability of religious texts that this effected (p.382).

Drawing the reader's attention to the age's most contradictory and schismatic features, the Tale
confronts its reader with an overwhelming sense of instability, creating a profound sense of the kind of turmoil that accompanies radical intellectual and cultural destabilization. As C.J. Rawson expresses it:

The cumulative effect of the Tale's formidable parodic array is to convey a sense of intellectual and cultural breakdown so massive and compelling that the parodied objects, as such, come to seem a minor detail. ('Gulliver and the Gentle Reader' p.50)

In this radically unstable and uncertain situation, natural authority is lost and meaning becomes subject to the vagaries of extreme forms of interpretation. This temporally dislocated, clearly fragmenting world seems to need some absolute assumption of authority in order to hold itself together (that the Hack himself is only too willing to try and provide). The most that one can be sure of is what the Hack assures Prince Posterity that he is capable of, namely writing that truth that is of the moment of writing itself, the presence of writing to itself at that instant. The Tale however gives us little sense of presence -- quite the contrary, the text seems to prefigure Roland Barthes's famous notion of 'The Death of the Author'. Here we feel that the writer is 'lost' as soon as the pen hits paper -- that, as with the Hack's writing on nothing, the pen moves across the page with a digressive will of its own. Inevitably the 'Death of the Author' in this case does not stay restricted to concerns textual, but becomes a religious issue, too.

The Tale deals with the loss of powerful sources of authority, and the emergent conflict of involving opposing 'authorities': old versus new, Protestant versus Catholic, religion of clothes and of the power of the image versus the religion of air and the power of sexual sublimation, credulity versus curiosity,
writer versus reader. Its satire taking place against a historical backdrop of religious fragmentation and schism, the Tale reflects a world in which authority is negated, in which the polarized and conflicting Catholic and Protestant faiths subvert the basis of each others' positions. Jonathan Dollimore has drawn attention to the way in which historically the Protestants attacked the notion of tradition upon which the authority of Catholicism depended, and the Catholics in turn attacked the notion of the political power and sovereignty of the State, upon which Protestantism depended (p.14). The Hack author/narrator has to establish his own authority in a world which is polarized between the rival claims of an outer authority of the established powers and institutions, an authority which is concerned with its own mass propagation (the form of authority that Catholicism invokes), and its extreme alternative, the Protestant 'inner' authority of religious inspiration and personal interpretation. One of the clear targets of the satire of the Tale is extremism of all kinds: indeed all extremisms turn out in the end to resemble each other in their deviation from the perspective of human normality as the central allegorical fable, the 'tale' proper, reveals in the course of reducing and relativizing the three great Christian Churches.

Allegory was pretty much a politically 'hot' topic during the seventeenth century. The political theorists of the time: Filmer, Hobbes, Locke all use back-to-origins allegory involving old documents, mythical 'sales' and transactions in order to justify their particular interpretations of the key political notions of the time.

Whilst Catholic authority was historically feared and suspected in England for its repressiveness, and for its capacity for mass manipulation and exploitation in favour of its own narrow interests, the radically
different Protestant authority was feared for its revolutionary implications. The established order was, as Michael Wilding points out, frightened of 'the democratic communistic and egalitarian consequences of the concept of the inner light' (‘Regaining the Radical Milton’, p.128).

The change brought about by the Reformation could not have been more extreme: from the absolute authoritarianism of Catholicism, a religion controlled by priests and dominated by the institutional power of the Church, to the extreme individualism of the Puritans. Liberating religion from the powerful institutional control of a single church, the Puritan revolution conferred upon the individual worshipper the right of access to scripture and God, sacralized the now readily available religious word as sacred and absolute text, whilst leaving the interpretation of the word free of any reference to a tradition of learning, Biblical exegesis, or any authorizing frame or context whatsoever.

For Swift the loss of a social context of interpretation results in the suddenness with which, historically, freedom of religious interpretation led to political radicalism, bringing profound challenges to the power of old authorities, and dark threats of the power of new ones. With the anti-institutional individualism of the Puritans the word becomes a powerful agent of transformation, reflected in Jack’s ability to perform the kind of linguistic alchemy realized in his account of the rapidity of the transformation of zeal from an idea to a concrete substance and social agent.

However, for this medley of humour he made a shift to find a very plausible name, honouring it with the title of zeal, which is perhaps the most significant word that hath ever yet been produced in any language, as I think I Have fully proved in my excellent analytical discourse upon that
subject, wherein I have deduced a histori-theo-physiological account of zeal, showing how it first proceeded from a notion into a word, and thence, in a hot summer, ripened into a tangible substance. (p.127)

In the radical temper of mid-seventeenth-century England the Bible becomes a revolutionary document to be used against established religion (Catholic and Anglican alike). From a source of oppression, religion now becomes a source of inspiration as a means to political liberation. Puritanism itself becomes authoritarian with its fundamentalist intolerance of everything that lies outside of its religious frame of reference: that is not sanctioned or validated by the sacred Biblical letter.

The great religious divide between Catholic and Protestant can be found within the Hack himself. As a new phenomenon, a bearer of the modern cultural revolution, the Hack represents a new self-asserting authority which is clearly Protestant in its orientation. On the other hand he is a figure who would seem to have much in common with Catholicism, since the new order he is so keen on founding will be heavily equipped with its own powerful institutions and its own Summa Theologica (the Tale itself).

Whilst Swift is against the new, he is also using the Hack, an embodiment of all the new energies of the age, and more particularly of its new mode of production, as a means to attack some of the values and institutions of the old world, especially those which were continuations of what the humanist critics reviled in the past. It is clear that the Hack sees himself as being at the vanguard of a cultural revolution, and that consequently his text is to play a key role in the transformation of the social and cultural world. Of all the changes that occurred during the century the change in the mode of literary production was perhaps the most profound. In a sense this change is, as
Marshall McLuhan suggests, the logical outcome of the technological imperialism inherent in the Gutenberg (printing press) revolution. This incredible change was so fundamental it was bound to affect all dimensions of literary practice. With the development of a new affluent middle class with the money to spend and leisure time to fill, and with the emergence of a new class of literary entrepreneur, the booksellers and publishers with the ability to create and to manipulate literary markets, writing becomes far more complicated and uncertain than in the days of writing for a small aristocratic coterie of readers. Where there was once a direct relationship with the reader, now there is much greater mediation, and much more scope for intervention between author and reader.

The Tale reflects the impact of the new conditions of production in portraying the relationship between author and reader as profoundly uncertain, a territory of struggle between competing ‘powers’. As the introduction to the Tale proper makes clear, this is a competitive world in which authors need to fight to be heard. There is a need to press, squeeze, thrust and climb simply to survive, not to speak of conquering the pinnacles of power.

Certainly it is true that with this radical change in the mode of production the satirical writing of the period becomes obsessed with the idea of production, exploring, often in quite fantastic images of generation and degeneration, the relationship between text and surrounding world — the world it not only addresses and enters as a textual object, but through whose material processes it is created and constituted.

The satirists of the period faced the issue that concerns contemporary theorists, that of mass culture in our postmodern (late capitalist) era — more particularly, the pernicious role of a capitalist economic system that infests creativity with its random
and mechanistic qualities, revealing the power of the
market to 'invade' and transform cultural practices and
relations in its own image, radically redefining
cultural landscapes in line with the capitalist
exploitative model of economic relations.

The change in the mode of literary production is
also depicted by the satirists as having an important
impact on a writer’s sense of autonomy and control.
The digressive qualities that Swift’s Hack
author/narrator exhibits in A Tale of a Tub seem to
suggest a loss of authorial direction and control, a
loss of control over his writing that reflects a loss
of control over his publishing. As the Bookseller
makes clear in his address to the reader (p.74), the
Tale was published without the author’s permission and
the author’s original manuscript has been lost. The
imaginary authors of the eighteenth century are not
very careful with their manuscripts: at the beginning
of Gulliver’s Travels, Gulliver also confesses to
having lost his manuscript. This losing of manuscripts
would seem to be a sign of the author’s loss of power
over and possession of the text.

Though the Hack’s Tale seems to be a liberated,
experimental form, for that is how he sees it himself,
his desire for power and control makes for a profoundly
repressive and reactionary textual politics. He hopes
for power, for assertiveness, for a ‘presence’ of
meaning, voice, and authority that will not just carry
his words but actively enforce them. Yet there is a
slipping and sliding of meaning and an irresistible
pull towards digression which subverts his absolutist
enterprise and pushes it, despite itself, towards the
Menippean. There is a fundamental irony then in the
Hack’s desire to write to attain power over his world
and in so doing to establish his identity above the
other Hacks, when writing is what is most submerging
him in his world.
As I pointed out irony is everywhere in the Tale: it is shot through with it. Some of the most startling ironies involve the Hack himself, a man who is desperate for social acceptability, to the extent of aligning himself with the 'well-deceived peace' of 'credulity', yet cannot keep his text free of violent and destabilizing energies.

The Hack points to the danger that satire poses in disturbing what is accepted as normal, equating satire with a destructively Hobbesian free-thinking, which has proved to be so threatening to the 'Grandees of Church and State', the old enemies of the Renaissance humanists, for whose 'protection' the Tale itself (as a kind of diversionary 'Tub') has been written, suggesting that institutions of power should be treated as politically taboo.

The wits of the present Age being so very numerous and penetrating, it seems, the Grandees of Church and State begin to fall under horrible apprehensions, lest the Gentlemen, during the intervals of a long Peace, should find leisure to pick Holes in the weak sides of Religion and Government.(p.79)

This 'disavowed' satire is equated with the perverse pleasures of a sadistic 'disciplining'. Here the Hack's style hints at a prurience lurking behind the moral censure, as the pedant shows himself not prepared to spare the rod and spoil the punctuation:

I have observ’ed some satirists to use the public much at the rate that pedants do a naughty Boy ready horsed for discipline: first expostulate the case, then plead the necessity of the rod from great provocation, and conclude every period with a lash. Now, if I know any thing of mankind, these gentlemen might very well spare their reproof and correction, for there is not through all nature, another so callous and insensible a member as the world's posteriors. whether you apply it to the toe or the birch. (p.83)
In this new literary environment, where it is demanded of writers that they market themselves and their texts for all they are worth, the Hack acts as his own showman/apologist/impresario. He is a literary 'producer' who breaks the distinction between the writer on the one hand, and the middle figures, the media men who produce the texts and market them in the world, on the other. As part of this self promotion the Hack presents the reader with the grand schemes that he has for the text that he is promising to write (if only he could stop talking about it).

In the Preface he makes the point that he cannot write a preface, cannot 'tour' his invention because he cannot escape the Preface itself (the whole of the Tale is a preface to itself, it would seem). This invention, in the incomplete condition that we have it, is the 'lost' work of a 'lost' author, a 'fossil' of the Grub Street era that has been subject to every process affecting the writing and publishing of texts in that literary milieu. Despite all of this absence and failure the Tale does not want for a textual bravado as the Hack tries to make a virtue out of necessity. He speaks as if he has control over his situation, as if his hunger were willed, an experimental condition to stimulate creativity:

The shrewdest pieces of this treatise were conceived in a bed in a garret, at other times (for a reason best known to myself) I thought fit to sharpen my invention with hunger; and in general the whole work was begun, continued, and extended, under a long course of physick and a great want of money. (p.81)

Swift's Hack is always under this kind of pressure. The digressions of Swift's Tale do what they are supposed to: they answer the Hack's most pressing
concerns by filling the book. They ensure that in a capitalist world where time is money, and writing is a labour to fill time, there will be something for sale.

With the absolute rule of quantity over quality there is an absurd speeding up of the processes both of writing and of production. The Hack needs to write as much and as fast as possible in order to survive. Thus the Hack’s Tale carries such a strong sense of do or die urgency, which is of course, somewhat ironical given the supposed circumstances of its delayed publication.

The most extreme example of the kind of writing to fill time, and with it the Hack’s belly (and perhaps other ‘holes’ of a more existential nature), is the ‘writing on nothing’ that the Hack tells us he is keen to experiment with.

I am now trying an experiment very frequent among modern authors; which is, to write upon nothing; when the subject is utterly exhausted, to let the pen still move on; by some called, the ghost of wit, delighting to walk after the death of its body. (p.163)

The phrase the ‘Ghost of Wit’, and the reference to the ‘Death of its Body’, suggests a connection between this idea of ‘writing on nothing’, and the demise of the old tradition of wit that I referred to earlier. With this demise or ‘death’ of wit (Swift’s Hack having literalized the metaphor) comes the ending of that important sense of writing as critical and exploratory. Without wit, all that is left is the self-indulgent exhaustion of subjects. The Hack’s predicament here begins to look curiously similar to that of the postmodern writer: writing in a world ruled by pastiche where originality is no longer possible. All has been said, explained and over-theorized; all that is left is that ‘play’ of angles and styles to give new ‘takes’ on outworn themes.
As a form of writing 'writing on nothing' is the perfect form of the kind of 'scribbling' that constitutes the complete antithesis to Menippean satire, with its emphasis on and commitment to the creative and the transformative.

The idea of 'scribbling' does not however, provide as clear-cut a dividing line between Swift and his narrator as it might initially seem. As Edward Said has pointed out, with the loss of his own status as a directly commissioned, immediately involved political satirist the distinctions that had operated no longer worked for him:

The Tory policy Swift supported and wrote about was policy in the world of actuality: here he was an ecrivant. The Whig opposition was projection, mere scribbling. This was always the basis of his strategy. After 1714 Swift occupied no place except as outsider to the Whigs' monolithic machine. He had become the scribbler and projector he once impersonated (in A Tale of a Tub) and attacked (in The Examiner and elsewhere). ('Swift's Tory Anarchy', p.62)

The issue of 'scribbling' with which the Hack 'author' is identified is one that would seem to oppose the issue of presence and involvement, with the issue of substance and permanence: a distinction that Swift would perhaps only truly resolve with Gulliver's Travels, which as we shall see, is both a topical, satirical intervention and a deep critique of the political and social world of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment that continues to speak beyond its time.

Presence and permanence are two of the Hack's greatest concerns. His way of resolving the problem is as drastic as it is novel. He plans to end the cannibalistic slaughter of his ephemeral Grub Street brethren at the hands of time, by ending time: bringing about a new Golden Age -- but this time round one in
which all the values, ideas and practices of Grub Street become enshrined.

Hence, in an ironic revisitation of the Cronus myth, the Grub Street fraternity 'noble' Time (Prince Posterity's 'governor'): the Grub Street writers have so nobly triumphed over Time; have clipped the wings, pared his nails, filed his teeth, turned back his hour-glass, blunted his scythe, and drawn the hobnails out of his shoes. (p.90)

This revolutionary violence is to pay back the monstrous tyrant for the horrific castrating violence he used against the Grub Street race. Cronos/Time's cruel desire to destroy the Hack writers is described with a particularly horrified relish:

It were endless to recount the several methods of tyranny and destruction which your governor is pleased to practise upon this occasion. His inveterate malice is such to the writings of our age that of several thousands produced yearly from this renowned city, before the next revolution of the sun there is not one to be heard of. Unhappy infants, many of them barbarously destroyed before they have so much as learnt their mother tongue to beg for pity. Some he stifles in their cradles; others he frights into convulsions, whereof they suddenly die; some he flays alive; others he tears limb from limb. Great numbers are offered to Moloch, and the rest, tainted by his breath, die of a languishing consumption. (p.76)

For all this vindictiveness, the personification of time gives the Hack and his colleagues presence and meaning: they have been noticed by Time, who must go out of his way to annihilate them. Their being singled out from such horrible punishment entails recognition, as ironic as it may seem. It is much more significant to be wilfully destroyed rather than being simply overlooked and in due course, forgotten.
With the enforced retirement of time the Grub Street fraternity set up their own golden age of Grubbininess, bringing the bathetic apocalypse that the eighteenth-century satirists so feared, the culmination of the 'narrowing' process to which the whole of Grub Street is supposed to be dedicated.

We can see that ironically, in the very way that the Hack characterises it, the problem with time will never be resolved -- and he and his colleagues will never be free of the old world. In trying to end time, this Grub Street revolutionary uses the language of one of the oldest mythologies known to Western Man: that of the golden age, iron age and Cronos' devouring of his children (which becomes a metaphor that the hard-done-by Hack takes rather personally).

It is strange that an author whose textual 'presence' is put very much 'under erasure' (to use a Derridean term) can speak with such confidence of compressing everything into a closed portable volume, a Grub Street Summum Opus, the final and ultimate (and most sacred) Grub Street text. This smallest encyclopedia, that seems to be almost a contradiction in terms, is seen, quite absurdly, to have the power to annihilate all previous writing and contexts of writing, and to be able to reduce all of time and space to one Grub Street perpetual present. The truth of this Grub Street millennium is, paradoxically, the truth of the 'now', of the moment of its being written, of the self-evidence (to the ghost Hack himself) of his own pen nib scratching the paper.

Yet the Hack is never able to centralize himself into the position of authority and power that the realization of this project demands. He does not 'exist' at the allegorical and religious centre of the text, but in the subversive ironies and innuendoes of its margins. Carole Fabricant has drawn attention to a lack of the centre in the Tale as well as in Gulliver's
Travels. For her the Tale's 'most appealing, vital energies seem to be located on the fringes' (Swift's Landscape, pp.6-7), running counter to the Hack's desire to make his text the embodiment of his world's will to power. This suggests that the Hack's power and 'life' lie at the periphery in the form of those energies at the very margins of the text that act as its interface with the world. It is here in the extrovert and expansive digressions where the Hack is most proactive, constantly trying to establish and maintain some kind of bridge with his reader (the reader he has to some extent already included in the text itself). This is because it is in the digressions, where writing comes easiest, that contact becomes most uncertain. So much of the writing of the Tale is there to try to establish and maintain the 'contact' (to use Roman Jakobson's term) between author (or ostensible author) and reader (or fictional reader). The loss of this contact would mean a total loss of identity and being for the Hack, whose very name signifies an identity that is dependent upon writing -- whose only existence lies in the act of writing. As author he thus parallels the religious showman Peter, the author of the 'clothes' religion with its carnivalesque miracle-mongering. Here Peter has clearly appropriated the popular carnival culture that during the Medieval period and Renaissance was so antagonistic to Church authority and to the repressive Church doctrines of holiness and purity, and has turned the heteroglossia of carnival into the most authoritarian of mass media.

The catchy labelling of Peter's supposedly magical 'powder pimperlimpin pimp', though it sounds close to the contemporary advertising jingles and slogans with which we are familiar, reflects an animistic faith in power of words to move things that lies, according to Robert C. Elliott, at the heart of the practice of the
primitive satirist. With the power of 'pimp' (a word that evokes the Protestant accusations that the Catholic Church was the 'Scarlet Whore') and with such wondrous mumbo-jumbo as the 'spargefaction of the moon', religion is reduced to a magic show and confidence trick, but above all, an exercise in mass media manipulation. Peter's cursing to hell suggests, in the heavy emphasis placed on the whole excessive verbal performance, that hell and damnation are more rhetorical than real: that they are not 'places' or conditions but strategies to preserve authority and power.

Unfortunately this religious showman is by no means an aberration. There is a direct line of descent that runs from Swift's Peter to today's esteemed and distinguished television evangelists, who, in their various mixes of the Peter and Jack inclinations, all seem to be variants on that age-old religious theme of P.T. Barnum meets John the Baptist.

In the central allegorical fable that deals with the issue of religious schism, the 'will' of the father links the notion of meaning to a concern with inheritance, a concern that sits close to the heart of propertied social classes. As Barry Coward has shown, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century the question of inheritance and royal lines was one of the central political issues of the day, both in terms of English internal affairs with the Tory attempt to justify William III as King and dominant partner in terms of the old politics (The Stuart Age, pp.314-15), and in foreign affairs with the issue of the complicated list of claimants and their respective rights to the Spanish throne, this being the issue that formed the basis of the dispute at the heart of the War of the Spanish succession (Coward, p.344).

Though it is itself allegorical, the central fable points to the end of the old kind of allegory of
natural correspondences that existed during the Renaissance, and a new 'modern' allegory in which these correspondences are 'forced' through an act of will. Serving the interests of manipulation, power and control, allegory is now primarily used as a means of religious or political propaganda (though the dividing line between these has become blurred with the religious practices of Peter and Jack). Allegorical signs no longer refer to a higher order that gives them their meaning, but are a means of arbitrarily conferring meaning as part of the institution of arbitrary systems, systems which ultimately depend upon power and violence for their enforcement.

In pointing to a world in which all relations have become relations of power, the central fable allegorizes the struggles between author and reader, and text and world, in Oedipal terms. These struggles lie at the root of the internal divisions and schisms that manifest themselves in the Hack's narrative. With this schismatic quality to his voice the dialogical play of voices is suppressed and replaced by a binary violence and antagonism. In the Oedipal struggle over power between the father and the three brothers, a cyclical politics is engendered in which rebellious and licentious sons become in their turn repressive and authoritarian fathers.

The way in which in the central fable the father's will is distorted to mean what the brothers want it to mean is uncomfortably close to being a little allegorical commentary not on religious schism, but on something which is, institutionally speaking, closer to 'home', i.e. closer to the political use of texts that some twentieth-century theorists appear to be asking for.1 In the Tale as a whole, but more especially in the central fable, interpretation is shown to be so powerful as to overrule the text of what is said. Ultimately the interpretations enforce themselves --
resisting access to the original text (in the same way that the Catholic Church prevented direct access to the Scriptures). The text becomes submerged under the hermetic and cabbalistic methods used in textual exegesis. Valentine Cunningham has written of the historical pervasiveness of cabbalistic and gnostic reading practices and the way in which such techniques of Biblical interpretation have found their way into literary practice ('Renoving That Bible', p.21). The 'moral' behind all of this is that morality cannot be made a question of interpretation. Treating the moral 'lesson' of the will as an issue of meaning and interpretation results in the kind of intellectualizing and theorizing in which the will itself is considered as a title to power and influence, not as a directive as to how life should be lived. When the will ends up in Jack's possession he boasts that he can prove his linguistic and intellectual power by transforming it into something else completely. This is the danger with religion: that the simple moral directive or 'lesson' is lost and religion becomes an issue of and a site of the battle between rival 'learnings'. Swift is here an Anglican intellectual at his most anti-intellectual, and at his most Christian. For a moral satirist like Swift, though Anglicanism might offer him the space to continue in the line of the Renaissance humanists', the true issue of the Christian faith is as graphically clear as the text of the will. Swift's Christianity, as opposed to other areas of his make-up and life, is something clear and uncomplicated, and nothing if not moral.

In the Hack's words to 'Prince Posterity' we immediately see the way in which, in this most deconstructive of allegories, the kind of fixed correspondences to which allegory subscribes is subverted by the play of wit. Indeed the allegory is, as we shall see, all about texts and allegories, and
about this text and this allegory itself. That he
starts talking of 'Prince Posterity', personifying time
from the outset, clearly suggests an allegorical mode
of thinking, in which analogical correspondences will
dominate. It is here in the area of the analogical
correspondences that the most powerful satirical
subversions that the Tale has to offer will take place.
Right from the outset we have a sense of a speaker
overshadowed by allegorical figures, uncertain how to
exist and produce in their inhibiting presence:

I profess to Your Highness in the integrity
of my heart, that what I am going to say is
literally true this minute I am writing.
What revolutions may happen before it shall
be ready for your perusal, I can by no means
warrant. However, I beg you to accept it as
a specimen of our learning, our politeness
and our wit.'(p.78)

Representing a considerable narrowing from the
breadth of Menippean satire and the Encyclopedic
tradition of the Renaissance, the text is now true only
in its immediate, well-circumscribed context, marking
the culmination of the 'narrowing' process to which the
whole of Grub Street is supposed to be dedicated.
Ironically the Hack is here dedicating the Tale to
'Prince Posterity', signalling that texts are now
released from being commissioned by patrons and are now
open to a wider, much more heterogeneous audience, and
a potentially more open-ended reception -- a radical
change which ensures that meaning is something that can
now no longer be either controlled or reclaimed.

In his two ground-breaking essays on Swift:
'Swift's Tory Anarchy' and 'Swift as Intellectual'
Edward Said argues that Swift's satire is best
considered as a form of political activism, directly
involved in the political affairs of the world, as was
the case for Swift personally during the years he was
employed as a satirical pamphleteer by Harley and St.
John. In Said's view the Tale, like Swift's other satires, is concerned with the disjunction between language and power ('Swift's Tory Anarchy,' p.65), a disjunction characterised by a loss of a sense of involvement and engagement, which in the Hack's case, we might add, is replaced by a delusion of power over the reader that is thoroughly Cartesian, deeply analogous to the desire within Cartesian thought for the mind to exercise control over the world. This seems to me to be compatible with Foucault's idea in 'What is an Author?' of the text as a site of a struggle between authorial control and the proliferation of meaning, an idea which the central fable of the Tale could almost be a direct allegory of (see Foucault, p.159).

The irony of addressing posterity as a patron indicates a disjunction in the text between the presence of the speaker and what we know of the history of the text, its uncertain route to the reader and the uncertain connection with its purported author. The text represents a culture that is changing so fast that the years that have elapsed between the time of writing and the time of publication suggest that the context within which the text was written, and which it addresses with such swaggering confidence and assurance, no longer exists. The Bookseller's prefatory comments, in pointing to the gap that exists between the author's world and that in which his text is finally being published, suggests that the text has now something lost and irrecoverable about it, paradoxically, that it is being read now in the same uncomprehending way that it might be read years into the future.

The market laws of supply and demand have a radical impact on the notion of time, producing a frighteningly unstable, ephemeral world, a Heraclitian world that is 'lost' to itself with each passing
Swift’s text raises the kind of ontological questions that we associate with postmodernist fiction (particularly that of a writer like Italo Calvino), questions such as whether what we have before us is the Tale, or whether, as is the case with Traveller, what we have is what sets itself up as about the text that lies beyond this one. Is the Tale this digressive, editorially amended text, with ‘gaps’ and other signs of it being an incomplete work in progress, or is it something that this document is pointing to: the dream, the ideal that was never realized and perhaps can never be achieved: that illusory signified that lies forever beyond the reach of the Hack’s wayward signifiers? The gaps in the text would seem to mirror all sorts of other ‘gaps’ that bedevil the Hack’s project, in fact a whole chain of gaps that runs from author to reader, these being: between thought and pen, pen and paper, paper and book, book and reader. With all these ‘gaps’ the tub is a veritable sieve of meaning -- losing its meaning (in the sense of having a planned intention and direction) even as the Hack strives to capture and deliver it.

As with Calvino’s novel, arguably most self-reflexive of all texts, the Hack’s narrative seems to be about its own conditions of production (and reasons for non-completion) than anything else. When the Hack points out that he can’t finish his introduction, and thus introduce his text, because he can’t circumnavigate it, there seems to be a kind of Maurice Escher paradox of self-referentiality taking place here. To write an introduction one must stand outside of the main text. But if the Hack is so closely involved in his text, very much like Sterne’s Tristram, then it becomes impossible to stand outside of the text -- and the introduction, in being unable to limit itself and differentiate itself from the text, becomes the text itself. The writing becomes so concerned
about itself that all it can write is its intention and desire to be written. As the Hack points out in his preface: 'Thrice have I forced my imagination to make a tour of my invention and thrice has it returned empty' (p. 80).

The Tale’s concern with writing and with textual ontology and the whole industry of production and publication, particularly the sequence that deals with the locating of books in shops and the process of haggling over prices with the bookseller, curiously anticipates the opening of Traveller. More uncannily there is also a correspondence between these two texts in the way in which both employ as quite a serious structural and thematic device, the idea of travel as a metaphor for writing, the idea that is contained within the very title of Calvino’s book. As the Hack points out:

After so wide a compass as I have wandered, I do now gladly overtake and close in with my subject, and shall henceforth hold on with it an even pace to the end of my journey, except some beautiful prospect appears with sight of my way, whereof though at present I have neither warning nor expectation, yet upon such an accident, come when it will I shall beg my reader’s favour and company, allowing me to conduct him through it along with myself. For in writing it is as travelling: if a man is in haste to be at home (which I acknowledge to be none of my case, having never so little business as when I am there) if his horse be tired with long riding and ill ways or be naturally a jade, I advise him clearly to make the straightest and commonest road, be it ever so dirty. But then surely we must own such a man to be a scurvy companion at best; he spatters himself and his fellow-travellers at every step; all their thoughts, and wishes, and conversation turn entirely upon the subject of their journey’s end; and at every splash, and plunge, and stumble they heartily wish one another at the devil. (pp. 152-3)
With such a strong sense of the imperatives of narrative, the distance here from Tristram Shandy, and, for that matter, Roland Barthes, is not very great. This metafictional quality that the text possesses has an important bearing on its subversive qualities as a satire. The self-reflexive parodic subversiveness with which it approaches its own production of meaning is extended to the production of meaning and the creation of authority in the religious and intellectual systems with which it deals, taking the satire into areas that many find dangerous and disturbing.

In The Comedy of Entropy, Patrick O’Niell points out that contrary to what the common belief might be satire and self-referential metafiction are far from being incompatible with each other. He points out that:

To the extent that all humour, however self-confident, in a sense exploits uncertainty, all humour can be said to tend towards the reflexivity of metahumour. (p.51)

What we have with the Tale is a meta-satire, concerned with itself as a satirical allegory, and with the role and manner that it must adopt as a satire dealing with religion and with the sacredness of the religious text, as well as with the issue of the uncertainty of interpretation, given the uncertainties of interpretation that it is itself going to cause. In this power world of competing authorities contesting their rival claims, the ‘meta’ satire of the Tale acts both to destabilize rival and opposed authorities, and to put its own authority to a self-referential and ironic text.

There is then, something inescapably self-referential about the Tale, a text that cannot avoid dealing with its own processes of textual production. This clearly reflects upon the revolutionary change in
textual production that is happening at this point in time, and which can be detected in the two separate dedications, the bookseller's to the generous patron Lord Somers, and the Hack author/narrator's own dedication to 'Prince Posterity', both of which showing that with the ending of the patron system the text is freed from the constraints of a narrow audience of patrons and other 'insiders', and now opened to a potentially much wider readership which would include totally unenvisaged audiences and contexts of reading. The irony of a bookseller penning a dedication to a patron, what Pat Rogers in *Hacks and Dunces* describes as 'the parody of a very bad dedication to a very good patron' (p.179), should not escape us. In his dedication the bookseller reveals the extent of his lack of learning:

They swore to me, that they had ransacked whatever could be found in the characters of Socrates, Aristides, Epaminodas, Cato. Tully, Atticus, and other hard names, which I cannot now recollect (*Tale*, p.73).

The word 'ransacked' makes the Hacks sound like a horde of raiding Visigoths descending on the libraries of classical Rome.

Written well before the postmodern concern with the loss of authorial centrality and control over meaning, the *Tale* is a text that in its exploration of the twilight world that emerges with the 'death of the author', suggests, as it cannot fail to do with its concern with religion, the death of the Author (God). The Father in the central fable who discusses the terms of his will with his three children would only do so if he were near death, and his disappearance from the story and the passing of the will over into the hands of the sons would indicate that he has died. This gives the text a very anxious, traumatic quality, reflected in the observation that there is a barely
suppressed level of grotesque horror and violence within the text that suggests the distorted infernal landscapes of Hieronymus Bosch (John Traugott, 'A Tale of a Tub', p.8). It is the powerful modern sense of an alienated world that has lost the certainties that held it together in the past, and which as a result is riven by the violence of its internal conflicts, that most appeals to C.J. Rawson, and which has him speaking of Swift of the Tale as a 'textual extremist', to be grouped with the textual extremists of twentieth-century modernism such as Beckett, Artaud and Mailer (Gulliver and the Gentle Reader). David Ward (Jonathan Swift: An Introductory Essay) has come to a similar conclusion regarding the Tale through an analysis of the metaphors that the Hack employs in articulating his vision of the world. For Ward (p.48) this post-author world is subject to a relativism that, in one moment of astonishing imaginative insight, the Hack describes in 'space-warping' terms that seem to capture the essence of Einstein's Theory of Relativity:

And whereas the mind of man, when he gives the spur and bridle to his thoughts, doth never stop but naturally sallies out into both extremes of high and low, of good and evil, his first flight of fancy commonly transports him to ideas of what is most perfect, finished, and exalted; till having soared out of his own reach and sight, not well perceiving how near the frontiers of height and depth border upon each other; with the same course and wing he falls down plumb into the lowest bottom of things, like one who travels East into the West, or like a straight line drawn by its own length into a circle.

(Swift, A Tale of a Tub, p.137)

Ultimately the Tale is a text that raises the question of its own impossibility, of the impossible conditions that militate against its production. There is no completed Tale and so no text that matches its own self-description. There is only the writing (the status and authorship of which is often uncertain) that
records the failed attempt to produce the Tale, or for the Tale to do justice to itself. As is the case with Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759) we have a text doomed never to find closure, as it is so caught up in its own process of construction and mediation that it can never deliver itself. Despite the Hack's powerful desire to have the final consummating word, to be the comprehensive and definitive voice of his time, to exercise absolute power over his reader, his Tale remains a text of failure and lack and his whole identity exists only as a state of writing, as activity, as the 'trace' of that ghost pen wandering across the page.

The Hack is hoping that the same kind of process that has produced his text will allow his text to be extended and made more meaningful as it becomes part of the whole corporate enterprise of writing/reading. This is also a transcending of self, becoming an identity that presently lies beyond him. All texts in the Grub Street world are part of a simultaneously cooperative and combative process of production, where the whole notion of the individual author who produces his text or even 'owns' what he has written is collapsing. Texts are freely constructed out of bits of other texts in an unashamedly scissors and tape method of construction. Whatever is written is immediately public property to be appropriated for further use or recycling. Texts are composed out of other texts in a lot more literal a way than is suggested by our contemporary notion of intertextuality. The Bookseller's dedication to Lord Somers quite freely points out that 'by altering the title I could make the same material serve for another Dedication' (p.73)." He apologizes for this 'form' dedication because he is not aware as to how these 'form' dedications are done, which is quite understandable, since it is pretty bizarre to think of
a bookseller submitting a dedication to a patron, an act that effectively crosses the great divide between different modes of production.

The image of religion that appears in the Tale is one that seems very dark, dark enough to suggest that not only do religious excesses promote and/or foment fanaticism, but that religion is itself a pretext for cruelty and fanaticism, the site where such impulses receive legitimacy. There is obviously such a powerful irony in what reads as an anti-religious text, a satirical dissection of religion that cuts as deep as anything in Marx, Freud or Nietzsche, yet which was written to defend Anglicanism against its Catholic and Protestant opponents. There is no sense of the comfort and solace of religion in the Tale. Religion is seen only as a source of delusion, and through that delusion, of political danger. Indeed the Tale even goes so far as to suggest that it is the most dangerous of all human concerns because of the depth of the needs and desires that are involved. Swift’s brutal dissection of the idea of the spirit points to the presence of ulterior and unconscious motives, of the kind that the great anti-religious thinkers such as Marx, Freud and Nietzsche would later articulate.

The Tale presents a singularly horrible image of a ‘monster’ religion that manufactures its adherents out of what it consumes as if by some industrial process, shaping their bodies to fit into its system. Since the purpose of this monster’s priests is to appease this all consuming-beast/machine with sacrificial offerings, religion is here depicted as performing an action strikingly similar to that of the tub itself. The circularity of the image is perhaps its most damning comment on religion: religion is itself a tub to protect the faithful from its own horrible machines! The all consuming monster and the clothes religion both mimic and express the power of religion to consume
everything allegorically and analogically. Swift's depicting of religion as the site of grotesque practices and superstitions is frighteningly rational, but in a way that is quite different from the deistic attitude to religion current in the eighteenth century, since it acknowledges the power of the human unconscious that underpins much of the religious impulse, and which religion itself exploits.

The Tale's savage demystification of all faiths (by implication) is what most confused and upset Anglican readers whose Church it was supposed to be defending. The religions that Peter and Jack represent: the self-indulgent and politically reactionary Catholic Church, and the repressed, guilt-ridden radicalism of the Puritans, mirror each other in their ruthless rejection of any 'human' sense of social life or sanity. The ultimate irony is that all extremisms look the same:

The reason of which is easy enough to apprehend; for the frenzy and 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 centre; which, though moving contrary ways at first, will be sure to encounter somewhere or other in the circumference. Besides, it was among the great misfortunes of Jack to bear a huge personal resemblance with his brother Peter. Their humour and dispositions were not only the same but there was a close analogy in their shape, their size, and their mien. (p.158)

Jack and Peter are opposites within, and thus dependant upon the same metaphoric, analogical system that produced their faiths. Against these titanic forces for religious and political madness and perversion there is only the doubtful power of the 'phlegmatic' Martin to carry the banner of the Anglican compromise.

The Hack's reductivism would seem to be exposing itself to ridicule when it suggests that those who
suffer from madness should be given a military or a legal commission. The prestige and authority of such serious and important institutions should make the Hack's 'madness' quite clear to the reader. But the satire is double-edged: under the appearance of inadvertent self-satire the Hack has drawn a connection between madness on the one hand, and warfare and the law on the other, that appears to stick, and to ridicule the institutions themselves:

Is any student tearing his straw in piecemeal, swearing and blaspheming, biting his grate, foaming at the mouth, and emptying his piss-pot in the spectators' faces? Let the right worshipful the commissioner of inspection give him a regiment of dragoons, and send him into Flanders among the rest. Is another eternally talking, sputtering, gaping, bawling in a sound without period or article? What wonderful talents are here mislaid! Let him be furnished immediately with a green bag and papers and threepence in his pocket, and away with him to Westminster Hall. (p.146)

The kind of irreverence for the key institutions of the British social and political establishment that is articulated here, prefigures that expressed by Gulliver in the second and fourth voyages of Gulliver's Travels, giving vent to the kind of political iconoclasm that could not help but find a more ready audience amongst the anti-institutional radicals of the left, than the conservatives and traditionalists of the political right and centre.

The Tale presents the suggestion of quick solutions and panaceas for the human condition: there is much talk of human shapes being changed, of chemical transformations of things, and of spiritual states of being chemically or hypnotically induced, and through them the rational mind being successfully circumvented. For Swift, as Norman O. Brown has revealed in his psychoanalytic reading of his religious satire ('The Excremental Vision'), what is revered as spiritual
inspiration, is actually a form of sexual displacement and sublimation:

Swift affirms not only that the spirit is generated by repression of bodily sensuousness, but also, as is implied by the analogy of the Scythian Longheads, that the basic structure of sublimation is to use the psychoanalytical formula. Displacement from below upward, conferring on the upper region of the body a symbolic identity with the lower region of the body, is Swift's explanation for the Puritan cult of large ears: the ear is a symbolic penis. (p. 46)

Religion is now an agent of the new modernist social metamorphosis. The modern world has produced material religions that manufacture their adherents, 'shaping' their bodies so that they fit in with the repressive and constraining systems to which they are made to conform.

Swift has a field day with references to heads and ears and to the opposition between long and short, all of which he uses in a way that suggests something sexually obscene about them, and which cannot help but remind readers of the mid-seventeenth century, when such words had special political meaning of a particularly controversial nature (the 'roundhead' Parliamentarian soldiers, Archbishop Laud's earslitting excesses and the long and short Parliaments that were held during this bitter period). The most devastating suggestion of the Tale is that religion and politics are powers without contents, that they are all about shapes, forms and fashions rather than about divinely ordained truth or enlightened rule. The subversive use of clothes as an explanatory metaphor for religion emphasizes its textuality, its openness to the 'play' of satire, and, in reversing the traditional analogy between the soul and the body, emphasizes materiality, pointing to a system of production that is in the market for the manufacturing of miracles and
revelations. Religion emerges as thick with its own self-validating metaphors and images, part esoteric cabbala and part mass industry.

With the rise of science comes a devaluation of the religious (as is evident in the rise of rational religion of Deism with its profound suspicion of religious mystery and miracle). Peter, the ‘projector’ shows how science can be exploited to religious ends as part of the ‘raree shows’ as a means to deceive the gullible.

The Tale sets the desacralizing power of satire, and the hybridizing energy of the carnival grotesque, against (what the Hack seems to confuse it with in practice if not in principle) the reductive power of Cartesian scientific rationalism, stripping the world of its moral consciousness and leaving it radically ‘split’ into the antagonistic opposites of mind and matter, surface and depth. This leads ultimately to the Hack’s accounts of the scientific ‘experiments’ with whips on a woman, or his own surgical investigations into the brain of a beau (which seems to have its particular ironic purpose).

Satire and the sacred come from opposite ends of a spectrum of reverence. Swift is courting danger by bringing these two worlds together. Satire’s irreverent, sceptical spirit exposes where the sacred has been produced. Drawing attention to the process of mediation and production is obviously a problem for every sacred text since it challenges the assumption that the sacred text is divinely inspired, and thus to be differentiated from other types of literature.

Roland Barthes has also raised the secular flag against the sacred by suggesting that the battle between sacred and profane texts revolves around the issue of textuality. In Barthes’s view sacred texts use their immense textual power as sacred text to dismiss all texts that forsake the ‘spoken’ truth,
particularly those that verge towards textual and intellectual play, and towards explorations of linguistic materiality. According to Barthes it is such explorations and subversions that mark these texts as 'evil' in the absolutist way of thinking that characterises the religious mind ('From Work to Text', p.160).

With the ending of the Renaissance notion of correspondence (what Foucault calls the Renaissance 'episteme') comes the loss of the old context within which allegory operated. Allegory is now something produced, and its very presence raises the issue of the politics of its production. Allegories no longer have a 'natural' air to them, they now have to be 'forced'. It is thus interesting that the central fable should be about power, reflected in the pun on the word 'will', the power of the authoritarian father's word enshrined in the authoritarian 'sacred' text, versus the power of the world, of the pull towards fashion, pleasure, freedom, indulgence and the sexual/textual play between image and flesh. In the modern world allegory is will, is power. It is something that not only serves the interests of manipulation, power and control in the impact of its mythological power to create narratives of origins, of continuity, of patriarchal approval, narratives which historically had great force in the power struggle between the Catholic Church and the monarchs of Europe, the Catholic Church and The Protestant reformists, and between the Church and monarchs on the one hand, and popular movements for rights and social justice, as well as political and intellectual rebels and independents on the other.

The central Tale of the father and the sons, whilst standing as a narrative allegory of the religious schisms in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, has a clear 'meta' relationship with the Tale as a whole. The central allegory thus suggests
the dangers inherent in interpretation, and the role that textual interpretation can play not only in the propagation of a radical politics, but also in the sacralization of textual meaning, the strongest form of political reading. The central allegory imparts a very strong sense of the degree to which interpretations are struggled over, and what is vitally at stake in such struggles. The failure of the father to preserve what he has 'will-ed' points to issues of meaning and interpretation, and the relationship between textual meaning and external world -- in short, to the profound issue of a politics of texts. The Tale provides an allegory of textual power, religious power and political power: for Peter and Jack we can substitute any such in-house bitter ideological rivals. The Tale presents a different kind of allegory from Renaissance allegory. What we find in the Tale is a kind of deconstructive allegory, an allegory about allegorizing that presents an exploration of the logics that inevitably determine the construction of systems of power and meaning rather than a narrative that confirms the contents of a belief system.

I must point out here that my view of the Tale as a deconstructive text is in direct conflict with G. Douglas Atkins's deconstructive reading of the Tale (in Reading Deconstruction/Deconstructive Reading). Atkins's reading of the Tale is an very interesting example of Yale deconstructionism in action. He argues that Swift's intention with the Tale is to write a very traditional satire that reinforces the dominant intellectual and other viewpoints of the age. What happens is that there is an inevitable deconstructive slide and the Hack speaks a subversive 'Other' message that deconstructs the text from its margins. The Hack's voice is one that the text's strategies and intentions cannot contain or curtail: as he puts it, the text is 'insightful' despite its satire (p.107).
Atkins's position relies too heavily on the presumption that *A Tale of a Tub* is a 'traditional' text, and that satire is a 'traditional' form.

Instead of classical unity and identity, the *Tale* reveals inevitable disunity and difference from itself. In spite of his best efforts, then, Swift's text subverts the classical hierarchies. Graff's work could be shown to do the same. (p.35)

For all his deconstructive noises, Atkins does not seem to be prepared to challenge certain received notions regarding the way in which certain generic modes and types function. Though he is to be recommended for alerting us to the 'meta' issues of textual meaning and interpretation with which the Tale is centrally concerned, the readiness to see a schism between experimental text and staid satirical author -- when play and experiment is so much a part of Menippean satire, is a fundamental flaw in his position. In articulating his view that with the *Tale* we have a reactionary/conservative satirist whose text speaks subversively against its intentions, Atkins does not consider the problem of how he is able to know what Swift’s intentions are? How is he able to find his way so easily through a suddenly all-too transparent Swiftian irony that others have found so difficult to negotiate?. That we have here a self-professed deconstructionist using the 'intention' is surely grounds for suspicion.

Contra Atkins I would argue, along with John Traugott”, that *The Tale* is subversive because of and not despite its satire, that with its Menippean qualities it asserts digressiveness and plurality against the impulse towards power, fixity and finality; and the nihilism and fragmentation that is but the other side of the same depreciating coin.

Swift uses the idea of social fashion to ruthlessly relativize notions of power. The very idea
important satirical strategy to relativize values, ideas and institutions (as he does so successfully in *Gulliver's Travels*) pointing to their arbitrariness to disabuse readers who might believe that they have universal and absolute validity, particularly if this is what is claimed for them. However, as F. P. Lock points out, Swift greatest fear was a political arbitrariness: the arbitrary powers employed by the absolutist monarchies of the European mainland. Lock documents Swift's opposition to arbitrary power as follows:

In 'The Sentiments of a Church -of -England Man' (1708) he sides with Aristotle against Filmer and Hobbes and arbitrary power, which he regards as 'a greater Evil than Anarchy it self; as much as a Savage is in a happier State of Life, than a Slave at the Oar'.

*The Politics of 'Gulliver's Travels',* p.10

The immediate politics of the *Tale* would seem to reflect what McKeon terms 'conservative ideology', characterised by its hostility to the old aristocracy and to the new middle classes ('A Generic Transformation and Social Change: Rethinking the Rise of the Novel', pp.171-2). Using the idea of fashion to satirically destabilize the idea of an intrinsic meaning in the sign, the *Tale* undermines the aristocracy's notion of its own transparent superiority -- the aristocracy being a class for whom power and appearance have always been intimately connected, a class who must *always stay in fashion* for their political power and survival. The consorting of the three brothers with the French 'prostitute' aristocracy (France being, from an English perspective, the country of sexual fashions as well as of political absolutism) replaces the respect that the aristocracy would probably see as their due, with mistrust and contempt. The political world that the *Tale* reflects (the one
that the Hack clearly buys into) is that of absolutism: where meaning is the product of power, as arbitrary as it is absolute, rather than something 'naturally' inherent in the sign in a way that transcends the determining influences of time and place. The Tale undermines the absolutist position by emphasizing arbitrariness, and instability -- that as the Hack's text fails to control itself, so absolutist politics fail.

The absolutist world is the world of the extravagant sign, something Swift was also to mock in his portrayal of Lilliput in Gulliver's Travels. Historically absolutism, which argues for the total concentration of power in the hands of the monarch, meant the decline in power of the aristocracy (in principle at least). A world in which signs are both arbitrary and absolute is a world in which the aristocracy cannot justify their existence. The aristocratic world is a world of fixed signs and of inherited meanings, most important of which are the signs of breeding: their dress, demeanour, etc., that actually serve to justify the privileged position of their class. In a sense the aristocracy cannot go out of fashion, to do so would be fatal for them.

Christopher Hill argues that clothes always had a very important role in determining power and privilege: to the extent that the validity of a man's argument was established by his garments (Reformation to Industrial Revolution, p.49). He points out that the level of the concern with the issue of clothing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is clear evidence of the breakdown of the notion of a static hierarchical society. Michael McKeon draws an even closer correlation between clothing and the established aristocratic order, that political absolutism places under threat:
In aristocratic culture, it is not only that power, wealth, and honorific status most often accompany each other; honour is also understood to imply personal merit or virtue. Thus the social hierarchy is a great system of signification: the outward forms of genealogy and social rank are taken to signify an analogous, intrinsic moral order. ('Generic Transformation and Social Change: Rethinking the Rise of the Novel', p.169)

The whole clothes anti-allegory thus shows a profound shift in thinking away from the established aristocratic position. In this thoroughly relativized haute couture world of power (in which the latest fripperies of silk and lace determine everything) clothes can no longer be seen as the stable signifiers of class authority. In the new political semiotics of absolutism clothes are no longer the natural signifier of anything, unless they are made so by royal fiat.

Styles of thinking have social correlatives and social roots. This is the point that Swift makes in A Tale of a Tub particularly with regard to the issue of clothes and fashion, around which the central allegorical fable revolves. These are used to mock the 'styles' of systems, not only suggesting (long before Saussure) that there is an arbitrariness and 'manufactured' quality to such systems, but that the style determines the content, that the way of thinking largely determines what is thought, and as a result these systems of ideas (which are treated with such reverence by their acolytes) often seem to have generated themselves out of little more than a predisposition to think analogically and make metaphoric associations. In the darkest moments of Swift's these styles turn out to be rigidly coercive and imprisoning things (in a way that seems, most strangely, to foreshadow the deconstructive social archaeologies and genealogies of power in Michel Foucault).
The political world that is emerging is one in which substance is completely surrendered to style. And when it comes to style Catholicism has a head start. Swift's attack on Peter's desire for stylish additions and accessories is both an attack on the worldliness of the Catholic Church (nothing new in this) but also an attack on what is perceived to be the very basis of its religious power: the impressiveness of its signs and of its cultivation of the religious spectacle. In satirizing the Catholic Church as the religion of extravagance (in all spheres) as opposed to (and violently opposed to at that) the Puritan religion of austerity, Swift's attack on the 'clothes' religion has found a most striking echo in modern cinema with the infamous church fashion parade in the Italian film director Federico Fellini's film *Roma* (1972).

Institutionalization, including the development of the critical institutions out of which the academic literary institution will develop, is an important feature of the cultural revolution that the Hack and his associates are initiating. As Pat Rogers makes clear, the growth of all sorts of academies and institutes is something with which the Hack is particularly concerned and is a great source of Grub Street pride:

Throughout his *Tale*, Swift speaks of the 'Society' of Grub St, the 'Academy of Wits' located there, the 'College' of modern Aeolists the 'Corporation of [hack] Authors', the 'Corporation of Poets', the 'Walks' of Wit, the 'spacious Commonwealth of Writers', 'Seminaries' planted by 'the Grub Street Brotherhood', and so on. (*Hacks and Dunces*, p.59)

Suddenly there is a proliferation of institutions and academies, and castes of priest-like professional critics whose title to the world is ludicrously justified in a plethora of bogus classical
In the section of the Tale entitled 'A Digression Concerning Critics' (pp.104-11), critics are portrayed as the modern descendants of a long line of restorers of ancient learning, who restore lost knowledge from what the Hack rather dismissively speaks of as the 'worms and graves and dust of manuscripts'. Implicit in these words is a judgement that elevates criticism as the superior industry that resurrects writers from the state of absolute historical decay.

The Tale makes it clear that this new breed of critic is threatening to displace the satirist by narrowing down the scope of criticism from the kind of criticism that satire performs, criticism aimed at an unlimited range of extra-textual targets, to criticism as we understand it today, as something inside the institution, a form of evaluative commentary or assessment directed at literary texts. This shift represents a dramatic narrowing of the idea of the critical: from writing that attacks the world to the world criticising writing. Thus in a profound shift in the notion of the relationship between writing and criticism, the humanist critic, like Swift a critic of the social and the political is replaced by the 'carping' True Critic, whose aggressive energies are directed at in-house targets that represent a displacement of the targets of humanist satire and criticism.

The power of these critics lies in their ability to appropriate and to refashion, turning the past into a history of their own ancient line. As is the case with every revolution, the establishing a true genealogy of its cadres and reconstructing history in a new revolutionary image are major concerns. These critics are, like the scientists in Lagado, representatives of a modernism that breaks decisively with the past and with its traditions. Thus what
initially seems to involve saving and restoration amounts to an effacing, a reconstruction in which any sense of the original is lost, and can be dismissed as old and irrelevant: the stuff of 'worms and graves and dust'.

Reflecting this process of institutionalization, the Hack places a very strong emphasis on definition, labelling, etymologies: in short, on all things that fix and control meanings, to the extent that, contrary to any notion of meaning as something that slips and slides towards pun and metaphor, he attempts to fix and naturalize meanings to the extent that they seem somehow locked up in the physical 'logic' of the words themselves. This pseudo-scientific account of meaning obviously suits the physico-logical systems that the Hack is attracted to (a host of such systems were developed during the eighteenth century).

Textuality cannot be effaced however. These etymologies and definitions become a site of subversive 'play' (and the occasional grotesque pun) as the Hack becomes carried away with his own metaphoric powers. Nowhere is this subversive excess of metaphor more apparent than when the Hack, in true scholastic fashion attempts a simple definition (by analogy) of 'wisdom'. The very process of definition is commandeered by wit and becomes a head-over-heels exhibition of wit in action, subverting any attempt to fix upon a particular definition. Here wit disrupts the idea of fixing meaning necessary to establishing the definiteness and authority upon which the new order must depend:

*Wisdom is a fox who after long hunting will at last cost you the pains to dig out. 'Tis a cheese which, by how much the richer, has the thicker, the homelier, and the coarser coat, and whereof, to a judicious palate, the maggots are the best. 'Tis a sack-posset, wherein the deeper you go you will find it the sweeter. Wisdom is a hen whose cackling we must value and consider because it is*
Chapter Three: The Rape of the Lock: Sexual/Textual Politics, the Project of Enlightenment and the Social Milieu.

'Moreover, we need to consider the possibility that one day, perhaps, in a different economy of bodies and pleasures, people will no longer quite understand how the ruses of sexuality, and the power that sustains its organization, were able to subject it to that austere monarchy of sex, so that we became dedicated to the endless task of forcing its secret, of exacting the truest of confessions from a shadow.'

Michel Foucault: The History of Sexuality

The black empiricism of sexuality observes its objects through the keyhole, lustful, fearful, apprehensive. Because erotic facts were totally screened off before the so-called sexual revolution, like dangers and secrets, every access to them, whether one liked it or not, had a conflictual character. Anyone seeking sexual experience found it to be almost like a military adventure. It is no accident that our erotic tradition uses an abundance of martial metaphors—attack, defense, siege, storm, victory, subjugation, giving over the key to the fortress, etc.

Peter Sloterdijk, Critique of Cynical Reason

'But trust the Muse -- she saw it upward rise,
Though mark'd by none but quick, poetic eyes:'

Alexander Pope The Rape of the Lock, V, 123-124
I am convinced that no account of the satire of the period, even one that is concerned with the textual politics of satire, would be complete without looking at *The Rape of the Lock*. This is not purely as a matter of contrast between the more strident, provocative or subversive satires written by Pope and Swift that I deal with in the other chapters of this thesis, and the seemingly mild satire of this poem, commonly assumed to be a light-weight, neo-classical piece concerned with social and sexual foibles, as well as the somewhat absurd pretences of upper-class, elite society during the final year of the reign of Queen Anne (bringing an end to the House of Stuart).

Whilst I shall dispute that the poem is entirely as mild and frivolous as some readers have assumed, the poem is clearly very different in style and tone from that of the later Pope of the *Horatian Imitations*, with the figure of the oppositional, politically involved satirist that Pope presents in these satires. Here Pope’s first priority would appear to be aesthetic rather than satirical, and his primary sense of himself would appear to be that of the poet and artist, rather than as satirist. What is strikingly similar, however, is the strong sense of the social role of the writer, which is explicit in the defensive/offensive satirical strategies and tactics that Pope adopts in the *Imitations*, and which emerges in this poem implicitly, as part of the process of transformation that takes place at the end of the poem -- the totally unexpected, 'magical' solution, achieved through the power of art. The transformation of the stolen lock into the 'cosmic' lock (itself a metaphor for the poem, and the transformative power of the poem) echoes the 'productive' confidence of a nation on the verge of colonial and industrial power, expressing a new national 'exuberance' that Donald Greene saw as the defining spirit of the age.¹
Of course, the historical and political contrasts between the respective worlds of the *Rape* and of the *Imitations* is very important, particularly insofar as it defines what kind of writing is possible. For Pope the contrast between the Stuart Court of Queen Anne and a Hanover Court manipulated by Sir Robert Walpole, and presiding over what was felt to be unprecedented moral decay and political corruption clearly determined (as he himself recognises in the *Imitations*) the course his writing was to take. In the *Imitations* satire takes on a strong crusading tone, becoming a political necessity, rather than an aesthetic pleasure, and the satirical 'play' that he indulges in in these poems seems primarily intended to make a point (in the face of those who would censor such 'play' out of existence) and to hurt or embarrass a target.

Yet such differences can be misleading. There are important reasons for including *The Rape of the Lock* in this study which relate to the textual and sexual politics that operate in the poem, and whose somewhat hidden presence suggests points of contact with the more ostensibly politically engaged and subversive satire of the age.

Perhaps the most aesthetically refined literary text produced in the eighteenth century, the poem raises key questions in its exploration of its central theme, the stealing of Belinda's lock of hair, and the social and sexual causes that lead up to this act, questions that relate to the issue of the relationship between poetry (and satire) on the one hand, and the eighteenth-century social world, its ruling intellectual discourses (the scientific materialism of Newton and Locke) and its sense of its own identity and direction, on the other. The Rape is closer to formal satire, than it is to Menippean, though the border-crossing, category-collapsing power of the Menippean, and the controlling, tight manipulating of the energies
of satire in formal satire are both important for Pope's 'imperial' project -- for making a very special kind of statement about English culture and the classicist/satirist as unifying figure as the country stands on the verge of an Imperial future.

This concern with the social role and significance of the poem itself, and by implication the poet whose power the poem is made to exemplify (in a way that seems to suggest the power of Elliott's tribal satirist) makes the poem ultimately self-reflexive and metafictional (or meta-poetical). It is this self-reflexive quality that allows the poem to ultimately unite its seemingly disparate and contradictory elements, that initially give the impression of mutually exclusive different worlds, separated by gender or by class, or most unfortunate of all, a combination of the two.

It should be obvious already that the idea that this early poem in Pope's poetic career is simply a lightweight satire on the foibles of female narcissistic pride is one that I do not agree with. Such a view has been challenged by recent readings of the poem from Marxist and feminist directions, which suggest that those who have read the poem as exclusively a lightweight piece of neo-classical wit have ignored or repressed (since there is real sexual danger behind the gaiety and glitter) the poem's deep concerns with matters of a sexual and an economic/political nature. In his Marxist account of aesthetic theory Adolfo Sánchez Vásquez makes the following political assessment of the neo-classical style, an assessment which I believe shows the distance between Pope's poem and the standard forms of neo-classical poetry:

Neoclassicism was transformed into an official, cold, and wizened art, intended to serve the ideas of the bourgeoisie at the expense of life, of
reality itself; reality was embellished and idealized, its rough edges softened. (Art and Society, p.165)

In his article 'Pope among the Formalists', Christopher Norris draws attention to the way in which readings of the poem have moved away from New Critical positions which tended to ignore issues such as the sexual and the economic as a matter of aesthetic policy (pp.141-5). For Norris it was through this elision that the New Critics were able to place a particular importance upon the poem, since in their view its contradictoriness, a contradictoriness that I have tried to resolve at a deeper level of meaning construction, provided an example of the power and dominance of paradox as a structuring device, thus helping to reinforce the emphasis placed upon paradox in their general poetics and critical methodology.

As Norris acknowledges, Cleanth Brooks in his famous article 'The Case for Miss Arabella Fermor' was the first to draw attention to the sexual dimension to the poem, and to the problem of how we are meant to 'read' Belinda (p.102). It is through Brooks's reading that the idea first begins to develop that the issue of lock is something that involves a whole sexual politics, and reflects a deep conflict between the male and female positions in the poem. Of course, in addressing these very issues, feminist accounts of the poem such as those of Patricia Meyer Spacks's "Ev'ry Woman is at Heart a Rake" and Felicity Nussbaum's The Brink of All We Hate, arrive at very different conclusions from those reached by Brooks.

To think of anything in the eighteenth century as lightweight or simply 'social' is to adopt an attitude which does not reflect the century's conviction of the central significance of social life, and of, as the poem's use of zeugma shows, the connections rather than absolute divisions between what is thought of as
serious and what is seen as superficial. One might say that nothing in the eighteenth century is really lightweight in the way that we think of the word, and that it would be a mistake to apply our own sense of a distinction between style and substance to a poem that, whilst so very stylized, is also so semiotically rich, and so provocative in its engagement with social and intellectual meanings. Our tendency to think of social manners and customs as being of little significance is something that we do not share with the eighteenth century. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White (following Pierre Bourdieu and Norbert Elias*) point out, that for the eighteenth century the whole area of 'manners' is of crucial significance. For them manners are a serious terrain of struggles and contested meanings (The Politics and Poetics of Transgression, p.88).

The whole idea of surface and the superficial is treated, as paradoxical as it may seem, as a matter of great seriousness in the poem, as reflective not just of the minor moral failings of this society, but also of its more serious epistemological problems and concerns, and of the impact of the rapidly expanding capitalist market system on the shapes and forms within which human (social and sexual) relationships are expressed.

Here The Rape of the Lock shows that its world is hermetically sealed, that it is -- like Belinda in her most narcissistic moment in front of the mirror -- trapped within its glittering, reflective surfaces and its late baroque (rococo) labyrinthine ornateness.

This isolation is both economic/political and epistemological. Almost entirely restricted to the parlour and boudoir, Belinda's world veers towards the epistemological hazards of solipsism in its avoidance of the 'other' world, that of the steal-to-survive underclasses of the eighteenth-century novel, for whom the issues of rape and theft would have been very
different matters. The world of the poem is almost exclusively that of the social elite, a very exclusive class of aristocrats, courtiers and professional politicians who occupy the major positions of power and privilege at the court of Queen Anne, and who play a dominant role in the determination of State financial and political policy. If it is a rich society both financially, and in terms of the quality of life, it is also one that seems to lack moral sense, and also to lack a sense of social cohesion and stability, ruled as it is by its irresistible inclinations towards beauty, glitter, effervescence and pleasure. Power this class may have in abundance, and pleasure too, but they are locked into their own world, cut off from an 'outside' that we only glimpse in the poem with the fleeting reference to the wretches who are hanged a little before due process for the convenience of the dining habits of upper class jurors. This is the only intrusion of the world of the lower classes, of the steal-to-survive, rags-to-riches heroines of the lower classes that we find in Defoe’s novels written at around the same period. Though the slightest of intrusions, it is summarily (and judiciously !) dealt with. As Sheila Delaney points out:

What he (Pope) seems not to see is that wretches hang not only so that Jurymen could dine but so that they could exist as a class along with the wealthy landlords. ('Sex and Politics', p.155).

Belinda's social world does not escape contact with this harsher world of that harsh 'other' eighteenth century, that lies outside of the confines of its closed and self-satisfied upper-class society. The idea of a socio-economic 'underworld' that shadows all of this upper class gaiety, light and superficiality is conveyed through the hinted-at presence of the grotesque in the suggestions of objects
becoming chipped, dirtied or stained, and thus everything that is anathema to this glazed and glistening, aesthetically polished environment,

Whether the Nymph shall break Diana’s Law,
Or some frail China Jar receive a Flaw,
Or stain her Honour, or her new Brocade,
Forget her Pray’rs, or miss a Masquerade,
(II, 105-8)

as well with the full-blown grotesque of the Cave of Spleen section of the poem that climaxes in the kitchen, that part of the house associated with the lower-class hired help, and which involves the pots, pans and kitchen utensils that a well-bred woman like Belinda would not have hoped to have so much direct physical contact with during her lifetime.

This self-enclosed, exclusive world of Belinda’s is the world of the Whig elite that controls the economy, as well as, as Michael Foot points out, being the trustees of a sceptical philosophical tradition that played a major role in the development of the empirical philosophy (Debts of Honour, p.117). The intellectually dominant presence of this tradition, which, to a large degree, defined for the age what knowledge was possible, is clearly felt in the poem. Pope’s explorations of the visible take place against the backdrop of what this philosophy determined could be ‘seen’. The members of this whig elite are the cognoscenti in a world given to invisible forces and secret causes. After all it was this class who were most responsible for the financial manipulations that produced institutions such as the Bank of England and the National Debt, which are to provide the financial basis of the development of British Imperialism. Of all the hidden and invisible forces that this class discovered, it was gravity, the physical law that stands at the centre of the physics of the universe itself, but also which most readily lends itself to
explaining sexual attraction that was the most famous, its discovery being seen by the age itself as its most prestigious scientific achievement. It might be argued then that the 'secrecy' of the ideas of Locke and Newton is indicative of their appropriation by an intellectual elite who are 'in the know'. But there were, I believe, 'secret causes' and 'invisible forces' which the early part of the century didn't fully understand, though their understanding of the hidden economic forces (and the way these forces could be manipulated) improved somewhat after the disastrous stockmarket crash of 1720 (the South Sea Bubble).

In the Augustan Vision, Pat Rogers describes theft, the great class crime of the eighteenth century, as 'the archetypal Augustan crime' (p.99), acknowledging the importance of, indeed the sanctity of, property during the eighteenth century, which justified, in the minds of the propertied classes of the time, the brutal laws that were used to protect personal property. The act of stealing the lock then, even if stripped of its sexual content, represents a transgression of the class code that the Baron and Belinda should have in common, a code without which the whole social order would founder. The Baron's theft of the lock, the one act around which the whole poem revolves is really an act which breaks the most crucial distinction of the eighteenth century, between propertied and non-propertied classes, between the class in the jury box and the class in the dock.

It would seem that Pope wanted the poem to appear simple and light-weight, Wittily exploring the foibles of courtship amongst the social elite, in order to hide the poem's deeper and more fundamental concerns. According to Stanley Edgar Hyman ('The Rape of the Lock', 1977) in order to foster the illusion of simplicity, and to deceive his potential readers into accepting the poem as a light-weight piece of mock-
heroic spoofing, and to assume that the poem will be true to its opening promise of clarity and transparency, Pope indulged in his own typically satirical little ruse. As Hyman points out, in 1715, a year after the complete *The Rape of the Lock* was published, one Edras Barnvelt published a pamphlet: *A Key to the Lock* a Bickerstaff-type little exercise in parodic impersonation/creation, spoofing attempts to read the poem as being the vehicle of any deeper or more serious meanings. According to Hyman this was an ingenious little stratagem of its real author (who else but Pope) to dismiss the idea that the poem had more serious concerns by parodying allegorical 'depth' readings (pp.364-5). For Hyman what this ruse is secretly saying is that the poem does have depth and seriousness, that it is concerned with what for Pope were important social, sexual and political matters (pp.364-6).

I do not think that the poem is a simple mock heroical poem (as a corollary, I do not think that mock heroic is a simple form). For all its suggestions in the opening lines that all will be explained and, with the help of the muse, the truth will be revealed, nothing is spelled out, indeed it is as if the poem suggests that in this social world where with so many factors, perspectives, signs and forms to take into account, things are too hopelessly over-determined to yield nice and neat answers and solutions.

Proclaiming that it will confirm the appropriateness of the Cartesian faith in truth and clarity, *The Rape of the Lock* soon reveals itself to be for all of the clock-work regularity and syntactic cohesion of its heroic couplet form, a poem of the play of light, of shifting shapes and forms, labyrinthine interiors (including the maze that is a woman's mind), and events so socially coded that you need an structuralist anthropologist to explain their
symbolic significance within the myth system that the poem itself constructs. Even the very title of the poem itself seems to be in a cryptic code that has its own secret meaning.

The poem’s sexual qualities account for its inclusion (or an excerpt at least) in an anthology of erotic literature (Jane Mills ed., Bloomsbury Guide to Erotic Literature). As the editor of this anthology makes clear The Rape of the Lock is part of the explosion of erotic literature that begins in the mid-seventeenth and continues throughout the eighteenth century (p.148). Of course human sexuality is precisely where the serious and the superficial meet. As a satire the line between serious and comical will be hard to find. So as a satire dealing with sexual matters we can expect shifts as great as they are sudden: in which the trivial suddenly becomes deadly serious and vice versa. As Freud has observed comedy is used to cover anxiety.’ The poem’s humour will thus always be deceptive: a little, or somewhat more serious than it initially seems as we see how it masks its deeper (and darker), concerns, fears and anxieties with jokes, puns and innuendoes.

The real power of the poem’s sexual energies and romantic passions should not be overlooked. The poem uses the trivial and seemingly inconsequential to explore human sexual relations (and how they are shaped by forms and conventions that have power, as Foucault has shown, to stimulate as much as to repress). Behind the artificiality of everything stands the mechanics of desire, revealing itself in Pope’s use of strong animating verbs like ‘breathes’ and ‘fires’, whose energy and forcefulness are there to impress upon the reader that whilst there seems such a superabundance of a rather coldly glittering light, bouncing off polished metallic surfaces, radiating from the eyes of its heroine there is also heat, fire and as Belinda’s
'keener lightnings' suggests, a strong sexual charge. The volcanic Cave of Spleen, this society's metaphoric underworld, that in its generative power would seem to constitute the poem's creative source (providing as clear a metaphor of unconscious repression and sublimation as anything in Swift's *A Tale of A Tub*), is a place far hotter and more fevered than anywhere 'on the surface.' In this very strange, steamy locale the increase in temperature has produced strange phenomena that would not see the light of public day in Pope's polite society.

In his *History of Sexuality* Michel Foucault advances his now well-known argument that the developing interest in sexuality and the proliferating discourses of sexuality that begin around this time, as is the case with so many of the key social institutions whose genealogies he has described, are related to a growing desire for social regimentation and control. As he expresses it:

> Since the eighteenth century, sex has not ceased to provoke a kind of generalized discursive erethism. And these discourses on sex did not multiply apart from or against power, but in the very space and as the means of its exercise. Incitements to speak were orchestrated from all quarters, apparatuses everywhere for listening and recording, procedures for observing, questioning, and formulating. Sex was driven out of hiding and constrained to lead a discursive existence. From the singular imperialism that compels everyone to transform their sexuality into perpetual discourse, to the manifold mechanisms which, in the areas of economy, pedagogy, medicine, and justice, incite, extract, distribute, and institutionalize the sexual discourse, an immense verbosity is what our civilization has required and organized. (pp.32-3).

What Foucault does not do (yet what the poem does appear to do) is to connect the proliferation of sexual discourses with the proliferation of goods and products through conquest and trade, and with then the
proliferation of styles, codes and manners that they give rise to.

An emphasis placed on the sexual aspect of the poem is likely to prove disconcerting to the traditionalists who have long seen the poem as a piece of light-weight, neo-classical ornateness that reflects the then current aesthetic attractiveness of the rococo style. As John Heath-Stubbs remarks in his 'Commentary and Notes' section of the Heinemann Selected Pope, of which he is the editor:

The result is a masterpiece of rococo fantasy and light raillery. It is very absurd (yet it has been done) to read the mature satirist and moralist of the later poems into this, after all, very youthful, though magnificently accomplished piece.(p.126)

Not unsurprisingly those readings that tend to accept much of the poem at face value, are 'male' readings that accept the issues of sexual politics and morality as being uncomplicated: the poem seems to be saying that the issue (ie the cause of the rape itself and the sexual 'point' that the poem is trying to make) is one that is critical of female inconsistency and 'pride', and sees the action of the poem as stemming from women putting so much value on something so trivial. Feminists, having recourse to the way in which eighteenth-century women documented their feelings of being trapped and exploited by the structural hypocrisies that oppressed them, have read this poem in terms of a very different context, one in which women are punished on account of male fears of their sexuality (that is the reason for the castration fears and rituals that are central to the narrative of the poem).

The sexual issues with which the poem is concerned reflect the significant shift in sexual morality occurring at the time, a shift that has a significant
class dimension, as is revealed in Terry Eagleton’s *The Rape of Clarissa*. Eagleton argues here that sex is the very medium in which the class war is fought out in eighteenth-century England (p.88), as there is a shift in the dominant sexual ideology away from the old aristocratic male-orientated permissiveness of the Restoration, towards concerns that are connected to the rising middle classes: stability and security and marriage seen on the model of property relations. The class division that separates the upper middle class Belinda from the aristocratic Baron corresponds with that Eagleton sees as central to the textual/sexual struggle in Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa* between middle class Clarissa, and the aristocratic Lovelace, representatives of the two classes who must 'marry' in order to establish a new, strengthened ruling order.

That we have rape rather than marriage is also significant in Pope’s poem, reflecting the uncertainty and instability of the time (the poem was published in the same year as Anne’s death and the installation of the House of Hanover, and the loss of the power of the Tory party). Recent historical perspectives on the period have pointed to the depth of the political division in England at this point (the very year of the poem’s publication in its final version) over the issue of the Succession. The poem would seem to reflect this political uncertainty in showing a clear displacement of power away from Queen Anne, who is barely mentioned in the poem, towards the new central figure, a *goddess* rather than a queen, who radiates light like the sun (the traditional icon of the absolute monarch) and whose *fiat lux* pronouncement, 'Let hearts be trumps, and trumps they were' for all its joke effect, echoes the *fiat lux* that Anne delivers in *Windsor Forest*, where she has a powerful symbolic role as the monarch who is to lead England into a new Golden Age of imperial expansiveness. Belinda’s regal
position is further underscored by her ability to instantaneously change the mood around her in accordance with her own, and in her exultant shout of victory after winning at Ombre being echoed by the whole surrounding landscape.

Whilst the Court of Queen Anne marked a serious decline from the great Court of her uncle, Charles II, it was unlikely after the revolution of 1688 that any Stuart Court would escape being viewed with suspicion or ambivalence. In his book England in the Age of Hogarth, Derek Jarrett has written about the ambivalent attitude towards Stuart Courts (p.106). The Stuart despotism which had been overthrown by the revolution of 1688 had been popularly associated with frivolous courts and feminine wiles, with power-crazed mistresses who manipulated their lovers for their own ends. As Felicity Nussbaum has shown, the somewhat sexually alien temper of Charles' court is echoed in this poem through the way in which Pope borrows from and alludes to the risque but thoroughly misogynistic satires of the court wits of the time (The Brink of All We Hate, p.24).

If the sexual is, as Eagleton maintains, inseparable from the political, the means through which the class war is fought, it is also inseparable from the textual, and the means whereby what appears to be the poem's hidden discursive battle -- between poetry, in alliance with the old alchemical hermetic tradition (via the Rosicrucian imagery of the Sylphs, who lie at the poem's imaginative centre), and the perfect physics of mind and world that the century believed would emerge out of the synthesis of Newton's physics and Locke's epistemology. Given the significant 'presence' of Locke in the poem, there could be the suggestion of a hidden pun on lock/locke.¹⁰

In Enlightened Absence, Ruth Salvaggio presents a feminist reading of the poem which approaches the issue
of the poem's relationship with the key figures of Newton, Descartes and Locke from the position of a psychoanalytical feminism which sees the philosophical positions of these thinkers as exemplifying the patriarchal and phallogocentric biases of the Enlightenment that result in the conflation between woman and nature and thus make woman both sexual and scientific object, whilst excluding her from the central domain (in psychoanalytical terms the 'symbolic order') of science and of Reason.

Salvaggio sees the poem as involved in an ambiguous relationship with Enlightenment, caught between the contrary inclinations towards clarity and control on the one hand, and, on the other, towards a sense of visual and tactile shapes and forms that is disruptively 'feminine', unsettling and disturbing the Enlightenment faith in closed, binary systems (pp.20, 75 and 128). Here the poem's visual and textual qualities, particularly the use of colour, play an key role in subverting the Enlightenment desire for clarity and definition (pp.60-6). Salvaggio points out that 'Pope came to rely more and more on colour to express the distortions and deviations that fill his satires'(p.61) but that his attraction towards and indulgence in the random and fluid qualities of light marked an attempt at male appropriation of that which had been defined as feminine and thus 'outside'.

Perhaps, in this sense, there was a good deal of the 'woman' in both of these Enlightenment men. Yet if this is so, we need to recover these feminine qualities from the dark realms into which they were repressed, and find in them a means to transform systematic thought. .... What Pope and Newton borrowed from the feminine were the glimmerings and fusions of colour that they tried to appropriate for their dominion of light. (Enlightened Absence, p.66).
We can already see that the issue of the lock cuts a lot deeper than the issue the poem immediately addresses: the dispute between the Petrie and Fermor families over the incident upon which the central action of the poem is modelled. The project of reconciliation with which the poem is concerned involves serious issues, of which the rape of the lock is but a minor symptom, as well as the great emblematic sign. In writing a poem of national and imperial reconciliation, to celebrate the Peace of Utrecht that with the gaining of the Spanish territories in the Americas, perhaps more than any other treaty in England's political and military history, set her on the road to becoming a colonial power, Pope has to repeat the kind of imaginative reconciliation that he contrived in the Lodona section of *Windsor Forest*, a reconciling, or 'marrying' of the dynamic, agonistic qualities of the national imperial epic, with the idea of the peace and harmony of a new Golden Age, an age of classical peace founded on the new discoveries and slowly developing technology of the Scientific Enlightenment.

The presence in the intertextual shadows of this poem of Virgil, the great Roman 'national' poet of the new Roman Empire, and Milton, the great 'national' poet, who unites the humanist and radical political traditions, and the baroque 'Catholic' style with a Puritan religious individualism, should alert us to the poem's true imaginative and political seriousness. Belinda becomes a powerful centralizing and unifying force through the lock. This makes her role in the poem strongly symbolic as an emblem of national unity and power: not only is her story one of her personal rite of passage into the male dominated public realm, but also England's rite of passage into its new imperial history. Belinda's achievement as figure inspiring a kind of transcendental devotion, in that
her sexual allure so clearly crosses cultural boundaries, 'But ev'ry Eye was fix'd on her alone. / On her white Breast a sparkling Cross she wore, / Which Jews might kiss, and Infidels adore' (II, 6-8), is the sign of the right of England's to assume the universal position of an imperial power.

The relationship between poetry and the social has a particular historical significance here -- to the extent of giving the poem an *epochal* quality -- since Pope's England is in the throes of a process of economic transformation, whose impact on the poem on formal and linguistic levels has been brilliantly characterised by Laura Brown in her revisionist reading of the poem, *Alexander Pope*. The problem that Pope faces, as Laura Brown has indicated, is how differentiate imperialism, what Pope sees as, in one of the first clear celebrations of imperialism in poetry, an expansive, unifying ideal, from the distorting and devaluing processes of capitalism. She argues (it is in fact her central thesis) that the Rape of the Lock provides a site of ideological contradiction between Pope's pro-materialist and anti-capitalist sympathies (pp.21-2). The new wealth, which is responsible for commodity fetishism and the resultant lack of moral discrimination, is also an indication of the development of British colonial prestige and power -- a correspondence that the Augustans were familiar with from their reading of Roman history. But it is precisely this correspondence that Pope has problems with and is attempting to conceal.

Whilst Brown's position is illuminating, especially on the way that the poem embodies the economic processes of Pope's society at the linguistic level, and deeply insightful into the relationship between poetic style and form and the pressures exerted by social and economic force, her approach is limited by the narrowness of its perspective, and its failure
to engage with the sexual with which the poem turns out to be positively saturated. Irvin Ehrenpreis, in his article ‘Pope: Bipolar Implications’ alerts us to the pervasiveness of the sexual in Pope’s poem, pointing out that ‘disorderly lust glances at us from the first couplet; and it pounds on us in the final canto’ (p.102). Ehrenpreis reveals that even the opening lines of the poem, in which the speaker, following the tradition of the classical epic, announces the theme of the tale that is to be told, carry an erudite allusion to Horace’s Satires that serves to make a joke that is far more ‘genital’ than it is genteel:

‘What dire offence from am’rous causes springs, / What mighty conquests rise from trivial things, / I sing,’ says Pope as he begins a story connecting love with theft and war. The couplet sounds plain enough until we hear an echo of Horace joining the same themes and calling the vagina (or lust) a most shameful cause of war (cunnus taeterrima belli / causa -- Satires I, iii, 107). Once we remember that Pope would translate ‘cunnus’ as ‘thing,’ the language of decorum becomes a screen for impropriety. (p.102)

The connection between capitalism and sexuality is an important one in the poem -- which is hardly surprising, since the expansion and acceleration of desire is what capitalism is all about. Belinda’s society, a consumer society in the phase of primary accumulation, obsessed with idea of production/consumption and transformation, is caught by contradictions that are as much sexual as they are economic. Much of the poem’s sense of the sexual that is connected to women (ie of its sense of the tactile, sensory and physically erotic) seems to be hostile to, and to resist the kind of sexual expression that fits in with the quick exchange and transactions that capitalism has introduced. In its concern with issues
of sexual morality, however hypocritical and patriarchal this morality may turn out to be, the poem is facing the key issues affecting a well-ordered and stratified society disturbed by the effects of sexual commodification as the sexual economy of this society becomes more and more capitalistic and woman herself becomes treated as a commodity of transfer, exchange -- or, as in the case of Belinda and her lock, as the ultimate currency of value in a world where all other sources of value and meaning are reduced by the levelling action of the capitalist system. Terry Castle's work on masquerade (and the poem refers to the social/sexual significance of the 'Midnight Masquerades': I, 72) points to the kind of class anxieties brought about by a sense of a libidinous overruling of social distinctions. However the impact of the kind of libidinous energies that the poem seems to be struggling to contain (and yet also revelling in the energies of) is anything but simple and unilateral. If the new economics of exchange is becoming more and more at odds with an old aristocratic sexual morality, and is in conflict with an awareness of the power of the erotic, as a force that implies an awareness of the sexual power of the feminine, it is one that is in contradiction with the restrictive sexual morality of the middle class itself, the class of the agents of the capitalist transformation.

The classical world to which the poem constantly alludes, (its very narrative being a contemporary version of the Paris' Rape of Helen), is not purely there for the humour of incongruity in its constantly being contrasted with the 'low' social reality of Pope's elegant, visually brilliant, but narcissistic and superficial society. Representing a larger than life, 'mythical', allure, power and completeness, the classical that the poem recreates is already present in the mythic consciousness of the age, as that set of
values and models to be aspired to, its myths and figures loaded with layers of literary and social interpretations and reinterpretations and serving to confers a value and meaning beyond the local, the immediate and the contemporary, at the same time as it provides the images and symbols with which to 'code' and understand a social world that seems so complex, hopelessly complicated and essentially contradictory.

Whilst the poem explores the satirical humour of the discrepancy between the heroic style of the world of classical epic, and the more relaxed 'aesthetic' styles of a Stuart England that is soon to vanish forever\textsuperscript{12}, it also points to a great similarity in productive ability, in an ability to transform things, to think expansively and universally, and above all, to realize the transformative power of language. Laura Brown has drawn attention to the way in which the poem moves between an ironic distance from, and what she calls a 'celebratory proximity' to, the world of classical Rome (Alexander Pope, p.21). She also draws attention to the way in which Pope connects British trade and industry to the classical world through his use of the images of classical pastoral (p.31).

The classical qualities of the poem relate less to the rigid rules of poetic practice associated with the court poetry produced at the courts of the absolutist monarchs and princes of Europe, than to the issue of the production of a Classicized England, an England that can assume the classical political mantle of Ancient Rome. It is not a restrained neo-classical poem that abides by the conventions, but one that is out to show its powers: its range and depth, and the level at which the literature and mythology of the classical world has been assimilated. Examples of this power abound in the poem. At the linguistic level it is reflected in the authority of the verbal pronouncements, particularly the royal fiat that
Belinda appropriates 'The skilful Nymph reviews her Force with care; / Let Spades be Trumps! she said, and Trumps they were.'(III, 45-6), and in the controlling, or even dragooning power of the couplets, as well as the authority of the speaker's imperative verbs with which he commands the reader's attention: 'see', 'hear', 'know', and 'look' being the prime examples. All of these point, through the strong sense of a 'presence' of voice, to writing as an assertive dominating practice or act, that carries real legislative power. This 'presence' is something that the action of the poem serves first to decentre, and then to powerfully reinstate.

At a basic level the poem is about restoration of social balance. The word 'restore' reverberates in the final canto, shouted out at the climax of the battle of the sexes, reminding the reader of the historical significance of the word. Since the lock is itself, being the equal companion of its 'sister', an image of balance, the cutting of the lock represents an act that causes social disruption and chaos.

Historically the idea of social balance was more an ideal than a reality. The period, however was not at all balanced, as W.A. Speck has pointed out. In 1714 the ruling class was divided and the country was in need of political stability (Stability and Strife, p.146). It would seem that this sense of political instability and fracture at the top of the social order is reflected in the sexual divisions and disputes that plague Belinda's society. The poem's fanciful suggestion of a polite and refined social world plunged into a comical version of civil war could not help but remind readers of the actual civil war still within living memory, and a possible class warfare narrowly averted over more recent constitutional crises.

The numerous allusions to war and conflict in the poem suggests not only the depth of the sexual division
and conflict between men and women, but also how tense and bitter feelings are, and the likelihood of what is simmering beneath the surface breaking out into the sexual equivalent of civil war. This is in fact what happens in the final canto of the poem with the battle between the beaus and the belles, in which, when the battles reaches the furious intensity of hand-to-hand combat, and in the fury of angry passion social inhibitions fly out of the window. Sex, not death proves to be the great leveller, and the promiscuous carnage is enjoyed by all, or at least by the defeated men who find being subjected to female dominance so sexually stimulating that they 'die' and are 'resurrected' time and time again. Pope is having a field day here with the old metaphysical puns on 'lie' and 'die':

When bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa down, 
Chloe stept in, and kill'd him with a Frown; 
She smil'd to see the doughty Hero slain, 
But at her Smile, the Beau reviv'd again. 

Now Jove suspends his golden Scales in Air, 
Weighs the men's Wits against the Lady's Hair; 
The doubtful Beam long nods from side to side; 
At length the Wits mount up, the Hairs subside. 
(V, 67-74)

The significance that the social world places upon the transgressive action of the Baron's, the cutting of the lock of hair, and the level of Belinda's pain, outrage and sense of defeat suggests that within the context of this society, in terms of how this society understands itself and articulates its 'life', this is a very serious thing indeed. Viewed from the outside, to call the act of cutting a lock of hair 'rape' trivializes the very notion of rape, treating it as something of the surface, as a form of visual damage or inconvenience, pointing to the problem that this society has with its sense of value, particularly human value. The attitude that rape is an issue of surface
appearances is very similar to that expressed by Swift's Hack in *A Tale of a Tub* when he passes the frightening comment that we would be surprised to find how much the woman flayed had been 'altered...for the worse', which he cites as evidence in support of his contention that the 'outside hath been infinitely preferable to the in' (p.145). From the inside, however, in terms of the way in which Belinda's society constructs its social meanings, and the issues of power and sexual politics that are implicit in its everyday practices, the act of cutting the hair is an act of great social and psychological meaning, a symbolic act that goes right to the heart of the society's concerns.

Belinda's society is caught in a particularly interesting contradictory position. They have a problem with sexual desire, yet the sexual, particularly in the forms of the intricate rituals of courtship that the poem deals with, is this society's primary concern. That so much interest and energy should be focused on the lock, and that so much despair and anger be felt when it has been stolen, clearly shows the importance of the sexual, but also how it can be confused with the aesthetic, and how prone this society is to fetishism and displacement. The tendency of this society to fetishize and displace its sexual objects, as is so clear in the fetishizing of the lock, is presented as a social malaise and is subject to satirical attack, though far more gently and with greater understanding than the great and far more noxious social malaises that are attacked in *The Horatian Imitations* and *The Dunciad*.

The lock is a powerful talisman that metaphorically stands for, and in a sense 'replaces', Belinda herself, as a kind of piece-de-resistance and summation of all her beauty. From the Baron's voyeuristic and fetishistic perspective it is by possessing the lock he has in his power that object
which is most indicative of his own incompleteness, and of his being victimized by his own desire. His crazy building of the altar to love shows his obsessiveness.

For this, ere Phoebus rose, he had implor’d Propitious Heav’n, and ev’ry Pow’r ador’d, But chiefly Love -- to Love an Altar built, Of twelve vast French Romances, neatly gilt. There lay three Garters, half a Pair of Gloves; And all the Trophies of his former Loves, With tender Billet-doux, he lights the Pyre. And breathes three am’rous Sighs to raise the Fire.

Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent Eyes Soon to obtain, and long possess the Prize: (II, 35-44)

This is a society that is obsessed with, and foments the sexual, even as it represses it. As Patricia Meyer Spacks makes clear, there is a strong clash between the stylized rituals of this society, that serve to defer and deflect desire, and its basic sexual needs, whose insistence is demonstrated in the Cave of Spleen section of the poem. She sees fantasy and other forms of imaginative displacement to be a prevalent feature of the social world that the poem depicts, since they provide the sole outlet for all its displaced and repressed sexual energies. For Spacks, Belinda’s society is one that in ‘frowning on obvious sexual indulgence’, ‘magnifies the trivial and diminishes the significant’. In reflecting the ‘psychic landscape’ of her society, the poem is fundamentally concerned with ‘mechanisms of repression and release’ (An Argument of Images, pp.230, 232).

As a result of the displacement of desire objects (such as, most obviously and pertinently the lock itself) are invested with a sexual quality. A seemingly innocuous little coffee drinking ceremony becomes a bubbling sublimation of pent-up sexual energies and tensions.
For Lo! the Board with Cups and Spoons is
crown’d,
The Berries crackle, and the Mill turns round.
On shining Altars of Japan they raise
The silver Lamp; the fiery Spirits blaze.
From silver Spouts the grateful Liquors glide,
While China’s Earth receives the smoking Tyde.

The poem suggests at the outset that it is going
to discover causes, but instead of spelling out what
the causes are, resolving the issue in a thoroughly
Newtonian manner, it constructs a narrative whose
meaning ‘resonates’ mythologically, and is complicated
by the constant interplay between the different
(intersecting and oppositional) social, poetic and
other ‘codes’ within which the poem operates and with
which it is engaged. The event with which the poem
deals is one that is _overdetermined_ by the complex
array of factors impinging upon Belinda, the Baron, and
their world. At no stage does the reader receive the
simple Newtonian answer he or she has been misled into
expecting.

Couched in the language of sexual innuendo
(especially the explore part of the word ‘unexplored),
the opening lines of the poem suggest that there is a
hidden rationale to everything which lies hidden
beneath the surface.

‘Say what strange Motive, Goddess! could compel
A well bred Lord t’assault a gentle Belle?
O say what stranger Cause, yet unexplored
Could make a gentle Belle reject a Lord?’

(I, 7-10)

Everything that we encounter upon entering into
Belinda’s world (and indeed into her sleeping
unconscious/semi-conscious mind) seems to subscribe to
and be compelled by a ‘strange’ hidden force or logic.
Of course the ‘strange motives’ and ‘stranger causes’
turn out to be the Sylphs — added to the poem in 1714
to provide Belinda’s world with the workings of a supernatural machinery to provide a very witty (but smugly sexist) explanation for all those things men cannot comprehend about women.

Sheila Delaney argues that the confusion of the categories 'fairy' and 'religious' caused by the Sylphs 'reflects back on the people in the poem' and 'suggests the limitations of a mind in which fairytale and theological mystery are scrambled without discrimination' ('Sex and Politics in Pope’s Rape of the Lock’, p.178). But the Sylphs are celebrated in the poem, and are too complex to function as a negative moral reflection upon the society that, in Delaney’s argument, would appear to have ‘produced’ them. The Sylphs are, as we shall see, too central and integral to this world for them to be the result of a theological/epistemological confusion or some kind of ‘category mistake’. If they usurp the place of religion they are only doing what science itself is doing -- demystifying the religion of the eighteenth century to such an extent that it has to be rewritten in rational terms, producing a fundamentally Cartesian material universe stripped of miracle, mystery and all forms of religious transcendence, in which God functions as the winder-upper of the great clockwork machine, and then seemingly disappears leaving it to the care of his trusted servants, the scientists, mathematicians, and the Deistic theologians who accept the supremacy of scientific explanation.

Entering Belinda’s waking world, ironically not with the rising sun, but at midday, the reader should be aware that the sense of time that operates here is symptomatic of the kind of eccentricities and idiosyncrasies to which this society is prone: and that it has the power to live by its eccentric values and codes. By using the mock-heroic comparison Pope is not only able to sustain a series of mildly satirical
comparisons, but he is also able to defamiliarize a social world with which his upper-class readership would have been very familiar, and in so doing to raise the question of how this social world is seen and how it is produced, questions which I suggested in the opening chapter were very important ones for the satirist. In this sense the distance between the world-in-miniature of this poem, and that of Part One of Gulliver’s Travels is not great at all.

Belinda’s society may sleep till lunch time, suggesting a languorousness that borders on the post-coital, but upon waking the great cycles and rituals of the day begin, and Belinda herself immediately plunges into the central pursuit of her society: courtship, conducted, as ever at a frenetic pace. Linguistically the poem seems to ‘crackle’ under the whip of Pope’s syntactic control in attempting to capture the production, transformation and exchange of all its conflictual and contradictory energies: the male versus the female, the capitalist reductive versus the imperialist expansive, the artistic (alchemical) versus the scientific/epistemological. A sense of the whirlwind pace that these energies produce is conveyed in the following lines, in which the frivolousness, and machine-like predictability of this feminized, yet male controlled world, are captured in the striking image of the ‘moving Toyshop of their Heart’ (I, 100).

With varying Vanities, from ev’ry Part,
They shift the moving Toyshop of their Heart;
Where Wigs with Wigs, with Sword-knots, Sword-knots strive,
Beaus banish Beaus and Coaches Coaches drive.
(99-102)

The last line here has a tail-chasing quality that fits in with all the sense of circular (and inward-spiralling) movement that takes place in the poem. It would seem as if a kind of short-handed, synecdochic
code (‘wigs’, ‘coaches’) has developed that reflects a desire to compress the maximum pleasure, excitement, events into the minimum amount of time. If this is urban pastoral, it is urban pastoral on methedrine: the old pastoral cycle of the year has been collapsed into one short day (a very short one for the wretches who hang to convenience lunch arrangements).

Whilst there is a sense of a veil of secrecy having passed over the events of the night before and that the events of the night before must be imaginatively reconstructed from the objects around the room (putting the reader in the position of the voyeur, a voyeur who must read sexual meanings into the rich surface detail with which he is confronted), there is also a quite contrary sense of openness, accessibility, and consonance in the image of the ‘The press’d watch’ that returns ‘a silver sound’. Here the classically perfect ‘silver’ sound feeds back into Belinda’s ‘clockwork’ world, seemingly providing a perfect circle that is not only metaphysically reassuring, but also, in terms of the laws of Newtonian mechanics, scientifically apt. This suggests that this is a Cartesian world in which the minute mechanisms inside the watch (as microcosmic ‘machine’) correspond with the larger mechanisms of the social world without, a social ‘machine’ in which opposites such as action and reaction, question and answer, touch and response, and male and female can be formalized in equation form. The workings of this larger social ‘machine’, (so the male mechanistic logic runs) reveals that in their much-condemned fickleness and inconstancy, women are completely determined by the lesser social forces of their world.15

The pervasiveness of the poem’s sexual innuendo however, suggests that this image of the faithfulness of Belinda’s society’s timepieces, and with it their ‘iconic’ sense of time16 might be read otherwise, that
it too might have a sexual meaning lurking unobserved, and that everything is not all crystalline transparency. What appears to be very neatly Newtonian in the case of the watch, a paradigm in which cause and effect, action and response are perfectly synchronized, is presented in a somewhat different light in the notorious finale of the Cave of Spleen pyrotechnics: when 'maids turn'd bottles call aloud for corks'. From the constant tendency to evade and displace sexual contact that is, according to Patricia Meyer Spacks, so pervasive in Belinda's world as to be considered a structural principle of her society, we move to an image of the sexual act, a human social, cultural and biological relationship, reduced to the crudest agent/verb/object form imaginable, a male-orientated and thoroughly Newtonian configuration, depicted in images that seem to be straight out of Freud's account of the sexual symbolism that operates in the human unconscious. 17

I have already hinted that a Marxist sense of art as production seems to be important to an understanding of the poem's sense of its own social significance. The poem is clearly concerned with itself as a form of production, and a form of production that would appear to be marked by a confident belief in its own power to produce and transform its social world. There is a powerful sense of metamorphosis in the poem, which both emerges out of the social forces to which this world is subject, as well as falls under the province of the control of the speaker, as if he has a special kind of knowledge, and is aware of the secret physics or chemistry that makes all kinds of transformations and transmutations possible. Laura Brown has drawn attention to the close relationship between the shape and the form of the poem and the economic forces operating in Pope's (and Belinda's) society, these being the forces of mercantile capitalism as it enters
its imperial phase (Alexander Pope, pp.3-5). In her revisionist reading of Pope's poetry, Brown sees mercantile capitalism as informing the whole creative process in so much of Pope's poetry, being an active determinant of his poetry at the formal level. For Brown the capitalist system manifests its influence in Pope's poetic styles and forms, as well as in the very language and linguistic structures that he uses (pp.9-13). Yet these shaping and determining forces are things that the poem is itself setting out to shape. That the poem is attempting to influence the forces that it is produced by helps to explain the circular qualities in the poem, as well as its 'møbius strip' blurring of sharp demarcations, in which a sense of edges and boundaries are lost, and things flow into each other. This is nowhere more prevalent than in the description of the mythical matriarchal realm of women in the first canto (35-78).

The dehumanizing extent of the reductive power of capitalism seems to lie behind the very strong mechanistic qualities in the poem, such as is conveyed by the reduction of things to cyphers or symbolic counters, as in the snappy synecdochic compression of lines like those that, as we saw, follow the image of the 'moving Toyshop'. The mechanistic quality to the poem, that seems much informed by a Cartesian view of man and society, is further reinforced by the preponderance of passive verbal constructions in the poem, that in suggesting hidden agency, point to secret powers and forces that play a determining role in shaping the social forms and practices of Belinda's world and which are known only to the speaker of the poem.

The very title of the poem could hardly be more cryptic, suggesting a strange, possibly sexual variant on the theme of the irresistible force meeting the immovable object. The title immediately raises one of
the poem's major concerns: with the transparency, or opaqueness of language (in the final analysis the poem would seem to be suggesting that what language gives us is at best translucency). The word 'lock' would seem to imply fixity, yet right from the point of its introduction to the reader in a strange combination with the word 'rape', it seems to be inviting the slide of the signifier. The word lock is, of course, just a slur of a consonant away from 'cock', usually the culprit in acts of rape, rather than the victim. Indeed the word 'rape' has already 'slipped' in meaning by becoming metaphorical: what the poem is about is not a real rape, but the stealing of a lock of hair.

The slipping of the signifier poses a danger to the established order of relations between men and women, since it suggests how easily this order could be linguistically subverted. Pope makes the symbolic order seem a tenuous and precarious thing: something that could be completely inverted with just a slip of a syllable. One wrong word and the social world undergoes that feared reversal that results in what Natalie Zemon Davis terms 'women on top' (Women on Top: Symbolic Sexual Inversion and Political Disorder in Early Modern Europe), most graphically illustrated in the Cave of Spleen section of the poem when amidst all the chaotic transformations that take place, one stands out for the supreme sexual justice that it administers: 'Men prove with child as powerful fancy works'.

The suggestion here, as with the slight consonantal 'difference' between the words 'lock' and 'cock', is that there is no great, absolute and final divide between men and women: that the two sexualities are not binary opposites, but interpenetrating and interconnected. If rape is the sexual violence that separates men from women, as perpetrators and victims, castration -- which has a disturbingly obvious connection to the actual theft, as this involves a
cutting off of the lock of hair, -- is a form of symbolic violence that both men and women are subjected to (the phantasmic fear of, at least), and which in psychoanalytic thinking is perceived as that which structures the social relationship between men and women.

As the central object in Belinda's society, as if it were a tribal totem, and as the object of which the possession or loss is crucial to a sense of sexual wholeness and power, and upon which the severing act of symbolic castration is performed, the lock stands for that supreme structuring signifier in the (patriarchal) symbolic order, the phallus.

With the centrality of the lock as (with a peculiar gender reversal) the great phallic signifier of the poem around which the poem's sexual and political issues revolve, it should come as no surprise to find the poem riddled, in both senses of the word, with all kinds of sexual references, allusions, hints, puns and innuendoes, some of which, according to Felicity Nussbaum, suggest objects useful as sexual toys or as surrogate penises able to assuage an insatiable female sexuality. Here Nussbaum sees Pope repeating the same scurrilous trope through which women were attacked in Restoration satire (The Brink of All We Hate).

The novelist Maureen Duffy, in her book the Erotic World of Faery), offers an interesting reading of the poem as part of her chapter dealing with the rationalized versions of fairies that appear in eighteenth-century literature. Her interest in Pope's Sylphs as signifiers of the sexual unconscious of Beindia's world leads her into an analysis of the poem's concern with the phallic and by this route to the insightful observation that the poem is arguing for a common sexuality between men and women, a sexuality that is phallic, masculine and assertive (pp.191-3).
Though she is not operating within a Lacanian paradigm, Duffy's reading of the poem is consistent with Lacan's account of the social centrality of the symbolic castration. In Lacanian psychoanalytic terms the strongly ritualistic central action of the poem, the severing of the lock of hair from Belinda's head, is an enactment of that process of symbolic 'castration' that marks the entry of the subject into the social realm of signification that Lacan terms the 'symbolic', an order structured under the male, phallic 'law of the father'. Duffy sees the lock as representing 'that controversial thing: the female penis' (p.193), the signifier of the active and assertive quality to female sexuality that men have tried to control, deny or repress throughout history. For her the act of rape is a severing, or stealing back, of the power of the phallus: an act of castration that immediately raises the issue of the struggle for sexual power between men and women.

Duffy's line of argument is consistent with that of Ruth Salvaggio that I discussed earlier, in that both positions suggest that the poem is consciously or unconsciously deconstructive of the 'male' sexual and gender presuppositions of the society with which it deals, and which it inevitably reflects. If both Salvaggio and Duffy's arguments hold, then the poem is deeply deconstructive of the sexual presuppositions of its world -- subverting the patriarchal notions of the power of masculine order and law that Salvaggio connects with the Enlightenment, and demolishing the notion that sexual assertiveness and power is the sole property and prerogative of the male. In Duffy's reading the poem deconstructs the opposition between male and female that is set up in terms of the possession, or non-possession of the phallus, since it shows that both men and women have this phallic power. Each image of male sexual power in the poem seems
counterbalanced by one in which it is women who are powerful and asserting themselves over men. Indeed male sexuality is revealed to have its own passive, 'feminine' side, as can be seen in the battle of the sexes in the final canto of the poem. Here the violent anger of the women results not in a demolishing of men physically and sexually, but as we can see by the way in which Pope gives the old metaphysical puns on 'die' and 'slay' a run for their money, the men become sexually excited and acutely responsive to the female assault.

The basic inversion of the normal distinction between male assertiveness and female passivity, such as is so humorously evident in this most sexually suggestive of battle scenes, points beyond the poem's sense of an absolute divide between men and women, to the extent that they appear to inhabit different worlds, to the interconnectedness and interpenetration of male and female. In acknowledging the phallic sexuality of women, the poem challenges the notion of female passivity, and with it, implicitly, the sexual position of women that is the product of such masculine assumptions -- and of the fears that result in acts of suppression, such as that performed by the Baron.

The poem presents the female predicament as one in which they find themselves trapped and condemned by the contradictions that men foist upon them. Both The Rape of the Lock and An Epistle to a Lady present images of women caught up in circular movements or processes, or trapped in fantastic shapes and forms such as those of ghosts, spirits, angels and mechanized creatures -- the imaginative rendering of the way in which women are subjected to 'male' linguistic categories and subjugated by male critical and castigatory forms. It would appear that there was considerable bitterness amongst women in the eighteenth century over the way they were represented. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the
foremost female intellectual of the day (in fact the age’s proto-feminist), records her impressions of the depth of male contempt for her sex:

I am persuaded if there was a commonwealth of rational horses (as Doctor Swift has supposed) it would be an established maxim amongst them that a mare could not be taught to pace. (‘Letter to Lady Bute’, 6th March 1753, Selected Letters, p.240)

In the self-contained matriarchal world that Pope constructs in the early part of the poem (with its pre-Socratic cosmology), women are completely ruled by and true to the element that they are entirely composed of. Outside of this fanciful female cosmos, in the ‘male’ public world, women are divided into two extremes: they may be soft, almost physically fluid, melting away at the suggestion of male touch, or male sweet-talk (I, 97-8), or they may be powerful and warlike Amazon figures like Belinda, though her power is consumed in self-destructive violence, as is the case with Atossa in Epistle to a Lady.

The ruthlessness of the male epistemological hold over women can be seen in Moral Essays: Epistle II. Of the Characters of Women (Epistle to a Lady) (1735), a poem far less sympathetic to the position of women than The Rape of the Lock. In To A Lady women have been turned into portraits in a gallery, into aesthetic objects ‘frozen’ at a moment of satirical revelation (caught flagrante delicto, morally speaking).

How many pictures of one Nymph we view, All how unlike each other, all how true! Arcadia’s Countess, her, in ermin’d pride, Is there Pastora by a fountain side: Here Fannia, leering on her own good man, Is there, a naked Leda with a Swan. (Epistle to a Lady, 5-10)

The feminist unconscious in this poem, that Ruth Salvaggio makes such a convincing case for, is counter-
balanced (if that is the word) both by the kind of misogynistic elements that Felicity Nussbaum sees lurking beneath the surface of the poem, as well as by criticism far less hidden or cryptic in kind, which would include the moments of negative judgment, the hints at female fickleness, inconstancy and pride, and by the key motif that women are creatures of a different world, a world outside the realm of male logic, rationality, and morality. Perhaps it is to be expected that Pope would need to attack women because of his anxieties about what his feminine voice is saying. But the tension between these two sexual 'worlds' makes the poem, supposedly about and dedicated to 'balance' (and its restoration), a quality so central to the eighteenth-century mind, in effect more a play of contrary and contradictory forces, perspectives and inclinations -- where it does not verge on suggesting incompatible epistemologies. This is not to say that balance is not central in the poem, far from it: it is too central and far too precarious a thing, to the extent that the poem seems obsessed with the fear of its loss, powerfully conflating the notion of the sexual 'loss' that Belinda fears, itself a metaphor and metonym for wider and deeper social fears, with the idea of death.  

Duffy's view that the poem asserts female sexuality as something assertive and masculine explains why Belinda's beauty and her aggressive and assertive power are so closely connected. Beauty and war are combined in Belinda's very name: the stem 'bel' seems to be equally well connected to bellum as it is to belle. So belligerence is second nature to her, as it were. More pertinently the connection between beauty and war points to an aggressive quality in beauty, that beauty is ipso facto militant, aggressive, an 'in your eye' threat that is an immediate statement of sexual power.
The idea of the century being designated the 'Age of Rape', (rather than the 'Age of Seduction', the label that has been recently suggested) seems particularly appropriate when the colonial dimension to the idea of rape is borne in mind, in which the notion of rape is able to act as a synecdoche and as a metaphor for colonial conquest, the imperial 'rape' of one country by another that is referred to in Gulliver's Travels (pp.343-4). As Terry Eagleton shows in The Rape Of Clarissa, sex, rape and class are very much bound up during the eighteenth century. Both Lovelace's rape of Clarissa Harlowe in Clarissa, and the Baron's forcible theft of Belinda's lock of hair are acts which reflect an aristocratic attitude to women. For Eagleton the struggle over Clarissa's body is a form of class warfare, between the ancient right of the aristocrat and the middle class concern with virtue and propriety. That this sexual/property battle should be taking place at the time when the middle class is articulating its own claims to status and social identity, distinct from, but in relation to the aristocracy, is something that Eagleton finds extremely significant:

Sexuality, far from being some displacement of class conflict, is the very medium in which it is conducted.

....

In material terms, the tragedy of Clarissa is not 'world historical' but a storm in a teacup; it dramatizes a collision between two wings of the eighteenth-century ruling class whose true destiny lay not in conflict but in alliance.

(pp.88, 89)

From the economic perspective, what the whole issue of the lock represents is a clash of different value systems, and the uncertainties caused by capitalism moving into the spheres of the artistic, the aesthetic and the sexual. It is in the light of this that everything seems to be up for re-negotiation: the
position of women, of the aristocracy, of the nation in the world context, and above all, from Pope's perspective, of the poet and artist.

As pointed out earlier, the poem's reference to 'Midnight Masquerades' (I, 72) points to the threat sexual desire posed to the established aristocratic order. Terry Castle has shown in her article 'Eros and Liberty at the English Masquerade', how masquerade was feared as a form of expression that cut through class barriers, providing a sexual frisson that was a heady concoction of intrigue, secrecy, anonymity and clothes fetishism (pp.161, 174). In The Rape of the Lock this dangerous terrain of secret and anonymous liaisons is one policed by the Sylphs, who must protect from such known threats as: 'the treach'rous Friend, the daring Spark, / The Glance by Day, the Whisper in the Dark;' (I, 73-4).

The oxymoronic phrase 'treach'rous Friend' suggests a world beset by sexual intrigues and reversals, which serve to confound the poem's desire to provide a revelation, in clear and precise terms, of the reasons and causes for things, which is nothing less than the project of the Enlightenment: the use of scientific Reason and epistemology to discover hidden truth.

With its suggestions of different states of matter, of the spectrum of light, of visible and hidden forces and pressures, the physical concerns of Newtonian science are very much a part of the poem, and provide the means through which the poem articulates its own processes, often reducing social and human interactions to the kind of mechanistic descriptions of classical physics. Whilst on the one hand the poem presents a world that conforms to Enlightenment categories, to the hard-edged principles of Newtonian physics such as gravity, force and momentum, it is also a world subject to the confounding uncertainties of
sexual desire, a desire impacted upon by the developments within the mercantilist economic system that have made for the kind of proliferation that Michel Foucault sees as an important development within the notion of 'sexuality' during the eighteenth century (The History of Sexuality). As Ruth Salvaggio reveals, in the poem the war of the sexes (a real, and long-standing war, despite all the mock-heroic spoofing) turns out to have its epistemological and textual dimensions (Enlightened Absence). Through the presence of woman, for Ruth Salvaggio the 'sign' of that which is, from the perspective of Enlightenment patriarchy infuriatingly (and deconstructively) 'other' 24, both inside and outside of the patriarchal intellectual systems of the day, and through the disturbingly powerful presence of female sexuality, the primacy of male scientific objectivity and clarity is threatened. Indeed the pervasively sexual qualities of the language of the poem, where everything could be double entendre and innuendo, seems to suggest that the polarities be reversed, and that primacy be given to the sexual (and textual) over the epistemological.

Salvaggio sees women, chastised in the poem for the ways in which they constantly resist and infuriate male attempts to understand them, as a potent force for obfuscation and evasion, subverting the clarity and control that the male scientific epistemology desires. In fostering a sense of indefiniteness and uncertainty by a subversive 'blurring' of the fixed, the clear and the final, Pope would appear to be working, as it were, 'against the grain' since satire, as the art of the instant, clear-cut judgement seems to provide a masculine control of meanings which serves to police the patriarchal order. On the other hand, satire, as the most protean, generically unstable, open and pervasively critical of forms cannot help but provide, however unintentionally or unconsciously, a site of
subversion and opposition which threatens all fixed and definite 'patriarchal' forms. In the poem, this feminine dimension serves to confound the poem's patriarchal purpose and creates a fissure between the Enlightenment desire to understand, to control and to reconcile, and the poem's exploration of textures and forms: of the mutually analogous materiality of language and sexuality of women.

The references to the medieval world in *The Rape of the Lock*, serve to point to an aristocratic feudal world where the male members of the aristocracy were a lot more privileged, and would not have had to worry unduly about negotiating the laws and customs of courtship. Rape would be a quick and easy way of possessing the women they desired, and which were, from their class perspective, their natural right. Though these medieval references are mediated by those romances set in the medieval period that both Belinda and the Baron read, these texts would have been so internalized by both parties (Belinda thinks of herself as a knight, the Baron builds a 'love pyre') that they actually seem to read the world through the imaginative fantasies that the authors of these romances have constructed.

The Baron's Caesarian move from first sight to planned conquest all in one breath ('He saw, he wish'd, and to the Prize aspir'd:') (II, 30) suggests that he sees Belinda as little more than an object to be conquered, and the lock a trophy to be obtained, like those from past loves which he burnt as offerings on his pyre.

Belinda's beauty, on the other hand, is the self-created rather than inherited source of her power; it is not derived from the advantage of birth or class (not immediately, that is -- obviously she must have the money to afford the objects that she uses to create her alluring beauty). Her beauty has such a persuasive
force that it simply overrules such categories and considerations, threatening the old, fixed hierarchies of rank and position upon which aristocracy depends. Nor is this power to break through restricting constraints Belinda’s alone. The Sylphs are clearly figures who are unbounded by and unfazed by lesser ‘mortal’ considerations: ‘For Spirits, freed from mortal laws with ease / Assume what sexes and what Shapes they please.’ (I, 69-70).

Straddling the boundaries between the known world and its ‘Other’, the Sylphs are meant to act as a principle of rational explanation, to provide an imaginative and witty rendering of the scientific and epistemological laws of Newton, Locke and Descartes in Rosicrucian ‘fairy’ terms. For all their metaphoric connection with philosophical notions of the real and the rational, they nevertheless seem to be responsible for a degree of epistemological uncertainty and category confusion, particularly since their tissue-thin, diaphanous spirit forms are only revealed at the blurred point at which different boundaries meet:

Transparent Forms, too fine for mortal Sight
Their fluid Bodies half dissolv’d in Light.
Loose to the Wind their airy Garments flew,
Thin glitt’ring Textures of the Filmy Dew;
Dipt in the richest Tincture of the Skies,
Where Light disports in ever-mingling Dies,
While ev’ry Beam new transient Colours flings,
Colours that change whene’er they wave their Wings.(II, 61-8)

At the intersection of the visible and invisible, the Sylphs suggest an uncanny translucency that breaks the clear-cut Cartesian division between the visible and the invisible, as well as between a psychological ‘inside’ and an objective ‘outside’, that is to say, between the realm of thought and the imagination and the world upon which it is presumed to operate. It is here that according to Ruth Salvaggio, the Sylphs are
most deconstructive of the presuppositions of the 'patriarchal' Enlightenment that the opening of the poem suggested it would adhere to (Enlightened Absence, pp.75-6).

Representing a meeting point of two different realms, the Sylphs are a 'both' and a 'neither', a place of joining and of separations, the point of division and ultimate utopian unification, between male and female, material and immaterial, tactile and intellectual, and scientific and artistic. Connecting women to the old Renaissance analogical universe of elements and humours, and allowing for the construction of a special sense of interior 'space', the Sylphs represent not just the inevitable 'female' inclination towards imaginative fantasy (as men perceive it) but also an alternative world that is a refuge and imaginative escape, and which provides the source of the 'softer' powers of female resistance to male attempts at knowledge (envisaged as penetration) and control.

Pope further connects the notions of love and war (as forms of conquest), and echoes his English epic model, Paradise Lost, in making the Sylphs a military order, one of whose key roles seems to be to regulate the lives of women in a military fashion by bringing military discipline to their cosmetic arts. They are an old order that connect British military and political power to the order of the spheres:

Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your Chief give Ear, Payys, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Demons hear! Ye know the Spheres and various Tasks assign'd, By Laws Eternal, to th' Aerial Kind. Some in Fields of purest Aether play, And bask and whiten in the Blaze of Day. Some guide the Course of wandring Orbs on high, Or roll the Planets thro' the boundless Sky. Some less refin'd, beneath the Moon's pale Light Pursue the Stars that shoot athwart the Night, Or suck the Mists in grosser Air below, Or dip their Pinions in the painted Bow,
Or brew fierce Tempests on the wintry Main,
Or o'er the Glebe distill the kindly Rain.
Other on Earth o'er human Race preside,
Watch all their Ways, and all their Actions guide:
Of these the Chief the care of Nations own,
And guard with Arms Divine the British Throne.
(II, 73-90).

It is the Sylphs who contribute to turn Belinda herself into an image of British military power: more specifically of British naval power. This, it was already apparent in the eighteenth century, was the means to military supremacy over Europe, and unrivalled wealth as an imperial power. In *Windsor Forest* Pope shows he is well aware of what naval power means to Britain:

Thou too, great Father of the British Floods!
With joyful Pride survey'st our lofty Woods,
Where tow'ring Oaks their growing Honours rear,
And future Navies on thy Shores appear.

and

Thy Trees, fair *Windsor* now shall leave their Woods,
And half thy Forests rush into my Floods,
Bear Britain's Thunder, and her Cross display,
To the bright Regions of the rising Day;
(219-222; 385-8)

With the assistance of the Sylphs Belinda becomes a vessel far more elaborate and potent than the rather homely and mundane (and quite fragile) 'vessels' that are used as metaphors for women elsewhere in the poem. Gliding towards Hampton Court, Belinda has all the splendour of Cleopatra's barge, combined with the suggestion of (with lovely sexual irony) a vessel of great national significance as a symbol of English naval power greater power: a man-of-war. The phallic potency of this most military and masculine of the
feminine vessels in the poem is emphasized by the position that Ariel occupies at the sexually symbolic position of the masthead: 'Amid the Circle, on the gilded Mast, / Superior by the Head, was Ariel plac'd; / His purple Pinions opening to the Sun,' (I, 69-71).

This 'man-of-war' is Belinda 'armoured' for all the social and erotic encounters that await her at Hampton Court, still the centre of power and pleasure in eighteenth-century England. A beautiful, yet decidedly potent 'vessel', gliding along with supreme grace, Belinda looks for all the world (to the poet and reader privileged to be able to see the host of invisible Sylphs that surround her) like one of those official military paintings, in which classical deities and angelic figures serve to provide allegorical justifications of military power.

In that they represent the internalization of external authorities and powers, whose job it is to discipline and control a woman's body, the Sylphs are something of an embodiment of Michel Foucault's idea of an internalized self-discipline replacing external 'sovereign' authority. Those who fail to perform their disciplinary tasks are to be punished in the time-honoured way:

Whatever Spirit, careless of his Charge,  
His post neglects, or leaves the Fair at large  
Shall feel sharp Vengeance soon o'ertake his Sins  
Be stopt in Vials, or transfixt with Pins;  
(II, 123-6)

It is of course, very clever to portray a woman's dressing-table as a torture chamber, playing on the traditional male complaint regarding the ridiculous lengths to which women will go, and the suffering they will endure to make themselves beautiful. However absurd these versions of medieval torture sound (Torquemada comes to Toytown), a real nastiness is
revealed in the desire to ruthlessly punish the smallest infraction.

Clearly the Sylphs are ambivalent and ambiguous creatures. In his 'ranging through the crystal wilds of air' and in the way that he, like the other Sylphs, serves to connect the conscious and unconscious and the male and female poles of the separate dualities, Ariel is a figure whose roots lie in the hermetic alchemical tradition that was adopted by the Rosicrucians. It is my strong feeling that Pope is using the Rosicrucians more seriously than has been thought in order to invoke the alchemical traditions that the mechanistic and atomistic materialism of classical physics completely effaced.

It is most intriguing that Pope, a crippled poet whose sexual exploits were a standing joke amongst his enemies could have written a poem that seems to straddle the great sexual divide between men and women. Clearly read by male critics in a particular way, it is now clear from its female readers that there is a great sensitivity here (as compared to his quite misogynistic To A Lady) not only towards the situation of women, but also to the question of a feminine principle, and its relationship with the artistic and poetic, during the heyday of the ruthlessly masculine, totally phallogocentric preoccupations and practices of Newtonian science. Duffy's notion of the interpenetratedness of the male and female sets up a strange resonance here: the great 'wedding' of the male and female principles is one of the central notions of the alchemical tradition, the tradition that extends into Rosicrucianism, and thus lies behind the Sylphs. If the relationship between Sylph world and Newtonian hard-edged, 'billiard ball' physical world becomes somewhat confused in the poem?, with the former subverting the latter, it is to be remembered that Newton was himself deeply interested in alchemy, and
saw his physics as a direct continuation of that speculative tradition. This implicit allusion to the alchemical tradition through the presence of the Rosicrucian Sylphs suggests a view of the world in which causal connections and explanations are more mysterious and open-ended than they are in classical physics, and that if we are to solve the conundrum posed at the outset of the poem (why the event happened), we will not find the answer in terms of a mechanistic explanation of forces and pressures, which is the kind of answer suggested in the language that Pope uses to frame the question.

But there is a further dimension to this: the chemistry that is associated with the alchemical tradition is a synonym for sexual chemistry, a physical interactiveness that is primary and sexual. Belinda's society is simply shot through with it, to the extent that even, as we saw, the percolating of coffee (bubbling and steaming away in a not unsuggestive manner) takes on a libidinal quality. According to Jane Mills, the editor of the Bloomsbury Guide to Erotic Literature, because of the proliferation of scientific treatises on the sexual (the point that Foucault makes in his The History of Sexuality) the scientific and the erotic become difficult to disentangle (Mills, p.148). The connection between the two realms becomes that more involved when we remember that it was the atomistic and atheistic materialism of Thomas Hobbes that was used by the Restoration libertines as a philosophical justification for their sexual amorality (sexual intercourse between human beings becomes something free of social foreplay and nuance -- suggesting the reductive influence of a sensationalist philosophy in which all things are but variations on the ideas of motion and collision). The poem seems to be using the sexual as its basis of explanation. Setting out to show and explain a sexual
mystery in terms of physics, it seems to end up showing a physics that conforms to the deeper patterns of human sexual understanding. To put it another way, in its sense of the power and centrality of the sexual unconscious, the poem is, through its central narrative and the metaphors that it employs to tell its tale, heading towards the area of Freud and Lacan and the great psychoanalytical readers of social practices and institutions.

Belinda’s ‘rite of pride’, the sequence in which she applies her make-up before the mirror, transforming herself from high priestess of her own beauty to the goddess herself provides the most important symbolic action of the poem. In becoming the goddess she attains a sexual power which has, as the phrase ‘keener lightnings’ suggests, an elemental quality, and one that is, furthermore, clearly associated with light, which is, as Ruth Salvaggio points out, something that ‘belongs’ to the male as the basis of binary coding upon which the patriarchal Enlightenment depends (see pp 57-58). No longer the passive object of male scrutiny, ‘frozen’ by the violence of the male gaze like those unfortunate ‘gallery’ women in An Epistle to a Lady, Belinda becomes a source of light, one who looks wherever she likes, with favour and disdain.

Her lively Looks a sprightly Mind disclose,  
Quick as her Eyes, and unfix’d as those:  
Favours to none, to all she Smiles extends,  
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.  
Bright as the Sun, her Eyes the Gazers strike,  
And, like the Sun, they shine on all alike.  
(II, 9-14)

Belinda becomes the goddess as the result of a productive process involving the application of the materials of her world, themselves the polished products of British imperialism and trade, the boundaries of which were pretty conveniently ill-
defined. Sheila Delaney observes: 'At her dressing-table, Belinda is surrounded by exotic ornaments, the result of Britain's booming commercial expansion' (p.179).

Thus the process of Belinda's self-deification draws attention to the close correlation between beauty and wealth, showing not only how the material forces in her society have united to produce her beauty, but that her beauty is the end to which these forces are directed.

In presenting the wonderful and magical objects that have come from all over the world, the suggestion is that they encapsulate, through the associative power of synecdoche, the essence of the countries from which they come:

This casket India's glowing Gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder Box.
The Tortoise here and the Elephant unite
Transform'd to Combs, the speckled and the white.
(I, 133-6)

There is an animistic magic at work here that elicits the presence of Arabia from the spicy perfumes that Belinda keeps in 'yonder Box, and which has the 'Tortoise' and 'Elephant' 'unite': suggesting a magical fusion that hints at the magical transformation of substances in the Christian eucharist, as well as contriving to suggest a transgressive sexual union and act of procreation.

The sense that we have of objects fusing and melding to produce an all-new Belinda, the embodiment of the essences of the substances that she has used in her rite of pride, suggests an overdetermining process through which she is simultaneously elevated and reduced -- the universal symbol of female beauty (appealing to 'Jew' and 'Infidel' alike) that can itself be captured/symbolized in the form of the lock.
Though the lock obviously involves a reduction of Belinda, metaphor is used to disguise this reduction, by suggesting that the object to which she is reduced, is in some way of a 'higher' order, and confers value in embodying her or capturing her essence. The whole narcissistic and idealizing process through which Belinda becomes the goddess is performed with the kind of military precision, which is most apt since in terms of the mock-heroic parallel what Belinda is doing is arming herself against men. When her armour and weaponry proves its worth on the sexual battlefield expectations of comic discrepancy give way to the recognition of strikingly apt imaginative parallels.

The second canto of the poem presents us with the spectacle of this all-new Belinda's grand entrance into the public world, in which we move from an expansive baroque opening, with its 'wide-angled' view of the entire social prospect, and with its powerful sense of command over space, to the minute 'treachery' of the hair-fine traps set to 'entangle' men:

Love in these Labyrinths his Slaves detains,  
And mighty Hearts are held in slender Chains.  
With hairy Sprindges we the Birds betray,  
Slight Lines of Hair surprize the Finny Prey,  
Fair Tresses Man's Imperial Race insnare,  
And Beauty draws us with a single Hair.  

(II, 23-8)

The most perfect and dangerous of all such traps, is, of course, Belinda's lock. Whether it is the case that Belinda grew the lock with the explicit intention of ensnaring men, or whether it was purely accidental that it should have attained such power is left ambiguous: the preposition 'to' in the adverbial phrase 'to the Destruction of Mankind' (II, 19) allows Pope to suggest both possibilities.

That a greater number of critics and commentators have not picked up what would seem to be obvious, the
phallic and yonic imagery (birds, fish and 'hairy' labyrinths), is surprising. If we accept Maureen Duffy's point that these images are classically Freudian: 'The symbols the poem uses betray the real fear. Fish and bird are the penis; the hair is pubic hair' (*The Erotic World of Faery*, p.190) -- then the fear to which Duffy refers provides an interesting comment on the male attitude towards sexual involvement with women. This would seem to suggest that the fear of being caught up in a relationship of permanence, an 'entanglement', is a species of the unconscious fear of castration (in which behind the beauty of the lock, displaced from the beauty of its 'owner', lies the shadowy fear of the *vagina dentata*).

Swept up by the wonderful description of this social scene here in Canto II, which seems to undergo its own Copernican revolution in Belinda's presence, we as readers have probably not figured out that this epic transformation, arming and voyage is for Belinda a daily occurrence. This means that an incredible compression of the epic timescale has taken place.

In the third canto of the poem a harsh, agonistic classical world replaces the soft Romantic one (it is at the beginning of this canto that the Baron burns all his soppy Romance novels on his pyre, to signal his movement from Romantic adulation to epic action). With the classical agon comes war and conquest, which has a resonance for both the aristocracy, the class whose position was, in feudal times, premised on their warlike ethos and proficiency in war, and the middle class, the force behind mercantilism, which as colonial competition developed between the European powers, came to blur the boundaries between trade and war.31

It is in this canto that the metonymic linking device of zeugma, employed throughout the poem for a witty exploitation of incongruities, is used to draw attention to interconnectedness and dependence, showing
the constant connection between the immediate microcosmic world of social values and manners, and the more distant yet always implicit macrocosmic world of economics, politics and foreign policy, as in Queen Anne’s taking counsel and taking tea (III, 7-8). This suggests that the trivial world that dedicates itself to fashion and to courtship, can be what it is because of British political power and authority. If this society is concerned with the superficial and trivial it is because the fears that usually concern nations have been removed by British military power. Hence the zeugma that serves to equate foreign tyrants and local ‘nymphs’ in the couplet ‘Here Britain’s Statesmen oft the Fall foredoom / Of Foreign Tyrants, and of Nymphs at home (III, 5-6). The implicit moral judgement on the sexual callousness of these powerful statesmen, is set against the admiration of their ability to destroy the enemies of English liberty, as if they were little more than English nymphs. It is because of the security afforded by this kind of power that Belinda’s society is free to become obsessed about social and sexual fashions, and why Pope can write a mock heroical poem that lightly satirizes these obsessions whilst exploring somewhat self-reflexively the nature of this society’s social vices and its correcting satirical virtues.

Hampton Court is the terrain in which Belinda sets out to do battle with men, as if she were a medieval knight out to compete in the lists:

Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,
Burns to encounter two adventurous knights,
At Ombre singly to decide their Doom;
And swells her Breast with Conquest yet to come.
(III, 25-8)

The stakes are very high. The social milieu is so judgemental that even the barest suspicion of anything untoward is a humiliating disaster. Semiotically, the
place is red-hot with secret and coded meanings: where each sign, glance and gesture has its own secret text, subtext and glossary. Here gossip is little less than will to power:

One speaks the Glory of the British Queen.
And one describes a charming Indian Screen;
A third interprets Motions, Looks and Eyes;
At ev'ry Word a Reputation dies.

(III, 13-16)

In this game playing world the displaced 'battle' that Belinda must wage against men, takes place on the field of Ombre.

Ombre is a card game all about power, a three-handed game known as the 'Spanish game', and thus an easy metaphor for the three handed game of world power played between Britain, France and Spain finally resolved at the Peace of Utrecht which brought the War of Spanish Succession to a close, and set Britain on the road to becoming a colonial power. The game of Ombre makes the emphatic point that this society, and the wider world about to fall under its sway, is all about winners and losers. In the symbolic battle of the card game it is as if the cards are armies, colonial surrogate armies in all their dazzling exotic finery. Belinda's masterful strategy results in the victory of her hearts over the Baron's diamonds (the power of female beauty over money, symbolically speaking). Such is the level of generalship she displays in this surrogate warfare, she could have been another Marlborough, were it not for the unfair accident of birth that made her a woman in this male dominated society. As Maureen Duffy makes clear:

Her intelligence and energy can only find expression in a game of cards, which she plays with such brilliance that she could have led armies, with her masculine spirits seated on each
card. It isn’t the Baron’s fault either. He can only defend himself by attacking.
(The Erotic World of Faery, p.193)

Before the game, Belinda has to check her cards, metaphorically ‘review her forces’: ‘The skilful Nymph reviews her force with care: / Let Spades be trumps; she said, and trumps they were’ (45-46).

Belinda’s use of the fiat lux to determine trumps is decidedly ironic, since whilst in Windsor-Forest (1713) it was ‘ANNA’ (Queen Anne) who spoke the sacred ‘making’ words in order to institute a new Golden Age of peace, (‘At length great ANNA said -- Let Discord cease! / She said, the World obey’d, and all was Peace!’) (326-7), here it is the form that Belinda uses to call the shots in the surrogate warfare of the card game, determining that the suit in which she is most heavily favoured, ‘spades’, will be trumps for the course of the game (46). The ‘care’ that Belinda displays here is just as tellingly ironic. It is a word whose feminine sense is now ‘militarized’, and would appear to carry very little of its old associated meanings such as softness, concern and other epithets associated with what is primarily socially healing. The violence of the game does however, also have its sexual aspect, where the winning of the tricks (the word itself suggesting sexual treachery) suggests sexual conquest: the winning card ‘falling’ on the ‘prostrate’ card that is vanquished, the Knave of Diamonds winning the Queen of Hearts through ‘his wily Arts’ (III, 87), and the colourful array of cards that have been played spread across the table described as ‘Throngs promiscuous’ (80), a scene of sexual/military carnage that prefigures a similar scene during the battles between the beaus and the belles in the final canto.

Upon winning the final trick, and hence the whole game, Belinda’s exultant shout of victory echoes far
and wide in a way that seems to suggest that the notions of power and of presence are too closely associated. This proclamation of victory reduces the Baron to the status of defeated wretch, and in leading directly into the actual 'rape', points to revenge as the immediate (and logical) motivation for the assault.

With the cutting of the lock the Baron's action confirms in an unambiguous way what has been implicit all along -- eighteenth-century woman's position as victim. The deliberateness with which Clarissa, the traitor in the camp, draws the weapon suggests a ritualistic quality to the cutting of the lock, adding to the other ritualistic elements in the poem. At the moment of cutting Pope alludes to classical mythology to suggest that the scissors, the most feminine of bladed 'weapons', being more readily associated with sewing and needlework than acts of martial valour, is to be associated with the shears of the Fates, goddesses who would seem here to represent a male fate, and thus elevate the patriarchal principle to the level of a cosmic law.

In terms of the symbolic action of the poem, the cut is a very deep one indeed; in fact, as I suggested earlier, it represents the unkindest cut of all: castration, the 'price' of the social, psychic and linguistic journey from childhood and the Imaginary, to adulthood, sexual knowledge and the Symbolic Order (Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy, *The Works of Jacques Lacan: An Introduction*, pp.80-1). If in Lacan castration is the symbolic/psychic 'event' upon which the whole social order depends, it is, in the view of feminist criticism that has absorbed Freudian and Lacanian thinking, the central principle upon which the patriarchal oppression of women hinges.³⁴

Clarissa's advocating of a good-humoured fatalism might have a general, philosophical point and validity, but seems quite inappropriate in this particular
context -- as the lack of a positive response from the female audience shows. Maureen Duffy would appear to be spot on here in her negative assessment of the value of her speech from any politically conscious or alert female perspective. As Duffy has observed, Clarissa's speech could not be more coldly received by her sisters (*Faery*, p.192). The reasonableness of her request for good sense is icily rebuffed: 'So spake the dame, but no applause ensued' (*V*, 35). This cold response seriously undercuts the strongly authorial voice with which she spoke -- and signifies it as 'male'.35

The coldness of this reaction to Clarissa's speech shows how little women really buy into the sexual morality dictated to them by men, and which seems to trap them in a no-win situation. Clarissa glibly emphasizes the importance of 'merit' in the moral scheme of things. But the moral and the sexual are very different things. When she tells Belinda that 'Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul' (*V*, 34), this runs counter to the prevailing logic in the poem which privileges the visual. Furthermore, it is difficult to see how the word 'merit', like the word 'honour' used previously, can stand up against the power of the romantic and sexual codes that operate in Belinda's social world. As the poem informs us earlier, whilst men live in a world of honour, women inhabit the far more ambiguous realm of the Sylphs.

In asking Belinda to accept the importance of 'good sense' after the cutting of the lock, Clarissa seems to be asking Belinda to adopt a perspective quite removed from the kind of fetishistic sexual logic that she is both a victim of, and party to, and which seems to lead away from the sexual reality of real people and their bodies, towards a fantasy realm of surrogate objects, that are perceived to be more intense and more real.36 The logic of fetishism seems to confuse power with satisfaction: for the Baron the possession of the
lock means the restoration of the sexual power he has 'lost' to Belinda simply by looking at her. (As feminist critics and theorists have pointed out, the gaze is meant to confer power to the man at the expense of the woman 37 -- not the reverse, which is what happens here). The Baron's possession through violence ensures that the appearance of conquest will be served, the appearance that the male image of sexual power depends on. 38

Belinda fears that the lock will be used by the Baron in true aristocratic fashion, as a trophy to signify her having surrendered her virginity to him. Her pain and outrage at the rape indicates the degree to which she has lost the power that the lock conferred upon her. Here we no longer have a Belinda who has power over language, who is able to pronounce divine fiats ('Let spades be trumps') or shout out exultantly after winning at Ombre to find that the whole world echoes her triumph: 'The Nymph exulting fills with Shouts the Sky, / The Walls, The Woods, and long canals reply' (III, 99-100).

Now the melodramatic sense of pain and loss in her words points to the destruction of her illusory sense of supremacy and security at the hands of what Lacan terms 'the real', that insurmountable horizon beyond self and language. 39 When in an outraged state she exclaims that she would have preferred it if the Baron had grabbed 'hairs less in sight', it would seem as if, given the innuendo that has operated throughout the poem, she has made a Freudian slip, the innuendo suggesting, as Stanley Edgar Hyman points out, her pubic hair ('The Rape of the Lock', p.366), which in signifying (as Freudian slips do) her true (i.e unconscious) desire, exposes the essence of the rift between men and women over female sexuality. Belinda's Freudian slip points to a truth: that chastity is ultimately of less value than beauty for women. Only
men could make a frigid chastity an issue of morality. Pope here subversively suggests that the women, accused in the poem of coquettishness, fickleness and narcissistic pride, when they are exasperated enough to speak in their own voices, reveal that they do not see the world through the same distorted lenses that men do.

For Belinda the hairs are an extension of her beauty, not its symbolic replacement -- which is the male fetishist position to which the Baron is committed. Belinda's Freudian slip can be read as showing that for her, understandably, beauty is 'more real' and more important than chastity. The Baron however, is bound by the male created code of chastity to shun what Belinda could well be offering openly. This is presuming that he is, like the reader, able to read between the lines a little. We are told the Sylphs fail to protect Belinda at the last moment from the cutting of the lock because of the 'earthly lover' in her heart.

Whilst the lost lock of hair will grow again, it would seem to require a strange set of procedures for this society to be able to accord chastity a central social significance bordering on the absolute, and yet prevent itself being sexually repressed out of existence. Chastity, which, as Katherine M. Rogers has argued, was an all-important social virtue in eighteenth-century England (Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England\(^{40}\), is not a visible property (it seems to be a comment on general behaviour more than anything else); Belinda's society makes it visual however, and thus avoids the thorny philosophical question of appearance versus reality by collapsing the two, at the expense of whatever deception, subterfuge and downright hypocrisy this brings into being. If chastity means the same as the appearance of chastity this entails that for a woman to be considered to be
chaste, she must conform to the male-determined stereotype of what a chaste maid should look like. Beauty is employed as the 'sign' of chastity, and as such, provides a means of suggesting that chastity is not just something substantive, but something visible. The implications this has for female autonomy and self-representation are pretty severe. In Belinda's case, the presumed loss of chastity results in a horrible reductive transformation from the classical aesthetic (woman as beautiful object) to the grotesque (woman as body). Insofar as it is itself seduced by the hypocrisies of the age that revolve around the idea of beauty, Pope's poem is in complicity with this moral/sexual malaise. However, to the extent that it is able to point to an alternative to male sexual domination and control, the poem presents a satirical challenge to the practices of his society. Clarissa's speech, the bearer of a 'male' common sense that is quite understandably rejected by Belinda and her friends, also carries with it a perspective that seems to come from somewhere outside of the poem, from a world where people see things quite differently, and know that there are more serious things than a loss of a lock of hair that will grow again, and that the long loneliness of spinsterhood is much more difficult to bear than temporary chagrin.

Clarissa's pointing to the danger of spinsterhood if Belinda keeps on her ill-humoured tack, suggests that marriage is less an ultimate goal than a lesser of evils. Marriage may bring the required end to everything, it may be the ultimate goal of all the courtship, but it is something that, viewed from the perspective of the kind of social life that Belinda enjoys as the centre of attraction, brings cessation rather than fulfilment, and with this cessation, a loss of power. Belinda's power and value depends on her being still on the market, so to speak, in active
circulation in a world of coquetry, sexual tease and
deferral -- of a society where life seems to be founded
on a principle of 'jouissance' -- the kind of teasing
deferral and extension of pleasure that Roland Barthes
associates with reading. To develop this we could
point out that men and women seem to be very different
readers, to have very different appreciations of this
textual 'play'. The Baron shows himself to be a
typically masculine reader of the lock in his refusal
of textual 'play' by severing it from its
textual/sexual context. In contrast, Belinda's appeal
to other hairs suggests metonymy, the ruling device in
that narrative that is seduction and consummation.

From the poem we have a sense of a very different
sexual world that would operate if women defined the
sexual terrain, and were not imprisoned by male
sexuality dominated by the idea of 'penetration', as
the mock heroic parallel between a woman's petticoat
and Achilles', shield made for him by Hephaestus of
layers of different metals, would seem to imply (II,
117-122). The cumbersomeness of this garment (whose
layers are to increase sexual attractiveness, not to
'rebuff' attempted penetrations), which at first glance
seems to be a comment upon what its wearers will put
themselves through in dressing fashionably, would,
however seem to be better explained as yet one more
example of the kinds of constrictions and constraints
men placed upon women in the eighteenth century. Mary
Wortley Montagu, in a letter discussing social life
amongst the women at the Turkish baths, expresses how
she as a woman feels about being subjected to the
fashion:

I was at last forced to open my skirt and show
them my stays, which satisfied 'em very well, for
I saw they believed I was so locked up in that
machine that it was not in my power to open it,
which contrivance they attributed to my husband.
('Letter 1 April 1717', Selected Letters, p.91).
The epic simile of the petticoat contains its own sexual joke, of the standard phallic 'locker-room' kind. To complete the mock-heroical equation the powerful Homeric spear that fails to penetrate Achilles' special shield needs an equivalent spear-like 'weapon' to penetrate all the layers of the petticoat. The image of the attempted penetration would seem to confirm a male sense of power, but the emphasis on the rigidity and strength of the petticoat reflects male anxieties of phallic 'failure' (and at a deep level, of castration). The suggestion of penetration here (however much it may mask male anxieties) provides one of the really few suggestions in the poem of male phallic or sexual potency. For Toril Moi has argued (Sexual/Textual Politics pp.57, 58) that male thought is phallic because it is always endeavouring to 'penetrate' its object. The resistance of the petticoat is thus the sign of material (textual) resistance to such penetration. It is also, to my mind, a 'key' to the message regarding human sexuality and sexual politics that the poem is unconsciously expressing.

The whole idea of penetrating a petticoat is, of course, based on a faulty sexual logic, one which extends the logic of war, and of scientific 'penetration' into the bedroom. Forgive the unintended pun, but to turn the male sexual logic of the poem on its head, as I think this image does, what the petticoat simile tells us is that the failure to penetrate is because of the desire to penetrate. The very dominance of the notion of penetration destroys the possibility of male and female sexual interaction. The 'text' of the petticoat is meant to be read and uncovered in a way that would exemplify the kind of erotic reading that Roland Barthes has in mind when he speaks of 'the pleasure of the text' (the title of his book). The petticoat is meant to attract rather than
repel, it is meant to defer and extend pleasure and the mystery that is so much a part of that pleasure, rather than to prevent it. All of the routes 'around' the petticoat involve an intimate knowledge of boudoirs and of bodies, and of the social and sexual codes through which their meanings are expressed.

Belinda's great concern over the loss of the lock is one that relates to her social value, not to any sense of herself being morally tainted, that the idea of the fallen woman implies. Her perfect image has been spoiled, and she fears that the Baron will use the lock as a trophy, as an object that the society will naturally read as a sign of sexual conquest and possession.

The turbulent (and quite melodramatic) feelings of outrage and pain with which Belinda is beset are heightened by Umbriel's fetching the vial of Spleen from the Cave of Spleen and sprinkling it over her. Guided by a phallic 'golden bough' of spleenwort, Umbriel's journey is a clever revisiting of the classical theme of the journey to the Underworld, in which the weirdly distorted, sexually repressed shapes of female hysteria replace the shades from the classical realm of the dead.

Beyond its role as mock heroical version of the epic descent into the Underworld, its relationship with Belinda's social world, the world of the rest of the poem, is deliberately left unclear. It is the one uncharted place in a world that is so thoroughly mapped out. It exists as a product of language, and need not explain itself ontologically because the classical myth of the underworld allows the speaker to say that it exists.

A strange logic appears to be at work here. The normal metonymic links seem to have disappeared and everything would seem to be connected as the signs of something unspoken or unrepresented, as if there is
someone behind the scenes projecting these images via a camera obscura. The lines carry an authority which is at odds with the feeling that the whole thing is just a series of nonsensical little tableaus, the hallucinatory products of a raving hysteria.

A strange mixture of the cryptic and the excessive, the images the Cave reveals would all seem to be symptoms (appropriately, since this is a medical site) of a powerful conflict between constraint and desire, with all the suggestions of the physical and biological restriction (with the references to ‘pain’ and ‘megrim’), strongly at odds with the forcefulness and vivid energy of these visual shapes, which suggest that which is free-flowing, metamorphic and ‘transactive’, and close in spirit to Menippean satire and carnival grotesque.

The images that the Cave appears to be able to ‘generate’ seemingly out of nothing are a strange or uncanny mixture of the intense on the one hand, and the diffuse and dislocated on the other. It would seem as if Spleen has the power to, as it were, ‘write itself’, to impose its own shapes and forms -- each of which is a perfect encapsulation of a symptom/message, expressed in that unconscious allegorical code that is composed of these images of repression and frustration.

The astonishing image of the ‘Angels in Machines’ (IV, 46) which appears to be a fusion of religious revelation and scientific imagination, echoes (in that it is clearly a fevered and disturbed image), and at the same time undercuts (in that it is so imaginatively striking a literalization of the idea of the deus ex machina) the scientist’s suspicion of the miraculous, and faith in mechanical rather than miraculous causes.

Whilst there is a deranged, Bedlam tour quality to this part of the poem, the energies of this lower stratum, which clearly bear the hallmarks of Bakhtin’s carnival grotesque, are contained. ‘Spleen’, is of
course, the name by which these energies are appropriated and controlled: as Sheila Delaney points out, this was the name for a malaise that was regarded as both specifically feminine, ruling the sex 'to fifty from fifteen' and fashionably aristocratic ('Sex and Politics in Pope's Rape of the Lock', p.187).

The culmination of all the tableaus that the Cave reveals (which read in many cases like case histories in a psychopathia textbook) is the kitchen scene with its climactic image of 'maids turned bottles, call aloud for corks'. The movement towards what appears to be the source of the Spleen, where its power is so concentrated as to dissolve normal categories and boundaries (that would seem to suggest the presence of carnival grotesque) is thus marked by a social descent from boudoirs to kitchens and from belles to maids (the maids who cry out for corks in this lower class antithesis to upper-class romance are less maid-virgins, than lowly kitchen maids). With the no-nonsense copulation desired in this heady dissolution of categories, the whole male/female courtship issue is reduced to a crude equation, stripped of all its social and cultural rituals, reduced to a simple agent, verb, object transaction devoid of any romantic frills.

Whilst the Cave of Spleen may trivialize the powerful forces that the 'fashionable' maladies are symptoms of, it also serves to centralize women by suggesting that it is their energies that lie at the poem's generative source. So powerful are the category inversions that Spleen (a most Menippean force) is able to produce the one key gender reversal that would totally transform the politics of human social and sexual relationships, depicted in the line 'Men prove with child, as powerful fancy works'.

There is a triumphant quality to Pope here: almost as if he is mocking the same male voyeuristic reader who was 'treated' to the eroticized secret world of
women in the opening canto of the poem, and now sees himself as a feminized spectacle, impregnated by the very 'fancy' that led him into the poem's sexual imagination in the first place.

Ultimately the feud over the lock is solved by divine intervention, that of the true transformative power in Belinda's world, the poet, who now looks down from an Olympian height and begins to assert his affinities with Milton, the poet of *Paradise Lost* (1674), the great national epic and religious poem of the high baroque.

At the height of the fracas, the lock disappears, and cannot be found: the places where Belinda and her associates look only reveal how confined and limited their view of the world is:

Some thought it mounted to the Lunar Sphere,  
Since all things lost on Earth are treasured there.  
There Heroes' Wits are kept in pondrous Vases,  
And Beaus' in Snuff-boxes and Tweezer-Cases.  
There broken Vows, and Death-bed Alms are found,  
And Lovers' Hearts with Ends of Riband bound,  
The Courtier's Promises, and Sick Man's Prayers,  
The Smiles of Harlots, and the Tears of Heirs,  
Cages for Gnats, and Chains to Yoak a Flea,  
Dry'd Butterflies and Tomes of Casuistry.  
(V, 113-122)

The lock is transformed into a comet (appropriately, since comets have 'hairy' tails), an act which would appear to be the expression of the speaker's own 'divine fiat', and which serves to unite the mythological (classical) dimension to the poem with the scientific interests of Pope's culture, concerns which as we have already shown, are expressed in the poem's preoccupation with the visual and with the epistemological.

The poem celebrates science and the new epistemology -- but it is also asserting the power of the artistic imagination to triumph over the closing
down of the possibility of artistic vision in the empiricist philosophy of Locke and the scientific system of Newton. As Pat Rogers points out it was because of Locke that 'the creative imagination goes underground' (The Augustan Vision p.47). In the transformation of the lock into an immortal, celestial object the poem enacts its own process of self-creation, tellingly missed by all but those with 'quick poetic eyes' (V, 124). It also celebrates the social capital (to use Bourdieu's term) of the poet-artist who is able to achieve the transformation by harmonizing/re-directing the contradictory forces in his society, as well as confirming the rule of the male symbolic order over the feminine realm of sensuous particularity and textuality, whilst using the textual to resist the absolutist claims of science and epistemology. Indeed the Miltonic role that Pope adopts at the outset of the poem, but which becomes more evident here at its close, provides him with far greater powers than that afforded by the science and philosophy of his time. Able through the 'alchemical' Sylphs to access inner space, particularly that of the female mind, the speaker in the poem is thus -- like Milton who wrote Paradise Lost from a baroque space outside of space and time -- beyond the constraints of Newtonian physics, finding a way in which to escape having to become the mouthpiece of the ruling scientific and epistemological discourses, through presenting himself as the medium through which they are kept in communication with the 'underworld' discourses of textuality/sexuality that lie outside of their systems. The assertion of the imagination -- what the poem links to the female domain, at the expense of male science and epistemology -- is, as we have seen, something that cannot be separated from that other, more basic struggle with which the poem deals: that of the much longer and more bitter war between the sexes.
With the gratuitous act of transforming the lock into the comet (a historically recurrent sign that transcends the social world and yet provides it with a clear sense of focus and a desire to look outward), the poem extends its concern with the issue of the sign and with forms of production, pointing to its own power as a performative in metaphorically enacting its own ability to encapsulate in images, to speak and to have meaning for different readers and their societies across space and time. Here the comet is an image of something free and spontaneous, creative and magical, that breaks with sense of constraint that we have seen in this social world, and replaces Belinda's world's sense of time, that Heraclitian time of fast, inwardly spiralling circles, with an image of cosmic time, the time used to measure the great historical cycles of the rise and fall of dynasties and Empires, whose birth or death are signalled by epochal moments such as that dealt with by the poem. The 'birth-death' comet is thus presented as the sign that everything in Belinda's world has changed, that it is now a 'post-cutting' world. Out of the death of the old world and with it, we presume, Belinda too, will emerge the historical successor to Imperial Rome and absolutist France, whose collapse is referred to in the line 'The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome' (139). We can read into this a certain ironic justice. Since Belinda attached so much value to the lock and projected so much of herself into it, it is only fitting that it should be the lock and not Belinda herself that is immortalized, in the way befitting a classical hero beloved of the gods.

With this apotheosis comes the celebration of the survival of the lock and the triumph of art, part of whose meaning is premised upon human mortality. A shadow is cast even as the lines celebrate the new imperial world that Pope believed (quite wrongly) would bring a unification of society, science and classical
art (in a sense that extends beyond the limited neo-
classicism of the time). The expansiveness at the 
ending (so typical of the expansive endings of Pope’s 
poetry during his earlier period of writing) is both 
tempered and augmented by a reminder of the vanity of 
all human pretensions, be they those of Arabella 
Fermor, of Louis XIV, or of the entire Roman Empire.

The perspective from which the reader is reminded 
of the fate of the great powers of the past is that of 
the anticipated great power of the future. As in most 
myths of triumph there is always a sacrifice.
Belinda’s sacrifice of the lock (a highly civilized, 
symbolic sacrifice of a beautiful virgin to the social 
good) coming at the end of a long series of 
displacements and other hidden transactions leads to 
the final magical transformation of closed, 
solipsistic, self-preoccupied world, to outward-looking 
Empire, believing itself the centre of the world, and, 
as the natural successor to classical Greece and Rome, 
its guiding light.

In releasing the lock to its new universal mode of 
existence, the poem reconciles a notion of absolute 
value/meaning with that of the kind of mass meaning 
conferred upon a literary object by seeing it as social 
property. Transformed into a comet, the lock becomes 
(this the ‘meta’ transformation to which the comet 
transformation points) a metaphor for the new social 
power and centrality that it will attain with its 
entering a very different economy of value and mode of 
circulation42, one that brings liberation from the 
patronage system, whose sexual correlative is the 
Baron’s trophy room full of all his ‘trophies’, the 
stolen objects that are the signs of past ‘conquests’.

Historically, with Queen Anne’s death and the 
collapse of the Tory party, the moment turned out to be 
epochal in a way that the poem did not expect. As we 
know from Pope’s later poems the idealistic vision that
is expressed here was starkly confounded and contradicted by the social and political world that was to emerge, which once we step outside the favourable light in which it was placed by the Whig historians of the nineteenth-century, suddenly emerges in its true, much darker colours. As Michael Denning points out in an article dealing with the criminal/political context of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, the period of the Walpole government that Whig historians characterise as a period of 'political stability' (p.31), was in fact a repressive political environment in which 'political life in England in the 1720s had something of the sick quality of a "banana republic"' ('Beggars and Thieves *The Beggar's Opera* as Crime Drama', p.37).

It is to the satire of this period that I now turn.
Here, for the moment, we witness that familiar process long generally associated with the Enlightenment, namely, the desacralization of the world, the decoding and secularization of the older forms of the sacred or the transcendent, the slow colonization of use value by exchange value.

Fredric Jameson 'Cognitive Mapping'

Courts are too much for Wits so weak as mine; Charge them with Heav'n's Artill'ry, bold Divine! From such alone the Great Rebukes endure, Whose Satyr's sacred, and whose Rage secure. 'Tis mine to wash a few slight Stains; but theirs To deluge Sin, and drown a Court in Tears.

Alexander Pope, *Satires of John Donne: IV*  
(280-5)
The satires that we will be analysing in this chapter are all important because of the sense that they convey of being acts of resistance against a powerful threat, primarily political, but extending into all of social life. The sense of social threat and demographic upheaval that we find in eighteenth-century satire is not a new thing. In his *Satire* I the Roman satirist Juvenal gives us a portrait of a Rome being overrun by foreigners and new social types who are destroying the architectural and social cohesion of the city.

What is significantly different about the way in which these concerns surface in the satire of the eighteenth century, is the clear connection that is drawn between social changes and changes at the intellectual and political levels. There is a sweeping quality to the changes that take place during the century, with the reshaping and reformulating of the social and intellectual landscape in ways that reflect the notions of mathematical regularity and order in the new scientific philosophy of Newton and Locke, the ideology of a mercantilism struggling with its need to homogenize and control the new mass society it has generated as it moves towards its absolutist, imperialist phase.

David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity* and Lewis Mumford in *The City in History* both deal with aspects of this process of transformation within its widest historical context. Here is Mumford's concise statement of the major changes that lead from the medieval through to the baroque, absolutist period:

Between the fifteenth and eighteenth century, a new complex of cultural traits took shape in Europe. Both the form and the contents of urban life were, in consequence, radically altered. The new pattern of existence sprang out of a new economy, that of mercantile capitalism; a new political framework, mainly that of a centralized despotism or oligarchy, usually embodied in a national state; and a
state of imminent or near collapse, seem to veer off away from or fall in towards each other at strange angles, suggesting a world subject to the tensions created by conflicting forces and perspectives.

The narrower political issues of the day, such as the opposition of the major satirists of the period to the policies, and whole political style of the Walpole government, must, I feel, be connected to and placed against the backdrop of the kinds of major social and cultural changes during the first half of the eighteenth century that analysts like Jameson, Mumford, Williams and Stallybrass and White have articulated. Lewis Mumford characterises the role of the law during the absolutist period as integrally related to social regulation and centralized political control under the dictates of mercantile capitalism, or as he calls it 'baroque capital':

Law, order, uniformity -- all of these then are special products of baroque capital: but the law exists to confirm the status and secure the position of the privileged classes; the order is a mechanical order, based not upon blood or neighbourhood or kindred purposes and affections but upon subjection to the ruling Prince; and as for the uniformity -- it is the uniformity of the bureaucrat, with his pigeonholes, his dossiers, his red tape, his numerous devices for regulating and systematizing the collection of taxes. The external means of enforcing this pattern of life lies in the army; its economic arm is mercantile capitalist policy, and its most typical institutions are the standing army, the bourse, the bureaucracy and the court. (The City in History, pp.420-1)

In the The Condition of Postmodernity, David Harvey devotes a whole chapter 1 to the radical reconceptualization and reorganization of space taking place during the period, and devotes particular attention to the shift from a world in which the local
and traditional concerns, perspectives and interests are predominant, to a world ruled by abstract and mathematically quantifiable notions of time and space. He speaks of the age experiencing an 'overwhelming sense of compression of spatial and temporal worlds' (p.240). In terms of the political realities of eighteenth-century England, this is a movement from the patchwork quilt of little urban and rural districts under the political control of the country squires, to the dominance of the capital, the cities and the rule of the trading classes and trading interests expressed through the bureaucratic politics of control of the Whig party under Walpole. The movement towards the abstract and rigidly quantifiable that Harvey characterises as so central in the social and cultural developments that take place during the century leads to a rigidly centralized notion of social and political control. The movement towards the authoritarian dominance of the centre as opposed to the authority of the squires and other local powers is a cause of grave political concern for the major satirists of the period, who were steeped in the Renaissance humanist tradition of intellectual dissidence.

In imaginative terms this change from the old to new is that from the hierarchic, rurally ordered world of Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, harshly and bluntly commanded by its Westerns and Allworthys, to the rurally destructive, abstract and dislocated flying island of Laputa in the Third Part of *Gulliver's Travels*.

The abstract notions of space and time that form part of the restructuring and reorganizing of the social and political world militate against any sense of space as something that is necessarily bound up with, or even 'produced' by, the social and psychological 'life' of actual living human beings. Of particular significance here is the notion of space in
relation to the ‘construction’ and development of the subject, processes which are seen as taking place both in the context of the social order, and in opposition to that which constitutes the ‘Other’. In Falling Apart: The Rise and Decline of Urban Civilization (1976) Elaine Morgan argues that in the human urban environment space is something far from abstract, that it is something fraught, tense and contested: a battle line between self and Other in which violence and symbolic verbal violence, such as satire and wit are used in aggressive and defensive ways (in an urban context it is often difficult to draw a clear demarcation between the two). Space is, as she convincingly argues, crucial to the very existence of wit and satire. These she sees as rooted in and expressing a strong sense of urban territoriality, in their commitment to what she describes as the ‘crucial distance’, that physical distance that is important for the preservation of that sense of space bound up with one’s sense of identity, and through that, the preservation of the rational interaction of the various members of a social community. Morgan writes of the importance of wit as a safety valve through which violence can be released, displaced or sublimated:

At its most civilized, though, the subconscious aversion doesn’t break into hatred and fight. It breaks into words -- debate, discussion, argument, oratory -- or it breaks into laughter, or satire, or that hard to define and ineffably urban type of verbal gymnastics known as wit, which is typically the city’s safety valve for the city’s malaise. It is the source of some of literature’s pure gold from Menander and Horace through Swift and Wilde to Noel Coward and Dorothy Parker. (p.47)

The rise of the mass, logically restructured mercantilist society is accompanied by a new economist ideology which, as Stephen Copley has shown, is
fundamentally hostile to the moral, and arts and culture-privileging discourse of humanism with which the Tory satirists were aligned. As Stallybrass and White have shown -- during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries there is a closing down of popular sites of cultural and political expression with the privatization and professionalization of spaces. This process of the closure of public spaces that begins here results in our contemporary world in which all spaces have been commercialized or institutionalized -- where public spaces no longer exist in the sense that they did in the Renaissance, as sites for the production of the popular libertarian spirit of carnival with its characteristically festive and satirical opposition to dominant ideology. In Bakhtin's account the suppression of carnival to which this process of closure leads is accompanied by the resurgence of classicism, and by the processes of institutionalization (the growth of institutions and the growth of power within existing institutions) that we see similarly characterised in the archaeologies of Michel Foucault. Our postmodern period is, I believe, the final conclusion of the process of privatization that has been observed accompanying the movement from mercantilism to capitalism and early industrialism within the eighteenth century.²

The satirists' battle against these processes of closure, including the legal forces of the Walpole government closing down textual spaces (and in so doing revealing its absolutist tendencies) is the most significant, inescapably political dimension of their practice. That such a battle is being contested in the sphere of language and of signs can be seen from Pope's *Horatian Imitations*, the key political satires under discussion in this chapter. The *Imitations* clearly reveal how much signs and meanings, particularly political and moral signs and meanings are under contestation, being
directly challenged by the State's conveniently narrow, utilitarian definitions. These fit in with what Stephen Copley terms the growing 'economist' thinking of the time), set against the satirist's uncompromisingly moral definitions (Literature and the Social Order in Eighteenth-century England, pp.3-4, 7).

The satirist is forced to assert his right to exist in the face of this economism and associated developments that extend across the economic, social, political, cultural and legal spheres, and which threaten the closure of space upon which his identity and practice depend.

Pope's poem An Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot (1735) provides a preface to the Horatian Imitations where he conducts his major exploration of the theme of an oppositional space for the satirist and the practice of satire. The poem in which Pope announces his movement towards a more engaged style of writing and stance as writer in response to the social and political developments taking place, Arbuthnot raises the issue of the position of the satirist when the very 'space' of the writer is being threatened. Crucially concerned with the question of the identity of the writer/satirist, portrayed here as humble, modest and accessible, this poem stands as a prelude to the ironic yet deeply combative Imitations, his exploration of the possibilities for subtly subversive political satire.

The poem's sense of threat is conveyed through the startling image with which the poem opens: of an assault on Pope's privacy of space and of person by a wave of admirers, patron-seekers, and general hangers-on. In this assault, characterised in military terms, Pope's private world is invaded, he appears to be left without a place to escape to, and extreme pressure is exerted on him to in some way address and redress all the hopeless desires and needs that those invading his life imagine he will be able to fulfil.
power relationship between author and reader/host of readers is presented as a symbolic feminization, as G. Douglas Atkins has shown (Reading Deconstruction: Deconstructive Reading, pp.122-3).

In Pope’s description of the figures that make up this mob (from the Man of Rhyme in line 13 to the figure of Pitholeon in line 49) we have a clear image of them as frantically scrambling for some kind of recognition. The extent of their confusion is revealed by their singling Pope out as both the cause of the condition that they are in, and their salvation from it!

The poem starts with a frantic and exasperated Pope, hammering on the door of Dr Arbuthnot, his friend and fellow Scriblerian, seeking refuge (in this crazed state Pope seems to mirror the very people he is running from). That Pope should have run to a friend and fellow-writer for protection is an indication of the break down of the patronage system: there is now no patron to whom Pope can turn in this moment of crisis.

As Elaine Morgan makes clear, the arrival of the word 'mob' from the Latin mobile vulgus shows a connection between the idea of a collective irrationality, and the idea of movement (Falling Apart, p.101). Arbuthnot’s house represents a place of refuge from social pressures that are an expression of lack and desire, but a desire that manifests itself in a collective form as madness.

As a doctor, Arbuthnot is a member of the profession which, as Barry Smart points out in his analysis of Michel Foucault’s Madness and Civilization, was entrusted with protecting the world of the sane from the contagion of madness, (Smart, Michel Foucault pp.22-3). For the satirists of the period, crazy movement such as that with which they depict their enemies, pouring out of Bedlam to subject the world to
their lunatic schemes, is the sign of madness, and places that are protected from the crazed hustle and bustle of city life are places of sanity and rationality.

In this new dynamic and fluid situation, Pope has to create an identity (reaffirming difference, distinction and the boundaries of the self) and a space for his practice that is able to preserve its separation and distance from the old patronage system on the one hand, and the new market system on the other: in other words to create a 'third' space that keeps its politics distinct from the kinds of politics circumscribed by and determined by these two modes of production.

Initially hustled out of his stride, overwhelmed by the sheer violence with which he is being uprooted, Pope calms down and grows more confident and self-affirming as the poem progresses, the very regaining of control over the situation confirming his claims to being a thoroughly professional career poet.

Whilst the poem would seem to be extremely sensitive to the implication of this loss of centres and the resultant need to find new loci of social meaning, it also conveys a clear sense of threat that the new world poses to a writer like Pope, who suddenly discovers the disadvantages of having a 'mass' profile. Ironically, Pope finds himself powerless because of his success as a writer (his 'power' to reach people). It is because of his power that he is turned into the helpless subject of his besieger-readers, whose assault on his home is a product of desire and lack, and of the desperate need for a source of meaning and purpose in their lives. Named as the author of their listed woes, Pope is both the author of their desire, and the object of it, the reluctant 'lover' who must fill the vacuum generated by the new conditions of literary production and the mass enthusiasm and desire that this has
created. G. Douglas Atkins sees this lover/love object relationship as central in the poem, being the key to the position that Pope finds himself in: being unable to escape the host/parasite logic of connection and relation, whilst attempting to establish his distance and difference from all the representations of the Other that we find in the poem (Reading Deconstruction: Deconstructive Reading, pp.122-3). That this logic presents the relations between the satirist and the Other in sexual terms reveals the depth of Pope’s anxieties and concerns regarding the integrity of his own identity in the face of the developments that the poem presents.

It is because of this situation in which the figure of the satirist/poet finds himself in the poem that the position of the reader takes on a special importance. As a writer/reader relationship that stands outside of those with which the poem deals, this imagined relationship inside the poem represents an implicit, and contrasting ideal. The reader is brought into the dialogue, standing alternatively in the Arbuthnot or the Pope position, thus becoming included in the circle of friends and family that Pope uses to distance himself from those who are representatives of, or are connected with, the antagonistic social forces that threaten his identity. The relationship between the satirist and reader, taking place in a textual space of shared social ‘truth’, is thus meant to be closer and more intimate than the kinds of unequal, if not exploitative, relationships that the poem characterises, particularly between the new figures of literary influence and power, who through the change in the mode of literary production find themselves in a commanding social position, able to exploit the hosts of readers/admirers/supplicants who are totally dependent upon them for literary acceptance and advancement. The most powerful and influential of
these, the sneeringly authoritarian Atticus (Addison) has enthroned himself (like Cibber at the beginning of *The Dunciad*) and sneeringly looks down upon his literary subjects as if he were an Eastern tyrant (a popular image during the period of everything that the eighteenth-century Englishman believed antithetical to his own parliamentary political culture).

Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear like the Turk, no brother near the throne
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for Arts that caused himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserved to blame, or to commend,
A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend;

(197-206)

The portrait of Sporus, aimed at the actual courtier, Lord Hervey, seems to bring the anxieties of the poem in a particularly concentrated form. Sporus, an embodiment of the political and moral corruption that we see more centrally expressed in the *Imitations*, also seems, in his proliferating emptiness, to reflect the satirists' view of the new mass literature as self-promulgation and propagation. He is a figure that the portrait painter starts out confidently claiming to have 'placed' and fixed within his sights ('yet let me pin this painted bug'). Armed with a superabundance of off-putting defence mechanisms (his 'stink' and his 'sting'), Sporus, it soon becomes apparent, cannot be pinned down at all.

Names in satire often suggests a linguistic corruption of identity: here the whole notion of identity is exploded. Sporus has no centre, no 'core' identity. He is all movement, transformation, dissemination: an ostensibly sexually ambivalent, yet in effect clearly phallic, 'force' that would seem to have no effect on anything 'whose buzz the witty and
the fair annoys’, until his ability to wield power through his corrupting of the Queen is revealed. It is this power that marks him as a dangerous Satanic corrupter, the very embodiment of Court corruption (I.R.F Gordon, A Preface to Pope, p.39).

Meant to epitomize everything discordant and inharmonious in the poem, Sporus represents an unrestrainable, uncategorizable figure of an absolute and repugnant ‘difference’, a shape-shifter in a constant state of mutation. Overruling all binary oppositions, he fractures the antithetical order that Pope’s poetry depends on so decisively that the extract ends on a triplet rather than the expected couplet.

Sporus is a strange creature whose excessiveness and contradictoriness seem to suggest a power that is beyond Pope’s full understanding, since it would appear to be beyond the logic of language to contain it. The strong suggestion of oral violence in the satirical portrait that Pope has created, particularly in relation to the images of the oral expulsion of fluids (the ‘spitting’ speech of Sporus), would seem to suggest that the portrait is very close to home: that Sporus represents something that Pope needs to satirically exorcise.

That Sporus’ capacity for oral self-propagation (he ‘spits himself abroad’—an act that suggests sexual ejaculation) seems to express itself in the very mentioning of his name would appear to indicate that the very act of naming is a kind of magical summoning up of the man himself (absolute presence in a portrait meant to show otherness and absence, above all, absence of the phallus, the sign of difference and of power).

The venomous spitting of self (and spitting of venomous self) that is so definitive of Sporus suggests something that comes uncomfortably close to the activity of the satirist himself, the creative and destructive ‘dissemination’ of the satirical animus.
So rather than distance and separation between the satirist and his target, we have reciprocity and entanglement as the play of difference deconstructs the kind of clear, antithetical separation that Pope was hoping for. They do, as Atkins points out, have something very much in common. Both Pope and Sporus are ‘parasites’, both depend on each other for their textual ‘being’ (Reading Deconstruction, p. 135). Atkins misses however the more obvious bond that they share as parasites: Sporus (Hervey) is a court parasite who preys upon his court victims, Pope as a satirist is a different kind of parasite, one who preys parasitically upon his satirical victims, and who occupies not a place of difference or removal but a (to turn the word into a spatial pun) ‘para-site’: a place neither above nor below, neither without nor within, the kind of charged and contested space of proximity that he occupies in the Horatian Imitations.

In the last, thoroughly anti-climactic, part of the poem Pope has managed to distance himself from Sporus’ unrestrained shape-shifting sexual energy by focusing on his responsibilities as a dutiful son and loyal friend. Pope uses a process of negative definition to separate himself from the social malaise whose impact was so powerfully felt at the beginning of the poem.

Not Fortune’s Worshipper, nor Fashion’s Fool, Not Lucre’s Madman, nor Ambition’s Tool, Not proud, not servile, be one Poet’s praise That, if he pleas’d, he pleas’d by manly ways; (334-7)

The phrase ‘manly ways’ conveys a strong sense of the need for rhetorical deliberateness and for measured phrasing in order to establish a clear masculine identity as opposed to Sporus’ transgressive sexuality. At the close of the poem Pope attempts to restore a sense of order and regularity by restating the bonds of
family and friendship that make his world and his sense of identity more secure. In sharp contrast to the beginning of the poem, where members of the group of suppliants accuse him of being the cause of their self-destructive urges to write, Pope here expresses confidence of being able to affect people who are meaningful in his life:

O Friend! may each Domestic Bliss be thine!  
Be no unpleasing Melancholy mine:  
Me, let the tender Office long engage  
To rock the Cradle of reposing Age,  
With lenient Arts extend a Mother's breath,  
Make Languor smile, and smooth the Bed of Death,  
(406-411)

In Pope's earlier poem: Moral Essays: Epistle IV. To Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington (1731) there is a similar concern with place and displacement -- but here Pope displays a greater confidence in the power of art (his own and Bolingbroke's brought into powerful alignment) to resist the destabilizing social and economic forces, epitomized by the upwardly mobile, invasive nouveau riche figure of Timon, whose badly designed and appallingly fitted house raises many of the humanist concerns regarding art and architecture.

At the centre of the poem lies the contrast between the world that Burlington represents, the 'solid' world of architecture that affirms the importance of taste (and thus the importance of the satirist as the arbiter of taste) and the new world represented by Timon's villa, the world of a new consumerist notion of taste that has lost the moral and aesthetic sense of the past.

Since architecture is a particularly 'solid' and 'public' form of artistic creation, Burlington is an appropriate representative of *stylus*, the strong personal imprint of those whose style is definitive. There is the sharpest of contrasts between Burlington
and Timon in relation to the question of art and production since they stand at opposite ends of the creative process: Burlington is the producer, Timon the consumer. As an architect, Burlington is still connected to the old world of patronage, and to a notion of taste that links various kinds of artistic creation.

The villa lacks the kind of solidity and substantiality that Bolingbroke represents -- qualities that are so strongly featured in Horace’s satires, where they act as the ‘sign’ of the quality of human social life. Rather than architectural strength and stability we have jerry-built facades, what Pope describes as:

...some patch’d dog-hole ek’d with ends of wall,
Then clap four slices of Pilaster on’t,
That, lac’d with bits of rustic, makes a Front.

(32-4)

There is a ‘raw’ quality to everything here, as if straight from the production line and just tacked together: an ad hoc accretion, the antithesis to the ruling aesthetic principle of the concordia discors, which in this poem, as well as in Windsor-Forest (1713) and, to a lesser extent The Rape of the Lock (1714), Pope treats as as much a political principle employed to justify England’s claims to colonial dominance as the embodiment of a political ‘order in diversity’, as a principle of aesthetics or metaphysics.

On account of its neglect of taste and style, the villa’s cold interiors and exposed exteriors, seem to have been designed with the creation of discomfort in mind, producing a place painfully lacking in human considerations, in which the overriding feeling is one of coldness and alienation rather than the warmth of human society. In contrast to Burlington (the artist/producer), who displays public-minded, correctly
'classical' attitude to his profession, Timon (the consumer) fails to understand the fundamentally 'social' issue of architecture and landscape gardening, his villa providing a thoroughly 'commodified' pastiche of classical forms and motifs that seem to allude to and express a desire to emulate the tyrannical days of the Late Empire rather than the full flood of the Roman Republic, or even the ambivalently regarded period of the early Empire under Augustus.

Writers like Pope do not fit into Timon's world: the vast library of impressively bound books, there to provide the 'sign' of style and learning shows only the rift between writers and the new stately house owning class: between the owners of cultural capital and those desperate to transform new wealth into social assets.

His Study! with what Authors is it stor'd?
In Books, not Authors, curious is my Lord;
To all their dated backs he turns you round,
These Aldus printed, those Du Sueil has bound.
Lo some are Vellom, and the rest as good
For all his Lordship knows, but they are Wood.
For Locke or Milton 'tis in vain to look,
These shelves admit not any modern book.
(133-40)

It is ironical that whereas in the building of the house corners were cut, and substandard materials were used, Timon ensures that the books he collects, which are without any real literary or philosophical value, exhibit the best craftsmanship and finest materials. This treating of literature as if, like fine art, it were something to be collected, is something that Pope attacks in a more serious and concerted manner in The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace Imitated: To Augustus (1737).

Timon's visitor is not meant to feel at home, but to feel impressed upon by space, structure and spectacle. This is an oxymoronic world where there is no sense of combinations, of pattern, harmonics, of
what we might call the 'syntax' of place which allows things to have 'sense', to achieve any kind of unified architectural meaning or identity. The references to 'Temple', 'Hecatomb' 'solemn sacrifice' at the beginning of the dinner scene (lines 156 and 157) suggest an oppressive spirit that is inimical to the old convivial relationship between writers and landowners so strong in Horace's *Epistles* and *Satires*.

In the banquet sequence, that is such a distortion of the kind of banquet scenes that Horace describes with such enthusiastic appreciation, Timon is satirized for not only taking liberties with the established conventions of cuisine and table etiquette, but also for turning the whole experience into what is perhaps best described as a form of regimented theatre. The meal is divided into acts ('Between each Act the trembling salvers ring,' [161]) and rigidly structured according to time in a way that reflects the kind of concerns amongst the satirists of the period regarding the way in which the new social and economic forces were leading to a fundamental restructuring of notions of social space and time. This vision of a life regulated by the minute contrasts strongly with the notion of time as *continuity* implicit in classicism (the continuity from ancient to modern) and with the kind of time-span that Burlington's architectural creations are meant to last for.

Ultimately the various contradictory elements in Timon's world combine to produce a bizarre antithesis to or inversion of the *concordia discors*. The unity in diversity of the *concordia* is transformed into an aesthetic (or anti-aesthetic) prospect in which harsh and violent oppositions, such as between over-indulgence and excess on the one hand, and decay and neglect on the other, combine to produce a sense of deadening sameness, rather than visual interplay and difference:
His Gardens next your admiration call,
On ev'ry side you look, behold the Wall!
No pleasing Intricacies intervene,
No artful wildness to perplex the scene;
Grove nods at grove, each Alley has a brother,
And half the platform just reflects the other.
The suff'ring eye inverted Nature sees,
Trees cut to Statues, Statues thick as trees,
With here a Fountain, never to be play'd,
And there a Summer-house, that knows no shade;
Here Amphitrite sails thro' myrtle bow'rs;
There Gladiators fight, or die, in flow'rs;
Un-water'd see the drooping sea-horse mourn,
And swallows roost in Nilus' dusty Urn.
(113-26)

The Timon's villa section of To Burlington reveals a deep sense of social displacement in relation to the new capitalist self-made class, a class very much connected with and involved in the great social and political developments taking place at the time. The politics of displacement and how this relates to the identity and place of the satirist is an issue that is brought to the foreground in those epistles and satires known collectively as the Horatian Imitations.

Commonly regarded as the sophisticated, metrically developed satires that are the consummate achievements of Pope's poetic career, they have not been given their full due for being such brilliant examples of what they primarily are: satires of political and moral resistance.

Nowhere else in the entire history of the form do we find satires bearing such a strong sense of the social and moral necessity of satire, and so steeped in and immediately directed at their social and political context, with their welter of references, direct and coded, to the major (and not so major) figures of the time. When treated as the subtle satiric weapons that they are, it becomes apparent that beneath their elegant and thoroughly civilized surfaces they are political to the core.
This central political emphasis has been expressed very strongly in Brean Hammond’s book on the relationship between Pope and Bolingbroke:

As is only now beginning to be appreciated, the literary struggles of the time were a kind of Eastern front to the main political war against Walpole, and on this front, Pope was a very active soldier. (Pope and Bolingbroke, p. 2)

In that the Epistles are part of a long tradition of ‘public’ poetry, the use of this form (allowing for Pope to slyly and ironically invoke the panegyric forms normally reserved for the public flattery of State figureheads and office-bearers) makes it difficult for the legal arm of the political establishment to marginalize Pope’s satire, so carefully camouflaged as ‘epistles’ in a classical style and form, as ‘poetry’ addressed to the readers of poetry. This allows the satirist to portray himself as having a directness of access to establishment spokesmen, who as the satirist subtly probes, challenges and interrogates, unwittingly reveal the truth about the moral shallowness, hypocrisy, political exploitation and manipulation of the regime.

Whilst Brean Hammond’s reading of the relationship between Pope and Bolingbroke and Vincent Carretta’s analysis of the ironic use of Renaissance political iconography in the satirical battles against the Walpole government (The Snarling Muse) have stressed the importance of the political context within which the Imitations were written, it is Thomas E. Maresca’s earlier book on the Imitations (Pope’s Horatian Poems) that has most drawn attention to the important political dimension to these poems.

Maresca has made it clear that the Imitations are not simple set-pieces based on Roman models, but are political poems that confront serious issues of political morality. Following Maresca’s lead we can
see that Pope means business, bringing the heavy artillery of the whole Christian humanist culture (including Christian notions of law, Renaissance notions of ideal government, and, most ironically, the seventeenth-century Whig critiques of political despotism) to bear in his attack on the culture and politics of the new mercantilist bureaucratic state emerging under Walpole's leadership. Max Beloff suggests that the absolutism of the monarchies of Europe, a political prospect greatly feared by many in eighteenth-century England, provided the basis for much of the deeper suspicions and fears regarding this new form of government. Beloff points out that it was Walpole's office of prime minister itself that was seen as particularly 'sinister', 'because it smacked of absolutism and despotism' (The Age of Absolutism, p.55).

Edward W. Said has commented on the dramatic change in the nature of politics during the period. In Said's assessment politics loses its personal quality and becomes an impersonal and bureaucratic machine ('Swift's Tory Anarchy', p.62). In other words, it takes the characteristic form of the kind of governments and political institutions that we see the satire of our own century reacting against so strongly.

With the development of an imperial bureaucratic politics the relationship between the satirists and the structures of power and meaning in eighteenth-century England become significantly altered. The satirists now stand outside the world of power and begin an assault on its political credentials and very foundations, which represents a new, politically radical use of satire that seemed to threaten Walpole and his government in a way that seems totally unrelated to the level of actual physical support it received.
The host of new laws to control the stage productions and publications are testimony to the nervousness of the State to the wave of anti-Walpole satires written during his years in office, and served to deepen what Robert C. Elliott has characterised as the traditionally antagonistic relationship between satire and the law:

At any rate the law continued to pay close heed to the satirist, and from Horace’s day to our own the satirist has skated on the thin edge of censorship and legal retribution. It was forbidden for a time to print satires at all in Elizabethan England; and in totalitarian states today the satirists are among the first to be silenced. ('The Satirist and Society', p.212)

If we take Christopher Hill’s observation that the radical Tory position here was a defeated one that had no hope of toppling Walpole, and which represented a dying alliance between the backwoods gentry and the urban poet, what Hill terms the ‘two defeated classes of the eighteenth-century’, then the response of the government to the satirical campaign being waged would seem to be out of all proportion to its political effectiveness (From Reformation to Industrial Revolution, p.214). Brean Hammond (referring to Bertrand Goldgar’s book Walpole and the Wits) draws attention to the impact that the satire of the period had upon Walpole:

Bertrand Golgar has argued that the Walpole era was the last historical epoch in which satire was capable of influencing state policy directly and that Walpole saw the danger in the situation. His deliberate refusal to patronize literary talent was no mere philistinism but was a calculated attempt to disarm the satirists with the weapons of economics. (Pope and Bolingbroke, p.150)
Since it was employed by the Walpole government as the means to try to control opposition satire, it is natural that the law should be so central a concern of *The Imitations*. The very notion of the law is a politically contested one since it was seen by the Tory opposition as a political tool used by the Walpole government to suppress criticism, closing down the space for oppositional discourse (to the extent that these oppositional poems almost take the form of court room dialogues -- suggesting the extent to which the law has circumscribed discourse, debate and social exchange).

Censorship is presented in the *Imitations* as laws against speech and thus against the poetry/satire that is speech, (or which passes itself off as such). Exposing the interconnectedness of the personal, the legal and the political, what the *Imitations* do is to challenge the boundaries that are used to circumscribe speech and with it political action, presenting the law with a form that seems to slip and slide from one context to another: from poem in a well-established tradition of poetry, to a recorded personal discussion between two social acquaintances, to moments of satirical 'self-defense'. This slipping and sliding makes it terribly difficult to pin statements down in a way that their political intentions can be exposed.

With the powerful legal attack on satire during the Walpole years, it was inevitable that the satire should have become so sensitive to legal matters, and should have developed new forms and strategies in order to both evade the restrictions of the law, and to attack the law itself on juridico-ethical grounds. If anything then, the law served only to make the satire of the period more legally and politically astute, and to sharpen its moral antagonism to the political system that could so abuse its legal powers.
To place satire under the rule of the law presupposes the co-extensiveness of legality and justice, and ignores the moral concerns implicit in any questioning about the justness or otherwise of individual laws or of the legal system as a whole. Indeed, as Swift makes very clear in his essay in The Examiner, the failure of the law to assure justice provides the very reason for satire as a principle of law and justice itself (my emphasis). For Swift the law is vulnerable to the moral failings and weaknesses of human beings:

But to return from this digression; 'tis very plain, that considering the defectiveness of our laws, the variety of cases, the weakness of the prerogative, the power or the cunning of ill-designing men, it is possible that many great abuses may be visibly committed which cannot be legally punished: especially if we add to this that some enquiries might probably involve those whom upon other accounts it is not thought convenient to disturb. Therefore it is very false reasoning, especially in the management of public affairs, to argue that men are innocent because the law hath not pronounced them guilty.

I am apt to think it was to supply such defects as these, that Satire was first introduced into the world, whereby those whom neither religion, nor natural virtue, nor fear of punishment, were able to keep within the bounds of their duty, might be withheld by the shame of having their crimes exposed to open view in the strongest colours, and themselves rendered odious to mankind.

(No. 39 'The Criminals in the Late Ministry' 1711 pp.270-1)

As C. R. Kropf has shown in his article 'Libel and Satire in the Eighteenth Century' the anti-Walpole satirists were consistently able to escape censure by exploiting the loopholes in the censorship legislation to the maximum. As Kropf point out, innuendo was the way in which the satirists were able to evade the censorship laws: the satires could not be deemed
libellous when they refused to directly name the targets. The naming of targets is the central issue of the second of the \textit{Epilogues to the Satires (Dialogue II)}. Here Pope rejects the attempt to push satire towards a directness of statement, and thus to place it under the scrutiny of the very laws that were aimed at restricting and controlling it. To forgo the indirect means of satirical attack would have been suicidal. The demand that satire be specific and name also runs counter to its insinuating nature, its tendency to exploit what Srinivas Aravamudan calls its 'excess' as it follows a metonymic 'slide' from one target to another, in which he suggests it closely resembles an industrial strike in the form its 'protest action' inevitably takes:

Metonymy is at issue in the three examples of satire, carnival, and the 'general' strike. The beginnings of small strikes spread contiguously from one part of the work force to another, generating sympathetic copycat strikes, leading to a general strike which contests powers other than those directly at issue for which the disturbance began. By revealing the violence at the heart of the law, the satirist demystifies social fictions with repetitive familiarity.

("'Being God's postman is no fun, yaar": Salman Rushdie's \textit{The Satanic Verses}', p.17)\textsuperscript{11}

Through the 'camouflaged' satire of the \textit{Imitations} Pope fights for space by entering into interaction with, and more directly intervening in, the central legal, cultural and political discourses of the day. All of these discourses reflect the powerful and pervasive dominance of the economic and political interests of the Walpole government and its supporters, seen as a system that can co-opt, corrupt, and assimilate its opponents: the danger that Pope alludes to in the first dialogue of \textit{The Epilogues (Epilogue to the Satires: Dialogue I)} when 'Friend' suggests that
Pope should go and 'see Sir Robert' (line 27). This hints at the benefits of the 'insider' treatment that Pope could be offered if he would toe the line. The satirical position that Pope establishes in the *Horatian Imitations* is neither that of the insider, not that of the outsider, but that of an 'outsider on the inside', able to shift his position in order to unsettle those for whom this distinction is clear-cut and absolute. Pat Rogers has pointed to the combination of qualities that make Pope ideally suited for this role when he speaks of Pope as having 'the bite of an outsider, yet the familiarity of a habitue' (*The Augustan Vision*, p.216).

The basic political hostility between the poet/speaker and the spokespersons, members of the political-professional class which controls the law, services the world of financial management and trade and draws power from its theoretical knowledge of the practical affairs of the State, shows that for all its ostensible Horatian qualities, the sharper, stronger and far more adversarial satires of the later Roman poet Perseus are a truer model (John M. Aden, 'The Satiric Adversary', p.161). With the single exception of the ironic and cynical Fortescue of *The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated* (1733), these spokespersons are all 'adversaries', in the sense that the word is used in relation to Perseus' satire. The very presence of the spokesmen/adversarius figures in these poems, who are all legal experts versed in the law and supporters of the Walpole government and of its censorship policies, is an acknowledgement of the concern that he is causing within the ruling camp with the satirical effectiveness of these very poems that they are present in, and thus are ironically and somewhat metafictionally (or meta-satirically) helping to contribute to. They are people who could not be more implicated in the social and political malaise.
because of their connection with the very law the Walpole government is using to silence the satirists. Unsettling these adversaries with a strange mix of politeness, ironic deference, plain-spokenness and uncompromising toughness, Pope adapts the urbanity and charm of Horace's Satires and Epistles as a cover for the kind of satirical engagement with the system that had for the Tory satirists of the 1730s, taken on the appearance of a great bureaucratic machine. By engaging with his enemies in a social and rational exchange, that exposes their political ideologies to Socratic dialogism (which is not unlike the way Swift has Gulliver interrogated in the Travels), Pope gives the issues a human dimension, making the politics an issue of human concerns, rather than abstract principles or shadowy policies. He is thus able to break down the 'wall' that separates the realm of the political from all other areas of human life, and in so doing, to point to the corruptive power of the Government's policies.

There is a constant element of self-justification in the Imitations since Pope is fighting a pretty solidly established order. His statements of purpose and meaning are set against his interlocutors charges of waste, pointlessness etc. For Pope the political, and literary and economic levels mirror each other. This is what gives him the right to speak.

When Pope does move into direct attack mode in The Imitations, the attack is made on moral grounds, the moral being a category that Pope suggests (this itself a powerful moral condemnation of his political enemies) the new government and the world that it has produced have excluded.

The kind of moral and intellectual weaponry that Pope brings to bear in the Imitations, allows him to reverse the roles operating in the poems, in which Pope the satirical defendant becomes Pope the Prosecutor,
accusing the Walpole government that wishes to marginalize the oppositional satirists by placing them under the rule of law, in terms of a higher law and in the setting of a higher court than the legal experts are (to their shame) aware of.

Both *Satire I: To Fortescue* and *Dialogue II of The Epilogues* deal with a very serious issue: the ending of critical writing through direct and disguised forms of pressure, including legal suppression and threats thereof. *Satire I: To Mr Fortescue* picks up on the key themes of *An Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*: the practice and identity of the satirist. However instead of focusing on the social and economic forces that are impinging upon the satirical poet’s world, the concern here is more clearly political: that of the role and position of the satirist who finds himself in conflict with a social and political establishment that is out to suppress its satirical opponents through whatever legal means or measures, and social and political pressures, are in its power.

The poem opens with advice from Fortescue, the legal expert, given ‘off the record’ and so ‘free. Fortescue’s words make it clear that the dividing lines between the personal, the professional, and the political have all been broken.

In the opening of this poem the syntax that Pope employs lends itself to ambiguity, which immediately seems to inform the reader to be on the alert for the presence of verbal deceptiveness and trickery throughout the *Imitations* as a whole. The key qualifiers could apply to either Pope or Fortescue: which of the two is ‘learned in the law’, and who is the friend ‘both sage and free’? The rest of the poem will reveal that it is precisely these things that become contested-- particularly as Pope moves from occupying the position of the accused on trial, to that of the prosecutor conducting his own cross-examination
of the State's defence of itself. As it becomes evident how much more applicable the words 'sage' and 'free' are to the satirical poet than to the lawyer, the meanings of these words become liberated from the political and legal constraints that they were operating under.

The combination of familiarity and cynicism makes Fortescue the most interesting of these insiders to appear in the Imitations. As a part of that political-professional class to which I referred earlier, Fortescue could not be more well-acquainted with the legal ins and outs of the system, and thus better placed to act as Pope's collaborator in exposing the contradictions within a system. Fortescue treats Pope with sympathy, but as an eccentric beset by troubling literary urges that can be treated as a kind of psychosomatic disorder, which, if it is not to be cured by his getting married, or taking sleeping powders or portions, is certainly to be cured by redirecting his talents to the production of politically acceptable literary material. This suggests a normality that Pope is at pains to show is not possible in so abnormal a situation, where because of the way in which the new style of things in government, law, morality and writing has infiltrated every facet of life, and has put pressure on the satirist and his art, it is no longer possible to separate the political from the personal. Of course, the putting pressure on satire is a sure-fire way of actually fostering satire. The great practical mistake of the Walpole government was to apply a rigid censorship, but one which the law provided enough loopholes for the satirists to slip through.13

Pope is quick to point out, in response to Fortescue, that the politically acceptable poetry which he is suggesting in effect means singing the praises of the government in the kind of sycophantic eulogy with
which the country is already quite over-saturated. Representing the eulogists, the blustering figure of Richard Blackmore is mercilessly parodied by Pope in these lines:

P. What? like Sir Richard, rumbling, rough and fierce, With ARMS, and GEORGE, and BRUNSWICK crowd the Verse? Rend with tremendous Sound your ears asunder, With Gun, Drum, Trumpet, Blunderbuss & Thunder? Or nobly wild, with Budgell’s Fire and Force, Paint Angels trembling round his falling Horse? (Sat. II i, 23-8)

In this interchange with Fortescue over the possibility of his emulating Blackmore, Pope reveals that 'taste' has a political meaning, and now functions as a political weapon against the government. For Pope it is not only that the acceptance of a State commission to write poetry is distasteful, given the political situation, but that the poetry he produces reflects the commission that he has received. In the case of an eulogist like Blackmore it is clear that bad politics and bad poetry are not unconnected.

As we shall see, the issue of the political uses and misuses of poetry is something that Pope explores with much greater width and depth in his own ironic panegyric to George II, To Augustus, in which he wickedly, in the midst of all the parodic subversion of George and the poet-sycophants that takes place in the poem, presents himself as a failed panegyrist, whose satire is to a large extent a consequence of that failure.

The second dialogue of the Epilogues (Epilogue to the Satires: Dialogue II) opens with the reference to Paxton, the government’s libel commissioner, scanning publications for libel against the government. The spokesman, Friend, points out that, according to Paxton, 'Tis all a Libel' (line 1). We are immediately
plunged into the middle of a dispute as to what constitutes libel, one of the central issues of contestation of which I spoke earlier.

Pope cleverly suggests that the poem (which could be either this poem or another poem, the one that this poem is 'about') is not yet a libel, since the government has not officially deemed it to be so, and for that reason will be published that very day in order to escape possible libel action. Pope suggests that the censorship laws are capricious and that a writer cannot in any way predict what is going to fall foul of them, and what not. The hidden agenda behind these laws is to prevent writing altogether, rather than to ensure that key political and other figures are not offended. Aware of this Pope confronts the administration's spokesman with the implications of his master's logic. Over the issue that the poem debates: that between an openness to satire, in which the targets are not named, and a specific targeting, in which targets are named, Pope appears to have his opponent trapped. Whatever move he makes he loses: a satire naming the guilty is devastating for those named as the guilty, but a satire that doesn't enrages all those who see themselves as implicitly named. Pope ruthlessly exploits the contradictory position that the Friend is in:

F. Yet none but you by Name the Guilty lash;  
Even Guthry saves half Newgate by a Dash.  
Spare then the Person, and expose the Vice.  
P. How, Sir! not damn the Sharper, but the Dice?  
Come on then, Satire! general, unconfined,  
Spread thy broad wing, and sowze on all the Kind.  
Ye Statesmen, Priests, of one Religion all!  
Ye Tradesmen, vile, in Army, Court, or Hall!  
Ye Reverend Atheists. F. Scandal! name them,  
Who?

P. Why that's the thing you bid me not to do.  
Who starv'd a Sister, who foreswore a Debt,  
I never named -- the Town's inquiring yet.  
The poisoning Dame -- Fr. You mean --  
P. I don't. -- Fr. You do.
P. See, now I keep the Secret, and not you!
The bribing Statesman -- Fr. Hold! too high you go.
P. The bribed Elector -- Fr. There you stoop too low.(10-25)

This is not a pas de deux, by any manner of means. It is more like a jujitsu hold in which Pope twists 'Friend' inside out.

In The First Satire of the Second Book, Pope characterizes his writing as free of the kinds of constraints and limitations that the spokespersons are subject to. As they are answerable to the political powers they represent, it makes for powerful irony when Pope is able to present them as getting tripped or tripping themselves up and letting something really damning slip. In a moment of strongly confident self-assertion he presents himself as being spontaneous, transparent, and charged with human resistance:

In this impartial Glass my Muse intends
Fair to expose myself, my Foes, my Friends'
Publish the present Age, but where my Text
Is Vice too high, reserve it for the next:
My Foes shall wish my Life a longer date,
And ev'ry Friend the less lament my Fate.
     My Head and Heart thus flowing through my Quill'
Verse-man or Prose-man, term me which you will,
(Satires II i, 57-64)

The images of immediacy and transparency in these lines are in sharp contrast to the kind of secret and underhand dealings associated with the Walpole government. Throughout the course of the poem Pope shows that he has nothing to hide, that he is 'free' and eager to explain himself, to show where he is coming from and what makes him tick.

'Satire's my Weapon, but I'm too discreet
To run a Muck, and tilt at all I meet;
I only wear it in a Land of Hectors, Thieves, Supercargoes, Sharpers and Directors.

(69-72)

Having expressed himself so openly, it is easy for him to lash out when his interlocutor questions his moral integrity:

P. What? arm'd for Virtue when I point the Pen, Brand the bold Front of shameless, guilty Men; Dash the proud Gamester in his gilded Car, Bare the mean Heart that lurks beneath a Star; Can there be wanting to defend Her Cause, Lights of the Church, or Guardians of the Laws? Could pension'd Boileau lash in honest Strain Platt'rs and Bigots ev'n in Louis' Reign? Could Laureate Dryden Pimp and Fry'r engage, Yet neither Charles nor James be in a Rage? And I not strip the Gilding off a Knave, Un-plac'd, un-pension'd, No Mam's Heir, or Slave?

(105-16)

All this talk of lashing and stripping recalls the kind of violence with which the Hack narrator becomes preoccupied in A Tale of a Tub. The lines show not just the power of the violence of which he is capable, but also the unfailing accuracy with which he hits his designated targets (pointing his pen as a marksman would a firearm). The satirical voice could not be more militant. I.R.F. Gordon draws attention to the aggressiveness with which Pope states his case here, and the way in which he turns the tables on his adversaries, becoming their prosecutor:

The satirist describes himself in an aggressively militant way. He points, brands, dashes, bares, lashes and strips his enemy. The verbs draw comparisons between the satirist's profession and that of the public prosecutor: both see it as their duty to publish and punish, to strip bare and to whip.

(A Preface to Pope, p.104)
hosting a group of visitors which includes, ominously for the Walpole government they have fallen out of favour with or are otherwise confirmed in their hostility to, the great tactical and strategic minds of the time.

Know, all the distant Din that World can keep
Rolls o'er my Grotto, and but sooths my Sleep.
There, my retreat the best Companions grace,
Chiefs, out of War, and Statesmen, out of Place.
There St. John mingles with my friendly Bowl,
The Feast of Reason and the Flow of Soul:
And He, whose Lightning pierc'd th' Iberian Lines,
Now forms my Quincunx, and now ranks my Vines,
Or tames the Genius of the stubborn Plain,
Almost as quickly, as he conquer'd Spain.
(Satire II i 123-32)

Whereas this was the place from which Pope fled the military invasion in Arbuthnot, here it is the place where the military minds are gathered to 'mingle with my friendly Bowl', and no doubt, put heads together and devise a political strategy.

In To Augustus Pope contextualizes his satirical practice both against the immediate political backdrop -- in which there has been a loss of a sense of symbolic meaning and purpose -- and against the backdrop of the entire history of English poetry. The poem presents a sense of disjunction between the two worlds: the world of the inherited literary and artistic tradition that he sees as being very much a part of the national character, and the new Walpole world of secrecy, expediency and misrepresentation. The poem clearly suggests that the satire of the time springs out of the gulf that has developed between these two worlds and a recognition of the dangers that this poses for a sense of national morality and political cohesion. In this sense the latter part of the poem leads thematically into the great satirical attack on Vice/greatness that appears in the first of
the Epilogues to The Satires (Dialogue I) and beyond that to the apocalyptic vision of social and cultural collapse in The Dunciad.

The poem is a satirical parody of the panegyrics written on George II (Augustus) that shows how bad the situation is at the uppermost level of political life. This is the great political satire on the English court in English literature and the grim ironic perspective that operates in the poem stands in sharp contrast to the celebratory tone of the poems from earlier in Pope's career that are connected with, or allude to the court of Queen Anne. According to Howard Erskine-Hill with To Augustus Pope presents a more direct challenge to the court than he had ever done before: 'Publication of the epistle To Augustus rapidly followed, and here Pope went further than he had ever done in direct political challenge to the court' ('Alexander Pope: The Political Poet in His Time', pp.133-4).

To Augustus presents a further satirical exploration of and elaboration upon the motif of the grotesque court first appearing in the Variorum Dunciad. Unlike the culturally rich courts of the past (including the libertine court of Charles II), the Hanover Court is portrayed as in a state of cultural and political stagnation, and most significantly, no longer able to play a role of any real symbolic or social importance, a source of national impoverishment rather than enrichment. Whereas Charles II was, as the following lines rather ambivalently claim, a figure who helped transform the artistic and cultural landscape of the time,

In Days of Ease, when now the weary Sword Was sheath'd, and Luxury with Charles restor'd; In every Taste of foreign Courts improv'd, 'All by the King's Example, liv'd and lov'd.' Then Peers grew proud in Horsemanship t' excell, New-market's Glory rose, as Britain's fell; The Soldier breath'd the Gallantries of France, And ev'ry flow'ry Courtier writ Romance.(139-46)
George Augustus is a figure who represents a break with a past (most obviously in the arbitrariness of the House of Hanover's claim to the throne) in which symbols and values meant something and where poetry was part of the life of the court, the primary site of patronage in the history of English poetry up to this point. The loss of symbolic meaning that George represents, and, as king, is an ironic embodiment of, is connected to what Pope perceives to be a great decline in the status and influence of poetry, and the splitting of poetry along sharply political lines between panegyric and satire. Where once Pope felt part of the validation of power and legitimacy, now he finds himself having to explain his art to a humdrum, boorish Hanoverian King.

George shows himself to have neither understanding of nor interest in the role that the court has played in English cultural life, and, conversely, how much of a role poetry and other cultural forms have played in fostering a sense of national identity and pride. The poem's opening line contextualizes George in relation to art and poetry by calling him 'Patron of Mankind', ironically at the very moment when the patronage system is collapsing, except for those writers prepared to offer their talents in direct political service of the State. Pope suggests that there is a clear relationship between the lack of legitimacy of the Hanover line and the decline of a sense of the importance and value of poetry. George's failure to understand the importance of the tradition of English poetry that Pope to some extent is actually creating within the poem itself, and his lack of legitimacy, in terms of traditional Tory ideology, are presented as intimately connected: as if they were reflections of each other.

The introduction of a principle of arbitrariness at the symbolic heart of the nation, and at the centre
of political power, results in a powerful sense of dislocation and loss with the ending of the old established relationship between poetic meaning, premised (for the earlier Pope of the philosophical poems at least) on a confirming of orders and identities, on the one hand, and the State as the embodiment of national spirit and power, on the other. It is here that Pope loses his Imperial voice: nowhere in the *Imitations* do we hear the Imperial voice of *Windsor Forest*, *The Rape of the Lock* or *To Burlington*.

The seemingly generous opening to the poem, where the tone appears to match the (presumed) magnanimous spirit of the King, is misleading. The generous tone is shown to be inappropriate since George turns out to be a King who has mercantilist interests pretty much at heart: 'How shall the muse from such a Monarch Steal / An hour, and defraud the public weal?'(5-6).

This reference to wealth at the beginning of the poem foregrounds the issue of value with which the poem is deeply concerned. Here George shows peevishness and mean-spiritedness instead of the magnanimousness expected of a King. There is a strong suggestion of fraud in these lines as Pope suggests the King’s shadier connections with the suspect financial world of the usual entrepreneurial wheeler-dealers, and suggesting that corrupt practices (such as the shady back door payment) have infiltrated the very highest level of society. The King cannot have his time ‘stolen’ because ‘time is money’ in the commercial ethos, even -- or perhaps especially -- when it comes to a King’s time. Pope’s use of the financial metaphor here makes an interesting contrast with that in the *Seventh Epistle of First Book of Horace*, where he ironically employs the idea of the ‘sinking fund’, a key factor in the century’s financial revolution, as a metaphor for his own ageing and sense of personal decline, reversing the age’s economistic inclinations.
by appropriating the economic as a figure for the human, rather than the system to which the human is slavishly subjected and reduced.

Near fifty, and without a Wife,  
I trust that sinking Fund, my Life.  
Can I retrench ? Yes, mighty well,  
Shrink back to my Paternal Cell,  
A little House, with Trees a-row,  
And like its Master, very low,  
There dy’d my Father, no man’s Debtor,  
And there I’ll die, nor worse nor better.  

Pope’s emphasis here is on a powerful personal set of values that provides the strength that allows him to stoically withstand the world, accepting the inevitable with a grace and dignity of the kind that in To Augustus the King is revealed, with a political irony that could not be more complete, to be completely bereft of.

In parodying the spate of panegyrics eulogizing George II, Pope imitates (and outdoes) for parodic effect the standard court flattery, exaggerating its notes of praise to a level clearly verging upon blasphemy:

Great friend of LIBERTY, in Kings a name  
Above all Greek, above all Roman fame.  
Whose Word is Truth, as sacred and rever’d,  
As Heav’n’s own Oracles from Altars heard.  
Wonder of Kings ! like whom, to mortal eyes  
None e’er has risen, and none e’er shall rise.  

The poem also provides a serious critique of the new relationship between poetry and the Court that makes the panegyric mode impossible for a poet like Pope. In The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Fortescue (21) suggests he write ‘CAESAR’S praise’ (ie panegyrics on King George II). Pope’s response is to
point out that the over-enthusiastic exertions of two poets have made this area already over subscribed, that the market has been cornered by Blackmore with his bluster and Budgell with his overdramatizing 'fire and force', both poets' primary concern being that of turning the King, at Dettingen the last English monarch to lead British troops into battle, into the martial hero he wished to perceive himself as being. For Pope, satire has become the only form of poetry possible in the current political climate.

The comparison between George Augustus and the Roman Emperor Augustus, that naturally emerges out of their sharing the same name, works doubly unfavourably for George. Emperor Augustus was perceived as the tyrant who destroyed the Roman Republic, and thus a dangerous role model for those namesakes who might wish to identify with him. Since he was also a ruler who really had power, and an understanding of the importance of poetry and the arts, Augustus can be used for all kinds of unfavourable and ironic contrasts with a Hanoverian King who was suspected by the Tory satirists of the time of being manipulated by the Walpole Ministry.

Right from the outset the ironic comparisons come fast and furious: George defends his country (ie by which Pope means Hanover, not England) with 'arms abroad' (3) whereas Augustus strengthens Rome's defences at home (2). The severity of George's neglect of the home front is suggested in the bitter irony with which Pope thanks George for 'opening' 'the main' ('While You, great Patron of Mankind, sustain/The balanced World, and open all the Main;') (1-2). The seemingly generous note here is deceptive. What 'opening the Main' means is a total loss of naval power, the fear that arises out of the Jenkin's Ear incident, in which Walpole's placatory response to provocation by Spain is made to suggests a total
abrogation of national power and pride, that now puts the traditional Britain's liberties at risk.

Pope's George (unlike Horace's Augustus) is placed against a historical backdrop which thoroughly diminishes him, in which he as King is tellingly not situated at the centre, but made to form part of the composite situation being addressed. However, it would appear that this displacement has not rid him (or his government) of absolutist designs and pretensions. In lines 19-22 the image of the sun dispelling the stars suggests absolutism, particularly with the word 'oppressive' used to describe the sun's beams.

That George is described as a 'wonder' suggests the rather dubious and improbable circumstances of the ascension of the House of Hanover to the English throne in order to secure the Protestant Succession, this constituting a wrenching break with the established political and historical traditions of England. As a result of this the 'old' forms and roles of court poetry cannot be recovered because the vital thread of continuity and tradition has been broken.

Pope connects the arbitrariness of the House of Hanover to his sense of a loss of poetic value and meaning as poetic signification itself falls prey to arbitrariness and dislocation. Poetry is now seen as a curious object whose role and meaning become uncertain, but which at least can provide the State some use as a diversion or form of escapism. Contemporary society, Pope implies, would leave the poet to his 'Play-thing of a Pen' (93), which suggests writing has now lost all its potency, in its loss of power (envisaged in phallic terms) reduced to a masturbatory scribbling. The decline of the writer is the occasion of Pope slipping into heavy-handed irony when he says of the poet that, 'I scarce can think him such a worthless thing, / Unless he praise some monster of a King (209-10).
As Irvin Ehrenpreis points out in his article 'Bipolar Implications', Pope's notion of Kingship undergoes a radical transformation during the course of the Walpole years. From being a word that is closely connected to the idea of writing and authorship, it is now a word that is made to stand in an antagonistic position to these ideas, and which degenerates to meaning practically the same as 'fool' or 'idiot' (p.111).

Pope has to spell out to George, a King who has no sense of, or feeling for the rich tradition of English poetry, and who stands as an embodiment of a devaluation of symbolic meaning, rather than as a national figurehead, not only what the purpose and importance of poetry is, but also what the historical function and purpose of poetry has been. Pope is here speaking as one outsider, the excluded and disillusioned poet, to another, the son of an imported King who has no real affinity with the English people and their history, and who functions neither as true power (since power lies with Walpole) nor as true figurehead.

For Vincent Carretta (The Snarling Muse) it is this shared world of symbolic meanings that is 'owned' by both the popular and elite political and literary cultures of the period of Walpole's rule and invoked by the satirists in their assault on him and his government.16

A tell-tale sign of the exhaustion of symbolic meanings is the image of Cibber parading in Edward's armour, that actually 'beams' on his breast (319), showing how easy it is for him to upstage a lack-lustre King like George, so bereft of kingly character. In this world Cibber, the poet-actor-dramatist-showman is the symbolic heir to the great victor of the battles of Crecy and Poitiers.
What dear delight to Britons Farce affords!
Ever the taste of Mobs, but now of Lords
(Taste, that eternal wanderer, now flies
From heads to ears, and now from ears to eyes).
The play stands still; damn action and discourse,
Back fly the scenes, and enter foot and horse;
Pageants on pageants, in long order drawn,
Peers, Heralds, Bishops, Ermine, Gold and Lawn;
The Champion, too! and to complete the jest,
Old Edward's Armour beams on Cibber's breast.
With laughter sure Democritus had dy'd,
Had he beheld an Audience gape so wide. (310-21)

The irony of playing Edward, the victor of Crecy
and Poitiers against the French, in his own armour, at
a time when the satirists believed French fashions were
bringing in French absolutist political practices along
with them, would seem to have been lost on the actor-
laureate. Nothing exemplifies more than these lines
here the sense in the poem of an age that has lost its
sense of the significance of time and of history, a
loss expressed in the flatness and characterlessness
that Thomas Maresca has identified as a significant
aspect of Pope's depiction of the social and political
milieu under Walpole (Pope's Horatian Poems, p. 59).

Now the symbolic heart of the nation is no longer
the court, but the theatre; with the exhaustion of
'natural' symbolic meanings (those that fit in with the
Tory ideology of the relationship between land, people
and the institutions and traditions of political
power), new symbolic meanings have to be manufactured
in order to produce political allegiance.

The vacuum at the symbolic centre is supplanted by
the theatre, the site of a new mass-orientated form of
symbolic representation and sign production. The rise
of the theatre as the new centre of symbolic meaning
brings with it the satirists' disillusioning
realization of political and cultural failure, a sense
of failure that culminates in the comic phantasmagoria
of The Dunciad (1743), particularly with Pope's attack
on the emergence of a new theatrical culture (and
of the showmen, the 'wizard' theatrical impresarios and theatre owners, and their political equivalents, the wizard politicians.

The issue of satire raised here in To Augustus is pursued in the Epilogues to the Satires: where Pope expresses his critical voice more powerfully than anywhere else in his poetry. Here an assertive, more strongly rhetorical Pope faces and articulates the fear of the end of satire, the death of satire referred to in Epilogue to the Satires: Dialogue I:

So -- Satire is no more -- I feel it die --
No Gazetteer more innocent than I --
And let, a God's-name, ev'ry Fool and Knave
Be grac'd thro' Life, and flatter'd in his
Grave.(83-6)

The death of satire imagined here is directly related to the forces that intend to suppress its power, the kind of power which is able to: 'Brand the bold front of shameless guilty men; / Dash the proud gamester in his gilded car; / Bare the mean heart that lurks beneath a star;' (Satire II. i 105-8). The insidious threat that satire faces emerges out of a political climate in which, constantly running the danger of being misinterpreted, the satirist cannot exist in an obvious, up-front kind of way: 'Besides, a fate attends on all I write, / That when I aim at praise, they say I bite.' (Epistle II i 408-9).

The adversarius, countering Pope's fears that the present climate means the death of satire, suggests that satire does have a space and a function, but a restricted one that falls under the law which requires that it should attack only those who are known to have committed some crime, and whom the law has already punished:
F. Why so? if Satire know its Time and Place,
You may still lash the Greatest -- in Disgrace:
For Merit will by turns forsake them all.
Would you know when? exactly when they fall.
(Epilogue to the Satires: Dia I 87-90)

In the Examiner essay Swift made it clear that satire flourished because of the imperfections of the law; the idea that the law itself might be fundamentally flawed and biased in one political direction or another is likely to produce a satire that flourishes because of the law, rather than despite it. Pope inverts the justification of satire that Swift was presenting: now satire does not complement the law, but subverts it: for it is the effectiveness, efficiency and completeness of the law which is now most feared. From a fear of the moral spaces that the law does not attend to, the satirist’s fear becomes that of the political spaces that it conduces to and helps create.

The calls upon satire to restrict itself to what the adversarius figures in the poems request/demand: named targets and fixed times and places, are shown to be attempts to use the laws of libel to ensure the ‘sanctity’ of the corrupt system itself. The State’s desire to be ‘above’ satire takes on a religious dimension in Pope’s presenting Walpole (the protector of those culpable for the South Sea financial crash) as a redeemer figure with the power to save the politically ‘fallen’.

But let all Satire in all Changes spare
Immortal S---------k, and grave De------re.
Silent and soft, as Saints remove to Heaven,
All Tyes dissolv’d, and ev’ry sin forgiv’n,
These may some gentle ministerial Wing
Receive and place forever near a King!
There, where no Passion, Pride, or Shame transport,
lulled with the sweet Nepenthe of a Court;
There, where no Father's Brother's, Friend's
Disgrace
Once break their Rest, or stir them from their
Place;
(Epilogue to the Satires: Dialogue I 91-100)

What the satirist is after is the inflicting of death and damnation on the guilty. So nothing could be more galling than the image of the kind of 'salvation' depicted in these lines.

As is to be expected, the notion of the satiric vision takes a distinctly political turn in these poems. Even the classical takes on a new political role as the source of myths and themes that can be re-interpreted in a way antagonistic towards Walpole politics and the new capitalist world with which it is structurally connected. The re-evaluation of the role of satire and of the satirist in this new political context -- that produces a new natural oppositional position for satire in British political life -- is foregrounded against the negative example of Horace, who if he provides the classical model that Pope is emulating, also provides the negative example of the controlled satirist, the satirist who sacrificed his satire (and with it his moral integrity) in order to be assimilated by the world of the powerful, allowing himself to become Maecenas' little puppet, sitting on his patron's knee. The Imitations are both a deep tribute to Horace, in extending the form that he developed into this particular socio-political terrain, but also a sharp criticism of the negative example that his satire provides, particularly to those in power. Thus in the Epilogue to the Satires: Dialogue I 'Friend' presents what he thinks are the political implications of Pope's using a gentle Horatian form:

But Horace, sir, was delicate, was nice;
Bubo observes, he lashed no sort of Vice:
Horace would say, Sir Billy served the Crown,
Blunt could do Business, H---gins knew the Town;
In Sappho touch the Failings of the Sex.
In reverend bishops note some small Neglects,
And own, the Spaniard did a wagghish thing
Who cropped our Ears and sent them to the King.
His sly, polite, insinuating style
Could please at court, and make AUGUSTUS smile:
An artful Manager, that crept between
His Friend and Shame, and was a kind of Screen.
(11-22)

Horace, as ‘Friend’ depicts him, appears more as court propagandist than as satirist. The use of the word ‘screen’ serves to link him to Walpole, whose popular nickname was ‘screen’ as a result of his cover-ups after the South Sea debacle (screening the powerful and influential culprits from public revenge). Horace is seen as a poet who ‘screens’ because his satirical soft-pedalling saves the powerful and influential villains from public revenge.

As the focus of the Imitations widens, they become more hard-hitting, moving from a defensive posture in which satire is fighting for its right to exist, to one that is more aggressive and assertive in confronting the situation of perceived moral and political corruption and national decline. Now the issue is dominated by a powerful sense of the total difference in meanings and perspectives. The debate is no longer conducted on the terms of those opposed to satire and in answer to their demands. The first of the Epilogues to the Satires charts the downward progression that leads to the final satirical vision of the horror of national collapse (perceived by the satirist alone), in which all values have become totally reversed. Vice and Greatness, the word used with unremitting irony in Fielding’s Jonathan Wild, have become synonymous, and degradation and defeat are celebrated as a victory. The outbursts of righteous anger in the more forthright Epilogues, particularly at the way in which a whole nation can be ideologically duped, culminates in a rejection of the Walpole world, lock, stock and barrel,
and a full-throated panegyric to satire, which is meant to be read against the empty court panegyrics that Pope himself parodies in *To Augustus*.

The 'Hogs in Huts of Westphaly' passage of *Epilogues to the Satires: Dialogue II*, in which courtly wits are compared to hogs, brings the fundamental difference in vision between the satirist and the adversarius to an explosive head, providing a moment of raw and open conflict between satire that the State deems offensive and a State that the satirist deems offensive. Deep-rooted ideological differences are dragged out into the open at this point. This is 'Horatian' Pope at the furthest distance possible from his Roman model:

P. Faith, it imports not much from whom it came
Whoever borrow'd, could not be to blame,
Since the whole House did afterwards the same:
Let Courtly Wits to Wits afford supply,
As Hog to Hog in Huts of Westphaly:
If one, thro' Nature's Bounty or his Lord's,
Has what the frugal, dirty soil affords.
From him the next receives it, thick or thin,
As pure a Mess almost as it came in;
The blessed Benefit, not there confin'd,
Drops to the third, who nuzzles close behind;
From tail to mouth, they feed and they carouse;
The last full fairly gives it to the House.
Fr. This filthy Simile, this beastly Line,
Quite turns my Stomach -- P. So does Flatt'ry mine;
And all your Courtly Civet-Cats can vent,
Perfume to you, to me is Excrement.
(*Epilogues to the Satires: Dialogue II*, 168-84)

The distance and difference between the satirist and the established political order, represented by 'Friend' could not be greater: it exists at the sensory level, involving a complete difference in sense of smell, the most animal and immediate of senses, yet most culturally sensitive and directly related to class
judgements and perceptions. You can't get greater sensory disagreement between what smells like perfume and what smells like excrement: to confuse these two smells suggests a perceptual difference that runs as deep as that between different species. This sensory inversion: that excrement smells like perfume and vice versa is as huge an inversion as the semantic one between greatness and moral dissolution that we saw in the triumphant parade of Vice. The political suggestion is that the regime's insiders can no longer see reality (in the parade of Vice) and can no longer even smell it: that everything, including the smell of its excrement has been totally naturalized. Pope's choice of 'hogs' could hardly have been more offensive: as Peter Stallybrass and Allon White point out in The Politics and Poetics of Transgression, the pig had a particularly strong connection with the old carnival and the grotesque, and was thus particularly reviled by a middle class hostile to and fearful of the old popular energies with which those two phenomena was associated. As Stallybrass and White see it, avoidance of swine was almost the sign of being bourgeois: 'was not that the aim of every educated bourgeois subject -- to get as far away from the smell of the pigsty as possible?' (p.52).

As I suggested earlier, it is here that the issue of taste provides the great fault line between the two positions on satire: that which sees taste as something primarily moral and thus having an absolute licence to offend when employed as a satirical weapon in a moral or political battle, and that which sees taste as a social absolute that must be protected from what is disturbing and offensive. The political implications of this position, the position associated with the middle class and the attraction towards the emotional refinements of sensibility should be clear. Ronald Paulson's book on the aesthetics of iconoclasm is
important in this regard since it acknowledges the importance of the issue of taste in emphasizing the degree of to which eighteenth-century writers (particularly of narrative fiction) subvert the established, conformist notions of taste current at the time (Breaking and Remaking: Aesthetic Practice in England, 1700-1820.)

Given the global dominance of bourgeois culture and values today it would appear as if taste is still, inescapably, one of the terrains upon which satire must fight the battle for its own right to be.¹⁸

The 'Hogs in Huts of Westphaly' lines raises the issue of the satirist's vision. This part of the poem (perhaps closer in spirit to the last book of Gulliver's Travels than anything else Pope ever wrote) suggests a world polarized over the issue of taste, divided between those who accept their ideologically dulled perceptions at face value, and those whose sense of moral outrage finds immediate expression in repulsive images designed to shock and warn readers. The latter are well-attuned to the tell-tale putrefying smell of human vice and corruption, whilst the former are, likely as not, those who produce the moral 'stench'. Because of this lack of a 'nose' for moral and political malaise, this group can easily degenerate to the level beneath the human: to that of the Westphalian Hog (or Yahoo).

The final note of the Imitations is thus one that presents a view of society in which morality and power are at complete odds. The Triumph of Vice in Dialogue I is depicted as a triumph over satire: it is now incumbent upon satire to attack the 'great', not as Swift suggested, because it is a kind of 'tax' that they must pay, but because it is a punishment that they must suffer. In the second of the two dialogues Pope provides the panegyric on satire as the last defender
of freedom and truth against corrupt political and legal systems that distort and pervert human values.

Let Flattery sickening see the Incense rise, 
Sweet to the World, and grateful to the Skies: 
Truth guards the Poet, sanctifies the line, 
And makes Immortal, Verse as mean as mine.

Yes the last Pen for Freedom let me draw, 
When Truth stands trembling on the edge of Law; 
Here, Last of Britons! let your Names be read; 
Are none, none living? let me praise the Dead, 
And for that Cause which made your Fathers shine, 
Fall, by the Votes of their degen'rate Line! 
(Epilogues to the Satires: Dialogue II, 244-53)

In response to this lofty statement of unswerving commitment to the satirical cause, Friend suggests that Pope: ‘...pray end what you began, / And write next winter more Essays on Man.’ This terse last line suggests Pope’s own dismissal of that earlier self who wrote the poems like the Essay on Man, poems which express a metaphysics vindicating the established political order. It serves to hammer home the distance between the world of Pope the anti-Walpole political satirist, and that of the philosophical Pope of the Essay on Man, a world in which all spheres of life seemed to be in the happy conjunction, ultimately united in terms of the creative aesthetic of the concordia discors.

Earlier I made the claim that these Imitations are political to the core. The legacy of these satires (together with those of Swift’s that are also hostile to the politics of the new order) has continued. British satire from this point on seems to start with the basic assumption that power cannot be trusted. With the Imitations and with Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels we have the beginnings of the strong anti-institutional, anti-authoritarian tradition of British political satire that mistrusts governments and the ways in which they inevitably abuse power.
If the satirist is a visionary, the *Imitations* suggest, he is so because he can see what others have been conditioned not to see, because they have become blinded to the ironies and contradictions of life that the *Imitations* are full of, or because their senses have been dulled or anaesthetized by the false sensory and intellectual stimulants and soporifics that feature so strongly in *The Dunciad* as the agents of that desensitizing sleep that presages Dulness' rule.
Chapter Five: *Gulliver’s Travels*: Epistemological Satire and the Politics of the Menippean Tradition.

‘To sum up, if you could look down from the moon, as Menippus once did, on the countless hordes of mortals, you’d think you saw a swarm of flies and gnats quarrelling amongst themselves, fighting, plotting, stealing, playing, making love, being born, growing old and dying.’

Erasmus *The Praise of Folly*

‘To see things plainly, you have to cross a frontier’

Salman Rushdie
Inserted in its world not primarily as a literary object but, for all Gulliver's moments of camaraderie with the reader, as a confrontation text, a satire to 'vex the world', Gulliver's Travels quickly became what it has remained ever since, a phenomenon that seems beyond classification and yet continues to delight and perplex its readers, and uncannily, to speak to the politics of different places and times.

Again, as was the case with A Tale of a Tub, this satire is both reader-friendly/reader-directed, in this case mollycoddling its 'gentle' reader with detailed evocations and comprehensive explanations, as well as reader-inclusive, drawing the reader into the satirical line of fire when it is least expected. For a text meant to vex the world, it has also, it would appear, the quite exhilarating power to reject the world, or turn it inside-out or upside down -- in so doing showing its important legacy to the great line of Menippean satires, the imaginary voyages of Lucian of Samosata and that 'line' which continues through the Renaissance, and which includes the two greatest influences on, if not models for the Travels: Rabelais' The Histories of Gargantua and Pantagruel, and Cyrano De Bergerac's Other Worlds. Thus whilst Gulliver's Travels feeds into an immediate political context, it also is very much in the Menippean and utopian line of the humanist intellectual tradition in the critical and moral stance that it adopts towards the political institutions and practices of its world.

This subversive Menippean dimension is important in regard to the way in which the Travels relates to its reader. For Brian Tippett the reader's delight in reading Gulliver's Travels is inseparable from the sense of liberation that the text is able to achieve by suspending the everyday, ideologically 'safe' world, and in so doing, freeing its reader from the rule of the normal and the predictable, presenting a glimpse of
utopian alternatives and imaginative possibilities (Gulliver's Travels: An Introduction to the Variety of Criticism, p.71).

One of the great texts of world literature Gulliver's Travels may well be -- but it is, given the destabilizing presence of Swift's 'layered' irony, one of the most difficult for critics to say anything about with anything approximating the kind of confidence and security to which they are accustomed.

As we saw in the chapter of this thesis dealing with A Tale of a Tub, Swift is such a difficult customer: no writer has elicited and continues to elicit such a range of critical positions (that can vary between quite opposed and contradictory extremes). In his account of the range of critical perspectives on the Travels, Brian Tippett points out that it is a text that has constantly confounded readers and critics, to the extent that 'even the text of the book remains the subject of an on-going debate' (Gulliver's Travels: An Introduction, p.13). Tippett refers to Patrick Reilly, for whom the Travels is 'Janus-faced' and radically open-ended, forever offering the possibility of alternative readings (p.62). Such positions on the openness of the Travels are supported by what Tippett sees as the array of very different possible readings that remain 'credible and current at the present time' (p.66). This suggests that readers should take the Travels open-endedness, a quality which leads Michael Foot to speak of the text as 'a perpetual unfinished argument' (Debts of Honour, p.183) as their starting point. To see the text as a book like any other of its time is to ignore the special impact that it continues to have on readers and writers alike. Modern and contemporary satire are greatly indebted to Swift, an indebtedness which would seem to reflect an awareness of the ways in which, without any great exercise of the imagination, the Travels can be made to speak to our
own century, one of the most tyrannous and brutal in human history. There are good historical and political grounds for this: it is out of the eighteenth-century world satirized in the Travels as politically and intellectually aberrant that our own darker and more devious forms of economic exploitation and political manipulation have developed.

Seeing itself as being 'in' the world, concerned with its relationship with its reader and with its world, and of the way in which texts are used in the world, the Travels has a self-referential, metafictional quality. This makes for a very complex relationship between the text and a number of the targets that it is attacking. In the case of one of the primary targets/concerns: that of British colonialism as the political expression of the power drive within the scientific rationality of the Enlightenment, the Travels seem to have a somewhat uncomfortable awareness that it is necessarily part of that process of colonization, that as printed text benefitting from the revolution in printing technology, it needs to differentiate itself from the plethora of very different texts (indeed a whole world of 'text') with which it is surrounded, and with which it is in communication. Drawing attention to the Travels' concern with itself as text in a world of text, Tippett points out that:

Gulliver speaks of 'Pyramids of Law-Books', hundreds of commentators on Homer and Aristotle shamefacedly avoiding their 'Principals', hundreds of hours on the egg controversy in Lilliput and thousands of books on the art of government. (Gulliver's Travels: An Introduction, p.86)

and that the argument of the 'little Old treatise' which Gulliver finds in Glumdalclitch's bed chamber 'bears a close resemblance to some of the major themes of the Travels' (p.88).
This preoccupation of the *Travels* with texts and the textual, whilst considerably more disguised than in *A Tale of a Tub*, serves to add a corollary to Edward W. Said's argument regarding the worldliness of text ("The World, the Text and the Critic", p. 35), a worldliness of which Swift is a supreme exemplum (to which his two essays on Swift attest). This corollary is that Swift would seem, as I suggested in my chapter on the *Tale*, to have been equally aware of the textliness (or textuality if you would prefer), of the world.

One of the major concerns of the *Travels*, if not ultimately its central concern, is with colonialism, a political and economic phenomenon that, whilst in its relatively early stages, is already beginning to redefine human social and political relationships across the surface of the planet, as the European powers, none more determinedly or, for all Gulliver's ideas to the contrary, rapaciously, than England itself, exploit their military power in order to establish colonial dominance over recently discovered parts of the world. If the satire is to speak to us (and it certainly would appear to speak to us) in the twentieth-century, it is less as a satirical allegory of the political, as important and valuable as this may be, than as a particular response to the historical forces that produced the world we have inherited. For all of the exciting and liberating analogies that we can draw between these satirical worlds, and our own social and political realities, it is the *Travels*' concern with colonialism and the subversion of the colonial delusions of certainty and centrality through its Menippean, 'dialogical' elements that is ultimately most interesting to our twentieth-century neo- and post-colonial world.

It is hard to avoid the colonial dimension of the *Travels*: to the extent that we can ask the question as to whether those readings that 'missed' this key aspect
were not guilty of historical repression. Gulliver shows that his voyages have colonial implications that are inescapable. Since he is a British subject, according to British law the lands that he has visited count as 'discovered', and thus now belong to the crown.

I confess, it was whispered to me that I was bound in duty as a subject of England, to have given in a memorial to a secretary of State, at my first coming over; because, whatever lands are discovered by a subject belong to the Crown. (IV, xii, p.342)

Swift pulls no punches in his description of colonialism as the practice that gives the licence to every act of lust, murder and butchery as man’s inhumanity to his fellow man takes a new economically institutionalized expression.

It is out of Swift’s very sense of repulsion from the ugliness and corruption of humanity that his most powerfully critical politics emerges. His satire shows a deep awareness of the economic and political forces that degrade and dehumanize human beings, and which had reduced the peasantry of Ireland to a brutally deprived, subhuman condition that provided one of the models for the bestial Yahoos of the final book of the Travels. For Carole Fabricant (Swift’s Landscape) the impoverished state of the Yahoos, as well as their 'slovenliness, squalor, and a certain kind of barbarity, paradoxically coexisting with an excessive submissiveness to authority' is strongly suggestive of the condition of the oppressed poor of the colonially dominated Ireland of the eighteenth century, with its Anglo-Irish ruling class (p.35).

Ireland, surfacing in the Travels as the land of Balnibari, dominated and overshadowed by the flying island of Laputa, is a strange thing: the proximate margin and, from an English perspective, other
island/island of the 'Other' that is right next door. It is, in other words, an immediate geographical reminder of the impossibility of the Enlightenment project ever being achieved without exclusion and repression, and the Houyhnhnm ability to deny unpleasant realities as 'irrational'. As Carole Fabricant makes clear, an Irish 'presence' pervades the Travels, not unexpectedly: it is important to remember that Swift wrote the Travels hot on the heels of his The Drapier's Letters. What started out as a campaign to defend Irish financial and manufacturing interests against English protectionism, widened into an attack on English rapacity and political corruption (the attacks on Wood's coins) and ultimately, in challenging English jurisdiction over the people of Ireland, England's right to colonial possession.

Superficially at least, it is one of the great paradoxes in the history of English Literature that it is this conservative satirist, whose immediate political allegiance is to the Tory Party of the day, the party that represented the interests of the backwoods gentry and interests connected with the land, who became celebrated not only as an Irish political hero, but also an important model and example for the political satire of our own century. The radical nature of Swift's 'Irish' voice is clear in Barry Coward's observation that Swift's voice in the Drapier's final letter is the voice of the Irish nationalism of the Patriot Parliament of May 1689 (The Stuart Age, p.325)

The uncompromising political rebelliousness of the Drapier's final letter is very close in spirit to the kind of dismissive contempt we find in the Travels regarding the social and political institutions of his day. If there aren't any readers today who would take immediate offence to anything in the Travels on the grounds that the satire was aimed at them or what they
held dear, there were readers in Swift’s own century who were totally bowled over by the kind of dismissiveness of political institutions and practices that we today would label ‘anarchist’. It was George Orwell, one of the twentieth-century satirists most indebted to Swift, who labelled Swift’s politics as ‘Tory anarchist’ in attempting to capture this strange mixture of an old Tory conservatism aligned with the now waning power of the rural squires and landed gentry, and that quite inimitably ‘Swiftian’ irreverent, oppositional and extremist strain. Orwell’s phrase has stuck, a fortunate occurrence, since it has quite rightly served to draw a great deal of attention to the radical side of this eighteenth-century satirical phenomenon, the side that is closest to the serious philosophical anarchism of the utopian tradition that Gramsci described as attempting to connect Renaissance Humanism to the popular dream of ‘Cockaigne’, a Communist society without privilege and want (‘Indirect Sources’ pp.238-41).

In a sense all lateral political thinking ends up in anarchistic territory. Part of Swift, the part that bitterly resists the idea of imposed systems of order, is unquestionably anarchistic, but not in the sense that we in the twentieth-century tend to understand the term. His portrayal of Brobdingnag, the small society of huge people, reveals his attraction towards the politically small, what is small enough to ensure that issues of political morality do not get lost in the bureaucratic problems of administration. The Brobdingnagians, who live in a ‘small’ self-contented world that is both pre-modern and pre-absolutist, are a gigantic people without earth-conquering pretensions, a combination of qualities that would seem to make perfect logical sense to Swift, for whom their physical giantism is the ‘sign’ of their moral superiority, rather than the sign of a monstrous capacity for
violence, and the rationale for an imperialistic desire for space and power, which is what the political logic of our own century would suggest.

Ironically it is Swift's anarchistic qualities that allow the *Travels* to speak to different readers in different places and times. Many such readers will, no doubt, be only too eager to identify the political targets that Swift is attacking with their equivalents in their own societies. Here is an example of a reader anonymously leaping to the defence of a British Parliament he sees as being defamed by Swift in the comparison that Gulliver makes between the noble and heroic Roman Senate that the magicians of Glubbdubdrib have magically conjured up before him, and its modern equivalent, a parliament of rogues and criminals. This fine example of the kind of literal, 'unpresumptuous' reader that Gulliver would seem implicitly to connect with being a Yahoo, seems not to realize that in identifying the satirical target so unambiguously, he is actually confirming that such things are to be seen in the British Parliament:

The next great Attack...is not less than upon a British Parliament; this August Assembly, the Wisest, the Noblest, the most Awful in the World, he treats with Words of the utmost Scurrility, with *Billingsgate* terms of the lowest Sort; this Body of the best Gentlemen in the Kingdom he calls Pedlars, Pickpockets, Highwaymen and Bullies; Words never spoke of a British Parliament before, and 'twould be a National Reproach they should now pass unpunished: This is beyond all Bounds; who that are English Men can with Temper think of such an Insult upon the Body of their Representatives; the Centre of the National Power; the great Preserver of our Laws, Religion, and Liberties, and of all that as Men and Christians we ought to hold dear and valuable. ('Letter from a Clergyman to his Friend' [1726] in Clive T. Probyn, Jonathan Swift: The Contemporary Background, p.186)

Sometimes the satirist has to stalk his victims; at other times targets and victims stand up and
announce themselves, and in trying to strike back, only manage to shoot themselves in the foot. Here the cap certainly fits: the clergyman's offended response shows the depth of ideological commitment to political institutions and practices that Swift's satire is prepared to run up against.

Although Swift's satire provides a devastating critique of the political institutions of the time, its true target, one that includes colonialism within its ambit, would appear to be much more fundamental: the nature of Western political man, that dislocated, colonizing subject characterized in the person of Lemuel Gulliver, a social middle man (rather than the Everyman of the old religious allegories), who represents (whether he wishes to or not) the European powers that will colonize the world. Swift takes great care to make Gulliver a thorough product of the English middle class, a class riding on the success of its scientific epistemology. This being the case the Travels should, like the other Traveller's Tales be a text of certainty and power, not of a deeply disturbing sense of historical and cultural dislocation and malaise.

As historians of science fiction such as Brian Aldiss (himself an esteemed science fiction writer) and Darko Suvin, its foremost Marxist theoretician, have emphasized, Swift's Gulliver's Travels is one of the great precursors of this form of writing. Drawing attention to the defamiliarizing and epistemologically challenging qualities that it shares with science fiction, Darko Suvin emphasizes the radical and critical qualities in the Travels, accentuating the way in which, like what he feels to be the most powerful and effective science fiction, (that which exemplifies his idea of 'cognitive estrangement') it provides a liberating exploration of the idea of the human, subverting the well-established notions of Human
Nature, as well as those notions of the human implicit in or produced by the then relatively new and exciting scientific materialist/capitalist culture. Suvin points to the really powerful politics of the human in the Travels, drawing attention to Swift's 'reaction against the shameless perversions of knowledge, optimism, and domination brought about by Individualism' and to his indictment of a civilization seemingly founded upon the exploitation of rich by poor (Metamorphoses of Science Fiction, p.112).

It is logical and appropriate that the challenge to the notion of the 'human' should involve the text's relationship with its reader. In his reading of the Travels David Ward emphasizes the extent to which the real journey that is to be made, is actually that of the reader, whom the satire is designed to shock 'into a new awareness of himself, and of the follies and vices which he shares with the rest of mankind' (Jonathan Swift: An Introductory Essay, p.7). Here Ward argues that the presence of fantasy in the Travels, such as that which Maureen Duffy connects to the exotic world of the Arabian Nights, makes it all the more powerful a satirical agent since it is able to engage and exploit its readers' fantasies, the private tellings of what are essentially narratives of a culture's unconscious desire (Ward, pp.132-3). The sultry exoticism of the Arabian Nights blends in with the satire's other Eastern influence, one that is far more central. As P.J. Marshall & Glyndwr Williams point out in The Great Map of Mankind, their impressive history of the impact of travel, colonization and the racial other on the literature of the period, the device of the Oriental visitor was very well established in the writing of the time, providing a politically useful means of looking at English society from the external perspective of a superior, alien civilization (commonly Chinese). The exotic wish-
fulfilment world of the Arabian Nights also provides a somewhat submerged sexual critique of Gulliver's world, pitting the force of desire against inhibiting customs and constraints. The combination of the sexual and the intellectual elements seems to give the Travels a strangely charged quality: suggesting that there is an inescapable interplay between the space of the idea and the space of desire. This is particularly true of the final Voyage, with its strangely homoerotic, and ultimately nightmarish revisiting of the Arcadian scene invoked by Plato in his Dialogues, an episode that suggests the close and ultimately blurred relationship between eros and logos, thought and desire, the categories in classical philosophical thought that psychoanalysis inherited.

What Swift is doing by bringing the exotic, the erotic, the anthropological, the political, the philosophical and the geographic all together under one textual roof, is exactly the opposite of the acts of spatial and cultural segregation that Peter Stallybrass and Allon White have argued was such an important part of the bourgeois redefinition of the social, artistic and intellectual spheres (The Politics and Poetics of Transgression pp.80-124, 112-14). Whereas the bourgeoisie was demarcating these spheres as separate territories, Swift is producing a 'mixed' text in which all of these concerns mirror each other, or are made to intersect in surprisingly imaginative ways.

A dialogical textual 'migrant' (to use Salman Rushdie's term) when it comes to the different generic and intellectual territories it traverses, the Travels proves to be thoroughly Menippean in its determinedness to refuse labels and categorization, as well as any kind of final resolution or closing authorial message that makes the direction of the satire easy to determine.
As is the case with so much of the literature of this century of great transformation, Gulliver's *Travels* has an epochal quality. Standing between the old Renaissance world, and the new modern world of science, mercantilism, absolutism and colonialism, the fundamental social and political oppositions/contradictions with which it is concerned are so deep-rooted as to be irresolvable, which is one of the reasons why the *Travels* remains open-ended. The world that is emerging in the *Travels* is a capitalist world in which trade, diplomacy, scientific measurement, cartography, and centralized power are all profoundly linked in the capitalist opening up of the world that flows out of the establishment of clear lines of trade and travel (such as that brokered by the alliance between the Japanese Emperor and the King of Luggnagg). That Gulliver is travelling into the South Seas would remind Swift's reader of the recent stock market collapse of the South Seas Company, and in so doing serve to connect the idea of the instability and uncertainties of the market-driven capitalist system, with the dangerous unpredictability of the sea.

For all the attractions of the pre-modern Renaissance world, the inaccessibility of these worlds that Gulliver only discovers by strange accident, and their 'non-transferability' (in Gulliver's Letter to Symson it seems as if no one is really interested in his story, at least not for the reasons he wants them to be) surely points to a profound realization that there is no turning the clock back, and that the *Travels*, for all its bitter opposition to the new world, is something of an obituary for the old. Swift seems to recognise that the *Travels* itself is a product of the modern 'machine' world, given that it too is but one amongst the many volumes of text that the printing revolution has released upon the world.¹⁶
Attempting to enter into social and intellectual realms that hitherto might have seemed inaccessible, what Gulliver represents is bourgeois man on the make in the realm of ideas, a representative of those nations on the make, actively scouting out colonial opportunities. It is interesting that this thoroughly middle class man has such great access to the courts and centres of power and influence in all the lands he visits. Always trying to win prestige by placing himself in proximity to those in power, his longing to be upwardly mobile extends ultimately not just to an increase in rank and station, but to a move up on the ladder of species as well, with his renouncing of his humanity and his painful attempts to emulate the Houyhnhnms.

Though he acts the scientist, the diplomat and the intellectual, Gulliver knows the true source of upward mobility in his own society: hence it is wealth rather than knowledge or expertise that he is after. His primary motivation for going overseas is to make money. The Lilliputian livestock that he returns home with allows him to becomes a man of means: 'I made considerable profit by showing my cattle to many persons of quality' (I.viii, p.117). Gulliver having made a tidy sum out of this 'show' of foreign curios finds himself, as the situation becomes ironically reversed, shown in Brobdingnag for money, having become a financial asset to the man who found him.

What drives Gulliver is less a spirit of adventure, or a thirst for scientific discovery, than something entirely more calculated and monetary: a desire that is actually more of a compulsion to make something of himself financially and intellectually (insofar as this will also produce financial benefits). Thus when he imagines the advantages of immortality (such as he imagines are enjoyed by the Struldbrugs) he speaks of himself becoming 'a living treasury of
knowledge and wisdom'. This capacity to make quick calculations as to the exchange rate between the various 'capitals' (financial, social, political, intellectual) could not be more characteristic of the class from which he comes.

From his background we can see everything about him is 'middle'; he is the middle son, of a middle class family that comes from the middle of England. This is a very stable social structure -- but one that he feels constricted by, hence his peculiarly 'modern', restlessness and constant need to travel overseas. Whilst Gulliver seems very accomplished in developing the social skills that allow him access to the most important members of the societies that he visits, his facility with languages being an indication of his inter-cultural skills, the way in which he interacts with the crewmen of his various journeys suggests that he is greatly lacking in a deeper kind of social awareness. As a ship's surgeon, and later captain, Gulliver occupies a position of authority, yet fails to live up to his responsibilities. The quality of his medical care seems to be quite suspect since during the first and fourth voyages the crewmen whose health he is responsible for suffer illnesses. When he is placed in command of his own ship the men mutiny against him. These failures, together with the indecent haste with which he leaves his pregnant wife to go on the fourth journey, are indications of the social priorities of the 'new' man that Gulliver represents. For him the attraction of new lands is an irresistible one. There must be something of this 'irresistible' attraction of new lands in colonizing types.

By any set of criteria the Travels is a radical satire, one that clearly is premised upon a turning of the fundamental presuppositions of its age inside out and upside down. It constitutes a powerful challenge to the accepted and conventional positions of European
Enlightenment thought and political practice, drawing attention to the emergence of colonialism as the great signifier of a process of political and ideological closure, a bringing of the margins (geographical and intellectual) under the rule of an intellectually and politically absolutist and imperialist 'centre'. As Carole Fabricant has suggested, (Swift's Landscape, p.7) the Travels is anti-absolutist in its very geography, presenting a fragmented world consisting of isolated enclaves such as islands or peninsulas that are cut off from the well-travelled sea routes, are quite removed from the familiar world of England and Europe, and do not appear to have a unifying source or point of reference. Above all, these lands pose the kind of epistemological problems that absolutist notions of the centre are not equipped to handle:

The 'centres' of political power encountered by Gulliver in his travels belong to a world of relativity and flux; they appear and vanish suddenly, change size and shape at the drop of a hat (or the readjustment of Gulliver's spectacles), and function according to arbitrary laws that bespeak their insular nature.

(Fabricant, p.7)

It is in these lands that the tables get turned on 'universal' colonial man, who finds himself read as, and branded as radically 'other' himself. Gulliver finds himself for the first time a contradiction of other's universal laws and absolute geographies and histories.

In its critique of the ideas and values of the Enlightenment, particularly of its rapidly developing scientific rationality (the ideology of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism) the Travels seems to approximate, in more 'literary' ie imaginative and metaphoric terms, the kind of genealogical analysis initiated by Foucault in his account of the birth and development of those key and defining social institutions that accompany the
growth of the Enlightenment. In the uncompromising ruthlessness with which its deconstructive/reductive logic sets about the institutions of power, the Travels speaks very differently to those utopians and anarchists at heart, who are sick of the deception, manipulation and misrepresentation that takes place in the realm of power, for whom it is a source of pleasure and delight to see things exposed for what they are, and as people would see them if they were not already conditioned to see things in particular ways shaped by the ways of seeing that social and political institutions inculcate -- in the case of Lilliput, to see how the nature of the political itself is exposed, with the self-justifying propaganda of the absolutist princes of Europe being swept away, their grand designs reduced to the small-minded antics of absurd little egotists. It is in such acts of exposure that Swift and the Travels reveal a satirical integrity in which some intellectuals are not averse to placing their trust.19

As we all know, when certain sections of the book are expurgated it can serve as a children's book (it is a book from most of our childhoods) or be made into a children's cartoon film. It is the area where the book seems to be moving in the realm of children's literature that some of the darkest of Swift's probings are to be found. In the course of sketching his own path of textual exploration through the Travels, Brian Tippett observes that 'the book's appeal as a book for children seemed, after all, not to be a separate matter but closely related to its power as a satire' (Gulliver's Travels: An Introduction, p.64). This serves to confirm Douglas Rudikoff's observation about the contemporary satirical viruses operating in the popular media: it is their cover as children's shows which allows them to be far more potent in their subversive action.20 Swift seems to have intuited the
satirical gains in lulling his reader into a false sense of security: often the more innocuous things appear, the more the reader is being set up for a particularly distressing satirical revelation or exploration.

Capturing a childlike joy in small, toy worlds, the Travels takes Gulliver and the reader back to childhood, that most intense of times that is not only the realm of the fantastical and magical imaginative power of the child, but is also the forbidding world of all sorts of primary fears and anxieties often of a deeply sexual nature (though, of course, not realized as such) and profoundly related to one's social and linguistic development into a cultural and social subject.  

Returning to this time of childhood is a return to the world of dependence on the parent, on the huge needed and feared, nurturing giant/threatening monster figures, who would seem to be with us, in one shape or another throughout our political lives. The return to a childhood past allows the world to be explored from a fresh child-like perspective (in which Gulliver, the child-ingenue, soon shows his innocence of the world's harsh political realities), but also makes us very much aware of the psychological dimension to political authority, that the political power that is exercised over us is not just analogous to, but in a very real sense a continuation of the power that parents exercise over us (and the social and psychological holds that they have over us, as nurturing protector figures).

Much of the power of the return to childhood motif in the Travels would seem to emanate from Swift's own horrific childhood experience of abduction and loss of parental bonding. 22 The return to childhood thus makes a political rebellion an act of rebellion against parental authority, which has disturbing implications for those who take this step (note the horrific
castrating punishments that the Lilliputians wish to mete out to him on account of his dissident refusal to do everything their absolutist Emperor demands). Edward W. Rosenheim Jnr. suggests that one of the most unsettling things about the Travels is the way in which, as is typical of the exercise of power within the dysfunctional family, 'power speaks for logic'. (Swift and the Satirist's Art, p.190)

Perhaps there is a connection between satire and the experience and awareness of dysfunction (which would appear to be more the norm than the exception). The pessimism about the parental and the political can only be strengthened by observations like those of the art critic and theorist Camille Paglia, who argues that the dark areas of childhood, areas in which self-definition and sexual awakening is often twisted and frustrated by parental authority, are never escaped from in adult life: 'Every encounter with friend or foe, every clash with or submission to authority bears the perverse traces of family romance' (Sex and Violence or Nature and Art, p.5).

The Travels conform to the model of the children's book for a deep reason: the infantilism (of a kind that fuses the political and the sexual) of Gulliver and the society that he represents. In using the phrase 'political mother' in order to refer to England, or more particularly the English political establishment, Gulliver reveals his relationship with his country to be one of child-parent (which raises the question as to whether this is a nurturing, or abusive and destructive kind of family bond).

By his own admission, Gulliver would seem to be the 'child' of a world where parental authority (and protection) is taken as a natural metaphor for, or immediately connected with, political authority.
Whilst his loyalty to his English political parents is without question,

I would hide the frailties and deformities of my political mother, and place her virtues and beauties in the most advantageous light

(II.vii, p.173)

he does seem inordinately keen to find surrogate parents to replace them in his absence. Indeed, throughout his travels Gulliver would seem to be in search of powerful figures, of political fathers and mothers on whom he can depend and to whom he can 'belong'. With the King and the Queen of Brobdingnag acting as his adoptive parents (and Glumdalclitch as his nurse), Gulliver is afforded the vital, though by no means total, protection he needs against the horrific dangers with which he finds himself surrounded. In Brobdingnag Gulliver cannot help appearing as (for all his efforts to show his adult rationality and masculinity) a child who mimics adult behaviour: living in a doll's house, (that seems more like a prison when he is rescued), sailing his little boat in the equivalent of a baby's bath, and striking martial postures for the entertainment of all.

The psychology of political power might find its roots in childhood, and political leaders may be seen as parent figures (and exploit this connection, proclaiming themselves to be 'Fathers' and 'Mothers' of their people), but this, as Roland Barthes points out serves to add a special twist to acts of rebellion (especially acts of textual rebellion, such as the Travels). For Barthes it is the duty of text (and above all, one might add, the 'Jack the giant-killer' satirical text) to show its backside to the political father, to refuse parental authority in such an outrageous and provocative way because of the
insidiousness of its hold (The Pleasure of the Text, p.53).

The child-world concerns and perspectives of the Travels, particularly its tendency to suggest fears and insecurities revolving around parental authority, suggests that there is something regressive about Gulliver, and through Gulliver the culture he represents.

This regressiveness is made clear by Gulliver’s little-boy preoccupation with things phallic, to the extent that he unwittingly makes an intricate little play on the name of the Master to whom he was originally apprenticed. This whole word-game which leads from Mr Bate, my master, to Master Bate (ie masturbate) would seem to involve a rather persistent bit of Freudian slipping, as if Gulliver was telling us something that can only get by his inner censor by being articulated in a kind of code. Gulliver seems to go through every permutation of the words ‘Bate’ ‘Mr’ and ‘Master’ in ensuring that his Freudian slip is not missed. What the phallic connection that is being made here between apprentice and Master would seem to indicate, is that Gulliver’s culture is strongly patriarchal, and yet intensely nervous about the phallic, the very basis of its power. Certainly it appears to be a culture in which the individual needs a strong male figure as a form of leader-protector against the forces of chaos and the irrational that play such an important role in the satire. Chaos, ambiguously associated with destruction but also with life, is a force antithetical to the order and systems of the eighteenth century, and has an important if not determining influence on Gulliver’s life. Without chaos to sweep Gulliver off the well-known and thoroughly navigated paths there would be no Travels, no visits to strange and wonderful ‘virgin’ lands outside the established order of Europe.
In her feminist reading of the *Travels* (in the chapter of *Enlightened Absence* entitled 'Swift's Disruptive Woman'), Ruth Salvaggio sees the chaotic and irrational forces in the text as subversively 'female' and a threat to the masculine categories upon which the patriarchal order that underpins the binary and exclusionary thinking of the Enlightenment depends. Following on from Salvaggio, we observe how Gulliver seems to be strangely caught between his interest in women and the confident way that he relates to some of the female characters (to those who do not pose a sexual threat, at least) and the women he fears and wishes to evade, first amongst these being his very own wife. Here the lure of new lands to make a tidy profit in provides the pretext for evading the sexual duties of a husband that he seems to be so averse to. Ironically the restlessness that seems to be connected to a desire to escape from women (and the marital bondage to a woman) is, in terms of the categories within which Salvaggio is operating, itself 'female', of the female world that she identifies with chaos and fluidity (p.33) and which she sees as resistant to the male world of order and proportion. For her, Gulliver's situation is one of constant oscillation between these two sexually opposed worlds, his attraction towards female fluidity, countermanded contradicted by his fear of her sexual power and 'excess', qualities that Salvaggio sees the 'overpowering' giant women of Brobdingnag as the embodiment of (p.85).

Right from the outset, then, with the little Mr Bate/Master Bate word game, Gulliver's attachment to the strong male figures is emphasized, and is furthermore, seen to involve a high-degree of phallus fascination, and phallic consciousness which seem to be bound up with his sense of identity. The level of his preoccupation and identification with the phallus, as
the 'sign' of strength and power, give him a particular symbolic meaning that immediately lends itself to the kind of psycho-sexual analysis that can be found in Norman O. Brown's psychoanalytic treatment of the notions of sublimation and fixation in Swift's work in general, and John Traugott specifically on A Tale of a Tub. Maureen Duffy pursues the sexual/phallic undercurrents of the Travels quite relentlessly (The Erotic World of Fairy, p.186), describing Gulliver in terms that suggest he is, from this perspective, pretty much what might be termed a 'wandering human penis', a penis, we may add, whose size is suddenly diminished from that of the giant 'erect' colossus of Lilliput (homus erectus), to Gulliver the child-man of Brobdingnag (homus flaccidus). From being the giant whose genitals, visible to the Lilliputian army when they parade beneath his legs and peep up his tattered trousers, are of such an impressive size that they become objects of awe and veneration, Gulliver becomes a dildo man whose whole body gets used as a phallic sex aid by one of the more 'frolicsome' maids in waiting at the court (II.v, p.158). This concern with the phallic creates something of a contradiction: since as explorer/traveller and precursor of colonialism, this metaphorical penis, engaged in a metaphoric 'penetration' of the feminine worlds of the 'Other' on behalf of a patriarchal and imperial England and Europe turns out to be absolutely afraid of physical contact with women. His horrified reaction to the sexual advances of the Yahoo female (a distorted version of the colonial fantasy of the exotic dark woman, the figure of an unrepressed sexuality), and the callous neglect of his wife (that turns into a savage outright rejection upon his return from the rational Houyhnhnms) suggest a strong fear of female sexuality. For Gulliver there is a world of difference between the sheer pleasure of having one's genitals admired by an
army of tiny men, and the shame of having one’s naked body become an object of female sexual desire.

The concern with the phallic and the sexual and their connection with power places the issue of what we might call 'the politics of the body' right at the centre of Gulliver’s Travels. For Michel Foucault this concern with the politics of the body is distinctively modern (Alan Sheridan Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth, p.175), the issue of the control of the body being definitive of the way in which political power is expressed in the modern era (which he sees as a perverse kind of power for this very reason). The way in which Gulliver articulates his repulsion from the physical aspects of human life is deeply disturbing, but seems to reflect back on Gulliver and the values and attitudes of his own society, and more particularly, of his own social class. Though it is well-established that Swift was obsessed with the physical repulsiveness of the human body, we must bear in mind that it is clearly Gulliver who is responding in horror to the huge bodies of Brobdingnag, and the bestial, obnoxious Yahoos, and that there are clear indications that this response is pointing as much to the Gulliver whose cultural background has produced a predisposition to see the world in a certain way than to any objective sense of ugliness and squalor.

The human body is so much at issue in the Travels, right from the moment that Gulliver finds that he has become a huge physical intrusion into and imposition on Lilliputian life, through to being dwarfed by the morally and politically superior Brobdingnagians, to his experiences amongst the body-denying thinkers of Laputa, and body-forgetting scientists of Lagado, to the ghost-raising magicians of Glubbdubdrib, the horribly degenerating Struldbruggs, and the bestial Yahoos whose physical grotesqueness seems all the more extreme by virtue of its being contrasted to the
smooth, equine bodies of the Houyhnhnms. Connected to an ugliness and the horror of the physical that has been generally assumed to be expressive of Swift's 'excremental' instincts, and of his deeply repressive nature, the body proves to be a potent weapon in the Travels, an indicator of a malaise that is, as Norman O. Brown showed, of Swift's own society and ultimately of his entire civilization (The Excremental Vision), rather than purely of his own psyche, and as both weapon and terrain of battle in the struggle in which the Travels is engaged, a shock factor that can be used to shock and disgust the reader out of any state of intellectual or ideological complacency.

The way in which Swift exploits the great disjunction between the physical and the intellectual would appear to be closer in spirit to Beckett, and to the Existentialist tradition in thought, than to Rabelais and that spirit that Bakhtin characterised as the carnival grotesque.

Paradoxically for such a restless soul, an escapist desirous of escaping his hum-drums 'middle England' life, and consorting with Emperors, Kings, magicians and philosophers in a way that you would not normally expect a member of his social class to be able to, Gulliver always seems to end up in some form of confinement or incarceration. Gulliver could be said to move through a whole range of prisons from his initial bondage into apprenticeship, to his being tied up and then chained by the Lilliputians, to his experience of more subtle or insidious forms of incarceration such as that of the Laputans imprisoned by the Pythagorean bent of their minds, and the truly horrible mental imprisonment of the Struldbruggs, in their own degenerating bodies. All of these forms of imprisonment seem to be versions of the ideological and epistemological imprisonment generated by Gulliver's own culture.
The places Gulliver visits are not unknown -- as Hugh Kenner points out (The Counterfeiters, p.132), they are places that are culturally very familiar and would be to most educated readers, but which are treated by Gulliver as virginal, unexplored worlds. They are full of all sorts of literary and mythological hints, allusions and parallels. True to form, Gulliver misses all of these including, ironically, those which refer to him, such as a possible comparison between Gulliver the bespectacled giant, and Homer’s Cyclops, Polyphemus, particularly when Gulliver contemplates, in a sudden rush of atavistic aggression, eating the few trigger-happy Lilliputians who almost cost him his eye. Gulliver is really ‘set up’ for the sophisticated satirical reader, since he misses all of the parallels that exist between the lands he visits and those ‘textual’ lands of his own, presumably ‘lost’ literary and intellectual heritage. It is here, at this level of covert allusion, that the uncanniness of the encounters Gulliver has with the Other, in the shape and form that it takes in the various lands he visits, is simultaneously revealed to be the uncanniness of the encounter he has with his own ‘lost’ culture, and thus with his unperceived self, the self that has a particular significance within that lost or forgotten cultural and intellectual context. Kenner see Gulliver as a being a shallow empiricist who, in sharp contrast to the central tenets of the humanist tradition, has no notion of what the past has to teach. He argues that had Gulliver

known the classics, he would surely have recognised the resemblances between the Brobdingnagians and the Cyclops, The Struldbruggs, Tithonus and the Sibyl of Cumae, between the Houyhnhnms and the wise Centaurs. (quoted in Brian Tippett Gulliver’s Travels: An Introduction, p.73)
Previously a castaway as well as a victim of pirates and mutineers, Gulliver has become a self-declared outcast (having cast the world out rather than vice versa), breaking all bonds and ties with the world, except, interestingly, the social ties that exist between authors and readers, conducted in that strange public ghost space of the text. The fate that has befallen his Travels: out upon the unpredictable and chaotic waters of the publishing industry, reflects the way in which the force of chaos has intervened in his own life actually to produce the very experiences out of which the Travels are composed.

In his letter to the publisher, his cousin Richard Sympson, Gulliver expresses his anger at the deliberate additions and changes, as well the proliferation of errors that he claims the publishers have made, such as misspelling 'Brobdingrag' (what it should have been) to read 'Brobdingnag', what has since passed into popular idiom. The powerlessness Gulliver feels here is the sign of the shift in power from author to bookseller with the new capitalist mode of literary production. With all the mediating processes involved in publishing the text the idea of a 'pure' text that is allowed to speak for itself becomes an impossibility. His attempt here to re-establish some kind of authorial control over a text that now belongs to the reading public and the world of public rather than private meanings is an exercise in futility. The extent of his exasperation in clear here, where he reveals that he no longer recognises the published account as his own:

Likewise, in the account of the Academy of Projectors, and several passages of my discourse to my master Houyhnhnm, you have either omitted some material circumstances, or minced or changed them in such a manner that I do hardly know mine own words. (p.37)
The text itself seems to have become almost totally alien to Gulliver: its meaning escapes him and confronts him as something foreign, emphasizing the failure of the language that he thought so faithful and transparent to mean what it was intended to mean. The fact that Gulliver’s text has been amended, and that the original manuscript has become lost, means that what we have is something mediated through internal and external forms of censorship, which thus has our own predispositions and attitudes (or what Gulliver feels them to be) nicely mirrored. This issue of mirroring is an important one, because the world that Gulliver meets is one that does not mirror his expectations, but confronts him with the disturbing presence of the ‘uncanny’, that liminal realm that straddles the divide between the strange and unusual on the one hand, and the close and familiar on the other.

Here in the letter we hear the voice of an embittered man, a man who has broken with the human race. The narrative of the Travels leads us to this Gulliver, who has returned to England in a shattered, broken state; estranged from his fellow human beings, whose very smell offends him, and no longer able to either touch his wife or talk to his friends. Though this returned, devastated Gulliver is the one who tells the tale of his travels, the tale is clearly told in the voice of and from the perspective of the younger Gulliver, a man who has not yet undergone the shattering experience that awaits him in the final voyage. Here in Gulliver’s letter we have the only sign of the changed Gulliver of the last Voyage. The only obvious sign, that is. As has been recently pointed out, the relationship between the ‘before’ and ‘after’ Gulliver’s is, like the relationship between Gulliver and Swift, not an easy one to fully resolve.29 Indeed the tendency in the past of identifying Swift with Gulliver’s pronouncements needs
to be guarded against, particularly in relation to the final voyage, but equally the tendency to distance Gulliver from Swift, and to make him purely a vehicle of the satire is also to be guarded against.

The 'returned' Gulliver's propensity to tar everyone and everything with the same Yahoo brush provides Swift with the licence to make that 'lateral', anarchic movement of which I spoke earlier - movement far 'outside' the conventional political and social 'wisdoms' of the time. Gulliver's contemptuous dismissal of the world he has left behind as 'Yahoo', the name for the brutish subhuman creatures that Gulliver encounters during his final voyage, allows him to be abusive in a more politically pointed way by referring, with a delightfully anarchistic disdainfulness to the political leaders of the time as: 'the Yahoos who are now said to govern the herd' ('A Letter', p.38). Furthermore, since Gulliver unwittingly creates a disjunction between 'Yahoos' on the one hand and 'readers' on the other (the two categories not being entirely co-extensive), space is created for the implicit 'construction' of another kind of reader, whose special reading skills mark him as a non-Yahoo reader, a reader who escapes the tag 'Yahoo' because of the distance between his or her way of reading and the textually and politically credulous way in which Yahoo-readers read (see Appendix, note 6).

A Menippean satire/imaginary voyage pretending to be what is pretty much is own antithesis, the Travels exploits the traveller's tale's presumptions of clarity, certainty and fundamental coherence, constructing its own perfectly Cartesian 'style' as the medium through which to present a 'content' that could hardly be more radically challenging to Cartesian concerns. For Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, Cartesian clarity is 'the very blandness and transparency of bourgeois reason', in which they see
the suppression of the heterogeneity connected to carnival. It is, for them,

nothing other than the critical negation of a social 'colourfulness', of a heterogeneous diversity of specific contents, upon which it is, nonetheless, completely dependent. (The Politics and Poetics of Transgression, p.199)

Since it is so expressive of bourgeois reason it is to be suspected that the simplicity and clarity which Gulliver, as a good Cartesian, believes to be the signs of truth, but which begin to look more like the signs of naivete, are actually the indicators of deep self-deception.

There is, of course, an obvious contradiction about the assumption of this style, since the simplicity and clarity with which Gulliver deals with his 'gentle' reader are so much at odds with the sophisticated and treacherous machinations of his culture, one that has its sights set on global power. Thus the scientific confidence that is reflected in the book's preoccupation with denotation, and which is the expression of the 'official' confidence and sense of mastery of Gulliver's Europe in its ability to measure, manipulate and in all things act with incontrovertible mathematical authority, is, in Swift's moral dissection of the politics of pride, too close to the kind of military and political arrogance embodied by conquering and colonizing powers.

The very notion of clarity seems to imply that one looks through a scientific instrument -- which too soon results in the notion or de facto assumption, so upsetting to those familiar with the humanist emphasis on self-knowledge, that one is a scientific instrument. Thus our journey starts with the incredible clarity of image in Lilliput and Brobdingnag, worlds that seem to have been 'produced' by the optical instruments of the telescope and microscope (David Ward, Jonathan Swift,
p.33) but thence leads to the self-forgetting scientists of Lagado who have allowed themselves to become human instruments, enslaved by their own crazy experiments.

As it progresses, the Travels clearly moves away from the realistic and towards the fantastic, culminating in the strange fusing of magical/fantastical and the real/clear with Gulliver’s encounter with the rational, Cartesian horses in the last voyage. These quietly fantastical creatures are themselves the embodiment of the very simplicity and clarity that Gulliver is after. However it is here, in this place of a clarity, where Gulliver finds himself in a situation in which his sense of his own social, political and economic realities (in which he has a fixed and relatively secure place) is completely undercut.

Whilst Swift uses the fantastic to attack the epistemological assumptions behind the Cartesian plain style, he also, as the Russian Formalist theorist Tomashevsky has shown, uses the plain style to expose things for what they are, stripped of political euphemism or any of the political distortions of language. The major satirical targets of the satire (such as colonialism, corruption, war, and arbitrary power) are, in Tomashevsky’s words ‘stripped of their verbal justification and thus defamiliarized’ and thus ‘emerge in all their horror’ (quoted in Raman Selden A Readers Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory, p.11). The external ‘alien’ perspectives on Gulliver’s own world that the satire affords seriously challenges what would have been the commonly accepted belief that they were characterised by and expressive of the age’s faith in its own clarity and rationality. By defamiliarizing the well-known and established, Swift is showing how from a very different perspective, it all looks so strange and unfamiliar, unclear and irrational: that
that which is most alien is, in the nature of things, always closest to home.

Thus it is the text’s ‘uncanny’ clarity that serves to increase rather than to decrease the readers growing sense of the unsettling of the ordinary and common-sensical world that he inhabits, as Gulliver’s narrative progresses. Ultimately Gulliver takes the reader into a situation where the firm sense of a (British) social, political and economic reality (the order in which Gulliver and reader, eighteenth century, and to a lesser extent twentieth century, have a fixed and relatively secure place) is completely undercut.

Recent Marxist thinking on the idea of the normal such as Stanley Aronowitz’s critique of the notion of ‘normalcy’ points to the political importance of this kind of satirical disturbance of the world as it is commonly perceived and accepted to be (‘The Production of Scientific Knowledge: Science, Ideology and Marxism’).

For Darko Suvin the clear style of the traveller’s tale is used ironically as the vehicle for an epistemological satire attacking Gulliver’s (and by implication his society’s) closed limited view on the world (a position that brings Suvin close to Bakhtin’s critique of monologism). The scientific style, playing into the hands of such powerful interests, is, in Suvin’s view, turned against the Baconian spirit it originally carried and now becomes a means to power, control and repression (p.108). But it is also what it most seems not to be: a fantasy of objectivity and transparency that not only falsifies the nature of language (and of narrative textuality) but also ignores the fundamental issues of power and control that come into operation within the colonial context.

The clarity of the Traveller’s style is a sign -- from a Menippean perspective -- of the political credulousness that believes textual representation can
be a neutral objective thing. The realistic style of
the Traveller's Tale produces 'realistic' worlds that
suggest they are as they appear, and need not or ought
not to be questioned. The appeal to seriousness and
clarity (at the expense of the Menippean tradition of a
provocative textual playfulness) hides the other
agenda: a politics of closure in which alternatives and
Others (including the alternate voices or presences of
Bakhtin's dialogic) are hidden or suppressed.

There are sudden shifts from this clear and
'rational' style to moments when violence or the
suggestion of violence erupts out into the text. And
there is such a strong sense of violence in the
Travels, particularly of that violence that is the
political and/or military expression of the abuse of
power and desire to dominate the Other. As we can see
from the weapons that are among the basic possessions
that he brings to Lilliput, Gulliver has a military
significance: he possesses a capacity for violence that
is intimately connected to his identity as colonial
man.

An example of a sudden textual slipping into
violence occurs with Gulliver's account of a naval
battle, that he relates so coolly to the Master of the
Houyhnhnms. The suddenness with which we shift realms,
finding ourselves thrown into the brutal and yet in
some way hypnotically fascinating spectacle of war
suggests that the line separating civilization and
violence in Gulliver's society is a very thin one
indeed.

Gulliver's joy in this revelation of technological
power reflects a sense of pride based on compensation
for human inadequacy: that whilst human beings are so
small and insignificant (when compared to the moral
stature of political 'giants' like the
Brobdingnagians), they can unleash a destructive power
that is almost beyond imagining. There is something of
a 'cinematic' quality to this passage: Gulliver's obsessive attention to detail has something of the effect in film of the use of slow motion in attempts to depict intense (and aesthetically compelling) forms of screen violence. 33 Here is the passage in question:

I could not forbear shaking my head and smiling a little at his ignorance. And, being no stranger to the art of war, I gave him a description of cannons, culverins, muskets, carbines, pistols, bullets, powder, swords, bayonets, battles, sieges, retreats, attacks, undermings, countermings, bombardments, sea-fights; ships sunk with a thousand men, twenty thousand killed on each side; dying groans, limbs flying in the air, smoke, noise, confusion, trampling to death under horses' feet; flight, pursuit, victory; fields strewed with carcasses left for food for dogs, and wolves, and birds of prey; plundering, stripping, ravishing, burning and destroying. And to set forth the valour of my own dear countrymen, I assured him, that I had seen them blow up a hundred enemies at once in a siege, and as many in a ship, and beheld the dead bodies drop down in pieces from the clouds, to the great diversion of all the spectators. (IV.v, p.294)

The passage conveys the feeling of the rational, empirical mind being totally overcome by the explosive violence of the spectacle (a telling choice of word). Most intriguingly it seems that the run-on quality of the violence is captured in the writing, not just for mimetic accuracy, but, as I suggested earlier, to draw a connection between two technologies of violence: the more obvious one that involves the 'run on' rapid firing of military machines: whether drilled ranks of soldiers firing in sequence, or naval battleships firing sequential broadsides, and the less obvious one involving the textual 'violence' created by a 'run-on', machine technology of information, the Gutenberg and post-Gutenberg technology of the information media that appears to be behind the satire on the 'writing frame'
in the scientific Academy of Lagado in Part Three. In the passage the explosion that brings death and destruction, also creates the spectacular textual event that is this moment in the Travels, this moment of narrative 'overkill' in which the reader is bombarded by an overpowering array of images and signs delivered at great speed, the textual 'equivalent' of a synchronized naval broadside upon whose destructive power the English colonial Empire would be founded.

It is in its bold confrontation with the terrible fact of human violence that the Travels proves to be so strong and uncompromising an argument for pacifism and tolerance: the latter being, as John Traugott points out, a rather dangerous position to recommend, in the face of growing English pride in their military capabilities ('A Voyage to Nowhere with Thomas More and Jonathan Swift', p.157). Here the Travels shows that it is a satire deeply aware of the violent, the irrational and the fantastic in a world that does not appear to question its presumptions of rationality and reason, qualities which, in the forms that they have assumed, may well show themselves to have no small connection with a capacity for violence.

None of this technological power that we have just witnessed in the description of the sea-battle accompanies Gulliver on his less than glorious and awe-inspiring arrival in Lilliput. A storm, representing those chaotic forces that human beings cannot control, casts him up on a strange shore and he wakes up to find himself (in one of the classic moments of world literature) pegged down by a host of tiny ropes. So he arrives in the first strange 'virgin' (in terms of its being uncolonized) land not in a position of strength, not in a position of colonial power with all the science and technology of his world immediately at hand, but totally bound by tiny ropes, a prisoner of the Lilliputians and as helpless as a baby. This is
one of a number of examples of the restriction or imprisonment that Gulliver experiences during the course of his *Travels*, to which Carole Fabricant has referred.

When Gulliver first meets the Lilliputians the violence that they direct against him is immediately compared to the superior firepower of which his own world is capable:

I heard one of them cry aloud, *Tolgo Phonac*; when in an instant I felt above an hundred arrows discharged on my left hand, which pricked me like so many needles; and besides, they shot another flight into the air, as we do bombs in Europe. (I.i, p.56)

In this childhood world of doll-palaces and tin soldiers, Gulliver suddenly finds that he has become invulnerable, as European bombs are magically transformed into tiny arrows whose sting can be relieved by the simple application of a dab of ointment.

Swift uses the tiny Lilliputian Empire as the perfect satirical metaphor for the pettiness, tinymindedness, and narrow concerns with power and influence in an England ruled by the Walpole administration. The satire does not restrict itself to the antics of the Walpole cabinet, but presents a satirical scenario which held good for much of England’s history, particularly with regard to its relationship with its continental neighbours. The long-standing political and military rivalry with France, which from the sixteenth century onwards took a decidedly religious form (Protestant England versus Catholic France) is satirically represented in the rivalry between Lilliput and Blefuscu, at war over a small matter of sacred etiquette: the end from which end a boiled egg should be eaten.
Gulliver's size is a central feature of the satire on what Swift takes to be the absurd premises upon which absolutism, rapidly on its way to becoming the dominant political system and ideology in Europe (F.P. Lock, *The Politics of 'Gulliver's Travels,'* p. 47), is founded, as is graphically evident in the relationship of power that is established between the Emperor of Lilliput, and a gigantic Gulliver, absurdly eager to prove his absolute loyalty to a six inch high megalomaniac.

The Emperor's size, and that of his subjects, is that which befits their moral stature, a stature indirectly proportional to their political ambition (the satirical imagination having put things in their true perspective). This tiny Lilliputian Emperor, who is absurdly determined to force the whole world to conform to his beliefs and yield to his power, is tiny not despite his desire for power, but because of his desire for power. His arrogance is also accompanied by the blindness which prevents him from seeing that Gulliver's very existence is a confutation of the Imperial propaganda which proclaims his near divinity. As John Traugott has shown, the Lilliputian emperor is a doll-size version of the real size absolutist Emperors who were brought up in a 'dolls' house' environment ('The Yahoo in the Doll's House'), and weaned on the art of war from an early age. As Colin Gordon writes in relation to Foucault's theory of disciplinary power, notions of the miniature and of the mechanical play a key role in the development of absolutist political thought and practice:

*The elaboration of this science was coeval with the influence of Descartes' mechanical speculations on Physiology and La Mettrie's *L'Homme -Machine* ('at once a materialist reduction of the soul and a general theory of training (dressage)'; both drew inspiration from the celebrated clockwork automata of the period, which 'were not just a way of
illustrating the human organism; they were also political dolls, miniature models of power: the obsession of Frederick II, the scrupulous king of little machines, well-trained regiments and long exercises." The focal concept of 'docility' designates this dynamic and constantly intensifiable interrelation of the attributes of knowability, malleability and utility of individuals. Foucault notes the general concern, throughout the 18th century, with knowledge of the infinitely small and the 'discipline of the minuscule'. ('The Birth of The Subject -- Foucault', p.83)

Organized on geometrical and mathematical lines in order to maximize the mustering and deployment of military forces, Lilliput is a well-organized and regulated absolutist society, a social 'machine' whose machine-like qualities are emphasized all the more by having Gulliver pulled back to Mildendo, the capital city, strapped to what is, in Lilliputian terms, a huge wheeled machine, a machine which would seem to symbolize the collective power and ingenuity of this little nation. Mildendo, is an exact square built according to a 'grid' plan the Emperor's palace being right at the centre of the city, where the two main streets meet, the optimum design to facilitate the quick mobilization of forces. It is also the perfect model of the kind of logical, mercantile city of which I was speaking in the previous chapter.

The Lilliputian penchant for exactitude makes it home from home for a man as committed as Gulliver is to sizes, weights and quantities. Gulliver finds himself both the narrator of the efficiency of the Lilliputian people as a social unit, as well as being the cause for their abilities being tested to the limit as all the efforts of the society are immediately focused upon establishing control over, and seeing to the needs of Gulliver's massive body, which consumes as much as would a standing army, that great anathema to the eighteenth-century Tory writer. The Lilliputians seem,
initially at least, to be able to expand their world physically and conceptually in order to accommodate the 'man mountain', Gulliver, whom they treat as the justification of their own sense of self-importance, not as a living refutation of their delusions of political grandeur, which is what the reader might have expected.

However whilst this place has an acute sense of order and accuracy, which ought to make Gulliver feel very much at home, it is also a place of political irrationality, of egotism, intrigue and duplicity. The most obvious example of Lilliputian political 'irrationality' is the hostility that Skyresh Bolgolam develops towards Gulliver, which for Gulliver seems to be without explicable motive.

What Swift would appear to be targeting in his depiction of Lilliput is the power of politics and politicians to corrupt the social domain (the corruption of the social by policies and systems being a major theme of the Travels as a whole). Political life in Lilliput is all about show and performance; ministers must perform circus acts to show that they have the right 'performing' skills (that involve treachery, hypocrisy and intrigue) to keep power. The shenanigans that are revealed in Lilliput seem calculated to challenge the reader's faith in the political, particularly those who do not have an innate, or learned, mistrust of politicians and governments (upon which, ultimately, the favourable reception of political satire depends).

The political life of Lilliput contrasts so sharply with the level of social organization that Gulliver encounters: there could be no stranger mixture of on the one hand, an absurdly authoritarian political system centralised in the tiny Emperor and his devious advisers, and on the other, a well-ordered and culturally rich civil society. In conflict with the
essentialist and universalist assumptions of the 'scientific' travel book/traveller's tale genre, Swift clearly suggests that many Lilliputian social practices are superior to the European ones: their justice system is presented as being morally superior. The generosity and social-spiritedness that seems to underpin all their legislation and social practices, though offset by a harsh and coldly rational approach to things, particularly in the rearing and educating of children, suggests the kind of strictly moral utopian thinking that is to be found in More's *Utopia* (1516), a text that Jonathan Dollimore sees as expressive of the 'anti-essentialist' and sceptical tendencies of Renaissance humanism. 34

The facility with which Gulliver learns the Lilliputian language, and the commanding view that he has of the whole Lilliputian social world, seems to confirm the confidence of the eighteenth-century European in his cultural superiority. Yet this privileging works to expose the political: Gulliver's ability to visually encompass the whole of Lilliput means that he has visual access to the whole workings of a society, its entire machinery. The telescopic view on offer here is one that makes a nonsense of attempts to mystify and disguise real relations through ideology since the whole pattern of social interaction lies exposed.

Though he prides himself on the ease with which he imagines he has integrated himself in Lilliputian culture and society, pointing to the speed with which he has learnt the rudiments of the language, his size makes his cultural absorption quite impossible. Whilst Gulliver seems to want to inhibit his personality, to 'shrink' himself in order to fit into Lilliputian society, the Lilliputian character is one that is expansive and ambitious: the temperamental opposite to the Gulliver who finds himself chained up in the
profaned temple for all the world like a dog in a kennel. Despite the size of its inhabitants Lilliput is ruled by a politics of extravagant spectacle and gesture. If their diminutive size mocks their absolutist pretensions, it also serves to emphasize their incredible chutzpah. This is the salutation for their 6" (penis-sized) Emperor:

Monarch of all Monarchs, taller than the sons of men; whose feet press down to the centre, and whose head strikes against the sun: at whose nod the princes of the earth shake their knees; pleasant as the spring, comfortable as the summer, fruitful as autumn, dreadful as winter. (I.iii, p.79)

Ironically the size of the Lilliputians serves to emphasize the power of the Emperor in relative rather than absolute terms. We can see the effectiveness of his orders as hordes of Lilliputians are sent scurrying hither and thither with each executive breath. By diminishing political man in size, Swift is trivializing the political -- making it an affair of toy soldiers and doll palaces, whose illusions of grandeur and significance are something a moral satirist might sneer at. But he is also giving us a sense of the power that can be realized if the world is reduced to a toy perspective: in the world of the 'toy' absolutist princes (the Louis and Fredericks of Europe) there is a formidable concentration of power.

There is something infectious about Lilliput which seems to reflect the growing popularity of absolutist politics within the European kingdoms of Swift's time. When Gulliver complains of the Treasurer's failure to acknowledge his (Gulliver's) superior rank, it is clear that he has already started to talk like a Lilliputian. In complaining that 'all the world' knows that his title of 'Nardac' is superior to the Treasurer's title of Clumglum, he suggests that he has
started to believe that this pretentious and presumptuous little world is the be all and end all of the universe.

The satire would appear to be making the political point that titles such as that of Clumglum are socially destructive because of the jealousy and rivalry that the awarding of them causes. Gulliver, wanting to be accepted at the highest level of society, clearly loves the diplomatic role that he is called upon to play in assisting the Lilliputians in their dealings with Blefuscu. However, his quick-thinking act of public service in extinguishing the fire at the Queen's palace by urinating on the flames backfires on him and wrecks the illusion he has of political indispensability. Pissing on the fire is Gulliver's most clearly Gargantuan action, an action that he clearly recounts with no small pride when he speaks of: 'voiding' his urine 'in such a quantity, and applied so well to the proper places, that in three minutes the fire was wholly extinguished' (I.v, p.92). This act of 'gigantic' largesse, which is exactly of the kind for which Rabelais' hero would have been universally lauded, is responded to by the Lilliputians in an entirely different way, one that is totally in character with what we know of their political peevishness. Gulliver's saving of the building by pissing on it (an act that Gulliver describes with a delightful reader-sensitive tact) is in their 'refined' view worse than allowing it to burn down. This is the kind of suspiciously bourgeois moral hypocrisy that satire challenges in the only way it can: by yet further outraging sensitivities by repeating the satirical attack (the metaphoric pissing on) that they took such exception to in the first place."

The diminutiveness of Lilliput and the Lilliputians allows Swift to ridicule some of the most contentious political and religious issues of European
history. The issue of the dispute between the small-endians and big-endians satirizes religious intolerance by making the religious differences that divided (and still divide) Catholics from Protestants, ridiculously trivial, hardly an issue worthy of the wars and massacres that took place in Europe (particularly during the Thirty Years War) in the name of true Christianity. In the harshly demystifying terms of satirical analysis, the great issues of religion and politics are reduced to their essential ridiculousness. The ludicrousness of the egg dispute emphasizes the level of political and religious stupidity that determine the affairs of State. The dogma that the absolute sign of the true believer is that they break their eggs at the 'right' end shows the way in which even the best religious intentions can be corrupted by the way in which the religious message is wilfully misinterpreted in the interests of power (a key theme of *A Tale of a Tub*). Though the words of the sacred Lilliputian text say that the egg must be broken at 'the most convenient end' and one could hardly think of a more neutral and less controversial word, it stands to reason that there will be two 'convenient' ends, with their parties and bishops and mystics willing to fight to the end for their interpretation of the sacred word 'convenient' and for their divine right to impose it upon their opponents, and in so doing, save their souls from eternal damnation.

When Gulliver falls out of favour we sense that he is seriously threatened and in real danger. Suddenly the toy people assume a real nastiness and cruelty that contrasts so sharply with their original friendliness and generosity, and Gulliver is no longer living out the childhood fantasy of invulnerability.

With Gulliver's fall from political grace his position in Lilliput undergoes a marked shift in significance. From the heroic conqueror of Blefuscu he
again becomes the monstrous Other, a threat and huge financial burden, consuming as much food and drink as a standing army, that great anathema to all the Tory politicians of the day (F.P. Lock The Politics of ‘Gulliver’s Travels’, pp.139-40). Appropriately for one who is a product of a visual culture, and whose account of his journeys is saturated with references to things being observed, to sight and the visible, his vulnerable spot proves to be his eyes, as the Lilliputians recognise in their plan to blind him. The Lilliputian State’s quandary regarding how to kill Gulliver and dispose of his body brings to the forefront the issue of the relationship between power and the body (a major concern of Michel Foucault’s), suggesting that the idea of the body lies at heart of the political (as is metaphorically suggested by the very phrase ‘the body politic’). Suddenly the huge body, which Bakhtin identifies with the great social body of the popular masses, is something that must be either destroyed or neutralized by the violence of the absolutist State.

Entering this miniature realm in the size, if not the disposition of Rabelais’ Gargantua, Gulliver is in an ideal position to be a liberator figure, yet consents to subject himself to Lilliputians -- because he is in awe of the Lilliputian elite that, quite ludicrously, he so much wants to be part of. There is a strong connection between Swift and Rabelais, as C.J. Rawson has made clear:

That Rabelais’ exuberance evokes a happy release, while Swift’s animated tribute of mankind’s vicious energies has an imprisoning force should not be allowed to obscure the important likeness between the two authors. (Gulliver and the Gentle Reader, p.104)

Both Rabelais’ History and Swift’s Travels focus on the body but to quite different ends. There is a similar
emphasis on the huge quantities of food and drink that Gulliver consumes but whereas Rabelais’ Gargantua is a liberating giant, a figure of carnival excess, Gulliver is a self-regulating conformist who is embarrassed about some of the social problems that his size causes.

Whilst there is something prodigious about Gargantua’s gigantic size, there is something mistaken, incorrect and thoroughly inappropriate about Gulliver’s. Whilst his size is something he takes pride in, it is also a source of embarrassment, particularly when it comes to his bodily functions. Gargantua was able to celebrate the tens of shit and lakes of piss that he could manufacture, for Gulliver the quantities that he has to contend with is a matter of great personal concern. There is a huge temperamental distance between Gulliver having to perform all his bodily functions chained and Gargantua’s prodigious and marvellous feats of shitting.

Once I wiped myself on a lady’s velvet mask, and I found it good. For the softness of the silk was the most voluptuous to my fundament. Another time on one of their hoods, and I found it just as good. Another time on a lady’s neckerchief; another time on some ear-flaps of crimson satin. But there were a lot of turdy gilt spangles on them, and they took all the skin off my bottom. May St Anthony’s fire burn the bum-gut of the goldsmith who made them and of the lady who wore them! That trouble passed when I wiped myself on a page’s bonnet, all feathered in the Swiss fashion.

(Francois Rabelais, The Histories of Gargantua and Pantagruel, pp.66-7)

It is strange how quickly Gulliver forgets he is a physically powerful Gargantuan giant, an embodiment of moral independence and dissidence. Whilst Gargantua breaks through barriers and restrictions in a spirit of carnival excess, destroying the marauding armies of the
tyrant Pinocholet with contemptuous ease, Gulliver always seems to be constrained or confined in one way or another. He wakes up in Lilliput bound so completely that he cannot move. This awakening, after having slept 'sounder than ever I remember to have done in my life' (I.i, p.55), suggests a symbolic rebirth, though one in which he is born into the state of absolute subjection (subject-ion) that absolutism demands.

Under absolutism the fragmentation (atomization) and mechanization of the social body, brings an end to the Renaissance energy that Rabelais' Gargantua and Pantagruel represent. 'Packaged' in such a way that the Lilliputians can wheel him around wherever they want (on the impressive wheeled machine they have constructed for this purpose), there is little chance for Gulliver to exhibit any of the free-spirited independence, or the irrepressible gigantic energy that is so characteristic of Rabelais' giants.

The power that he does have seems to be in conflict with his desire to become socially and politically accepted. In his 'class' desire to becomes something, Gulliver is sadly prone to the fetishizing of power and the powerful. This is revealed so clearly in Brobdingnag when he expresses an absurdly reverent attitude towards a chair made from the Queen of Brobdingnag's hair.

The Queen would have had me sit upon one of these chairs, but I absolutely refused to obey her, protesting I would rather die a thousand deaths than place a dishonourable part of my body on these precious hairs that once adorned her Majesty's head.

(II.vi, p.165)

The contrast between the Gulliverian and Gargantuan attitude towards power and authority could not be more complete. If Gulliver had been as much like Gargantua
in spirit as in size it would not have taken him long
to dispose of the whole corrupt political apparatus
that plunged the land into the costly and quite
senseless war with Blefuscu, and it would have been a
natural act to perform, the expression of the gigantic
energy and largesse of 'carnival' (to invoke Bakhtin's
term).

One of the reasons Gulliver can't be Gargantua, is
because he has the 'other' giant within him, the giant
as monster, what Jeffrey Jerome Cohen in his PH.D
dissertation: 'The Tradition of the Giant in Early
England' speaks of as the negative, 'reactionary' giant
used by political powers to repress the image of the
liberating giant such as that found in Rabelais (pp.5-
6). Released now because of Gulliver's gigantism, this
is a dangerous, atavistic Other that Gulliver seems to
be battling to control, and what prevents him from
acting in an unrestrained free and libertarian way like
Gargantua. During his first encounter with the
Lilliputians this 'other' giant reveals itself when
Gulliver suddenly finds himself having to resist a
strong temptation to inflict the gigantic violence upon
them that he would be capable of:

I confess I was often tempted, while they
were passing backwards and forwards on my
body, to seize forty or fifty of the first
that came in my reach, and dash them against
the ground. But the remembrance of what I
had felt, which probably might not be the
worst they could do, and the promise of
honour I made them for so I interpreted my
submissive behaviour, soon drove out those
imaginations. Besides, I now considered
myself as bound by laws of hospitality to a
people who had treated me with so much
expense and magnificence.(I.i, pp.58-9)

Most significantly, Gulliver sees these atavistic
urges as something that can only be suppressed through
a kind of 'willed' adoption of a civilized, polite and
diplomatic self, which sounds like the classically
Freudian account of the struggle between the id and
superego, a struggle profoundly exacerbated through the
absence of an ego, as the ground upon which the
conflict can be negotiated/deferred/resolved. Clearly
we have a schism between the two Gullivers. On the one
hand we have this thoroughly atavistic 'secret'
Gulliver, with a capacity for sudden violence that
would seem to reflect the cultural violence he has
internalized, and on the other we have the social
Gulliver who prides himself on his own politeness,
restraint and all the trappings of eighteenth-century
civilized behaviour.

Part of the reason for not emulating Gargantua,
then, is that he fears his own capacity for violence,
and the destructive power he has as a giant. He does
not trust himself, and needs to submit himself to
Lilliputian laws and customs in order to stay
civilized. The bondage and restraints to which the
Lilliputians subject him (he spends the first half of
his stay attached to a chain) are preferable to letting
the giant in himself go unleashed.

So ludicrously intent is Gulliver on his cultural
absorption and upward mobility in Lilliputian society,
that he fails to realise the degree to which this is
incompatible with the ideological picture of the
freedom-loving Englishman he shows himself so committed
to, being the subject of a nation that imagined herself
to be the protector of the small nations of the world,
an idea that is celebrated in Pope's *Windsor Forest*
(397-424). A particularly telling moment in this
regard is when Gulliver, confronted by a quite blatant
example of Lilliputian political cynicism and
manipulation, rejects his own judgement in favour of
the party line, believing that he lacks the inside
knowledge of the courtier to 'penetrate' the true
meaning of these words. Gulliver refuses to accept
that he has seen through the big lie, that he has the kind of insight into the cynicism and hypocrisy of political leaders that satire is premised upon. Behind the absurdity of the discrepancy between word and reality, similar to that which obsessed the Orwell of 'Politics and the English Language' and Nineteen Eighty-Four, lies the violence of suppression that the Lilliputian ruling order is capable of.

In the way that Gulliver recounts the episode, it is as if the Lilliputian ruling elite is exulting in its power to be as ironical as possible, knowing that however great the great lie, it will always be read as 'fact':

The Emperor always made a speech to his whole Council expressing his great lenity and tenderness, as qualities known and confessed by all the world. This speech was immediately published through the kingdom; nor did anything terrify the people so much as those encomiums on his Majesty's mercy; because it was observed, that the more these praises were enlarged and insisted on, the more inhuman was the punishment, and the sufferer more innocent. Yet, as to myself, I must confess, having never been designed for a courtier either by my birth or education, I was so ill a judge of things, that I could not discover the lenity and favour of this sentence, but conceived it (perhaps erroneously) rather to be rigorous than gentle. (I.vii, p.109)

The product of a power and class fetishizing society, Gulliver seems to have a notion that the powerful are in some way epistemologically privileged: that their language has greater meaning because it reflects and embodies perceptions that are in some way purer and closer to the real. This is the most serious form of gullibility that Gulliver (whose very name suggests this capacity for being deceived) shows himself to be capable of. It is the gullibility that rulers and governments cynically exploit in their
continued distortions and manipulations of the truth in order to perpetuate control and to legitimize oppression. Gulliver's rejection of his own awareness of discrepancy between the Emperor's speech and its true political meaning (the persecutions that its proclamations of the Emperor's mercy signal) implies that the political common sense and 'consciousness' of the dominated is misguided, because truth is a class thing: only the privileged and those in power can know the truth.

This idea that only those who are a part of the logic of government can truly know what it is about, is not only a recipe for political oppression, but makes the whole realm of the political a magical or secret realm that only the true initiates who are a part of its processes can truly understand. This notion, which seems to curiously parallel those epistemological positions that dismiss the evidence of the senses in favour of rational truth, the domain of the philosopher, is the complete antithesis to the satirist's desire for the ironic and defamiliarizing distance and separation that can allow the political to be stripped of the kinds of mystifying rituals and customs and trappings of power that Gulliver gets so easily sucked into.

Gulliver here shows himself to have become more an agent of the cynical manipulation of the truth by the politically powerful, than its simple victim. His awareness that something seems wrong makes his desire to be the true political fetishist, rather than the consistent empiricist, trusting the clear evidence of his senses, all the more damning. In the light of his statement of faith in politicians and elites, it is at once darkly ironic, and highly appropriate that he should be threatened by the State with horrible death or mutilation, as the most sinister and treacherous
elements within the ruling elite succeed in their plotting against him.

For Gulliver to learn to see things as those in power, or close to those in power do", would mean a total divesting of any sense of irony and discrepancy and to learn that cynicism that allows politicians to distort and exploit the truth without it appearing, or anyone believing that they are really doing so, almost as if it has become second nature to them. The danger Swift is pointing to is one that we will find later in the Houyhnhnms in the final book: the attractions of what we might call a moral solipsism, where the possibility of refutation or contradiction becomes completely closed off, as thought is completely naturalized.

Apart from the obvious transformation in size (a typically Menippean transformation), and consequently in stature, the Gulliver of the second voyage appears far more to identify with the scientific and military values of European culture. As a result of this he becomes far more included in the satire, operating as both its vehicle and its target. What might seem to be inconsistency in characterization (to be explained by pointing to Gulliver's primary role as satirical mouthpiece) can also be seen as involving the presentation of the two 'sides' of the political contradiction that is eighteenth-century England, land of liberty and the balanced constitution, as well as colonial power and slaver nation (the main slave trading nation since Jamaica was ceded by Spain in 1655).

Brobdingnag represents Swift's ideal Renaissance humanist world, a 'small' Renaissance humanist kingdom ruled by a philosopher king, a level-headed intellectual with a strong moral conscience, whose court is the natural centre of social, political and intellectual life. As F. P. Lock makes clear:
Swift’s critique of contemporary society is radical in scope while deeply conservative in its basis. His ideal is an early Renaissance state, freed from the slavery and superstition of the Middle Ages and yet untroubled, if not untouched, by the wider reaches of the disturbing discoveries which in a short while transformed Europe. (The Politics of 'Gulliver’s Travels,' p.148)

Whilst Brobdingnag clearly falls within the utopian tradition, it has the ramshackle energy and rumbustiousness of the England of the Tory squires in abundance.

Giants, as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen ('The Tradition of the Giant in Early England') points out, are figures in mythology and folklore that are as ambivalent as they are powerful (pp.5-6, p.11). They can be used or interpreted in a positive or negative way: as liberatory figures representing human potential and collective social power, or conversely, as I pointed out earlier, as monsters or barbarian Others representing the need for protection and for a powerful authority that can contain such threats.

Gulliver’s assumption of a direct correlation between monstrous size and monstrous character clearly does not apply. The monstrousness he expects from the Brobdingnagians (so ironically, after having experienced what it means to be a giant himself) is nothing more than his imagining of his own violent tendencies ‘writ large’, or projected onto a larger screen. From this voyage onward the idea that Gulliver is a ‘projector’ (the word he will use for himself in Lagado) begins to suggest itself, linking the issue of epistemology, how we come to know the world through our perception of it, and the historical and political theme of colonialism: the power that a culture can exercise over the world through its occupation of the space of, and subjugation and exploitation of the Other. As Darko Suvin has convincingly argued: the
true power of the Travels lies in the epistemological nature of its satire, rather than in its high moral critique of political malpractice and perversion (Metamorphoses of Science Fiction, pp.30, 109).

Far from turning out to be the monsters that Gulliver expects, the Brobdingnag giants reveal that it is their humanity that is gigantic, their size being a 'sign' of the diminishment of Gulliver and the ideas and values of his world. Here Swift uses the idea of the giant to suggest what is a powerful motif in the Travels: historical 'progress' as a form of diminution and declension. That the Brobdingnagians have declined from a past condition in which they were greater in size and stature suggests, analogously, that the time of these giants (recognizably that of the Renaissance) is the legendary past of Gulliver's own world, his own world's time of giants. This serves to set up a very different equation from Gulliver's; this being that the greater the scientific and political 'progress' of Western man, the greater the diminishment from this giant world.

Gulliver's being stranded in Brobdingnag brings a complete inversion of the status and position that he enjoyed in Lilliput, as well as a change in perspective that could not be more complete. He finds himself inhabiting a closed 'interior' world, a world where his sense of sight can offer no forewarnings of surrounding dangers as he suddenly finds himself subjected to the alarming proximity of things. Under such conditions Gulliver shifts from being the agent of powerful acts that impress a whole nation, to the object of all sorts of haphazard forces and accidents, and malicious pranks that put his life in danger, or embarrass and threaten to humiliate him. The Lilliputian fantasy of omnipotence has now become the childhood nightmare of vulnerability and exposure in a world of gigantic adults.
It is Gulliver’s being summoned to the Court that allows him to escape the degrading life of an enslaved ‘flea circus’ performer, whose little show at the ‘Sign of the Green Eagle’ had become a thriving industry for his ‘master’, the giant who first discovered him. Aline M. Taylor (‘Sights and Monsters and Gulliver’s Voyage to Brobdingnag’) connects this abuse of Gulliver’s talents to the carnival world of fairs and fairgrounds that features so strongly in Stallybrass and White’s Bakhtinian analysis of the history of English cultural life. She shows, in the words of Brian Tippett, that Gulliver ‘is the precise counterpart of the midgets, monkeys, puppets and freaks who were displayed for popular entertainment in the eighteenth century’ (Gulliver’s Travels: An Introduction, p.59).

For all his aspirations to be the courtier, Gulliver cannot escape battles for survival, or jealous little feuds with wasps, rats, monkeys, dwarves and other creatures that from the Brobdingnagian visual perspective are things that he most resembles. Finding himself constantly subjected to such degradation and humiliation, and as we saw right at the beginning of the opening chapter, the butt of much Brobdingnagian humour, he is constantly trying to show his hosts that he can do things, that he can fend for himself, that he is, like them, an agent with power over his world. The way in which he brings what he has killed to his Brobdingnagian guardians to show what he is capable of, would seem to be very much like the behaviour of a feline pet, bringing its little kills home to present to its mistress or master. Of all the humiliating experiences that he is subjected to, the worst are his being mothered by the male monkey, and, what is also a sign of his decline from the huge phallic ‘meaning’ conferred upon him by the Lilliputians, his being used
as a human dildo by the most frolicsome of the royal maids-of-honour.

The natural political and intellectual focal point of its society, the Brobdingnagian Court is the centre towards which all things necessarily gravitate, rather than the absolutist centre that wishes to extend itself outwards, imposing a directness of rule over all its sovereign territory. Swift’s very depiction of this ‘happy’ court is in itself a political act: since his readers would inevitably make comparisons between this ideal state of affairs (in terms of the political philosophy within which Swift is working) and the Court of George II, so despised by the Tory satirists of the day.

Unlike the dour and unlettered George Augustus the King of Brobdingnag is a humane man educated in philosophy and mathematics, a philosopher King in the style of Plato’s Republic (F.P. Lock, The Politics of ‘Gulliver’s Travels’, pp.16-17), with a Renaissance down-to-earth twist. He is also a figure who stands lightyears apart form the mad abstract philosophers who rule the flying island of Laputa, and the long-suffering lands beneath.

The Voyage to Brobdingnag is perhaps the least imaginatively satisfying section of the Travels, yet it would seem that what we have here is Swift’s closest approximation to the idea of a true utopia, providing a norm or standard to contrast with (and to counterbalance) what we find in the other voyages. Here Swift is not looking back to a real historical past, in the sense that he is elevating the Renaissance above his own century: the memory of the Church and State oppression of intellectuals during the period, epitomized by the burning of Giordano Bruno (to which Darko Suvin refers in Metamorphoses, p.98) and the acknowledgement that the new scientific rationality of the time (the Enlightenment) brought an end to the kind
of ignorance and superstition exploited and actively inculcated by the institutions of Church and State in the name of power and control. What Swift is suggesting is that it is in the pre-modern Renaissance past that such an ideal state might have been achieved. In the modern world, as it is depicted in the Travels, there is a overwhelmingly strong inclination towards dystopias of manipulation and control, the very antithesis to the small-scale utopia that Brobdingnag represents. The transformative power of the modern is very clear in Laputa/Lagado, and would seem to lurk behind the pastoral Eden that is the land of the Houyhnhnms.

The law in Brobdingnag has a simplicity; everything is clear and transparent. Since the Brobdingnagians have outlawed legal commentary, there is no place for the growth of special groups of professionals who can make their knowledge a domain of their special power, as is very much the case in Laputa/Lagado. Although the style of Brobdingnag is described by Gulliver as being clear and 'masculine', and the King is a strong masculine authority and presence at the heart of his Kingdom, the society is also characterised by its strong wilful woman: the Queen, Gulliver's patron/mother, Glumdalclitch, Gulliver's 'little' nurse/mother and last but not least, the 'frolicsome' maid of honour who uses Gulliver as a sexual toy. Brobdingnag is a comparatively 'open' simple society, free from the kinds of political competitiveness and penchant for political intrigue that Gulliver experienced, and fell victim to, in Lilliput. Ruled according to moral principle, with a clear human authority, fair-minded but fallible at the helm, Brobdingnag is a State premised upon taking account of basic 'natural' human needs (the King's idea of great knowledge is that which will help keep the peace or increase the agricultural
yield). It is also a place of laughter: the only place of laughter in the *Travels*. And what resounding laughter it is: of all of the *Travels* the thing closest to Rabelais’ *Gargantua*.

The mistress sent her maid for a small dram-cup, which held about two gallons, and filled it with drink; I took up the vessel with much difficulty in both hands, and in a most respectable manner drank to her ladyship’s health, expressing the words as loud as I could in English, which made the company laugh so heartily, that I was almost deafened by the noise.(II.i, p.128)

That the laughter all comes at the expense of poor Gulliver places him the kind of comic light that we do not find elsewhere in the *Travels* (although he is invariably the victim of Swift’s irony).

I would think that it would be impossible for a satirist to imagine a utopia without laughter, for such a utopia would be too short on humanity for it to be liveable in. A utopia too serious for laughter would have no place for satire, and thus no protection against the kinds of forces of which I spoke in the first chapter. Brobdingnag may be ruled by a king who is moral and wise, a Renaissance incarnation of Plato’s philosopher king, but it is a place of the human, the body, and laughter: in this sense it is as rough and ready, warts-and-all utopia as they come.

In Brobdingnag the King is a leader of honour and integrity, of a kind that doesn’t really exist in Gulliver’s world. Emerging from his sad experience in Lilliput, after which he had resolved ‘never more to put any confidence in princes, or ministers, where I could possibly avoid it’, Gulliver seriously misjudges the King, presuming that his philosophy of and attitude to political power would be the same as that of a regular European absolute monarch.
For all his efforts, Gulliver finds it impossible to restore his battered self-image by proving that he is a rational human being. The more he tries to, the more he confirms the Brobdingnagians view of him as a creature that mimics the human. Their great council of experts called together by the king for the purpose of classifying Gulliver also fails, since he lies outside of what the giants can visually categorize. They conclude that he is (with an irony that looks forward to the final voyage), a lusus naturae (II.iii, p.143), a 'freak of nature', a verdict that is consistent with the reactions of those lesser luminaries, the ordinary people of Brobdingnag, such as the woman who ran away screaming at the sight of him 'as women in England do at the sight of a toad or a spider', or identifying him as 'splacknuck', a most hideous term that shows how alien and Other he is to the alien Other (who correspondingly becomes a lot less alien to us).

Here in Brobdingnag it is Gulliver who now falls under microscopic scrutiny. Now he himself becomes an object, living in a world that is blown up to the kind of size magnification that is provided by a microscope. This excruciatingly close-detailed, microscopic perspective is the very point of view behind the logic of coding and classification of the human objects of medical inquiry that Michel Foucault deals with in The Birth of the Clinic (1966). From the commanding presence he had as the colossus of Lilliput, Gulliver becomes the potential prey of every little predator in the land; formerly the one-man-army who stole an entire fleet, he descends to the level of a bathtub admiral sailing in his toy boat for the entertainment of his gigantic hosts.

Through this visual scrutiny of the isolated, diminutive Gulliver by the curious and perplexed Brobdingnagians we begin to see what it would be like to look at ourselves and our world through alien eyes.
The visual defamiliarization acts to prepare the way for the political defamiliarization which is to follow: the first of three biting accounts of British and European social and political institutions and practices (the other two are in Glubbdubdrib and in the Land of the Houyhnhnms), each more damning than the last.

Gulliver's pygmy status in comparison to these indigenous giants reflects the idea of the superiority of the culture of the Other that goes back to Montaigne's 'On Cannibals' (1588), a humanist text that is used to challenge Western values by using cannibalism, the absolute sign of the barbarity and moral inferiority of the Other, to provide a critique of the corrupt, authoritarian, increasingly capitalist, and seemingly morally bankrupt European 'centre'.

Cannibalism is clearly something that Swift associates with colonialism, both here in the Travels, and more famously in A Modest Proposal. When in Lilliput, Gulliver, a supposedly civilized figure, manifests atavistic urges towards cannibalism, threatening to eat some of the Lilliputians who have offended him, it is almost as if he were acting out his own image of the giant as devourer, and since that giant comes from the colonial nations about to devour the world, unconsciously allegorizing himself and his world. Swift seems to be aware of the irony of cannibalism being used as a pretext for colonialism (as it was historically, with the idea of 'saving' the cannibalistic savage) when cannibalism is such an obvious metaphor for colonialism.

When the King of Brobdingnag, an old world intellectual, submits Gulliver, the new world medical professional, to a bit of exploratory surgery of a Socratic kind, teasing out the absurdities and iniquities of Gulliver's world, we are led on a satirical 'descent' into all that is wrong with
eighteenth-century England, pulling the whole of the English political system to pieces.

Talking to the King about England puts Gulliver in a situation of split loyalties, being so close to the King but also, as we saw earlier, so close to what he so revealingly termed his 'political mother'. It is hardly surprising that his exposition should reveal the extent to which he has swallowed the whole British ideological 'line'. His account of things sounds very similar to the Whig view of history that dominated historical readings of the eighteenth century until the advent of Marxist revisionism.

The way in which Gulliver continually emphasizes himself in his account of his own society (his account to the reader of the account that he gave the King), shows how much his sense of his own identity is on the line here, which explains how important it is for him to convince the King by producing a 'magical' narrative revelation of European culture and power. However, through this self-assertive emphasis on the I (ironically he wishes he were a Demosthenes in order to do justice to his society) he ends up doing the exact opposite of what he intends, creating a very different impression, that of someone who is compensating for his smallness in trying to be authoritative and prolific.

The King astutely raises all of the questions that Gulliver finds difficult or impossible to answer. Perplexed at his interrogator's persistence, Gulliver cannot understand that there is nothing self-evident about his world, nothing that puts it above scrutiny. As a result of Gulliver's 'Demosthenean' ineptitude -- plainly evident to the reader, with whom Gulliver believes he is sharing a joke at the Brobdingnagian's expense -- the King is led to a totally dismissive position in which he sees everything Gulliver has so proudly recounted and explained as the indication of the depth of the madness of his society.
The King's analysis of Gulliver's world reflects, in an alien tongue, and in the voice of regal authority and power, the position of the alienated intellectual who has realized (as Thomas More did) the stupidity and horror of the world that he and his compatriots have created for themselves. This critical voice is one marginalized by the cultural and social processes that Gulliver's social class had much to do with, now suddenly given supreme moral authority, and allowed to comment, from a 'high' utopian perspective, the perspective that Menippeus is given in Erasmus' *The Praise of Folly* (1509), on the stupidity and horror of a world that has moved so far away from rational principles. Solid authority is given to the King through the comparison with the 'Royal Sovereign' (*Travels*, II.iii, p.146), the battleship that is clearly a symbol of British naval power. This is as flattering a comparison in one sense as it is ironical in another.

To make matters worse Gulliver sees the King's refusal to allow him to build a supercannon with which to colonize his enemies, and to enslave his own people as the result of a 'nice unnecessary scruple'. As an example of what Northrop Frye terms an 'alazon' (*Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, pp.39-40, 365) Gulliver must needs be a sucker for satirical punishment. As he sees it, the King's politics, still under the unfortunate influence of moral principles, are completely out of touch with the modern tendency to make politics a calculating science (in the King's world Ethical Philosophy has not yet become Political Science 101).

The King sees Gulliver's proposed cannon as a truly diabolical suggestion (reacting with the kind of moral outrage that we witnessed a decade or so ago with the proposed introduction of the neutron bomb). In the King's 'alien', moral way of thinking (the thinking of
a civilization that is not premised on violence, though it is certainly not without it), such a weapon could only have been thought up by what he describes as 'some evil genius, enemy to mankind' (II.vii, p.175).

Gulliver's account of European technology and politics is of necessity also an account of the colonizing forces lined up against a land like Brobdingnag. Quite inescapably there is a colonial dimension to their exchange: Gulliver's presentation of his world is also the presentation of the colonial case for his world, and the King's probing critique of Gulliver's discourse is a kind of anti-colonial subversion and unhinging of the case for European superiority and power.

Gulliver thinks the reader will be pleased at the evasive strategies that he takes to avoid the King's questions. The implicit suggestion is that Gulliver is not entirely gullible, as his name would suggest, buying into his and his society's self-deceptions, but that the truth is known -- but is too dangerous a thing to be expressed, and so must be repressed. Speech is thus not the production of clarity, that the Cartesian premise of the Traveller's Tale presumes, but the art of misrepresentation and concealment, and is an extension of the kind of physical behaviour that the Brobdingnagians see as the capacity to imitate the human.

In trying to convince the 'Other', Gulliver seems to fail because of a translation problem that seems to lie outside the scope of the scientific and empirical notions of language upon which his own linguistic practices are premised. It is inevitable that our wandering soul might not himself prove to be (to entertain a little post-Saussurean thinking) something of a 'wandering' signifier. Indeed as we know from the pun in his own name and that in Master Bates, names are not always what they seem, they have secret linguistic
identities that might just get 'teased out'.
Gulliver's name is a floating signifier: it floats so much that at the end though he may know who he is, his idea of 'what' he is has been ripped apart. Gulliver's 'meaning' undergoes such radical changes during the Travels: we can see from the outset in Lilliput, where his whole body seems to take on semiotic meanings that it never had before, that he no longer can be (as if he ever could) the stable, British sign that he imagines himself to be. Certainly at the outset of the Travels he is at pains to assign himself just such a fixed and stable meaning in locating himself so precisely in familial and geographical terms (as a kind of absolute 'middling sort', as I suggested earlier, the middle son of a middle class family from the 'middle' of England).

Producing a sense of contact between Gulliver and reader emphasizes human fallibility and propensity towards stupidity, credulousness and the litany of satirical signs that prevents us from dismissing Gulliver as an ingenue who has no real connection to us. What emerges is a sense that the errors that Gulliver makes are human errors, that we could make just as easily, given that we are also pretty gullible when it comes to accepting the official line on so many things. The realization that we could just as easily fall into the kind of traps that Gulliver falls into, strips us of the comfort we might take in our own presumptions of moral and political vigilance. In such strange and yet familiar worlds (worlds of what Freud termed 'the uncanny'”), we could just as easily become ingenues too. Gulliver's telling us how he tried to protect us in evading the King hints at our own unconscious 'protective' barriers and suggests we reassess these as part of the process of reading, that process which gives us the great acid test between politically gullible and irrational Yahoo, and the possibility of something that can avoid the Yahoo
through its use of 'capax rationis', the power of reason.

As I have already suggested, one of the greatest changes for Gulliver to come to terms with between Lilliput and Brobdingnag is the visual deprivileging that he undergoes. As Carole Fabricant has convincingly shown, the visual position that one occupies in eighteenth-century society has an important connection to political class (Swift's Landscape). Here in Brobdingnag Gulliver is hard-pressed to achieve a visual sense of distance and detachment from the realm of the physical, which he associates with the idea of the 'lower-classes'. Having lost that supreme and heady position that he enjoyed in Lilliput, where the entire society presented itself as a visual prospect that could be swallowed up in a single panoramic 'look', it is only through what is in effect a very bizarre form of royal patronage that he is able to achieve the 'segregation' that he desires.

Laying such great emphasis on class distinctions, Gulliver is as trapped by the idea of status and class as any of his compatriots, forever making the kind of discriminating judgements between the 'high' and the 'low' that we see in such absolute form in Part IV of the Travels.

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. (II.v, p.163)

The connection between Gulliver's class-consciousness and his physical revulsion from the bodies that he encounters in Brobdingnag is a clear one, as his choice of beggars as the subject of his observations demonstrates. Revealing that he had
specially gone out to 'see' the poor, and the extent of their physical ravagement, his microscope-like eyes
seem to peer into a huge and horrible universe, where what seems to be a dissolving mass of entropic flesh
plays host to the most disgusting parasites and other sub-life forms:

One day the governess ordered our coachman to stop at several shops, where the beggars, watching their opportunity, crowded to the sides of the coach, and gave me the most horrible spectacles that ever an European eye beheld. There was a woman with a cancer in her breast, swelled to a mountainous size, full of holes, in two or three of which I could have easily crept, and covered my whole body. There was a fellow with a wen in his neck, larger than fine woolpacks, and another with a couple of wooden legs, each about twenty foot high. But the most hateful sight of all was the lice crawling on their clothes. (II.iv, p.151-2)

The disgust that Gulliver expresses here is worlds apart from the Rabelaisian glorification of the huge and the excessive as the expression of the popular, collective social 'body' (as interpreted by Bakhtin, with his notion of 'carnival'). The distance from the Rabelaisian giant of Lilliput that Gulliver could have been (if he had had the mind to), and this tiny Gulliver whose disgust is so true to his social class, could not be greater. Gulliver's repulsion from the body in its grotesque form as the signifier of the lower classes fits in with his class's aesthetic preoccupation with a classicism based on a purity of shape and form (an aesthetic or cultural ideology at odds with its mercantilist economic ideology).

The beggars that Gulliver sees when travelling in a coach are, as we can see from the passage I have just quoted, described as 'the most horrible spectacles that ever an European eye beheld'. By being labelled a 'spectacle' the bodies of these social unfortunates are
stripped of their humanity, and treated as a 'show' for the consumption of the privileged, as was the case with the Bedlam inmates, who provided a very popular spectacle for visitors in need of good entertainment. Gulliver’s horrified response to these bodies bears out Allon White’s argument regarding the troubled relationship that the bourgeois class has with carnival grotesque, as it is pushed out of public social space and into the unconscious, only to resurface in the ‘morbid symptoms of private terror’ (‘Hysteria and the End of Carnival’) revealed in the psychoanalytic case studies that comprise Freud’s *Studies on Hysteria*. 45

Here in the *Travels* we have the feeling that the grotesque body -- now so clearly the class marker of everything antithetical to bourgeois cleanliness and rationality 46 -- is something that must be viewed at arm’s length, through a sheet of glass, or through a microscope under protected laboratory or clinical conditions.

Thus one of the worst things about Brobdingnag from Gulliver’s point of view, is the way in which these gigantic human bodies appear to break through perceptual barriers. In the case of female bodies this creates the feeling of a monstrous female physical 'materiality' invading Gulliver’s space:

I must confess no object ever disgusted me so much as the sight of her monstrous breast which I cannot tell what to compare with so as to give the curious reader an idea of its bulk, shape and colour. It stood prominent six foot, and could not be less than sixteen in circumference. The nipple was about half the bigness of my head, and the hue both of that and the dug so varied with spots, pimples and freckles, that nothing could appear more nauseous: for I had a near sight of her, she sitting down the more conveniently to give suck, and I standing on the table. (II.i, p.130)
Gulliver’s body anxieties, which in Lilliput took the form of the desire to distance himself from his natural functions, here becomes a repulsion from the physical proximity of these giant bodies, particularly those whose grotesqueness is a sign of their poverty, and which is, as Peter Stallybrass and Allon White have argued (The Politics and Poetics of Transgression, pp.171-90) what Gulliver’s class bear the responsibility for the historical repression and displacement of. It is entirely to be expected then, that Gulliver’s repulsion is a sign of something as much social and related to the class that Gulliver is the embodiment and spokesman of, as it is a personal thing that, by analysing it psychoanalytically as a symptom, can be traced back to a pathology in the author himself, a position that is supported by those poems of Swift’s that deal with the body, and by some of the things we know about his life.

Those who read this physical repugnance quite differently and see the satire as more revealing of the author’s malaise, rather than that of the society of which the author has taken pains to make his narrator and central character an embodiment of, need to be able to offer a convincing explanation as to why it is so clearly Gulliver himself who is responding so negatively to the bodies of the Brobdingnagians, and who ‘recognises’ the human in the Yahoo.

The physical bodies of the Brobdingnagians complicate the satire of this voyage in a similar way to the way in which the utopian social practices of the Lilliputians complicated the clear-cut political satire of the first book of the Travels. The physical flaws of Brobdingnag, which is a society that has its capital criminals, as we can see from the execution that takes place shortly before Gulliver’s departure, make this land more intimately physical than any of the other
lands visited, less conspicuously intellectual or hypothetical and therefore more ‘human’.

The Brobdingnagians are morally superior, but it is their bodies that bring home the horror of man’s physical nature, a horror that, whilst mediated by Gulliver, and in a sense produced by his middle class attitudes and values, as well as by the ‘microscopic’ perspective provided by his culture’s scientific epistemology, is also one that does strike an uncomfortable chord with the reader -- who is left uncertain as to whether the problem lies with the human body, shown in its giant-sized imperfectness, or with Gulliver, whose epistemological mind-set is responsible for the mixture of fascination and disgust with which he approaches and responds to the ‘spectacle’ of the human body.

Gulliver’s horrified rejection of the grotesque body (that is such a cause for celebration in Bakhtin) occurs at the same time that his own human identity becomes so severely challenged. In Brobdingnag the human shape of his body cannot be recognised, and he is treated as if he is a ‘splacknuck’, an ‘alien’ animal that has no precise translation in a European language:

He considered a while with the caution of one who endeavours to lay hold on a small dangerous animal in such a manner that it shall not bite him, as I have sometimes done with a weasel in England. (II.i, p.125)

This seems to be ironical and yet in terms of human cultural capacity for violence and developed technology of violence the treatment is quite apt. The simple irony quickly reverses itself: Gulliver is a weasel-like conniving little predator, as are all the members of the class of middle class professionals from which he comes, in the eyes of the satirists of the period at least. The Beggar’s Opera is rich in the
predatory images that its author, Swift's fellow Scriblerian John Gay, devises for the members of this class. The attack begins in the very first Air:

All professors berogue one another
The priest calls the lawyer a cheat,
The lawyer be-knaves the divine;
And the statesmen, because he's so great,
Thinks his trade as honest as mine.
(Act I, Scene I; Air I, p.43)

The King's contemptuous dismissal of Gulliver and his nation as 'the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth' (Travels, II.vii, p.173), prepares the way for the even more brutal attack on the proud self image of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment that is to follow.

For the King everything in Gulliver's world (the world that has produced him, and whose ideological narratives he carries around with him in his head) is seen as imitative and derivative, as a poor copy of something real (as if Swift were using Plato's description of the world of appearances in The Republic). This critique of The King's poses the first ontological challenge to Gulliver and his world, the second, more devastating challenge will come in the Land of the Houyhnhnms.

Ironically it is when Gulliver thinks that, through his exposition of his own world's 'progress' in the social and political spheres, and of its advanced military capabilities, he has most distanced himself from the negative image that the Brobdingnagians have of him, has confirmed his humanity and established a sense of his own authority, that the King reacts with such dismissive outrage.

Gulliver's ultimate gesture of 'generosity' towards the King is to offer to build him a huge cannon, which curiously anticipates the long-range
supercannon that certain contemporary regimes are apparently keen on constructing. Gulliver sees this as the perfect weapon for a King who naturally, as European absolutist kings (like Louis XIV of France) could make good use of such a weapon to destroy his enemies and colonize their lands, or to suppress his own people.

Nowhere in the Travels is Gulliver's judgment so hopelessly wide of the mark. The very idea of such a weapon is an anathema to the King. Here the politics of Brobdingnag and of Europe are poles apart. For Gulliver the King's refusal to accept this proposition is incomprehensible. He sees him as having rejected the chance of making himself the absolute master of his people (in other words enslaving them) 'from a nice unnecessary scruple' (II.vii, p.175). Gulliver's logic here draws attention to what is wrong with the new absolutist conception of power, a power dependent on regimentation, coercion and promulgation. In this absolutist conception, power must be total and completely centralized, if it does not constantly assert itself in regulating the lives of those ruled, then chaos and anarchy follow, as Thomas Hobbes argued in justifying the absolutist position in The Leviathan (1651).

The Gulliver who expresses these political sentiments is very far removed from the defender of British liberty and fair play whose dissident stance was seen as such a threat by the Lilliputian ruling elite. What Swift has done is to take the two political attitudes or philosophies that are both present in Gulliver as the two halves of an ideological contradiction and split them apart, making the Gulliver in Lilliput the more mythological than historical 'freeborn Englishman', the lover of freedom, justice and fair play, and the Gulliver in Brobdingnag, the colonizing Englishman, subject and patriotic supporter
of a militaristic, colonizing and enslaving nation. That these two political 'selves' are quite irreconcilable makes the national character one that is politically schizophrenic.  

The challenge to Gulliver's human status that takes place in Brobdingnag, whose great scholars believe him to be an impossible freak, beyond the 'regular Laws of Nature' (II.iii, p.142) -- reflects upon the fixed notions of humanity that they adhere to. The demolishing of self that takes place here ought to disabuse Gulliver of his own essentialist way of thinking since it makes him a principle of deconstruction, an 'identity' whose very existence confounds the essentialism of the lands he visits. Despite his own middle class Cartesian assumptions Gulliver has become a thoroughly Menippean subject, both less and more than any notion of 'human', that most open-ended of categories (in an ideal, open-ended world). Gulliver's deconstruction of the Brobdingnag system of generic classification is all the more effective because of the effort that they put in to establish the 'truth'.

The spectacle of the public execution that Gulliver witnesses shortly before his departure seems, initially at least, to be a strangely anomalous episode in this voyage. The bouncing of the decapitated head and the huge flow of blood are striking images that paradoxically suggest vitality rather than death, bringing together the idea of a chaotic and anarchic force, with the idea of the clear-cut and decisive.

The comparison between the height of the spurtting blood to the fountains at Versailles might alert a reader to the way in which justice was executed in Bourbon France (the great national enemy of the period). It seems to suggest a 'higher', cleaner justice than that which needs to brand its sense of outrage on the body of the perpetrator as a kind of
cathartic expulsion of social evil, such as that horrific 'show death' of Robert Damiens, the would-be regicide of Louis XVI, cited by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*.

The Brobdingnag execution leaves a vivid impression that we take with us into the following voyage of the reality and unavoidability of death (seen to be something equally as gigantic as life), as well as, obvious as it may seem to the non-philosophers amongst us, that peculiar importance of the connection between head and body for the continuation of human life. In this following voyage we are about to enter a world (actually a world fragmented into a series of small 'worlds'), that fear death and wish to control or perpetuate life and therefore fail to 'live'. The account of this third voyage is dominated by one of the most striking satirical inventions of the *Travels*, a 'flying' world that is the ruling spirit and imperial power having jurisdiction over the lands beneath. Metaphorically speaking the flying island, in the degree to which it has cut itself off from the world beneath, seems to have gone through its own process of decapitation: floating between earth and the heavens, unable to detach itself from the lands beneath, absorbed in realms of abstract theory and speculation it is more like Socrates' balloon in Aristophanes' *The Clouds* than it is like any of the true flying machines in the Menippean tradition (such as in Cyrano's voyages to the moon).

As with *A Tale of A Tub*, one of the great concerns of the *Travels* is the relationship between social styles and intellectual contents, particularly the determining role that social styles can play in forcing thought into particular moulds, and in determining the kind of associative and analogical links that are possible in the generation of ideas. With the voyage to the flying island of Laputa, Swift explores the
extent to which style can become imprisoning, closing down the possibility of alternative viewpoints and other voices. From here on the theme of imprisonment takes on a darker, more metaphoric meaning, as well as raising the nightmarish prospect of the prison world, the dystopia that we are so very familiar with from the great dystopian satires of the twentieth century.

Hovering above the lands below through the application of Newtonian physics (the counterbalancing of magnetic and gravitational forces), Laputa is the very embodiment of the desire to subject space and time (the categories of classical physics) to absolute mathematical control. It both stands as a metaphor for the kind of abstract and thoroughly introspective activity that its inhabitants indulge in, as well as the perfect location for such activities. Thus there is something about Laputa which suggests that it has been constructed as a model of the human intellect that all satirists, whatever their immediate political persuasion would see themselves in opposition to.

I would like to point out that, as should be clear from my line of argument, I believe that Swift is engaged in serious satire here: that his concerns regarding the politics of the new scientific rationality that is the central target under attack are very real ones as they are for us. I do not think that the satire here is 'dated', or that Swift misrepresents the scientists of the period through a lack of real acquaintance with what they were doing, or that he sees them as minor irritants indulged in foolish pursuits. In the satirical attacks that he is conducting Swift manages to both stay close to the spirit of what was taking place, as well as to explore some of the implications of the new science in a way that suggests that he has much in common with those within our own century who have attacked the scientific Enlightenment with the benefit of historical hindsight, as well as
all of those modern and contemporary political satirists for whom this part of the *Travels* has held special attraction.

We must therefore acknowledge that the satire in this part of the book points with uncanny historical accuracy to a new era on the horizon, an era of a new ruthless scientific rationality, and what this rationality means. The third voyage of *Gulliver's Travels* makes it clear that a scientific revolution is sweeping the old social realities away producing a new science fiction world, that is in effect, the first scientific dystopia in literature, the first in a more or less direct line that includes Zamyatin's *We* (1924), Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), and Voinovich's *Moscow 2042* (1986).

With *The Voyage to Laputa* the issue that we recognise as one of our own post-industrial obsessions is raised: that of the relationship between the political and intellectual or, more pertinently, how in our scientific world intellectual and political superiority should have become such clear correlatives of each other. This voyage points to the human and political dangers inherent in the new scientific rationality, primarily the loss of communication and loss of community as such spaces are commandeered and overruled by a new breed of scientist and mathematician, one obsessed with the imposing of abstract and reductive systems that will dehumanize the world, mechanize language and eradicate artistic and intellectual creativity. Human intelligence becomes alienating and socially destructive, and finds itself in the service of oppressive political agendas.

The relationship between intellectual and political power is a major theme in *Science Fiction* where the notion of domination of man by an alien race with superior intelligence allows writers to explore and comment on the colonial history of our own planet.
There is a very strong science fiction feel to this section of the Travels: you don’t have to be an expert in science fiction to see that Swift’s flying island is, superficially at least, similar to the great mother ships that science fiction writers have hurrying across the galaxy. Whilst it may lack mobility compared to these mother ships and even to Jules Verne’s Nautilus, the submarine of Twenty-Thousand Leagues Under The Sea (1870), like these vehicles Laputa is a technological world, whose very existence has emerged out of developments in science and technology, and which has produced an artificial, life-supporting environments for its inhabitants. Oddly enough both Laputa and the Nautilus are pirate vessels/terrorist states whose technological power puts them above or beyond a sense of law. The notion of piracy is a significant one in this voyage. It is appropriate that Gulliver should encounter the flying island after an act of piracy has left him abandoned, since Laputa turns out to be what could well be described as a ‘pirate’ world, parasitic on the lands it hovers above and holds in a state of colonial subjection, the perfect metaphoric image of the relationship between colonizing power and the lands it has colonized, as well as of the relationship between the absolutist courts of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, and the lands they control, ruled directly and summarily, without the kind of mediating traditional authorities and interests that Swift’s Tory party represented.

There seems to be a suggestion in the Travels that the dividing line between pirate and non-pirate is not as clear-cut as some readers might think (or eighteenth-century readers might have thought). England was of all the nations in Europe the one that all too often made piracy an instrument of national policy (and in the case of the defeat of the Spanish Armada at the hands of English pirate captains, a
matter of national survival). William Dampier, the most famous writer of Traveller's Tales, whose three accounts of his travels provided the model for Swift to mimic and satirically react against⁵³, was himself a pirate and the kind of clear-cut distinction that Gulliver makes between himself (as good capitalist) and the mutinous crew who take away his ship (as bad, 'pirate' capitalists) does not sound all that convincing.

When Gulliver first 'sees' the island of Laputa it is as a 'large opaque body between me and the sun, moving towards the island' (III.i, p.198). However, what is initially seen as a place of wonder soon reveals itself to be the home to all sorts of absurdities of a comical, as well as a much darker kind. Darkness is something with which the flying island is immediately connected, since from the perspective of the overshadowed lands beneath, it appears to occlude the sky and eclipse the sun. The symbolism of this moment has a clear bearing on what Gulliver's account of his visit to Laputa will reveal, that the enlightenment (Enlightenment) of the few who inhabit this elevated platform is achieved at the expense of the many who live in the shadow beneath.

Laputa is on the one hand an absurd place, a flying Bedlam of absent-minded and totally other-worldly Platonists and Pythagoreans, whose dedication to mathematical and musical harmonies, and the movements of the celestial bodies in the heavens, has come at the cost of language and society. On the other, it provides a deadly and dangerous home for mad mathematicians of power, whose sense and use of mathematics is very different from that of the King of Brobdingnag. It is also an example of an absolutist court. In fact it represents the most absolutist court possible -- one in which the court has managed, quite literally, to detach itself completely from any
burdensome contact with the lands beneath. A perfect fusion of intellectual and political absolutism which posits the intellectuals as a new superclass elite, Laputa also presents us with concerns which seem peculiarly modern: that of State terrorism. The Laputans may well be detached from the world, yet they are so ruthless about maintaining their power and dominance over the lands beneath by threatening to bombard or crush the rebels. They may inhabit the world of abstract ideas and Pythagorean forms, yet this elevation also finds expression in the political repression and domination of the intellectually inferior lands beneath them. Laputa is an interesting (and telling) combination of the mathematical knowledge that is applied by the scientists who are restructuring the social world, and a colonial power whose power over the lands it dominates could not be more directly, or more powerfully evident, and whose obvious historical model (obvious to its victims that is) is the English colonial dominance over Ireland, a couple of centuries old at the time of Swift’s writing.

In its willingness to use technology to threaten any city challenging its authority and, should that fail, to inflict total destruction Laputa seems to be pursuing a notion of power with which we in the twentieth century are very familiar. There is a parallel with our own predicament which is quite astonishing: as we in the twentieth-century used energy, the fundamental principle of our own Einsteinian physics in the creation of our own ultimate weapons of mass-destruction, so the Laputans use attraction, the fundamental principle of seventeenth and eighteenth-century physics (and for Christian mystics, the divine motivating principle of the universe) as the means by which their island itself is able to act as their doomsday weapon, enabling them to crush all signs of political opposition to its absolute
power in the lands beneath. As Carole Fabricant points out Laputa is:

the very emblem of highly centralized authority seemingly in command of all the techniques of organized State terror, complete with the most modern scientific instruments of repression at its disposal. (Swift's Landscape, p.263)

The idea of a whole land as weapon, whilst an extension of the kind of eighteenth-century militarized absolutist State, totally geared for war, also anticipates the notion of total warfare in our own century: that wars are fought between lands and entire peoples, rather than between representative armies in the field.

The abstractions in which the Laputans lose themselves are clearly then, not innocuous follies, the forms of human escapism that those less afflicted with an attraction towards the purity of celestial notes, numbers and bodies can laugh at. The humour of this voyage is a little different from any of the others since it combines an exploitation of the reader's sense of the ludicrous and absurd in its imaginative re-invention of eighteenth-century science, with a satire that takes the science of the age beyond itself, through a process that is part extrapolation and part reductio ad absurdum (these two being very closely connected) pointing to the darker implications and possibilities for human life and freedom lurking here. In this regard, the ludicrous intellectual transcendentalism of the Laputans shows itself to be dangerously blind to the horrors that they themselves are capable of perpetrating.

What the flying island does reveal, and in this it leads directly into the account of the political projectors of Lagado, is not only that science cannot detach itself from the madness of power, but that this
madness is all the more dangerous because science has the capacity to become a supreme power. The flying island of Laputa suggests a dangerous future in which the old Renaissance lunatics 'outside', have become the new Enlightenment lunatics 'on top'. To invoke one of the images that appears in Foucault's *A History of Madness*: the wandering ship of fools has now become the fixed and overshadowing ship of state. Laputa is an image which imaginatively confirms all of Foucault's more outrageous comments regarding the birth of science and its connection with madness ('the same ignoble origins as the lunatic asylum') and torture from its inception (Alan Sheridan, *Michel Foucault: the Will to Truth*, pp.140-1, 206). Sheridan explicates Foucault's sense of a darkly violent 'positive unconscious' (p.49) to science in the following terms:

It is Foucault's belief that the motivation and techniques for scientific investigation (enquête) have more than an etymological connection with those of judicial torture; not only was torture conducted with scientific rigour, but science itself has been, not so much a disinterested unveiling of its truth, as its extraction by a kind of torture (pp.140-1).

The Laputans concern with the abstract has led to their confinement to a world of abstract ideas, pure sounds, geometrical shapes and astronomical bodies. Ironically their concern with the beauty of the ideational and the ideal is accompanied by a physical clumsiness and lopsidedness and seems to reflect an aversion to (if not a pathological flight from) their terrestrial bodies, and more pertinently, those of their wives. Their fears and concerns about the possibility of being struck by celestial bodies shows an unconscious recognition (on their part, conscious on the satirist's part) that human reason cannot use mathematics to exclude the world. Swift's Menippean position which attacks the closure of the Laputan
mathematical system has much in common with the existential critique of science as a system of total explanation. In our own century the Menippean commitment to openness is finding support from a strange, and most ironic quarter: from mathematics and science themselves with the advent of chaos and quantum theories. Whereas quantum theory is a complement to Newtonian physics, it also, as the popularizers of the impact of this new scientific ‘revolution’ have made clear, demolishes the metaphysical assumptions of bourgeois materialism derived from and based upon classical physics. This has, as I have already suggested, powerful implications for positions that claim to be ‘materialist’. According to quantum theory they are now a lot less adequately materialist than they claim to be -- and a lot more conspicuously ideological."

In chaos theory an abstract, easily computerized, mathematical model of events has been produced that has great predictive power. The theory analyzes each event as essentially chaotic, and thus subject to the paradoxical, seemingly ‘aesthetic’ patterns that govern chaos, the force which propels Gulliver to all the strange lands he visits. Chaos can never be excluded; the greater the repression or denial of its ‘truth’ the greater the return. Looked at from the perspective of the power of chaos, a force that is clearly very much a part of life, and antagonistic to notions of closure and completeness, the Laputans need for power would seem to be related to the question of fear. One of the failings of the microphysics of power that we find in Michel Foucault (that we don’t find in Nietzsche, the great influence on Foucault’s thinking) is that it does not take the issue of fear into account. The Laputans exercise power in such an absolute way over the lands below because they seem to be petrified by fears of cosmic disasters befalling them. These absurd
disasters⁶⁰ would appear to be the displaced form of something more real: threats from 'below', from all those energies, sexual and political that are associated with Bakhtin's notions of 'carnival' and the 'grotesque'. The Laputans bear out the Frankfurt School philosophers' conviction that there is a strong connection between the desire to dominate nature through science and technology, and a fear of human emancipation. As a contemporary Marxist theoretician expresses it:

This preoccupation with the domination of nature arises from our collective fear of human emancipation, masked as the fear of the terrors visited upon us by 'natural disasters' (Stanley Aronowitz 'The Production of Scientific Knowledge: Science, Ideology and Marxism.', p.526)

The abstract sense of time that we see amongst the Laputans plays a major role in their pathological fears of impending cosmic disaster. Their 'parsec' view of the universe means that for them time is foreshortened so radically that millennial events seem to occur with frightening frequency. It is as if the timeless order of the heavens (under the old Ptolemaic system) has been replaced by a chaotic demolition derby in which planets and comets seem to be constantly colliding with each other. Outer space features not as a place to travel to (there is no Menippean travel to the stars here, as in Lucian or Cyrano) but as the place from which they believe their destruction will come, shattering their world in the same way that they shatter rebellious cities beneath them.

The Laputans' overwhelming desire for the abstract and transcendental, and their fear of a cosmic cataclysm, are closely connected, as expressions of a repressive movement away from the physical and the real centred in the human body. Their aversion to the chaotic extends to their fear of shapelessness (which
is actually a fear of shapeliness: of the sensuousness of natural shapes, such as those of the bodies of their wives). This can be inferred from the way in which they fetishize regularity: their clothes and their food are all cut into mathematically calculated regular shapes, suggesting a desire to deny the sensuous and the sexual. In embracing Platonic and Pythagorean ideas, the Laputans are fleeing from the chaos that they themselves are creating through their fear of their own bodies, of the sexuality of their women, who run into the arms of abusive partners who are at least willing to take notice of them, and their political fears of the bodies of those they oppress in the lands beneath them. The intellectual and political 'style' that has so distorted their lives is founded upon fear: the fear of life in all its unpredictability and chaotic energy. The very stuff that Menippean satire is made of.

It is then, nothing less than life itself that the Laputans are attempting to exclude. This is why the place is, for all its mystical pretensions, too boring for ordinary human beings to stay there for any length of time. As is the case with the Laputans' wives, Gulliver soon becomes keen to leave himself. More seriously, however, in its resistance to life, Laputa introduces the idea of death that will dominate the Travels from this point on, being obviously connected to the necromantic raising from the dead in Glubbdubdrib, the false immortality of the Struldbruggs, and on a more figurative level, the cold and deathly rationality of the Houyhnhnms.

That the Laputan attempt to exclude the chaos of life proves to be an impossibility, and that they are politically defeated by the Lindalinian act of rebellion, should not come as a surprise to the twentieth-century reader, who is aware of the postmodern hostility to notions of totality and
finality, and has witnessed the political success of liberation struggles all over the globe. The chaos that the Laputan mind attempts to exclude cannot be excluded; it will inevitably show up to infiltrate the system in some form or other. The perception that there is a radical incompleteness to all systems, is common to both Menippean satire and to the postmodern scientific or mathematical thought of figures like Heisenberg, Gödel and Böhr that have served to shatter the notion of a complete intellectual system of description, computation and explanation.  

In its obsessive resistance to the 'chaos' of life, the Laputans' passion for order, especially mathematical order, produces disorder and destruction -- a phenomenon that can also be observed in modern satire, the most famous example of which being that of Catch-22 (1961).

Gulliver leaves the flying island and finds the lands beneath in the process of being turned into a wasteland by the absurd projects and schemes of the obsessively enthusiastic scientists of the Academy of Lagado. As the forerunner and harbinger of the new revolutionary industrial modernism (about to totally transform the world in less than a century) the new science proves to be absolutely ruthless in its drive to efface the social bonds and connections upon which agricultural societies depend. Though the satire here is rooted in the Tory party's commitment to land, as opposed to the Whig support of trade and finance, the satire clearly reverberates beyond the confines of the party/class political conflict of the day. In this sense there is much that the process that Balnibarbi is being subjected to has in common with colonialism: of particular significance is the brutal disregard for indigenous ties and traditions that they both share.

The relationship between Lagado and Laputa that Swift has characterised points to the relationship
between the abstract, mathematical meta-discourse (or masternarrative) and the new practical and applied scientific knowledge that is in the process of forcing itself upon the world. The Academy of Lagado reveals that science has lost its sense of the social and its sense of the human. Returned 'hot' from Laputa with a smattering of mathematics, its practitioners seem obsessed with crazy experiments none of which have any practical implications for the improvement of human life. Whether it be falling into ditches, or getting covered in excrement: dehumanization and self-degradation are all in a day's work for them. Instead of objectivity we have loss of self as these projectors mistake an obsessional commitment to their discipline for objectivity.

In the slapstick satire that they inflict upon themselves these scientists would appear to have more in common with crazy carnivalesque clowning and Bedlam madness than they have with significant advances in knowledge. Given the way in which the 'scientific' bourgeoisie suppressed the popular spirit of carnival, and were intimately involved, as Michel Foucault has shown, in the exclusion of those classified as insane from the realm of Reason (and their confinement in institutions where they could be shown as a 'spectacle'), this could not be more ironic. 62 Stripped of an ironic consciousness that might let it see itself with a far less enthusiastic 'outsider's eye, deprived of any corrective laughter, science, that most serious of disciplines, and great weapon of Gulliver's social class, has carnivalized itself without realizing it.

The abstract thinkers of Laputa and the Lagadoan 'clown' scientists with their narrow specialisms 63 and claustrophobic little 'Bedlamite' cells are the antithesis to the inmates of the Abbey of Thélème, Rabelais' humanist academy dedicated to social and
intellectual liberation (Gargantua and Pantagruel, pp.149-60).

Over and above the immediately obvious and very significant difference in dress, the spontaneous and expansive Thélèmites provide a stark contrast with the cloistered, paranoiac minds of the Laputans. Whilst the Thélèmites have a happy and expansive relationship with their immediate environment, the Laputans seem positively agoraphobic in their fear of the expansive and open-ended. Astronomy, one of their great passions, would appear to be the very worst thing for them to study since it is the very 'sign' of open-endedness: the more the story of outer space unfolds, the more outer space there is that has yet to unfold, and the more cosmic bodies they have to worry about. Instead of their science leading to control of their environment, and the ability to free their lives, it leads to an ever greater burden of fear. If the Laputans are the agents of the scientific rationality, they are also its victims: exposed to the demons of fear and of power that their own obsessiveness and pathological fear of the expansive and open-ended has unleashed.

As Christopher Hill has shown (The World Turned Upside Down, pp.296-7), the political radicals of the seventeenth century had high hopes for science precisely because of the qualities that the Laputans fear. According to Hill the perspective on science changes quite dramatically from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries, changing from something seen as the enemy of the political establishment, and a force for radical liberation, to an image of science as part of the political establishment, serving the interests of political repression and control. The key move in this transformation comes with the institutionalization of science by Charles II, with his founding of the Royal Academy, that in its eighteenth-century form
provides the satirical model for Swift's Academy of Lagado.

Science changes from being a force for democracy and liberation to a new 'secret' institutionalized and controlled discipline serving the powers that be, and thus as much a 'secret' hermetic knowledge as was alchemy and all its other mystical predecessors. With its alienation from the underclasses and more general dehumanization science now takes on a destructive quality: if it is revolutionary, it is a top-down kind of revolution that it helps effect, transforming everything in line with the dictates of a centralized knowledge and source of power. The kind of revolutionary destructiveness that Laputan mathematics and mathematically-inspired science wreaks on the agrarian world that lies within the island's 'orbit' is a satirically intensified realization of the kinds of transformative power that Lewis Mumford sees exercised by the centrally organized absolutist state (The City in History pp.396-402), and which I discussed in a different context in the fourth chapter.

Historically the Industrial Revolution lies just around the corner: within the next seventy years England would be fully industrialized. Swift's satire on Laputa/Lagado is the first instance before the Romantic period of concern being voiced about the new scientific revolution, in particular about its seeming totality: that the whole world is to recreated in an all new modern image that will retain nothing of the past. This is why the project for the total reconstitution of agriculture along scientific lines (two hundred years before Stalin dreamt up his variation on the same theme") turns out so disastrously, the land ravaged to the extent that it has become nothing but a wasteland, and why the wise Lord Munodi, the traditionalist whose lands are the only ones able to produce things, is so despised.
It is with the school of political projectors that the satirical critique of science becomes even more ominous. Here Swift’s satire shows itself to be a powerful precursor of not only the major political satirists of our century: with Gulliver’s account of the political projectors the twentieth-century reader recognises that he or she is in familiar dystopian territory. Orwell’s 1984 and other political satires of our time carry the same concern for the political manipulation of science and technology mainly through the direct influence of this part of the Travels (the line from these projectors to the Oceanian State’s use of technology to control the subservient masses would appear to be a pretty direct one).

The school of political projectors in speaking of ‘the diseases and corruptions, to which several kinds of public administration are subject’ (III.vi, p.232) are treating politics as if it were medical science, using analogy as if it were ‘fact’. It is out of this metaphor -- that again depends on the politics of the body -- that a whole science and industry has emerged, a whole discourse of power rapidly colonizing a terrain of knowledge, and promising power and control. In exposing the arbitrariness of the metaphoric bases of scientific thought, Swift’s satirical critique comes close in many respects to Foucault’s analysis of the rise of medicine as a discipline -- with its own regime of truth, and sites of power (The Birth of the Clinic).

One of the greatest targets, if not the greatest target for scientific control is language. The great desire is to eradicate the human and material qualities of language by turning language into an atomistic formal system that fits in with logic, mathematics and epistemology, and in which, perhaps above all, meaning is fixed in a precise and politically correct way.
Revealingly the opposition to this move is comprised of those most socially and politically oppressed, women and the poor:

And this invention would certainly have taken place, to the great ease as well as health of the subject, if the women in conjunction with the vulgar and illiterate had not threatened to raise a rebellion, unless they might be allowed the liberty to speak with their tongues after the manner of their forefathers: such constant irreconcilable enemies to science are the common people. (III.v, p.230)

It is obvious to them what the real agenda is here: that behind the professed need for scientific purity lies the desire for the political control and repression of language. It is supremely ironic that one who spoke (in a very different voice) for the logical reformation of language in *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining The English Tongue* (1712), should raise the issue of the dangers of the political manipulation of language in such a powerful way, something that has been a major concern of our own century as is clear in the great majority of political satires written this century that are concerned with the kind of political manipulation of language that was attained by the Nazis and the Stalinists.

There is a wonderful irony in that after talking about specially constructed formal languages, political discourse is suddenly translated into the funniest formal language of them all, 'satirespeak' (to coin a term), a code whose choice of images reveals a contemptuously dismissive view of political practices:

These papers are delivered to a set of artists very dextrous in finding out the mysterious meanings of words, syllables and letters. For instance, they can decipher a close stool to signify a Privy-Council, a
flock of geese a senate, a lame dog an invader, a codshead a _______ a plague a standing army, a buzzard a prime minister, the gout a high priest, a gibbet a secretary of State, a chamberpot a committee of grandees, a sieve a court lady, a broom a revolution, a mousetrap an employment, a bottomless pit the Treasury, a sink the Court, a cap and bells a favourite, a broken reed a court of justice, an empty tun a general, a running sore the administration.(III.vi, pp.236-7)

The lands that Gulliver visits in this part of the Travels, all of them under the influence, if not tutelage, of Laputa, deny the textual and the sexual in their desire for either absolute mathematical order, or for scientific power and control. What most seems to epitomize the dream of the Enlightenment scientists that language can be 'mathemeticized' is Swift's writing frame, a machine for the random generation of the great texts of world literature (the first in a line of such automatic writing machines). This computational machine allows its operators to 'write' all the great works of knowledge, new and old alike, by the random turning of handles, after paying the fee to allow you to have a 'turn'. This machine makes writing 'accessible' obviating the desire for learning, effort or creative inspiration:

the most ignorant persons at a reasonable charge, and with bodily labour, may write books in philosophy, poetry, politics, law, mathematics and theology, without the least assistance from genius or study.'(III.v, p.227)

Representing the fragmentation and commodification of knowledge that accompanies the scientific revolution, the writing frame is a machine that appears to embody the scientific ideal of the atomization and controlling of language, as well as the commodification of the intellectual/creative process, since the scheme is
something that is thought of as a financial enterprise.

Visually resembling a medieval 'torture rack' (W.B. Carnochan Confinement and Flight, p.49) — appropriately for all the 'violence' that it inflicts on human creativity -- the frame is the ultimate sign of the desire to rule out the human and the textual in favour of the quantifiable and the mechanical, and the dream of reducing language to a pure concatenative syntax that would mirror linguistically the atomism of Newton and Locke.

It is significant that these mass producing machines are themselves going to be mass produced, and people are going to pay for time spent 'on' the machine, whilst the fragmented pieces of text that the machine operators generate are meant to serve as the basis for a whole new re-constitution of knowledge and learning that is not unlike that which threatens to take effect in our period through the unprecedented development of information technology:

Six hours a day the young students were employed in this labour, and the professor showed me several volumes in large folio already collected, of broken sentences, which he intended to piece together, and out of those rich materials to give the world a complete body of all arts and sciences; which however might still be improved, and much expedited if the public would raise a fund for making and employing five hundred such frames in Lagado, and oblige the managers to contribute in common their several collections. (III.v, p.229)

So, it is a capitalist venture that promises instant learning for everyone. Anybody can pay a few coins, turn the handle and generate some fragments of 'value' which will later be pieced together by academy of professional experts who will no doubt be rewarded handsomely for their efforts, and for their skill in being able to tell, whether what was generated is
typical of Plato, Shakespeare or, for that matter, Swift (or in some bizarre reverse-essentialism, Plato, Shakespeare, or Swift themselves). With this invention meaning thus becomes something that falls completely under institutional control—here it might be argued that Swift presents an early intimation of the kind of critical 'terrorism' decried by George Steiner in his critique of current critical and theoretical practices within the institution ("Critic"/"Reader", p. 82).

The introduction of this technology means that there is no place for the great writers and thinkers who would make the past alive and relevant (in the way that Swift himself has done with the Travels, saturated as it is with all kinds of mythical, literary and philosophical echoes). What learning amounts to now is little more than an operation of radical editing, with a special committee cutting and pasting the fragments of 'dead' knowledge stuck together by a group of 'young students'.

With the writing machine a pure mathematical language (of fixed signs) replaces the textual play of language, the interplay of voices that Bakhtin terms the dialogic. So severe is the desire for linguistic purity amongst the scientists that dialogue proves to be an impossibility, and scientific methods are devised for the chemical transference of mental 'meanings' and for the surgical resolution of political arguments. Of all the science fiction elements in this voyage of the Travels, the account of the chemical transference of meanings and instructions by what Swift terms 'cephalic tinctures' is the most astounding of all: in imagining a situation in which a scientific invention produced by the devious minds of such a dark little institute as the academy of political scientists could produce a form of communication that obviates the need for language, or ordinary cognitive processes, Swift seems
to have produced something which for all the world looks like a very early precursor of many of the ideas in ‘cyberpunk’, that form of science fiction concerned with drug induced and computer-generated alternate realities, and associated with writers like Bruce Sterling and William Gibson.

With its typically Menippean device of the voyage to the land of the dead and conversations with its inhabitants, the Voyage to Glubbdubdrib provides perhaps the most openly humanist section of the whole of the Travels, particularly in its critique of the brutal power logic of history, and of the way this is falsified by the ‘prostitute’ historians. The very name ‘Glubbdubdrib’ points to the lugubrious state of a world suffering from the kind of dislocation and loss of direction that I spoke about earlier in relation to in this chapter. What this voyage to the underworld section of the Travels represents is a view of history and the past as something ‘dead’: existing in a detached, limbo world that is accessible only to the magic of the necromancer, and which is plagued by error, failure, and, above all, the sad revelation of subterfuge and conspiracy. Expressed in these terms, Swift’s view of history could not be more starkly in conflict with the notion of a rational, planned ‘progressive’ history that is so central to the Enlightenment (here one thinks of Giambattista Vico and Immanuel Kant in particular).

The very idea of a land of the dead shows how distanced historians, the ‘prostitute writers’, as Swift so unflatteringly refers to them (III.vii, p.244), are from the events they write. Whilst the idea of death is used negatively, to suggest the death of important traditions with the rise of the new scientific culture that Gulliver is a proponent of and spokesman for, there is also a more positive use of the idea of death, to emphasize the particular kind of
corrective vision that satire affords. Here amongst these walking ghosts of the past, death seems to function as Swift's metaphor for what (with a nod to Roland Barthes) we might call a political degree zero -- of the historical and political reality absolutely demystified: a perspective that strips thinkers, leaders, heroes, royalty and the nobility of not just their glamour, but of all their necessary illusions (and so the magic that reveals the words of the dead, the zero-degree truth, is of course, a little allegory for satire itself).

Walt Disney may have had his sentimentalizing way with the Travels in turning it into safe cartoon fare for children, but here Swift seems to foreshadow much of the theme park/waxworks mentality that treats history as a visual show or spectacle by presenting history as a set of tableaus that one can amble through a-la Disneyland or Madame Taussauds. It is as if the Faustian visions as to what lies behind the scenes of history (discovering the primal scenes of our political parents) take a style and form that seems designed to satisfy an 'insatiable' appetite like Gulliver's for visual spectacle, whether it is a visual caricature of the humanist notion of the great conversation, or an image of history as a picturesque extended landscape (like a painting by Poussin or Claude Lorrain), or the horrible spectacle of mangled bodies being blown high into the air as testimony to the power of modern munitions. This desire to 'see' history, is also a desire for stimulation, for the special entertainment not unrelated to that Gulliver believes he is providing to his fellow-travellers:

It would be tedious to trouble the reader with relating what vast numbers of illustrious persons were called up, to gratify that insatiable desire I had to see the world in every period of antiquity placed before me. I chiefly fed mine eyes with
beholding the destroyers of tyrants and usurpers, and the restorers of liberty to oppressed and injured nations. But it is impossible to express the satisfaction I received in my own mind, after such a manner as to make it a suitable entertainment to the reader. (III.vii, p.241)

Swift again presents a 'split' Gulliver who, on the one hand, is seriously interested in discovering the shocking secret truths of history, a history that has been lost in the manufacturing of the great political lies by what Gulliver terms the 'prostitute writers', and on the other, a sensation seeker, comfortable with the new idea of 'instant learning', who is excited at the prospect of a kind of virtual reality revisiting of the past, in which history will take the form of a 'show' or demonstration. The Gulliver who wants to find the subversive truth of history (particularly that revolving around a pantheon of the great moral heroes of the past, each member of which is venerated as an embodiment of intellectual resistance to arbitrary power) is adopting a political position diametrically opposed to that which he was intent on taking just a moment before, when he was so keen to offer his services to the scientists working hard at inventing new techniques and devices to perfect oppression and control.

Whilst the journey to the land of the dead provides what is more a whirlwind theme park ride than any serious encounter with the past, the historical revelations that do emerge are devastatingly subversive, as is revealed by the outraged response to Swift's Roman Senate/modern parliament comparison that I quoted at the beginning of this chapter. In this section of the Travels there is such a strong relativizing voice, a voice that overturns all the institutions of the present, blasts the idea of historical greatness, and which, through the mouthpiece
of Aristotle, rejects the whole of the modern intellectual and philosophical tradition (Hobbes, Descartes, Gassendi) as just the expression of the limited knowledge and the historical and political fashions of the time, which in this case, are the fashions of absolutism, as the extended satire on fashions and the notion of fashion in *A Tale of a Tub* makes clear.

What the dead reveal to Gulliver provides a strengthening of the kind of critique provided by the King of Brobdingnag and prepares the ground for the no- holds barred condemnation of eighteenth-century English society that Gulliver himself expresses for the benefit of his Houyhnhnm audience. Here in this land of the dead that materializes uncannily in the very garden of the house he is visiting, Gulliver is shown that the ‘rational’ narratives of history falsify a brutal truth of murder and appropriation in the interests of established power, and that we have to go behind history, to an ‘underworld’ to find the ‘backstairs history’ where the gaps have been filled in and the lies have been corrected. In its satirically demystified ‘raw’ state, history turns out to be exactly what the King of Brobdingnag proclaimed it to be, a horrific list of:

conspiracies, rebellions, murders, massacres, revolutions, banishments and the very worst effects that avarice, faction, hypocrisy, perfidiousness, cruelty, rage, madness, hatred, envy, lust, malice and ambition could produce. (*II.vi*, p.172)

Swift presents a strong rejection of history (as an absurd and brutal farce) from a moral position which would hardly seem to be consistent with a materialist position. Given the powerful influence of the notion of the dialectic of history in Marxist thinking, materialist perspectives have tended to be progressive.
and to emphasize the role of economic forces and factors rather than issues of political morality. Yet what is consistent with materialism is surely Swift’s perception that stripped of ideological mystification, the text of history reveals itself to be one of social and political injustice, in which the crucial issue is one of power. It makes good materialist sense to make the reader aware of the textuality of history, which for Swift is a pernicious textuality that we have to get ‘behind’ (in a way that has its similarities with the alternate histories produced by Marxist revisionists such as Christopher Hill.)

The presumption that appears to be operating in this satirical view of history is not that we can ever know what really happened, for to do that would mean a getting beyond the textual processes through which history is told and mediated, but that given the way in which it is in the nature of power to misrepresent history in its own interests, a satirical ‘compensation’ can be provided that will bring us that much closer to the real, and inevitably far more sordid truth.

There would appear then to be a similarity between the post-structuralist ‘undecidable’ history and the satirical lost or displaced history, a text of oppression, manipulation and corruption that reveals the unfortunate predominance of the dark impulses such as Foucault’s violence and madness that the sanctified official narratives, produced by the ‘prostitute writers’ that Swift reviles, would exclude. From the perspective of a satirist like Swift history is driven by forces that have very little to do with rationality, as John Traugott expresses it ‘in the Tale and in Gulliver history is treated as though it makes no sense at all, except as a case book in abnormal psychology’ (‘A Tale of a Tub’, p.21).
The Gulliver who wishes to see the history of the world spread out as a visual spectacle is clearly looking for a historical significance and meaning that he will not find. What is revealed is a text of decline, irony and loss in which the notions of rank and greatness are particularly fiercely deconstructed, a move that forms part of the anti-aristocratic strategy which Michael McKeon has identified as an integral facet of what he terms the 'conservative ideology' of the period ('Generic Transformation and Social Change', p.162.)

The contempt for history as site of the expression of power leads Swift to celebrate the role of those whose moral integrity set them against the perverse logic of history, in defence of freedom and liberation. Gulliver would appear to be speaking most in Swift’s voice when he reveals his reverence for the kind of political heroes of the past (whose legacy was kept alive within the humanist tradition), the destroyers of tyrannies and usurpers of liberty to the oppressed and injured nations of the past. Part of the poignancy here is the sense that these figures who mean so much in moral terms, have become so insignificant, lost and forgotten in this new age.

The notion of history as a downward spiral of corruption, domination and exploitation leads into the powerful shock revelation of physical dissolution and decay in the description of the ‘immortal’ Struldbriggs, which finally demolishes the eighteenth-century notion of history as aesthetic prospect.

Apart from introducing the Struldbriggs the visit to Luggnagg is important in providing an image of the degrading depths to which absolutism can sink. Here a most degenerate form of absolutism is practised, involving a degrading floor-licking ritual whereby homage is paid to the King. In Gulliver’s case his licking the floor is just a more extreme version of the
kind of fawning and self-abasing display towards the monarchy that he has been indulging in all along. This shows that Gulliver, having just returned from Glubbdubdrib with Faustian insights into the meaning of political power, forgets everything he has learnt in the presence of royalty.

The patently nonsensical toast paid to the absolutist King of Luggnagg (Swift’s version of the standard eighteenth-century portrait of the Oriental tyrant) not only prepares us thematically for the disturbing encounter with the immortal Struldbruggs, but also points to the way in which language and thought become debased at the hands of absolute power. The toast asks that the ‘celestial’ King be bestowed with a superhuman longevity, which will allow him to survive the life-span of the sun in lengths of time measured according to the moon!

Prior to his actual meeting with the Struldbruggs we are privy to Gulliver’s fantasizing about their immortality. By his own admission a ‘projector’ in his youth, Gulliver projects himself imaginatively into what he believes an immortal life must be like, teasing himself with thoughts of a god-like power that will bring him wealth, status and knowledge beyond normal comprehension.

Significantly Gulliver imagines that the Struldbrugg world is one that conforms to a number of his preconceptions of his own class, especially when it comes down to the ability to plan and order life down to the last detail. This is strange coming so soon after Glubbdubdrib where Gulliver was shown how powerful a role the accidental and the chaotic play in human history.

The reality could not be more contrary to what Gulliver expects: the Struldbruggs live in a state of isolation and decay, suffering from a progressive degeneration that leaves them in a sort of timeless
Alzheimer’s zone. A more truly horrific antithesis to Gulliver’s fantasies of immortal wealth and power would be hard to imagine. The Struldbruggs represent a Cartesian nightmare of consciousness imprisoned within a putrefying body, the horrible antithesis of the Cartesian dream of an intellect free from material constraints, able to range far and wide over the whole of human knowledge in order to garner the wisdom necessary for the perfect planning and directing of human life.

Given his restlessness and sensitivity to the human body, becoming a Struldbrugg would be the absolute worst thing imaginable for Gulliver -- the realization of a private nightmare rather than the fulfilment of a personal dream. Whilst the Struldbruggs are like those unfortunates in classical mythology who were promised immortality but forgot to ask for youth, we have to turn to Beckett, Sartre, Kafka’s ‘Metamorphosis’(1915), or Harlan Ellison’s science fiction short story, ‘I Have no Mouth but I must Scream’(1968) for anything approaching the sheer existential horror of their condition. Like Ellison’s narrator, the victim of a computer determined to silence him, the Struldbruggs have no way of communicating with the outside world or with each other, since as Gulliver points out:

The language of this country being always upon the flux, the Struldbruggs of one age do not understand those of another, neither are they able after two hundred years to hold any conversation (farther than by a few general words with their neighbours the mortals, and thus they lie under the disadvantage of living like foreigners in their own country. (III.x, p.258)

Thus the knowledge that he comes to through contact with the Struldbruggs is of a far more bleakly existential kind than he initially imagines. It comes
as a terrible shock to the reader who has shared Gulliver's enthusiasm when he discovers the truth about the Struldbruggs, who are revealed to be living immortal lives characterised by an entropic torpor and sterility, and to be on course to terminal degeneration.

A world in which there are Struldbruggs may well be magical (in a perverse sort of way) but it is not one in which intellectual liberation of the kind Gulliver envisages, is possible. It is an ironic and existential world, in which theories fail, hopes are squashed and grand intentions are confounded -- and in which, above all, cognisance must be taken of the constraining physical reality of the human body, and its central role in any attempt to define or understand human nature.

The image with which we leave Part III is that of incomparable hideousness 'They were the most mortifying sight I ever beheld.' (III.x, p.259), as life and the grotesque, ever inescapable, take their terrible revenge. Both Gulliver and the reader 'fall' from the dizzy heights of expectation, imagining that the Struldbrugg's will be a kind of fulfilment of the wish that was made for the King of Luggnagg. This theme of a 'fall' is to be powerfully reinforced in the last book of the Travels, the subject of the chapter that follows.
Chapter Six: The Voyage to the Land of the Houyhnhnms: Satire, Colonialism and the Dream of Philosophy.

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 people's 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 then be shut up in the learned world.


Every unmasking critique knows itself to be in an intimate relation with what is 'really the case' below the surface. On all sides, human consciousness is invited to deceive itself and be content with mere illusion. For enlightenment, therefore, it is always the second look that is decisive because it overcomes the first impression. If things were generally as they immediately seem, investigation and science would be superfluous. There would be nothing to look for, look through, or look into.

Peter Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason*
The satire of the Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms, the last of the books of the Travels, is very disturbing -- all the more so for its resistance to critical appropriation. Indeed it is this book of the Travels where the presence of that disturbing unconscious realm of the liminal and uncertain that Freud terms the 'uncanny' is decidedly the strongest. The strong presence of the uncanny here not only reflects Gulliver's growing uncertainty regarding the security of his identity, and his power over the 'uncivilized' world, particularly in the light of the kind of radical satirical alienation and defamiliarization that he has been subjected to already, but also continues the destabilization of categories that has occurred earlier in the Travels.

Colonialism and the colonial identity is a major concern of this voyage (which contains Gulliver's powerful denunciation of colonialism that he makes after his return to England, fearing for the future that the lands he has visited might face at the hands of the colonial powers). Initially lurking behind the scenes, yet addressed far more directly than anywhere else in the Travels, colonialism would appear to be centred here as the concern of the satire as a whole, providing a new dimension, what we might call a new, inescapable context to what are essentially very old satirical themes or 'battles' returning in a modern form. It is this centring of colonialism that has allowed this voyage of Gulliver's to speak to the future in the way that it has, and will continue to do until the last vestiges of colonial exploitation disappear.

In this part of the Travels we have three interconnected satires going on at the same time, much to the potential confusion of the reader (not to speak of the documented historical confusion of real readers). The Voyage to the Land of the Houyhnhnms
combines a bitter attack on human bestiality and corruption, which later is seen to be directly connected to the capitalist economic system as that which is dependent upon, and maximizes moral perversion, together with a satirical attack on a notion of intellectual purity which is made specific and restricted to a biological (acting as a metaphor for social/racial) elite, as well as a largely implicit satirical critique of the dehumanization that accompanied the historical process of the colonial enslavement of the racial Other. The Voyage thus combines an entropic satire of human debasement with an insidiously subtle, but typically Menippean attack on the philosophical position that the Houyhnhnms espouse, positions which in rejecting everything ugly, impure and corrupt as ‘Yahoo’, would seem to be set against the socially degenerative force of capitalism to which I have just referred. It is in relation to the Houyhnhnms that we find the great divide in critical readings and interpretations of this voyage. Either Swift wishes for the ideas and attitudes of the Houyhnhnms to constitute an ideal that stands in total and antagonistic opposition to the ingrained bestiality of the Yahoo, who represent human nature at its worst, or these ideas and attitudes are themselves under attack as having a much deeper ‘structural’ connection with the horrors that the Yahoo represent. Here, of course, any trace of irony proves crucial in swinging the interpretation towards the second point of view: one that sees the Houyhnhnms as as much the satirical target as (if not more than) the Yahoos.

By any standards this section of the Travels constitutes one of the most disturbing pieces of satire ever written. With the final voyage Swift’s satire seems clearly out to ‘get’ his reader, to drag the reader into the satire and make the reader as much a victim of the irony as the Gulliver he or she could
previously distance himself or herself from. The Voyage to the Land of the Houyhnhnms is to this end, a veritable minefield of ironical traps and snares for unwary readers and readers who take things at face value. Thus right from the outset there are warning signs that the reader needs to be extra vigilant, in particular that he or she should actively 'read' Gulliver more than in any of the other books, where either Gulliver's culpability was spelt out, or where the irony was a lot easier to detect. Gulliver becomes far more unreliable a narrator than before as the distance between the narrating self and the self narrated begins to close. The presumption of authority and integrity with which he addresses us could firstly hardly be more severely compromised than it is right at the beginning of the account of this voyage by the revelations of a lack of humanity (if not quite an inhumanity) in his deserting of his pregnant wife after having barely returned home from his previous voyage, and secondly by what we can only infer was an abject failure in his duties as captain and medical officer, when he reveals that his first crew was struck down by calentures, and the replacement crew mutinied, keeping him locked up in his cabin (a prisoner yet again) before forcing him to leave the ship in a longboat. That these men, though clearly so desperate to get Gulliver off the ship, treat him with civility and respect suggests that they could hardly be the assortment of criminal types that he makes them out to be.

The 'gap' between Gulliver's explanation and explanations that would seem to fit the facts better suggests that something is truly amiss with him. The reference to 'calentures', tropical illnesses that produce hallucinations not only keys in the strange 'uncanny' quality to Gulliver's first meeting with the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos, but also serve to raise
disturbing suggestions of radical illusion, mistakenness, and epistemological deception, which makes a great change from the sense of accuracy and scientific precision that we encountered in the first two voyages.

David Ward suggests that the reference to calentures is a clear warning that things in the Land of the Houyhnhnms are not going to be what they seem and that Gulliver is very deceived in his reading of this world. Referring to Swift's use of the image of a calenture as the sign of illusion and deception in his poem 'Upon the South Sea Project', Ward says of Gulliver amongst the horses: 'this son of Adam plunges into a false paradise, and drowns in it; not physically as the fevered sailors do, but spiritually and morally.' (Jonathan Swift: An Introductory Essay, p.167)

Whereas all the previous lands that Gulliver visited reflect the same empirically observable, measurable world, however changed the perspective in relation to the respective size of the inhabitants, or their state of elevation above solid ground, here things become more uncertain. Whereas previously the Cartesian notion of the measure of the truth of an idea being its clarity and distinctness was not directly challenged, in the Land of the Houyhnhnms the very idea of what is perceived to be real is immediately challenged with the references to magic and illusion. This suggests that world of deception and uncertainty that Descartes used methodologically to prove the existence of the rational mind (via the cogito) and with it that what is perceived truthfully and faithfully is perceived clearly and distinctly. Here what is clear and distinct is not the sign of rationality, but of a sickness induced vision of hyper-rationality, where Gulliver's Cartesian consciousness is externalized and embodied in the pure and rational
horses -- an ironic choice of medium, given Descartes dismissive view of animals as in principle very little different from machines (Discourse on Method, Part V). The satire of this voyage brings back with a vengeance something Descartes had excluded from his rational landscape: the unconscious, whose 'signs' are the irrational and the fantastic, both of which are not only disturbingly present in this land, but what is most significant, present right at the heart of its professed rationality. The final voyage marks a culmination here of a movement inward, away from a satire on the institutions and values of Gulliver's world, to a satirical exploration of its social and cultural unconscious. With this exploration geography takes on a more unconsciously charged, psychological and psycho-social significance.

That colonialism is clearly on the agenda here is apparent from the effort Swift takes to make it clear that Gulliver enters the Land of the Houyhnhnms revealing all of the standard assumptions of the colonial powers regarding the 'civilized' world:

When I was a little refreshed, I went up into the country, resolving to deliver myself to the first savages I should meet, and purchase my life from them by some bracelets, glass rings, and other toys, which sailors usually provide themselves with in those voyages, and whereof I had some about me. (IV.i, p.269)

Should he encounter any 'savages' he is quite prepared to barter for his life at the same rate of colonial exchange that the Dutch in North America were able to purchase Manhattan Island, namely, for a couple of trinkets. The encounter with the racial/colonial Other that Gulliver does have, however is not the one he expects (it awaits him on his return journey).

Magic is certainly to be expected in that historical 'romance' narrative known as colonialism,
given the profound changes that it brings about. The references to magic and mirroring, and to his rubbing his eyes and having to pinch his arms and legs when Gulliver first arrives in the land (IV.ii, p.275), suggest that deep-rooted and profoundly transformative processes that are beyond his comprehension and conscious awareness are beginning to act upon him. With the strong whiff of the workings of a transformative magic that are in the air, Gulliver’s initial suspicion is that he may be the victim of a magical trick, played upon him by some wizards who control the island. In other words what he expects to find as the rational and logical explanation for the things he encounters is an ‘uplifting’ Prospero-type magical presence that is imported and colonial, rather than a ‘debasing’, indigenous and alien, Circe-type magic (the island of Homer’s enchantress being the classical model that this voyage invokes).

From a postcolonial perspective the transformative magic that Gulliver suspects has produced the strange (uncanny) phenomena he encounters in the Land of the Houyhnhnms, and which seem to have him oscillating in a state between insecurity/uncertainty and enchantment, is nothing other than the colonial situation itself: a situation of a self-mirroring projection (in the psychoanalytic sense of the term) that creates the monstrous ‘bond’ (or rather, state of bondage) between colonizer and colonized, in which the possibility of humanity is denied. In his exploration of the colonial situation/encounter in relation to the key colonial narratives of Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe and Shakespeare’s The Tempest O. Mannoni writes of the role of projection in ‘producing’ the perceived colonial reality:

I have reached a conclusion which is at first sight paradoxical -- namely, that the personality of the colonial is made up, not of characteristics
acquired during and through experience in the colonies, but of traits, very often in the nature of a complex, already in existence in a latent and very repressed form in the European's psyche, traits which the colonial experience has simply brought to the surface and made manifest.

and

The ensuing encounter between the European's unconscious and a reality only too well prepared to receive its projections is in practice full of dangers. Colonials live less in a real social world, and this diminished reality is less able to wake the dreamer.

(Prospero and Caliban, pp.97, 107)

The loss of humanity through the process of colonization is something that this voyage would appear to address, since both the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos present non-human, distorted images of the human (the one too bestial, the other too perfect and entirely equine) and with the world so completely polarized between them, there is no place for that excluded third term, the 'human'.

For the colonized, upon whom the colonist projects his sense of the Other, that antithetical and excluded identity that defines his own, this is the most pernicious of magics, overruling their cultural being, and stamping them with the mark of debasement. The Land of the Houyhnhnms is a place of dark enchantment -- a little 'Heart of Darkness' masquerading as a philosophical and pastoral idyll in the manner of Hesiod', a place in which is realized the philosophical dream of turning of culture into Nature -- that perfect integration of rationality, society and law that suggests that highest state of rational and moral perfection attainable in this world. Whether this perfection is humanly attainable is, as we shall see, a major issue around which the satire of this book revolves.
From the way in which they impact upon Gulliver we can see that both the Yahoos and the Houyhnhnms originate in something very close to home. And yet they represent such absolute, polarized extremes. There is no middle ground whatsoever between the Houyhnhnms, who represent all the aspects of utopian perfection, and the Yahoos, who represent all the aspects of social man degenerated to an anarchic horde.

‘Race’ is a category that is not mentioned by name in the *Travels*, though it is certainly present as a hidden issue and concern. Here in the Land of the Houyhnhnms, where it is most at issue, it would seem to have been completely elided. It is as if race as a contentious category of difference has been completely naturalized. Looking at it from a different perspective, we could argue that this naturalization of racial Otherness is what colonialism aims to achieve. The turning of colonized human beings into animals is what the Land of the Houyhnhnms shares with the horrific (and thoroughly capitalist) proposed solution to Irish poverty in *A Modest Proposal* (1729), Swift’s brutally ironical attack on England’s exploitation of Ireland. In the *Proposal* turning the Irish people into meat livestock is made to appear to be totally consistent with, and follow on from, seemingly with perfectly acceptable logic, the kind of colonial subjugation that Ireland and the Irish people are already subject to.³ Whilst the Yahoos would seem to suggest the indigenous black races enslaved or colonized by colonial powers, since the way in which they are represented echoes the marvellous/horrifying accounts of the racial Other in William Dampier and the other travel writers of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries⁴, they are also, as Carole Fabricant has shown, very closely connected to the debased, sub-human condition of the Irish poor,
something with which Swift would have been all too horribly familiar.

On one level the Yahoos are the Irish as perceived with a lofty disdain by a highly cultivated elite who have fully sublimated all biological and emotional urges to higher forms of rational thought and civilized behaviour. They are the Irish adjudged by English (hence also Gulliverian) standards as subhuman (or rather, subequestrian) creatures whose excremental activities bespeak an atavistic force that must be kept under tight control -- creatures who must be 'inclosed', tamed as draught or carriage animals, and consigned to 'Huts' perhaps not very different from the notorious Irish 'cabbins,' finally to be deemed unfit for anything but extermination. (Swift's Landscape, p.35)

The Irish parallel is intriguing, since it would seem to indicate that Swift is trying for a width and inclusiveness to his satire, rather than a specificity, in order no doubt to strike all sorts of different and possibly contradictory resonances in his reader: the Yahoos, the initial vehicle of the satire of this Part of the Travels are thus a complex representing the racial Other, the Irish exploited, and the bestiality of all humankind. Strangely, for all their exclusion and domination by the Houyhnhnms, the Yahoos have a logical and political priority: rather than their being defined as the absence of Houyhnhnm, it is the Houyhnhnms who are defined in relation to, and as the antithesis of the Yahoo. The Yahoo are, strange as it may seem to the colonial mind, the 'key' to understand the uncanniness of the Houyhnhnms, not the other way around. The Irish resonances to which Fabricant alludes have rather interesting implications for how we read the Houyhnhnms 'colonially'. If the Yahoos are in some way a representation of the Irish peasantry, then Fabricant's idea regarding the Houyhnhnms would appear to follow: that they are in some way meant to allude to, if not to represent, the colonizing 'settler'
ruling class of the Anglo-Irish. That the Houyhnhnms have some connection with a historical ruling 'settler' class sheds a new and rather interesting light upon the 'relevance' of the Travels for the South African reader, for reasons which should be obvious.

When Gulliver meets the Yahoo he 'reads' them in racial terms, indulging in his own bit of racist anthropology:

But these differences are common to all savage nations, where the lineaments of the countenance are distorted by the native suffering their infants to be grovelling on the earth, or by carrying them on their backs, nuzzling with their face against the mother's shoulders.(IV.ii, p.276)

The kind of pseudo-scientific 'analysis', a concoction of biology and anthropology, that Gulliver delivers here was to become very popular during the colonial period, giving racism a supposed scientific validity, particularly when Darwin's evolutionary thinking (that itself develops out of the early interest in the oppositions between nature and culture and human and animal evoked by the question of racial difference) is extended into social thinking.

Peter Fryer clearly sees the racism of the Traveller's Tale as structurally and institutionally linked to slavery and colonization (Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain, quoted in Roger Andersen's The Power and the Word, p.215). The physical grotesqueness emphasized in the accounts that Fryer refers to here, and in the dehumanizing way in which, according to David Dabydeen, Black people were portrayed in eighteenth-century England (Hogarth's Blacks: Images of Blacks in Eighteenth-Century English Art), would appear to reflect the projection of repressed images of the old carnival grotesque in European popular culture upon the racial Other, as the
processes leading to bourgeois identity-construction and cultural hegemony begin to play an important role in the colonial project. Stallybrass and White write of the projection of the libidinal energies of carnival grotesque out into the colonies during the eighteenth century:

Then, in a sudden turn, all such barbaric behaviour is projected onto colonials and provincials: The Irish, Virginians, Jamaicans and the Booby Squires. The civic body is topographically reformed by the unceremonious exportation and dumping of libido in the countryside and in the far colonies, where, at the end of the next century, it will be miraculously rediscovered and hailed as a new-life source. (The Politics and Poetics of Transgression, pp.88-9)

Swift is however more interested in the production of these images than these images themselves: in his account of the Yahoos we are always conscious that it is Gulliver who is seeing them thus. What they mean to us is similarly something that we produce. Swift’s whole treatment of Gulliver’s relationship with the Yahoos points to the use of images of human nature to deny the reality of human culture, and with that the category ‘human’ altogether. The appearance of the Yahoos is cited by Gulliver as the reason for what he calls his ‘naturally conceived’ exceedingly strong antipathy towards them (IV.i, p.270). This is a strange word for Gulliver to use as freely and unquestioningly as he does, in such a strange and uncanny place, where things look as if they have appeared as if by magic.

Obviously Gulliver’s use of the word ‘natural’ is a reflection of what Gulliver sees as natural, itself a product of his society’s sense of what is normal -- in other words it depends on a cultural (and therefore culturally biased) idea of nature. But the satire has
already exposed his society as abnormal, particularly in relation to its capacity for violence.

The word 'naturally' thus begs all the questions regarding the normality of Gulliver's world. The word is to rebound on him with particular potent ironic force when the Houyhnhnms read him in 'natural' racial terms, and pass the same demeaning judgement about his physical features and characteristics that he passed about the Yahoos' in comparing them to his own.

As this last voyage seems to be at pains to show, culture is primary. Nature is an intellectual product, rather than an 'essence' or state that can be miraculously stumbled upon. This is not at all what the current thinking was at the time. As is quite consistent with the age's attraction towards various myths of origin (that mirror the search for first principles in science and epistemology), the indigenous peoples who were encountered on the great voyages of discovery of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were believed to be living in a 'natural' condition, the condition of man preceding civilization and culture. This made the voyages ipso facto 'scientific' investigations of nature. Robert Wokler writes in his entry in The Blackwell Companion to The Enlightenment that:

The discovery of the New World inspired thinkers of the Enlightenment to explore a state of nature before its passage into culture. In the beginning, claimed Locke, 'all the world was America', its land and its people equally uncultivated ('New World' p.369).

Nature is, however, in pointing to a mythical 'outside' or alternative to culture, a powerful and quite dangerous political notion -- as the history of the latter part of the century was to prove. The implications of this may seem to be conservative, since they reject the idea of a human existence outside of
society in the pristine condition of 'the noble savage' (to use the term later devised by Rousseau), which was put to revolutionary use in the thinking of the French philosophes. It does however prevent racist conclusions being drawn from the assumption that what lies outside of European culture is nature. Such a conclusion leads to the denial of the cultural reality of the racial Other -- acknowledged in the Travels in the richness of the social/intellectual/political cultures of Brobdingnag and Lilliput (to a lesser extent). The equation of non-European peoples with nature means that according to the logic of the scientific rationality of the Enlightenment, they are a nature to be tamed and to be acted upon, if not raw materials to be exploited. The admiration of 'the noble savage' did not save any of the North American Indians whose admired philosophy of life, lifestyle and bearing provided the inspiration for the idea from conquest and genocide. O. Mannoni sees a strong relationship between the development of the idea of 'the noble savage' in European thought (he speaks of it as being a delusional and falsifying 'dream') and the violent terror of the French Revolution (aimed at those who no doubt, refused to be post-Revolutionary noble savages). For Mannoni 'it was not by chance that the eighteenth century, which sang the "Noble Savage", also produced the Revolution and the Terror: they all sprang from the same source' (Prospero and Caliban, p.104).

The whole idea of what is 'natural' and the philosophical and political thinking that base themselves on a quite troublesome and sometimes quite dangerous notion of 'nature' and the 'natural' would thus appear to be under hidden, but nonetheless heavy assault in this voyage. It is here that the greatest satirical subversion of uncritical notions of nature and the natural are going to take place.
The Land of the Houyhnhnms presents itself as an extreme, first-principle world that is polarized between two diametrically opposed philosophical ideas of nature: the Houyhnhnms presenting a utopian ideal straight out of the pages of Plato's *The Republic*, and the Yahoos, representing the state of primal anarchy and violence to be found in Hobbes' *The Leviathan* (1651). In Platonic terms what we have here is a 'colonial' reworking of Plato's theory of ideas. The Houyhnhnms set themselves up as occupying a higher reality that has to preserve itself as a sanctuary against the lower, fallen realm of degeneration and decay identified with the Yahoos. This polarization, corresponding to the two images of the racial/indigenous Other current at the time: the negative Yahoo image that uses contemporary descriptions of the Hottentots of the Cape and of the Aborigines of Australia as its model, and the seemingly positive image of the Houyhnhnms that employs the image of the Native American 'noble savages' as its model. Whilst the myth of the 'natural' Other living in a 'natural' State can take two such completely opposed forms, in both the word 'nature' functions in a way that denies the primacy of the social and cultural dimensions of human life: that we are primarily social and cultural beings whose very notions of nature are social and cultural, and inevitably controversial and contested. The attempt to naturalize the cultural is mocked by Swift's having the Houyhnhnms sew and perform human-like cultural activities. This serves to remind the reader that whilst they may well be perfect creatures (before the mask is allowed to slip), they are horses, not suited by nature to human cultural activities.

The exploration of the idea of nature, coming hard on the scientific destructiveness of Laputa-Lagado sets the reader up for a fall. After witnessing the way in
which science produces something so thoroughly unnatural, the reader is bound to be uncritical in his or her acceptance of an image of nature as initially idyllic as that which is suggested by the ideas and lifestyle of the Houyhnhnms.

Because so much has been elided here in the Land of the Houyhnhnms its underlying assumptions have become masked, and its cultural origins effaced. It is thus able to masquerade as a world of ideal nature, a perfect blending of animal and philosophical 'nature. In an essay on the discourse of race Gareth Cornwell shows how important the notion of nature, particularly philosophical notions of nature, and the process of naturalization are to racist thought and practice. He writes of Aristotle that:

In the Politics he observed that 'just as some are by nature free, so others are by nature slaves.' It was explicitly in terms of this Aristotelian idea of 'natural slaves' that the Spanish, the first modern imperialist adventurers sought to justify their treatment of central American Indians in the sixteenth century. ('Race as Science, Race as Language', pp.14-15)

The notion that the Yahoos are slaves, and that their condition might be the end result of the dehumanizing social condition of enslavement is something that Gulliver fails to see. Strangely the horrific moment of recognition, when Gulliver realizes that the Yahoos have what appear to him to be human features, pushes him towards identification with the Houyhnhnms, where one might have expected him to feel a sense of species outrage at human enslavement at the hands of an alien species.

This is not what we would have expected, this is not the response of the freeborn Englishmen of the national myth, the emancipator of oppressed peoples. When he meets slavery face to face he is unable to see it (a perceptual failure that is most Houyhnhnm-like).
If Gulliver recognises the human in the Yahoos, the question that would appear to arise is why he does not express the species solidarity that the Houyhnhnm later reveal they expect and fear from him (IV.x, p.328). The greater the parallels that are discovered between the Yahoos and human beings, the worse the Houyhnhnms' 'domestication' and proposed genocide of the Yahoo appears, and the worse Gulliver's rejection of his own humanity, even in this abject shape in which it is encountered.

The horror of Yahoo ugliness (and the recognition that they are human) has so powerful an impact on Gulliver that he fails to raise any moral objections to their enslavement by the Houyhnhnms (for if the Yahoos are human their condition of servitude amounts to slavery -- or something worse than slavery, since their skins are used for clothing). This shows the morally numbing impact of the racial discourse that paints the racial Other as ugly, uncivilized and thoroughly bestial (and therefore in need of the kind of control that only an Enlightened European rationality brought in from the outside and superimposed from the top can achieve). The role played by the aesthetic in the denial of the humanity of the racial Other could not be more clear.

That Gulliver is unable to see what is right in front of his very nose is an indication of the extent to which he has already fallen under the politically and philosophically enchanting spell of the Houyhnhnms. In his enchanted state Gulliver buys into the Houyhnhnm way of thinking, particularly their rather convenient Manichaeism in which the world is differentiated into a good nature, an ideal philosophical nature that perfectly reconciles thinking and being, and a bad nature, the blind biological force that the Yahoos are an embodiment of. This leads to a very dangerous politics in which the Houyhnhnms can simply decide to
eliminate the Yahoos as if they were acting upon the authority of nature itself. With Gulliver’s account of The Yahoos Swift gives the idea of the savage a viciously ironical twist.

What a closer analysis of the Yahoos shows Gulliver, is that civilization is not a redemption from the Yahoo condition: it is that condition in which man is able to mask his Yahoodom from himself. Rather than representing that primitive point of departure from which human beings evolve, the Yahoos seem to provide a crude mirror for the kind of corruptions and distortions that capitalist society produces on its entropic path towards total social degeneration. In this the Yahoos are the satirical vehicle for the further subversion of Gulliver’s assumption that he is a civilized representative of a civilized world, an assumption already placed in serious doubt by his worst moments in Lilliput, Brobdingnag and Lagado, particularly those that related to Gulliver’s difficulty in controlling his violent impulses and enthusiasm for his culture’s considerable military violence. The institutions and structures of civilized society (which suddenly seems to need to be placed in inverted commas, or to be prefaced by the phrase ‘so-called’) are just ways of making the wickedness and corruption of human beings more sophisticated, insidious, and more invisible. What some might read as misanthropic satire, presenting an image of the depths to which human beings sink through their own volition, is actually a piece of economic satire aimed at capitalism as a perverter and destroyer of social bonds and human values, most strongly revealed in Gulliver’s bitter attacks on the legal profession that he voices near the end of his stay here.  

Viewed from the perspective of satire, the Land of the Houyhnhnms is a pure, satire-free world of the politically correct, a naturalized world which has
successfully effaced its origins, so that no genealogical reconstruction is possible. As Brian Tippett points out in discussing Timothy Reiss' book The Discourse of Modernism, these pure Houyhnhnms seem to be a little too disingenuous when it comes to their language, that it seems to have an in-built capacity for what he terms 'occultation':

There is a contradiction here: although Gulliver reports that they have no notion of power, government, war, law or punishment, they do in fact use these in the conduct of their affairs. A process of 'occultation' leaves such vicious institutions unacknowledged within their language although they are surreptitiously present in their world.

(Gulliver's Travels: An Introduction, p.16)

This effacing of the process of production seems so at odds with the great concern in the text itself with production and the processes whereby things come about and by which they operate. So much of the Travels has been concerned with things being made, with processes of social manufacture and production -- not least of all Gulliver's text itself.

In recounting the history of the Yahoos (with all the ideological glibness that one associates with the colonizer) the Houyhnhnms efface historical processes, in presenting their account of the 'spontaneous' generation of the Yahoos out of mud and slime (as we saw earlier). By emphasizing that the Yahoos sprung out of mud and slime, the story serves to brand them as mud and slime -- to treat them as material, in other words as the raw materials of their society. This is what the Yahoo are reduced to within the Houyhnhnm slave economy. Their skins which were one of the signs of their racial/species difference observed by Gulliver when he first encounters them, and consequently, one of the signs by which they were denigrated as inferior:
'but the rest of their bodies were bare, so that I might see their skins, which were of a brown buff colour' (IV.i, p.269), now becomes the sign of their positive value to their Houyhnhnm masters as commodity/resource to be harvested. Gulliver’s breezing through the description of the industrial uses that the Houyhnhnms can find for the Yahoos makes chilling reading, horribly echoing the similar motif in A Modest Proposal. For the modern reader the repeated references to using Yahoo skins and tallow (fat) have a particularly distressing resonance.

Ironically it is Gulliver’s sense of there being no difference between himself and the Yahoos that most subverts racist thinking. Swift’s satire disturbs the essentialist certainties regarding human nature that feed the racism that colonialism depends upon. If everybody is Yahoo -- then no race is exempt -- and the image of the Yahoo cannot be used specifically to designate the racial Other, as a point of differentiation. The brutal suggestion that we all are Yahoos, that we must take the Yahoo as the human starting point and inescapable condition of being human, is, I believe, to be seen not as a reflection of Swift’s misanthropy, but as a severe deflation of colonial pretensions (attacking the very binary premise upon which the colonial identity is founded).

Clive T. Probyn has drawn attention to the way in which the controversy over essential properties between Locke and Edward Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester, impinges upon the Fourth Voyage (Jonathan Swift: The Contemporary Background, pp.166-84). Stillingfleet’s position is perhaps the most extreme form of essentialism possible. In ‘The Bishop of Worcester’s Answer to Mr Locke’s Second Letter’ (1698) he presents the argument that essential properties are ‘real’, that they reside in the object itself (like primary qualities) and can be known directly through the senses
(without any of the key determinants on perception that Swift is both intrigued by, and intellectually committed to the existence of). Stillingfleet writes in a way that clearly shows his commitment to the idea that essential properties can be apprehended through the senses: 'For mankind are not so stupid, as not to know a Man from a Horse or a Drill' (p.180). As I have already suggested, the ability to differentiate between man and animal is a central concern of this last book of the Travels, which is, interestingly, populated by Houyhnhnms horses and drill-like (ie mandrill-like) Yahoos. Locke's attempts to debate the issue with Stillingfleet by appealing to language ('A Letter to the Bishop of Worcester', p.178) seem lost on Stillingfleet not because the niceties of Locke's logic are too difficult for the Bishop to follow, but because of the necessity of believing in the reality of essentials, come what may. The position is thus far more deeply ideological than Locke imagines: if he knew how intensely the bishop wants to believe in essentials, he would surely not have persisted. Swift, on the other hand, would appear to have realized exactly what was at stake as far as the Bishop was concerned, and that the commitment to essentials is an important facet of the kind of thinking that produces the cultural and intellectual values and politics of which the Houyhnhnms are an embodiment.

Crucially for a time of slavery and colonization Stillingfleet's argument that we can discover the nature of man in man:

Is not that Nature really in all those who have the same Essential Properties? And therefore the Common Nature of Man must exist in Peter because he is a man and so in James and John: and yet every one of these is so distinguished from the other, that we may justly say he hath a Particular Subsistence with that Common Nature.(p.182)
is bound to fall foul of racial difference: since nothing could be more visually apparent than the peripheral difference of skin colour that determines how racial categories are applied (by European classifiers and categorizers, the great inventors of Enlightenment racism)."

To save the hard-line essentialism in the argument racial difference has to be made into the sign of essential difference, a difference of the same order of species difference. The image of human would be fixed on a certain shape or size and the idea of what counts as human would then be restricted by excluding certain images of the human as 'unnatural', including, of course, images of humans from different racial groups. Racial difference becomes a signifier of a different 'essence' from that of the known essence of the human, of man. As an immediate logical consequence difference of race becomes difference of species and the kind of treatment that the Yahoos receive at the hands of the Houyhnhnms is 'naturalized'. The movement from essentialism to racism becomes such a 'natural' one that it raises the question as to whether the position didn't have a philosophical justification of racism as its ulterior motive in the first place, or if not this specifically in mind, then a position in which one's own cultural reality is defined in such essential terms as to immediately discredit the views of any other culture as philosophically invalid or unreal. The reduction of depth to surface, the very thing that Swift decries in his A Tale of a Tub, here takes a particularly vicious twist: as the surface (the skin surface in the case of human beings) becomes the sign of absolute depth of difference.

Stillingfleets's strange, question-begging philosophy must represent the most extreme example of any eighteenth-century faith in the visual, and in the self-evidence and transparency of the perceived world.
Representing perhaps the ultimate philosophical expression of an extremely reactionary middle class position, a Stillingfleet world is a philosophical and epistemological clarity, without shifts of perspective or perceptual distortion. The strong presence of the uncanny in this Book subverts Cartesian assumptions of clarity and transparency such as those upon which Stillingfleet’s philosophy is founded. What this subversive presence suggests is that Cartesian clarity is something that presupposes its ‘Other’, a shadowing strangeness bringing psychological disturbance and distortion of perspective, and causally connected to the experience of racial difference at the moment of colonial contact.

Gulliver’s sense of things as clear, natural and self-evident is ‘exposed’ by the turning of this empirical confidence in on itself, to the point that he himself (particularly his body) becomes empirical evidence against his claim to rationality and humanity. The signs that he reads so ‘naturally’ and which gave him such confidence, now begin to threaten his sense of who he is. Gulliver’s feelings of ‘natural’ disdain for and superiority over the Yahoos are exploded by his own recognition that there is an inescapable resemblance between human beings and Yahoos, and that he cannot keep the ‘truth’ of his Yahoo appearance from being discovered, especially when this ‘truth’ begins to peep out through his clothes. For Gulliver here the body becomes something whose horrible animal truth needs to be hidden beneath one’s clothes, particularly from the race of pure philosophers whose wonderful animal bodies are displayed as uninhibitedly as nature intended them. This sign of failure and shame is the selfsame ‘grotesque’ body that Gulliver recoiled from in Brobdingnag, and which, as eating/shitting/pissing machine caused such logistical problems (and personal embarrassment) in the land of Lilliput.
Since a utopia is nothing if not a place of freedom and nature, it is ironical that Gulliver ends up in a utopia where he has to be careful to hide his body. A liberated attitude towards the human body, and the psychological integration that does not promote sexual guilt and anxieties would seem to be a precondition for any utopia worthy of that name. For the first time this child of a visual culture is petrified about how his own visual appearance might be read by the Other. Colonized by the Other, Gulliver finds himself getting an unwelcome sense of what it feels like to be on the receiving end of that arrogance that sees that which is different to be essentially inferior. Gulliver, labelled Yahoo (with the rest of the human race however) finds himself in that position of psychological inferiority and uncertainty described so powerfully by Fanon in our own century in his psycho-analytical critique of colonialism (The Wretched of the Earth).

What most marks Gulliver as Yahoo, in his own mind at least, is that he is able to be the object of the desire of the female Yahoo who sexually accosts him. The episode in which Gulliver discovers that he sexually attracts a female Yahoo is a strange moment that combines absolute distancing on the one hand, with an absolute confirmation of shared identity on the other. Here the sexual 'law' of colonialism: that the racial Other is turned into a fantasized sexual object, a source of torment and tantalization, is completely reversed. Here Gulliver becomes constituted as the sexual object, and is seized as if he were the young Yahoo girl's sexual prey, a reverse-rape experience in which the colonial male is made into an sexual object in a way that is portrayed as threatening his human dignity, and raising the extreme anxiety of breaking a primal taboo.
Neither Houyhnhnm nor Yahoo, Gulliver finds himself caught in a no-man's land, lost and homeless in a world polarized into the two opposed but mutually defining extremes that the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos represent: between a desired but unattainable rationality (contra human philosophical definitions of man as the 'rational animal') and a loathed but unavoidable irrationality, and between masters who define themselves as suprahuman, and slaves who are relegated to the level of beasts. Of course what is factored out of this picture is the category of the human: that missing 'third term' that the satire has already placed under such critical and philosophical stress.

In this maliciously Cartesian, very unAugustan world that Swift has created, ultimately a place of terrible dislocation and alienation, there is no place for any reworkings of the old Medieval 'Great Chain of Being', in which man was the proud, but not too proud, occupant of the middle state between angel and animal, about which Pope is so glib in his Essay on Man (1733-34). Here the middle is a space that simply does not exist: unless it is the limbo realm/no man's land between the polar opposites that exclude him.

Exploding the antithetical mode of thought that is so much a part of the century's way of thinking, it is hardly surprising that it is this book of the Travels which in digging so deep into the age's psyche, actually speaks outside of its time. And there can be little doubt which age has taken this fourth voyage as its own. Irvin Ehrenpreis, a well-established and relatively conservative critic of eighteenth-century literature, sees the last voyage of the Travels to have been waiting for the twentieth-century reader to be fully understood and appreciated. Realizing that dehumanization and colonialism are the keys to our understanding of our own period, he writes:
I think we respond sympathetically to Part IV insofar as we have learned elsewhere what Swift learned in Ireland. It is only since the Second World War that Gulliver's last voyage has held the imagination of critics, and it is only since then that we have had the irrefutable evidence of modern man's bestiality, in Germany, Russia, S. Africa and S.E. Asia. ('The Styles of Gulliver's Travels' in Literary Meaning and Augustan Values, p.109)

It is we twentieth-century readers who find a cold genocidal arrogance in the perfect rationality of the Houyhnhnms. Because of the horrors we have witnessed within our own lifetimes, or which took place during that of our parents', we are deeply suspicious of notions of purity, particularly of the kind of 'species-thinking' whereby the Houyhnhnms elevate themselves above the rest of creation. There are so many modern analogies for the Houyhnhnms and their relationship with the Yahoo, a relationship that following the Houyhnhnms' own pure logic can only lead to genocide, for which our century devised euphemisms such as 'final solution' and 'ethnic cleansing', in so doing confirming Swift's fears regarding the political manipulation of language.11

However, if there is something very amiss with the Houyhnhnms, there is also something, by the same token, very seductive, and therefore dangerous, about them. David Ward has suggested that Swift was conscious that with the Houyhnhnms, he was dealing with something very deeply ingrained and able to exert a powerful hold over people, not least of all himself (Jonathan Swift: An Introductory Essay, pp.180-1). The Land of the Houyhnhnms is, perversely, both a colonial paradise where the process of colonial effacement has already taken place, as well as a world in which the central logocentric fantasy of the philosophers has been realized, the creation of a world of truth beyond the differences of language, a state of that truth that in
its absolute difference separates the philosophers from lesser mortals as clearly as if they were a different species (and a higher one at that).

It is this closed, pure reason of the Houyhnhnms that teaches them to love the whole species, which would seem to mark them as superior to humanity. But then the Houyhnhnms have nothing but contempt for other species, who since they are all non-Houyhnhnm, are necessarily all Yahoo -- a logic that we have been unfortunately all too familiar with in South Africa. Human beings, whilst they might destroy each other in their perpetual internecine conflicts, are not without a moral edge over these 'gentle' Houyhnhnms, since, as Gulliver himself proves with his desire to join their ranks, human beings have the capacity to respect, empathise with, and, above all, to learn from the Other.

The old war fought by the humanists against scholastic essentialism now takes a very different turn as philosophy assumes the power to determine the way in which the world is seen. The Houyhnhnms are totally unable to visualize what their world view does not allow them to conceptualize. This is demonstrated when the sorrel nag is quite unable to see the island that Gulliver sees in the distance, a failure that shows the moral and philosophical purity of the Houyhnhnms to be solipsistic. Their philosophy and their society would appear to be bound up in a closed mutually-confirming circular relationship that in premising its existence on absolute difference, closes off the possibility of 'difference', that ongoing and relativizing process through which meanings are created, and with it the dynamism of change and historical development. The severity of their binary thinking, which excludes the possibility of intermediate shades and grey areas, reveals them to be far more Cartesian dualists than the Platonic idealists
the Arcadian qualities of their world might have led the reader into believing them to be.

The Houyhnhnm Language is a powerful force for naturalization -- its very horsy whinnying sound suggesting that there is something quite natural and species-appropriate about it. For all its logocentric claims to purity, the Houyhnhnm language is above all a political language that excludes things by omission, and is thus a wonderful tool for the effacing of unpleasant realities. What the Laputans have achieved through the evolution of an introspective stupor comes ready-made to the Houyhnhnm in the form of the very language that they speak.

In their political correctness the Houyhnhnms do not entertain the possibility of an 'Other', apart from the Yahoos that is, from whom they derive their sense of the bad and the negative, to the extent that all words in their language that express a negative are derived from the word 'Yahoo'. If they do not have alienation, by the same token, they have no sense of fiction, imagination, linguistic plurality and 'difference'. Hence there can be no dialogue between the accepted and orthodox on the one hand, and that which the system excludes: the different, the alternative and 'Other', and on account of this, no social change or development. In this regard, the static Houyhnhnm world is that most seductive and attractive places, a place without fear and anxiety, of security and certainty, of the Freudian death instinct 'thanatos', described by Herbert Marcuse as follows:

The death instinct is destructiveness not for its own sake, but the relief of tension. The descent toward death is an unconscious flight from pain and want. It is an expression of the eternal struggle against suffering and repression.

(Eros and Civilization, p.39)
When F.R. Leavis, in his famous essay on Swift ('The Irony of Swift'), argues the case for the 'vital' Yahoos against the sterility and dead rationality of the Houyhnhnms (pp.26-7), he not only sets the tone for future readings of this last voyage, being one of the first to choose the Yahoos, and to help set the twentieth-century trend for doing so, but also points towards political and economic interpretations of this species vitality on the one hand, and sterility on the other.

It is interesting to see how the qualities of this world that are most disturbing, and most suggestive of dystopian nightmare (an emotionally cold, static, and closed place of deathly truth and self-righteousness) are those that are so clearly in conflict with the vital and chaotic spirit of Menippean satire, with its celebration of unruliness of life and idea.

Swift leaves a clue for the reader who knows something about the origins of satire and its own mythologies. Gulliver's turning away in disgust from the Yahoo diet because it is a mixed one shows where satire is in relation to his developing Houyhnhnm perspective on the world. Rejecting the mixed dish is nothing less than a rejection of satire, given that this is what the phrase 'lanx satura', the Latin source of the word satire, translates as.

Nothing could be further from satire than the Houyhnhnm language, which is, in its absence of figures of speech and textual 'play', as monological as those artificial and machine languages that Gulliver encountered in Lagado. It is a language which only allows one perspective, that of the rational; it does not admit of an 'other', of anyone or anything that lies outside of its narrowly defined terrain of the rational. What this absolute rationality boils down to is a form of denial, and the language that preserves this rationality is one that effaces realities (such as
that of slavery). As has been observed in post-structuralist readings of the Travels, there is a powerful contradiction at work amongst the Houyhnhnms. Their language has no terms for power and political activity, which makes their land seem like an anarchist utopia free from the very notion of political power. F. P Lock draws attention to the philosophical significance of the absence of coercive law and rigid political organization amongst the Houyhnhnms, the most democratic community that Gulliver encounters:

Houyhnhnm society illustrates the point Plato makes in Book IX of the Laws that a good man born with the capacity to attain a perfect knowledge of the good 'would need no laws to govern him'.

(The Politics of 'Gulliver's Travels', p.17)

Yet, as I pointed out earlier, Timothy J. Reiss shows in The Discourse of Modernism (1982), that at the same time the Houyhnhnms claim to have no sense of or no place for the kind of political practices that Gulliver is familiar with, they clearly exercise power, have political ideas and perform political actions. Their world shows how ingrained ideology can be: how it can produce a collective imagination so strong that the imagined world simply replaces the real one.

If Swift's Houyhnhnms are philosophically pure and inhabit what seems to be a morally unfallen world that is an anarchist's pastoral dream -- they are also profoundly racist disciples of Stillingfleet in the absolute exclusivity which they have claimed for themselves. The rational horses turn out to be less clear and fair minded Platonists, who have developed a healthy and organic (though Spartan) society like the one that Socrates discusses at the beginning of Plato's The Republic, and more the self-assured exponents of the kind of body-suppressing, pure bourgeois philosophy of absolute difference that is expounded by Bishop Stillingfleet. The land of the
Houyhnhnms takes itself far too seriously to be a true utopia. It is far too Spartan and above all, far too convinced of its own social and intellectual purity. Whilst carnival is, according to Bakhtin, hostile to notions of purity (which were the hallmark of the cultural attraction towards the classical, and part of the religious longing for spiritual transcendence), and emphasizes the mixed and the hybrid as part of its resistance to the pure, Swift's critique would seem to move in a different direction, one that brings it closer to the philosophical critiques of the Western philosophical tradition of the Frankfurt School. Here in the last of Gulliver's voyages, we meet for the first time in the history of human thought with the suggestion of an absolute danger in the very idea of purity, an idea which has and has had such a strong emotional and religious meaning for human beings.

That the language of the Houyhnhnms is similar to high Dutch or German suggests that there is something about their aloofness and sense of superiority that is characteristically European, and more particularly, closely related to the issue of European class distinctions. Their lifestyle is characterized by an absence of emotion, passion and an emphasis on what are essentially the good bourgeois virtues of 'Temperance, industry, exercise and cleanliness' (IV.viii, p.317). We have moved here away from Plato's The Republic in the direction of something that has a far more intimate class connection to Gulliver's own world, towards a bourgeois Spartanism premised on the creation of an ideal space of the pure and rational, that as Stallybrass and White have shown, is achieved at the expense of the suppression and repression of the grotesque (seen in the safely quarantined dirt, disease, ugliness and immorality of the Yahoo) and its projection onto the social and racial Other. What is suggested is a vision (and for some no doubt a
nightmare) of the bourgeois utopia, where the values of this most ambiguous of social classes (kindly, thrifty, virtuous, rapacious, and genocidal) have been elevated to the level of immutable Platonic verities.

Manufactured rather than discovered¹⁹, and its very existence at the expense of the indigenous Other, this bourgeois utopia is a threatened place: one that exists in the shadow of its oppressed slaves, whose ever increasing numbers point to the day when the colonial masters will no longer be able to exercise control. As was the case with the Laputans, the Houyhnhnms also have their dark future scenarios. The exponential growth in all things that comes with the advent of the modern will not leave them untouched.

The predicted biological explosion of Yahoo numbers seems to express the same kind of demographic fears we encountered in the fourth chapter of the thesis. There they were expressed in terms of natural disasters such as floods or whirlwinds; here they are expressed in terms that one would associate with plagues of insects or vermin: ‘these Yahoos engendered and their brood in such a short time grew so numerous as to overrun and infest the whole nation.’ (IV.ix, p.319)

This classic expression of fear of a ruling caste for the day that their servile underlings get too many to control is, ironically, reinforced by the Houyhnhnms own myth regarding the origin of the Yahoos. It is easy for ‘material’ creatures made out of mud and slime to reproduce themselves at will, they have an in-built industrial capacity to do so. Here we see a image of the ‘masses’ quite different from Bakhtin’s notion of the masses as the grotesque and carnivalesque mass body, and from the absolutist notion of the masses as atoms in a structure, centrally organized and controlled and functioning like a machine (such as the Lilliputian social body that runs like clockwork).
What we have here, surfacing in these demographic fears, is a blurring of the boundaries between the overlapping categories human and animal, reflected in the image of the mass of people as a subhuman horde that behaves in a way analogous to the 'mass' behaviour of vermin or insects. In their ability to multiply, the Yahoos are the embodiment of new social concerns and anxieties, of the kind of fear of the new and of a new that disturbs and breaks fundamental categories. When Menippean satire confronts the anxiety of the new and focuses on the human under the environmental pressure of the new, a new genre is born, that of science fiction. The Yahoo anxiety of Swift’s is actually very similar to the science anxiety of Mary Shelley. In both cases the monsters, anxieties and profound 'disturbance' that these writers produce are not unrelated to issues of history, identity and social class. In Swift’s case the concern being unconsciously expressed is that new human energies and forces will bring about the end of all of that carefully balanced arrangement of Newtonian physical forces that worked like clockwork. These energies and forces produce an ambivalent response in Swift. On the one hand we have the rejection of their dehumanizing power, most evident in the condition of the Irish poor, stripped of their humanity by colonial exploitation. Swift’s well-known aversion to the physical qualities and properties of human beings would seem to have lent itself to the way in which he characterizes his sense of disgust and outrage at the horror of this. On the other hand, these energies and forces have a more positive role to play in Swift’s scheme of things, since they spell the end for so many established ideas, values and practices for which he would appear to have only the most deep-seated of intellectual contempts.

Swift uses the Houyhnhnms to not only subvert the notion of man as a rational animal, but also to subvert
the very notion of 'rational' as it is exemplified by them. The Houyhnhnm Reason is a special 'angelic' form of Reason that comes by virtue of birth. With such a 'wired-in' sense of Reason it is impossible for one not to be rational: biology becomes the basis for logical impossibility, for the kind of thinking from essence, that removes the necessity for rationality to be self-vigilant and critical.

Swift's famous definition in his letter to Pope in which he rejects the notion of man as rational by definition (and thus unable to sink to any kind of level beneath the rational) and replaces it with the more guarded definition of the 'rationis capax,' man capable of reason, spells out his deep misgivings regarding the whole issue of human rationality. The notion of rationality that Swift seems to be proposing in the letter, and implicitly suggesting in the Travels is a more dynamic and critical notion of rationality, a struggle to be rational at the same time as being a practice of the rational, that is much closer to the Marxist notion of praxis than it is to any Platonic notion of rationality that involves a suppression of the emotions and the passions.

Most important of all, this notion of rationality as a practice (and a power) has very strong links with satire. Without satire the kind of rationality that Swift is referring to is not possible. The satiric vision of the human propensity to be irrational is a logical precondition for the kind of rationality he is after. It is only through the satirical vision of human beings as Yahoos that Yahoo behaviour, masked as it is at all sorts of levels, can be observed, and being observed, be transcended. Brian Aldiss points to irony as the key to the intellectual paradox of Part IV of the Travels: 'We have to be better than Yahoos to recognise that they are us, we are they. So we are
raised to the level of Swift’s own ironical vision’ (Trillion Year Spree: The History of Science Fiction, p.84).

This ironical vision has a crucial importance for Swift in the determination of the rational (as he understands the term). There is a strong suggestion on Gulliver’s return home that the meaning of Yahoo is less ‘savage’ than ‘unconscious/unthinking’, which is consistent with Gulliver’s eliding of the difference between Yahoo and reader, and pointing to the Yahoo as being amongst other things, but perhaps most important of all, a class or type of reader, one who unswervingly takes things literally, and is thus hardly the perfect reader for satire.

The elision (p.40, quoted earlier) means that we have two notions of the Yahoo -- one that it is the state of nature that we cannot avoid, a state shocking enough to make misanthropists of us all, and the other that the Yahoo is a species of reader, one bereft of critical and satirical intelligence. The reader who can understand irony is the reader who can penetrate the surfaces of things, who has the predisposition to respond to satire (if not to share in the satiric vision himself). This begins to sound curiously similar to Roland Barthes’s notion of the way in which readers of what he terms ‘writerly’ texts actively assist in the construction of meanings, thus producing meanings that challenge the easily digestible consumerist ‘readerly’ meanings that carry fixed ideological values and messages (S/Z, pp.4-5). Thus the degenerate Yahoo is in an analogous position to Barthes’s ideologically duped consumer of readerly texts.

Gulliver’s own position on the satire is simple: he has not got one. He doesn’t know he is writing a satire and he certainly doesn’t know he is in one (which only serves to show how readers can abuse texts
if they can construe this most serious text of Gulliver's as, of all things, a satire!). That there is a special relationship between satirists and readers of satire that I pointed to in the first chapter is something that he does not seem cognisant of. His view is one that actually militates against satire since it presupposes that all readers fall into the same undifferentiated mass: Yahoo readers, by definition practically beyond redemption. That this great misreader of texts (in the widest sense of the word texts) should not see any connection between reading and being a Yahoo is to be expected. However, the text suggests that there is a particular Yahoo way of responding to texts -- and thus, by implication a particularly non-Yahoo way of responding to texts, in other words, there are those who reveal that they are not Yahoos by the way in which they read texts -- or more particularly given the nature of the beast, the way in which they read satirical irony. What I think Swift is suggesting is that satire operates as a kind of acid test, judging ideas, values and institutions in terms of a very special kind of 'Reason' or rationality, a critical, subverting, anti-system rationality I have called an 'ironic rationality.' John Traugott also sees irony and satire as the keys to a notion of rationality that Swift is invoking in his assault on the abstract notions of Reason, and connects this rationality to the ironic 'tests' that Swift sets the reader in this Part of the Travels:

Faced with their own truth by the bedeviling irony, rational readers are literally created by Swift. His satire is hardly 'corrective' -- one cannot correct one's being. If 'rationis capax' means anything then it means 'capable of reasoning if one knows that when one fixes one's eyes on the constellation, one's lower parts will seduce one into a ditch.' It is an improbable possibility, this demand for incessant irony in order to be rational. ('A Tale of a Tub' p.40).
In one sense the land of the Houyhnhnms presents the kind of utopia that gentle pacifist anarchists have always dreamt of), a small, moral-philosophical community ruled by absolute consent, where there is neither a dominant social class, nor (compared to the world of Laputa-Lagado), use of science, mathematics or technology to serve the ends of political power and control, and where laws and rules prove to be quite unnecessary. It is an oral society that has very precise and controlled forms of oral literature, that seem to have a strong inclination towards the panegyric, the form most at odds with satire. A pre-colonial society that has not yet suffered the impact of writing, the land of the Houyhnhnms presents a world beyond satire, or a post-satiric world where satire has conquered all of its enemies and no longer needs a reason to exist, where all are divided into the saved who are above satire, and the damned, who are beyond it.

As I pointed out earlier, their language is free of political terminology, which paradoxically makes it the most political language ever. The Houyhnhnms have no terms for power, government, law, punishment -- for any of the problems of the modern mass society being produced by capitalist economic and social forces, problems that eighteenth-century England was beginning to become acutely aware of. The long list of things not present suggests presence in absence, that this land can only define itself as a place of the 'not', confirming the very existence of things in the very act of denying that they do exist. This place of ideal Reason, and a Spartan life lived according to a strict notion of Nature, comes to suggest less a liberation from science and technology than a pathological desire to escape the modern by constructing an new ideal world in the colonies. Unfortunately this new unfallen pastoral haven, with all its echoes of classical
Greece, begins to appear more asylum than utopia. Were it not for the colonial dimension, there would be a sunny kind of lunacy about the Houyhnhnm faith in their own rational purity, an insane 'Reason' that appears as a conflation of two Bedlam lunacies: thinking one is a horse, and imagining one has a god-like (or papal) infallibility.

Clearly the reader who has dreams of a utopia or a pastoral haven is being set up for a fall -- a similar one to that he and/or other readers might have experienced with the portrayal of the Struldbrugs in Part III. There is nothing in this world that can accommodate human beings, once the colonial facade slips the gentle Houyhnhnms reveal just how cold and inhuman they are. When Gulliver speaks of the way the mutineers treated him they show neither sympathy nor moral outrage, only curiosity about how Yahoos could make things. They are so rational that they can entertain genocide as if a perfectly reasonable policy -- in the way that cannibalism is seen as a reasonable solution to Ireland's economic problems in a Modest Proposal. This further emphasizes the extent to which the Houyhnhnms fail to understand how (in classical Marxist terms) the base produces or determines the superstructure, an understanding of which would spell out to them how eliminating the Yahoos will also bring about their own demise.

The spectre of genocide comes as a shock to the reader, who could have hardly expected it of such gentle paragons of rationality and social harmony. Carole Fabricant has perceptively commented that this is not too unexpected, since: 'Within the context of eighteenth-century English colonialism, paradisal vision can at any moment turn into genocidal nightmare' (Swift's Landscape, p.76). What is remarkable however is the way in which genocide just slips into the Houyhnhnms' speech. As I remarked in the first chapter
of the thesis: we slip from Plato's Arcadia to the Killing fields of Cambodia in the space of just a couple of words.

The emphasis placed on the softness and gentleness of the Houyhnhnms misleads the reader into the belief that they are totally pacific and would not be capable of actions we would consider evil. But their notion of rationality excludes the possibility of committing evil; they are necessarily incapable of evil acts. Arguments from necessity are the most dangerous things, since they neatly absolve the perpetrators of moral or political viciousness from the moral responsibility for these acts, since if they did these acts they cannot be morally wrong, and if they are morally wrong they did not do these acts. Reality thus fails the ideology test that this circular logic has devised. And fails it every time. It is such a potent weapon of propaganda -- to exclude oneself from the realm of the moral by a 'nice' logical necessity (I use the word 'nice' here as Swift normally uses it).

The Travels point to the ending of not only power of the moral over the political (which was always a convenient fiction to the powers that be) but also of the moral utopian 'Other' to the political. Gulliver's despair at the moral condition of man parallels the despair of the political that the text leads to by implication. During the Renaissance, knowledge of new worlds produced the utopian impulse, suggesting new ways of thinking about the social world that were in conflict with the established order ruled by the dominant and oppressive power of Church and State. The political influence of the new world is obvious in Thomas More's Utopia (1516), the book that assisted radical social and political speculations by providing them with the term that signified an ideal world that typically and significantly, lay outside any European state or society.
growing sense of unease regarding Gulliver's continued sanity to let Gulliver speak, with the special dispensation of those who might be deranged, and thus not answerable for their words, whilst at the same time distancing himself from Gulliver at precisely those moments when he wants the satirical criticism to be most trenchant.

The modern world appears as a perverse 'system' in which lawyers, thanks to the impact on human morality of the capitalist economic system, occupy a central, defining position. This corrupt modern society that functions as a kind of machine for the generation of social evils, could not be further from the Houyhnhnm small-scale pastoral utopia. As its corner-stones are dismantled one by one, all of the central institutions of Gulliver's world are shown to be more sophisticated versions of evils that are to be seen in the Yahoo. Capitalism, for Swift, is an economic system whose proliferation of 'roles' and 'professions' is a symptom of social decline. In his devastating condemnation of the legal profession, the Law, the very institution that is supposed to protect human beings against economic exploitation becomes the chief means to human enslavement.

In Swift's thoroughly critical view (and here his satire strikes its most anarchistic note), the law is a profoundly anti-human practice. Regulating the inclination towards greed with the aversion to pain, the law 'services' capitalism at the expense of the kind of moral principle that Swift placed at the heart of the more just and rational Lilliputian justice system. Not only is there no place within the new capitalist order for the inculcation of the social morality that will act as a unifying principle and resist social fragmentation in a less ad hoc, and coercive way, but the system is portrayed as being fundamentally opposed to knowledge and education. Thus
he audaciously calls lawyers 'avowed enemies to all knowledge and learning' (IV.v, p.297), and sees their social presence as paradoxically self-generating: the more lawyers you have, the more you are going to need.

The idea of the impartiality of the law, and that the law has, ultimately, nothing to do with money, is still a potent ideology amongst the liberal bourgeoisie, and one that they have a vested interest in preserving. Our society is now so far down the road towards the very rule by a professional class that Swift is attacking in its embryonic form that Swift’s critique is likely to elicit a stronger, and more negative reaction now than it did at the time it was written.

Gulliver also gives voice to an uncompromisingly negative view of colonization as piracy, rape and murder, adding what Swift surely meant to be a tongue-in-cheek exclusion of England from the ranks of these murderous colonizing nations since, as he puts it, England ‘may be an example to the whole world’ (IV.xii, p.344). Speaking through the mouthpiece of Gulliver, Swift pulls no punches in his description of colonialism, which he sees as providing the licence for every kind of cruel inhumanity that allows the bad types we have met in the Travels really to come into their own.

Another major target for Gulliver is the nobility. The class whose very name suggested that they provided the ‘natural’ sign of what is morally and socially superior have become little more than a genetic cesspit, and their physical degeneration, matching the process of social degeneration of which I have just been speaking, is the incontrovertible sign of the unfitness of their claims to power and privilege.

As I pointed out earlier, this hostility to the aristocracy is an expression of what Michael McKeon terms the century’s ‘conservative’ ideology, the
'radically sceptical' ideology with the Tory satirists of the period identified ('A Generic Transformation and Social Change', p.166). There could be no more virulent an example of the hostility to the aristocracy that Swift is expressing here: attacking the very basis of aristocratic power, the bloodline, he depicts the aristocracy as so thoroughly riddled with inherited diseases as to have become the very sign of disease, rather than the transparent sign of the worth and nobility, that offers immediate justification of their privileged position.

Such revelations mark a considerable shift for Gulliver, who hitherto seemed so strongly influenced by notions of social rank and status. Through his contact with the Houyhnhnms (who represent an elevation quite beyond that of rank or social class) Gulliver becomes distanced from the ideas of human status, which now become thoroughly inverted signs of the extent to which one is Yahoo. Now Gulliver desires -- as he did when he found out about the immortal Struldbruggs -- to leave the human race and enjoy a higher mode of being.

As is the case with this assault on the aristocracy, Gulliver is also disabused of his old pretences to status and power. The representative of a culture so arrogant as to believe it could 'buy off' the natives with baubles and beads finds that he cannot 'buy into' the Houyhnhnms by showing how far he has morally distanced himself from the institutionalized vice and corruption that goes by the name of civilization.

Despite the rejection Gulliver perseveres in identifying with the Houyhnhnms to the extent that he is ready to faint at the smell of Pedro de Mendez and his men, the Portuguese sea captain who rescues him after his clash with real hostile colonial 'savages' and takes him back to Europe. That Gulliver treats not only a fellow human being, but one of who is such a
generous humanitarian in such a way is indicative of the degree to which his Houyhnhnm 'wisdom' has alienated him from all human social intercourse, producing the very conditions which makes its moral and political 'truth' incommunicable. Indeed Gulliver has 'fallen' into a misanthropic madness in which he segregates himself as Other and different, and antithetical to an entire human race that has suddenly become Yahoo. Totally estranged from human beings he returns to England where he recoils from his friends and family with revulsion, callously rejecting them as he shuns all human companionship to spend his time conversing with horses.

The depth of Gulliver's rejection of his social bonds, and of a common humanity leads him to a position which is in conflict with the Christian faith. He has so intimidated his family that, as he tells us, 'they dare not presume to touch his bread or drink out of the same cup', which in suggesting the bread and wine of the Communion, as Kathleen Williams has argued ('Jonathan Swift', p.93), implies that his rejection of human society, is ipso facto a rejection of the Christian faith itself.

Gulliver's obsession with the bad smells of his former loved ones does not seem to be appropriate for a man who has undergone a transformation so profound that he describes it in the language of a Damascene religious conversion, in powerful visual terms as a form of enlightenment. He speaks of the Houyhnhnms opening his eyes and enlarging his understanding:

'But I must freely confess, that the many virtues of those excellent quadrupeds, placed in opposite view to human corruption, had so far opened my eyes and enlarged my understanding, that I began to view the actions and passions of man in a very different light, and to think the honour of my own kind not worth managing; which, besides, it was impossible for me to do
before a pension of so acute a judgement as
my master, who daily convinced me of a
thousand faults in myself, whereof I had not
the least perception before, and which with
us would never be numbered even among human
infirmities. (IV.vii, p.305)

It is strange that this statement of absolute
conviction should echo the passage in which he rejects
his instinctive reaction to the hypocrisy of the
Lilliputian Emperor's proclamations of leniency.

Gulliver emerges from the land of the Houyhnhnms
with an evangelical fervour which is very strange
because he has already given us the impression that
there is little that can be done about the Yahoos. His
call upon his readers to save themselves is patently
absurd. The horror vision has obscured everything
else: if he had difficulty with the satirical message
of the other lands, it seems to be totally lost with
his new anti-Yahoo, pro-Houyhnhnm obsessions. Even the
King of Brobdingnag, the most enlightened (in the best
sense of the word) figure in the whole of the Travels
is dismissed as a Yahoo, albeit one of a slightly
better disposition and of a slightly superior morality.
In his final crazed commitment to an unattainable
ideal, and in his failure to see just how
intellectually and politically dangerous such an ideal
can be, Gulliver reveals himself to be not just an
ingenu, but a profoundly anti-satirical figure.

What we have in this book is the most extreme of
ironical traps ever set by this most terrible of
satirists. It is a trap set for what in any other
satire would be an intended reader, one aware of
satirical irony and the degenerative vision that we
find in satire (and which we have already seen so
powerfully present in the Travels). What Swift has
done is to elevate satirical vision, an earthy,
contingent, demystifying, and deconstructive kind of
vision to the level of an absolute truth. It is as if
the Menippean impulse in the Travels has turned satire against itself, exploiting the predisposition of readers of satire to believe the worst of human beings, and to see the worst side of human nature.

Only if we see Swift as exploring the tortured inner logic of his culture from a Menippean perspective, do we avoid the trap of accepting Gulliver’s misanthropic judgement on the human race as final, as the judgement of a terminally embittered (and perhaps even insane) satirist. Ultimately there is no contradiction between Swift, the serious moral satirist, and Swift the playful Menippean; there is no point at which the uncompromising satirical morality (which is quite different from and distant from what we might call ‘conventional morality’), tips over into a misanthropic rejection of humanity.

For the shattered Gulliver who emerges at the end of the book, this whole experience is treated as a painful coming to knowledge. There is a sense, however, that he has not learnt anything at all: that the ‘knowledge’ that he emerges from the Land of the Houyhnhnms with, which has led him to a rejection of human beings and their society, and a pitiful attempt to try and be Houyhnhnm, is not something radically new that has changed him completely, but something latent that has just been brought to the surface, now manifesting itself in ways that could hardly be more extreme.

The tortured victim of the inner logic of his culture, the confusion and pain that Gulliver feels after his rejection by the Houyhnhnms, whilst imagining himself so privileged to be the recipient of their Knowledge and Enlightenment, suggests that he has undergone the kind of painful schism that Franz Fanon was to identify with the fate of the colonized psyche, radically split through the process of colonization and subject to self-loathing and self-doubt (The Wretched
of the Earth). What is so paradoxical about Gulliver’s self-loathing however, is both that it could co-exist with a professed state of greater knowledge and deeper awareness, and how it should find an outlet in the astonishing incivility and arrogance that characterises his relationship with his fellow human beings (including his readers) at the end of the book. That this condition is an alarmingly unstable one can be seen when Gulliver presents the reader with his own understanding of the significance of the changes that have happened to him during his stay with the Houyhnhnms. It is a most telling indication of his instability that in the passage quoted from page 305, Gulliver first speaks the language of self-enlightenment, of mind-altering revelation, and then shifts completely to the haughty voice of unchallengeable authority.

Totally isolated from the social realm, torn from the social bonds that gave him the sense of identity and place, and which he talked about with such pride and at such length at the beginning of the Travels, Gulliver perplexes the reader with this expression of hostility and disdain, closing himself off completely with his contemptuous and uncompromising last word:

I dwell the longer upon this subject from the desire I have to make the society of an English Yahoo by any means not insupportable, and therefore I here entreat those who have any tincture of this absurd vice, that they will not presume to appear in my sight. (IV.xii, p.346)

With Gulliver’s ‘homecoming’ we have come full circle: we are back with the man whose bitter voice we heard before the narrative proper began. The man who has come home will never, it would seem, travel again. The restlessness of a man who could hardly wait to set sail from England has gone, and what we are left with
is the homelessness of a man who lives in barns and talks to horses.

Gulliver’s homelessness would seem to be a sign of the social alienation of the time, something that is bound to strike a bleakly responsive chord in the twentieth-century reader. Behind Gulliver’s failure to re integrate himself into English society lies the shock of his rejection by the Houyhnhmms, which seems to point to the loss of a number of things: the idea of transcendence, the philosophically ideal, and most important of all for a book written within the utopian tradition of Sir Thomas More and others, the end of a dream of community. In his book on the contemporary American Marxist critic and theorist, Fredric Jameson, William C. Dowling writes of the way in which Marxism has understood, and characterized this loss.

As we have seen, Marxism already knew all this, for the story of history for Marxism, and especially for Jameson’s Marxism, is the story of a fall out of collective life and consciousness into a world of estrangement and separation and alienation. Only toward the end of that story, when the enormous power of capitalism to break human life up into ever more estranged and isolated units has begun to be felt in its full force, when all the forms of collective unity have been systematically undermined and human life shivers within the lonely monad of each isolated consciousness, does ‘individual identity’ as such become a primary category within thought. (Jameson, Althusser, Marx, p.92)

The final words of the Travels are spoken by a man who has not changed, despite what looks like powerful evidence to the contrary. He returns to England not having undergone a qualitative change, but having reached the degenerative point in his own personal logic, that is, as I pointed out in the previous chapter, the logic of his class. He is returning the most alienated of human beings, rather than the most
enlightened -- which is what he figures himself to be. In human and existential terms, what the Travels had to teach him, lay beyond him. Ultimately he was both true to his identity, and imprisoned by it: a Gulliver who like so many others journeying to satirical worlds, is discovered to be not quite the reader he had imagined.

There is a very good reason for Gulliver's failure here both to close the Travels with his personal authoritative imprint, and to perform an exercise in damage control after it has been published. This intimate story of a voyage out of and beyond the self, of a decentring of a freeborn Englishman and good middle-class European, and with it almost all of the values, ideas and institutions that he so clearly sees himself a representative of, is that uncanny, disruptive, parasitic, invasive and thoroughly problematical thing: a satire. The ultimate irony on Gulliver, formerly the faithful representative of his world, and now so hopelessly alienated from it, is that his book that he sees as being an urgent message of the Houyhnhnms truth that will change his world (in this sense it comes as uncomfortably close to being a sacred book as the Hack's Tale) now seems to refuse any connection with him, to deny his intended meanings, and to exist in a way that he has no power to control, and in ways that he could ever have envisaged. Despite itself, and without knowing it, Gulliver's text still continues to speak to us in a voice that is powerfully satirical, a voice that is sure to 'vex' us for a while to come.
Dullness never limits its reach for grandeur to language alone but always goes on to try vast images of itself in extravagant clothing, elaborate manners, oversize gestures, huge accumulations of goods and titles, and vast, pretentious buildings. As fatuousness and insolence swell, these modest violations of nature expand into ever larger and grander schemes. We find the master dunces of satire busily constructing perpetual motion machines, industriously mixing chemicals to create the philosophers’ stone, stirring up the elixir which will confer eternal life on its possessor, creating utopian societies which by scientific regulation banish all pain and hardship from life. Marching under the banner of progress, dullness is always incurably optimistic about its ability to rework nature into a brave new world and to make itself over in the image of its own desire.

Alvin B. Kernan The Plot of Satire.

Now ours at last evolves the Dream of Dreams Pure Criticism, without thought or fuss; Pure Theory formed with nothing to discuss! This rare device embodies in its guts No cranks or levers, pistons, cogs or nuts; A ‘magic eye’ looks inward and controls Pure Critics musing on their own pure souls.’

A.D. Hope Dunciad Minor, Book V
 Appropriately for the last poem that he wrote, with *The Dunciad* (the later four book version of 1742/3), Pope leaves the satire of engagement of the *Horatian Imitations* and returns to the epic canvass and mythic, mock-heroical poetic form and voice of *The Rape of the Lock*, but to very different effect. Having the same epic sweep as *The Rape* and an even stronger element of the mythopoeic, the poem is, very much like Hogarth's final print, *The Bathos* (1764) a final comment on a career and the end of an age reaching its bathetic, rather than apocalyptic conclusion.1

A monumental satire in four books that presents something of a reworking and a very clear philosophical and moral deepening of the earlier *Dunciad*, the *Variorum Dunciad* of 1728, the poem is important not in the way that the *Horatian Imitations* were important, as poems that dealt with issues such as the position of the satirist and the politics of satirical engagement, but for its archetypal qualities, as a satire that deals with, and *enacts* what Alvin B. Kernan sees as the essential narrative theme or motif of satire, the 'primal action of dullness' (*The Plot of Satire*, p.109). In presenting a satirical investigation and critique of the social, cultural and political impact of the new capitalist, market-centred mode of literary production that brings to a final end the old system of literary patronage largely associated with the Court and the aristocracy, the poem presents an imaginative 'history' of the 'progress' of Dulness, horizontally, across the geographical space of the city of London, and vertically, to a position of unchallenged power. The physical movement of Dulness, modelled on the mythical narrative of Aeneas' flight from Troy, and founding of Rome in the west, is one that follows a route closely associated with the Lord Mayor's Parade (one of the most official and heavily restrained forms of 'carnival' possible), from a westward direction,
away from Grub Street and its environs, the home of the new popular/capitalist writers and entrepreneurs towards Westminster, the financial heart of the city, and the Court of George II. This marks an implosive, centripetal movement from the suburbs at the city margins (Pat Rogers *Hacks and Dunces*, p.70) towards a centre that has already, as we saw in the third chapter, experienced a process of symbolic devaluation.² Pat Rogers, and Peter Stallybrass and Allon White have separately indicated³ that this is a journey of profound social significance, since it crosses the geographic boundaries that represent the 'invisible' hierarchic divisions within eighteenth-century society. As Pat Rogers makes clear in *Hacks and Dunces*, 'Augustan society superimposed a spatial segregation on a vertical social hierarchy' (p.14).

The reader's sense of the 'logical' and measured progression with which the Dunces advance along their route⁴, is accompanied by suggestions of plague, riot and conflagration spreading out of control as well as with the idea of military invasion and conquest at the hands of a Dunce 'army' on the march. The movement of the Dunces (the poem's narrative) also suggests a particularly prolific form of biological growth and procreation, one that produces processes of physical mutation, an astonishing and horrific insect-like proliferation, and a plant-like, 'vegetable' growth and propagation. This sense of growth accelerated in a quite unprecedented way lies behind the poem's creation of a nightmare image of what Pat Roger's terms the poem's 'biological catastrophe' (*Hacks and Dunces*, p.139). The poem here exploits the increasing awareness within the eighteenth century of minute biological worlds, following upon the microscopic examination of plant and animal life (James Sambrook, *The Eighteenth Century*, p.20). Against the proliferation of a 'bad' nature of diseases and
insects, there are only two defences: air-tight barriers, and agents which counteract these forces by acting in a similarly invasive, proliferating manner. I shall return to this issue again when discussing the poem's 'thickness' or 'solidity' (to use Emrys Jones' term). Suffice it for now to point out that whilst, as I.R.F. Gordon has disclosed (A Preface to Pope, p.48), the poem, in its earlier version, was Pope's response to the campaign his literary enemies launched against him in 1711, it is also implicitly setting itself up as the great agent to contain and defeat the threatening, diverse social and cultural forces that the Dunces embody: the agent that attacks by infiltrating their world and imagining the collective force which their seeming competitively and contradictorily individualistic practices and activities ultimately assumes.

The poem shows the ingrainedness of historical memory as Pat Rogers shows when he points to the poem's hidden layer of historical reference: 'The vocabulary of Augustan satire, then, carries with itself a buried layer of allusion to civil unrest' and speaks of the Dunces' historical identity as the 'heirs of the armies of the seventeenth century which had laid waste so much of the country' (Hacks & Dunces pp.114, 115). Events from the Civil War and Restoration periods such as the fires (including the Great Fire of 1666), plagues and Popish plots are alluded to as if they were still very much alive in the social memory. The sense of the movement of Dulness as a contagious spreading echoes the great historical disasters that befell the city during the previous century.

In recording the unfolding of the new age of stupidity and 'nonsense' Pope would seem to want to convey a sense of rarity, of a special conjunction of figures, forces and places that makes the whole apocalyptic outcome of the poem, that ironically brings
an end to the very idea of special concurrence and significance, a foregone conclusion. Thus this strong sense of the historical is played off against the mythic and classical element, leading to Pat Roger's comment on the incongruity of the mixing of sonorous and mellifluous classical names, and guttural Anglo-Saxon place names. The poem's phantasmagoric quality associated with Dulness and with the distorted qualities of the inner world of the Dunces is also played off against the commonplace and customary, defamiliarizing the ordinary and the everyday, including the well-known urban landscapes of London, and investing all of the Dunces' habitual activities with a new significance, as part of a grand ritual leading to the birth of an age of chaos and darkness. Pope uses classical literature and mythology in order to satirically deflate his literary enemies through the absurdity of the mock-heroical comparison. In mythologizing his enemies, Pope is able to establish his artistic superiority over them, placing them in a particular limiting and defining context, which serves to 'explain' them.

Ironically the classical, that Pope uses to implicitly criticise the Dunces through mock-heroical comparisons, is what they themselves are positively aspiring to, in order to create their own classical world which conforms to all their versions of classical literature and mythology, through which they see themselves and assign themselves meaning and value in the great historical scheme of things. Classical literature and mythology thus acts as a mirror, or rather two mirrors, in the poem. The first mirror is that which has the fantasized image of themselves as classical figures in a new classical landscape and classical age. The other mirror is Pope's that has both to present a corrective sense of the real, as well as to 'mirror the mirror', to try to explore the
relationship between Dunce mind, Dunce world and Dunce historical dream.

The poem takes the exploration of the decline in symbolic meaning that is the central concern of *To Augustus* to what Pope would appear to believe is its logical conclusion: the collapse of the long tradition of Western literature and culture rooted in its sense of the achievements of the classical period, and the birth of a new antithetical 'mass' culture of commodification and political control.

Re-enacting the central theme of Virgil's *Aeneid*, the poem deals with the founding of a new Empire of stupidity in the West, that whilst based on the model of the founding of Rome, actually suggests the ending of classical civilization with the fall of that city and the world being plunged into a new dark ages, which is simultaneously the restoration of the Empire of Dulness, the ancient rule of chaos before consciousness and the word (the logos). As a 'restoration' involving a coronation (of King Cibber at the end of Book I) it echoes and is a dark parody of the historical Restoration of Charles II.6

The poem’s satirical use of the old iconography and rituals associated with royalty, royal power and the institutions with which its power and influence is connected, or through which it is mediated, is one of the poem’s most striking features: the pomp and ceremony of the Lord Mayor’s procession (from the city to Westminster) providing the poem, as Aubrey Williams has shown, with its central narrative motif. The sense of stateliness in the poem conveyed by such rituals and ceremonies ironically echoes the political themes of displacement of the old symbolic sources of authority.

According to Peter Stallybrass and Allon White it is this movement of the Dunces from the city to the court that poses the greatest danger in social and symbolic terms to the ruling order. This is why,
according to the authors, Cibber replaced Theobald as the hero of the four-book revised version of the poem: Cibber's connections with the high world of Court and government, and low world of Grub street and its environs make him what they call a 'contaminating mediator' (The Politics and Poetics of Transgression, p.110). These lines from Book III of the poem, which deal with the 'transportation' of the Imperial seat of Dulness,

Till rais'd from booths, to Theatre, to Court,  
Her seat imperial Dulness shall transport.  
Already Opera prepares the way,  
The sure fore-runner of her gentle sway.  

(III: 299-302)

chart the 'irrevocable' (p.100) path of Dulness from fairground stalls (the site of carnival) to the Court (in their view, supposed site of social and cultural refinement). What is telling about Stallybrass and White's account of the significance of these lines is that they miss (or elide) the reference to opera, an art form that is treated with unmitigated satirical antagonism as an artistic/cultural form whose politics are completely antithetical to those of satire.

In her Althusserian reading of the satirists' relationship to the changed mode of literary production and the popular literary forms that developed as a result of this change, Kathy MacDermott ('Literature and the Grub Street Myth',) occupies a position that is, as I pointed out earlier, close to that of Stallybrass and White. She argues that the satirical project in which the eighteenth-century satirists were engaged involved their attempt to differentiate themselves from the newly emergent 'popular' forms and democratized modes of production (p.17) by mythologizing (and thus 'dehistoricizing') the whole context of literary production, and their own roles in
an antagonistic opposition which they set up with the 'vilified' popular producers and entrepreneurs. (pp. 17-18, 20-1).

She argues that the satirists felt threatened by and satirically attack these new 'popular' forms since they demystify the relationship between literary and other economic forms of production, making the true economic relationship of literature to the capitalist market quite clear, thus threatening what she believes to be the satirists' desire to keep writing the preserve of a privileged elite (p. 21).

Her argument, which supports and is supported by a negative political appraisal of the satire of the period, begs the question of definition: whether there is a distinction that can be made between mass and popular culture/literature, and what the political implications are of such a distinction. It is wrong to argue, as do the theorists of the Frankfurt School, that the primary distinction is one that should be made in terms of mode of production, between a 'high' art and literature, that in some way remains immune to capitalism, and to 'mass' aesthetic and political models; and 'mass' literature, a mass-produced literature of exploitation, manipulation and control, whose political implications could not be more disturbing. It is equally wrong however to take the 'popular' at face value: and to simply invert old, established scales of value which elevate the 'high' above the popular. What is popular can easily be the site of socially and politically regressive and reactionary ideas and values -- perhaps more easily than is the case with high literary and aesthetic forms.

This is what the modernist textual line in criticism would tend to suggest: the more a text is prepared to exploit the possibilities of language, and in so doing to subvert connections between signifiers
and signifieds in a semiotically subversive way, the more socially and politically disturbing/offensive/radical it is likely to be. Roland Barthes is perhaps the most prominent voice in this 'line', consistently teasing, tempting and provoking literary conservatism wherever he thinks it is likely to be found. Michael Shapiro, though, has given clearest and most forthright expression to this 'line':

Literary discourse, particularly in its modernist guise is hyperpoliticizing. By producing alternative forms of thought in language, it makes a political point. By virtue of its departures from linguistic normality, it points to the way that institutions hold individuals within a linguistic web. But it goes beyond this demonstration. It deforms images to show how accepted models of the real are productions of grammatical and rhetorical constructions, and it forms antagonistic imagery that provides sites for resistance to domination. A failure to exercise a literary self-consciousness, then, amounts to the adoption of a depoliticizing posture, the acceptance of institutional imperatives. ('Literary Production as Politicizing Practice', p.239)

Unfortunately, one needs to be careful regarding what assumptions one makes about the politics of the 'high' and the 'popular'. This is a point that is inadvertently revealed by Peter Stallybrass and Allon White in their The Politics and Poetics of Transgression. Stallybrass and White criticize the cultural politics of the eighteenth-century satirists because of their resistance to popular cultural forms, and with them to the socially transformative energies of carnival grotesque. However, that Stallybrass and White cite Ned Ward, a key member of the 'Hack' and 'Dunce' fraternity, as an example of those voices disapproving of carnival festivity (at the St James's Fair), creates serious problems for their central line of argument as the words in which he describes what he
observed at the Fair: ‘a parcel of scandalous boozing kens where soldiers and their trulls were skipping and dancing’", would seem to show a gulf between carnival on the one hand, and the so-called popular writing of the period on the other (something that I have tried to point to during the course of this thesis). I do think that Ward’s sentiments are not just typical of those writers that Stallybrass and White have quite erroneously connected to carnival, but also fairly indicative as to what his and his colleagues/rivals textual, cultural and wider politics were all about.

The example of Ward is one that I believe seriously questions their line of argument regarding the battles between the satirists and the popular writers taking place during this period. The irony of it is astounding: the one ‘popular’ voice that they cite on popular carnival festivities speaks what is clearly the ‘fussy’ repressive language of the middle class. Astounding as that irony is, it is exceeded by that to which Ward himself surely falls prey in expressing his aversion to carnival in such a morally superior tone when Pat Rogers’s crushing assessment of him is that he was an ‘alley-cat of the literary world’ (Hacks and Dunces, p.27).

Stallybrass and White’s mistakenness about these ‘popular’ writers would appear to be derived not from their writings themselves (totally unread by and perhaps quite unreadable to anyone in the twentieth century) but from how they are represented in the satire of the period. Bizarre as it may sound, I believe that Peter Stallybrass and Allon White have implicitly made the mistake of treating the ‘popular’ writers who are carnivalized by Pope and Swift as part of the satirical attack upon them (and linked to the kind of ‘bad’ carnival we find here in The Dunciad), as the embodiments of carnival.
I do not think that, as the current institutional logic of 're-reading' might suggest, that a writer like Ned Ward, who seems to typify the kind of writer the satirists of the period were attacking, can be seen as a figure of aesthetic or political resistance, writing from the margins to which he has been consigned by the high literary canon represented by Swift and Pope. For those of us influenced by or prepared to acknowledge the contribution made by Frankfurt School theorists in this key area, the crucial point of distinction between a true popular culture and a mass (commodified) literature and culture is that of agency, interest and control. From the Frankfurt School perspective this agency and creative power to produce is denied within the capitalist 'commodified' mode of production. Culture is produced for rather than by, and the 'sign' of such a capitalist mass, commodified culture is its manipulativeness, its alienating power, and its mechanization of production. All of these are clearly evident in the satirists' characterization of the new forms. MacDermott’s argument that the satirists mythologize their own writing in order to efface its links to the new literary market seems to be a serious misreading and misrepresentation of the satirical engagement of the satire of the period with the new. What she sees as escape-minded mythologization seems better explained in relation to the 'mythic' qualities of the form itself, particularly insofar as these provide the satirists’ own sense of legitimacy and right to speak. Another explanation for the mythical qualities of this satire lies in the presence of an element of Menippean fantasy used to challenge the 'closed' textual and epistemological assumptions of the new.

For Laura Brown the poem is more exploration rather than evasion of the new conditions of production -- which she sees as characteristically capitalist
rather than popular. She sees Pope's concern with the commodification of art and literature with the development of the mercantile-capitalist economy as the central focus of the poem:

The attack on the capitalization of the printing industry and hence of literature itself is the main explicit enterprise of *The Dunciad* (Alexander Pope, p.130):

What is most important, in her reading, is the way in which Pope's ambivalence towards capitalism is conveyed by the poem. One the one hand there is his obvious concern with the capacity of the capitalist market to commodify writing as part of a more general process of commodification of value, but on the other there is, supported by the poem's strongly mythical and historical qualities, a sense of the vitality of the capitalist market, and its transformative power to change all established orders and relations.

Thus though Pope presents capitalism as stultifying and dehumanizing (most obviously in reducing human beings to Dunces), it is also characterised as an historical force that is unstoppable, the source of the grotesque vitality and excessive energies that seem to escape confines, overflow limits, break barriers and subject everything to mutation and transfiguration.9 Ironically despite that Pope would have us believe that they are ushering in the end of history, and for all their numerous gross and infuriating human failings, the Dunces are, unquestionably, the agents of history. There is thus an inevitability to the vision of the future afforded to Colly Cibber, the newly crowned King of the Dunces (III, 61-122). Ironically this vision of the future is presented as a prospect -- taking the aesthetic shape of a landscape through which the eye must be directed -- when the forces whose victory is depicted here will
who control it), the relationship between word, rationality and mass cultural images, and the possibility of a critical space outside of a closed capitalist model of production and consumption, all overlap and interconnect with each other in ways we find difficult to ascertain because of the continuity and exponential development of the whole process.

One of the major concerns of *The Dunciad* is imperialism, an imperialism envisaged very differently from that imperialism joyously anticipated at the end of *The Rape of the Lock* (as it is at the end of *Windsor Forest* and *An Epistle to Burlington*). For Laura Brown the extent to which the poem invokes imperialist ideology can be seen in its choice of images: 'The Dunciad's whales and dolphins, though they sport in the woods and the skies, come directly from contemporary imperialist panegyric' (*Alexander Pope*, p.145). The poem replaces the positive images of imperialism as a force for civilization that occur in his earlier poetry with its negative Other, a colonizing force that is implosive rather than expansive, and is introducing a new age of barbarism rather than a new age of Enlightenment.

Though Pat Rogers argues that the Dunces are anti-Enlightenment, 'minions of darkness' representing an antithesis to the essential spirit of the Enlightenment, what Robert Wokler describes as 'an invocation of free thought and action against the darkly oppressive forces of barbarism and superstition', it is possible to entertain an opposing view can be proposed: that they represent something within the logic of Enlightenment itself, the dark side of the Enlightenment, a force corrupting the Enlightenment from within rather than from without, what we might term the 'Enlightenment's corruption of itself'.
The imagery of light is of great importance in suggesting that which is opposed to the very idea of Enlightenment, and yet is parasitic upon its shapes and forms, advancing itself under the cover of the idea of an Enlightenment expansiveness and openness whilst leading to closure, consensus, and ultimately darkness and night. The poem’s reference to mirrors and mirroring, particularly in that the reflections are always obscured, dulled, clouded, fogged, suggests that Pope sees the Dunces as epistemologically deluded, trapped in the ‘unconscious mirror’ (to use Dick Hebdige’s phrase) of their severely limited ideological vision (‘From Culture to Hegemony’, p.363).

Pope’s The Dunciad is the place to look for the expression of a social unconscious since his Dunces are swept up by a collective power whose meaning lies quite beyond them, and whose imperatives they unconsciously act out. Aubrey Williams suggests that the narrative line of the poem has a lot to do with unconscious revelation when he speaks of the poem gradually revealing ‘its powerful undercurrents’ (Pope’s Dunciad, p.153). His very choice of the word ‘undercurrent’ suggests that the river Thames plays a key role in connecting the unconscious element in the poem with the its historical and mythical resonances. All of the areas in the poem that suggest an imitation of our modern sense of the unconscious are connected to the idea of or image of the river -- perhaps nowhere more so than in the grotesque and somewhat scatological image of fishing ‘her nether realms for Wit’ (II, 101). In the diving competition that forms part of the heroic games Smedley makes a much delayed return from his dive, having visited the mud underworld that Pope’s imagination places at the bottom of the Thames. Populated with dark, sexually responsive females, the underworld is that unconscious realm that is connected to the colonies and lands of the racial Other, now
transfigured into an alluring pastoral realm free from inhibition and taboo.\textsuperscript{14}

The danger that the mud nymphs pose is clear from Smedley's appearance: they have the power to sexually 'absorb' their partners, to refashion them in their own image. Smedley's liaison with the mud nymphs has transformed him into a 'sable' mud figure himself.

First he relates, how sinking to the chin,
Smit with his mien, the Mud-nymphs suck'd him in,
How young Lutetia, softer than down,
Nigrina black and Merdamante brown,
Vy'd for his love in jetty bow'rs below,
As Hylas fair was ravish'd long ago.
Then sing, how shown him by the Nut-brown maids;
A branch of Styx here rises from the Shades,\textsuperscript{331-8}

The way in which Pope is constantly connecting images of the indistinct or incomplete to images of light suggests that it is the Enlightenment itself that is being exposed: an Enlightenment that would include rather than exclude the Dunce protagonists.
The Enlightenment is exposed as being ideological, being in contact with the world of Grub Street and its Dunces, and having at least some of its social roots in this part of the world, rather than existing in some quite unpolluted, transcendental philosophical and scientific sphere.

It is wrong to think, as has been suggested by Pat Rogers, that Dulness and her minions represent a force against Enlightenment (The Blackwell Companion to the Enlightenment, p.208), since the very revolution that they are promoting is one which, however perversely, employs the language of Enlightenment -- indeed it would seem to want to appropriate it for itself.

Dulness would thus seem to be something that is implicit in Enlightenment, its 'shadow' rather than its antithesis. Here the distance between Pope's dream of the state of universal freedom under British imperial...
guidance, as expressed at the end of *To Burlington*, and a feared barbarism come to take the nation into a new dark ages, has dissolved. In *The Dunciad* this fear of the bad Empire of Dulness would seem to be tied up with Pope's obsession with the word 'black', used repeatedly to carry racial and colonial connotations as well as by Dulness' claim that she is out to restore the mind's 'native anarchy'. Examples of Pope's use of the word 'black' in ways that suggest the racial/colonial dimension include (ominously) the suggestion of a conquering military force of mercenary soldiers whose blackness could be literal, a matter of race, or metaphoric, a matter of connoting the idea of death, since Smedley has just returned from the equivalent of the classical Underworld. Seemingly out of thin air, the sudden appearance of this 'invading' force, surrounding Smedly upon his return suggests a moment of magical transformation, one of the sacred transformations of Dulness' new Papal appointee (as the phrase 'Heav'n's Swiss' suggests), that points towards a more perverse (since more clearly parodic of Christian ritual) magic performed by the priest 'succinct in amice white' in the last Book of the poem (549-54). The sudden mysterious appearance of 'the sable Army' is the first of a number of martial and military notes that the poem will strike.15

'Receive (he said) these robes which once were mine,
Dulness is sacred in a sound divine.'
He ceas'd, and spread the robe; the crowd confess
The rev'rend Flamen in his lengthen'd dress.
Around him wide a sable Army stand,
A low-born, cell-bred, selfish, servile band,
Prompt or to guard or stab, to saint or damn,
Heav'n's Swiss, who fight for any God or Man.
Thro' Lud's fam'd gates, along the well-known Fleet
Rolls the black troop, and overshades the street,

(II, 351-60)
With his reference in the Third Book to the 'sable sorcerer' (233), this racial dimension is linked to Pope's central critique of the popular media. The number of references to 'blacks', who were a small minority presence in English society, in ways that suggest danger or threat, and collusion with the 'darkest' intentions of Dulness, indicates strong unconscious fear of a process of what we might call 'reverse colonization', an unwelcome return home of the colonial violence the colonizing power has exported (showing that colonial violence is a displacement of the aggression usually unleashed in European wars).16

In the poem the producers of the new commodified literature of the capitalist market, whom the satirists despisingly labelled as 'Hacks and Dunces' are presented as being immersed in their world, caught up in circular processes in which produced material is constantly being recycled (in what could almost be a grotesque parody of the Althusserian notion of production), and having no sense of critical distance from the phenomena with which they are surrounded.

Pope presents their textual activity as frenetic, but entirely negative and destructive, and in a particularly vicious satirical image, as being true to their natures as insect-like, parasitic creatures. Here Pope portrays the critics he has placed amongst the ranks of the Dunces as insect-like creatures who actually live on text:

Next, o'er his Books his eyes began to roll,  
In pleasing memory of all he stole,  
How here he sipp'd, how there he plunder'd snug  
And suck'd all o'er, like an industrious Bug.  
Here lay poor Fletcher's half-eat scenes, and  
here  
The Frippery of Crucify'd Molière;  
(I, 127-32)

Pope is both hostile to the Dunces whose collective stupidity, embodied and immortalized in the figure of
the ancient goddess Dulness, has brought about the malaise whose entropic narrative is the poem, as well as sympathetic to them, since they are caught up in something beyond their understanding, and agents of a collective destructiveness that is quite beyond their imagining. So much so in fact that it will destroy their very means and mode of existence.

The stupidity of which Dulness is the embodiment and powerful agent is not a simple thing. What it denotes is the destruction of critical intelligence. Thus the small endeavours that the Dunces are involved in all need to be seen against the backdrop of a larger picture: the picture that suddenly emerges at the end of the third and beginning of the fourth book of the poem of a huge process of transformation, spreading across the whole of London foot by foot (in the pun that links the poetical and physical progression), street by street, borough by borough.

From this perspective, the Dunces small-scale activities are seen in a much more damaging light. Though their individual contributions may seem minuscule, and The Dunciad is 'thick' with their individual contributions, as a collective force they are seen as culturally and intellectually destructive, deadening critical perceptions by erasing 'difference' in favour of a bland homogeneity, and in so doing, promoting the ends of a reactionary political culture. What is significant here is that there is no sense of an alternative perspective amongst the Dunces, and thus no sense of anything that can reveal what their self-enclosed yet expanding world is surrounded by and relative to. Taking itself so very seriously, being without a sense of irony and without the presence of laughter, their world has no resistance to laughter's cathetic antithesis: sleep, portrayed as that basic and absolute condition towards which we would all gravitate helplessly and entropically, were it not for
‘other’ forces whose self-appointed task it is to resist. In Hacks and Dunces, Pat Rogers speaks of sleep (a sleep that is ‘eternal’) as being ‘the ultimate condition of Dulness, its Nirvana and its ideology’ (p.165).

On the one hand the Dunces are ruthless individualists, in open competition with each other for the ever fewer sites or niches, whilst on the other, they are all collaborating in a collective effort that requires the submergence of their wills into that of an ‘Other’, that, as in Marx’s critique of religion (that he adopted from Feuerbach), represents the alienation of their creativity and humanity.17

Dulness, the figure in whom the Dunces’ powers are alienated, is a commanding female and material presence in the poem. As Susan Gubar points out, she is yet one more version of the figure of the monstrous female (with Swift’s ‘Criticism’ from the Battle of the Books18) used as a metaphor for the kind of anti-creativity that the satirists of the period believed that bad, commodified writing of the time represented (‘The Female Monster in Augustan Satire,’). Able to bend the Dunces to her will (her power being strongly reflected in the number of deictics that characterise her speech), Dulness, like Anna (Queen Anne) in Windsor Forest, and Belinda in The Rape of the Lock, possesses the transformative power of the word. Here though, the word is not the authoritative, creating logos, used analogously to the ‘fiat lux’, but the ‘uncreating word’, the word which ultimately destroys itself and the social nexus upon which it depends. In the unmediated power that she exercises over the Dunces, she is a figure who mirrors the great absolutist monarchs of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe. Dulness is a complex creature -- part social phenomenon, part intellectual abstraction, both outside history and acting through history (to bring an end to
history). Everything about her suggests something indefinable that is neither matter, mind nor spirit, but which seems to oscillate between these realms.

Her power and her clear position as 'Other' (that through which a sense of subject and cultural identity is constructed in Lacanian thinking), would seem to make a nonsense of attempts to give her a neat ideological label -- to see her as representing the threat of the 'mob' or any clearly defined socio-political group. It should be remembered that mobs in the eighteenth century were, as the Sacheverell riots earlier in century show, as likely to be in favour of conservative causes such as the High Church and the Tory Party, as to be in favour of more radical causes, or to express an angry response to class oppression. It was, after all, the Whig party who instituted the Riot Act shortly after the succession to the throne of George I (according to Pat Rogers, it was one of the first acts that George performed: Hacks and Dunces, pp.115-6)

In that she is a figure that strongly resonates of the Neoplatonic alchemical tradition\textsuperscript{19}, the portrayal of Dulness raises the philosophical issue of human thought and creativity, deepening the poem beyond its immediate Grub Street concerns considerably.

The relationship between the creative mind and the world in Neoplatonic thought has profound implications for the artist and poet's sense of their own significance as creative beings. Pope presents Dulness and through her the Dunces as the agents of a perverted and inverted form of Neoplatonism which acts both as a model for the kind of 'creative' enterprises in which the Dunces are engaged, and as the model for Dulness' own 'materialization' as a potent physical force for cultural and historical transformation. In the Neoplatonic view the artist has the power to emulate the divine creative mind that the world is an
expression of. The mind of Dulness, an absolute corruption of the creative principle of the Neoplatonic tradition, 'oozing' its 'grey immanence' (Aubrey Williams, Pope's Dunciad, p.144) throughout the benighted world of the poem, works in the opposite direction from that envisaged in the quasi-religious thinking of the Neoplatonic philosophers. Mind is reduced to matter, culture is reduced to nature, and language is reduced to words, its basic phonetic material.

It is important to note that the very relationship between Dulness and her followers -- who are also her 'children'-- is a perversion of the idea of natural creation/procreation. That Pope saw there to be a close connection between the ideas of natural and artistic creation can be seen from the lines in An Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot dealing with his own 'literary' birth.

Why did I write? what sin in me unknown
Dipt me in Ink, my Parents, or my own?
As yet a Child, nor yet a Fool to fame,
I lisp'd in Numbers, for the Numbers came.
(An Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot, 125-28)

Irvin Ehrenpreis has written of the cocooned environment that the goddess creates for her followers/off-spring, a play-act world of private fantasy become public reality, free of danger and adult responsibilities, without conscience or internal moral authority. He writes:

In Book Three of The Dunciad we meet the laureate Cibber lying with his head in the lap of the goddess Dulness while a dark, soporific dew falls and 'raptures' overflow (lines 1-5) -- a titillating scene. ('Pope: Bipolar Implications', p.101)
This scene between Cibber and the goddess is an uncomfortable mixture of the goddess/mortal bedroom scene (such as Anchises/Aphrodite) and a narcissistic child/mother scene such as is connected to what Jacques Lacan terms 'the Imaginary', the condition of illusory power and completeness, connected to a sense of maternal presence, that precedes the subject's entrance into the symbolic order.\(^{20}\)

It is Dulness' maternal presence and guidance, in blessing each expression or act delivered or performed by the Dunces that serves her cause, which sets up those self-confirming circles through which a sense of an 'Other', something antithetical to and critical of Dulness, is excluded. In Book III a brief moment of resistance to Dulness' grand scheme, as an alternate viewpoint celebrating the positive energies of the Enlightenment reveals itself (215-24), is lost as the speaker's mind soon 'clouds' over again, and the 'sable sorcerer ' (233) exerts his powers to create the gorgon-hissing and dragon-glaring 'new world to Nature's laws unknown,' (241).

Whereas in the humanist tradition, following the rhetorical tradition of Cicero, the emphasis was laid upon public speech as the personal and political measure of a man, here there is a closed-circuit quality to the Dunces' speech: it is all directed at Dulness, who if she encourages and magnifies their speech, also clearly occupies the position of privileged voice, able to regulate and control the speech of the Other.

In keeping with the illusory quality to Dunce life and Dunce power, Cibber's throne room is presented at the beginning of Book Two as what is in effect a hall of mirrors, with Dulness' favourite firmly ensconced on his throne, the latest incumbent in that not so long and not so distinguished royal line of Duncedom that includes Dryden's MacFlecknoe. The overriding
in focus from the high baroque sense of height, splendour and expansiveness, to Cibber's thoroughly unpleasant pettiness and narrowness. The contrast between the character of the trappings of power and the man in power could not be greater for those who are outside this distorting, and in a sense blinding, excess of second and third-hand light, bouncing from metallic surface to metallic surface. A Medusa figure stultifying all who look upon him, centre stage and in the limelight, Cibber strikes the affectedly disdainful pose of a media star:

All eyes direct their rays
On him, and crowds turn Coxcombs as they gaze.
His Peers shine round him with reflected grace.
New edge their dumbness, and new bronze their face.  
(II, 7-10)

Cibber would appear to have been working at what people in fashion and the media call 'the look'. Those who have been particularly critical of what the fashion world means for the idea of a critical and intelligent culture, would probably agree that there is an imaginative truth in seeing Cibber, a precursor of the fashion and media-dominated late-capitalist culture we are a part of, as a stultifying Medusa figure.

The Dunciad reflects the economic uncertainty of the new conditions of literary production, presenting images of sinking and crowding that provide a sense of how overworked and contested the field is with the sheer volume of new literary production saturating the market, and as a result the struggle of the writers to create a space for themselves, an identity, and a means of survival.

The commodification of literary value brings the end of literary distinctions: anyone can write, and most people would appear to, since writing has become
so compulsive an activity. In Epistle II i of the Horatian Imitations (To Augustus) Pope depicts poetry as the new social craze, the 'one poetic itch' that has seized everyone, in the literary equivalent of a St Vitus dance (169-70). Complaining about the host of supplicants who blame him for their being infected with the poetry virus, Pope presents an image of writing so obsessive that the writer is now in Bedlam blackening his own cell walls, thus ultimately negating the very possibility of writing through his effacing of the very space of non-writing, the blank walls that provide the surrounding space necessary for writing to take place. In a situation of such textual saturation, a situation which encapsulates a wider social problem, no production is possible, since there is nothing left for textual meaning to be foregrounded against.

Pope is also fighting the Dunces on their own terms with the sheer textual comprehensiveness of the poem, its graphic solidity, which is a reflection at the cultural/aesthetic level of the huge demographic pressures produced by the emergent mass society:

Where Brown and Means unbar the gates of light
Demand new bodies, and in Calf's array
Rush to the world, impatient for the day.
Millions and millions on these banks he views,
Thick as the stars of night or morning dews,
As thick as bees o'er vernal blossoms fly,
As thick as eggs at ward in Pillory.
(Book III, 28-34)

The last line actually demolished the poetic comparison that but a couple of lines earlier seemed to elevate the Dunces by comparing them to the stars (albeit purely in numerical terms). The sense of this line and the typically pastoral one that follows (with its bees and vernal blossoms) could not have been brought down to earth more heavily than with the image of the summarily convicted being placed in the stocks and being pelted with rotten eggs.
The solidity of which Emrys Jones speaks (see p.386 earlier) is an idea that ties in nicely with Pat Rogers's sense of what he terms the poem's 'density of topographical allusion', its deep and intricate sense of the geography and recent and immediate history of the city of London (Hacks and Dunces, p.9). For Jones the poem has a 'solid, almost three-dimensional presence' (p.126) which makes it ultimately like the Dulness it projects, providing a special kind of performative quality as a satire, what Jones sees as a real physical resistance to, and scrupulously documented condemnation of, the Dunces:

The Dunciad on the page is a formidable object, dense, opaque, intransigently and uncompromisingly itself. Its apparatus of prefatory material, voluminous annotation, and after-pieces helps to create something like a spatial sense of the area occupied by the central object, the poetic text. One can indeed contemplate it as something with real physical dimensions. ('Pope and Dulness', p.125)

With this solid resistance to the mutually-reinforcing world of Dunce and Dulness, the poem both lays claim to be a thorough encapsulation of its world, as well as an intervention and obstacle in it, the one thing that stands against its own self-confirming prophecy.

Pope exploits the physics of Newton to present a political critique of the kind of textual thickness that the Dunces are party to. Because of the overwhelming gravitational pull towards the centre, the Dunces' only way of transcending their context is through the identification with (and alienation in) Dulness. They consign their fates, meanings, everything over to Dulness and to a final intention and purpose that lies beyond them. Their inability to transcend immediate context means that they are prisoners of the material conditions of their world. Unable to use their art to humanize their world, which Marx saw as the purpose of art (Vásquez, Art and
Society, p.51), they transform their habitat through their writing by quite literally, filling it with text, producing a landscape of literary detritus and failed writing in which to live, and breaking the category distinctions that make writing possible. The oppressive thickness of the Dunce world is also reflected in the images of the inescapable materiality in which the Dunces become mired, whether it be that they find themselves entangled in language, swamped by the sheer volume of text being produced, submerged under the indescribable filth of the Fleet Street Ditch (Pope’s perfect metaphor for journalistic pollution) or dragged down by the inexorable pull of gravity. In a brilliant sequence of images that seems to allude to the close connection between the Dunces and the printing presses (lead being the material used for the printing blocks) Pope suggests that through their output, the ‘Nonsense precipitate’ is able to evade them, and though their works strike them as evasive, enigmatic and quite incomprehensible, this is through lack of meaning rather than plenitude: their production is fragmented, incomplete and above all untransformed from its raw physical state.

Nonsense precipitate, like running Lead,
That slip’d thro’ Cracks and Zig-zags of the Head;
All that on Folly Frenzy could beget,
Fruits of dull Heat and Sooterkins of Wit.
(I, 123-6)

As we can see from these lines the Dunces are connected with nonsense, a substance precipitating like molten printers’ lead, and overflowing along a crazy zig-zagged line, which suggests the visual disjointedness used by Hogarth as the sign of moral decay, social collapse and psychological conflict and confusion. By definition nonsense presupposes a world of sense in order to exist (it is parasitic upon
a world of sense). Nonsense is, of course, a strategy of containment and dismissal: what is labelled 'nonsense' is immediately ruled out of court and not worthy of further consideration. The problem with the nonsense of the Dunces is that it threatens to become the new reality through the power of Dulness to make it appear its opposite, sense. Nonsense changes from becoming something that presupposes sense, a corrective to the tendencies of sense, to a competing 'sense', to that which will replace sense completely.

The heavy, earth-bound and pedestrian aspect to Dunce identity suggested by this image of lead is, in true Cartesian style, paralleled by its antithetical opposite, an ephemeral and insubstantial, vapid formlessness and shapelessness, that is revealed in the heroic games of the second Book, with the chase to capture the image of the poet. This shows the extent of the Dunces' desire for an identity and presence, despite their possessing the mass solidity to which I have already referred.

As is the case with the 'ignis fatuus' of Rochester's *A Satire against Reason and Mankind* (1679):

> Reason, an *ignis fatuus* in the mind,  
> Which, leaving light of nature, sense, behind,  
> Pathless and dangerous wandering ways it takes  
> Through error's fenny bogs and thorny brakes;  
> Whilst the misguided follower climbs with pain  
> Mountains of whimseys, heaped in his own brain;  
> (12-17, *The Oxford Book of Satirical Verse*, p.81)

the image of the poet that they are chasing proves to be far too elusive for them to capture. This desired identity which teases them like a chimera is an impossible ideal, a state of complete being that lies beyond writing and thus obviates the need for the effort, frustration and great uncertainties involved in the actual process of poetic production.
Interestingly it is the protean quality of these signs the Dunces wish to capture that defeats them. As I made clear in the opening chapter, the idea of the protean has a particular resonance for the satirist; here Pope concocts a nasty little variation on the Proteus capturing scene from Homer's *The Odyssey* in order to expose the emptiness and instability of Dunce identity:

Curl stretches after Gay, but Gay is gone,  
He grasps an empty Joseph for a John  
So Proteus, hunted for a nobler shape,  
Became, when seiz'd a puppy, or an ape.  

(II, 128-31)

In this fluid world of Dulness, *The Dunciad* could not help but be a poem of metamorphosis, of the inversion of hierarchies, the mixing of types and forms and the collapsing of boundaries, which would seem to be what Menippean-spirited satirists are after. However this metamorphosis is like that planned by the Hack in *A Tale of a Tub*, a permanent rather than a provisional venture. Dulness will have none of what Salman Rushdie terms the 'perpetual revolution'\(^2\) of the imagination; what she wants is a complete and absolute inversion of values and the creation of a Dunce-centred world. For Alvin B. Kernan, this is but one more example (perhaps the most disturbing of all) of the paradoxical movement of dullness.

Marching under the banner of progress, dullness is always incurably optimistic about its ability to rework nature into a brave new world and to make itself over in the image of its own desire. (*The Plot of Dullness*, p.37)

For all of its professed commitment to human centredness and the idea of 'Man', the Dunces' cause is revealed, particularly in the final Book, to hold great danger for human creativity and freedom. This emphasis
on man in Dunce thought cannot be isolated from the
narrowness and short-sightedness of their moral and
epistemological perspectives. The instating of 'Man' at
the centre of things does not produce an anti-
essentialist critique of the 'transcendental'
inclinations in the thought of the time, but produces a
new Dunce-centred, world-inverting essentialism that
not only denies the decentring truth of the Copernican
revolution, but produces, as Pope imagines it, a social
and cultural implosiveness in which time itself is
brought to a halt:

How Time himself stands still at her command,
Readers shift their place, and Ocean turns to land,
Here gay Description Aegypt glads with show'rs,
Or gives to Zembla fruits, to Barca flow'rs;
(I, 71-4)

The ocean turning to land is a typical baroque
inversion, such as we find in Marvell’s poem Upon
Appleton House. Here though it is less a witty, purely
metaphysical conceit, than a real threat. The greatest
and darkest of all of Pope’s poetic inversions occurs
in The Dunciad. The idea of human beings having been
created in the image of the Divine is replaced by an
image of something created out of our collective human
alienation to replace both the image of the Divine, and
the image of human-as-Divine. In the light of this
devaluation of the human and loss of the Divine, it is
ironical that the Dunciad not only echoes the classical
myth of Aeneas founding the new Troy in Latium, but
also has Biblical parallels, since the Dunces are
treated as a 'chosen race' whose task it is to lead to
the 'promis'd land' (Book I, 292), the new millennial
world of Dulness.24

The heroic games in Book Two of the poem are a
witty acting out of the Dunces' competitive instincts
necessary for their physical survival in a cut-throat
capitalist world. The games exploit the most obvious pun on the word 'race' to the full, highlighting the central contradiction between the Dunces' common cause and mass solidarity on the one hand (the word 'solid' having a particularly strong resonance), and their bitter rivalries and cut-throat competitiveness on the other, in their battle to eke out a living in the saturated literary market of the time. The course the contests take is not without significance, reflecting in the case of this portrayal of 'lofty Lintot', whose power it seems none dare challenge, the shifting of power from authors to publishers with the new mode of production. His sobriquet 'lofty' seems to be somewhat contradicted by 'tot', the last syllable of his surname, suggesting the small and the infantile (in keeping with other suggestions of these qualities being characteristic of the Dunces). The suspicion is that his nick-name draws attention to the best and worst kinds of elevated status and mental condition.

All gaze with ardour: Some a poet's name,
Others a sword-knot and a lac'd suit inflame.
But lofty Lintot in the circle rose:
'This prize is mine; who tempt it are my foes;
With me began this genius, and shall end.'
He spoke: and who with Lintot shall contend?
(II, 51-6)

Exploiting the linguistic discrepancy between the polished, highly allusive idiom of classical heroic and pastoral (including English poetry written in that tradition) and the grossly scatological and perversely sexual nature of the sporting competitions themselves, Pope satirizes his Dunces as both thoroughly unheroic and unpoetic by providing witty Dunce equivalents of the great competitions that formed part of the heroic games in Homer's Iliad. The pissing contest, the Dunce 'equivalent' of the javelin throw, carries the satirical subversion of the Dunces' identity to an
uncomfortably intimate level by raising serious doubts about key aspects of their sexual identity. Here he portrays the Dunces as pissing prodigious distances with erect penises, which is ironically the sign of the sexual immaturity of childhood rather than of heroic capability. The suggestion here would seem to be that it is the Dunces' penis fascination and phallic obsessions that have, ironically it might seem to some readers, prevented them from reaching full sexual (and in terms of the metaphor) creative manhood. One of the Dunces' performances shows the tell-tale symptoms of a disorder that has nothing to do with childhood: 'Eridamus his humble fountain scorns, / Thro' half the heav'n's he pours th' exalted urn; / His rapid waters in their passage burn. (II, 182-4)

There is something infantile about these games and the preoccupations (fixations) that they reveal. The urge for polymorphous sexual gratification, (and with it for an auto-erotic stimulation) that Freud associates with childhood is what seems to be expressed in the tickling contest, the contest that most reflects upon the sensationalistic qualities of Dunce writing, and its effect in creating an audience in need of this kind of titillation. The way in which Pope depicts this contest is strongly suggestive of a strange communal autoeroticism.

But Welsted most the Poet's healing balm,
Strives to extract from his soft, giving palm;
Unlucky Welsted! thy unfeeling master,
The more thou ticklest, gripes his fist the faster.

While thus each hand promotes the pleasing pain,
And quick sensations skip from vein to vein;
A youth unknown to Phoebus, in despair,
Puts his last refuge all in heav'n and pray'r.
What force have pious vows! The Queen of Love
His sister sends, her vot'ress, from above.
As taught by Venus, Paris learnt the art
To touch Achilles' only tender part;
Secure, thro' her, the noble prize to carry,
He marches off, his Grace's Secretary.

(II, 207-20)

Gone is the civilized erotic style of *The Rape of the Lock*, that poem's delicate sexual innuendoes give way to vigorous expressions of a less-refined interest in the obscene (of both the sexual and scatological varieties):

Renew'd by ordure's sympathetic force,
As oil'd with magic juices for the course,
Vig'rous he rises, from th' effluvia strong
Imbibes new life, and scours and stinks along,
Re-passes Lintot, and vindicates the race,
Nor heeds the brown dishonours of his face.

(II, 103-8)

This is a well-lubricated, frictionless world that greatly facilitates the expelling of bodily solids or the exchanging of bodily fluids, processes which the century saw as having a close physiological, and therefore psychological connection, as Pat Roger's exploration of the cloacal 'motif' in the poem (and within the wider culture of the time) shows. He points out in *Hacks and Dunces* that the basis of this association -- which in the wider social terrain is used to connect appallingly bad sanitation and sexual corruption (p.144) -- is the 'female pudenda', 'the orifice which both receives one kind of effluvium and disgorges its own ' (p.143).

The noise competition that forms part of the games gives the reader a sense of these new urban, narrowly pre-industrial conditions of production. In their love of the grating cacophonies that the clashing consonants of Pope's couplets are purporting to emulate -- this in preference to the 'silver' sounds of classical pastoral -- their art reflects the new reality of urban demographics: 'Now turn to diff'rent sports (the
Goddess cries) / And learn, my sons, the wond’rous power of Noise’ (II, 221).

Graceless in the extreme in their bumbling awkwardness (ironically when so ‘graced’ by the presence of Dulness), the Dunces huge efforts and equally huge boasting are completely at odds with their desperately poor physical performances. This creates a surreal sense of discrepancy that seems to illustrate the depth of the Cartesian divisions between the mental and the physical to which they subscribe. The ultimate gracelessness on display is that involving Curll’s Corinna’s attempt to sabotage his rivals during the running race, revealing the degree of competitiveness between the different booksellers, and how they will stoop to any underhand method in order to win a narrow advantage. In plotting the downfall of his rival, Curl, the figure who according to Pat Rogers, most epitomizes the new, distributor-governed mode of production (The Augustan Vision, p.72), gets his ‘mistress’ to quite literally do his dirty work for him:

Full in the middle way there stood a lake,  
Which Curl’s Corinna chanc’d that morn to make:  
(Such was her wont, at early dawn to drop  
Her evening cates before his neighbour’s shop,)  
Here fortun’d Curl to slide; loud shout the band,  
And Bernard! Bernard! rings thro’ all the Strand. (II, 69-74)

Hoist by his own wet petard! In the description of the unexpected outcome of Corinna’s act of sabotage we have a literalizing of the idea of a plan backfiring, producing a scatological effect entirely apiece with the degree of anal and penile fixation that the games reveal.

Despite the competition, the victories and the celebration taking place in these games, the Dunces are figures beset by failure. For all the sense of them
frantically working and writing, we have no real sense of anything that is completed, a creation that can be referred to by name. For the satirists, frustration and alienation are, in the light of this failure to bridge the divide between vision and expression, the crushing realities that militate against the new literary producers. Alan Swingewood argues that such frustration and alienation are not only the product of the capitalist system, but that under capitalism such feelings come to characterise writing, as, typically this system 'marginalizes the writer, evoking an ideology in which the artist does not have a vital and integral function to perform' ('Theory', p.94)\(^2\). In the first Book of the poem we encounter a particularly violent image of artistic frustration as Cibber in a state of terminal writer's block calls for inspiration to help him write.

Swearing and supperless the Hero sate,  
Blasphem'd his Gods, the Dice, and his Fate.  
Then gnaw'd his pen, then dash'd it on the ground,  
Sinking from thought to thought, a vast profound!  
Plung'd for his sense, but found no bottom there,  
Yet wrote and flounder'd on, in more despair.  
Round him much Embryo, much Abortion lay,  
Much future Ode, and abdicated Play;  
(Book I, 115-22)

Cibber is not assisted by Dulness in his endeavours: she does not answer his need for literary inspiration, but ensures that he ends up being crowned King of Dunces and leading an insurrection that is also a cultural revolution. Dulness removes this frustration, by making 'them think of 'higher' things and seemingly giving them the power to refashion the world in their own image, which entails the institution of a whole new negative order, one in which their identity will be justified and given significance.
As Aubrey Williams has convincingly argued, The Dunciad is within the tradition (perhaps its final moment) of the humanist critique of scolasticism, whose pedantic and circumscribed 'priestly' learning was seen by the humanists as a perpetuation of the dark ages of Church domination. Williams has pointed out that the very terms 'Dunce' comes from Duns Scotus: regularly applied by humanists to exponents of the scholastic philosophy (Pope's Dunciad: A Study of its Meaning, p.109).

For Jacques Le Goff the ancients/moderns debate which this poem marks a continuation of, and foresees such an unfavourable conclusion to, is central to Western intellectual history. Taking place during the time of what he terms 'the birth of the intellectuals', Le Goff sees the debate as profoundly concerned with the key issue of intellectual and cultural renewal (Intellectuals in the Middle Ages, pp.9-10). Le Goff's account of the significance of this debate would seem to confirm, in intellectual terms, McLuhan's judgement that the poem has a cultural centrality.

The very act of showing that the stupidity of the Dunces is an ancient phenomenon, that it has an ancient lineage: 'Dulness o'er all possess'd her ancient right / Daughter of Chaos and eternal Night:' (I, 11-12), and 'Still her old Empire to restore she tries, / For, born a Goddess, Dulness never dies.' (17-18), confirms the triumph of the humanist ancient over Dunce 'modern', all of whose desires, ideas and schemes and parasitic upon the classical and humanist traditions.

The new categories of literary producers and entrepreneurs that Pope attacks in this new 'battle of the books' include the new professional critics from whose ranks the discipline of literary criticism as we understand it, is to emerge. With the birth of professional criticism, a serious threat is posed to the long tradition of satire, and its claim to a
independent social and political role. It is the institutional development of the notion of textual criticism that produces what Pat Rogers terms the 'bureaucratization of culture' (*The Augustan Vision*, p.104) and leads to the displacement of the idea of satire as a licensed and sanctioned site of social criticism.

The process of institutionalization that accompanies the revolution in the mode of literary production is mocked by Pope by his portraying the collective identity of the Dunces in biological terms, as a huge collective insect-like body, which fantasy is supported by the puns on the words 'body' (collective unit and physical organism) and 'feet' (a part of a limb, and a unit of poetic metre). This grotesque image signals that the carnivalesque social body has become fully institutionalized and reduced to what Pat Rogers terms a professional 'corporation' (*Hacks and Dunces* p.184) centred on the idea of the academy, which Rogers points out, had the additional meaning of 'brothel' in the eighteenth century, as can be seen from Cleland's *Fanny Hill* (*Hacks and Dunces*, pp.184-5). The new academicism of the Dunces is revealed (and satirically exposed) in the graduation ceremony held by Dulness:

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Next bidding all draw near on bended kneed,
The Queen confers her Titles and Degrees.
Her children first of more distinguish'd sort,
Who study Shakespeare at the Inns of Court,
Impale a Glow-worm, or Vertù profess,
Shine in the dignity of F.R.S.
Shine, deep Free-masons, join the silent race
Worthy to fill Pythagoras's place:
Some Botanists, or Florists at the least,
Or issue Members of an Annual feast.
Nor past the meanest unregarded, one
Rose a Gregorian, one a Gormogon.
The last, not least in honour or applause,
Isis and Cam made Doctors of her Laws.
(Book IV, 565-78).
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It is such official status and rank conferring ceremonies and celebrations that impress the Dunces, not the popular and decidedly egalitarian energies of carnival. Like the followers of the first 'Dunce', Duns Scotus, the scholastic opponent of the humanists in the Ancients / Moderns battles of the medieval period, Pope's Dunces show themselves to be men who see themselves as very professional and very scholarly: certainly much too hungry to receive rewards and accolades to be the representatives of the popular libertarian and egalitarian spirit of carnival, as Stallybrass and White appear to be arguing that they are.

The decline of symbolic meaning of which I spoke earlier is reflected not just at the top -- at the Parnassian pinnacle of Dunce power, but also in the street, in the rag-tag quality of the Dunces who 'pour' out of every Grub street nook and cranny in attire made from every conceivable fabric.

They summon all her Race: an endless Band
Pours forth, and leaves unpeopled half the land
A motley mixture! in long wigs, in bags,
In silks, in crapes, in Garters, and in rags,
From drawing rooms, from colleges from garrets,
On horse, on foot, in hacks, and gilded chariots:

(II, 19-24)

This rag-tag, 'motley' quality serves to emphasize the materiality of their world, something they are portrayed as feeling imprisoned by and desperate for some kind of transcendence of or escape from (of the kind that Dulness promises). The 'leaves unpeopled half the land' suggests the extent of the demographic pressure placed upon the city with its rapid increase in population. From the satirists' perspective the in-your-face demographic pressures captured in such images of the outpouring of a 'motley mixture' brings to an
end the world of taste, politeness and refinement. The Dunces, absolutely lacking in any of the 'old' social graces, push themselves forward, threatening the integrity of one's personal space, which Elaine Morgan sees satire and wit as historically the prime defenders of (Falling Apart,).

Pope also uses the word 'motley' in order to present the idea of collapsing generic categories. In the lines that follow he presents a sequence of images suggesting the grotesque mutation and miscegenation of generic types and forms (reflecting that in the poem which presents a sense of the loss of social categories and distinctions.)

There motley Images her fancy strike,  
Figures ill pair'd, and Similes unlike.  
She sees a Mob of Metaphors advance,  
Pleas'd with the madness of the mazy dance:  
How Tragedy and Comedy embrace;  
How Farce and Epic get a jumbled race;  
How Time himself stands still at her command,  
Realms shift their place, and Ocean turns to land. (I, 65-72)

I do not think that the Dunces wearing of motley is a sign of their attraction towards the mixed and the hybrid as expressed in the carnivalesque qualities, but of their desperate attempts to ape authority. What Stallybrass and White take as subversion is, in fact, a satirical parody of their desire to emulate the aristocracy through a somewhat confused appropriation of their dress. In trying to emulate the aristocracy by 'dressing up', the Dunces are in distinguished historical company, as Jacques Le Goff has shown (Intellectuals in the Middle Ages). In his history of the emergence and development of the intellectual during the Middle Ages, he writes of the concern academics had with the issue of dress as an attempt to construct themselves as a new aristocracy. According to Le Goff academic dress was introduced by academics in order for them to adopt an aristocratic mode of
life. In his words the academics 'turned their dress and emblems of their function into symbols of nobility' (pp.124-5).

In the light of Le Goff's argument it should not come as too great a surprise that where here the Dunces run out in a weird 'motley' collection of apparel, (suggesting the motley-wearing fools of the Renaissance), later their movements become more measured and regular (more tidily inside the couplet, ironically enough) and finally are all capped, wearing the uniform of academic dress.

There is something very paradoxical about the triumph of Dulness and her Dunces in the poem, since their brave new entrepreneurship, a reflection of the positive, creative aspect of capitalism, leads to the destruction of civilization. The rapidity with which the spiralling process of degeneration takes place as the Dunces institute their new 'Golden Age' is surprising, given that it would seem to be militated against by the Dunces' self-absorption, as well as by the moral slothfulness and torpor that they reveal in the lines 'Like buoys that never sink into the flood, / On Learning's surface we but lie and nod'.(IV, 241-42).

There is a problem with the idea of gold and a golden age however: the question that is raised is how does one even begin to speak of what is gold or golden in a capitalist world that is in the process of stripping everything of symbolic value?

Then taught by Hermes, and divinely bold,
Down his throat he risqu'd the Grecian gold;
Receiv'd each Demi-God, with pious care,
Deep in his Entrails -- I rever'd them there,
I bought them shrouded in that living shrine,
And, at their second birth, they issue mine.
(IV, 381-6)

Aubrey Williams writes of the significance of the word gold in the poem:
In the era of George and Dulness gold is apotheosized: in the general displacement of values there is given to Caesar, imaged on the coins, the worship due to God; the 'thing', the physical object is deified.

In any event Pope suggests that 'Gold is the God of the Nation', striking again at commercial values and at the relatively new phenomenon of finance capitalism which threatened traditional Christian attitudes towards usury and money. (Pope's Dunciad: A Study of its Meaning, p.125)

As the larger movement of Dulness becomes apparent, the reader realizes that what is at issue is deadly serious, that Dulness is not something that is local and containable but has a global and panoramic view of space, and an epic and apocalyptic view of time. Aubrey Williams writes:

In other words there comes a moment at which the epic vehicle, must be taken seriously, when a 'status of serious menace' is given 'to all the ludicrous activity'. (p.59, quoting Maynard Mack Pope and His Contemporaries)

The deliberate allusion to Milton's Paradise Lost at the opening of Book IV emphasizes the ominousness of what is being satirized. Here the poem takes a darkly apocalyptic turn, particularly with the suggestions of a daemonic/satanic force at work. As Aubrey Williams points out: 'For what the Dunciad is "about" is in one sense, the fulfilment of Satan's vow to restore to Chaos all creation' (p.139).

Dulness may be an ancient form, but the form that this ancient malaise takes is one that hopes to realize its purpose through the construction of a new world by revolutionary means, achieved mainly by every form of influence and persuasion meant to soften rational and critical opposition, but not without recourse to revolutionary violence. In the final book of the poem 'soft' attempts at control are dispensed with. Suddenly we have reference to the use of coercive
violence of the kind associated with 'commissars' and 'the secret police' (Pat Rogers, Hacks and Dunces, p.110) as the new order gains control of the State apparatuses and begins to consolidate its power at the expense of dissident and hostile social elements. Above all it is the intellectual sphere which is subjected to the strictest policing: 'We hang one jingling padlock on the mind'(IV, 162). Totalitarianism is ushered in after a brief period of anarchic licence and laissez-faire.

In the world-altering militancy of the force that it is attacking, the poem reflects much of what I have been saying about absolutism and the militarized society during the course of this dissertation. Thus in a move that is not unexpected the Dunces confirm their allegiance to political absolutism: "The RIGHT DIVINE of Kings to govern wrong." (188).

Most ironically and paradoxically, the poem seems to lend itself to the militarization of the Dunces. As Pat Rogers shows in Hacks and Dunces, there are a number of points in the poem where Pope emphasizes the quasi-military aspect of the events (p.103). In imposing order upon the Dunces primarily through the machine-like regularity of the couplet form, it ends up regimenting them and dragooning them into action. Marching towards their final victory, the Dunces are chained together metonymically along what Anthony Easthope terms the couplet's 'syntagmatic chain', turning them into what Pope's metaphor suggests is one huge linked beast (but which we can, with reference to a metaphor from our own military experience, characterise as a 'mechanized force').

The dark magic of theatre is what ultimately seems the most dangerous of the forces of Dulness. In its ability to not only totally alter the way in which the world is perceived, but to so confound the distinction between true and false, it is able to produce a stage-
effected, theatrical world to replace the public world of the senses. In its power to imitate and replace our world, this theatrical surrogate world that Pope so fears seems similar to our own computer generated 'virtual' worlds, that some see as having disturbing implications for our notion of the 'real'. For the satirists the popular theatre represents a loss of public space to the new 'mass' media, as well as a 'mass' appropriation of the humanist/utopian idea of alternate worlds, to very different political ends. Pope attacks the theatre not because it is a site of carnival, as Stallybrass and White suggest (Politics and Poetics, pp.111-12), but because it represents the power to use art and entertainment to politically 'stage-manage' the world. Pope draws attention to the danger of the spectacle -- or more accurately the danger of those who produce and exploit the theatrical spectacle. Peter, the great theatrical manipulator of Swift's A Tale of a Tub, and the representative of the extravagance of the Catholic Church, is replaced by a new political impresario figure able to exploit mass audiences, in this case the figure of the great theatrical wizard and showman extraordinaire, who inverts the Shakespearean dictum that 'all the world is a stage' to one which makes the whole world his stage."

By using the metaphor of the final curtain coming down right at the end of the poem, ('Thy hand, great Anarch! Lets the curtain fall; / And Universal Darkness buries All')(IV, 655-6), the poem points to the power of the popular theatre in destroying the old world, and with it the humanist literary and intellectual cultures that placed such a great emphasis on the idea of critical opposition. Aubrey Williams suggests (Pope's Dunciad: A Study of its Meaning, p.103) that this metaphor points to the theatrical nature of the poem's closing scene -- to which we might add that it points
to the penchant for the over-dramatic and theatrical that has characterized the Dunces with their host of affectations and stylizations.

Theatre, magic and religion become as hopelessly confused in *The Dunciad* as they were in *A Tale of a Tub*. With the priest 'succinct in amice white' conducting a parody of the Eucharist that seems to invoke the 'bad' alchemy of the necromancer, the powerful transforming force that is Dulness, already characterised in terms of the language and ideas of Neoplatonism, takes on a very forbidding quality:

> On some, a Priest succinct in amice white  
> Attends; all flesh is nothing in his sight  
> Beeves, at his touch, at once to jelly turn  
> And the huge Boar is thrust into a Urn:  
> The board with specious miracles he loads,  
> Turns Hares to Larks, and Pigeons into Toads.  
> (IV, 549-54)

The ultimate triumph of Dulness is achieved through a process of homogenization, the same process of homogenization that I discussed in chapter four, but here specifically extended to the cultural terrain. This homogenization is shown to have an association with music, both in the sense that the musical notion of 'harmonization' supplies an attractive (from the satirist's point of view dangerously euphemistic) metaphor for the whole process, and in the sense that opera is depicted as playing a crucial role in bringing about what McLuhan has termed a 'mass cultural anaesthetization' (*The Gutenberg Galaxy*, p.259). One of the greatest dangers in this process of harmonization is Opera, the 'harlot form' referred to in the following lines:

> When lo! a Harlot form soft sliding by,  
> With mincing step, small voice, and languid eye;  
> Foreign her air, her robe's discordant pride  
> In patch-work flutt'ring, and her head aside.  
> By singing Peers up-held on either hand,
She tripp’d and laugh’d, too pretty much to stand;  
Cast on the prostrate Nine a scornful look,  
Then thus in quaint Recitativo spoke.  
'O Cara! Cara! silence all that train:  
Joy to great Chaos! let Division reign:  
Chromatic tortures soon shall drive them hence,  
Break all their nerves, and fritter all their sense:  
One Trill shall harmonize joy, grief and rage,  
Wake the dull Church, and lull the ranting State;  
To the same notes thy sons shall hum, or snore,  
And all thy yawning daughters cry, encore.  
(IV, 45-60)

Opera, an imported cultural form was believed at the time to be promoting continental absolutism through its 'foreign' corrupting of British taste, as well as through its subtle enforcing of a particular sense of and image of harmony that was perceived to run, as was the case with panegyric poetry, very much against the grain of the critical politics of poetry and art to which the satirists were committed, and which they felt central to the very idea of their practice. Ironically the century’s truly popular form of opera is Gay’s The Beggars’s Opera (1728), an opera whose most immediate concerns are social and political, which parodies the styles of the imported form, attacks middle class professionals quite viciously, and which could not have stronger connections to the satire of Pope and Swift given their common Scriblerian membership and interests. That Bertolt Brecht should have reworked The Beggar’s Opera to produce his own political opera, The Threepenny Opera (1928), would seem to me to reflect an implicit acknowledgement of its political importance.

It is in the resistance of the satire of the period to this process of homogenization, in defence of difference and multiplicity in style, tone and form, that eighteenth-century satire most reveals its connection and commitment to what is implicit in the very idea of the 'lanx satura', the etymological 'root'
that all forms of satire ultimately share. It is the protean and 'dialogical' (to use Bakhtin's term) elements in the century's satire that must be rediscovered, as strange as it may seem to some that the literature of the age of the heroic couplet could ever have any connection with such things. This is an important step to make to rediscover the textual politics of eighteenth-century satire, which is, as I hope I have suggested, fighting its own battle against antithetical, 'monological' forces whose ultimate historical triumph has, I hope I have successfully shown, a lot to do, at the end of the day -- or rather at the end of a long historical process -- with the cultural and political situation that confronts us.29

Thus one of the things I believe that it is important to appreciate in order to understand the politics of eighteenth-century satire is the power of the 'monological' during this period, by which I mean all of those forces committed to a process of levelling (and centralizing), narrowing the range of permissible styles and forms, closing down the possibilities of the artistic expression of the 'Other', smoothing out the 'irregularities' of language and music to produce what Marshall McLuhan describes as a mass-orientated 'emotional equitone' (The Gutenberg Galaxy, p.219).

This ideal of an aesthetic and cultural conformity reflects the desire for all discourses having a scientific and logical interconnectedness, that they would all form part of a total epistemological and ideological synthesis characterised in terms compatible with the ideas of Locke and Newton. The great attractiveness of this idea can be seen in the dominance of Newtonian metaphors in the poetry of the period (particularly in the 'scientific' pastoral poetry of poets like Mark Akenside and James Thomson).

With everything suffocating under the crushing weight of the monological, and with the life squeezed
out of its own resistance, the poem reaches its close in a final coda (as music gives way to silence), announcing the final end of things with an almost apologetic sense of anticlimax. With the final words of darkness the great degenerative 'plot of dullness' has reached its culmination, revealing paradoxically, that Chaos itself, the force most opposed to the structures, orders and relations upon which human significance depends, is the ultimate achievement of an impeccably logical and perfectly co-ordinated plan.

But what of this plan? What are we to make of the logic of a poem that personifies a whole set of admittedly interrelated forces and phenomena in the form of one power or author -- and gives this figure a superworldly and mythical form? Here we touch on a major concern regarding satire: the legitimacy of the satirical vision, a variant of the issue that divides writers and critics/theorists: the authority of the imagination. A most obvious response to the poem would be to point out that it is to be expected of such a rhetorical form of expression as satire that there should be an element of exaggeration, even, as in this poem, a 'monstrous' degree of exaggeration. Pope would defend this exaggeration by insisting that there is something monstrous about the target. This line of thinking leads to an impasse, the impasse that is a major problem for critics and theorists in the institution who are concerned about the possibility that writers might be doing something more than producing social documents, and have a value over and above providing research material for the academic enterprise. Looking at the situation in icy cold, satirically detached terms, it is hard not to see analogies between the producers of texts attacked by the satirists of the eighteenth century, and those who are part of this huge text-generating industry in our
own. I shall be further pursuing this issue of satire and the institution shortly.

In the specific case of Pope’s *The Dunciad*, the strange notion of a masterplan is supported by some analyses of the dictates of the mercantilist economy of the time. There is a line of thinking here which suggests that the kind of demographic pressures that the poem depicts, that produce the scenes of urban chaos that the poem is full of, were not an accident of history, but were produced in order to create the wealth-generating mass society upon which mercantilism, and ultimately industrialism, depended. The correspondence of the degree of the swelling of the urban population that took place during the century, and the extent to which the process of land enclosure became accelerated during this period supports this view.30

Two and a half centuries have passed since the apocalyptic line ‘And Universal Darkness buries All’ brought a close to Pope’s career. But what of this apocalyptic darkness? How much does its non-appearance compromise the idea of Pope’s ‘satiric vision’? Eighteenth-century capitalism did not bring the world to an end -- but brought England to a pinnacle of wealth and power as all the exuberance of the post-1688 Settlement and financial revolution became channelled into the cause of Empire. Of course, with the benefit of post-colonial hindsight we want to and need to look beyond these particular national ‘triumphs’, and to listen to these voices of concern, anger and fear.

If we take *The Dunciad* as a document about eighteenth-century England, then obviously it was nothing like as prophetic as it claims to be: the eighteenth-century world that Pope sees as swamped by the new ‘mass’ society, and descending into mythical chaos and darkness, disappeared far less dramatically: a death by natural causes as the new Romanticism and
with it the first wave of European political revolution took its place. That England degenerated into a repressive political stance in the face of the new revolutionary politics and ideology, becoming the most reactionary country in Europe, possessing the most reactionary of all of Europe's middle classes, is about as close as history came to emulating Pope's prophecy - - in England, at least.

If we take the poem to be a European document, and (like Gulliver's Travels) a comment on a cultural malaise that is closely connected to the European mind caught up in the logic of Enlightenment, then the picture looks somewhat different. Then maybe credence can be given to McLuhan's appraisal of the poem's importance as a cultural document.

Dulness would not seem to be entirely a product of Pope's imagination, or purely his imaginative representation of the social and cultural forces that he felt threatened by at the time. Mythic, archetypal and immortal, she is too powerful a figure to be safely consigned to a particular past -- and to a particular size, shape, style and form. We may not fear Pope's Dulness, the Mother goddess of Grubean Empire, but what of our own Dulness, determined to trap her eager victims in her entropic logic of decline, make them swing to her rhythm, and dance to her all-new 'homogenizing' tune? For satirists the recurrence of history is unavoidable and the return of Dulness -- under whatever name she chooses to suit the time -- is inevitable.

This brings me to my own little 'coda', one in which the direction of the 'flow' of argument and analysis becomes reversed.

Both Pope and Swift attack the popular literary producers and entrepreneurs of their time (the ages hacks and dunces) -- identifying them in their narrow-minded pedanticism as the direct descendants of the
scholastics, the great scholarly enemies of the humanist intellectuals of the late Medieval period and Renaissance. There is a sense though, as Aubrey Williams would appear to be suggesting, that this particular 'battle of the books' -- like Pope's Dulness -- never dies. For Williams the eighteenth-century version or continuation of this battle is, ultimately, a very serious affair, what he characterises as having 'the concern with the means, use, ends, limits of human knowledge' at its heart (p.105). Arguably we are in the final throes of our own intense, and perhaps bitter, if not bloody, 'battle of the books' -- one that revolves around the issue of the purpose of literature and of criticism itself. This battle is being fought against the backdrop of a past in which the institution of literary criticism played an important role in preserving bourgeois cultural hegemony, and a beckoning future in which the invasive technologies and economies of the postmodern age would seem to be closing the space for criticism and literature alike, particularly insofar as they provide the space for an independent critical politics and for enlightened and progressive human values.

That the battle has been all but lost is clearly felt in a number of despairingly pessimistic responses to the postmodern/late-capitalist predicament in which we find ourselves. Alvin B. Kernan, the great theorist and critic of satire to whom I am indebted for much of my thinking about the entropic qualities of Pope's The Dunciad, is perhaps the most strongly negative voice of all. In his improbably titled article 'Plausible and Helpful Things to Say About Literature in a Time When All Print Institutions are breaking Down', he laments the irreversible decline of a literary culture at the hands of, quite apart from the powerful external forces associated with postmodern society, the deauthorizing strategies of contemporary deconstructive criticism.
The negative effects of this tendency are also criticised by Howard Felperin in *Beyond Deconstruction*. Felperin attacks the current 'trivialization' and 'marginalization' of literature at the hands of the academic institution, arguing that there is a need 'to reassert the power of texts in terms of a will to social change', to counteract the current ghettoization of literature by 'restricting it to a privileged elite' (p. 219). He argues that the institution has renounced its chance to be political by focusing on what is internal to the institution, rather than on a relationship with the political world outside -- the world that, we may add, satire is engaged with and addresses:

One might update Tully's dictum; being theoretical is now what being political recently was, to be of the moment, at the cutting-edge of change, avant garde, but without the promise or the danger, of immediate political consequences. In so far as the theoretical critique has taken for its object the institutional discourse, its cutting-edge has moved to the margin of society, and its social and political implications will be long-term, uncertain and difficult to measure. (p. 214)

Clearly the practice of the academic literary institution has been determined by forces that are connected with wider developments in postmodern, late-capitalist society -- and which are eroding the old critical authority upon which the very existence of the institution is premised. Our postmodern world is one in which the very notion of critical depth and distance, upon which satire, criticism and ideology critique depend is becoming effaced. In a provocative and exasperated article, ('The Bottom Line on Planet One') Dick Hebdige characterizes the postmodern world in a way that suggests a great similarity of perspective with the way in which the disillusioned satirists of the eighteenth century characterised their
own in their most pessimistic satirical moments. Postmodern men and women, the thoroughly commodified, visual/information age creatures of Hebdige’s ‘Planet One’, have, as is the case with Pope’s Dunces, lost all sense of an Other or an ‘outside’ to their high gloss media image world, and like the Hack of Swift’s a Tale of a Tub, they appear to have lost a sense of history and the historical. For Hebdige, the postmodern world, what he terms the ‘post’ world, is a world that has lost a sense of critical depth and value, it is a ‘flat’ world, which, in the well-known phrases of Jean Baudrillard and Fredric Jameson, is ruled by the demands of and for ‘spectacle’ and pastiche.31 Hebdige sees the ‘post’ world as totally ruled by fad and fashion -- to the extent that the sense of constancy and continuity is completely eroded.

This brings me full-circle, to a moment that, I suppose, has been implicit in this thesis all along. No satirist ever lambasted intellectual pretensions quite like Swift did. For this Swift, at his deconstructive best, or worst, depending on your side of the fence, such pretensions were ‘simply’ the expressions of social fashion. Under satirical scrutiny these fashions turned out to be not that simple after all, as they began to reveal the hidden motives and drives they were unconsciously expressing.

That this postmodern predicament has also, according to a number of critics arguing from very different premises, befallen the academic literary institution, should not come as any great surprise. With the inroads made by the technicist ideology of late capitalism,32 the advent of the deauthorizing (but often authoritarian) strategies in deconstructive and ideological criticism, and the loss of a sense of contact not just with social and political movements and forces, but with the very notion of the social and the political as a sphere of literary influence and
action, the institution finds itself, in the view of Derek Pearsall, in dire need of a particularly powerful viral remedy. Pearsall, one of the most influential of the new political critics of Medieval literature and culture, finds the current academic situation to be ripe for satire -- and satire of the most penetrating and devastating kind, such as that of Swift's. He calls for the same kind of ruthless satirical assault on intellectual fashions and pretensions that Swift produced in his Voyage to Laputa:

It is something which Edward Said describes in the preface to Literature and Society (1980): the merry-go-round of academic critical theory, with ideas first formulated in the context of real history and society being taken up as fashions, orthodoxies, 'mindlessly followed by a whole band of academic enthusiasts' (p.ix). It is a subject that needs a new Voyage to Laputa: what it gets is the lollipop comforts of David Lodge (Small World) scampering about in the undergrowth of critical theory like a puppy among toilet -tissue. (Derek Pearsall, 'Chaucer's Poetry and its Modern Commentators: The Necessity of History', pp.143-4)

Contrary to Tony Bennett, who argues, if we dispense with subtleties of interpretation, that literature has no 'outside' (Outside Literature), Pearsall's remarks suggest that what the institution needs is a corrective sense of an 'outside' -- of the kind that the satire is only too willing, and has always felt itself obliged to give.

In closing I would like to re-emphasize the point I made in the first chapter regarding the anomalousness and difficulty of satire: that it is something that resists ideological placing because it is a practice that is outside the rules of that political game, a practice that is 'transideological' to use the term that Linda Hutcheon coined with reference to irony (Irony's Edge, pp.29-30). I am not saying that satire is supra-ideological, what I am saying is that it seems
beyond the ken and capabilities of current ideological criticism.

In trying to articulate a different sense of the politics of the satire of Pope and Swift I have had to confront such completely opposed views and perspectives from ideological and political critics, who would freely call themselves 'materialist' (since what is the alternative?). Whilst these critics would probably largely agree on such issues as the subject position of the Jacobean dramatist, or the textual politics of *Paradise Lost*, or the subversive 'uses' of science fiction cinema, when it comes to the case of eighteenth-century satire consensus is by no means so easy to find. Here we encounter completely opposed views such as that of Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, who argue that the satirists of the time are producing a literature as part of middle class renegotiation of carnival grotesque (which includes its repression) and Carole Fabricant who, following Edward W. Said, sees Swift as a perfect model for left wing political intellectuals to follow. The two political perspectives have their supporters, the former position is one that most literary academics would identify with since it means that they do not have to adjust their institutional modes of thinking in order to accommodate satire, the great counter-type to their thinking. The latter position is, on the other hand, one that the left tradition in British politics, the dissidents and provocateurs within the institution, and anyone who has any understanding of and feeling for satire, would find themselves inclining towards, if not in complete agreement with.
1. In their introduction to *The Violence of Representation*, Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse equate the institutionalization of literature with the loss of its politics ("Representing violence, or "how the west was won"", p.35). I take this as a fundamental premise of my analysis of the satire of the eighteenth century, produced during the time when institutionalization is taking place at a historically unprecedented rate. In *Beyond Deconstruction: The Uses and Abuses of Literary Theory*, Howard Felperin speaks of critics (like himself) ‘writing from within theory ... against the institutionalization of theory' (p.145).

2. Darío Suvín *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On The Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*, p.112.


4. In *An Essay On Man* (361) and *Windsor Forest* Pope uses a holistic argument to portray British colonial power as ‘natural’ (the end result of the nation’s ‘natural’ growth) and also infinitely preferable to the bad alternatives, Spanish or French absolutism. Whilst Pope’s portrayal of England as the agent of universal liberty suggests that the colonized are powerless to resist their oppressors without British ‘help’, as David Ward has shown, with the *Drapier’s Letters*, and with his account in *Gulliver’s Travels* of the Lindalinian resistance to their Laputan overlords, Swift actually provided something of a blueprint for political resistance. See Appendix, note 11.

   See also Pope’s depiction of learning as imperialistic in *An Essay on Criticism*. ‘Learning and Rome alike in Empire grew, / And Arts still follow’d where her Eagles flew’ (683-4).


7. Eve Tavor Bannet (*Structuralism and the Logic of Dissent: Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, Lacan*) sees Foucault as an anti-institutional dissident whose archaeologies and genealogies expose the power machinations involved in institutional practices. The way that the institution tends to use Foucault, as the theorist and validator of institutional power, is a development that Bannet would no doubt find highly ironical.

8. This is the position that Tony Bennett argues so forcefully in favour of in *Outside Literature*.


11. On page 286 of *Outside Literature*, Bennett identifies his politics as Marxist-Leninist, aligned with the 'insurrectionary proletariat' (as opposed to the libertarian Marxism of Chantal Mouffe, to which I would be far more sympathetic). See also Bennett's *Formalism and Marxism*, p.141-2 for an earlier indication of his institutional militancy.

12. This is a right which, as Srinivas Aravamudan has recently argued, satirists do not necessarily see as in any way co-extensive with the legal provisions for the freedom of speech as it is understood in liberal political thought ('"Being God's postman is no fun, yaar": Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*').


14. It is also, as Howard Felperin shows, to be associated with deconstruction, which he sees as a 'liminal' 'virus-like' phenomenon (*Beyond Deconstruction: The Uses and Abuses of Literary Theory*, p.110).

15. The book's full title is *The New Eighteenth Century: Theory/Politics/ English Literature*.

16. Nussbaum and Brown see themselves, and their contributors, as currently engaged in a process of redefining the whole idea of literary history, and looking to establish 'new' relationships between literature and history. They see their anthology as presenting a challenge to the established view of the relationship between literature and history in
traditional criticism -- since the political is conceived in wide terms as embracing every aspect of human life, displaying a far greater receptivity to the political dimension of literature, than the traditional empirical critics heretofore.

17. The position that the growth of the institution meant a corresponding closing down of critical space and a loss of the political dimension to writing in general is to be found in Srinivas Aravamudan’s essay on *The Satanic Verses* ("'Being God’s postman is no fun, yaar": Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses,*’).

18. See *Outside Literature*, pp.6-7. His position regarding the ‘outside’ of literature is more sophisticated than I have characterised it -- but even its most subtle characterization cannot hide its extreme position. On page 282 he presents the new ‘inclusive’ relationship to literature’s ‘outside’, which now finds itself at ‘the very centre of its inside’.

The politics of texts are determined by the institution (pp.283-5). However, the making of the politics of texts would appear to involve a degree of violence. In his earlier *Formalism and Marxism*, Bennett speaks of ‘wrenching’ texts ‘from the forms in which they are customarily perceived and interpreted, so as to mobilize them politically in stated directions’ (p.142).

19. I am using Eve Tavor Bannet’s epithet here.


21. The notions of science that they adhere to, notions which are derived from the bourgeois scientific materialism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, have been exploded by the quantum mechanics/chaos theory revolution in physics and mathematics. See Appendix, note 2.

23. See Alistair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, pp.110, 239. Fowler argues that satire, particularly Menippean satire 'is the most problematic mode to the taxonomist' and that it 'eludes classification'.

24. No satirist worth his salt would deny that satire has a political power. The anxiety that satire raises amongst what Swift's Hack author/narrator of his *A Tale of a Tub* calls the 'grandees of Church and State' (p.79) is testimony to this. Ironically whilst satirists are imprisoned (as was Vaclav Havel), sent into exile (as was Vladimir Voinovich), placed under fatwa (as was Salman Rushdie), or executed on trumped up capital offenses (as was Ken Saro-Wiwa), the academic institution continues to see satire in terms that clearly do not acknowledge its power as a subversive political agent. Satire, with its inevitable irreverence, and yet constant claiming of the high moral ground is a perfect medium for the articulation of critical opposition to political forces and regimes.


28. I argue that satire is a special case--but perhaps it is profitable to think of satire in Ross Chambers' terms as an 'oppositional' discourse, particularly in the light of his suggestion that oppositional discourses resist critical and theoretical appropriation (*Room for Maneuvre: Reading (the) Oppositional (in) Narrative*). See also Chantal Mouffe's concept of 'democratic antagonism' in her paper 'Hegemony and New Political Subjects: Towards a New Concept of Democracy' in Nelson, Cary and Grossberg, Lawrence (eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, pp.89-104, p.96.

29. Of course a case could be made for Terry Eagleton, never one to hold back on the bitingly polemical, being something of a satirist in his own right. This is particularly true of those parts of *Literary Theory: an Introduction* where he is at his withering best (such as
in his dismissive account of ‘slide-rule’ structuralists).


31. Satire is an ancient and varied form that originates in its written form in Ancient Rome (though the plays of Aristophanes clearly have satirical qualities). The word satire comes from the phrase ‘lanx satura’ which means a dish of mixed fruit offered to the gods, and from associated phrases suggesting the idea of a medley.

See Ashley Brown and John L. Kimmey’s introduction to their anthology of satire and criticism on satire (Satire: An Anthology, p.2).

32. These are the poetic ideals of the period, according to Anthony Easthope. See ‘Transparency as explicit ideal’, the chapter in Poetry as Discourse, in which he presents his materialist analysis of eighteenth-century poetic language.

33. Of course, it is never quite the same Swift that survives. In the nineteenth-century (the age of full blooded imperialism) he was detested: see Michael Foot’s introduction to the Penguin edition of Gulliver’s Travels (1967), pp.12-14 and Ernest Tuveson’s ‘Introduction’ to Tuveson (ed) Swift: A Collection of Critical Essays, pp.2-3. In our own post-colonial century of profound political disillusionment, his shares are considerably higher.

34. See Chapter Six ‘Beyond Theory’ for Felperin’s discussion of the need for a new literary politics (pp.200-23). His attack on canonization is to be found on p.39.

35. ‘The Death of the Author’ in Stephen Heath (ed. and trans.) Image--Music--Text. Apart from the essay’s title Barthes only other use of the term is to provide the phrase with which the essay is concluded.

36. According to Peter Sloterdijk the parts of the body that satire is the closest to are the ‘arse’ and the ‘belly’. See Critique of Cynical Reason, pp.147-50.

37. For the way in which the notion of ‘nature’ has been influenced by post-structuralist and postmodern thinking, particularly in regard to how it operates in scientific culture see Neil Smith’s article ‘The Production of Nature’ and Kate Soper’s article (referred to elsewhere), ‘Nature’/"nature"/both in Future Natural, ed. by George Robertson et. al.
38. This is not as far-fetched as it may seem to literary academics, since such a move has already been pursued within philosophy, with Peter Sloterdijk's, *The Critique of Cynical Reason*. See Appendix, note number 1.

39. See Christopher Hill, *Reformation to Revolution*. It is interesting to note in this regard that David Harvey, an influential theorist and historian of the postmodernist goes back to the eighteenth century in charting the trends and developments that have produced the postmodern/late-capitalist age. See David Harvey *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Inquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*.

40. At the beginning of *The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality and Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson*, his 'case' study in the application of materialist theory and critical techniques to the literature of the eighteenth century, Terry Eagleton mounts an attack on those critics who have tried to make the eighteenth-century the last bastion of the old critical methods and literary aesthetics. From the sometimes abrasively polemical qualities of his materialist reading of Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa*, it would appear that Eagleton intends to set a few records straight regarding the way in which eighteenth-century literature is and should be read.

41. For Post-Nietzschean philosophical critiques of contemporary (and post-Enlightenment) moral thinking and theory see Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. A post-Nietzschean rejection of the cynicism of bourgeois morality is a powerful feature of Peter Sloterdijk's, *Critique of Cynical Reason*.

42. I discuss Peter Stallybrass and Allon White's *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, my major source for these movements, at various points in the thesis.

43. There is a sense in which the 'new' eighteenth century that is being produced already has a decidedly feminist quality, with the major contributions to the field by female critics like Fabricant, Salvaggio, Castle, and Nussbaum and Brown themselves.

44. See Pam Morris (ed.), *The Bakhtin Reader*, pp.13-16, 97, 112.

45. All the texts I have used that refer to theory, especially those that relate theory to the state of the institution, have a dissident or at least a somewhat disapproving quality to them.
Chapter Two.


3. I am very indebted to Milburn for this line of analysis -- though I have in some ways re-theorized his analysis of the age's hostility to satire (particularly prose satire) in the light of Bakhtin's distinction between the monological and the dialogic and heteroglossic.


5. The Apology was only included in the fifth edition of 1710, as David Ward shows as Swift's response to the negative reactions to the *Tale*. Its effectiveness in explaining things, or lack thereof, can be gauged from Pat Rogers' remark that: 'There is, of course, plenty of disagreement as to the intent of this section' (*Hacks & Dunces*, p.178).


7. Maynard Mack, 'The Muse of Satire' in *Modern Essays in Criticism: Satire* ed. by Ronald Paulson, pp.190-201. See Alvin B. Kernan's *The Plot of Satire*, p.12, where in assessing the importance of Robert C. Elliott's *The Plot of Satire*, he points out that: 'Second, by demonstrating that the art of satire is at least in part the distancing of the author from his satiric spokesman, Elliott helps to make further untenable that persistent identification of the writer of satire with his creature, a view which has vitiated so much criticism of satire and led to so much hopeless writing about why Swift hates mankind or Byron rejects society'.

8. From the article of that name (the phrase is actually only used in Barthes' final sentence).


11. See Mikhail Bakhtin *Rabelais and his World* for the definitive statement on the history of carnival and its opposition to the hierarchical world-view of the Medieval and Renaissance Church and State. Dominic La Capra provides a succinct statement of the challenge that carnival posed to established powers and authorities: 'Carnival and the culture of the carnivalesque in general (ribald humour, charivari, grotesquerie, parody, irony, etc.) were opposed by religious and secular powers for a variety of reasons: their incompatibility with reformed religion; their possible role in political protest; their infringement of a methodical work ethic; their manifest clash with utilitarian values; their indulgence of behaviour that seemed too brutish or brutal in the context of more 'enlightened' values' (*History and Criticism*, p.76).


13. See Tony Bennett *Outside Literature.* 'For Marxists, I have suggested, this wager has taken the form of investing criticism with a political significance as a means of assisting in the formation of a revolutionary subject. Questions of critical politics, in this view, devolve centrally around the hermeneutic mobilization of literary texts in ways that will aid the production of a collective political subject capable of effecting a transition from one type of society to another' (p.285). See also Bennett's earlier *Formalism and Marxism:* 'The task which faces Marxist criticism is not that of reflecting or of bringing to light the politics which is already there, as a latent presence within the text which has but to be made manifest. It is that of actively politicizing the text, of making its politics for it, by producing a new position for it within the field of cultural relations and, thereby, new forms of use and effectivity within the broader social process' (pp.167-8).

14. What the Puritan revolution brought about was an end to the kind of space that Humanism depends on, a space that from this satire, it would appear that Swift believed the Anglican Church afforded. See note number 5.

16. See Alan Sheridan *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth*, pp.53-4. My discussion of the change in allegory has been very influenced by Foucault's account of the change from the Renaissance to the Classical episteme.

17. Traugott lambastes those who wish to turn Swift's satirical tigerishness into something far more comfortably Augustan and 'lecturely' (a point that Carole Fabricant echoes approvingly, and cites in conjunction with Said's idea of Swift as organic intellectual). See 'Swift, Our Contemporary', pp. 240, 253, and 'A Tale of a Tub, pp.5-6. As can be seen from an earlier quotation in this chapter, G. Douglas Atkins reveals himself to be this kind of critic in comparing the Swift of *A Tale of a Tub* to the very traditional, and decidedly anti-deconstructive literary critic, Gerald Graff.

18. See Max Beloff, *The Age of Absolutism 1660-1815*, especially the chapter on France pp.46-76.

19. The study of literature as an academic discipline has its roots in the eighteenth century and has close ties in it origins with the development of the institutions of the commercial world. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White reveal that 'Literary criticism as a professional activity in the modern sense began in the coffee houses around 1712' (*The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, p.99).

20. The priest-like nature of these critics would seem to be in accordance with the notion of the anthropologist E. A. Hoebel's, quoted in Robert M. Pirsig's novel *Lila: An Inquiry into Morals*, that the great division throughout the history of ideas has always been between two opposing categories of intellectuals: the priest-like conformists on the one hand, and the shaman-like rebels on the other (pp.136-7). Robert C Elliott's *The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art* makes the shaman status of the satirist very clear, and, taken in conjunction with Pirsig's remark, would help to explain the peculiarly anti-religious quality to this satire, ostensibly written in defence of the Anglican Church.

21. This can be compared to the comparison in the Glubbdubdrib section of Gulliver's *Travels* where much is made of Homer's complete superiority over Aristotle in every point of comparison (p.242). This would seem to show quite clearly that for Swift poets are far superior to philosophers.
Chapter Three

1. See The Age of Exuberance: Backgrounds to Eighteenth-Century English Literature, particularly his account of the population 'boom' and the victory of expansionist thinking over isolationism (pp.2-3).

2. We have Brooks to thank for the sense that the poem articulates a fundamental culture/nature opposition between the artificiality of its social conventions, and the biological impulses which must be safely channelled. Spack's article is particularly indebted to this distinction. See Brooks p.109.

3. Of course, nothing could more epitomize that which is both nothing and everything than the hymen: that most insubstantial signifier of chastity and 'virtue' that deconstructs any notion that the distinction between the serious and the trivial is absolute. It is because of this play between what is of substance and what is insignificant, and related to this opposition, between what the real and what is imaginary that we cannot be really sure how we are supposed to respond to the central issue of the poem -- unless it is with ambivalence.


5. The full title of this pamphlet is: A Key to the Lock or a Treatise proving beyond all contradictions the dangerous tendency of a late Poem, entitled the Rape of the Lock, to Religion and Government.

6. The form of the poem is what is most influenced by the scientific rationalism of Descartes and Newton. Hugh Kenner's essay on Pope's couplets ('Pope's Reasonable Rhymes,' ) draws attention to the taxonomic and concatenative quality of the heroic couplet, and how it mirrors the scientific and epistemological atomism of the day (p.83).


8. See W. A. Speck, Stability and Strife, and Christopher Hill, From Reformation to Industrial Revolution.

9. See appendix: note number two for my comments on the connection between what appears to be the presence of the ideas of the alchemical hermetic tradition in the
poem, and Ruth Salvaggio's feminist reading of this poem (as Enlightenment/counter-Enlightenment text).

10. According to Anthony Easthope (Poetry as Discourse, p.35) the natural inclination of poetry is towards polysemy. If there is space for the signifier to slip, such as the space created by the possibility of a homonym, then slip it most certainly will. The normal condition of language is one in which signifiers slip and slide all over the place (similarly the normal condition of language in Bakhtin is polysemic/heteroglossic). Easthope's examples of such slippage, that has to be 'corrected' by social and aesthetic forces in the name of clear communication, certainly make my proposed pun look distinctly less far-fetched.


12. The Hanoverian Succession, together with the Septennial Act, changed the face of eighteenth-century England completely. In both Swift and Pope's writing we get a sense of a 'before' and 'after' that comes through occasionally quite strongly. I deal with this aspect of their satire in the chapter that follows.

13. This contradictory position was read by New Critics as a 'paradoxical' situation, and the poem was, as Christopher Norris points out, used to justify their own mode of critical analysis, which to a large extent depended on a notion of poetry as the site of a paradoxical truth. See Norris, 'Pope among the Formalists', especially pp.141-5.

14. See Appendix, note three, which deals with feminist perspectives on the relationship (in the poem and more generally) between the textual and the sexual.

15. This is especially true of Pope's own later poem, Epistle II: To a Lady (Of the Characters of Women)(1735).

16. See J.M. Coetzee, 'Newton and the Ideal of a Transparent Scientific Language'.

17. This is in the early Freud of The Interpretation of Dreams (1900), The Psychopathology of Everyday Life (1901) and Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (1905).
18. The comments I made earlier regarding Anthony Easthope's *Poetry as Discourse* obviously apply here too.

19. Maureen Duffy (*The Erotic World of Faery*) sees the lock as representing the female phallus -- that signifier of the active and assertive quality to female sexuality that men have tried to control, deny or repress throughout history.

20. Duffy's analysis of the poem forms part of a wider study in which she shows how the 'fairy' realm has an important sexual significance as a symbolic language with which to deal with the religious and sexual repression brought about by the Christian suppression of the old pagan fertility religion.


22. The presence of death haunts the poem, particularly in its closing movement, which brings the transformation of the lock, and with it the doubled-edged triumph of art over mortality. Here the poem brilliantly suggests that an unavoidable emphasis on human mortality is simultaneously the great 'price' for the triumph of art, and its raison d'être.

23. See Lesley Marx 'The Rites of Man: Mozart, Don Giovanni and the Strategies of Seduction', p.232. She is admittedly talking about the later part of the eighteenth century, and the palace/salon world that a court composer like Mozart would have inhabited, a world likely to efface a lot of the very rough edges of eighteenth-century life with which Pope and Swift would have been familiar. Of course, it would no doubt be very difficult to draw a clear dividing line between what the age, understood as 'rape' and what it understood as 'seduction'. No doubt this is particularly true of the men of the age.

24. See appendix, note four, for my assessment of the importance of Salvaggio's feminist reading of Pope and Swift.

25. In this analysis of the Sylphs I am indebted to Ruth Salvaggio for her account of, as mentioned earlier, how the poem's visual and textual qualities subvert the Enlightenment desire for clarity and definition. See *Enlightened Absence*, pp.65-6.

26. Or 'epistemes', to use Foucault's term. The Sylphs are both of the Renaissance hierarchic world of orders and levels (which they seem to militarize) and of the Newtonian world of visual objects open to scientific

27. In their 'quantum' critique of Newtonian thinking Dana Zohar and Ian Marshall characterize the world of Classical physics as a hard-edged billiard ball world: 'Newtonian atoms as conceived as hard, impenetrable things -- like billiard balls. When they meet they can only clash and go their separate ways. There is no way that they can get inside each other.' (*The Quantum Society: Mind, Physics and a New Social Vision*, p.285).

28. In *The Music of the Spheres: Music, Science and the Natural Order of the Universe*, Jamie James supports the idea of a Newton very much within the old alchemical hermetic tradition. 'While Newton had actually crossed over that line straddled by Kepler before him, perceptible only in retrospect, which divides the age of classical thought and the modern era, the point at which natural philosophy began to be governed by logic rather than belief, he still yearned to maintain a spiritual connection with the seers of antiquity. Yet however much he may have seen himself as the last of the prisci theologi, he has come to occupy the first position among modern intellectuals' (p.168).


30. See appendix, note five for Daniel Defoe's statement on the significance of trade (quoted in Stephen Copley *Literature and the Social Order in Eighteenth-Century England*,).

31. As Lewis Mumford has pointed out the dividing line between trade and conquest, and trade and war was one that did not really exist within mercantilist economic thought (*The City in History*, pp.413-24).

32. The correspondence between macro and microcosmic levels is a crucial dimension to the 'balance' of which I spoke earlier.


34. See Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, pp.128-73 (on Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva).

35. Maureen Duffy says of Clarissa: 'She is the kind of woman who constantly stabs women's emancipation in the back with her darning needle' (*Faery*, p.192). Male readers of the poem have tended to overlook the significance of the way in which the women respond to Clarissa's speech.
36. Here I am extending Patricia Meyer Spacks' argument that I presented earlier, in the light of postmodern thinking on the logic and the economy of the fetish and the image.

37. See Toril Moi Sexual/Textual Politics, pp.134-5. Moi speaks of the gaze as a means of attaining a phallic mastery she labels 'sadistic' (p.134), and of the gaze being part of the 'specular logic of patriarchy' (p.135), by which women are trapped.

38. As such it is possible to read the Baron's treatment of the lock as trophy as a horrible metaphor for marriage, reflecting how marriage was viewed by men in the eighteenth-century.


40. 'Chastity, narrowly defined, was the all-important factor in determining how a woman was valued, by others and by herself as well. It was equated with virtue or honor in women; and, once lost, it was assumed to be irrecoverable...... So vital was chastity that a woman must constantly preoccupy herself with preserving its very appearance -- avoiding any company, any reading, any actions that could arouse suspicions of her sexual purity in the narrowest mind' (Katharine M. Rogers, p.9).

41. See The Pleasure of The Text, pp.9-10.

42. My understanding of the significance of the end of the poem in relation to a new idea of the social value of art and literature (as belonging to and being part of society) emerges out of my reading of Trevor Ross' article: 'Copyright and the Invention of Tradition'.

Chapter Four


2. The point that is made by Douglas Rushkoff in his book Media Virus !, is that the process of commercialization has resulted in a closure of all public sites of discourse/community/entertainment (p.202).

As David Harvey points out: space is the central category in Enlightenment thought. Space, or rather, 'the production of space' is seen as 'a political and economic problem'. For Harvey, this notion of space is
confining and restrictive, and actually marks a point of contact with twentieth-century critiques of the intellectual politics of the Enlightenment: 'By treating certain idealized conceptions of space and time as real Enlightenment thinkers ran the danger of confining the free flow of human experience and practice to rationalized configurations. It is in these terms that Foucault detects the repressive turn in Enlightenment practices towards surveillance and control. This provides a useful insight into 'postmodernist' criticism of the 'totalizing qualities' of Enlightenment thought and the 'tyranny' of perspectivism' (p.253).


4. See Diana Laurenson and Alan Swingewood The Sociology of Literature, p.104.

5. A triplet (or tercet) is a very rare occurrence in Pope. Thomas E. Maresca points out (Pope's Horatian Poems, p.78) that the triplet is the only one in the poem. This is true, but I think that his observation doesn't quite express the true sense of rarity of the use of the three-rhyme form.

6. Timon's villa is symptomatic of a mind that has no plan. It represents the shift away from the planned city, the home of art, to something unplanned and undirected, that follows its own logic, and which is linked to the economic forces that has produced a class like Timon's, and allows them to 'buy into' the spaces traditionally reserved for the Bolingbroke class, which, as Raymond Williams points out in The Country and The City, had quite recently staked its claim as the new landowning class, grounding its 'naturalization' of its position in appeals to taste, financial acumen and moral authority, reshaping and redesigning the country in a landscape-gardening and house-building enterprise that were 'the outward sign of the new morality of improvement' (p.77).

7. Such as in Satire II.4. or Satire II.8.


9. The following twentieth-century satires must be considered to take bureaucracy as, if not their primary targets, at least one of their most serious subsidiary targets: We (1924), Nineteen Eighty -Four (1949), Catch-22 (1961), Kruger's Alp (1984), and Moscow 2042 (1986/87).
10. Both Dialogues were published in 1738.

11. This point is made somewhat more simply (and perhaps even more forcefully) by Northrop Frye in 'The Nature of Satire' when he points out that 'irony has an automatically expansive and destroying force; it is a bomb dropped on an objective which, if it misses that, will at any rate hit something in an enemy's territory' (p.332).

12. See Thomas Maresca for his account as to how Pope assumes the role of lawyer for the defence (defending his satire) and is able to turn the case for the prosecution on its head (Pope's Horatian Poems, p.65).

13. See C. R. Kropf on the legal importance of innuendo for the satirists of the period ('Libel and Satire in the Eighteenth Century',). The whole debate over naming that takes place in the Epilogues takes the legal situation as its backdrop.

14. Hence the veneration of Brutus in Gulliver's Travels (p.241)

15. See Christopher Hill, From Reformation to Industrial Revolution, p.215. Hill points out that there were fifty seven persons who had better hereditary claim to the throne than did the Elector of Hanover.

16. Louis I. Bredvold sees the suspicion and mistrust of Walpole and his government to have included practically all of the literary and other intellectuals of significance. In 'The Gloom of the Tory Satirists', he writes: 'But Pope and his friends, apostles of disenchantment, were by no means alone in their apprehensions for England. Walpole employs a bad pre­eminence among English statesmen for drawing upon himself the hostility of writers of all parties and shades of party, men representing the best elements in the nation' (p.13).

17. This section of the poem imparts a satirical outrage that is as disturbingly primal as it is archetypal. For Roger Lonsdale the conveying of this involved artistic risks that Pope felt compelled to take. Lonsdale writes: 'In this artistically risky, almost desperate, way, Pope hoped to convey the violent moral revulsion which he himself felt.' ('Alexander Pope', p.131)

18. As the satirical rock music of Frank Zappa can attest.
Chapter Five

1. *Gulliver’s Travels* is the book’s more familiar title. Its original title was ‘Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver.’

2. This is the English translation of *L’autre monde* by which Cyrano’s imaginary satirical voyages to the sun and the moon are known. See Brian Aldiss, *Trillion Year Spree*, pp.73-5.


6. Whilst there might be a temptation to see Swift’s satire as ineffably ‘magical’ or ‘prophetic’ in its ability to cross the boundaries of space and time, the historical explanation of this phenomenon is not without its astounding element. What is truly astonishing about *Gulliver’s Travels* is Swift’s intuitive understanding of the social and political implications of the interconnected forces of capitalism, colonialism and scientific rationalism, that have shaped our modern period.

7. ‘Swift’s Tory Anarchy’ and ‘Swift as Intellectual’.

8. Swift is a long-standing hero of the Irish nationalist movement (who are prepared to overlook his Anglo-Protestant origins). Carole Fabricant has made a very strong case for considering the Irish (and therefore colonial) dimension as being one of the *Travels*’ most important: ‘That the imaginative and satiric world of Swift’s writings derives a good part of its meaning from the geographic and political world of eighteenth-century Ireland becomes evident in the course of a reappraisal of those images and preoccupations which have given rise to the term “excremental vision”’ (*Swift’s Landscape*, p.24).

he uses as the title of his other major essay on Swift, in order to show his pronounced 'ideological consciousness' (the phrase he uses on page 77), pointing to the degree of political and social involvement in his writing.

10. See Appendix, note six, for the question of Yahoos, and other, more 'gentle' readers.

11. See Appendix, Note 7a on Gulliver's Travels as science fiction.

12. Suvin discusses the defamiliarizing aspects of the Travels on page 109 of his Metamorphoses of Science Fiction. See Peter Nicholl's entry on Suvin in The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction for the significance of his notion of 'cognitive estrangement', which the author, together with his collaborators on the entry 'Definitions of SF' see as having far more relevance for satire than for science fiction (pp.313, 1190).

13. As Maureen Duffy has shown, the Arabian Nights, recently available in French translation, was already starting to have a huge impact on the Eastward-leaning literary imagination of the time. For an account of the cultural and literary impact of the Arabian Nights, which first appeared in Europe in 1704 (in a French translation), and other oriental tales, see Jane Mills (ed.), Bloomsbury Guide to Erotic Literature, p.149; Maureen Duffy, The Erotic World of Faery, pp.209-18; and The Blackwell Companion to the Enlightenment, pp.374, 384-5.

14. Maureen Duffy's account of the influence of the Arabian Nights points to the titillating of its exotic sexual 'Otherness'. What is interesting is that historians of science fiction commend Swift's Gulliver's Travels on account of its sexual frankness, a quality that Peter Nicholls in his entry 'Sex' in The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction (1993) maintains 'was not to appear in SF again with the same force for more than two hundred years'(p.1088).

15. 'The Location of Brazil', p.124.

16. We are the inheritors of the new modernism that Swift attacks so strongly, a modernism that is in its latest postmodern/late capitalist phase of development. Thus these oppositions and contradictions are closer to us than we might think. Recent observations that there is a strong link between Menippean satire and twentieth-century postmodernist fiction, and the strong connection between Swift and the political satire of this century should not surprise us therefore. As Brian McHale points out, 'Postmodernist fiction is the
heir of Menippean satire and its most recent historical avatar' (Postmodernist Fiction, p.172).

17. I am indebted to Michael McKeon for this wonderful little insight. See his arguments in The Origins of The English novel 1600-1740 (1987) for his analysis of the relationship between upward mobility and the larger crisis of value that he sees as a crucial factor in the development of the novel.


19. Reviewing Leo Damrosch's The Professions of Eighteenth-Century Literature: Reflections on an Institution, William B. Warner points out that in her article 'Swift in His Own Time and Ours,' Carole Fabricant claims that Swift provides a model for what she terms 'committed left intellectuals' (p.499). In his article 'Chaucer's Poetry and its Modern Commentators: The Necessity of History' Derek Pearsall regrets that no writer has produced what he feels to be long overdue, the definitive satire on the academic literary establishment, an all-new Voyage to Laputa and Lagado. See my quoting of Pearsall in the final chapter of this thesis.


21. For the discussion of the toy/doll-like quality of Lilliput, and its political and psychological implications (particularly in comparison to Brobdingnag), see John Traugott 'Swift our Contemporary', p.250, and, of course, his article 'The Yahoo in the Doll's House: Gulliver's Travels the Children's Classic'.

22. See Angus Ross and David Woolley's introduction to The Oxford Authors: Jonathan Swift, pp.xi-xxviii, pp.xii-xiii. Maureen Duffy also gives a brief account in The Erotic World of Faery, p.185 (footnote 7).


24. See Sander L. Gilman's account of the history of the relationship between race and sexuality in Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality,
Race and Madness (pp.76-127). His detailed accounts of the deeply ambiguous sexual attraction/repulsion historically felt by whites towards blacks, upon whom a feared/desired taboo sexuality is projected, tend to have a similar element of physical and sexual horror (at a figure that Gilman sees as persistently identified with the genitalia) to that expressed by Gulliver in this encounter.

25. The contrast in these two physical shapes being remarkably similar to the difference characterized by Mikhail Bakhtin between the Classical body, and that of the grotesque. See Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, The Politics and Poetics of Transgression, pp.21-2.

26. See Brown pp.37 on the need for an 'explicative' form of literary psychoanalysis, pp.41-54, and, particularly the wonderful little quote on p.38 where Nietzsche refers to the 'necessity of doctors and nurses who are themselves sick'. See also Brian Tippett, Gulliver’s Travels: An Introduction, p.26.

27. Hugh Kenner’s book The Counterfeiters, clearly points to Swift being a key precursor of Irish modernism -- a position that is supported by C.J. Rawson’s argument in Gulliver and the Gentle Reader that Swift’s textual extremism bears comparison with the most extreme forms of modernist textual practice, such as those of writers like Artaud, Burroughs and Mailer.

28. Carole Fabricant sees prisons as ‘recurring features of Swift’s landscape’ (p.51).


30. This licence being that of the Renaissance fool, whose significance is addressed by Foucault in the first chapter of Madness and Civilization ('Stultifera Navis', see pp.22-3 especially).

31. It would be hard to find something more antithetical to Menippean satire, the forerunner of much ‘conceptual breakthrough’ science fiction in its subversion of the boundaries and categories of the ‘given’. See Appendix note 7b. on the relationship between Menippean satire and science fiction.

32. This despite the ultimate Cartesian irony of making animals, creatures that Descartes explained in thoroughly mechanistic terms, the embodiment of the Cartesian faith in the notion of rational clarity. Interestingly, Descartes theory finds no space for anything that lies outside what is visible to Reason.
There is thus no space for an 'Other', or the unconscious -- which would seem to account for the conceptual difficulty that the Houyhnhnms have in dealing with the Yahoos.

33. This form of a 'lyrical', dream-like, slow-motion violence was originally used to telling effect by director Sam Peckinpah in the famous 'machine-gun out of control scene' in his film *The Wild Bunch* (1969). Post Laura Mulvey's pioneering *Visual and Other Pleasures* (1989), much work has been done psychoanalyzing the aesthetics of screen violence.

34. See Jonathan Dollimore *Radical Tragedy*, pp.16-18, 170, 173-4.

35. F.P. Lock: 'As it happened, contemporary Europe was dominated by arbitrary regimes, and the trend of recent history seemed to be in favour of such forms of government' (*The Politics of 'Gulliver's Travels*', p.47).

36. It is also the supreme example of the aggression against parental authority by the 'omnipotent' infant. Perhaps the Lilliputians react so unfavourably because they intuitively sense the infantile-aggressive nature of Gulliver's act.

37. Critics have, quite naturally seen Gulliver's action and the Lilliputians horrified response to be modelled upon an event in his own life involving perhaps an outraged response to his satire by the very people and institutions he believed himself to be defending. As the editors to the Penguin edition of the *Travels* point out, it is commonly assumed that it is the writing of *A Tale of a Tub*, and the outraged response by Queen and Church to which Swift is implicitly referring (p.351).


39. In *Nineteen-Eighty Four* Orwell suggests that there is a crucial difference here in terms of knowledge or awareness. The inner party, the party of the interrogator O'Brien, are cynics who see the issue of politics as one of power -- and that the capacity to inflict pain is the true measure of power. The outer party, of Winston Smith and Julia, is composed of those who -- however much of a strain it is to do so, believe in the ideological vision of the world that the State has constructed for them.
40. See also Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, pp.40-1.


42. Witi Ihamaera’s poem ‘Dinner with the Cannibals’ (1993) involves this reversal: the speaker is invited to a banquet by one who represents colonial power, and finds himself being eaten up piece by piece.

43. ‘To sum up, if you could look down from the moon, as Menippus once did, on the countless hordes of mortals, you’d think you saw a swarm of flies and gnats quarrelling amongst themselves, fighting, plotting, stealing, playing, making love, being born, growing old and dying’ (p.143).

44. See Appendix note 8. on the ‘uncanny’.

45. Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer *Studies on Hysteria*. [1895] New York: Avon 1966. ‘Bourgeois Hysteria and the Carnivalesque’, the penultimate chapter of *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, the book Allon White co-wrote with Peter Stallybrass which I have alluded to on quite a few occasions, covers a similar terrain to that covered by ‘Hysteria and the End of Carnival’.

46. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White see bourgeois culture as one which avoids contamination by dirt at all costs (*The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* pp.106-7).


48. See Brian Tippett *Gulliver’s Travels* pp. 24-5 for an account of those psychoanalytical readings of the *Travels* focusing upon the author himself. *The Lady’s Dressing Room* (1732), *A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed* (1734), and *Strephon and Chloe* (1731) are the poems in which Swift expresses the strongest sense of physical disgust at human (particularly) female bodies and the bodily functions they must perform.

I don’t think that the psychoanalytical view that concentrates on the individual, and that which concentrates on the social as the locus of the pathology, are mutually exclusive. One can be as guilty of something as anyone else at the same time as being far more aware of it and having greater insight.
into the matter than anyone else. Such knowledge does not necessarily result in a cure. It is more likely to mean a lifelong battle.

49. As opposed to the Land of the Houyhnhnms where he tries so desperately to hide his body for fear that it will be recognised.

50. In *England in the Age of Hogarth*, Derek Jarrett shows that the patriotic/jingoistic song 'Rule Britannia', composed during the century, is an embodiment of this very contradiction. 'Its famous refrain urged Britannia to rule the waves, in order to ensure that Britons should never be slaves; but it left conveniently to the discretion of the politicians and the naval commanders to decide just which waves would have to be ruled. It contained both the sturdy defiance of the freedom-loving island race and also the arrogant imperialism of the most rapidly developing commercial and industrial nation in the world' (p.40).

51. See Appendix, note number nine, for a comparison between the exhaustive medical analysis to which Gulliver is put through and that in Jospeh Heller’s *Catch-22* (1961).

52. Captain Nemo’s vessel is being used both to further scientific knowledge, and to fight a anti-colonial war against a shadowy imperial power that has seized Nemo’s land and murdered his family.

53. These being: *New Voyage Round The World* (1697), *Voyages and Descriptions* (1699) and *The Voyage to New Holland* (1703).

54. See Appendix, note 10 on the political aptness of Swift’s Flying Island as an image of England’s relationship with Ireland and Europe.

55. I am indebted to Carole Fabricant for this account of the comparison between Laputa as doomsday weapon, and the holocaust weapons whose shadow we still live under. (See p.263)

56. See Appendix, note eleven, for the significance of the Lindalinian resistance campaign against Laputan domination.

57. See Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*, pp.416-20. Frederick’s Prussia and Louis XIV’s France would be the best examples of these militarized states, whilst the Enlightenment mercantile economy is premised on the notion that there is no essential difference between trade and war, that they are corollaries of each other in furthering the aims of the aggressive and expansive nation State.
58. Here the quantum theory popularizers like Fritof Capra, (The Turning Point: Science, Society and the Rising Culture) and Dana Zohar and Ian Marshall (The Quantum Society: Mind, Physics and a New Social Vision) are expressing a similar critique of bourgeois materialism in Newtonian thinking, to the critique of Marxist materialism expressed, from a position that he would no doubt identify as true materialist, by Tony Bennett (Outside Literature). Note that Capra sees Marx's notion of 'science' to be one that he has inherited from Newtonian Classical physics -- and argues that it is this notion of science that does most damage to Marx's thinking, a position that would be supported by Marxists in the humanist tradition (pp.213-19).


60. Unfortunately, they sound a lot less absurd to us, now we are told it is scientifically certain that just such a disaster accounted for the dinosaurs, and the earth is periodically threatened by comets and giant asteroids.

61. From the literary institutional perspective it has been argued that this is a profound point of contact between contemporary physics on the one hand, and deconstructive practice and theory on the other. See André Brink 'Transgressions: a Quantum Approach to Literary Deconstruction' JLS, vol. 1, no. 3 (July 1985), pp.10-26.


63. Attacked by Pope in The Dunciad, the specialization of knowledge becomes a major target of the existential tradition in European thought, a tradition that sees this book of the Travels as playing a significant role in its development. See the chapter in William Barrett's book, Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy that deals with the Voyage to Laputa (Chapter 6: The Flight from Laputa). Barrett is an American philosopher whose writings provide what is meant to be a more accessible introduction to Existentialism.

64. The Five Year Plan of enforced collectivization and industrialization. See Paul Johnson, Modern Times: A

65. See Appendix, note twelve for a literary history of the writing frame/machine.

66. What we would have here is something approaching the postmodernist logic of the simulacrum: the image that is better and superior to the original, more the original and real (hyperreal) than the thing itself.


68. See Appendix, note thirteen on the connection between the ghost tableaus of Glubbdubdrib and the 'hyperreal'.

69. There is a similar satire at work in Samuel Johnson's Rasselas (The Prince Of Abyssinia: A Tale) (1759) with the whole critique of the notion of the 'choice of life'.

Chapter Six.

1. This is the theme of the moment of uncanny recognition that features strongly in Homi Bhabha's deconstruction of colonialism, and colonialist ideology. See 'Representation and the Colonial Text', p.119.

2. See Brian Tippett Gulliver's Travels: An Introduction p.80

3. Carole Fabricant argues (what I suggested in the previous chapter) that the trope of cannibalism is intimately connected with the idea of colonialism, as a metaphor for colonial exploitation. As Fabricant points out (Swift's Landscape p.79), the colonial world is a 'cannibalistic' world, one 'fundamentally anarchic and predatory' and 'founded upon a grotesque Chain of Devouring' (a horrific version of the old Chain of Being).

4. See Appendix, note 14 for the accounts of the racial Other that provide the sources for Swift's Yahoos.

5. Referred to in Bill Ashcroft et al., The Empire Writes Back, pp.191-2.
6. This 'bad' nature is one in which it becomes difficult to differentiate between human on the one hand, and other creatures, such as apes on the other. During the eighteenth century a great curiosity develops regarding the close physical similarities between human beings and their simian 'cousins'. Of course it was only in the following century that Darwin discovers the family 'connection', but the point must be made that it is out of the growing interest in and speculation about the human/ape similarities that Darwin's research into evolution emerges. In his chapter on eighteenth-century science in The Eighteenth Century: the Intellectual and Cultural Context of English literature 1700-1780 James Sambrook discusses the various accounts in the eighteenth century of the intriguing (and perplexing) resemblance between man and ape (p.19).

7. I am deeply indebted to Darko Suvin (Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre) for a sense of the vital interconnections which exist between the moral, the political and the economic aspects of Swift's satire.

8. See also Brian Tippett Gulliver's Travels: An Introduction, p.49.


10. See Epistle III, 7-26.

11. The most famous example being Orwell's recognition that this master race/slave race relationship foreshadows that between the Nazis and the Jews during the Holocaust. See John Traugott ('Swift, Our Contemporary', p.244) on Orwell's reading of the Houyhnhnms as having a Nazi like belief in their own species purity and superiority, that, as I have argued, comes to function as a metaphor for racial superiority as part of an implicit justification of colonialism.

12. See Appendix: note 15 on this perceptual/epistemological failure.

13. That Houyhnhnms society is democratic can be seen from their grand assembly -- which decides on genocide for the Yahoos and expulsion for Gulliver. Democracy was not Swift's favourite form of government.

14. My suspicion that there was an echo of ancient Sparta in Gulliver's account of the world of the Houyhnhnms is supported by Ian Higgins. In Gulliver's Travels: An Introduction Brian Tippett, referring to Higgins' 'Swift and Sparta: The Nostalgia of Gulliver's Travels', declares that 'Ian Higgins demonstrated
Houyhnhnm Society closely resembles the austere civilization of ancient Sparta' (p.50).


17. Göran Therborn's 'The Frankfurt School' is my point of reference here. See also David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p.13, for his account of the Frankfurt School critique of the Enlightenment, and how that fits in with his reading of the logic of the modern.


   Fritof Capra's argument that the bourgeois philosophers of the Enlightenment were caught up in a curious contradiction regarding their notion of liberation, suggests that they have much in common with Swift's Houyhnhnms: 'Their educated middle-class status allowed them to conceive of radical ideas of equality, justice, and liberty, but did not allow them to extend these concepts to include the 'inferior classes'; nor did they ever include women' (*The Turning Point*, p.210).

19. The 'truth' of this manufacturedness would seem to be indicated by the suspiciously mythic quality, in Roland Barthes' sense of the term, to the Houyhnhnms' stories regarding the origins of the Yahoo (that they spontaneously generated themselves out of mud and slime -- and thus by implication, straddle the category divide between animal and mineral, and are thus the perfect 'raw material' for Houyhnhnm use.

   The story of the origins of the Yahoos is like the other myths that have historically served the interests of colonial domination. Barthes writes in his prefatory chapter to *Mythologies* ('Myth Today'): 'We reach here the very principle of myth: it transforms history into nature. We now understand why in the eyes of the myth-consumer, the intention, the adhomination of the concept can remain manifest without however appearing to have an interest in the matter: what causes mythical speech to be uttered is perfectly explicit, but it is immediately frozen into something natural; it is not read as a motive, but as a reason' (p.129).

21. The argument I am putting forward here is a variation on the position put forward by Tippett/Reiss earlier in this chapter.

22. The nationality of Pedro De Mendez would seem to add a little resonance to Gulliver's disgraceful antisocial behaviour. In contrast to Holland, a country vilified in the *Travels* as anti-Christian, in the light no doubt, of its rivalries with England, and for its actions against English traders and Japanese Christians in Asia, Portugal was one of England's oldest national allies, and more immediately, a fellow member of the Grand Alliance against France and Spain during the War of the Spanish Succession. That this kind human being should just so happen to be a national ally, paints Gulliver's actions even more negatively.

23. The mythical model for the story is of course that of the Fall and expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

24. They are identified as Yahoo by smell. That Gulliver should now be so sensitive to olfactory difference suggests that his mode of relating to his world has become more animal than social.

Chapter Seven

1. The full title of the print is: 'Representing the Bathos, or manner of sinking in sublime painting.' According to David Bindman 'It is a work of unmitigated pessimism' (p.206), in which 'everything is on the point of dissolution' (p.207). See Bindman, *Hogarth*, plate 166, p.207.

2. Roger Lonsdale characterises the movement of the Dunces as follows: 'Pope depicts Dulness's progress from the lower classes to the irresponsible aristocracy, supported geographically by the fact that the Dunces follow the route from the Commercial city to the fashionable Westminster taken by the Lord Mayor's procession on the day of the election. The triumph of Dulness's empire is thus displayed simultaneously in the literal procession across London, in the spread of debased theatrical taste, in the travesty of the Aeneid, in parallels with Satan's plot to replace order and light by chaos and darkness in *Paradise Lost*, and especially in Book III, in the explicit relationship of the action to the repeated triumphs of destructive ignorance over civilization in the history of mankind' ('Alexander Pope', p.116).
3. Stallybrass and White: 'The "crime" of Theobald, Cibber, Settle and others is the act of mediation: they occupy a taboo-laden space between the topographical boundaries which mark off the discrete sites of high and low culture' (The Politics and Poetics of Transgression, pp.113-4).

4. What Aubrey Williams has argued is a particularly strong aspect of Book II of the poem (Pope's Dunciad: A Study of its Meaning, p.29)

5. I make much greater use of this and other ideas of Jones' from the same article ('Pope and Dulness') later in this chapter.

6. The 'restoration' theme is something that the Dunciad shares with The Rape of the Lock, as we saw in Chapter Three.


8. See Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception'.

9. Alvin B. Kernan and Emrys Jones have both emphasized the energy and vitality of Dulness. For Kernan the energy of Dullness is something primal (The Plot of Satire, p.109). This idea of the 'primal quality of Dulness seems to connect the mythical and historical qualities of the poem -- qualities that can be reconciled within the idea of the poem being deeply concerned with a social unconscious. See Jones, 'Pope and Dulness', p.126.

10. The Dunces are trapped in a fiction within a fiction. Their lives are fictions in the sense that they live in a distorted and mistaken relationship with themselves and with their world, a relationship that is fundamentally solipsistic and narcissistic (but in a far stronger way than the characters of Belinda's world), and which can be associated with what Lacan terms the 'imaginary'. But they have also survived as satirical fictions: their 'life' as the reader perceives it is something that the poem has created for them. In this sense Pope, like the Dulness he fears, invests them with meaning, and immortalizes them. As Aubrey Williams puts it, the Dunces 'have been given a symbolic importance which they lacked in real life' (Pope's Dunciad: A Study of its Meaning, p.5).

11. Pope is not alone in this ambivalence. Marxists have a fundamental problem with capitalism too -- one that pits the two dimensions of Marx's own thinking
against each other: the Humanist Marx of the theory of alienation, against the scientific, historical Marx, the founder of the Leninist tradition. Thus capitalism can be seen negatively, as a dehumanizing and alienating force, or positively, as a progressive stage on the way to the classless society.

12. Rogers' and Wokler's comments are both taken from their respective entries on 'Grub Street' and 'liberty' in the Blackwell Companion to the Enlightenment (ed John W. Yolton et al.) pp.208 (Rogers) 286 (Wokler).

13. See also Book II, 287-425; Book III, 233-340; and Book IV, 74-84.

14. As Sander Gilman has shown, the travel literature of the day was a strong source of the image of the lascivious sexual appetite of the black (Difference and Philosophy: Stereotypes of Sexuality, race and Madness, p.83).

15. Pat Rogers refers to what he terms the 'quasi-military' dimension to the poem in Hacks and Dunces, (p.103).

16. See Laura Brown on Pope's concern to exclude colonial violence from the pastoral English landscapes in his earlier poems, as well as her thesis (that I referred to in the chapter on The Rape of The Lock), regarding his attempts to negotiate the contradictions revolving around a capitalism entering its imperial phase (Alexander Pope, pp.40, 156.)


18. The improbable full title of The Battle of the Books is: A Full and True Account of the Battle Fought last Friday, Between the Ancient and Modern Books in St. James's Library (1704/10). According to the account of the battle, Criticism, 'a malignant deity', had 'claws like a cat; her head, and ears, and voice, resembled those of an ass; her teeth fallen out before, her eyes turned inward as if she looked only upon herself; her diet was the overflowing of her own gall; her spleen was so large as to stand prominent like a dug of the first rate, nor wanted excrescencies in form of teats, at which a crew of ugly monsters were greedily sucking; and what is wonderful to conceive, the bulk of spleen increased faster than the sucking could diminish it (Jonathan Swift, Oxford Anthology p.12).

19. For an account of those features of the Neoplatonic tradition that Pope invokes see Aubrey Williams, Pope's Dunciad: A Study of its Meaning, p.144-45, as well as D.W. Hamlyn, A History of Western Philosophy, pp.124-5.

21. See Gail Faurschou’s comment on the relationship between fashion, codes and the visual image in this regard: "As we have observed fashion develops .... a "specular logic" of abstraction in which the concrete dimensions of social life and the symbolic world are increasingly reduced, recorded, and smoothly reprocessed into the one-dimensional, glossy (or increasingly fluorescent) signifying surfaces of their photographic or televised equivalent" (*Obsolescence and Desire: Fashion and the Commodity Form*, p.257).

22. *Southwark Fair* (1733), with its collapsing stage in the left foreground, *Gin Lane* (1751), and best of all, *Night* (1738) for the trajectory of the urine emptied out of the pisspot, being prime examples. See David Bindman, *Hogarth* pp.88 (plate 64), 93 (plate 68) and 181 (plate 143).


26. *Poetry as Discourse*, p.120.

27. In my discussion of the significance of the role of popular theatre in the narrative of social and cultural collapse I am indebted to Aubrey Williams’s *Pope’s Dunciad: A Study of its Meaning*, (pp.93-6). For the lines dealing with the notion of the stage replacing the world see Book III, 265 -340.

28. For passages in which Bakhtin articulates these concepts see *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov*, ed. by Pam Morris.

29. Fredric Jameson and David Harvey are the most important figures here. See Fredric Jameson, ‘Cognitive Mapping’; and David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*.

30. ‘The mercantilist wanted a large and dense population in order to keep wages low and manufactures cheap, a condition by which a country gained an advantage in export trade.’ (Louis A. Landa, ‘A Modest Proposal and Populousness’, p.104). Michel Beaud
argues that enclosures continued 'vigorously' during the eighteenth century (A History of Capitalism 1500-1980, p. 64). See also Christopher Hill, Reformation to Industrial Revolution, pp.268-73.

31. See Fredric Jameson, 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society' and Jean Baudrillard, 'The Ecstasy of Communication' and 'The Evil Demons of Images and The Precession of Simulacra'.

32. Edward W. Said argues this point most powerfully in his article/essay, 'Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies and Community'.

33. Both positions have been discussed at a number of points in the thesis.
APPENDIX

1. Peter Sloterdijk sees the formal, abstract qualities that are now so characteristic a feature of Western philosophy to have emerged with the Enlightenment, and the purging/suppression of the well-established presence of dialogical, polemical and satirical elements (what he terms the 'kynical') from the discourse and practice of philosophy.

For Sloterdijk modern, post-Enlightenment philosophy, the philosophy that we intellectually inhabit, was produced by the Enlightenment to fit in with the scientific orientation of its capitalist ideology. Though the argument is mainly pursued on the terrain of moral philosophy (he argues that with the loss of the ancient charged and contested 'kynical' morality, what has emerged is the coldly rationalistic 'cynical' morality of the modern world), there seem to be clear parallels between his critique of the institution of philosophy, and the deconstructionists' critique of logocentrism, and interrogation of logocentric thinking as it emerges within the critical discourses and discursive practices of the literary institution.

2. It is Ruth Salvaggio's feminist reading of the poem (Enlightened Absence), that has alerted me to the greater significance of the Sylphs as more than just the poem's imaginative machinery. My feeling is that the alchemical hermetic tradition is being invoked through the Rosicrucian Sylphs, Rosicrucianism being very much a continuation of this tradition and as such the source of an implicit critique of the later scientific rationalism/materialism of Newton (who actually saw his work as very much a part of the alchemical tradition). Salvaggio sees the alchemical hermetic tradition as providing a feminine more 'random' and 'fluid' 'Other' to the 'fixed' and 'atomistic' tendencies of Enlightenment Newtonianism (see pp.42, 56). In her view (one that I share): 'The hermetic tradition in philosophy, long associated with alchemy and the occult -- not to mention witchcraft -- was diametrically opposed to the mechanical tradition in which scientists viewed the universe as composed of inert bodies that move according to mathematical laws' (p.47).

See Jamie James The music of the Spheres: Music, Science and the Natural Order of the Universe for the connection between Rosicrucianism and the alchemical tradition (p.155) and John W. Yolton et. al. The Blackwell Companion to the Enlightenment (1991/1995) for the relationship between the scientific
Enlightenment and the hermetic/esoteric 'counter-Enlightenment' (pp.109-10).

As part of her exploration of the relationship between alchemy and the 'feminine' critique of the scientific rationality of the (patriarchal) Enlightenment, Ruth Salvaggio refers to Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature: Woman, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (1980). Merchant 'tells us', according to Salvaggio, 'that Newton had a deep interest in the transmutable processes of nature, especially processes of organic transformation and fermentation -- an interest that was ultimately subsumed by his work in mathematics and physics. Nature, like alchemy, was both fascinating and yet somehow forbidden for this systematic scientist. Colour however -- which was just as fascinating but also strongly linked to the domain of the physical sciences -- was a legitimate and respectable subject of scientific inquiry. The science of optics, in other words, made the mechanical study of colour possible, while biological and alchemical processes remained to a large extent associated with a taboo hermetic tradition and its links with magic, spirit, and witchcraft.' (p.71).

3. The parts of Patricia Meyer Spacks book *An Argument of Images* that deal with *The Rape of the Lock*, and her article 'Ev'ry Woman is at Heart a Rake' point to the way in which this society's culture of the sexual emerges out of its displacement and repression of the sexual. Her Freudian reading of the poem that places an emphasis on the way in which culture suppresses nature can be supplemented by a reading which takes Foucault's work on sexuality into consideration (*The History of Sexuality*). This would add an emphasis -- by no means incompatible -- on the use of the sexual as a proliferating site of power. The two positions can be connected to a feminist concern with the sexuality/textuality of language, with the interplay between the symbolic and semiotic (to use Julia Kristeva's terms) and how that informs the sexual issues that the poem raises, and the sexual attitudes it presents. The feminist arguments regarding the sexuality of language have played an important role in my reading of the poem, particularly as they have been expressed by Ruth Salvaggio's feminist reading of the poem (*Enlightened Absence*). For Kristeva's notions of the symbolic and semiotic see John Lechte *Julia Kristeva*, (pp.127-9).

4. Ruth Salvaggio's analysis of the relationship between the science and epistemology of the Enlightenment and the sensory and textual areas that lie outside its categories is one I find, in the main,
not just convincing, but very stimulating. Her observations about the subversive elements in the textual practices of Swift and Pope, and their ambivalent relationship with these fits into her wider feminist critique of the Enlightenment, which she sees ruled by an exhaustive set of binary oppositions whose purpose is less to liberate than to bolster the patriarchal order. The metaphors and oppositions in terms of which the Enlightenment articulates its world have no place for woman, who stands outside of the picture, as a socially and physically marginalized figure. However, since she is a term outside and yet inside, excluded yet present, she acts as a deconstructive Other, a challenge to the self-justifying logics upon which Enlightenment thought establishes itself.

5. Stephen Copley refers to and quotes Daniel Defoe writing on the way in which trade has transformed social consciousness during the century’s first decade. Trade has imparted a sense of expansiveness, that Defoe characterises in the following way: ‘(Trade) -- has improved the whole Face of Nature among us. Our ships are laden with the Harvest of every climate. Our Tables are stored with Spices, and Oils, and Wines: Our Rooms are filled with Pyramids of China, and adorned with the Workmanship of Japan: Our Mornings - Draught comes to us from the remotest corners of the Earth: We repair our Bodies by the Drugs of America, and repose our selves under Indian Canopies. My Friend Sir ANDREW calls the Vineyards of France our Gardens; the Spice Islands our Hot-Beds; the Persians our Silk-Weavers, and the Chinese our Potters’ (The Review May 1711 in Copley Literature and the Social Order in Eighteenth-Century England, p.64).

Note the imperial pronoun ‘our’, which indicates to me that the same logic that operates in the Rite of Pride section of the Rape is operating here. The possession of Belinda by the goddess is paralleled by that of the lands that produced these objects -- first by act of imaginative possession and then by colonial appropriation.

6. Gulliver makes this connection in his ‘Letter to Sympson’ that prefaces his account of his travels. Defending the veracity of his account, he points out that: ‘Indeed I must confess, that as to the people of Lilliput, Brobdingrag (for so the word should have been spelt, and not erroneously ‘Brobdingnag’), and Laputa; I have never heard of any Yahoo so presumptuous as to dispute their being or the facts that I have related concerning them; because the truth immediately strikes every reader with conviction’(p.40).
Notice how the terminology is allowed to slide: from people and Yahoos, to a narrower and less specified class, that of readers. That there are those readers who do not assume the narrative is true, unless by this is meant a correspondence to a 'higher', realm of satirical truth, means that there is a category of reader beyond Gulliver's comprehension, and on account of this: beyond Gulliver's easy labelling of her/him as 'Yahoo'. What Swift would seem to be suggesting is that those who can detect the difference between realism and satirical irony are exempt from the charge of being Yahoo. Thus their ability to read beneath the ironical surface becomes a 'sign' of that redemptive rationality, the capax rationis, that life is a constant struggle to achieve. The emphasis on struggle and on reading makes this a very interesting notion of rationality, one which seems very different from those entertained by his peers.

7a. According to Brian Aldiss, however you examine them, the SF credentials of the Travels are quite impeccable. In Trillion Year Spree, the critical history of the genre he co-wrote with David Wingrove, he argues quite astonishingly that were Swift's satire to be classified as science fiction (and he makes a strong case for doing so) then its brilliance would have had such an inhibiting effect on future writers as to possibly have destroyed the genre before it even got off the ground (p.81)

In thinking of the Travels as Science Fiction, it might be useful to consider that it could well be argued that by subjecting the scientific rationalism of the Enlightenment to the fantastic reductio ad absurdum of the Third Voyage, Swift practically single-handedly created the important sub-genres of dystopian writing and science fiction satire. Here the device of the 'reductio ad absurdum' that is so central to the 'logic' of satire, (or its 'plot', to use Alvin B. Kernan's term) reveals its close affinity with the science fiction writer's use of extrapolation, a 'forwards' logic of temporal or spatial projection in which social trends or tendencies undergo strange mutations and transformations, as opposed to the 'backwards' logic of the reductio, which, as its name suggests, charts a downward-spiralling process of ever-increasing human obstinacy and stupidity as absurd, but seemingly sane and sound premises are allowed to work themselves out into their totally insane and bizarre conclusions.

7b. It is with this closing down of space through the penetration of the scientific industrial culture of the Enlightenment into all areas of the globe, that Menippean satire gives way to science fiction, in which
the alternate place is removed to another galaxy or becomes the alternate 'parallel' time -- distance in miles becomes distance in lightyears. The world of the Other is either a world that has not happened yet, or in science fiction's most direct continuation of the alternate worlds theme, is a world that exists in a different, parallel, space and time. Interestingly, the most famous parallel universe science fiction novel of all, Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* (1962) creates an alternate world in which the Axis powers won the war and invaded and partitioned the U.S. in order to attack fascist tendencies within the America of the nineteen fifties and early sixties.

8. The essay in which Freud discusses this notion is 'The "Uncanny"' (1919) in *Pelican Freud Library*, vol. 14 trans. James Strachey, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985. Rosemary Jackson quotes J. Laplanche and J-B. Pontalis who explain Freud's notion of the uncanny as follows: 'Its uncanny effects reveal an obscure, occluded region which lies behind the homely (heimlich) and native (heimsich). As the terms "parataxis" has already suggested, fantasy lies alongside the axis of the real, and many of the prepositional constructions which are used to introduce a fantastic realm emphasize its interstitial placing. "On the edge", "through", "beyond", "between", "at the back of", "underneath", or adjectives such as "topsy-turvy" "reversed", "inverted". This area according to Freud is one of concealed desire. "Something has to be added to what is novel and unfamiliar, he claims, to make it uncanny (...) it is, in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old -- established in the mind and become alienated from it in the process of repression. What is encountered in this uncanny realm, whether it is termed spirit, angel, devil, ghost, or monster, is nothing but an unconscious projection, projections being "those qualities, feelings, wishes, objects, which the subject refuses to recognise or rejects in himself [and which] are expelled from the self and located in another person or thing"'(Rosemary Jackson *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, pp.65-6; J. Laplanche and J-B., *The Language of Psychoanalysis* trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith London, 1973, p.349).

9. The exhaustive pushing and probing examination that the Brobdingnag experts put Gulliver through prefigures the investigation of the sick colonel conducted by the U.S. Army Medical Corps in Joseph Heller's modern anti-war satire, *Catch-22*.

These two moments of scientific/medical analysis suggest the same obsessiveness, and radical failings, of the analytical, classificatory mind: 'The colonel dwelt in a vortex of specialists who were still
specializing in trying to determine what was troubling him. They hurled lights in his eyes to see if he could see, rammed needles into nerves to hear if he could feel. There was an urologist for his urine, a lymphologist for his lymph, an endocrinologist for his endocrines, a psychologist for his psyche, a dermatologist for his derma; there was a pathologist for his pathos, a cystologist for his cysts, and a bald and pedantic cetologist from the zoology department at Harvard who had been shanghaied ruthlessly into the Medical Corps by a faulty anode in an I.B.M. machine and spent his sessions with the dying colonel trying to discuss Moby Dick with him. The colonel had really been investigated. There was not an organ of his body that had not been drugged and derogated, dusted and dredged, fingered and photographed, removed, plundered and replaced' (p.23).

10. The image of England as an island weapon bombarding the lands beneath was realized in the Second World War -- when covered from head to toe with a huge aerial armada of fighter planes and bombers it acted as a huge aircraft carrier off the European mainland, from whence the Axis countries and their forces in occupied Europe could be ruthlessly bombarded (as indeed they were). George Orwell extrapolates from this military role played by the British Isles in his renaming the whole country 'Airstrip One' in his dystopian science fiction satire Nineteen Eighty Four.

Swift's Laputa reflects the emergence of this military/political situation in which England either found itself or created for itself. Becoming the world's great naval power off the coast of mainland Europe, England’s political and military relations with Europe were, from this period onwards, characterised by a particular ruthlessness. In any European war England would, as a matter of course, intervene on the side of the lesser power in order to ensure that no single power became dominant on the continent, and thus find itself in a position to challenge her naval supremacy.

11. Carole Fabricant points out how ultimately ineffective Laputan State terrorism turns out to be, that it 'proves impotent in the face of a determined grass-roots movement, concentrated in one particular area, that not only achieves its immediate goal but also hints at the possibility of regicide and complete revolution' (p.263). Fabricant’s sense of Swift’s moments of real radicalism, emerging here in the 'message' contained within the story of Lindalinian resistance, is supported by David Ward, who actually contends that the Drapier’s Letters had what might in the final analysis turn out to be profound historical implications. He sees these satires (satirical
'actions') as 'almost by accident' having 'led to the invention of techniques of civil disobedience (though they were not called that) which have since played an increasing role in the world whenever state and people come into sharp conflict. There are many ways in which the matter of Wood's halfpence prepared the way for the long subsequent history of Irish resistance to English power, and also taught the American colonists a thing or two which they were to remember half a century later' (Jonathan Swift: An Introductory Essay, p.119).

12. This frame is the first in a long line of such machines both in modernist satire of the twentieth century, and in the postmodern explorations of issues such as, 'the death of the author', intertextuality and literary production. Swift's writing frame is clearly a forerunner of the fiction kaleidoscopes in Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four and the monitorless computer terminals, all for the great synthesizing Communist computer, that will combine, refine and select in order to create great ideologically pure collective literature in Vladimir Volnovich's Moscow 2042. This computer (whose real existence turns out to be another of the State's great lies, if not the greatest of them all) provides the perfect means of controlling and disposing of dissident writing (see pp.235-7 and pp.246-7). In Postmodernist Fiction Brian Mc Hale (pp.183-5) speaks of Umberto Eco's writing machine in Foucault's Pendulum (1989), the computer Abulafia that he believes has Swift's writing frame as its model. Writing machines are also to be found in Italo Calvino's If on a winter's night a traveller (see pp.147, 171). Lastly, there is a sense too in which Hugh Kenner's argument in 'Pope's Reasonable Rhymes' can be developed to suggest that the heroic couplet is in an extended sense, itself one such textual 'machine'.

13. In 'Travels in Hyperreality', the title essay in his collection, Umberto Eco talks of the way in which history is presented as a theme park 'ride' by the Disney organization and others as embodiments of some of the key shifts in postmodern thinking regarding the nature of social knowledge and information. Eco provides an interesting history, survey and in-depth semiological reading of a whole cross-section of places which, like Disneyland, he sees characterized by the hyperreal. This essay would appear to shed interesting light on Glubbdubdrib (and other sections of the Travels). Whilst pursuing this connection falls beyond the scope of this thesis, I have in a couple of places dropped the suggestion, looking at things from a postmodern rather than an Enlightenment perspective, that the kind of visual commodification that takes
place within late capitalism, has its roots in the ‘young’ (or relatively young) capitalism of the Enlightenment. Eco refers to Louis Marin’s ‘excellent essay’ on Disneyland as ‘degenerate utopia’ (Marin’s phrase, not Eco’s). Going on Eco’s recommendation, this would seem to be something that anyone interested in making connections between the eighteenth-century epistemological view of the world and the twentieth-century concern with worlds of the hyppereal would really need to read (see Eco, p.43).

14. Swift’s source for the Yahoos were the racist accounts in the kind of Traveller’s Tales that Gulliver’s Travels is imitating, parodying, and ultimately subverting. As Brian Aldiss points out in Trillion Year Spree: ‘The Yahoos almost certainly derive from a number of accounts of Hottentots and Central American monkeys. John Orrington’s 1696 descriptions of Hottentot women with ugly dangling breasts led to the Yahoo females with "their Forefeet" (p.82).

According to P.J. Marshall & Glyndwr Williams, Dampier’s books A New Voyage Round the World by William Dampier and A Voyage to New Holland, the widely-read texts that the Travels most imitate, were extremely influential in determining the tone of the encounters with the racial Other: ‘Of Dampier’s ventures into areas outside European control, and indeed on the very periphery of Europe’s knowledge, most notable were his brief visits to the western coasts of Australia in 1688 and 1699. His description of the Australian Aborigines were first recorded by any Englishman, and their effect was to be long-lasting. More than seventy years later, when Cook and Banks reached the east Coast of Australia in the Endeavour, it was Dampier’s account which they had with them and which influenced their first encounters: ‘the miserablest people in the world ... setting aside their humane shape, they differ but little from brutes ... their eyelids are always half closed, to keep the flies out of their eyes... they have great bottle-noses, pretty full lips, and wide mouths... Their hair is black, short and curl’d, like that of the Negres... the colour of their skins; both of their faces and the rest of their body is coal-black ... they all of them have the most unpleasant looks and the worst features of any people that I ever saw, tho I have seen a great variety of savages’ (The Great Map of Mankind, p.40).

Images of the racial Other in the travel literature of the day are also documented by Peter Fryer in this extract from his history of black people in Britain: ‘English travellers fed an eager public with stories of the bestiality, depravity and stupidity of ‘negroes or savages’. The fact that these stories were contradictory and unfounded did not matter much and the stereotypes became part of everyday
consciousness. Literature reflects these stories, for example in Shakespeare’s *Othello* and *The Tempest*. As the slave trade expanded, more systematic expressions of white supremacy were produced by the plantocracy -- large plantation owners both in the West Indies and in Britain. Sometimes these views were justified by using religious authority and sometimes by reference to philosophy. Locke and Hume, two of the founders of British empiricism, added their support to the growth of racism. By the end of the eighteenth century racism was firmly established in Britain as ‘a principal handmaiden to the slave trade and slavery.’ *(Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain 1984 p.165, quoted in Roger Andersen’s *The Power and the Word: Language, Power and Change* p.215)*

15. There is an interesting parallel here between Swift’s sorrel nag who cannot see beyond his Houyhnhnm nose and Bernard Levin’s account of the failure of the Incas to ‘see’ the ships of the Spanish Conquistadors. Levin writes: ‘When, after the Spanish conquest of Peru under Pizarro, the first reinforcements and supplies from home arrived by sea, the ships hove to just off shore. The Indians literally could not see the vessels, for their inability to comprehend sights so extravagantly unlike anything they had ever seen before led not to ordinary bewilderment but to hysterical blindness; communication between eye and brain was temporarily severed, and where the Spaniards saw a flotilla, the Indians saw nothing but an empty ocean’ (*Crime and Punishment* in *In These Times* London, Sceptre, 1986: first published in *The Times*, July 30th 1985).
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