

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO

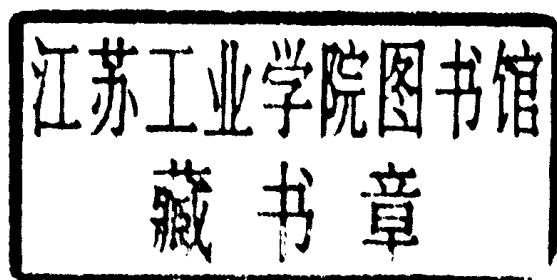


JONATHAN
SWIFT

Edited by
Christopher Fox

THE CAMBRIDGE
COMPANION TO
JONATHAN SWIFT

EDITED BY
CHRISTOPHER FOX
University of Notre Dame, Indiana



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge, CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

© Cambridge University Press 2003

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2003

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeface Sabon 10/13 pt. *System* L^AT_EX 2_ε [TB]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 0 521 80247 4 hardback

ISBN 0 521 00283 4 paperback

The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift

The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift is a specially commissioned collection of essays. Arranged thematically across a range of topics, this volume will deepen and extend the enjoyment and understanding of Jonathan Swift for students and scholars. The thirteen essays explore crucial dimensions of Swift's life and works. As well as ensuring a broad coverage of Swift's writing – including early and later works as well as the better known and the lesser known – the *Companion* also offers a way into current critical and theoretical issues surrounding the author. Special emphasis is placed on Swift's vexed relationship with the land of his birth, Ireland, and on his place as a political writer in a highly politicized age. The *Companion* offers a lucid introduction to these and other issues, and raises new questions about Swift and his world. The volume features a detailed chronology and a guide to further reading.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

SEAMUS DEANE is Professor of English and the Donald and Marilyn Keough Professor of Irish Studies at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana. He is a member of the Royal Irish Academy, a founding director of the Field Day Theatre, the general editor of the Penguin Joyce, and the author of several books, including *A Short History of Irish Literature*, *Celtic Revivals: Essays in Modern Irish Literature*, *The French Revolution and Enlightenment in England*, and *Strange Country: Modernity and the Nationhood In Irish Writing Since 1790*. Deane has edited the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, has written four books of poetry and a novel, *Reading in the Dark*. He is completing a new novel and a book on Edmund Burke to be published in the Field Day Critical Conditions series.

MARGARET ANNE DOODY is Professor of English and the John and Barbara Glynn Family Professor of Literature at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana. Her books include *The True History of the Novel*, *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works*, *The Daring Muse: Augustan Poetry Reconsidered*, and *A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson*. She has edited Frances Burney's *Evelina*, Jane Austen's *Catharine and Other Early Writings*, and L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* (*The Annotated Anne*). Her mystery novel, *Aristotle Detective*, has just been republished and has also been translated into Italian. She is currently working on two books, one on Apuleius and one on Venice.

CAROLE FABRICANT is Professor of English at the University of California, Riverside. She is the author of *Swift's Landscape* (2nd edn., 1995) and has published widely in the fields of Eighteenth-Century Studies, Postcolonial and Gender Studies. She is currently completing an edition of *Swift's Miscellaneous Prose* for Penguin Classics and collaborating on an edition of *Swift's Irish Writings* for St. Martin's Press. She received a Guggenheim Fellowship for her new critical project, "Speaking for the Irish Nation: Problems of Colonial Representation in Eighteenth-Century Ireland."

CHRISTOPHER FOX is Professor of English at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana. He is the author of *Locke and the Scriblerians: Identity and Consciousness in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain* and editor of several books, including *Psychology and Literature in the Eighteenth Century*, *Gulliver's Travels: Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism*, *Teaching Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, and co-editor, with Robert Wokler and the late Roy Porter, of *Inventing Human Science: Eighteenth Century Domains*, and with Brenda Tooley, of *Walking Naboth's Vineyard: New Studies of Swift*. He is currently working on a study of Swift and Defoe.

BREAN HAMMOND is Professor of English at the University of Nottingham. He is the author of numerous articles and several books on the eighteenth century, most recently *Professional Imaginative Writing in England, 1670-1740: "Hackney for Bread,"* published by Clarendon Press. His current project is an edition of Vanbrugh for Oxford University Press World's Classics.

IAN HIGGINS is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at The Australian National University in Canberra, Australia. He is the author of *Swift's Politics: A Study in Disaffection*, published by Cambridge University Press, and of several articles on Swift. He has also written on Swift's contemporaries in the Jacobite Diaspora and on radical Whig authors.

J. PAUL HUNTER is Professor of English at the University of Virginia. He has published numerous essays on the eighteenth century and is the author of several books, including *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-century English Fiction*, *Occasional Form: Henry Fielding and the Chains of Circumstance*, and *The Reluctant Pilgrim: Defoe's Emblematic Method and Quest for Form in Robinson Crusoe*.

PATRICK KELLY is Fellow and Senior Lecturer in Modern History at Trinity College, Dublin. He is the editor of *Locke on Money* for *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of John Locke* and the author of numerous articles. With Aileen Douglas and Ian Campbell Ross, Kelly has co-edited *Locating Swift: Essays from Dublin on the 250th Anniversary of the Death of Jonathan Swift*. He is currently completing a critical edition of William Molyneux's *The Case of Ireland Stated*.

JOSEPH MCMINN is Professor of Anglo-Irish Studies at the University of Ulster, at Jordanstown, Northern Ireland. He is the author of several books on Swift, including *Jonathan Swift: A Literary Life* and *Jonathan's Travels: Swift and Ireland*. He is currently working on a longer study of Swift's interest in the "sister arts."

JUDITH C. MUELLER is Associate Professor of English at Franklin and Marshall College, Pennsylvania. She has published articles on Swift and on masculinity in Restoration and eighteenth-century literature and culture in such journals as *English Literary History*.

DAVID OAKLEAF is Associate Professor of English at the University of Calgary, Canada. He has edited Eliza Haywood's *Love in Excess* and published essays on eighteenth-century writers in *SEL: Studies in English Literature, Studies in the Novel, Eighteenth-Century Fiction, Eighteenth-Century Life*, and the *University of Toronto Quarterly*. With Noel Chevalier and Joyce Rappaport, Oakleaf's most recent project is *The Broadview Anthology of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature in English*.

MICHAEL F. SUAREZ, S.J. is Associate Professor of English at Fordham University, New York. His scholarly interests include bibliography and publishing history, the so-called "sister arts" and literature and the history of ideas. Along with a study of Robert Dodsley's *Collection of Poems*, he has co-edited, with Peter D. McDonald, *Making Meaning: Selected Essays of D. F. McKenzie*, and with Michael Turner, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume v, 1695-1830* (forthcoming). His current project is a study of mock-biblical satire from 1660 to 1832.

PAT ROGERS is Professor of English and the DeBartolo Professor of Liberal Arts at the University of South Florida. He is the editor of *Jonathan Swift: The Complete Poems* and the author of numerous books, including *Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture, Literature and Popular Culture in Eighteenth Century England*, *The Text of Great Britain: Theme and Design in Defoe's Tour*, and *Eighteenth Century Encounters: Studies in Literature and Society in the Age of Walpole*.

MARCUS WALSH is Professor of English Literature at the University of Birmingham. He has co-edited, with Karina Williamson, *The Poetical Works of Christopher Smart*, published by Oxford University Press, and has written extensively on Smart, Swift, Johnson, and Sterne, on the history and theory of editing, and on biblical interpretation and scholarship in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. His study of *Shakespeare, Milton, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing* was published by Cambridge University Press.

CHRONOLOGY OF SWIFT'S LIFE

- 1667 Jonathan Swift born 30 November in Hoey's Court, a fashionable area of Dublin.
- 1673 Enters school at Kilkenny, seventy miles south of Dublin.
- 1682 Enrolls in Trinity College Dublin and receives a B.A. by "special dispensation" or *speciali gratia* in 1686.
- 1688 The so-called Glorious Revolution and the War of the Two Kings (the Catholic James II versus the Protestant William of Orange) erupts and Swift leaves Ireland soon afterwards.
- 1689 Receives employment in Sir William Temple's household at Moor Park near Farnham, Surrey and meets eight-year-old Esther (or Hester) Johnson, later known as Stella.
- 1690 Visits Ireland in the year William III defeats James II at the Battle of the Boyne.
- 1691 Returns to Sir William Temple and Moor Park.
- 1692 Obtains M.A. from Oxford.
- 1695 Ordained as a priest in Dublin and takes the prebendary of Kilroot, near Belfast.
- 1696 Returns to Moor Park.
- 1699 In Ireland after Temple's death, where Swift becomes chaplain to the Earl of Berkeley and edits Temple's works.
- 1700 Becomes vicar of Laracor, County Meath and prebendary of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.
- 1701 In England with Lord Berkeley where Swift publishes his edition of the third volume of Temple's *Miscellanea* and his own *Discourse of the Contests and Dissentions Between the Nobles and the Commons in Athens and Rome*. Esther Johnson (Stella) and Rebecca Dingley move to Dublin to be near Swift.
- 1702 Receives a D.D. at Trinity College, Dublin and becomes The Reverend Dr. Swift.

- 1704 Publishes *A Tale of a Tub*, *The Battle of the Books*, and *A Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*.
- 1707 Around the time of the 1707 Union with Scotland, Swift writes *The Story of the Injured Lady* and, in London, meets Esther (or Hester) Vanhomrigh (later known as Vanessa) and the Whig writers, Joseph Addison and Richard Steele.
- 1708 While in England on Church of Ireland business, writes political and religious tracts, including *A Letter from a Member of the House of Commons in Ireland to a Member of the House of Commons in England concerning the Sacramental Test*, and begins *The Bickerstaff Papers*.
- 1709 Publishes *A Project for the Advancement of Religion* and, in Steele's *Tatler*, "The Description of the Morning."
- 1710 Back in England, meets Robert Harley, the new Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer and later Lord Treasurer, secures the so-called First Fruits for the Church of Ireland, and starts writing for the pro-government paper, *The Examiner*. Begins a private correspondence with Esther Johnson and Rebecca Dingley, now called *The Journal to Stella*.
- 1711 Publishes *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* which includes *Contests and Dissentions*, *The Sentiments of a Church of England Man*, *An Argument Against Abolishing Christianity*, *A Project for the Advancement of Religion*, *Meditation Upon a Broomstick*, *A Letter from a Member of the House of Commons in Ireland*, and *Various Thoughts*. Also publishes *The Conduct of the Allies* as part of the Tory campaign against the Duke of Marlborough.
- 1712 Publishes *A Proposal for Correcting the English Tongue*.
- 1713 Becomes Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin and returns to London, where he joins Alexander Pope, John Gay, Thomas Parnell, John Arbuthnot, and Robert Harley (now Earl of Oxford) in meetings of the Scriblerus Club.
- 1714 Publishes *The Publick Spirit of the Whigs*, which brings a fierce condemnation by the Scottish Lords, and returns to Ireland after the fall of Oxford's government and the death of Queen Anne.
- 1715 Swift falls under suspicion during the First Jacobite Rebellion, after one of his former associates, Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, is impeached and imprisoned, and another, Bolingbroke, flees to France.
- 1720 Publishes *A Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture* which lands his printer, Edward Waters, in jail.

- 1721 Publishes *A Letter to a Young Gentleman, Lately Enter'd into Holy Orders*.
- 1723 After death of Vanessa, travels extensively through Ireland.
- 1724 Publishes *The Drapier's Letters* and the government at Dublin Castle offers a reward to anyone who can identify "the Drapier."
- 1726 Visits England, stays with Pope, and publishes *Gulliver's Travels*. Swift's longest poem, *Cadenus and Vanessa*, published in Dublin and later in London.
- 1727 Visits England for the last time and stays with Alexander Pope.
- 1728 Stella dies; Swift publishes *A Short View of the State of Ireland* and begins his collaborative series of papers with Thomas Sheridan in *The Intelligencer*.
- 1729 Publishes *A Modest Proposal*.
- 1731 Publishes *The Memoirs of Captain Creighton*.
- 1733 Publishes *On Poetry: A Rhapsody* and *To a Lady*.
- 1735 Dublin publisher George Faulkner prints the first four volumes of Swift's *Works*.
- 1736 Swift writes *The Legion Club*.
- 1738 Publishes a *A Complete Collection of Genteel and Ingenious Conversation*.
- 1739 Swift's *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift* is published.
- 1742 Swift declared *non compos mentis* (of unsound mind and memory).
- 1745 Swift dies 19 October and is buried next to Stella in St. Patrick's Cathedral.

ABBREVIATIONS

- C *Correspondence*. Ed. Harold Williams. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963–65, 5 vols.
- CW *Correspondence*. Ed. David Woolley. Frankfurt-am-Main: Peter Lang, 1999–. In progress, with four volumes projected, two published at this time.
- E Ehrenpreis, Irvin. *Swift: The Man, His Works, and the Age*. London and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962–83. 3 vols.
- JS *Journal to Stella*. Ed. Harold Williams. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948. 2 vols.
- P *Poems*. Ed. Harold Williams. 2nd edn. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958, 3 vols.
- Poems* *Complete Poems*. Ed. Pat Rogers. Harmondsworth: Penguin and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.
- PW *Prose Works*. Ed. Herbert Davis *et al.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1939–74, 14 vols.

CONTENTS

<i>Notes on contributors</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>Chronology of Swift's life</i>	x
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xiii
Introduction	i
CHRISTOPHER FOX	
1 Swift's life	14
JOSEPH McMINN	
2 Politics and history	31
DAVID OAKLEAF	
3 Swift the Irishman	48
CAROLE FABRICANT	
4 Swift's reading	73
BREAN HAMMOND	
5 Swift and women	87
MARGARET ANNE DOODY	
6 Swift's satire and parody	112
MICHAEL F. SUAREZ, S.J.	
7 Swift on money and economics	128
PATRICK KELLY	
8 Language and style	146
IAN HIGGINS	

LIST OF CONTENTS

9	Swift and religion MARCUS WALSH	161
10	Swift the poet PAT ROGERS	177
11	<i>A Tale of a Tub</i> and early prose JUDITH C. MUELLER	202
12	<i>Gulliver's Travels</i> and the later writings J. PAUL HUNTER	216
13	Classic Swift SEAMUS DEANE	241
	<i>Bibliography</i>	256
	<i>Subject index</i>	266
	<i>Title index</i>	280

CHRISTOPHER FOX

Introduction

“When a true Genius appears in the World,” Swift wrote, “you may know him by this infallible Sign; that the Dunces are all in Confederacy against him”(PW 1: 242). He may well have been speaking about himself. After his death, his ghost was said to haunt the aisles of St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Dublin, complaining that “The Pamphlets wrote against me, would have form’d a Library.”¹ Jonathan Swift (1667–1745) lived a contentious life in a contentious age. The day Swift, an ordained Anglican priest, became Dean of St. Patrick’s in 1713, these lines of welcome were said to be posted on the Cathedral gate:

Look down St. *Patrick*, look we pray,
On thine own *Church* and Steeple,
Convert thy Dean, on *this great Day*,
Or else *God help* the People.²

Swift of course invited and sometimes even welcomed this response. He did so because he was first and foremost a political writer, and one who was not afraid to speak truth to power. As a political writer, Swift was a brilliant controversialist with an uncanny ability to become what he attacked and then burrow from within. During his lifetime, political writers were at a premium. Swift lived to see the emergence of the new two-party system in the wake of the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the explosion of print media after the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695. These contributed to what Jürgen Habermas has called the “growth of the public sphere.”³ In a new world of opinion-making, writers of Swift’s caliber were highly sought after by politicians such as Robert Harley (later Earl of Oxford) who understood the power of the press to shape public perception.⁴ As David Oakleaf points out in this volume, in writing for Harley and the Tory administration in the last four years of Queen Anne (1710–14), Swift “attacked what he called faction with a partisan vehemence unsurpassed even in a vehement and partisan age”

(p. 45 below). In the partisan world of party politics, the counter-attacks on Swift were fierce. "Wild Beasts are reckon'd sporting Creatures, and must be kill'd fairly," writes one opponent of Swift in 1714, "but others that are Ravenous and Cruel, are knock'd down . . . as we can find them. I have an Adversary that claims a Place in the last Class."⁵

Swift's move in the same years to the Tory party, after his early allegiance to the Whigs, was neither forgiven nor forgotten. Francis Jeffrey was still complaining about it a century later. "In public life, we do not know where we could have found any body," he said in 1816, who so "openly deserted and libelled his party." Whatever may be Swift's merits as a writer, "we do not hesitate to say, that he was despicable as a politician, and hateful as a man."⁶ Calling this attack on Swift "a sharp, slashing, libelous assault, as if he were in the dock, and somebody had hired a rhetorician to get him hanged," one nineteenth-century commentator would remark: "It is not to be wondered at that Swift has had various treatment. You know he acted in public life with the Tory party; so of course the Whigs assail him."⁷ The critic, William Hazlitt, would agree that Jeffrey "does not seem to have forgotten the party politics of Swift" and add that "I do not carry my political resentments so far back: I can at this time of day forgive Swift for having been a Tory."⁸ Few showed such tolerance. And the winners – the Whigs, as Herbert Butterfield reminds us – wrote the history.⁹ Years after Hazlitt, in the same *Edinburgh Review* in which Jeffrey had written, Macaulay would continue to refer to Swift as "the apostate politician" with "a heart burning with hatred against the whole human race . . ."¹⁰

In looking at Swift, it is important to recall this highly politicized early history and the ways in which he was written into it and out of it. Macaulay's comment points to another factor, besides partisan politics, that has shaped and sometimes slanted representations of Swift and his work. This is the author's reputed misanthropy, usually connected with his critique of the then-emerging belief in human benevolence. In Swift's view, human nature was radically flawed from the start.¹¹ As a moralist, he inherited a tradition that saw human nature itself as inherently self-serving and corrupt, and the original sin, pride, as a "main cause of psychological distortion," of "prejudice, misperception, misunderstanding, and worse, delusion, in one's thinking about oneself and everything else."¹² In a letter to Alexander Pope on September 29, 1725, Swift tied this view to his best-known work, *Gulliver's Travels*: "I have got Materials Towards a Treatise proving the falsity of that Definition *animal rationale*; and to show it should be only *rationis capax*. Upon this great foundation of Misanthropy (though not in Timons manner) The Whole building of my Travels is erected" (C III: 103). Timon of Athens,

the subject of works by Lucian and Shakespeare, was the archetypal hater of humankind. In his letter, Swift differentiates his own position from Timon's by arguing that he does not hate specific people; he just does not expect very much from them. Man is not a rational animal (*animal rationale*) but an animal capable of reason (*rationis capax*). Swift would later tell Pope and his friends that "after all I do not hate Mankind, it is vous autres [you others] who hate them because you would have them reasonable Animals, and are angry for being disappointed. I have always rejected that Definition and made another of my own" (C III: 118).

Swift's ideas here were not always shared by others, especially those beginning to entertain newer views of human nature. In his time, thinkers such as the third Earl of Shaftesbury were arguing that, far from being selfish and fallen, human nature is basically benevolent. Perhaps the only fall we have experienced is the belief that we are fallen. These ideas would later be developed by writers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who would argue that not people but the institutions that surround them are corrupt. By the middle of Swift's century, the belief in human benevolence began to carry the day, as did a new stress on the importance on the individual. This brought with it a corresponding redefinition of pride. During the eighteenth century, this first medieval sin became the main modern virtue and the cornerstone of the new individualism.

This helps explain one reason why Swift was soon maligned as a misanthrope. In the first full-length critical consideration of the author – *Remarks on the Life and Writings of Jonathan Swift* (1751) – the Earl of Orrery took the newer path and found Swift's satire on human pride and pretense in *Gulliver's Travels* to be "a real insult upon mankind." In the story of the humanoid and grotesque Yahoos in Book IV especially, Orrery says, Swift "has indulged a misanthropy that is intolerable. The representation which he has given us of human nature, must terrify, and even debase the mind of the reader who views it." Though consistent with centuries of Christian belief in original sin, Swift's satire was linked by Orrery instead to a pathological "disposition" that caused the author "to ridicule human nature itself."¹³

Friends of Swift rushed to correct this view, among them Patrick Delany, who argued that far from being a misanthrope, the author of *Gulliver's Travels* managed "to do more charities, in a greater variety of ways . . . than perhaps any other man of his fortune in the world."¹⁴ Along with giving away much of what he earned to the Dublin poor, Swift left his entire fortune to found the first mental hospital in Ireland, St. Patrick's Hospital (which is still there). As he had said himself:

He gave what little wealth he had,
 To build a house for fools and mad:
 And showed by one satiric touch,
 No nation wanted it so much.

(*Poems* 498)

Challenging the charge of misanthropy, others would point to Swift's wide circle of friends, both male and female. (As Margaret Doody suggests in this volume, Swift's friendship with women was something Lord Orrery simply could not understand.) Still others would note the love fellow Irish Protestants showed Swift after he had vigorously defended them against English authorities in *The Drapier's Letters* of 1724–25, where he had argued that “in Reason, all Government without the Consent of the Governed, is the *very Definition of Slavery*” (PW x: 63). After traveling to London in 1726 to drop off the manuscript of *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift returned home (if the report can be believed) in triumph:

In his return to Dublin, upon notice that the ship in which he sailed was in the bay, several heads of different corporations, and principal citizens of Dublin went out to meet him in a great number of wherries engaged for that purpose, in order to welcome him back. He had the pleasure to find his friend Dr. Sheridan, in company with a number of his intimates, at the side of the ship, ready to receive him into their boat, with the agreeable tidings that [his friend Stella, who had been ill] was past all danger. The boats, adorned with streamers, and colours . . . made a fine appearance; and thus was the Drapier brought to his landing-place in a kind of triumph, where he was received on shore by a multitude of his grateful countrymen, by whom he was conducted to his house amid repeated acclamations, of *Long live the Drapier*. The bells were set a ringing, and bonfires kindled in every street.¹⁵

Somehow, this does not accord with Lord Orrery's misanthrope. But Orrery's view prevailed.

The hostile response to Swift that began to set in from several fronts was reinforced by stories surrounding the tragic circumstances of his last years. In 1742, at age seventy-five, in an action taken by his friends to protect him, Swift was legally declared *non compos mentis* or of “unsound mind and memory.” After three more years of deafness and ghastly suffering, Swift died (in Johnson's words) “a driveller and a show.”¹⁶ Soon after his death and the publication of Orrery's *Remarks*, Swift came to be pictured as one of his own dark creations, a decrepit and deranged old Strudlbrugg or a dirty and disgusting Yahoo. As Allen Reddick points out, Swift's protracted final illness and death “became a cautionary tale told over and over again” as a moral exemplum and a just punishment for his misanthropy. Focusing on