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Preface

The Seventh Münster Symposium on Jonathan Swift was an extraordinary event in many respects. While all of the previous Symposia have enjoyed the reputation of having been wonderful combinations of erudition, stimulation, and friendliness, the Seventh perhaps outdid them, in however small, almost imperceptible ways. In the first place, a festive and exuberant mood pervaded the Alexander-von-Humboldt Haus in June 2017 from the start. To one extent, this atmosphere was created by the fact that the delegates who had gathered from several remote corners of the world – Australia, England, France, Ireland, Scotland, the United States, Wales, and Germany – for three days of learned lectures and animated discussions (including a Round Table on “Reading Swift in the Twenty-First Century”) knew that they had come together to celebrate the 350th birthday of the Dean, THE Dean, the only Dean in the history of Ireland; to another, it was due to the awareness that the event was honoured by the patronage as well as the presence of H. E. Michael Collins, the Irish Ambassador to Germany, who was not only kind enough to open the Symposium with a most complimentary speech, which paid warm tribute to the achievements of the Münster Swift ‘industry’ (see Derek Scally's report in The Irish Times of 20 June 2018), but who also gladly engaged in conversation with the international crowd of Prestophiles. His Excellency was greeted by warm addresses of welcome by Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Michael Quante on behalf of the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, and Mayor Wendela-Beate Vilhjalmsson on behalf of the City of Münster, and the editors would like to express their deepest gratitude to all three of them.

At times when the struggling for funds has very much become part of the academic routine – and more often than not, with disappointing results – we expressly wish to acknowledge the financial support of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Council). Likewise, we extend warmest thanks to our alma mater, in particular to Dr Anke Kohl, Head of the University’s International Office, and to the Dean of the Faculty of Philology, Professor Eric Achermann. At Headquarters, we are greatly obliged to the professional advice of Vanessa Dartmann and Christiane Thieleke of the University’s marketing staff, as well as to our favourite ‘ministering angel,’ Petra Miech, for her able administrative assistance.

In addition to being a festival of scholarship, a Münster Symposium on Jonathan Swift has always been what the Greek root suggests it is: a convivial meeting. Prestophiles tend to think here of Sir William Temple’s apophthegm
concluding the *Essay upon Ancient and Modern Learning*, “that among so many things as are by Men possessed or pursued in the Course of their Lives, all the rest are but Bawbles, Besides Old Wood to Burn, Old Wine to Drink, Old Friends to Converse with, and Old Books to Read.” In other words, we have reason to be grateful, for genial hospitality and culinary conviviality, to the Hotel Mövenpick and Landhaus Eggert as well as to Franz and Hannah Lauter at Schloss Nordkirchen, truly the Westphalian Versailles. Last but not least, we would like to record our indebtedness to Professor Klaus Stierstorfer, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Philology, who hosted a charming and delightful reception for the conference delegates at the Ehrenpreis Centre.

In Sir William Temple’s enumeration, one field is conspicuously absent: that of music. To make up for this failure, the convenors decided to organize a workshop with Gerald Resch, the Austrian composer of a new family opera entitled *Gullivers Reise*, and members of the ensemble of the Oper Dortmund, where the opera had premiered in May 2017. The evening turned out a great success, with Gerald Resch vivaciously explaining origins and intentions as well as the modalities of the creative process, and Hans-Peter Frings, deputy director of the Oper Dortmund, the conductor Ingo Martin Stadtmüller, and the singers Joshua Whitener (Gulliver) and Almerija Delic (Vaniliput) on the panel taking questions from the audience and illustrating their points with samples from the opera. The author John von Düffel, who could not be present due to a commitment in Berlin, was kind enough to send a video message. All this while, Dr Michael Bähr was a brilliant Master of Ceremonies.

However, it takes more than convenors, financiers, and institutions to run the show, and we are therefore eager to show our appreciation to all who watched on the sidelines ready to step in whenever their services – bibliographical and electronic, material and moral – were called for: our dear Julia Barisch, the dutiful Ulrich Elkmann of the Ehrenpreis Centre, our dedicated friends Dr Sabine Baltes-Ellermann and Dr Marga Munkelt, Dr Dirk Passmann, the trusted Vice Chairman of the Friends, and, in fitting conclusion, our loved ones Dr Michael Bähr, George and Holde Juhas, and Erika, the one and only, who has now successfully shouldered the burden of seven Symposia.

Finally, as in 2013, the task always following the party, namely to make the scholarly efforts of the Münster Prestophiles available to the worldwide community of Swiftians, was greatly facilitated by a generous grant of the Sparkasse Münsterland Ost, and our most grateful thanks go again to Julia Bergmann and Anna Boeldicke. Given that *post festum* almost all delegates wrote in praising “the outstanding scholarship,” the “intellectual stimulation,” and “congenial company,” with which the Symposium, “a truly great celebration
of Presto,” had provided them, we would like to assure our sponsors that their money has been well spent, and in a noble cause, too. *Vivant sequentes!*

Münster, April 2018

Hermann J. Real, Kirsten Juhas, and Janika Bischof
Abbreviations


Correspondence, ed. Woolley The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D.D., ed. David Woolley, I: Letters 1690-1714 (nos 1-300) (Frankfurt on Main: Peter Lang, 1999); II: Letters 1714-1726 (nos 301-700) (Frankfurt on Main: Peter Lang, 2001); III: Letters 1726-1734 (nos 701-1100) (Frankfurt on Main: Peter Lang, 2003); IV: Letters 1734-1745 (nos 1101-1508) (Frankfurt on Main: Peter Lang, 2007), V: Index (Frankfurt on Main: Peter Lang, 2014).


ABBREVIATIONS


Abbreviations of periodicals are those of the “Master List of Periodicals” of the *MLA International Bibliography.*
BIOGRAPHICAL ASPECTS


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**What Do Young Men Know?**  
**All-Too-Powerful Inferences Masquerading as Facts**

**Abstract.** Jonathan Swift’s first three full-length biographers – the Earl of Orrery, Deane Swift, and the younger Thomas Sheridan – were all young men when they met Swift, and in preparing for their publications were able to learn very little about Swift’s first thirty years. Consequently, they frequently drew ill-founded inferences about Swift’s early years, which later biographers have too often taken for facts, and which in turn too often have been used to explain and interpret Swift’s later works. As we move forward in Swift biography and criticism, we should be more conscious than we have been of how fragile these inferences are when we are tempted to lean on them.

Nature abhors a vacuum, but biographers get excited about vacuums. For the 265 years since John Boyle, fifth Earl of Cork and Orrery, wrote his Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift (1752), there has been little controversy over Swift’s intentions in his *Examiner* papers, about Swift’s daily life in London between 1711 and 1713, or about his thinking as he was working on his *Drapier’s Letters*, all situations that are well documented. But there has been a great deal of controversy among Swift’s biographers about whether or not he married Esther Johnson, about whether or not he ever liked his sister Jane, or about whether his mother neglected him during his childhood. The reason we have these and many other controversies about Swift’s life is that his first three full-length biographers – Orrery, Deane Swift, and the younger Thomas Sheridan – were only 25, 31, and 16, respectively, when they first met Swift, or at least when they first dealt with him in anything like an adult friendship. The Dean himself was 64, 70, and 68, respectively, when he began to engage with these young men, and his temperament and his memory were increasingly failing him.1 The young men not only did not know Swift’s youth but did not understand his age. Thomas Sheridan was well aware of these young-man drawbacks. In his Introduction, he wrote of Orrery, “To draw [Swift’s] character

1 Swift lost much of his enthusiasm for life in January 1728, shortly after his 60th birthday, with the death of Esther Johnson. His memory began to fail him seriously in 1733, in his 66th year. In that year, he wrote to Charles Ford, who was gathering materials for Swift’s collected works: ‘In Your Catalogue of Pamphlets there are some I do not remember. I mean, *Journy to Paris*, *Remarks about Greg, Peace and Dunkirk*, *Windsor Prophesy*, *Pretenders Lettr to a Whig Lord*. I fancy I did not write any of these’ (*Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, III, 708-9).
at length, from observations made at such a [late] period [in his life], was the height of injustice; and yet his Lordship had no opportunity of knowing any thing of the brighter part of his days, but from common report." But then, we should perhaps be glad not to have several more than the mother, sister, and marriage controversies that we have, because in the enthusiasm of Orrery, Deane Swift, and Sheridan to put together comprehensive biographies of Swift, they frequently followed the temptation of youth and recorded inferences they had drawn about Swift as if they were facts. In many cases, these inferences have been accepted, or nearly accepted, as facts ever since.3

Swift wrote gracious compliments of both Orrery and Deane Swift shortly after meeting them. He succumbed to one of his frequent and inaccurate enthusiasms for young men with potential in writing to Pope about Orrery in 1733. "I have not known for his age a more valuable Person."4 Orrery was well versed in the classics. Otherwise, it is difficult to ascertain what it was about Orrery that led Swift to be even temporarily impressed. In April 1739, he complimented Deane Swift, also in a letter recommending him to Pope:5 "He hath a very good Taste for Wit, writes agreeable and entertaining Verses, and is a perfect Master equally skilled in the best Greek and Roman Authors. He hath a true Spirit for Liberty, and with all these Advantages, is extremely decent and modest."6 Swift was apparently forgetting that in 1725 when Deane was 18, he had in a letter to Stafford Lightburne called Deane a "Puppy."7 But Swift was prone to writing blandly positive letters of recommendation before knowing his subjects very thoroughly. The surviving evidence suggests that Swift held both Orrery and Deane Swift in contempt, at least once he had come to know each better.8 Of young Thomas Sheridan, Swift seems to have been fond.

3 Sheridan, John Hawkesworth, and Sir Walter Scott rarely go beyond the earlier biographies of Orrery and Deane Swift, which has strengthened the influence of these earlier biographies, all now conveniently assembled in The Lives of Jonathan Swift, ed. Daniel Cook, 3 vols (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).
4 Correspondence, ed. Woolley, III, 661. He wrote to Charles Ford in 1732, “Ld Orrery stays here [in Dublin] this winter. I meet him sometimes at dinners … He seems an honest man, and of good dispositions” (Correspondence, ed. Woolley, III, 547).
5 Correspondence, ed. Woolley, IV, 576.
6 Correspondence, ed. Woolley, IV, 575-76.
7 “I am grieved at the Difficultyes your Adversaryes Family must be under by their own wrong Proceedings, and should be more so if that Puppy who is heir had not so behaved himself as to forfeit all Regard or Pity” (Correspondence, ed. Woolley, II, 553).
8 Swift wrote to Lord Orrery on 19 October 1735, beginning with some raillery that is a bit harsh and goes on too long. “I own I have received many very friendly and entertaining Letters from you during your absence, and never answered one of them; And what of all that? Am I
But Sheridan’s strength, his skill at storytelling, proved equally to have been a weakness, as he frequently enhanced stories about Swift, already at bottom shaky in their foundations, with additional persuasive-sounding but unlikely details. What we know about Orrery, Deane Swift, and Sheridan does not lead us to trust them, and yet in many cases we continue to believe what they believed, most misleadingly, Swift’s brief account of his own first 33 years, probably written in 1738 when he was 71.9

I do not mean to suggest that Orrery, Deane Swift, or Thomas Sheridan were fools. They raised many of the issues that are still constructively debated among Swift’s readers. All three biographies are impressive in their scope and in the cogency of many of their critical assessments. Both Sheridan and Deane Swift complained that Orrery, the first to publish, was malicious in his biography, but I think that Orrery was trying to write an even-handed work. The problem was that he wrote with very little evidence other than the few and widely separated days that he spent with Swift, and Swift’s works that had been published by 1752. Orrery honestly felt that Swift was a little odd, and I am sure he was right.
Swift’s account, in his autobiographical notes, of his being kidnapped by his nurse serves as an excellent illustration of the way that inferences about Swift have metamorphosed into apparent facts:

When he was a year old,10 an event happened to him that seems very unusual; for his nurse, who was a woman of Whitehaven, being under an absolute necessity of seeing one of her relations, who was then extremely sick, and from whom she expected a legacy; and being extremely fond of the infant, she stole him on ship-board unknown to his mother and uncle, and carried him with her to Whitehaven, where he continued for almost three years. For, when the matter was discovered, his mother sent orders by all means not to hazard a second voyage, till he could be better able to bear it. The nurse was so careful of him, that before he returned he had learnt to spell; and by the time that he was five years old, he could read any chapter in the bible.11

Lest we accept the dates of this account too literally, Swift offers an alternative though more casual explanation of his birth and early years in a letter he wrote to Francis Grant on 23 March 1734: “I happened indeed by a perfect Accident to be born [in Ireland], my Mother being left here from returning to her House at Leicester, and I was a Year old before I was sent to England.”12 By 1734, when Swift wrote this letter, he was 67 and profoundly discouraged by Irish politics. During his 60s and 70s, he sometimes hated to acknowledge his Irishness, and his inventiveness never failed him when he needed a story.

Swift’s casual comment here, implying that his mother was born in Leicester and wanted to return there with him, certainly not true, and primarily a convenience for his 1734 self-image, has coloured the lenses of many biographers, so that they believe that Swift’s mother did not stay long in Ireland while Jonathan was growing up. Lord Orrery misled us from the start, writing that “Mrs. Swift, about two years after her husband’s death, quitted Ireland, and retired to Leicester, the place of her nativity.”13 Orrery is wrong about Abigail Swift’s place of nativity – it was Dublin and not Leicester – and he offers no evidence that she “retired” in 1669, when Swift was two, to Leicester. Presumably, Orrery was inferring from Swift’s letter to Grant, which Grant published in

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10 Swift wrote of himself in these notes in the third person.
12 Prose Works, XIII, 11; Correspondence, ed. Woolley, III, 730. No evidence survives of who Swift’s nurse was, of any further contact with her, or of any visits to Whitehaven. This inattentiveness is uncharacteristic of Swift, and his story of being kidnapped is reminiscent of a fairy tale.
13 Boyle, John, fifth Earl of Cork and Orrery, Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick’s, Dublin, in a Series of Letters ... to his Son, the Honourable Hamilton Boyle (London: A. Millar, 1752), p. 10.
1749. Neither Deane Swift nor Sheridan thought enough of Orrery’s speculation to make any mention of Swift’s mother leaving Ireland during Swift’s youth. Deane Swift simply follows Swift’s own autobiographical account without adding any melodrama except in asserting a strong friendship between his grandfather (Swift’s uncle), Godwin Swift, and Sir John Temple, Sir William Temple’s father. John Hawkesworth, though, in his 1755 biography of Swift, was even more misleading than Orrery. After reporting, in imitation of Orrery, that Abigail left for England while Swift was in the hands of his nurse, Hawkesworth resorts to invention influenced by Deane Swift’s partiality towards his grandfather Godwin: “But her son was again carried to Ireland by his nurse, and replaced under the protection of his Uncle Godwin.”14 None of these men – neither Orrery nor Deane Swift nor Hawkesworth – knew anything at first hand of any of the circumstances that they were talking about.15 They extrapolate either from Swift’s autobiographical account, which never places his mother in England until 1688 when Swift was 21, or from other comments, oral or written, that Swift made in his late 60s and 70s, when he was prone to entertain himself by making up stories. By the time Swift was 60, none of his friends, of course, knew anything about his pre-Trinity-College years, so none of his biographers had any versions of his early years, other than Swift’s, to rely on.

The casual, unsubstantiated remarks by Swift’s eighteenth-century biographers have been largely accepted even by Swift’s recent biographers. Alan Downie, so right about so many aspects of Swift’s life and character, conflates the accounts of Orrery and Hawkesworth on this issue: “About two Years after her Husband’s Death, [Abigail] quitted the Family of Mr. Godwin Swift, in Ireland, and retired to Leicester.”16 Irvin Ehrenpreis thoughtfully, but with no evidence, includes Swift’s sister Jane in their mother’s ‘move’ to Leicester: “While her son was at school, Mrs Swift did not remain in Ireland but moved with his sister to Leicester.”17 More recently, Leo Damrosch also accepts this
story as truth: “When Swift was finally brought back to Dublin ... his mother, Abigail, left for England, taking Jane with her and settling permanently in Leicester ... Jonathan Swift was now effectively an orphan.” David Nokes, assuming these ‘facts,’ speculates: “The evidence suggests that [Swift’s mother] neglected him in an age when neglect of children was not the invariable rule that has sometimes been claimed ... It may have been Abigail Swift who instilled in him an instinctive association of love and distance.” The apparent callousness of Swift’s mother during these early years, attributed to her by so many of Swift’s biographers, explains for many readers all too well Swift’s peculiarities of character, and stressing those peculiarities of character in turn distracts our attention from Swift’s purposes in writing his pamphlets, poems, and satires.

But the commonly accepted story of Abigail Swift’s leaving Jonathan in Ireland by the age of six and making a home for herself in Leicester makes little sense, and in most cases fails to consider that she had a daughter as well as a son. If Abigail was eager to live with her relatives in Leicester, why would she have stayed in Dublin with her daughter Jane between 1668 and 1671 when she could have easily reclaimed Jonathan from his nurse on the English side of the Irish sea and brought him to Leicester to grow up? Why, if Abigail and Jane did go to Leicester before Swift started school, did he not come with them and attend the free grammar school in Leicester? With respect to Jane, is it plausible that Abigail left Jane at age eight with relatives in Dublin and settled for her own convenience in Leicester? It is equally unlikely that Abigail took Jane to Leicester and raised her there, because if she did, why would Jane return to Dublin to marry a farrier (a blacksmith/veterinarian) in 1699? We know that Jane was living with her Uncle William in Dublin in 1692. She was also listed as a resident “of Bride Street,” as was William, at the time of her marriage in 1699. Her marriage to a Dublin tradesman at the age of 33 suggests that she was raised primarily not in Leicester but in Dublin. We ought to expect stronger

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evidence than Orrery’s assertion before we believe that Abigail Swift left either one or two children in Ireland while she lived comfortably in England.

Orrery first set us thinking that Swift had an unhappy and unloved childhood with several assumptions he made: first, he wrote about Swift’s first 33 years plagiarizing from Swift’s account without attribution, and as if it were fact; second, he assumed that with the 1658 death of Swift’s grandfather, his grandmother was consequently out of the picture; third, he inferred, offering no evidence, that “the care, tuition, and expence of [Abigail Swift’s] two children devolved upon her husband’s elder brother, Mr. GODWIN SWIFT, who voluntarily became their guardian;” fourth, he inferred from Swift’s autobiographical notes that while at Trinity Jonathan suffered from the “ill treatment of his nearest Relations,” and that he was ungrateful to his relatives; fifth, Orrery stressed the disappointment of Swift’s early years (which is not evident in any surviving source except in Swift’s autobiographical notes), and then he used that supposed disappointment to explain Swift’s later disappointments. Swift noted in his autobiographical account, for example, that King William ignored his “promise” of a Canterbury or Westminster prebend. Orrery from this comment draws a far-too-dramatic inference: “From this first disappointment, may probably be dated that bitterness towards kings, and courtiers, which is to be found so universally dispersed throughout his works.” Finally, Orrery assumed that Swift had a youthful moroseness of temper: “The moroseness of his temper, often rendered him very unacceptable to his companions; so that he was little regarded, and less beloved.” But there is NO evidence that Swift was morose as a young man.

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22 Orrery, Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, p. 9.
23 And swayed, I believe, only by Swift's comment to him that he was born at 7 Hoey's Court (Eugene Hammond, Jonathan Swift: Irish Blow-In [Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 2016], p. 11n).
24 Orrery, Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, p. 10.
25 Prose Works, V, 192. Which could have been Godwin Swift and his wife withholding money from his “portion” that he thought he was due.
26 Orrery includes as evidence Swift's letter to his uncle William, but is disappointed in the style of it. Orrery also draws an inference that taints Swift: “Or perhaps the letter was rather the effect of duty than inclination, and in that case, the style of it must be illaborate, and void of all freedom and vivacity” (Orrery, Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, p. 18).
27 Prose Works, V, 195.
28 Orrery, Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, p. 29. Orrery comments further, “Disappointments, the earlier they happen in life, the deeper impression they make upon the heart” (p. 12).
29 Orrery, Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, p. 10. This comment gave birth to the notion that Swift was a difficult young man, a notion that Samuel Richardson
In his biography, Orrery made several other questionable assumptions. He was the first to call Esther Johnson “Stella” outside the poetic context. He assumed that Swift and Esther Johnson married in 1716. He implied that Swift hastened the deaths of the key women in his life, Esthers Johnson and Vanhomrigh. He was the first to tell the improbable story of a Swift ride to Celbridge just before Esther Vanhomrigh died. In supposed explanation of Swift’s supposed objection to his sister Jane’s choice of a husband in 1700, and to his unwillingness to avow his supposed marriage to Esther Johnson, Orrery projects a class prejudice onto Swift that Swift did not share. Orrery admired Horace greatly, and because Swift as a poet did not behave and carry himself the way that Horace did, Orrery underestimates Swift’s poetry. Steeped in his class prejudice, Orrery accused Swift of “depraved taste” in companions after he returned to Dublin in 1714. Taking literary licence, Orrery dramatized the misery of Swift’s final years, writing that Swift’s lifelong dizziness and deafness eventually “render[ed] him the exact image of one of his own Struldbruggs, a miserable spectacle, devoid of every appearance of human nature, except the outward form.” Most fundamentally of all, Orrery’s view of life was too shallow for him to understand reinforced: Richardson in 1752 claimed to have heard from Jack Temple, who inherited Moor Park, that “Sir William hired Swift, at his first entrance into the world, to read to him and sometimes to be his amanuensis, at the rate of £20 a year and his board, which was then high preferment to him; but Sir William never favoured him with his conversation, because of his ill qualities, nor allowed him to sit down at table with him” (Samuel Richardson to Lady Bradshaigh, 22 April 1752, in The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld [London: Richard Phillips, 1804], VI, 173-74.) This idea that Swift had life-and-death power over the women in his life has had considerable stamina. Harold Williams wrote in a footnote to Swift’s 1700 letter to Jane Waring, “Varina died unmarried, from which, perhaps, evidential conclusions may be drawn” (Correspondence, ed. Williams, I, 36n1). Orrery wrote of Swift, “He grew outrageous at the thoughts of being brother-in-law to a tradesman. He utterly refused all reconciliation with his sister, nor ever would listen to the entreaties of his mother, who came over to Ireland, under almost a certainty of pacifying his anger, having, in all other respects, ever found him a dutiful, and an obedient son; but his pride was not to be conquered, and Mrs. Swift finding her son inflexible, hastened back to Leicester, where she continued till her death” (Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, p. 33). These stories seem to have been invented out of whole cloth, perhaps stimulated by Swift’s peeved attitude towards his sister during the 1730s. Swift assumed that class rankings should govern a society, but he did not characteristically look down on others simply because of their class. “From Swift’s settlement in Dublin as Dean of St. Patrick’s, his choice of companions in general shewed him of a very depraved taste” (Orrery, Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, pp. 67-68). Orrery, Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, p. 19.
Swift’s aim in his satire: “In those tracts, where he tries to make us uneasy with ourselves, and unhappy in our present existence, there, I must yield him up entirely to censure.”34 Orrery is the first commentator on Swift to assume that Swift was a ‘misanthrope.’35 We have been digging out of several Orrery-built holes since 1752.

I would like to insert a few words here about Patrick Delany’s 1754 Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks, because Delany met Swift at least 15 years earlier than any of Swift’s young biographers. Unlike Orrery, Deane Swift, and Sheridan, Delany lived with Swift weekly if not daily for twenty years; and he was not quite as young as they were (he met Swift in 1718 when he was 32 and Swift was 50). First of all, Delany celebrates with utter confidence and conviction Swift’s public admirability.36 Delany’s comments and evidence persuade me that Swift was more admirable than he is generally assumed to have been, but, following in Orrery’s footsteps, we usually seem to believe that it is a sign of mental toughness to emphasize Swift’s faults rather than that admirability.

Delany does not agree, and he had plenty of experience with Swift to base this opinion on, that Swift was avaricious.37 Nor that he was vulnerable to adulation.38 Nor that he was excessively ambitious.39 Nor that he disliked his sister.40 Nor that he learned his use of scurrilous language by mixing with the poor.41 Nor that he chose ill Irish friends.42 Nor that Temple was Swift’s father.43 Nor that his religion was less than fully sincere.44 Delany is, though wrong on the publication date of Cadenus and Vanessa,45 a seemingly reliable witness of the tension between Esther Vanhomrigh and Esther Johnson. Delany consistently found Swift’s poems better than Orrery thought them.46

34 Orrery, Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, p. 325.
35 Swift was not afraid to face squarely the underside of human behaviour, but he was by no means a hater of people. He wrote to try to work with us.
37 Delany, Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks, p. 4.
38 Delany, Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks, pp. 15, 18.
40 Delany, Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks, p. 71.
41 Delany, Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks, p. 73. Delany thought Swift learned it from Pope. I think he learned it at school.
42 Delany, Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks, pp. 90-91.
43 Delany, Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks, p. 73.
44 Delany, Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks, p. 44.
45 Delany assumes that Cadenus and Vanessa appeared before Esther Vanhomrigh died in 1723, not as it did in 1726 (Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks, p. 57).
46 Delany, Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks, p. 135.
He agreed that Swift was rough on company in his last years, but he draws an important distinction: “I have heard the Dean often charged with ill-nature: indeed I cannot remember any one instance of that kind.”\textsuperscript{47} He found, contrary to the usual interpretation, Swift a very conscientious manager of St Patrick’s vicars choral.\textsuperscript{48} And alone of Swift’s early biographers, Delany recognized and emphasized how important becoming historiographer was to Swift – “no man was better fitted for any employment, than he was, for that”\textsuperscript{49} – a crucial insight because it enables us to free Swift from being seen as merely a satirist.

Delany, though, has also misled us in several areas where he does not seem to have had full information. He did not know any more about Swift’s early life than Orrery did, writing to Orrery: “Your account of Swift’s birth, parentage, and education, is so just, that, I believe, nothing is to be added to it.”\textsuperscript{50} Delany was uncertain about Esther Johnson’s birth and mixed up about it.\textsuperscript{51} He also gave a significant boost to Orrery’s speculation that Swift had married Esther Johnson by writing, though he was not sure, “Your account of his marriage, is, I am satisfied, true.”\textsuperscript{52} Delany reinforced Orrery’s insinuation that Swift was responsible for Esther Johnson’s death: “Her chagrin, and sickness … followed soon, and sensibly increased after [the publication of \textit{Cadenus and Vanessa}].”\textsuperscript{53} Delany praises Swift for allowing Esther Johnson, whom he assumed to be Swift’s wife, to make her own will (though the fact that she made her own will is, on the contrary, evidence against her having been his wife).\textsuperscript{54}

From reading Delany’s many religious writings, particularly his defences of the Biblical King David’s moral character, Delany appears to have been sincere, but seriously naïve, so it is not surprising that he basically agrees with Orrery about \textit{Gulliver’s Travels} being too critical of human nature\textsuperscript{55} and that Swift was a misanthrope.\textsuperscript{56}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{47} Delany, \textit{Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks}, p. 188.
\item \textsuperscript{48} Delany, \textit{Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks}, p. 189.
\item \textsuperscript{49} Delany, \textit{Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks}, p. 86.
\item \textsuperscript{50} Delany, \textit{Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks}, p. 48. Delany writes, “Mrs. Johnston, and Mrs. Dingley, were both relations to Sir William Temple … Mrs. Johnston then was not the daughter of Sir William’s menial servant; at least if she was, that servant was his relation” (\textit{Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks}, p. 54).
\item \textsuperscript{51} Delany writes, “Mrs. Johnston, and Mrs. Dingley, were both relations to Sir William Temple … Mrs. Johnston then was not the daughter of Sir William’s menial servant; at least if she was, that servant was his relation” (\textit{Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks}, p. 54).
\item \textsuperscript{52} Delany, \textit{Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks}, pp. 52-53.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Delany, \textit{Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks}, p. 59. It is not clear whether Delany here was assuming that \textit{Cadenus and Vanessa} was published in 1723 or in 1726.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Delany, \textit{Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks}, p. 288.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Delany, \textit{Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks}, pp. 138, 161, 171.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Delany, \textit{Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks}, p. 176.
\end{itemize}
In 1755, a year after Delany and three years after Orrery, Deane Swift entered the biographical fray. Deane Swift’s helpfulness as a biographer was considerable. He was impressed with Swift’s mother, and offers plausible evidence for his admiration: Abigail Swift, he writes, was a woman greatly beloved and esteemed by all the family of the Swifts. Her conversation was so extremely polite, cheerful and agreeable even to the young and sprightly that some of the family, who paid her a visit near fifty years ago at Leicester, speak of her to this day with the greatest affection. I am told she was of a generous and hospitable nature, that she was very exact in all the duties of religion, and paid her attendance at the publick worship generally twice a day ... that her chief amusements were needle-work and reading, and that she was equally fond of both her children, notwithstanding some disagreements that subsisted between them.

Deane also is in sympathy with Swift’s choice most often to walk when he travelled during his 20s:

His company in those flights were, I believe, all sorts of people which he met in towns and villages where he chanced to refresh himself; some chat for an hour, and again to the fields. His imagination was always alive, and perhaps beyond all others he had a power to conciliate his ideas to the several capacities of all [the] human race, and at the same time catch entertainment to himself from every species of understanding.

Deane followed eighteenth-century convention in placing Swift’s “Mrs Harris’s Petition” in the category of “low humour,” but he clearly enjoyed and admired the poem. He recognized the greatness of A Tale of a Tub, “this great and mighty bulwark of our glorious reformation.” He showed excellent taste also in praising Swift’s several works of 1708:

We may observe the genius of Dr. Swift to break forth upon us in the year 1708 with such an astonishing blaze of humour, politicks, religion, patriotism, wit and poetry; that if the world had been totally unacquainted with all his former reputation, the productions of that one year would have been highly sufficient to have established his fame unto all eternity.

57 Deane Swift’s choice to characterize the difficulties between Swift and his sister Jane as “disagreements” seems more in keeping with the surviving evidence than does the stubborn and complete separation between them that is usually assumed.
59 Deane Swift, An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character, p. 100.
60 Deane Swift, An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character, p. 32.
61 Deane Swift, An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character, p. 131.
More particularly, he enthused,

The Argument against abolishing Christianity, which is the production of the same year, is according to the best of my judgment the most delicate, refined, compleat, unvaried piece of irony, from the beginning to the end, that ever was written since the creation of the world.⁶²

Many people since Deane Swift have not been able to see as clearly as he did the excellence of Swift’s political writings:

These are a course of writings not to be considered in the light of occasional pamphlets, or little poultry journals thrown into the world by some hackney jade in the defence of Corruption, and to serve the iniquitous designs of a party. No, these writings are to be considered, and read over and over again, as lectures of true unprejudiced constitutional politicks.⁶³

And Deane was savvy about Swift’s political principles: “[The principles of a moderate Whig, as articulated in his Letter from a Member of the House of Commons in Ireland to a Member of the House of Commons in England] were the political principles of Dr. Swift, from which I am persuaded that he never once swerved throughout his whole life.”⁶⁴

On the other hand, Deane Swift sounds like a lunatic whenever an issue related to the Swift family comes up in his biography. Orrery casually wrote that Swift was the greatest luminary in his family. Deane Swift had not even reached page 3 of his biography before he expressed his anger at Orrery for the supposedly critical light in which that remark placed the Swifts: “I am wholly at a loss to conceive, what invidious spirit, enemy to candor, friendship, and benevolence, could have instigated one of our modern criticks to asperse the remains of an old, faithful, and loyal family at so unmerciful a rate.”⁶⁵

Though an Anglophile himself, Deane Swift thoroughly admired Swift’s defence of Ireland against the exploitation of England.⁶⁶ He had mixed feelings

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⁶² Deane Swift, An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character, p. 135.
⁶³ Deane Swift, An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character, p. 150.
⁶⁴ Deane Swift, An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character, p. 130. See also Downie, Jonathan Swift: Political Writer, pp. ix-x.
⁶⁵ Deane Swift, An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character, p. 2. Deane Swift introduces into his biography gratuitous praise of the Swift family as a whole, as when he quotes [or invents a quote from] a wholly unnecessary Bishop Sheridan, talking with Swift about the authorship of A Tale of a Tub: “Oh, Mr. Swift ... I have had a long acquaintance with your uncles, and an old friendship for all your family” (An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character, pp. 122-23).
⁶⁶ Deane Swift, An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character, p. 198.
about *Gulliver’s Travels*, but he saw values in it that Orrery did not see.\(^{67}\) He also valued *A Modest Proposal* more than Orrery did.\(^{68}\) He understood the purpose of Swift’s poetry, and by implication, of his publications in general: Swift, he wrote,

> is not to be considered in the light of a professed poet; the multitude of his writings on various subjects both in verse and prose being an evident demonstration, that he was superior to any particular course of learning. He was born to be the encourager of virtue, and the terror of the wicked. He never sate musing in his elbow chair upon new subjects, for the exercise of his genius, and the advancement of his fame; but writ occasionally to please and to reform the world, as either politicks or humour gave the spur to his faculties.\(^{69}\)

Deane was not swayed either by the need to make Esther Johnson and Esther Vanhomrigh opposites, and so seems to give a much fairer assessment of the latter: “I have been assured, that Miss Vanhomrigh was in her general converse with the world, as far from encouraging any stile of address, inconsistent with the rules of honour and good-breeding, as any woman alive ... Her only misfortune was, that she had a passion for Dr. Swift, which was not to be conquered.”\(^{70}\)

Along with these strengths, though, Deane Swift, too, has been a major misleader. He assumed that what Swift wrote about his own life was literal truth. He calls Swift’s autobiographical notes “a paper of instructions for any one, that should think it worth his leisure to employ himself in that kind of writing.”\(^{71}\) He takes literally Swift’s account of his grandfather, Revd Thomas Swift, for example, in the improbable words that he was “plundered two and fifty times” during the Civil Wars. He also takes literally Swift’s remark that his father purchased a pension for his wife upon their marriage: “She had a small annuity of twenty pounds a year, which her husband had purchased for her in *England* immediately after his marriage.”\(^{72}\) And in Deane’s account, his own grandfather, Swift’s uncle Godwin, on very flimsy evidence, sails right to the top of the heroes who made Swift’s life possible.

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68 Deane Swift, *An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character*, p. 204.
70 Deane Swift, *An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character*, p. 264.
72 Deane Swift, *An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character*, p. 23. Deane seems not to have asked himself how Swift’s impecunious father would have had this money. A 20-pound per year pension for a young woman would have cost at least 400 pounds in 1665.
Also, Deane misleads us by idealizing Esther Johnson as Stella, naming Swift’s letters to Esther Johnson and Rebecca Dingley in 1710-13 *The Journal to Stella*. Deane did not know either Esther Johnson or Esther Vanhomrigh, so all his evidence about them is from Swift’s *Bon Mots de Stella* and from Swift’s poetry. Without proof, he believed Orrery that Swift and Esther Johnson were married. “That she was married to Dr. SWIFT in or about the year 1716 I am thoroughly persuaded,” he writes. He adduces as a reason for Swift not acknowledging this “marriage” a very unlikely one, that Esther was “a wife ... very meanly extracted.” Such a resort to class superiority was characteristic of Deane but not of Jonathan. Deane never doubts Orrery’s explanation of Sir William Temple’s bequest of a thousand pounds to Esther Johnson “as an acknowledgment of her father’s just and faithful services.” He surmises that, when Swift returned to Ireland in 1714, Esther Johnson was depressed by his unwillingness to marry, so, he writes, unconvincingly,

*it is not unreasonable to imagine* that SWIFT, thoroughly and sincerely her friend, and almost her lover, was unable to endure the least abatement in her cheerfulness and vivacity: and therefore to raise her spirits, and to secure the fame of her innocence from all possibility of reproach, resolved to gratify her with the consciousness of being his legal wife.

He adds that this is “certainly the reason that he ever married her at all.” All this is imagination. Deane’s evidence that Swift and Esther Johnson married is utterly useless.

Because he shared Orrery’s social-class prejudices, Deane also accepts at face value the Earl’s assessment of a supposed quarrel between Swift and his sister Jane over her marrying Joseph Fenton: “Neither can I blame the Doctor for his behaviour in this particular,” Deane writes, “because how reputable soever trade is beginning to be in *Ireland* at this time, it is certain that fifty or sixty years ago it was in the utmost contempt.” Again, Deane attributes to Swift his own feelings.

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73 Deane Swift, *An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character*, p. 80.
74 Deane Swift, *An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character*, p. 92.
75 Deane Swift, *An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character*, pp. 84-85.
76 Deane Swift, *An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character*, p. 85. For rhetorical emphasis, Deane has expanded Orrery’s “faithful services” (*Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift*, p. 22) to “just and faithful services.”
77 Deane Swift, *An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character*, p. 95; my emphasis.
78 Deane Swift, *An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character*, p. 94.
79 Deane Swift, *An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character*, p. 103.
Finally, Deane Swift has misled us by being the first critic to assume in Swift’s mind a link between the Yahoos and the Irish poor. When Swift arrived in Ireland in 1714, Deane reports, “he was frequently pointed at and abused by several of the meaner shopkeepers, mechanicks and other base fellows without name or occupation. These abominable wretches like their brethren the YAHOOs, would oftentimes scrape the kennels with their nasty claws to throw dirt and filth at him as he passed through the city.” But in *Gulliver’s Travels* it is evident that Swift designed the Yahoos as a satire most pertinently on the upper, not the lower classes. When Swift takes up ministers of state in Book Four, he finds them far worse than the bulk of Mankind: “In most Herds there was a Sort of ruling Yahoo (as among us there is generally some leading or principal Stag in a Park), who was always more deformed in Body, and mischievous in Disposition, than any of the rest.” But many later commentators have attributed to Jonathan Swift Deane’s prejudice here.

Thomas Sheridan’s character seems to have been genial, though he was a bit too much in awe of his godfather (Swift). He opens his biography of Swift with a shameless compliment, borrowing his epigraph – *Detur Dignissimo* [let it be given to the worthiest] – from Swift’s *Tale of a Tub*. He writes in the first page of his Dedication that “In the following history [that is, his biography] Swift has been represented as a man of the most disinterested principles, regardless of self, and constantly employed in doing good to others.” This is patently not true.

Sheridan’s biography has all the polish and sense of completeness that readers like in a biography, and it has many strengths. Most notably, Sheridan was the first biographer to see the point of Book Four of *Gulliver’s Travels*: “It was ... necessary to give this creature [the Yahoos] the human form, in order to bring the lesson home to man, by having the vicious part of his nature reflected back to him from one in his own shape; for in the form of any other creature, he would not think himself at all concerned in it.” Sheridan’s testimony concerning Swift’s late-life peevishness is invaluable because it was first hand, corroborated by other sources, and shows that Swift’s own testimony increasingly throughout the 1730s is not very credible: “It was his custom to try their [people meeting him for the first time] tempers and disposition, by some abrupt question that bore the appearance of rudeness. If this were well

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80 Deane Swift, *An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character*, p. 183. This is language that Deane Swift would use, but not, I think, Jonathan.
taken, and answered with good humour, he afterwards made amends by his
civilities.”\textsuperscript{84} Sheridan also describes a final quarrel between Tom Sheridan, Sr,
and Swift in 1738 that seems plausible, given Swift’s mental condition by that
year.\textsuperscript{85} Sheridan, though, was clearly irritated that his father was not taken seri-
ously by either Orrery or Deane Swift, and in response he gives his father sev-
eral notable good qualities, plausible ones, such as the care he took for Esther
Johnson in her last years, but also less plausible ones, such as pairing Swift and
Sheridan as “two men of genius, who had a great similarity both of disposition
and talents.”\textsuperscript{86}

Sheridan’s misleading comments in his biography of Swift consist primarily
of his telling plausible stories of which we have to question the veracity be-
because he so consistently adds an effective narrative twist to a story that we now
realize he had read elsewhere. Like Swift’s other young men, Sheridan uses the
language of Swift’s autobiographical notes and treats Swift’s comments as if
they were facts.\textsuperscript{87} Typical of Sheridan’s method is the way he embellishes the
story of Swift’s being stolen away by his nurse. Here is Sheridan’s version:

When he was but a year old, he was, without the knowledge of his mother or
relations, stolen away by his nurse, and carried to Whitehaven; which place she
was under a necessity of visiting, on account of the illness of a relation, from
whom she expected a legacy; and, as is usual among Irish nurses, she bore such
an affection to the child, that she could not think of going without him. There
he continued for almost three years; and she took such care of him, that he had
learned to spell, and could read any chapter in the Bible before he was five years
old.\textsuperscript{88}

Adding “as is usual among Irish nurses ... she could not think of going without
him,” Sheridan gives the story more heart by giving the nurse a nationality and
ascribing to her a supposed national trait.

Likewise, Sheridan assumes the veracity of many of Orrery’s and Deane
Swift’s inferences. Without offering any evidence, for example, he posits that
“the expence of [Swift’s] education [was] defrayed by his uncle Godwin Swift.”\textsuperscript{89}
And of Swift’s time at Trinity College, he invents the detail that “[Godwin Swift],
being father of a numerous offspring by four wives, was under a necessity of
reducing the stipend allowed to his nephew for his support at the University, as

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{84} Sheridan, \textit{The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift}, p. 409.
  \item \textsuperscript{85} Sheridan, \textit{The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift}, p. 392.
  \item \textsuperscript{86} Sheridan, \textit{The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift}, p. 370.
  \item \textsuperscript{87} Sheridan, \textit{The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift}, p. 1.
  \item \textsuperscript{88} Sheridan, \textit{The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift}, p. 2.
  \item \textsuperscript{89} Sheridan, \textit{The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift}, p. 2.
\end{itemize}
low as possible.”\textsuperscript{90} Sheridan assumes that Swift was ungrateful to all his uncles who had, he assumes, supported him: “He never afterwards could think with patience of his uncle Godwin, nor could heartily forgive the neglect shewn him during that time by his other relations.”\textsuperscript{91} If the ingratitude Sheridan adds here to Swift’s biographical story were true, Sheridan’s unqualified admiration of Swift would hardly be justified.

Reinforcing an assumption made by Orrery, Sheridan projects a young Swift into his biography that he could only have inferred from some of Swift’s late-life tendencies. While at school, Sheridan writes, Swift “scorned to take up with those of a lower class, or to be obliged to those of a higher. He lived therefore much alone.”\textsuperscript{92} And he assumes that applying to Sir William Temple for the position of secretary was “grating ... to the proud spirit of Swift.”\textsuperscript{93} While both of these assumptions are possible, no evidence survives that supports them. Sheridan sums up Swift’s youth dramatically: “The recluseness of his life had rendered him little known; and a temper naturally splenetic, sowered by the misery of his situation, did not qualify him much for making personal friends.”\textsuperscript{94} This view of Swift gives a cause-effect logic to Sheridan’s biography: “It is to those very circumstances, probably [– the want of money, want of learning, want of friends –] that the world owes, a Swift.”\textsuperscript{95}

So Sheridan either consciously or unconsciously added in these projections concerning Swift’s childhood to make his overall story of Swift’s life more coherent. We have no evidence that would lead us to think that Swift lacked either money or learning or friends as a young man. The surviving evidence, admittedly meager, suggests that Swift had enough money (though not keeping-up-with-the-Joneses money), plenty of learning (if not exactly what his teachers wanted him to learn), and several friends. Young Jonathan made and kept friends readily throughout his life, though the loss or destruction of his letters in his early years do not allow us to enumerate too many of his early friends other than the Waring brothers, John Jones, William Congreve, Dillon Ashe, and Tom Davys (Mary Davys’s husband).\textsuperscript{96}

More particularly, ever in search of coherence and plausibility in his biography, Sheridan added to stories that did not seem quite complete: “Sir William Temple had bequeathed to Mrs. Johnson a legacy of a thousand pounds, in

\textsuperscript{90} Sheridan, \textit{The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift}, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{91} Sheridan, \textit{The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift}, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{92} Sheridan, \textit{The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift}, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{93} Sheridan, \textit{The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift}, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{94} Sheridan, \textit{The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift}, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{95} Sheridan, \textit{The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift}, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{96} Correspondence, ed. Woolley, I, 151.
consideration of her father’s faithful services, and her own rising merits.”97 Since Sheridan was not convinced by Orrery’s hint that Esther Johnson might have been Temple’s illegitimate child,98 Sheridan invented “her own rising merits.” In fact, Sheridan frequently invented stories when he needed them, as in his account of the Duchess of Somerset’s response to Swift’s attack on her in “The Windsor Prophecy”: “The Duchess ... went in person to the Queen, and, throwing herself on her knees, entreated, with tears in her eyes, that she would not give the Bishoprick to Swift.”99 The Duchess died in 1722, Sheridan was born only in 1719, and he cites no source for this (melo)dramatic description.

Sheridan added significantly to the Esther Johnson versus Esther Vanhomrigh lore. First, prompted by Swift’s own description of his temperament – “my cold temper” – in his 1692 letter to Revd John Kendall, Sheridan gave credence to an inclination among later biographers to think of Swift as asexual: “[Swift] seems to have been of a very cold habit, and little spurred on by any impulse of desire.”100 Swift’s meaning seems to have been not that he was asexual but that he was judgmental.101 Focusing rather on sexuality, Sheridan repeated Orrery’s claim, often reiterated since, that Swift and Esther Johnson never conversed “but in the presence of a third person.”102 But Sheridan gave more credence to Orrery’s claim by adding, as if he had been a witness, “which was usually her companion Mrs. Dingley.”103 Sheridan’s account of Swift’s marriage to Stella, which he believed to have taken place, came from Elizabeth Sican, certainly a good friend of Swift during the 1730s, but a young child when the marriage supposedly took place in 1716, and still a youth (we do not know the year of her birth) when Esther Johnson died. She is not likely to have been a well-informed witness.

Furthermore, Sheridan claimed an unnamed source, “a common friend to both,”104 for his account of Swift’s and Esther Johnson’s thoughts about a possible marriage. If Elizabeth Sican was not this “source,” Sheridan’s father, also Thomas Sheridan, perhaps was: the younger Sheridan relates a supposed conversation in which Esther Johnson expresses to “the common friend” her hopes

97 Sheridan, The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift, p. 35.
101 Hannah More, for example, wrote in 1777 about a book she had been given, “a slowness to applaud betrays a cold temper or an envious spirit” (William Roberts, Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Hannah More, 2nd ed., 4 vols [London: R. B. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1839], I, 47).
103 Sheridan, The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift, p. 296.
for a marriage. Such a conversation would have had to occur before 1716, when Esther and Swift allegedly married, but the older Sheridan did not know Swift until 1718, two years after the alleged marriage. Although Sheridan sounds confident, quotes liberally, and gives details, he is unlikely to have known anything substantive on this issue. All the lines of argument Sheridan offers – Esther Johnson’s concern for her reputation, Esther Johnson’s jealousy of Esther Vanhomrigh, Swift’s insistence on the necessity of a more solid financial standing to marry – were readily available to Sheridan, so he could use them to make up a plausible story.

Sheridan’s discussion of the ‘marriage’ climaxes in a great story, which unfortunately is not likely to contain any grain of truth. Orrery had written, without evidence:

[Esther Vanhomrigh] often pressed [Swift] to marry her. His answers were rather turns of wit than positive denials; till at last, being unable to sustain her weight of misery any longer, she writ a very tender epistle to [him] insisting peremptorily upon as serious an answer, and an immediate acceptance, or absolute refusal of her, as his wife. His reply was delivered by his own hand. He brought it with him when he made his final visit at Selbridge: and throwing down the letter upon her table, with great passion hastened back to his horse, carrying in his countenance the frowns of anger and indignation.

Sheridan revised Orrery’s story of Swift’s supposed ride to Celbridge by making Esther Vanhomrigh’s first concern whether or not Swift and Esther Johnson were married, and by claiming that Esther Vanhomrigh wrote not to Swift, as Orrery had asserted, but to Esther Johnson herself. Then Sheridan adds persuasive-sounding circumstantial details: Esther Johnson “inclosed the note she

106 Sheridan acknowledges that “the only unequivocal proof remaining of the ceremony’s having passed between them arises from Mrs. Johnson’s declaration of it, in the presence of Dr. Sheridan” (p. 366). Sheridan is using his father here to dare us to disbelieve him. But I do not believe. First, the testimony of Jane Brent and Rebecca Dingley against the marriage should outweigh that of Orrery, Deane Swift, and Sheridan for it, because Mrs Brent and Mrs Dingley knew Swift, and knew him during the time that the Swift/Esther Johnson/Esther Vanhomrigh drama was playing out, infinitely better than Swift’s young biographers did. Second, if Swift and Esther Johnson were married, Swift’s sexual and emotional behaviour with Esther Vanhomrigh in the early 1720s would have been reprehensible, and not merely disloyal. Neither Swift’s character nor his concern for the reputation of the Church of Ireland would, I think, have allowed him to act so callously. I believe Sheridan wanted a Swift/Esther Johnson marriage to be true, and wanted his father to be a key witness to its truth, and had the storytelling ability to convince others of what he had already convinced himself.

107 Orrery, Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, p. 115.
had received from Miss Vanhomrigh to Swift. After which, she immediately went out of town without seeing him, or coming to any explanation, and retired in great resentment to Mr. Forde’s country-seat at Wood-Park."\(^{108}\) The rest is high drama: “Exasperated to the highest degree, [Swift] gave way to the first transports of his passion, and immediately rid to Celbridge... He then flung a paper on the table, and immediately returned to his horse. The violent agitation of her mind threw her into a fever, which in a short time put a period to her existence.”\(^{109}\) Esther Johnson “retired" to Wood-Park in March 1723. But March 1723 is an implausible date for this supposed incident. By that month, Esther Vanhomrigh was already dying of tuberculosis, and she was staying in Turnstile Alley in Dublin, not at Celbridge. Yet Sheridan’s storytelling is so compelling that readers find his account, despite its implausibility, difficult to dismiss.

Sheridan then retails another dramatic story concerning Esther Johnson’s death to match the drama of his and Orrery’s ride-to-Celbridge story about Esther Vanhomrigh’s death. According to Sheridan’s story, not hinted at by any earlier biographer, Esther Johnson, dying, and in the presence of Thomas Sheridan, Sr, asked Swift to acknowledge their marriage. “Swift made no reply, but turning on his heel, walked silently out of the room, nor ever saw her afterwards during the few days she lived.”\(^{110}\) From all we know of Swift and Esther Johnson neither the walking out nor the refusal to see her seems plausible. Sheridan seems to have written this story to account for Esther Johnson making a will that did not bequeath the bulk of her estate to Swift: “Roused by indignation, she inveighed against [Swift’s] cruelty in the bitterest terms; and sending for a lawyer, made her will, bequeathing her fortune by her own name to charitable uses.”\(^{111}\) But there is no need for such a story to account for Esther Johnson’s will, which included Swift in very trusting ways, and gave, as Swift would certainly approve, the bulk of her estate to charity after making it available to her mother and her not-well-off sister Anne for the duration of their lives.

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\(^{109}\) Sheridan, The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift, pp. 330-31. What witness could there have been for this event?


\(^{111}\) Sheridan, The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift, pp. 361-62. Oddly, Sheridan ignores his story here only a few pages later when he cites a 15 July 1726 letter from Swift to Worrall encouraging Esther Johnson to leave her fortune to charity (p. 367).
Immediately after this story, Sheridan makes his father a hero:

During the few days [Esther Johnson] lived after this, Dr. Sheridan gave her constant attendance, and was in the chamber when she breathed her last. His grief for her loss was not perhaps inferior to the Dean's. He admired her above all human beings, and loved her with a devotion as pure as that which we would pay to Angels. She, on her part, had early singled him out from all the Dean's acquaintance, as her confidential friend.¹¹²

Sheridan's comment honours his father: “No wonder therefore if the Doctor's humanity was shocked at the last scene which he saw pass between her and the Dean, and which affected him so much, that it was a long time before he [and Swift] could be thoroughly reconciled.”¹¹³ They did, though, jointly start *The Intelligencer* within four months.

In his biography, Sheridan is surprisingly frank about Swift’s sexual urges, which of course he cannot have known:

It will be hardly credible, that … [passing] many hours alone with a young and charming woman, who loved him to adoration, [Swift and Esther Vanhomrigh] should not, in some unguarded moment, have given way to the frailty of human nature. And yet extraordinary as it may appear, there are many strong reasons to believe that this never was the case.¹¹⁴

By way of explanation, Sheridan added that “Swift, having lived to such an advanced time of life in a state of continence, and a constant habit of suppressing his desires, at last lost the power of gratifying them: a case by no means singular, as more than one instance of the kind has fallen within my knowledge.”¹¹⁵ Sheridan has no evidence here but a hunch based on his own limited experience:

And I think there is one strong argument of his never having entered into any commerce of that sort with Vanessa, that it is hardly credible he should have refrained, in that case, from a similar gratification with Stella, who was possessed of greater personal charms, and was more an object of desire, than the other.¹¹⁶

Rather than assume Swift’s platonic love for Esther Johnson as a given, as Sheridan does here, to argue deductively that Swift’s love for Esther Vanhomrigh

was also platonic, I think we should frankly open the question, given the frequent sexual flirtation in Swift’s 1710-13 letters to Esther Johnson, of whether Swift had between 1700 and 1710 a sometime sexual relation with her. Sheridan wisely concludes his discussion of Swift’s mixed relationship with Esther Johnson and Esther Vanhomrigh, “I have dwelt the longer on this point, because much of the moral part of Swift’s character depends on it.”117 That is why we are still so seriously debating these questions.

Given our susceptibility to several of these young biographers’ inferences, scholars of Swift need to find more evidence for the years when evidence is scarce. Irvin Ehrenpreis did this impressively when his investigation of Swift’s school record at Trinity showed that Swift’s performance was far from a disgrace and in fact well above average. It is difficult to find new evidence about Swift by this point, but we need to try, in the spirit of Ehrenpreis, to chip away at the certainties of Orrery, Deane Swift, and Sheridan.

One key issue, where I hope we will be open to re-examining our assumptions, is our almost universal use of Swift’s poetic names, Stella and Vanessa, to refer to the women Esther Johnson and Esther Vanhomrigh. We have been seduced by the romance in these names, and we have perhaps allowed ourselves to use them for 270 years in part because both women were named Esther, and it seems too complicated to try to distinguish them using their real names. But Swift used neither “Stella” nor “Vanessa” consistently to refer to these women (though “Stella” had considerable staying power from 1719 to 1728). Swift’s nickname for the young Esther Vanhomrigh was not Vanessa, but “the brat.” His nicknames for her from 1720 to 1722, when their letters to each other suggest that they were carrying on a sexual affair, were “Skinage”118 and “Governor Huff.” We are given the impression by almost all biographers (and critics) that Swift called Esther Johnson “Stella” all his life, in large part because Deane Swift decided to title his publication of Swift’s letters to her from 1710-13 the Journal to Stella. But Swift’s first recorded use of that name is his 1719 poem for her birthday. Swift most often addressed his journal letters to “MD” (“my dears”), MC (“mes cheris”?), or ME (“mes enfants”?). He never addressed Esther Johnson in his “journal” letters as “Stella.” Deane Swift edited the more than half of Swift’s letters to Esther Johnson, which he received from the

Dean’s cousin and housekeeper, his mother-in-law Martha Whiteway, but he edited very unhelpfully: “To avoid perplexing the reader,” he wrote in his 1768 edition of these letters, “it was thought more advisable to use the word Presto for Swift.” He also inserted “Stella” in place of any term that Swift used for Esther Johnson. The letters Deane Swift used have since been lost, so we cannot check to find out which names Swift actually used. Following Deane Swift’s lead, Thomas Sheridan, when in 1784 he published the full set of journal letters that we now have, titled them *Dr. Swift’s Journal to Stella*, the title by which they are still unfortunately known. The letters after February 1712, that is, the letters that Sheridan had but Deane Swift did not, still survive, and we see in them Swift’s frequent use of “Ppt” or “saucebox” for Esther Johnson and “Pdfr” [possibly, poor dear friend] for himself. Judging from what Swift called Esther Johnson in the original letters that survive, this collection should be called *The Journal to Saucebox, or The Journal to Poppet.* Both poppet and saucebox give us a more accurate sense of how Swift felt about Esther Johnson at the time he wrote this journal than does the name Stella, his retrospective, late-life name for her.

We could safely call Esther Johnson Hetty. She was called Tetty as a pre-teenager at Moor Park, and Hetty at Moor Park from about the time that she was 16. Lady Giffard calls her Hetty in a 1697 letter, confirmed by John Geree, who in his 1757 article for *The Gentleman’s Magazine* writes that she “was usually called in the family, Miss Hetty.” And on a receipt Swift signed for Esther Johnson’s and Rebecca Dingley’s mourning clothes in January 1699, now in Yale’s Beinecke Library, he wrote on the back, “Bill for Mrs. Dingley & Hetty.” So Swift called Esther Johnson Hetty, and so, safely, I think, can we.

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120 Deane Swift, *Letters Written by the Late Dr. Jonathan Swift, DD, Dean of St. Patrick’s Dublin*, 6 vols (London: Bathurst, 1768), IV, 5n.
121 Or *The Journal to the Saucy Monkeys or The Journal to the Dear Rogues or The Journal to the Young Women or The Journal to the Brave Boys*. 9 February 1712 is the first Journal letter unedited by Deane Swift.
122 Correspondence, ed. Woolley, I, 129-30 and n1.
125 Moor Park Papers, Beinecke Library, Osborn Collection, fb 182. This document has not been brought to bear on Swift’s biography before.
distinguishing Swift’s most intimate female friends as Hessy and Hetty. Having done that, we can look through a clearer lens both at the characters of Hetty and Hessy, and at the character that Swift himself showed in his attempts to manage these two intimate but conflicting friendships.

Newly applied evidence also re-colours our acceptance of Deane Swift’s assertions that his grandfather Godwin served as Swift’s principal support in his youth, and should lead us to question whether Swift was culpably ungrateful to Godwin and his other relatives. Swift’s paternal grandmother, Elizabeth Dryden Swift, has been largely ignored in imagining who might have supported young Jonathan before he became linked with Sir William Temple. Her husband Thomas died in 1658, and all Swift’s biographers seem to have implicitly assumed that she died with him. But Elizabeth Swift was an energetic woman both before and after her husband’s death. In Bruno Ryves’s *Mercurius Rusticus*, she is portrayed as at least as brave as her husband in response to the terrors of the English Civil Wars. And Swift’s grandfather’s imprisonment in Raglan Castle in the early 1650s, as well as his death in 1658, left his wife Elizabeth to help set the career paths of their sons. Godwin and Thomas completed their educations during the 1650s while their father was in prison. William started at Gray’s Inn just days before his father died. Adam was too young (15) at the time of his father’s death to have acquired any legal education by that time. So the educations of all four – Godwin, Thomas, William, and Adam – were either exclusively, or at least primarily, supervised by Elizabeth Swift, Swift’s grandmother.

In his autobiographical account, *Family of Swift*, Swift noted that his grandfather during the Civil Wars “was deprived of ... his Church livings ... and his estate [was] sequestered.”\(^\text{126}\) But despite the depredation that the Swifts suffered during the war, Thomas Swift’s will indicates that, when he died in 1658, his family was still financially comfortable.\(^\text{127}\) His lands, his substantial home, and his clerical living worth £100 per year had been restored to him before he died. Deane Swift in his *Essay* estimated that Revd Swift’s total income, including land and inheritance, was “about four hundred pounds a year,”\(^\text{128}\) an amount that fits well with the support, primarily annuities for their daughters and education for their sons, that Thomas and his widow Elizabeth provided for their family.

\(^\text{126}\) *Prose Works*, V, 190.
\(^\text{127}\) Ehrenpreis, *Mr Swift*, I, 268.
\(^\text{128}\) Deane Swift, *An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character*, p. 11. Deane Swift sometimes invents rather than researches his details, but as an heir, following his grandfather and father, to the Goodrich estate, he may have had good reason to have known this amount that he states so confidently.
Conventionally, Revd Swift left his estate to his wife Elizabeth, naming Godwin, his eldest son, his executor. His will savours of the farm. He specifies leaving his “bacon beefe, butter, cheese, wheate, rye, barley, mault, and beere of all sorts to my deare and welbeloved wife.” He left to Godwin “all the rest of [his] personall estate,” noting that his surviving four daughters and five sons, Jonathan Sr among them, have had “their seuerall porcons [portions] already paid or secured to them.” The portions “paid,” most logically, must have been to the older Godwin, Dryden, and Thomas to cover the cost (roughly £100 per year for room, board, fees, and travel) of their Oxford or Gray’s Inn educations. The portions “secured” (that is, set aside) would explain how William and Adam could afford a Gray’s Inn education after their father’s death, and probably also the annuity given to Jonathan’s wife Abigail when they married, since Jonathan had not used his “portion” for an education. These “portions,” and the fact that Revd Thomas’s wife Elizabeth lived long enough to oversee their distribution, helped, I believe, not only the Revd Thomas Swift’s children, but his grandchildren, among them, Jonathan Jr, get off to a solid start in life.

Swift’s childhood was enhanced by the sometime presence of his “grand-dame.” Since his maternal grandmother, Elizabeth Imins Erick, died in 1663, four years before he was born, his frequent references to his “granddame” in his letters and published works must all be to his father’s mother, Elizabeth Dryden Swift, from Goodrich. Widowed in 1658, Elizabeth was alive at least until 1680 when Swift was 13, and possibly for several years beyond that. He could have known her through a childhood trip or trips to Goodrich. More likely, though, she lived regularly in either the William or Godwin Swift household in Dublin. From surviving Herefordshire Hearth Tax Records and Exchequer Port Book records, we can reliably infer that Elizabeth Swift was living on her husband’s estate at Goodrich in 1665, seven years after her husband’s death, that

129 The Goodrich home and land remained in the Swift family for more than 100 years. In 1738, Jonathan wrote in his autobiographical account, “The house is above an hundred years old and still in good repair, inhabited by a Tenant of the female line, but the Landlord [is] a young Gentleman [Deane Swift, who] lives upon his own estate in Ireland [Castle Rickard]” (Prose Works, V, 188).

130 William Nicolson, Bishop of Carlisle and then Derry, kept detailed records of the expenses of his son Joseph. Queen’s College, Oxford, between 1707 and 1712, cost him nearly £500, or roughly £100 per year (The London Diaries of William Nicolson, Bishop of Carlisle, 1702-1718, eds Clyve Jones and Geoffrey Holmes [Oxford: Clarendon, 1985], p. 55).

131 The Herefordshire Hearth Tax rolls suggest that Elizabeth Swift left her home in Goodrich sometime between 1665 and 1673. In the 1665 Herefordshire Hearth Tax rolls, “Widow Swift, 4 hearths” is in the list (Hearth Tax Rolls, Herefordshire Record Office). In the 1673 Herefordshire Hearth Tax rolls, we find instead “Thomas Vaughan for Mr. Swift’s house.” Vaughan had married Swift’s aunt Elizabeth.
she left the family home, allowing one of her daughters, also named Elizabeth, to live in it, sometime between 1665 and 1673, and that she was living in Ireland in 1680. That places her probably in Ireland between 1670 and 1680 and possibly beyond – we do not have a date for her death – during at least the years when young Jonathan was growing from 3 to 13, and plausibly perhaps until he was 23. In later life, Swift remembered his grandmother as a reliable sage. He recalls her folk wisdom and other habits six times in his correspondence and in his poetry:

To Esther Johnson, he wrote in 1713, “My Grandmother used to say, More of your Lining, and less of your dining.”

To Knightley Chetwode, he wrote in 1715, “My Grandmother used to say that good Feeding never brings good Footing.”

To Charles Ford, in 1721, he wrote, “I find there is less trusting in Friends than even our Grandmothers warn us against.”

In his 1724 poem, “The Answer to Dr. Delany,” Swift remembered that when his grandmother heard something she did not like, it

made my Grand-Dame always stuff-her-Ears,
Both Right and Left, as Fellow-sufferers. (ll. 39-40)

In the 1680 Chester shipping records, we find several shipments of cattle in the name of Elizabeth Swift: 1) “15 June 1680 Elizabeth Swift ind [indigena] Ir Sheep 1£ 5s 2d – In the Happy returne [name of the ship] pd”; 2) “[presumably also 15 June 1680] Elizabeth Swift ind [indigena]: 106 Ir sheepe – In the Happy Returne pd”; 3) “21 June [1680] Elizabeth Swift ind 42 Ir. Cattle, 40 Sheepe – In the Lamb of Chester, Richard Innsworth, Master a Dublin 5£ 11s 2d”; 4) “July 6 [1680] Elizabeth Swift ind 49 Ir cattle, 337 sheepe and other goods 6£ 11s 2d – In the Welcome pd”; 5) “July 6 [1680] Elizabeth Swift ind 96 Ir sheepe – In the Darien Swan pd 1£ 2s 9 1/2 d” (Controller’s Chester Port Rolls, Christmas 1679 to Christmas 1680, TNA E190, 1343/12. The National Archive, UK). Swift’s memories of his Grandmother’s sayings, the hearth tax records, and these shipping records suggest that some time between 1665 and 1673 Elizabeth Swift left Goodrich for Dublin, that she lived with either William or Godwin Swift, and that her name was used for the 1680 shipments in order to pay the lower customs duties that indigenous residents were entitled to. Elizabeth was presumably helping to stock the family’s Goodrich farm now managed by her daughter and son-in-law, Thomas and Elizabeth Vaughan. The English Cattle Acts forbidding the importation of Irish cattle into England were suspended in 1679 and renewed in 1681, leaving a small window in 1680 that the Swifts took advantage of.

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133 The Journal to Stella, ed. Abigail Williams, p. 502.

134 Correspondence, ed. Woolley, II, 119.

135 Correspondence, ed. Woolley, II, 371.
Grandmother Swift also finds a place in “The Bubble,” his poem upon the South Sea project (1720):

The Sea is richer than the Land,
I heard it from my Grannam's Mouth,
Which now I clearly understand,
For by the Sea she meant the South. (ll. 97-100)

Even as late as “A Character, Panegyric, and Description of the Legion Club” of 1736, Swift reinforces his point that the wickedness of Parliament is proportional to its proximity to the Church,

Making good my Grandame's Jest,
Near the Church – you know the rest. (ll. 7-8)

All these examples imply that Swift recalled frequent contact with his grandmother and not just an occasional visit. This is the tough, slightly cynical, courageous, and spirited woman whom we first met in Ryves’s account of the Civil Wars in Mercurius Rusticus.

The donor of Abigail Swift's annuity has been a mystery, and the source of much speculation, since both of Abigail's parents were dead when she married, and her husband Jonathan possessed no apparent means. But the wills of Swift’s grandfather Thomas, with its mention of paid and secured portions, and of his cousin Willoughby, who writes that his grandfather “Thomas Swift of Hereford Clergyman settled a small Estate of thirty-one pounds per Ann … as a Joynture on my Mother … and on her issue,” and that Willoughby in turn had settled on his daughter Honoria a “portion promised with her in marriage,” imply that the likeliest source of this annuity was Abigail’s mother-in-law, Jonathan Jr’s grandmother, Elizabeth Swift, who had already supervised the education of her sons William and Adam, and who, perhaps with the assistance of her son Godwin, was managing the portions “secured” by her husband for his children. And if Swift’s grandmother managed most of the money...

136 Quotations are from Poems, ed. Williams. Rogers takes “Near the church and far from God” for the proverb that Swift alludes to here, an appropriate proverb from the lips of the knowing wife of a clergyman (Poems, ed. Rogers, p. 892).
137 Deane Swift follows Swift in assuring us that Abigail’s husband bought this annuity (An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character, p. 23).
139 Deane Swift, as usual, gives the credit to his grandfather Godwin: “If it should be questioned, how came the Doctor's sister to be worth 300 l. when the Doctor himself was not worth a groat until after the death of Sir William Temple, I answer, the same generous
for his education, we do not need to regard Jonathan's seeming ungratefulness to his uncles quite so dramatically as the fundamental character trait that we often do.

Young men do not generally distinguish carefully between facts and inferences. They are so confident that their inferences are true that they forget the inferences' origins in sometimes only a single fact. In our case, the fifth Earl of Orrery's, Deane Swift's, and Thomas Sheridan's inferences, masquerading as facts, have, I believe, much too strongly coloured the water in our biographical well. *Pace* Orrery, Deane Swift, and Thomas Sheridan, Jonathan Swift may well have had his mother's support and presence through much of his youth; may not have associated love and distance; may have been supported throughout his youth by his paternal grandmother; may not have been supported primarily by his Uncle Godwin at any time; may have been a humorous, congenial young man; may have liked his sister Jane well into their adulthood; may have been consistently on good terms with his uncles excepting Godwin; may not ever have married Esther Johnson; may have called his two Esther friends Hessy and Hetty; may have regarded Hetty at least from 1700 to 1713 as a mischievous saucebox; may have enjoyed a sexual relationship with both Hetty and Hessy; may not have treated either Hessy or Hetty badly in their last days; and may not have been a misanthrope. How would these possibilities, I would say even probabilities, affect the way we interpret his works?

benefactors, the family of the Swift's who had supported and educated her brother until he was seven and twenty, made up this little fortune among them to push her into the world, as they had been equally beneficent to her from the days of her infancy* (An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character, p. 102). But it seems at least equally likely that Jane Swift's 300-pound dowry, like that mentioned in Willoughby Swift's will and that I assume paid for the education of Jonathan, came from the “portions” that Revd Thomas Swift made available to his grandchildren in his will, perhaps with Swift's uncles serving as executors of them after Elizabeth Swift's death.
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The Biographer as Historian

Abstract. In Gulliver’s Travels, Swift offered a cynical account of how history comes to be written. Yet in his own attempts at writing memoirs and history, he claimed “to write with the utmost impartiality ... as a faithful historian.” Contemporaries were not so sure, Chesterfield describing Swift’s History of the Four Last Years of the Queen as “a party pamphlet, founded on the lie of the day.” One of the problems with Swift’s accounts of events was that most of the information he was relaying to his readers as factual was second-hand at best. This would appear to raise serious issues for Swift’s biographers and critics. Propagandists are under no obligation to be factually accurate, let alone tell the truth. Almost all of the evidence for his influence with the ministers originates from Swift himself. In such circumstances, it is incumbent upon biographers to acquire detailed knowledge of the primary sources for themselves rather than merely relying upon the available secondary sources for their understanding of the political and social contexts of the age in which Swift lived.

My old supervisor, mentor, and friend, W. A. Speck – Bill Speck to everyone who knew him – would have been standing here today had it not been for a freak accident in February. Several speakers have already mentioned Bill, but I would like to add a few words of my own. I remember first seeing Bill as if it were yesterday, even though it was in October 1970. He had spent a year at Yale working on Volume VII of the Poems on Affairs of State with another of our old friends, Frank Ellis. (Bill’s name would have appeared as editor of the volume along with Frank’s on the title page had Frank not insisted in his Introduction that Tory and Whig were irrelevant to the politics of Queen Anne’s reign, whereas Bill had just published a version of his Oxford DPhil thesis with the title, Tory and Whig: The Struggle in the Constituencies.) So I had not seen Bill at any point during my first year reading History at Newcastle. The door of the lecture room opened and in walked this young man – Bill was 32 at the time – dressed in a leather jacket and stripy trousers with longish hair and a Zapata moustache – very fashionable in 1970. He proceeded to sit on the edge of the desk, throwing a stick of chalk up and down as he talked conversationally about various theoretical approaches to the study of history and their bearing on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, walking to the blackboard from time to time to write something down. He was quite a revelation. Little wonder, then, that I ended up taking his special option, England in the Reign of Queen Anne. And the rest, as they say, is history. I have spent my career following in Bill’s footsteps. At the very first Münster Symposium in 1984, Bill, appropriately enough, gave
a paper on “Swift and the Historian.” As he had returned to work on the great Dean around the time of the tercentenary of the death of Queen Anne, he was going to give a paper this year called “Swift and the Historian Revisited.” After Bill’s death, our convenors asked me if I would give a paper in his stead. I am not competent to tackle Bill’s topic head-on, but I wanted to offer something related to it. Hence the title of my paper, “The Biographer as Historian.”

Everybody knows how, in Glubbdubdrib, Gulliver became “disgusted with modern History”:

> For having strictly examined all the Persons of greatest Name in the Courts of Princes for an Hundred Years past, I found how the World had been misled by prostitute Writers, to ascribe the greatest Exploits in War to Cowards, the wisest Counsel to Fools, Sincerity to Flatterers, Roman Virtue to Betrayers of their Country, Piety to Atheists, Chastity to Sodomites, Truth to Informers. How many innocent and excellent Persons had been condemned to Death or Banishment, by the practising of great Ministers upon the Corruption of Judges, and the Malice of Factions. How many Villains had been exalted to the highest Places of Trust, Power, Dignity, and Profit: How great a Share in the Motions and Events of Courts, Councils, and Senates might be challenged by Bawds, Whores, Pimps, Parasites, and Buffoons: How low an Opinion I had of human Wisdom and Integrity, when I was truly informed of the Springs and Motives of great Enterprizes and Revolutions in the World, and of the contemptible Accidents to which they owed their Success.¹

Swift (like Sterne) has been described as a deconstructionist *avant la lettre*, and certainly this cynical account of how history comes to be written calls into question the possibility of objective or even factually accurate accounts of past events, although, as we have rightly been reminded, Swift’s “attitudes towards history” were “not static.” After 1714, Ashley Marshall argues, he “felt that history had become – so the *Travels* suggest – dishonest, misleading, and amoral.”² Yet Swift would have been more likely to have subscribed to the view of Professor Binns, the history teacher in J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* books – “‘My subject is History of Magic,’ he [explained] in his dry, wheezy voice. ‘I deal with facts, Miss Granger, not myths and legends’”³ – rather than to the opinion of the founding father of microhistory, Carlo Ginzburg, who, after reflecting in his

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most recent book, *Threads and Traces: True False Fictive* (2012), on the nature of evidence in the wake of post-structuralists and postmodernists, concludes that “historical narratives speak to us less about reality than they do about whoever has constructed them.” Of course, Professor Ginzburg had no inkling that we were about to enter the post-truth era when he wrote these words, but in the early twenty-first century literary critics – even crusty ones – have largely come to accept that texts do not have meanings, but that texts have meanings assigned to them by individual readers.

Patently, there was a powerful personal dimension to Gulliver’s account as far as Swift was concerned, which appears to be borne out by his own professed aim “to write with the utmost impartiality ... as a faithful historian” in works like *Memoirs, Relating to That Change which Happened in the Queen’s Ministry in the Year 1710, An Enquiry into the Behaviour of the Queen’s Last Ministry*, and particularly in the Preface to the misleadingly entitled *History of the Four Last Years of the Queen*, written in the 1730s, in which he insisted that

It was to counter the reports of “those miserable pamphleteers, or their patrons,” that Swift was so anxious for the *History of the Four Last Years* to appear in print, despite the manifest lack of enthusiasm shown by Oxford and Bolingbroke at the time he was writing it, as well as by Oxford’s son and his erstwhile undersecretary, Erasmus Lewis, in the 1720s and 1730s. In addition to anticipating the objection of future biographers and critics that “Swift’s lengthy character sketches [of contemporary politicians] in Book One undermine any real sense of objectivity,” Lewis wryly observed that despite Swift’s insistence that, as “a witness of almost every step they made in the course of” Queen Anne’s last ministry, he “must have been very unfortunate not to be better

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5 *Prose Works*, VII, xxxiv.
6 *Prose Works*, VII, xxxiii.
informed than those miserable pamphleteers,” he was not privy to everything relating to the transactions of which he was purporting to give an accurate account. This was of particular relevance, according to Lewis, to “the transactions with Mr Buys [which] might have been represented in a more advantageous light, and more to the Honour of that Administration, and undoubtedly they would have been so by your pen, had you been master of all the facts.”

And there’s the rub. Despite his repeated claims to have been the recipient of inside information which enabled him to write authoritatively about “passages, which the curious of another age would be glad to know the secret springs of” – a metaphor he used both in the passage from *Gulliver’s Travels* quoted at the beginning of this essay and in the *Memoirs, Relating to That Change* – Swift was apparently kept in the dark about some of the Ministry’s more dubious proceedings. “I know very well it is your intention to do honour to the then treasurer,” Lewis acknowledged. “Lord Oxford knows it: all his family and friends know it; but it is to be done with great circumspection. It is now too late to publish a pamphlet, and too early to publish a history.” This has not of course escaped the attention of biographers and critics. In one of his letters, the Earl of Chesterfield called Swift’s *History* “a party pamphlet, founded on the lie of the day, which, as Lord Bolingbroke who had read it often assured me, was coined and delivered out to him, to write *Examiners*, and other political papers upon. Swift took these hints *de la meilleure foi du monde*, and thought them materials for history.” This chimes in with the cutting comments of Orrery:

He was elated with the appearance of enjoying ministerial confidence. He enjoyed the shadow: the substance was detained from him. He was employed, not trusted; and at the same time he imagined himself a subtile diver, who dextrously shot down into the profoundest regions of politics, he was suffered only to sound the shallows nearest the shore, and was scarce admitted to descend below the froth at the top. Perhaps the deeper bottoms were too muddy for his inspection.

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8 *Prose Works*, VII, xxxiii-xxxiv.
9 *Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, IV, 533.
I have previously drawn attention to Orrery’s tone, and to his motives in writing about Swift in this way. As Orrery himself acknowledges at the beginning of his Remarks, he only knew Swift “in the decline of life.” Why, therefore, should he wish to denigrate the memory of a man whose “friendship” (he assured his son) “was an honour to [him]?” But Orrery’s observation that he “was employed, not trusted” accords both with what Lewis writes about Swift not being “master of all the facts,” and Chesterfield’s suggestion that the History of the Four Last Years was “founded on the lie of the day.”

Interestingly, in the opening paragraph of the Memoirs, Relating to That Change, Swift himself raises the question of the extent to which he was actually involved in policy-making. One of the problems with Swift’s accounts of events, as he freely admits in the Memoirs, is that most of the information he was relaying to his readers as factual was second-hand at best, and even then he confessed that he had been thwarted from being able to give “a particular account of every circumstance and passage during that whole transaction” by the “negligence” of “the Queen, the Earl of Oxford, and [his] Lady Masham,” and that it was for this reason that he could “give but an imperfect account of the first springs of that great change at court, after the trial of Doctor Sacheverel, [his] memory not serving [him] to retain all the facts related to [him], but what [he] remember[s][he] shall set down.”

If what Swift intimates about not knowing “all the facts” appears strangely similar to what Erasmus Lewis alleged in relation to the History of the Four Last Years, what I find most striking is the reason given by Swift for writing the Memoirs, Relating to That Change in the first place. Far from attempting “impartial” history, Swift freely acknowledged that his request for information proceeded not “from curiosity, or the ambition of knowing and publishing important secrets; but, from a sincere honest design of justifying the Queen, in the measures she then took, and after pursued, against a load of scandal which would certainly be thrown on her memory, with some appearance of truth.” Swift, in other words, wished to write an apology. A similar point might be made about the History of the Four Last Years. As Swift put it himself in 1738: “My chief Design in this History was with the utmost Truth and Zeal to defend the Proceedings of that blessed Queen and her Ministry, as well as my self.”

15 Prose Works, VIII, 109-10; my emphasis.
17 Mrs Whiteway and Swift to Orrery, [2 February 1737-8], Correspondence, ed. Woolley, IV, 494; my emphasis.
Considerations such as these would appear to raise serious issues for Swift’s biographers and critics. Propagandists are under no obligation to be factually accurate, let alone to tell the truth. On the contrary, as the example of The Conduct of the Allies perfectly illustrates, it can be argued that successful propagandists have succeeded precisely because they pandered to the prejudices of their target readers. Swift’s role in the Oxford ministry is a contentious issue nevertheless: just how much did he know? And how is the biographer to decide? Most of the evidence for his influence with the ministers originates with Swift himself, especially in his letters to Esther Johnson and Rebecca Dingley, as well as the Memoirs, the Enquiry, and the History of the Four Last Years, in which he repeatedly refers not only to “the time [when] [he] was either trusted or employed,”18 but also to his “endeavours, for above two years, to reconcile” Oxford and Bolingbroke.19 If this implies a little naivety on Swift’s part, it corresponds with the hostile testimony of some of his contemporaries. “They laugh at you,” Steele bluntly told him in 1713, “if they make you believe your interposition has kept me thus long in office.”20 To this might be added the malicious portrait of Swift as “the principal man of talk and business ... act[ing] as a master of requests” at Windsor, penned later on in the same year by White Kennett.21 Pieces of documentary evidence such as these would seem to support what Chesterfield, Orrery, and others have insinuated, suggesting that there was a significant discrepancy between what Swift believed or understood at the time he was involved with the Oxford ministry, and what was really going on during the Queen’s four last years. In these circumstances, the biographer, like the historian, has no alternative but to draw those “modest inferences about personal relationships” which, according to Park Honan, are “incumbent upon a biographer.”22

Patently, the tasks of the biographer and the historian often intersect. In the search for details of Swift’s early life, for instance, the biographer uses the tools of the historian to dig in the archives to uncover as much documentary evidence as possible. “As we all know,” Arthur E. Case pointed out in his surmise on Swift’s supposed ingratitude towards his Uncle Godwin, “the factual material dealing with Swift’s early life is scanty, and conjecture has had to be called upon to fill gaps.” “There can be no quarrel with conjecture so long as it is not labelled as fact,” Case continued. “Unfortunately, some conjectures

18 Prose Works, VIII, 108.
19 Prose Works, VII, xxxvi; see also Prose Works, VIII, 132.
20 Correspondence, ed. Woolley, I, 487.
about Swift have been repeated so often that their conjectural nature has been forgotten.” In his magisterial biography of Swift, Irvin Ehrenpreis purposely set out to “eliminate fables.” Several recent biographers, from David Nokes onwards, have seen fit to resuscitate some of those old, exploded traditions, thus creating more of a stir in bookish circles by suggesting sensational aspects to Swift’s life which were almost certainly fictitious. “Selection and arrangement are essential parts of the biographer’s art, and of larger import than the crowded attempt to leave nothing unsaid,” Harold Williams sagely observed in his essay on Swift’s early biographers: “How many biographers in striving to relate all that a man did failed to show what he was.”

While issues of interpretation are inevitably raised by the scanty factual material of Swift’s early life, these are relatively straightforward, it seems to me, compared with the problems posed by his relations with the most prominent political figures of his day. For instance, one either accepts or rejects the story that Swift was abducted and taken to Whitehaven in Cumberland by his wet nurse “when he was a year old ... where he continued for almost three years.” True, there is the added complication that Swift himself appears uncertain about how long he stayed at Whitehaven, for of course he would be reliant on second-hand testimony for the dates, and Swift’s memory was increasingly fallible in his declining years. But that is not of huge import in my opinion. What is dangerous, as Case points out, is when those writing about Swift’s early life represent their conjectures as fact, as Denis Johnston did in his *In Search of Swift*. Based on what he called inferences drawn from his examination of the Black Book of the King’s Inns, Johnston insisted that Swift’s father “could not have been” Jonathan Swift senior, the Steward of the King’s Inns, because the latter’s hand does not appear in the Black Book after 16 November 1666. I am unable to corroborate either this assertion or Johnston’s insistence that, “with one exception,” the minutes in the Black Book were in the hand of Jonathan Swift, Sr until 16 November 1666, for the simple reason that no authenticated example of his handwriting is known. What Johnston does not make clear, moreover, is that there are no entries in the Black Book between 16 November

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26 *Prose Works*, V, 192.
1666 and April 1667 when Abigail Swift, the widow of “the late Steward,” presented her petition for assistance in collecting £120 in arrears due to her late husband. In sum, Johnston drew conclusions that cannot be substantiated from the Black Book of the King’s Inns to support a thesis about Swift’s parentage which cannot be documented. 

While the scanty facts about Swift’s early life present comparatively few issues of interpretation, the matter is much more complicated when Swift’s accounts are themselves primary sources of some importance for the most momentous political events of the day. In such circumstances, it is incumbent upon biographers to acquire detailed knowledge of the available primary sources for themselves rather than merely relying upon the available secondary sources for their understanding of the political and social contexts of the age in which he lived. Despite its subtitle, “The Man, his Works, and the Age,” perhaps the least satisfactory part of Irvin Ehrenpreis’s biography is his grasp of the age, particularly the political context, and especially the politics of the period. This can be detected in a number of ways, but the key indicator is his reliance on the thesis, drawn from Namier, put forward by Robert Walcott in 1956, that, during the years when Swift was intimate with leading English politicians, British politics were dominated not by Tory and Whig, but by family connections. Thus we find sentences such as these:

In the 1701 House of Commons all the organized ‘Whig’ cliques together amounted to about eighty, if we exclude men normally attached to the court; while the Nottingham-Seymour-Harley connections totalled less than a hundred. Yet the members who did not belong to an organized group (apart from the government interest) numbered something like 250. Among those outside Parliament the tendency to feel unaffiliated was even stronger.

Unfortunately, the second volume of Ehrenpreis’s biography was first published in 1967 – the same year as J. H. Plumb’s Ford lectures, *The Growth of Political Stability in England*, and Geoffrey Holmes’s authoritative *British Politics in the Age of Anne*. As Bill Speck brilliantly put it in his Oxford DPhil thesis: “The slender branches of the family trees, so carefully cultivated by Walcott, will not bear the weight of the political fruit which he seeks to graft upon them.”

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29 The Black Book of the King’s Inns, fols 208 and 209.
30 Interestingly, neither Nokes nor Glendenning nor Damrosch nor Stubbs refers to the Black Book. Ehrenpreis refers to it twice, silently modernizing the text when he quotes from it.
31 Ehrenpreis, *Dr Swift*, p. 253.
It was no coincidence that Walcott elected to focus on the complex politics of 1701 in his monograph, *English Politics in the ‘Early’ Eighteenth Century*, because there were not one but two general elections in this utterly untypical year. As it was also the year in which Swift wrote and published his first political pamphlet, 1701 provides one of the best instances of the tasks of the biographer, the critic, and the historian colliding. Since the publication of Frank Ellis’s scholarly edition of *A Discourse of the Contests and Dissentions* in 1967, a number of scholars have attempted to elucidate aspects of Swift’s rhetoric, including his manipulation of the classical sources upon which he based his argument “from history.” More recently, in an essay with the significant title, “Situating Swift's Politics in 1701,” the historian Mark Goldie implicitly takes Swiftians to task for “tend[ing] to examine the *Discourse* diachronically, within the frame of its author’s career-long tergiversatory dialogue with Whiggism and Toryism.” Adopting what he calls a synchronic approach, Goldie sets out to consider the *Dialogue* “in relation to Whig and Tory arguments at the moment of its composition.” This is undoubtedly the correct procedure to take if the purpose of the exercise is to identify the polemical strategy adopted by Swift in the *Discourse* but, as is indicated by his conclusion that it “remains a perplexing work, since it supports the Whigs in unexpected ways,” a number of Goldie’s assumptions raise complications of a biographical nature, particularly his conclusion that “while Swift ran his colours up the Junto’s mast, his *Discourse* could not satisfactorily be colligated with the stance shared by Somers, Defoe, and Locke. Accordingly, the Whiggism of the *Discourse* was decidedly distinctive.”

In order to relate the *Discourse* to arguments which were current “at the moment of its composition,” we need to establish when it was written; we cannot simply assume that Swift was responding in some way to the arguments of the many writers who participated in the paper war of 1701, or even that he was aware of them. “We know very little of [Swift’s] personal life during this 1701 trip,” Eugene Hammond points out in his recent biography. Infuriatingly, the 1700/1 account book, which was in the possession of Dr Lyon in 1765 and of Dr Tuke of St Stephen’s Green in 1811, is no longer extant, and all we know from Lyon’s preliminaries to Hawkesworth’s biography of Swift is that “In April Swift

went to London; return\textsuperscript{d} to Irel\textsuperscript{d} Sep\textsuperscript{t} following.\textsuperscript{37} That Swift was in Ireland when “the Hott party in the House of Commons” began to pursue the Duke of Portland and William’s former ministers with a view to impeachment is significant. In the paragraphs leading up to the famous passage in the Memoirs, Relating to That Change in which he described how he “first began to trouble [him]self with the difference between the principles of Whig and Tory,” Swift explained how he came to write the Discourse:

I had dealt very little with politics, either in writing or acting, till about a year before the late King William’s death; when, returning with the Earl of Berkeley from Ireland, and falling upon the subject of the five great Lords [actually there were only four – Portland, Somers, Halifax and Orford], who were then impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors, by the House of Commons, I happened to say, that the same manner of proceeding, \textit{at least as it appeared to me from the views we had of it in Ireland}, had ruined the liberties of Athens and Rome, and that it might be easy to prove it \textit{from history}. Soon after I went to London; and, in a few weeks, drew up a discourse.\textsuperscript{38}

If analysed carefully, this passage is of great interest for the biographer. According to The Flying Post,\textsuperscript{39} Berkeley set sail for England from Dublin on 9 April 1701. Frank Ellis asserts, without any documentation, that “Swift arrived in London in the entourage of Lord Berkeley”\textsuperscript{40} on 15 April. Presumably, when Swift wrote, “Soon after I went to London; and, in a few weeks, drew up a discourse,” he was referring to the weeks immediately following the impeachments of Somers and Halifax on 14 April. By contrast, Irvin Ehrenpreis (followed by David Nokes) posited that “Swift worked \textit{through the summer of 1701} to compose a defence of the four lords,”\textsuperscript{41} after the Discourse was advertised as “To morrow will be published” in The Flying Post for 21-23 October.

Why is this significant? If Swift did write his Discourse immediately after he arrived in London in the middle of April, it means he would have been writing it during the weeks when “the Hott party in the House of Commons” upped the ante by depriving William of £100,000 of his already inadequate civil

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\item[38] Prose Works, VIII, 119; my emphases.
\item[39] Flying Post, 22 April 1701.
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list on 5 May, when the Kentish Petition was presented to the Commons on 8 May, and when Defoe delivered the Legion-Letter to Harley, as Speaker of the Commons, on 14 May. Even more significantly, Swift would have been writing it when the Commons finally exhibited fourteen articles against Somers and sent them up to the Lords on 19 May. These were the weeks when Swift might have felt a defence of the impeached lords was required: on 19 June, Somers was acquitted by the Lords by 55 votes to 33 when the Commons failed to appear to prosecute their case. William prorogued Parliament on 24 June, and dissolved it on 11 November – barely nine months after it had first assembled.

After the impeachment proceedings had come to an abrupt halt in the middle of June 1701, there would have been no pressing reason for Swift to write in defence of the four lords. This would seem to throw into doubt Goldie’s attempt to consider the Discourse “in relation to Whig and Tory arguments at the moment of its composition,” because none of the pamphlets he compares and contrasts with Swift’s had been published by the end of June 1701. Although he concludes that “Swift ran his colours up the Junto’s mast,” at one point Goldie argues that “his Discourse was far from endorsing the Somers-Defoe position,” at another he goes on to suggest that it “reads as if Swift was unaware of the Junto party line.” Since Swift was not introduced to Somers and Halifax until his visit to London in 1702, and seeing that he wrote his pamphlet before the publication of Somers’s *Jura Populi Anglicani* or Defoe’s *History of the Kentish Petition*, this is scarcely surprising. Swift almost certainly wrote the Discourse in blissful ignorance of what Goldie calls “the Somers-Defoe position.” (There is no evidence, either, that Defoe was linked to Somers at this, or indeed at any other time.) “The Parties are every day writing and printing against one another with great bitterness,” the Secretary of State, James Vernon, informed the Duke of Shrewsbury at the beginning of September, “and the chiefs seem to have a hand in it.” But according to John Lyon, Swift returned to Ireland in September, just as the paper war was intensifying.

I have chosen to focus on 1701 because scholars can learn from the various attempts by biographers, critics, and historians to locate Swift’s *Discourse* with accuracy in the turmoil of those febrile months when Swift was in London, but it applies mutatis mutandis to other periods of his life, too. If historians really want to situate Swift’s politics, whether in 1701, 1714, or 1727, they have

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to be thoroughly acquainted with the details of his life. If, on the other hand, biographers – and critics – want to do what Frank Ellis announced as the aim of his introduction to his edition of the *Discourse* – “to represent certain political and literary events of 1697-1701 as Swift saw them” – then they have to be aware of the complex politics at work in 1701, including understanding why William turned to Harley and his “New Country Party” allies in the summer of 1700, and what was behind the political manoeuvrings in the Parliament which assembled on 6 February 1701 and which proceeded to pass the Act of Settlement, before Harley lost control of the Commons. Only then will they be in a position to make those “modest inferences … incumbent upon the biographer” without which life-writing could not be attempted. This is the proper province of the biographer, even if it appears an exercise fraught with difficulty. It is also a requirement of the historicist critic.

In the analysis offered in the *Discourse*, Swift is concerned about the rise of what he calls the “Tyranny of the Commons.” Maintaining that “nothing is more dangerous or unwise than to give way to the first Steps of Popular Encroachments,” he repeatedly reflects on what he describes as the “late Proceedings of the Commons,” or “the late publick Proceedings among us.” True, in the added fifth chapter he attempts, not entirely convincingly, to widen the scope of his analysis. But up to this point, his argument is specifically relevant to the weeks between the impeachments of Somers and Halifax on 14 April and the collapse of the case on 19 June. Swift, then, was writing his pamphlet at the time that “the Hott party in the House of Commons” was getting out of hand. As one contemporary observed about the attempt to deprive the King of £100,000 of his civil list:

>This incident has put our Ministry into a very great disorder, as tending much to the diminution of their Credit with the king, since they have so little authority with their party as not to be able to restrain them from doing unreasonable & Extravagant things only to lessen the king, & it is not doubted but it will put the King upon em playing the Whiggs again, as they are usually called.

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46 Swift, *A Discourse of the Contests and Dissentions between the Nobles and the Commons in Athens and Rome*, ed. Ellis, p. 115.
48 British Library Add. MS 7074, fol. 15: John Ellis to George Stepney, 6 May 1701.
Harley blamed the dissolution of Parliament later in the year on his failure to prevent the impeachments. William turned back to the Whigs because of Harley’s failure to control “the Hott party in the House of Commons,” actually informing him, according to his own account, “Mr. Speaker, your Project of the Succession has done me no good.” “O silly, silly,” Harley reports Lord Sunderland as saying at the time: “Had they left alone Lord Portland and the Civil List, they might have hanged the other three in a Garret.”

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49 British Library Add. MS 70272, unfoliated: Harley’s “Large Account: Revolution & Succession.”
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Faulkner’s Volume II. Containing the Author’s Poetical Works: A New Uncancelled Copy

Abstract. A unique uncancelled copy of Faulkner’s 1735 edition of Swift’s poems was deliberately assembled, at some point after 1735, to preserve the texts that were to have been jettisoned or expurgated. A fresh analysis confirms that the cancellations were designed primarily to avoid re-publishing personal satire and to limit Faulkner's exposure to prosecution or other governmental interference.

George Faulkner’s 1735 octavo edition of Swift’s poems, Volume II of The Works of J. S. D. D. D. S. P. D., is by far the most significant collection of Swift's poems published in his lifetime. It is also one of the most extensively cancelled of all eighteenth-century books. In its completely uncancelled state, the volume is rare. Though the existence of cancels in the ordinary copies had long been known, no uncancelled copy was known before 1967, when Margaret Weedon reported the acquisition of an uncancelled copy by the English Faculty Library of the University of Oxford. Here, in three notes, we report the discovery of a new and unique uncancelled copy and assess its significance.

1. Discovery
by Andrew Carpenter

Like many Swiftians, I had been intrigued by the story Margaret Weedon told and had hoped that perhaps I might come upon another uncancelled copy.

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of Volume II; but for many years, every Volume II that I handled contained the normal cancels. Until 2015. In the spring of 2015, I was visiting the Dublin bookseller Éamonn de Búrcá who, like many booksellers, keeps odd volumes in the hopes that in time he will be able to make up complete sets for rebinding and sale.

Éamonn de Búrcá was generous enough to allow me to spend time among the sundry incomplete sets and odd volumes in the back room, where I came across, lurking at the bottom of a pile, three of the four volumes of the Faulkner 1735 octavo printing. Volume I was missing – which was lucky since, had it been there, the set would have been sold long before I set eyes on it; the other three volumes appeared to be in uniform eighteenth-century bindings.

I noticed several odd things about Volume II of this incomplete set. In a typical set of the 1735 Works, Volume II is the fattest of the four, partly because of stubs left when the leaves to be cancelled – the cancellanda – were cut out, but this copy seemed to be even fatter than usual. It contained a surprising number of blank leaves: blank sheets were bound in where the contents leaves should be, and blank sheets were also bound in at the end of the book. Most surprisingly, in several sheets at the end of the book, poems or parts of poems were pasted over with blank paper or with passages from other poems. The signatures and pagination were also irregular, and the book contained many more leaves than the normal Volume II.

I purchased the three volumes.

2. The Printing and Cancelling
by James Woolley

In Faulkner’s Dublin Journal on 10 February 1733, he announced his four-volume octavo edition of Swift’s works, seeking subscribers. Printing seems to have been well advanced by 3 November 1733, when he announced that “there are almost 3 Volumes finished,” of which the poems volume would have been one. After many delays, the first three volumes were published on 27 November 1734 (all with 1735 title pages), with Volume IV added on 6 January 1735.
Since 1967, when Margaret Weedon reported on the uncancelled copy in the English Faculty Library, three other uncancelled copies had come to light: two of them, one at Yale and one in the Gilbert Collection of the Dublin Public Library, are large-paper copies, neither preserving the replacement leaves.\(^5\) By contrast, the Carpenter copy, like the English Faculty Library copy, is on ordinary paper, and it preserves most of the replacement leaves.

In cancelling, one or more leaves in a volume are removed and replaced by other leaves.\(^6\) If a book includes cancels, one can deduce that the compositor and printer were required to make changes after printing had been finished. The changes might be authorial or editorial and the reasons many and varied: sometimes the author had second thoughts or wanted to insert notes, sometimes the bookseller might fear political or legal consequences that might follow the issue of the original text. Typically, the binder, who did the cancelling, discarded the *cancellanda*. Since this cancelling was an intentional act, the cancelled leaves, if they survived, could provide valuable material evidence about the history of the text and the intentions of its author or publisher.

On 30 August 1734, Swift told Edward, the second Earl of Oxford, “I have put [Faulkner] under some Difficultyes by ordering certain Things to be struck out after they were printed, which some friends had given him. This hath delayed his work, and as I hear, given him much trouble and difficulty to adjust.”\(^7\) The cancelling occurred, so far as is known, almost entirely in Volume II.\(^8\) Cancellation on the scale undertaken in Volume II was expensive, primarily because of the waste of large amounts of paper, paper costs being as significant a factor as labour costs in the total expense of producing an eighteenth-century book.\(^9\) A printer would presumably not willingly incur such costs except for an urgent reason. Comparison of the *cancellanda* with their replacements makes clear that Faulkner’s massive cancelling operation was not undertaken to correct ordinary errors or infelicities that might have been discovered in proofreading. Faulkner speaks of having such proofreading sessions with

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5 English Faculty Library acc. no. 29165 (= XL77 1735); Yale Ik Sw55 C735 v.7; Dublin Public Libraries, Gilbert 16E (16), v.2. Copies preserving only one or two of the *cancellanda* are in the collections of Trinity College Cambridge (*The Rothschild Library* 2151), Harvard (*EC7. Sw551.B735w(B), v.2), and James Woolley.


7 *Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, III, 753.

8 Minor cancelling is observable in Volume IV (*Teerink and Scouten*, p. 27); the possibility of whole-sheet cancels in the four volumes cannot be ruled out, though its cost makes it improbable.

9 Philip Gaskell calculates that in the eighteenth century, paper costs were “about 50 per cent” of total book production costs (*A New Introduction to Bibliography*, corrected reprint [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974], p. 177).
Swift, and proofreading may well have resulted in revisions before printing was carried out. The cancelling, by contrast, occurred after all 1152 copies of the book had been printed. The following list shows what poems were “struck out” and what poems replaced them, as well as which poems were expurgated:

The octavo Vol. II ends on p. 480; the duodecimo Vol. II (which lacks cancels) ends on p. 363.

pp. 207-20 “Mad Mullinix and Timothy,” Swift’s lampoon on the Irish politician Richard Tighe, was cancelled and replaced by “Joan Cudgels Ned,” “The Run upon the Bankers,” “Stella at Wood Park,” “A Receipt to Restore Stella’s Youth,” and “To Quilca” (all these poems except “The Run upon the Bankers” being previously unpublished). “Mad Mullinix and Timothy” was first published in 1728 in the *Intelligencer* and was reprinted, with some excisions, in the 1732 volume of the Swift-Pope *Miscellanies*.

pp. 281-93 “An Epistle to a Lady,” previously published, was probably most offensive for its derogatory innuendo that George II was a “Monkey,” a “strutting, chatt’ring Vermin.” It was cancelled and replaced by “A Panegyrick on the Dean in the Person of a Lady in the North.”

pp. 298-99 “An Epigram on Fasting” was cancelled and replaced by “Clever Tom Clinch Going to be Hanged.” The “Epigram on Fasting” was previously unpublished, as was “Clever Tom Clinch.”

pp. 343-46 “The Author upon Himself” (previously unpublished) was expurgated to soften its abuse of the Duchess of Somerset, whom Swift blamed for blocking his appointment to an English deanery in 1713. The uncancelled state’s first line is “By an old red-Pate murd’ring Hag pursu’d;” the expurgated state’s first line is easily identified: “By an ——— ——— ——— pursu’d.”

p. 358 The headnote of “An Excellent New Song on a Seditious Pamphlet” was expurgated. This poem was Swift’s 1720 satire on Judge William Whitshed’s prosecution of the Dublin printer Edward Waters for publishing Swift’s *A Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture*. The

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10 In later editions of his *Works of Swift*, Faulkner claimed that Swift had required him to attend him in the Deanery every morning while the *Works* were going through the press; in fact, says Faulkner, “he corrected every Sheet of the first seven Volumes that were published in his Life Time, desiring the Editor [Faulkner himself] to write Notes” (“To the Reader,” *Volume I. of the Author’s Works*, 186 [Dublin: Faulkner, 1762], p. vii). Karian casts doubt on Faulkner’s claims that Swift read proof (*Jonathan Swift in Print and Manuscript*, pp. 36-42).

11 The figure is calculated by McLaverty, “George Faulkner and Swift’s Collected Works,” p. 160.

12 Poems, ed. Williams, II, 364; McLaverty makes this point about the offensiveness of “An Epistle to a Lady” (“Naming and Shaming in the Poetry of Pope and Swift,” p. 171).
poem was previously unpublished. In the headnote, the uncancelled state calls Whitshed “that infamous Wretch,” whereas the cancelled state does not; the effect of this and other changes is that the headnote is “no longer a personal satirical attack; it is a complaint about injustice.”

“Traulus: The First Part” and “Traulus: The Second Part,” lampoons on Lord Allen, were cancelled and replaced by “A Pastoral Dialogue between Richmond-Lodge and Marble-Hill” and “On the Five Ladies at Sots-Hole.” The “Traulus” poems had been privately published in 1730. The two replacement poems were previously unpublished.

“To Mr. Gay,” previously unpublished, was expurgated to soften references to Walpole, both in the text and the footnotes, and “The Hardship Put upon Ladies” was added on p. 417; the uncancelled state lacks “The Hardship.”

The “Carbery Rocks” translation by William Dunkin appears on a cancel leaf even in the uncancelled copies; that is, the original leaf is not known to exist in any copy, suggesting that this was the earliest cancellation in the volume. The cancel, leaf 2I1, is signed at the bottom “Ii”; presumably the uncancelled version (which would have been leaf 2H8) would have been unsigned. The likely explanations for the cancel are either that an earlier unsatisfactory translation by some other poet was replaced by Dunkin’s, or that after being set in type, Dunkin’s translation required revision and was replaced with the cancel leaf signed “Ii.”

In summary, five poems were deleted: “Mad Mullinix and Timothy,” “An Epistle to a Lady,” “An Epigram on Fasting,” and the two “Traulus” poems; several others were softened. There were ten replacement poems: “Joan Cudgels Ned,” “The Run upon the Bankers,” “Stella at Wood Park,” “A Receipt to Restore Stella’s Youth,” “To Quilca,” “A Panegyric on the Dean in the Person of a Lady in the North,” “Clever Tom Clinch Going to Be Hanged,” “A Pastoral Dialogue between Richmond-Lodge and Marble-Hill,” “On the Five Ladies at Sots Hole,” and “The Hardship Put upon Ladies.” It is clear that these ten were chosen at least in part for their length: they served to fill holes left by the cancellations. Whether any or all of these ten had been initially considered and judged not worthy of inclusion is an open question. Some interesting poems – “The Run upon the Bankers,” “A Panegyric on the Dean,” “A Pastoral Dialogue,” to name three – would probably have remained unpublished in Swift’s lifetime, and perhaps forever, were it not for this extensive cancelling. The extent of Swift’s responsibility for the cancellation and the choice of replacements is uncertain and may have varied from instance to instance.

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In October 1733, when work on the Swift edition had already begun, Faulkner had been taken into custody by the Irish House of Commons for publishing an abstract of Swift's inflammatory Considerations upon Two Bills ... Relating to the Clergy of Ireland. Then in London during January 1734, the publishers of An Epistle to a Lady, which had come out in November 1733, were prosecuted; those arrested included Matthew Pilkington and Mary Barber. Faulkner departed for London on 16 February 1734, at least in part to seek additional works by Swift. In March 1734, the Political State of Great Britain reported that in Dublin, in late January, "several Printers and Publishers ... [had been] taken into Custody for printing and publishing a Poem, called, The Rapsody on Poetry, the same being deemed to be a scurrilous and s[c]andalous Libel." Whether these printers and publishers included Faulkner seems unlikely, since he did not publish the Dublin edition; but obviously in this climate, it would have been foolhardy for him to publish An Epistle to a Lady, and it is probable that that poem was cancelled from his Swift edition, and the expurgated poems expurgated, in the spring of 1734, once he had returned from London on 21 May. The poems cancelled for ethical reasons could conceivably have been removed several months earlier.

Swift's claim that the poems excised from Volume II had been at least partly supplied to Faulkner by Swift's friends and not by Swift himself has been supported by Stephen Karian. He argues that Swift became "actively engaged" in the preparation of Volume II only "quite late" – that is, at the time the cancelling occurred and not during some putative proof-correction process: "If Swift had been reading proof, then he probably would have made the decision to exclude these poems at a much earlier time such that there would be no surviving evidence of cancelled leaves."

James McLaverty has suggested that such poems seemed beneath the dignity of a collected works. “An Epigram on Fasting,” with its joke about religious fasting, may have seemed unworthy of a member of the clergy. The epigram

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14 Prose Works, XII, xxxviii.
16 Ehrenpreis, Dean Swift, p. 785.
17 Ehrenpreis, Dean Swift, p. 785.
18 Karian, Jonathan Swift in Print and Manuscript, p. 40. These comments are broadly supported by Karian’s pages on Faulkner’s edition of Swift’s works, pp. 30-43. Weedon, without the benefit of Karian’s evidence and arguments, believes it at least as likely that Swift himself, rather than his friends, chose what to include and later changed his mind about some of the flagrant personal abuse in the lampoons on Richard Tighe and Lord Allen (Weedon, “An Uncancelled Copy of the First Collected Edition of Swift’s Poems,” p. 54).
purports to be a translation from the French and therefore ridicules Roman Catholic fasting; at that time, fasting was apparently not zealously practised within the Anglican community.\footnote{Poems, ed. Williams, III, 948-49. A contemporary Anglican authority said that fasting did not require substituting fish for meat but only “forbearing those Pleasures, and Varieties of Meats, and Drinks, and Diversions, which we may at other Times Innocently enjoy” (The Clergy-Man’s Vade Mecum, 2nd ed. [1707], p. 158).} In 1746, in a preface to Volume VIII of Swift’s works, Faulkner, while in general seeking to publish as many of Swift’s uncollected works as possible, declined to publish, he said, “a few satirical Pieces on particular Persons; who, notwithstanding they had highly provoked him, yet were pardoned by him afterwards: And the Author laid repeated Commands on his Printer, never to publish such Pieces of private Resentment.”\footnote{“The Preface by the Dublin Bookseller,” Volume VIII. of the Author’s Works, 12o (Dublin: Faulkner, 1746), sig. a3v.} This point, I strongly suspect, is at the heart of the ethical exclusions, and it supports an inference that Swift actively intervened in Faulkner’s edition only late: had these “commands” been delivered earlier, before the poems of “private Resentment” were printed, Faulkner would not have wasted time and money printing them.

In the interval between Swift’s “Traulus” lampoons on Lord Allen in 1730 and Faulkner’s cancellations in the collected Works of J. S, D. D, D. S. P. D. in 1734, it would appear that Swift resolved to move to the moral high ground. It was during this interval that he drafted “Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift,” in which the supposed “impartial” observer is made to claim that “Malice never was his Aim; / He lash’d the Vice but spar’d the Name.”\footnote{Poems, ed. Williams, II, 571, ll. 459-690.} Swift evidently found complete fidelity to that claim to be beyond him, but these cancellations were in the spirit of sparing the name, even though Swift had not literally named Richard Tighe in “Mad Mullinix and Timothy” or Lord Allen in the “Traulus” poems. In short, the expurgation of the uncancelled Volume II had two different purposes and perhaps also two different occasions: it was designed both to preserve Swift’s ethical character as a satirist and to shield Faulkner from prosecution or other governmental harassment. Although, as Ashley Marshall has pointed out, the cancellation did not eliminate Swift’s anti-Walpole references, it lessened them.\footnote{Marshall, “The ‘1735’ Faulkner Edition of Swift’s Works,” pp. 168-70.}
Margaret Weedon concluded that the English Faculty Library copy resulted from a binder's mistake – that he was given the sheets of the book and the sheets of cancels and simply put a binding on the whole thing rather than performing the cancellation. The preservation of both the cancellanda and the replacement leaves was probably an accident in the English Faculty Library copy, but in the Carpenter copy it is obvious that the preservation of the cancellanda was deliberate. The Yale and Gilbert (Dublin Public Library) copies probably remained uncancelled because their binders had no access to the sheets of cancels; the Gilbert copy, at least, was clearly assembled very late, since it has a 1763 title page. But the Carpenter copy results not from any binder's error but from the deliberate wish of the purchaser to preserve, in full legible texts, both the cancelled and unexpurgated poems and the newly added poems. To this end, the expurgated versions were discarded and the sheets of cancels had their redundant bits pasted over; it is important to note that the over-pasting, either with blank paper or with other parts of the cancels, does not constitute slip-cancellation: the pasting was not part of Faulkner's preparation of the edition for publication. In one or two instances, leaves have been cut apart and reassembled so as to provide coherent readable texts of all poems, old and new.

Before these pasted-over sheets of cancels, the poem “Prometheus” – which is normally in Volume IV of the set – is inserted, paginated 385 and signed Cc as in Volume IV, but following p. 480 of Volume II. (“Prometheus” is also moved into a copy of Volume II now at Cornell.) In Volume IV, “Prometheus” is normally inserted as an afterthought on a two-leaf gathering that follows “FINIS.” on what was to have been the last page, p. 384. The poem is introduced with a note: “After these Works were printed off, upon examining the Poetical Volume, we found the following Poem omitted, which we have thought proper to insert here.” This seems to mean not merely that the “Poetical Volume” had been “printed off” by the time “Prometheus” was remembered but that it had been gathered, stitched, and bound, so that it was then too late to insert a two-leaf cancel gathering there. In Volume IV of the set to which the Carpenter

26 Cornell University Library PR3720.D35 v.4.
uncancelled copy of Volume II belongs, this two-leaf gathering is missing, so it seems almost certain that the binder chose, or was directed, to move that bifolium into Volume II. The fact that Volume IV was still being worked on after Volume II was published shows that the Carpenter copy was assembled after Volume IV was finished in January 1735. That is, what we have here is not a pre-publication copy or a publisher’s mock-up or draft but rather a specially prepared post-publication copy.

In the Carpenter Volume II, the four blank leaves (two ProPatria halvesheets with horizontal chains) standing where a table of contents should be were probably intended for a manuscript table of contents. The uncancelled state of the book seems never to have had a title page or table of contents, which would have been printed last, and the table for the ordinary cancelled version would not have represented this copy accurately at all.

The frontispiece normally present is absent, but a stub visible between gatherings B and C probably was once cognate with the frontispiece. In the normal copy, the frontispiece stub is visible between gatherings A and B, but the four-leaf A gathering, consisting of the title page, the “Advertisement” leaf, and a two-leaf table of contents, had had its table of contents cancelled (and perhaps by that time replaced by the blank leaves, or perhaps not), so the frontispiece was probably wrapped around the more substantial gathering B, with the stub appearing between leaves B8 and C1.

The blank leaves at the very end of the book were not guillotined with the rest of the book but added as an afterthought after binding. These leaves were perhaps intended for manuscript additions of then unpublished poems or unpublished passages, notably the extra lines of “On Poetry: A Rhapsody.” A copy of the cancelled volume at the Huntington has extra pages inserted for manuscript transcripts of “An Epistle to a Lady” and the extra lines of “On Poetry: A Rhapsody,” but a purchaser of the uncancelled volume would not have needed a transcript of “An Epistle to a Lady,” and the passages of “On Poetry” would not require nearly as much blank space as these added leaves provide. A copy of Faulkner’s 12° Volume II of 1735 uses leaves tipped in for manuscript texts of the extra lines of “On Poetry: A Rhapsody” as well as the two poems Delany engraved on window panes of St Patrick’s Deanery (beginning “Are the guests of this house still doomed to be cheated” and “A bard on whom Phoebus his spirit bestowed”). Thus the notion of providing leaves for additional poems or lines was not novel, but in this copy, the blank leaves remained blank.

27 Huntington Library 81494, v.2.
28 University of Michigan Library Hubbard Imaginary Voyages PR3721.F26 1735 v.2.
It would be pleasant to report that the book’s original owner annotated it with comments on the texts that were to have been cancelled. But the book contains no reader’s marks of any kind, nor is there any indication that subsequent owners had an appreciation of the volume’s uniqueness.

The binding, though not fancy, is not one of the sorts of publisher’s binding commonly seen on ordinary sets of the “1735” Faulkner edition of Swift’s Works. Scholars of Irish bindings we have consulted believe that the books were bound in Dublin, though it is hard to assign a definite date to the bindings. If the set was bound in the 1740s or later, it is quite possible that the contents were assembled from sheets remaining in Faulkner’s warehouse after he had already published his 1737 edition of Volume II and perhaps also his 1744 edition.

In 1736, Richard Tighe died. In 1742, Swift was declared mentally incompetent. In 1745, Joshua, Lord Allen, Sir Robert Walpole, and Swift all died. The Duchess of Somerset and William Whitshed were long dead. With the passage of time, Faulkner probably became willing to cooperate with an interested customer who wanted to preserve the original texts of the “1735” edition, even though most of those texts were never restored in Faulkner’s reprints of Volume II. We hope that it may yet be possible to establish the dating of the binding and to identify the binder from the binder’s tools used in the spine decoration and on the outer edges of the boards. The spines of the Carpenter set are somewhat abraded, but one of the spine compartments from Volume III is reasonably well preserved (Figure 3.1). The only other use of any of these particular binding tools that we have so far found occurs in a copy of Justini historiarum ex Trogo Pompeio libri XLIV (Dublin: Grierson, 1727), in the collection of Philip Maddock, MD. One spine compartment of the Maddock volume, also illustrated in Figure 3.1, shows the corner tools with greater clarity than does the Carpenter volume. The fact that the corner tools are identical in both compartments encourages us to conjecture that the Carpenter Volume II and the Maddock Justinus were bound by the same Dublin binder.

What we can say with confidence is that the owner of the Carpenter Volume II was aware that interesting poems had been cancelled from or expurgated in Volume II as published and wanted to save them in their best (that is, unexpurgated) state. It remains likely that the English Faculty Library’s uncanceled copy resulted from a binder’s error. Although we have not attempted


30 We are grateful to Dr Maddock for examining the Carpenter volumes and for providing the photographs for Figure 3.1.
(and Weedon did not attempt) to date that copy from its binding, she says that it has the bookplate of “W. Godley,” probably denoting “The Revd. Mr. William Godley,” who is listed among the subscribers in Volume I. This fact tends to confirm that the English Faculty Library copy was one of those issued to subscribers in 1734 and that it therefore, unlike the Carpenter copy, resulted from a binder’s error rather than having been deliberately assembled to preserve the cancellanda.

The intentional character of the Carpenter volume gives some insight into an interested albeit unknown eighteenth-century reader of Swift’s poems. Otherwise, the main implications of our findings are these: first, that the Volume II cancellations and expurgations were done for two main reasons: to avoid re-publishing personal satire, particularly in a volume whose authorship would be only barely concealed in the initials “J. S. D. D. S. P. D.” and to reduce Faulkner’s exposure to prosecution or government interference; second, that at least a few people in Dublin were aware that the cancelling suppressed significant texts that were worth preserving; and third, that at least in the case

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