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JONATHAN SWIFT'S A TALE OF A TUB
AND THE APOCALYPTIC TRADITION

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By

Dennis Raphael Hall, B.A., M.A.

The Ohio State University
1970

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INTRODUCTION

Since its first appearance in 1704, Jonathan Swift's A Tale of a Tub has drawn responses ranging from the usual hostility that greets all satire to the admiration of readers able to overcome their confusion and the abuse Swift heaps upon them.¹ It has been condemned as incoherent, literary failure and, particularly in the twentieth century, praised as a service to traditional

¹A Tale of a Tub To which is added The Battle of the Books and the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit, ed. A. C. Guthkelch and D. Nichol Smith (2nd. ed., Oxford, 1958) is the standard scholarly edition. For details about publication, the fifth edition, and the dates of composition, see pp. xi-xiv, xix-xxvii, and xlii-lii, respectively. There has never been complete agreement about Swift's authorship of the Tale and the role his cousin Thomas may have played in its composition. Guthkelch and Nichol Smith are emphatic in their judgment that Jonathan is solely responsible for the Tale (pp. xiv-xix). The case for Thomas's contribution is, however, far from closed. The latest argument for Thomas Swift's authorship, with some considerable new evidence, is that of Robert Martin Adams, "Jonathan Swift, Thomas Swift, and the Authorship of A Tale of a Tub," MP, 64 (1967), 198-232. Even if we were to accept Adams's argument, the contribution of Thomas is limited to the narrative of the three brothers and Jonathan retains complete responsibility for the state of the fifth edition. The Tale, as we now have it, seems on best evidence to be what Jonathan Swift intended it to be.
religious and moral values, as a unified—albeit incred­ibly complex—instance of the satirist's art, and as a literary masterpiece of the first importance. Since about 1950 the criticism of the Tale has expanded consider­ably our understanding and appreciation of Swift's satiric art. The complexity of the Tale allows for a variety of useful critical points of view: Robert C. Elliott and William Bragg Ewald, among others, have analyzed the functions of Swift's personae; Philip Harth has discerned in the Tale the implications for Anglican rationalism; Kathleen Williams and Martin Price have developed the role of ideas of order in the Tale; Ronald Paulson has dealt with Swift's satiric use of Gnosticism; and Edward Rosenheim has discussed the logic and rhetoric of Swiftian satire. Even these few recent


studies testify to the variety of critical points of view which have significantly elucidated the structural and thematic development of Swift's Tale. All of these studies, however, note the seventeenth-century character of the Tale, which is the legacy of the scholarship principally of A. C. Guthkelch, D. Nichol Smith, Ricardo Quintana, and Herbert Davis. The Tale, Herbert Davis has said, "is a sort of finale, a superbly exhuberant and reckless finale, triumphantly summing up all the heroics and extravagances of seventeenth-century thought and art, . . . a caricature of the most prominent features of a century of baroque art."^3

The historical studies of Arthur O. Lovejoy, R. S. Crane, R. F. Jones, and Ernest Lee Tuveson, to mention

(Chicago, 1961); Kathleen Williams, Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise (Lawrence, Kansas, 1958); Martin Price, Swift's Rhetorical Art (New Haven, 1953) and To the Palace of Wisdom (Garden City, 1964); and Ronald Paulson, Theme and Structure in Swift's 'Tale of a Tub.' (New Haven, 1960).

the most important, have revealed the ferment of ideas in
the seventeenth century, showing it to be one of the most
significant periods in the development of Western culture,
particularly for the history of ideas in England. 4

4 They are, of course, too numerous to recount here.
The debt to Lovejoy is not limited to the fruits of his
scholarship—such famous works as The Great Chain of
Being (Cambridge, 1936); "Milton and the Paradox of the
Fortunate Fall," ELL, 4 (1937) 161-179; and Essays in
the History of Ideas (Baltimore, 1948). His influence is
perhaps greatest as the advocate of the value
of the historiography of ideas. Ronald S. Crane's many
learned and useful articles—items like "Anglican
Apologetics and the Idea of Progress, 1699-1744," MP, 31
(1934) 273 ff.; "Neo-Classical Criticism," Critics and
Criticism (Chicago, 1952), 372-388; and "The Houyhnhnms,
the Yahoos, and the History of Ideas," Nicolson
Festschrift (New York, 1962), 231-253—have contributed
significantly to Restoration and eighteenth-century liter­
ature, but perhaps his greatest contribution is the leader­
ship he gave that study while directing the PQ biblio­
graphy and while writing reviews which often proved as
important as the works reviewed. Among the very many
of R. F. Jones's works, "Science and English Prose Style
in the Third Quarter of the Seventeenth Century," PMLA,
45 (1930), 977-1009; "The Attack on Pulpit Eloquence in
the Restoration: An Episode in the Development of the
Neo-Classical Standard for Prose," JEGP, 30 (1931), 188­
217; "The Humanistic Defense of Learning in the Mid­
seventeenth Century," Nicholson Festschrift (New York,
1962), 71-92; and, of course, Ancients and Moderns (2nd
ed., St. Louis, 1961) are the most relevant to our pre­
sent purposes and demonstrate the significance of seven­
teenth-century thought to an understanding of the liter­
ature of the eighteenth century. Ernest Lee Tuveson's
"Swift and the World Makers," JHI, 11 (1950), 54-74;
"Swift: The Dean as Satirist," UTQ, 22 (1953), 368-75;
"Swift as Moralist," PQ, 33 (1954) 368-87; and
Millennium and Utopia (Berkeley, 1949) further demonstrate
the function of seventeenth-century thought and liter­
ature in the making of the eighteenth-century literature.
Without meaning to neglect Basil Willey, Marjorie Nicolson,
"During the decade of the 1690's in England," Ernest Tuveson notes, "the characteristics of the 'modern' world were beaten out, as on anvils, in a series of hotly fought controversies about various subjects in the realm of knowledge." Although the spiritual and intellectual conflicts of the age seem to come to a head late in the century, as in the battle of the ancients and moderns and the antagonism of religion and science, they take root early in the period. During the seventeenth century, knowledge suffered the disintegration into categories; spirit and intellect, faith and learning, religion and philosophy were being divided and subdivided into the functionally autonomous realms which in the eighteenth century and beyond characterize modern habits of thought. For the seventeenth century, however, the division is not complete. The learned discourse of the divine or virtuoso was in effect a discourse of religion and philosophy. To write on a subject in any one realm of knowledge still meant, at least by implication and very often explicitly, that one addressed himself to all knowledge. Ideas about aesthetics, economics, history, language, order, original

Louis Bredvold, or the dozens of others, I think that these very few scholars adequately demonstrate the ferment of ideas in the seventeenth century and its significance in the development of succeeding centuries.

sin, politics, providence, revelation, Scripture, wisdom—all accrued to whatever one might say. Indeed, the intellectual habit of the time was to draw out, often with painful elaborateness, as many of the implications of one's assertions as possible. In an age of intense controversy, if the writer did not, his readers would. The comprehensiveness of the seventeenth-century approach to intellectual and spiritual problems accounts in large measure for the complexity and significance of the age.

Within this ferment of ideas, Jonathan Swift wrote *A Tale of a Tub*. The comprehensiveness of the satiric vision in the Tale makes it as baffling as the age which it mirrors. In the Tale, it is generally recognized, Swift levels an attack on Modernity—the novelty, arrogance, and materialism he sees in his own time—by means of a satiric fiction which is both an example of aberrations in religion and learning and the vehicle for his serious arguments against them. In the Tale, Swift offers his readers a paradigm of Modern culture with its own spiritual and intellectual premises, sense of history, habits of thought, and distinct personalities. Like the age which it mirrors, the Tale exhibits a chaotic diversity and a comprehensiveness that assumes all knowledge as its province. If the Tale can be said to be about any one thing, it is the character and scope of human know-
ledge. In directing his attention to religion and learning, Swift develops his argument on the issue of moral cognition, as he must, in terms of the broadest currents of ideas in the rise of Modern culture. If the Tale seems to swallow diversity whole to digest it only in part, to revel in complexity as if committed to chaos, to dwell in analysis apparently without interest in synthesis, and to confuse rather than enlighten, it does so precisely because such were the habits of thought in the emergence of Modern culture.

As with Pope and the other Tory satirists, Swift is critically concerned with the decline of culture. The revolution wrought by the new religious and philosophical thought increasingly posed the threat of destroying the traditional cultural order and plunging English society into chaos. Among the most significant issues in the seventeenth century was the argument over the role of Sacred Scripture in determining the philosophical, social, and political, as well as the traditional religious values. With the advent of the new philosophy, there arose a debate over the nature and function of both the scriptural and natural revelation of the Divine Providence governing the immediate course of human destiny. With the seventeenth century's rejection of scholasticism went the comfortable certitude which categorically dogmatic habits
of thought carried with them. The reports of the Book of Nature and the Book of Scripture were no longer perfectly harmonious. The new philosophy demanded a new theology, as Basil Willey points out:

> the question of scriptural interpretation was bound to be a vital one for many seventeenth century English writers, since they were not only Protestants, and therefore committed to the authority of holy writ, but beginning to be 'philosophical' as well, and therefore eager for 'the truth'. How to fit a supernaturalist and poetic scripture into the new world-scheme, how to reconcile Jehovah with the ontologically certified Dieu of Descartes, and the whole miraculous structure of Christianity with the new philosophical principles, this was a major problem confronting the critical intelligence of the age.

The seventeenth century's disruption of the great chain of being was as much a departure from the epistemological as the ontological values of tradition. How one certified religious and philosophical knowledge was a problem demanding immediate solution. Upon one's solution of the problem of knowledge depended his intellectual integrity and the fate of his immortal soul. The critical intelligence for the most part faced the problem in terms of four general alternatives: the certification of tradition, of idealism, of empiricism, and of mysticism. Among those rejecting tradition, rationalism, scientific

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method, and various strains of Gnosticism, Cabbalism, and Alchemy filled the void created by what was felt to be the failure of Scholastic and Renaissance systems of thought. The new thought was felt to more fully grasp "the truth," that is, provide more satisfactory explanations of God, Man, and Nature and their relationships.

Among the varied effects of the revolution in knowledge in the seventeenth century was a revival of interest in apocalyptic literature. In the early days of the Reformation, Daniel and particularly Revelation were, of course, significant texts justifying the rift with Rome. In the seventeenth century, however, apocalyptic (the species of thought as well as the kind of sacred literature) acquires even greater importance as a special source of knowledge in its own right and as a traditionally certified precedent for the new interest in intuitively acquired knowledge. Among the results of the Protestant ideal of every man becoming his own scriptural exegete was, in effect, the development of the notion that everyman could become in one sense or another his own prophet—that is, he could himself certify his knowledge through the experience of the spirit, or scientific method, or rational thought, or the practice of mysticism. Perhaps the major reason for revival of interest in apocalyptic was the ease with which it could be used to justify both
the processes and the products of the new thought.

For men of the Commonwealth, for example, St. John's living in the spirit justified their own sense of the spirit, and his Revelation clearly figured their own social and political reform. For men of science, the apocalyptic parts of Scripture were a religious revelation of the progress of human knowledge which they discerned in the world's history and which proved their greatest polemic asset. For virtually all men in the seventeenth century the apocalyptic literature provided a key to human knowledge and conduct; it was a significant source of ideas of time and history, teleology and eschatology, cosmogony and cosmology, ontology and epistemology. The special revelations of the apocalyptic seer and the mysteriousness of apocalyptic expression seemed to promise entirely new knowledge and new explanations for an age rebelling from the persecution of the old thought. A host of philosophic and religious ideas accrue to the seventeenth-century responses to Old and New Testament apocalyptic literature, yet the major currents of thought in the period also reflect the characteristics of apocalyptic thought. The whole of the seventeenth century, I submit, was an age given to apocalyptic thought and expression.

In A Tale of a Tub, for which all of seventeenth-century thought provides the background, Swift exploits
those habits of thought and expression characteristic of apocalyptic. Swift scholarship, however, has yet to pursue the implications of apocalyptic thought and literature in Swift's art. An investigation of *A Tale of a Tub* from this point of view is appropriate and useful because apocalyptic habits of thought and expression are undeniably prominent features of seventeenth-century thought and expression and because consideration of apocalyptic ideas significantly aids our understanding of the thematic and structural development of Swift's most difficult satiric fiction. Because apocalypse comprehends the entire history of its writer's culture, Swift is able to attack the spiritual and intellectual premises of Modern culture through the apocalypse of the Grub Street Hack. In the main, Swift viewed the developments of the new thought with alarm and their course in the new religion and new learning as marks of the steady decline of English culture. The acquisition of knowledge on human authority alone and the intuitive certification truth struck him as consummate absurdities. The *Tale* is Swift's satiric vision of the new age. Its spokesman, the Grub Street Hack, is an apocalyptic seer whose vision brings the reader to experience the absurdity of the Modern mind as it pursues knowledge on its own authority. In the Hack's apocalyptic expression we find the abandonment of sense for the mys-
terious realms of word magic. Rather than the promise of a glorious new age, the apocalyptic vision in the *Tale* portends the descent into chaos.

Swift's satiric vision, I suggest, is essentially prophetic. He takes his authority from tradition and his function is to call attention to man's moral obligation defined by a conservative reading of Scripture, the authority of state and church, and those spiritual and intellectual values tested by time. His is a skeptical position something like that of Pascal; the painful limits of the human condition demand recognition and impose obligations. Although Swift's expression of this position, like that of any satirist, runs counter to the established conventions of moral instruction, its function remains to remind men that they have strayed from their duty. As did the biblical prophets, Swift seeks to return man's attention to the simple and direct truth of the Word of God, the obligations of the human condition, and the traditionally certified conceptions of order in reality. Swift, I believe, seeks to achieve these ends by bringing his readers to experience the disorder of the Modern mind.

The Grub Street Hack's vision is apocalyptic. It derives from an isolated experience, the judgment of one man rather than that of tradition. If Modernity seems destined to fall into chaos, the *Tale* seems to suggest, it is the result of relying on the unlicensed and obscure sage.
Modern men have taken refuge in the comforting faith in intuition, the inevitable refuge of the heretical imagination. Throughout the seventeenth century, apocalyptic thought and expression were a liberating force; apocalyptic provided freedom from the obligations of tradition, freedom to satisfy fundamentally personal spiritual and intellectual impulses. The Tale is at once a monument to Swift's dedication to obligation and the Modern dedication to satisfaction.

In the five chapters which follow, I will argue that our understanding of A Tale of a Tub is significantly illuminated by viewing it as a piece of apocalyptic literature. It is such in a broad sense, for no evidence suggests that Swift consciously constructed it as "an apocalypse" or as a parody of Daniel or Revelation. The Tale is, however, a work fashioned out of the major currents of seventeenth-century culture which often exhibit that singular combination of habits of thought and expression which may be characterized as apocalyptic. The first chapter will briefly sketch the outline of an apocalyptic tradition among the major writers in English literary history. Although they are seldom identified under the rubric "apocalyptic," the literary patterns Swift turns against Modern culture are remarkably well preceded. The second chapter, drawing on modern biblical criticism,
will define the characteristics of apocalyptic thought and expression as they are exhibited in Scripture, and, drawing upon modern studies in the history of seventeenth-century ideas, show the currency of apocalyptic habits of thought in the general background of the Tale. The third chapter will focus specifically on the currency of apocalyptic ideas of language, attitudes toward scriptural interpretation, and approaches to the reading of Revelation. The fourth chapter will argue that the satiric fiction in the Tale is specifically an apocalyptic fiction. The fifth chapter will suggest that the character of the Tale's persona is that of the apocalyptic seer. The sixth chapter will argue that the literary devices the persona employs are those characteristic of apocalyptic writing. The seventh chapter will suggest that the Tale as a whole is a Modern Apocalypse.
CHAPTER ONE

No single influence on the history of English literature—or for that matter, Western literature—is comparable to that of Sacred Scripture. From the beginning of Christianity to well into the twentieth century, Scripture has been the mainspring of spiritual and intellectual life, a force so basic to the consciousness of the writers and readers of English literature that it affects all the processes of emotion and thought. Attitudes toward Scripture and changes in emotional responses to it, consequently, have long been recognized to mirror the development of seemingly unrelated social, economic, political, and aesthetic ideas—indeed, of culture itself. Yet because of its fundamental nature, the significance of the Bible's influence on imaginative literature is always in danger of being overlooked.

The simple fact that the Bible is a source of theme, structure, imagery, and style in the great tradition of English literature is in little danger of being ignored. The hazards of oversimplifying the function of biblical materials are, on the other hand, very real. Perhaps chief among the pitfalls, especially for modern readers,
is the easy and unconscious assumption that the Bible itself was at all times considered to be homogeneous. Murray Roston warns against the temptation to think of "the Bible as an individual entity, a body of writings which together rose and fell in the respect accorded to it by each generation" and argues that "the status of the Old Testament fluctuated almost independently of the New, and that within each Testament there existed numerous hierarchical subdivisions repeatedly exchanging their places on the ladder of sanctity in response to subtle movements within the English cultural scene."¹ That the detailed and reflective study of Scripture throughout a man's lifetime was the rule for generations of Englishmen makes the assumption particularly unwarranted. Writers like Spenser, Milton, Bunyan, Pope, and Blake had at their disposal not only a fund of allusion with which to develop their works, but a readership trained in the careful analysis and appreciation of literature.² The glosses, para-


²In applying "literary criticism" to sacred literature before the eighteenth century, I mean it in the broadest sense. Familiarity and recognition do not necessarily imply careful analysis. In Poet and Prophet (Evanston, 1965), Murray Roston has demonstrated that compared to the criticism of classical genres, the criticism of sacred literature was, for a variety of reasons, primitive. He observes that "the rising interest in Old Testament poetry during the eighteenth century suggests that its
phrases, sermons, commentaries, and the like, in addition to being aids to Christian devotion and education, were significant forms of literary criticism. Biblical study impressed on the minds of Englishmen the literary values of sacred literature as well as moral and theological doctrine and its derivative social, economic, and political tenets. From the Reformation onward, educated English readers were as familiar with the material and formal

literary merits had not been fully appreciated before then" (p. 42) and that there was an indifference to literary form as such in the Scriptures, particularly in reference to poetry (p. 19). I suggest Roston overstates his case, particularly when he ventures outside the realm of poetry. In Roston's use, "appreciation of literary merits" implies an unusually modern sophistication of critical technique rarely found applied to any kind of literature before the eighteenth century. Bishop Lowth's careful analysis of Hebrew poetry would have been a remarkable achievement even in the nineteenth century. Without detracting from the significance of Lowth's poetic criticism or Roston's argument, it is reasonable to suppose that the educated seventeenth-century reader enjoyed the experiential and theoretical wherewithal to appreciate the literary merits of sacred literature. If, for example, Milton may not have had sufficient knowledge of Hebrew meter or found it congenial enough to imitate in English, that is not to say he did not appreciate other merits of Hebrew literature, say its narrative structure or imagery, which are even more important sources of the spirit and texture of Hebrew literature than is its meter. It seems to me that Roston too hastily passes over Robert Boyle's appreciation of Hebrew literature including its poetry. It is clear that the many interpretations of the Apocalypse were founded upon appreciation of its literary merits, which are singularly poetic without being metrical. Even if the criticism of sacred literature before the eighteenth century were simply appreciative—and I do not for a moment think it was—that is not to suggest that such was not significant as literary criticism.
characteristics of sacred history, psalm, prophecy, epistle, and gospel as they knew them in English translation, as they were with the generic characteristics of classical pastoral, epistle, satire, tragedy, and epic, as they knew them either in translation or in the original languages. The pervasive influence of the classical literary tradition of the Renaissance has led many modern readers to oversimplify the role of sacred literature in the development of English literature. Perhaps because the classical revival allowed men to study ancient literature in the original languages, the spirit of Renaissance Hellenism seems strongest in them and seems to overshadow the influence of the native literary tradition and the literary tradition of the English Bible. Yet, as Harold Fisch points out in an important book on this subject, the Bible is not simply an accumulation of religious dogma. It is a mistake to forget "the impact of the Scriptures as a first-hand imaginative experience. ... The tremendous effect which the Bible had upon men, the awe, the terror, and ecstasy which it undoubtedly inspired, should be sufficient to convince the sceptic that the men of the Reformation were concerned with real and mighty facts of experience. The Bible may indeed have given rise to dogmas (dogmas of the most various and contradictory kinds), but in itself it was not a collection of dogmas; it was an
experiential factor no less than the new empirical sciences and the new humanism of the Renaissance."

Among the books of Christian Scripture with the greatest appeal to the human imagination are Daniel and the Apocalypse. Both have been traditionally accepted as the archetypes of apocalyptic literature in Western culture. The powerful attraction of creative genius in the graphic and literary arts to apocalyptic literature is perhaps best understood in terms of its cultural and psychological dimensions. In Hebrew culture, the eschatology of apocalyptic literature most closely approximates the eschatology of the Christian dispensation. The Hebrew's consolation in the messianic hope for a new kingdom of Israel in this world parallels the Christian's consolation in the hope for the renewal of grace and entrance into the kingdom of Heaven. The apocalyptic condemnation of the present and vision of the future is very much like the orthodox Christian rejection of this world and pursuit of the next. Apocalypses appear in both the Old and New Testament dispensations, and form a kind of cultural bridge for their distinct teleologies and philosophies of history. In its revelation of the ends of human history,

apocalypse provides the necessary complement demanded by Genesis. The issues of beginnings and ends, of the origins and purposes of human existence, are ever the most difficult and the most appealing in religion, philosophy, and art. In the beginning and in the ending, the artist finds the content of those aesthetic experiences which most significantly give meaning to life and art. In effect, culture is society's effort to span the beginning and the end, just as psychology is the individual's effort to span human beginnings and endings. Perhaps Frank Kermode, in his study of the cultural and psychological functions of fiction, best explains, in general terms, the role of the Bible as a model of history and the fundamental appeal of apocalypse drawn from this sense of history:

The Bible is a familiar model of history. It begins at the beginning ('In the beginning...') and ends with a vision of the end ('Even so, come, Lord Jesus'); the first book is Genesis, the last Apocalypse. Ideally it is a wholly concordant structure, the end is in harmony with the beginning, the middle with the beginning and end. The end, Apocalypse, is traditionally held to resume the whole structure, which it can only do by figures predictive of that part of it which has not been historically revealed. The Book of Revelation made its way only slowly into the canon--it is still unacceptable to Greek Orthodoxy--perhaps because of learned mistrust of overliteral interpretation of the figures. But once established it showed, and continues to show, a vitality and resource that suggest its consonance with our more naive requirements of fiction.

Men, like poets, rush 'into the midst,' in medias res, when they are born; they also
die in mediis rebus, and to make sense of their span they need fictive concords with origins and ends, such as give meaning to lives and to poems. The End they imagine will reflect their irreducibly intermediary preoccupations. They fear it, and as far as we can see have always done so; the End is a figure for their own deaths.

It is then, in Kermode's phrase, "the sense of an ending" which accounts in large measure for the enduring power of apocalypse to attract the attention of the artist, whose creative fictions, like those of Revelation, significantly aid in giving meaning to life. The significance of apocalypse in English literature is particularly important when we recall that the conception of the artist as the arbiter of the meaning of life is a fundamental notion in the aesthetics of men like Sidney and Spenser, Milton and Bunyan, Swift and Pope, and Blake and Wordsworth.

Apocalyptic literature exerts an equally strong appeal to the artistic consciousness in its vindication of the creative powers of the human imagination. The surviving canonical and uncanonical apocalypses are manifestations of the reality of the imagination rather than the empirical reality of time and place. Apocalypses are filled with angelology and demonology, elaborate animal symbolism, numerology, detailed catalogues of fan-

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tastic events, and mysterious astrological description. Their anonymous or pseudonymous writers present themselves as divinely inspired visionaries, interpreters of cosmic reality. In this role they are free from the demands of concrete reality. They seek to inspire awe in their readers by carrying them beyond the bounds of ordinary human experience. Their distance from more conventional notions of reality explains in large part why Christianity has found so few of the apocalypses in its sacred literature canonical. The Roman influence on early Christian culture fostered a taste for realism and disparaged the fantastic as barbaric. The joining of a human head to the neck of a horse which Horace castigates in the opening lines of the *Ars Poetica* is typical of the fancies which shape the apocalyptic writer's visions. In his *De Architectura*, Vitruvius deplores the taste for "monsters" in decoration because they represent things as they "are not, nor could be, nor ever were."

Medieval and Renaissance artists, painters and poets alike, combated the prejudice against the freedom of the imagination through Sacred Scripture, which was bound to neither the ordinary sense of reality nor the classical

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conception of beauty. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, no less than in other eras in Western history, those whose imaginations led them beyond the current conceptions of spiritual or physical reality found in Scripture the precedent and defense for their dissent.

From the earliest days of Christian art, the Old Testament prophecies and the Apocalypse of St. John have been a significant source of the highly imaginative representations of Christian iconography. The apocalypse, of course, is the source of such commonly recurring representations as the evangelistic beasts, the Lamb of God, the four horsemen, the beasts of the sea and the earth, the great dragon, and the scarlet whore. More important, however, is the precedent that apocalypse, as a kind of sacred literature, sets in releasing imaginative creations from the strictures of realism. Initially, the motive for allowing them may have been the desire to marshall barbaric tastes to the service of Christian devotion. The sustaining motive for the artist's unrealistic creations, however, clearly appears to be their service as instruments of Christian doctrine. As their use spread, they acquired symbolic and allegorical meaning through the influence of Christianized Platonism and the use of St. Augustine's method of scriptural interpretation. The representations of apocalyptic beasts gave rise to the
development of prodigies like the unicorn and the griffin, which in turn led to the bestiaries. Allegorical reading brought the fantastic realms of pagan mythology within the pale of Christianity, as the perceptive reader found in Hercules a type of Christ and in Virgil's fourth eclogue the messianic promise. The lustiest chivalric romance could be seen as the strictest of moral essays. The notion that any imaginative creation is justified if it serves Christian doctrine has never been universally accepted, but, as D. W. Robertson has demonstrated, its acceptance was widespread in the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance. The *Divine Comedy*, the *Canterbury Tales*, and the *Faerie Queene* are none the less "unreal" creations of the human imagination for their being in the service of doctrine or morality. From the *Vision of Piers Plowman* to the vision of Blake's *Jerusalem* there is a celebration of the creative powers of the imagination linked with a tradition of the apocalyptic in English literature which, despite substantial differences among its particular

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manifestations, reveals the writer's freedom to create his own sense of reality—a reality unknown to ordinary man.

Even to survey briefly the influence of apocalyptic thought and literature is beyond the scope of this essay, yet to employ apocalyptic themes and forms in their works is to point to the pervasiveness and importance of the current of apocalypse in English literary history. Spenser, Milton, Bunyan, Pope, and Blake are perhaps the most significant, both in terms of the elements of apocalypse in their works and in terms of their influence on others.

Spenser's most obvious debt to apocalyptic literature is Book I of the Faerie Queene, where many of the characters and much of the structure are drawn from St. John's Apocalypse. Redcross, Arthur, Una, Archimago, Duessa,
the dragon, and the seven-headed beast have their counterparts in Revelation. In thus invoking the Apocalypse, traditionally held to be a synopsis of all future history, Spenser expands the implications of his poem to include, in effect, the cosmic conflict of good and evil. Redcross's histories over the personified forces of evil throughout Book I mark not only the progress of Everyman to holiness, but the glorious victories of the English church and monarchy. The selections from Revelation—particularly the great dragon—suggest the Protestant interpretation of the Apocalypse as the prophecy of the Reformation. "It is these associations of Book I with Revelation," Josepheine Bennett points out, "which give depth and significance to Spenser's allegory, and it is the drama of the Apocalypse, interpreted as the prophecy of the Reformation and combined with the legend of St. George which serves as the plot of Book I." The sense of an ending in the Redcross plot is carried in his vision of the heavenly New Jerusalem, the end of Everyman's quest for holiness. The greater plot, however, reveals the function of holiness in the world and is carried in the revelation to St. George of an earthly New Jerusalem in the English
church and state under the reign of Elizabeth. Spenser's apocalypse combines the typically Hebraic millennial hope for the salvation of this world with the Christian hope for salvation in the next.

Perhaps the most important apocalyptic characteristic which Spenser's poetry often exhibits is the visionary quality. In the Faerie Queene and the Epithalamium, for example, Spenser creates a dream world of such detailed vividness that it seems to be real. The atmosphere of Faerie Land is not, however, simply that of the chivalric romance of Ariosto and Tasso, nor that of the more personal visions of Petrarch and DuBellay. Spenser's is the higher purpose of epic. While celebrating the glory of Elizabethan England, Spenser creates a world with a dis-

10 Despite our knowledge of his many sources, Spenser's imagination created a world with a distinct reality, having its own sense of history, habits of thought, and personalities. It is a totally unreal world in terms of human experience, filled with fantastic people, places, things, and events. Spenser's debt to the romance—to Ariosto, Tasso, and Petrarch—for his conception of the poetic imagination is explicitly acknowledged, but early in the development of his poetic craft he must have been influenced by the imaginative quality of apocalyptic literature. As a schoolboy Spenser made verse translations of Jan van der Noot's Theatre of Worldlings (1569), a collection of sixteen vision poems by Petrarch and BuBellay and four sonnets by Van der Noot versifying passages from Revelation with illustrations and running commentary, as he later employed in the Shepherd's Calendar. In a letter to Spenser, Gabriel Harvey commended Revelation as a model for visionary writing (see Bennett, pp. 112-115). Spenser's poetic practice is consistently a
tinct reality, a reality apart from empirical realities of Elizabethan England and the ordinary experience of men. It enjoys its own locus, personalities, habits of thought, and sense of history. Spenser provides his readers, in addition to the pleasing instruction in the necessary Christian virtues and the praise of the Tudor monarchy, a first-hand experience of a reality entirely of his own making. In the poetic act, he is the seer, the arbiter of reality. His role as poet is essentially that of the prophet, for, as Sidney suggests, he shows men what ought to be.

Although Spenser's epic pursues the implications of human history, it is severely limited by its heavy emphasis on the patriotic theme of all English poets. Milton, on the other hand, offers a comprehensive view of human destiny. *Paradise Lost* is a paradigm of the attempt to satisfy what Frank Kermode has described as the human need for fictive concords with origins and ends which give meaning to life. In beginning with a vision of the cosmos before the genesis of the human race and ending with a vision of the end for which divine Providence intends it, Milton seeks to justify both psychologically and intelle-

reflection of the creative freedom of the imagination exemplified in apocalyptic literature.
lectually the ways of God to men. Unlike their creator, men have no experiential knowledge of the beginning of time or of the fullness of time to come. Milton's epic seeks to give meaning to the lives of men stuck in the midst of time—in effect, to human history—by revealing its beginning and end. His epic is, then, a history of the cosmos in which genesis, fall, redemption, and apocalypse are the prime movements. Consistent with the epic's emphasis on historical beginnings, the bulk of Milton's poem and his greatest poetry develop the first two acts of the cosmic drama, genesis and fall. Yet without redemption and apocalypse the plot of human history would be incomplete. Adam's vision of Christ's redemption in Book XII releases him from the terror of history. History's turn from the fall to an even greater good than that from which he misled it, prompts Adam's joyful expression of the concept of the fortunate fall:

'O goodness infinite, goodness immense!
That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good; more wonderful
Than that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness! full of doubt I stand,
Whether I should repent me now of sin
By me done and occasioned, or rejoice
Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring
To God more glory, more good will to men
From God, and over wrath grace shall abound.

The more complete union of God and Man in the Incarnation, the act of Christ's redemption of the race, will yield in the fullness of time the greater glory of God and greater good will of God to men. Were the redemption only to effect a return to the prelapsarian state, there would be little justification of divine Providence. Man would be abandoned to the vast and meaningless interim of time without end. The terror of history lies in the recognition of a beginning and a middle without end. The fall and the redemption occur in this world and time; the ravages of the fall continue both before and after the redemption:

So shall the World go on,
To good malignant, to bad men benign,
Under her own weight groaning, till the day
Appear of reparation to the just,
And vengeance to the wicked, at return
Of him so lately promised to thy aid,
The Woman's Seed, obscurely then foretold,
Now ampler known thy Saviour and thy Lord,
Last in the clouds from Heaven to be revealed
In glory of the Father, to dissolve
Satan with his perverted World; then raise
From the conflagrant mass, purged and refined,
New Heavens, new Earth, ages of endless date
Founded in righteousness and peace and love, 12
To bring forth fruits, joy and eternal bliss.

The redemption provides Adam and mankind the consolation of a distinct end, a purpose beyond mere existence which follows from the beginning, to the fall, to the redemption, to the apocalypse—the cosmic event marking the

12 ibid., p. 114.
suspension of time and the culmination of history.

Milton's poetic forms are in the main modeled on the classical epic and most often bear the marks of Hellenistic restraint. He seeks to inspire awe in his readers through an appeal to an austere spirituality and cultivated intellect. Yet for all his sophistication, Milton remains a devoted student of the Old Testament and imitator of its imaginatively rigorous poetry. The taste for the fantastic representation typical of the apocalyptic writer can be seen in the portraits of Chaos, Hell, and the War in Heaven. For men trapped in time, the grandeur and justice of God can be expressed only in figurative accounts of the functions of Providence outside the human experience of time. Milton's vision, however disciplined its expression, is nonetheless that of the apocalyptic writer. The poet functions as seer, as do Raphael and Michael in his poem, in his revelation of the workings of Providence both within and without human history. For Milton, the poet is the arbiter of reality—a visionary leader in spiritual, intellectual, and political endeavors.

Of all English writers, John Bunyan is perhaps most bound to the apocalyptic world view as it is reflected in Scripture, particularly the Old Testament. Most of his works are informed by the substance of apocalyptic thought and, with the modifications demanded by his Puritanism,
its technique. Their personification of the struggle of the forces of good and evil in the universe is typical of the cosmic dualism of apocalypse. In *The Pilgrim's Progress* the contention of good and evil is at once within the individual and within the universe. Everyman, essentially alone, experiences within him the struggle of the forces of good and evil for possession of him. Bunyan expresses the internal conflict in detailed terms of external reality; the internal struggle mirrors the combat in the world. In *The Holy War* the external struggle between the Mansoulians and the Diabolonians is a figure for the conflict within the individual. The pervading awareness of universal combat is important to the eschatology of Bunyan's apocalypse. The notion of Christian combat is, of course, at least as old as St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, and, in a general way, as much at the heart of the first book of the *Faerie Queene* as it is at conceptual center of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. There is, however, a significantly different role for Everyman in the combat as viewed through the filter of Bunyan's militant Puritanism. As is typical of Old Testament apocalypse, man is substantially a passive element in the combat. The forces of good and evil fight over him. As in *Pilgrim's Progress*, Everyman's experience of the combat allows him to perceive whether or not he is elected; he
is in the main powerless to determine that election. The spiritual development in the combat is the development of the perception of election, participation in the "covenant of grace."

Out of the clashes of good and evil within man and in the world, Bunyan develops the plots of his allegories, and, as has been suggested of all meaningful fictions, these plots are marked by a sense of an ending which directs the progress of the pilgrim, history, and the universe. The Pilgrim's Progress, not unlike Milton's epic, works its account of human history in dramatic movements. Bunyan begins with the fall and moves through the arduous progress of redemption to apocalypse. The journey from place to place—from the Slough, to the Cross, to the Valley of Humiliation, to the Delectable Mountain, to Beulah, and finally to the City of Light—marks the movement from beginnings to ends which give meaning to the Christian pilgrim's life.

Bunyan's works manifest a sense of history much like the historical awareness which pervades the Old Testament. The Pilgrim's Progress is the history of every elect Christian. The Life and Death of Mr. Bad Man is an elaborate and realistically detailed exemplum of a man's failure to receive the providential gift of faith. Grace Abounding is a spiritual autobiography. The Holy War,
drawing many of its narrative details from the Civil War, is an account like those in the historical books of the Old Testament. The historical perspective of Divine Providence in Bunyan's works, however, is most like that of the apocalyptic literature. Apocalypse takes a pessimistic view of the present, abandoning it to the control of the forces of evil, and gives itself over to historical retrospects and the vision of the future. The events of the past justify the pessimistic view of the present and the hope for the future in the prophecy of the millennium. The one sure medium of revelation is history, the record of God's Providence in creation. Bunyan's works reflect essentially the same pessimism about the present and hope in the future. Both attitudes are justified in the records of God's special and general providences for the individual, as in *Grace Abounding* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and for the world, as in *The Holy War*. Functioning as spiritual leader or, indeed prophet, Bunyan is demonstrating how the Christian is to read, as he would read his Bible, the providences of God in history and to discover his destiny.

The apocalyptic view of the revelation of God's Providence in history is, however, not entirely typical of the common Hebraic conception of history, for apocalypse is thoroughly deterministic. Old Testament apocalypse is congruent with Bunyan's radical Protestantism,
particularly the doctrine of election or the "covenant of grace." In apocalypse, as Martin Rist points out, "the end is predetermined; Satan is to be overcome and his age brought to an end; God's new age is to be established; those who are to be saved are predetermined." Unlike his Anglican adversaries who interpret apocalypse less literally, Bunyan adopts the role of the apocalyptic writer in revealing the functions of Providence and the signs of human predestination. It is this function which earned Coleridge's praise of The Pilgrim's Progress as "incomparably the best Summa theologiae evangelicae ever produced by a writer not miraculously inspired."\(^{13}\)

In his use of dream vision and allegory, Bunyan employs literary devices appropriate to apocalypse, but not exclusively apocalyptic. The world he creates is the real world of ordinary men, not the fantastic realms of St. John, Spenser, or even Milton. His symbolic language ever seeks to be clear rather than esoteric, to inspire devotion and understanding rather than awe. In Bunyan's practice the spiritual reality is figured in terms of physical reality; indeed, for the practice of religion he seeks to make actions in the one realm indistinguishable

from actions in the other. Like the apocalyptic writer, however, Bunyan is attempting to describe the indescribable. His subject demands symbolism, yet his Puritanism excludes the creations of fancy. The seeming artistic dilemma is, of course, ours, not Bunyan's, for the Puritans developed their own approach to figurative language. By seeing emblems in the real world, they were able to satisfy the need for symbolism, in part able to make up for their lack of poetic imagination. "Seventeenth-century Puritanism," as J. Paul Hunter explains, "used 'emblem' to describe objects in the natural world which have spiritual significance. For Puritans emblems became substitutes for icons. Unable to create objects to symbolize spiritual truths (because such action would usurp a divinely reserved prerogative), they permit themselves to isolate and interpret objects and events created by God."14 Although Bunyan's figurative language lacks the flights of imagination typical of apocalyptic writing, the fundamental premise for its use is the same, namely, leading the faithful to an extraordinary knowledge of Providence—a function that a simple realistic narrative could not satisfy.

The strength of the apocalyptic character of Bunyan's writing is perhaps nowhere better seen than in the strength of its appeal to the audience for which it was designed. In the late seventeenth century Puritans in general and the dissenting sectarians in particular were members of a radical minority group. Their persecution was a harsh reality which long has been recognized, if not always sympathetically, as important to the understanding of their thought. It has been said that apocalypse is essentially a protest literature, and apocalyptic ideas, in one form or another, have had a significant function in the cycle of persecution and revolution in Western culture at least since the eleventh century.\textsuperscript{15} The intimate association of persecution and apocalypse must have significantly contributed—as it did to the thought of Hanserd Knollys, William Kiffin, John Lilburne, and the more extreme separatists in general—to the development of the apocalyptic strain in Bunyan's thought and writing. Persecution and protest clearly dominate the context of Bunyan's literary production. "Apocalypticism," Martin Rist suggests, "has

\textsuperscript{15} The role of apocalyptic thought in political thinking has been well developed by Norman Cohn in \textit{The Pursuit of the Millennium} (2nd. ed. New York, 1961), a fascinating and detailed study of "revolutionary messianism in medieval and Reformation Europe and its bearing on modern totalitarian movements." Of particular interest to students of English literature is the appendix, "The 'Free Spirit' in Cromwell's England: The Ranters and Their Literature."
and will continue to have a great influence, and in the main the more difficult, dismal, arduous, and perplexing the times are, the greater the influence will be. In general, it has been widely accepted by the have-nots, the poor, the dispossessed, the oppressed and the persecuted; this, no doubt, partly accounts for the adoption of it by the early Christians. In fact, oppression and persecution seem to have been strong incentives for writing apocalypses.16 Bunyan and his followers viewed their religious dissension as a return to the purer doctrines and forms of early Christianity and saw their persecution as essentially like that of the Christians in the apostolic times. They, indeed, felt themselves to be in fact primitive Christians and used their persecution as testimony of the evangelical spirit in rhetoric worthy of their beloved St. Paul, the first author of spiritual autobiography.

The incentives for writing apocalyptic literature also account for the great popularity of Bunyan's work among the dispossessed. The allegory drawn from the ordinary experience of physical reality and its stylistic simplicity—the vocabulary and coordinate syntax of the

16 Rist, p. 161.
English Bible--accommodate the spiritual message of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, for example, to the limited social and literary experience of his readers. Bunyan, however, does not patronize his readers, many of whom are among the sophisticated classes of society. Beyond stylistic simplicity, the apocalyptic character of Bunyan's writing in large measure explains its appeal. Martin Rist points out that "the strong appeal of apocalypticism down through the centuries is also in part due to its uncomplicated explanation of evil and to its strikingly dramatic solution to this age-long problem. Moreover, as the cosmic drama of the conflict between the forces of good and evil is portrayed, the reader or listener may come to think of himself as being involved in a great cosmic process; as being, indeed, not merely an interested spectator, but a more personal participant in the triumph of the forces of good over the forces of evil."17 In an age beset by social, political, and religious complexities, much of Bunyan's appeal arises from his involving his readers in the drama of Christian redemption and apocalypse. Bunyan does for radical Protestantism what we might guess the psychomachia drama did for Catholic doctrine in the late

17 *ibid.*
Middle Ages.

For Alexander Pope, as for John Milton, the great argument of the epic is the destiny of the race. Whereas Paradise Lost reveals the concords of beginnings and ends which give meaning to history, The Dunciad exposes the disharmony in the race of dunces which threatens to make history meaningless. Pope's masterpiece, no less than Milton's, narrates the history of a cosmos in which genesis, fall, redemption, and apocalypse are the prime movements. Perhaps the bitterest irony in Pope's attack on the universe of dullness is in the realization that the race whose history The Dunciad recounts is fundamentally inhuman despite its human appearances. The poem's movement from the genesis of the Uncreating Word to the apocalypse of Universal Darkness exposes declining culture's inversion of human values, both Pagan and Christian. The first and second books recount the creation, fall, and redemption of the world of dullness in a sacrilegious parody of those mythic and religious characters and events which give meaning to human history. As in Milton's poem, the cosmic drama would be incomplete without apocalypse, the sense of an ending and the revelation of how it is achieved. The third and fourth books of The Dunciad are devoted to the apocalypse of dullness, and the last act gets the greatest attention precisely because the endings,
far more than the beginnings, reveal the meaning of dullness. Book III, which draws heavily on the sixth book of the *Aeneid* and the eleventh and twelfth books of *Paradise Lost*, includes the apocalypse of Elkanah Settle, a vision of the history of dullness in much the same way Revelation is a vision of the history of Christianity. Martin Price observes that "through the prophecies of Elkanah Settle, the old city-poet, we look back to the past and trace the coming of night through time and space. As cultures have died, culture itself has moved westward, from China to the Middle East, from there to Greece, thence to Italy, to France and Spain, at last to England and now—in prospect—beyond it to the West. The death of culture is the progress of Dulness, and Bays is her prophet."\(^{18}\) The progress of humanity, Pagan or Christian, is the life of truth. The movements in the history of dullness are discordant parodies of the harmonious functions of the cosmos; the decline of culture foretells the age of chaos. Book IV narrates the fulfillment of the prophecies of the third, the consummation of the Uncreating Word in the restoration of Chaos and Universal Darkness which mark the suspension of time and the culmination of history.

\(^{18}\) *To the Palace of Wisdom* (Garden City, 1964), p. 221.
The whole of *The Dunciad* is, in a real sense, an apocalypse. Although Pope begins his poem with particular satiric targets, its scope steadily increases to include all the realm of letters in the second book and all of human history in the third, culminating in a vision of the universe in the fourth. The comprehensiveness of the poem points to the fundamental seriousness of Pope's satiric vision of the decline of culture. If Milton's poem is a paradigm of those concords which give meaning to life, then Pope's exemplifies the discords which make it meaningless. Above all, *The Dunciad* attacks habits of thought which, in denying the essential unity of the universe, rob the universe of its order and man of his humanity. If nothing else, the lesson of the *Essay on Man* is that the universe is a concordant whole. The irony of *The Dunciad* argues the same case by revealing the chaos toward which the decline of culture inexorably tends. For all the dirty jokes and literary gamesmanship, the wit of Pope's poem is the serious instrument of the prophet, the interpreter of Providence in history.

It is, of course, in the life and work of William Blake that readers of English literature find the greatest likeness of the visionary worlds of Daniel, Zechariah, and St. John. Of all Englishmen, Blake most fully and unreservedly embraces the habits of thought and artistic
expression of the apocalyptic writer. For Blake, Sacred Scripture was undeniably a first-hand imaginative experience, one among the many funds of experience from which he drew to create his own scripture of the cult of the imagination. The recognition of Blake's work as a kind of sacred literature has been a major contribution of modern Blake scholarship, and analysis of the intellectual and artistic function of Scripture—particularly the Old Testament Prophecies and St. John's Revelation—has long played a central role in the exegesis and appreciation of Blake's art and aesthetics. The criticism of Milton Percival, Northrop Frye, Harold Bloom, and Thomas Altizer, to mention only a few, has demonstrated the apocalyptic character of virtually all that is Blakean.19 Even to enumerate the apocalyptic characteristics in Blake's art is beyond the scope of this sketch, but it is important to note that the development of Blake's apocalyptic thought is not founded exclusively on his study and appreciation of Scripture. He is clearly indebted not only to the apocalyptic Scripture, but to the apocalyptic tradition

in English literature as well. From the visions of Piers, the Faerie Land of Spenser, the grand design of Milton, Bunyan's holy wars, and the satiric vision of Pope, Blake draws the elements which he synthesizes into his own radical vision. Blake is at once Everyman leading his fellows from a devotion to the material world to the life of the spirit, the creator of an intricate reality beyond the experience of ordinary men, the arbiter of human destiny who justifies the providence of the "Eternal Great Humanity Divine," the chronicler of the struggle of the forces of good and evil in the universe, and the satirist of the decay of the mind and of human culture. While his predecessors employed some of the elements of apocalypse to develop their political, social, aesthetic, moral, and religious arguments, Blake's work manifests them all. His art is totally apocalyptic in its means and its ends; it addresses itself, in a radical vision, to all that affects the human condition.

The influence of apocalypse and its associated ideas in English literary history is much like that of the Bible or of language itself. The influence is so pervasive and so fundamental to the conception of many works that it is apt to be overlooked. Even this brief account of apocalyptic elements in the works of some major English writers suggests something of the strength and depth of that in-
fluence. Yet among the writers upon whom the apocalyptic ideas of the seventeenth century seem to be a significant influence, Jonathan Swift is perhaps the most overlooked. Clearly Swift's satires are not "apocalyptic" in precisely the same sense that most readers would be willing to grant that Blake's works are. Although there has been considerable recognition of the common satiric grounds of Swiftian satire and Blake's "Marriage of Heaven and Hell" and "Island in the Moon," the similarity of their artistic visions is, I believe, significantly larger than is generally conceded and is accountable in large measure to a shared influence of apocalyptic thought and literature. A Tale of a Tub and Jerusalem, for example, are remarkably alike in many respects. Both are complex mosaics whose pieces of allusion, parody, allegory, metaphor, and the like all contribute to an artistic whole but whose pieces never perfectly fit with one another when viewed in terms of conventional literary genres. Both works—very much like the Apocalypse of St. John—give the reader an experiential sense of unity without allowing him to formulate that unity in logical terms. Both works clearly do not fit the forms of ordinary genres and their respectability as art works—at least in the twentieth century—does not

See particularly Fearful Symmetry, pp. 154, 191, 200.
depend upon their meeting the common standards of literary order. Neither the thematic nor structural unity of either work will yield to impeccable logical analysis, for they were not constructed on formal logical bases. For both, the artistic vision is a radical vision which allows the artist to create a distinct milieu whose standards of reality are entirely of the artist's own creation. The eighteenth-century's greatest prose satirist and its only poetic prophet consistently abused literary conventions—standards of realistic habits of thought—for their own ends. For them to conform to convention would have made the satirist and the prophet writers of bald moral essays rather than artists with vision beyond that of ordinary men.

It is then into this tradition that this essay seeks to place Swift's *A Tale of a Tub*. It is a tradition in English literature which has its roots in the Judeo-Christian apocalyptic literature as preserved in the canonical and apocryphal books of Scripture and which is revived with the Reformation's return to the Bible as the primary source of Christian revelation and devotion and is further developed in the seventeenth century's interest in Hebraism. In order to acquire an adequate sense of the current of apocalyptic ideas immediately in the background of Swift's early satires, it will first be
necessary to discuss briefly their source in late Jewish history and in the history of the early church, and to describe the characteristics of apocalyptic thought and literature in the Hebraic and early Christian traditions.
CHAPTER TWO

Apocalypse is a species of religious thought and a sacred literary genre apparently peculiar to Judeo-Christian culture. Although it has its roots in the concern with the origins and ends of existence which all men share, apocalypse developed as the response of the Jews and the early Christians to the threat of annihilation posed by Greco-Roman culture. Apocalypses have flourished in those times of crisis when men endure what has been called the "terror of history." Shirley Jackson Case succinctly describes the general conditions which give rise to apocalyptic thought and expression:

Generally speaking, an apocalypse is the peculiar product of a time of adversity. When mortals find themselves overwhelmed by misfortunes or plunged in perplexities, escape from despair is sought in a special disclosure of God's kindly designs for the future. The seer sets before

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the eyes of his afflicted readers a picture of coming victory as the reward of present endurance. It is assumed that man, through his own efforts, is quite incapable of either averting present misfortune or of insuring for himself a happy future. In fact while awaiting the hour of his deliverance, he may expect only an aggravation of his distresses. Yet in the moment of direst agony the light of apocalyptic hope burns brightest. Under more ordinary circumstances, when the course of daily living and thinking moves smoothly forward upon its accustomed way, interest in apocalyptic tends to abate. But periods of great political, social, or religious upheaval demand the service of the apocalyptic seer who can reinforce the faltering faith of the afflicted by disclosing the hidden purposes of the Deity, and by picturing a coming time when the righteous will enjoy unfailing rewards while sinners suffer relentless punishment.

Among the Jews, the rise of apocalyptic, which was to gain its greatest strength in the latter days of the Roman persecution, began in the Hellenistic period when the Hebrew monarchy had virtually dissolved and when Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, controlled the country and tried to introduce Greek customs and suppress the Hebrew religion. Apocalypse suited the mood of an occupied country, and through the first century A.D. it became customary in times of tension 'to send out 'apocalypses' couched in dramatic language and purporting to give a revelation of the heavenly world as well as the events which were shortly to come to pass.'

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3The Westminster Study Edition of the Holy Bible
annihilation and evidently felt no hesitation in recasting Jewish apocalyptic writings to meet their own needs. Again, Shirley Jackson Case's account is most to the point:

Among the earliest Christians, as among their Jewish predecessors and contemporaries, apocalyptic hopes thrived on adversity of circumstances. Prominent in the message of the first Christian preachers was the expectation of Jesus' return in messianic glory at an early date to establish his dominion upon a thoroughly renovated earth. This confidence in an imminent divine intervention to right the ills of life enabled Christians to endure without faltering both the opposition of their Jewish kinsmen and the hostility of their gentile enemies. While Christians remained relatively few in numbers and the prospect for a universal triumph of the new religion by ordinary means of missionary propaganda seemed doubtful, faith in the ultimate victory of God drew its inspiration largely from apocalyptic imagery. Thus Paul amid the adversities of his labors found satisfaction and courage in believing that the day of the Lord was at hand... And when the Roman imperial power seemed to John to menace the very existence of the new religion, apocalyptic expectations again came to the rescue, serving the Christians as a means of triumph of their cause. 4

From the very beginning, however, apocalyptic has not been the refuge of orthodox. The impetus which produced the Book of Daniel, the first extant apocalypse, also fostered the development of Pharisaism. The orthodox believed that prophecy had ceased and sought to endure the trials


4S. J. Case, pp. 128-129.
Of their existence through the creation of a community, half-state and half-church, founded upon close observance of Hebraic tradition. "Into the place of the prophet came the school-master and the drill-master... Again and again at critical times they showed the vigour and temper of fearless Puritanism...believing that the God of the nation was in control of history, that in His own good time He would grant the nation its desires; that, in the meanwhile, the duty of the true Israelite was whole-hearted devotion to the Torah, joined to the patient waiting on the Divine will." The impetus which produced St. John's Revelation soon waned. "As Christianity expanded both numerically and territorially, the demand for apocalyptic writings gradually diminished. The odds against the new religion no longer seemed so stupendous as to demand the early catastrophic intervention of God to secure its triumph and rescue it from destruction. More gradual and normal promises of growth now seemed to offer sufficient promises of success.

As the Rabbis consolidated Judaism in its tradition and the Fathers created for Christianity a tradition of its own, the orthodox developed means of dealing with the perils threatening their cultures and came to accept the events of history as being at one with the gradual playing out of the divine plan for the creation.

By its very nature apocalypse became the immediate and radical response of the unorthodox, the refuge of the dispossessed. "Between the close of the eleventh century and the first half of the sixteenth," as Norman Cohn amply demonstrates in his important study of the political implications of apocalyptic thought, "it repeatedly happened in Europe that the desire of the poor to improve the material conditions of their lives became transfused with phantasies of a new Paradise on earth, a world purged of suffering and sin, a Kingdom of the Saints." For those who derive little or no satisfaction from orthodox religious, social, political, and economic values and institutions, apocalyptic offers the promise of remaking reality, the

6 S. J. Case, p. 129.

consolation of a new vision of man and his fate. Thus, the Reformation found much of its evidence for the rejection of Roman orthodoxy in St. Paul's epistles and St. John's Apocalypse, the Puritan revolution was founded upon the vision of an immediate Kingdom of God on earth, and, as Ernest Lee Tuveson has demonstrated, the development of the doctrine of progress arose as much from the reading of the apocalyptic parts of Scripture as from the study of nature. Apocalyptic, then, may be seen as an expression of a persecution complex which not only cries out in discontent but also protests the orthodox views of reality which sustain the experience of frustration.

The seventeenth century in England was an age ripe for the revival of apocalyptic thought. Out of the quantative and theoretical revolution in knowledge in the sixteenth century had arisen intense dissatisfaction with the religious, philosophical, and political values of Scholasticism and the High Renaissance. The period saw the devaluation of analogical thought, and, consequently, the effective disruption of the traditional doctrine of correspondences as a reliable insight into the metaphysical structure of the universe. The circle had been broken, the microcosm

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no longer mirrored the macrocosm, and the chain of being failed to satisfy the need for concordant explanations. The later and more radical developments of the Reformation and the new philosophy mark the development of what Hiram Hayden has called the "Counter-Renaissance." For many, the coherence of Aristotelian philosophy and Thomistic theology and the orderly vision of Richard Hooker were demonstrably shattered. The old orthodoxy became a system of persecution. The rejection of tradition created a vacuum which momentarily left men facing the terror of meaninglessness. In response to an intensely felt need for those explanations which confere order and meaning on human life and culture, there arose a variety of new religious and philosophical systems explaining the relationships of God, man, and nature. The Counter-Renaissance was an era of turmoil rather than consensus, the period which reveals the trauma of the birth of modern culture. The competition of philosophical systems, the wars among religious sects, and the struggle for political power led men in the seventeenth century to feel that indeed all coherence had gone

from human experience. For some, the response to what must have seemed the threat of cultural annihilation was the return to the values of tradition; for many others, the chaos of the times elicited responses which I want to characterize as apocalyptic.

For all their differences in historical particulars, the first and the seventeenth centuries A.D. exhibit remarkable similarities. Seventeenth-century Englishmen, for example, consciously identified the spectre of Scholasticism and Roman Catholicism with the error and superstition of pagan learning and religion and the Roman empire's persecution of the early Church. The more radical Protestants considered their rejection of ecclesiastical structure and purification of liturgy as a return to the life and spirit of primitive Christianity and held their persecution to be an experience identical to that endured by the early martyrs. The fathers of the New Philosophy, like those of incipient Christianity, project an evangelical spirit while promising the rewards of the modern dispensation. Just as Christianity thrived on its conflicts with the past, the rise of modern culture was nurtured in the rejection of tradition. For all the chaos which marks the seventeenth century in England, it is an age abounding in an apocalyptic faith in the establishment of a new order. In terms of the broadest outlines of seventeenth-century history, it
is an age like that which first gave birth to apocalyptic and a period which manifests many of the characteristic habits of apocalyptic thought and expression.

Apocalyptic, though not a rigidly systematic species of thought, "may be defined as the dualistic, cosmic, and eschatological belief in two opposing cosmic powers, God and Satan (or his equivalent); and in two distinct ages—the present, temporal and irretrievably evil age under Satan, who now oppresses the righteous but whose power God will soon act to overthrow; and the future, perfect, and eternal age under God's own rule, when the righteous will be blessed forever."\(^\text{10}\) All cultures have developed means to cope with the prospect of meaninglessness, but what makes the apocalyptic response singular is the Judeo-Christian

sense of history. Particularly through the Hebraic content of Western culture there develops the notion that man's salvation may be beheld as a condition of his existence in the world—a notion which was particularly influential in the seventeenth century, as Harold Fisch's study of the Hebraic factor in seventeenth-century literature has demonstrated. Hebraism claims, he writes, "to provide an account of the relationship between God, Man, and Nature in its permanent, historical character. From the Hebraic point of view, Jerusalem is not a mythical ideal but rather one capable of resurrection in history through the exercise of our human faculties."\(^\text{11}\)

The sense of history as the proper arena for divine action is carried, with some modification, into the Christian concept of history as universal, providential, and teleological. It is, however, precisely this linear notion of history which makes pessimistic view of the present so terrifying, for the experience of persecution suggests that perhaps God has abandoned the world and that the hostile forces which have taken His place can bring about the annihilation of the faithful. In the face of an intensely felt threat of meaningless destruction, the Hebraic faith in the efficacy of the human faculties or the Christian

\(^{11}\text{Jerusalem and Albion (New York, 1964) p.}\)
trust in heavenly rewards provide insufficient consolation, and, consequently, the faithful find the strength to survive the terror of the present in a belief in a cataclysmic return of God's power in the world and the earthly reward of those who endure and punishment of those who persecute. The more orthodox Hebraic and Christian views of the functions of providence as gradual make the terror of the present unbearable and the suggestion that the God of the faithful is in control of the present psychologically unacceptable. The righteous view themselves as completely helpless; their only effective source of consolation is in the immediate perception of the entire plot of history prior to its completion. Apocalyptic is a thoroughly deterministic faith from which it derives not only its consolation but also a sense of mission, for not only is the future determined by God's will, but the faithful enjoy secret knowledge of the entire course of providence through the revelations of the divinely inspired seer. As in the orthodox views, history remains the one sure medium of revelation, but the apocalyptic vision allows man to view the end of history in advance and, thereby, to perceive that order which gives meaning to his suffering and to his life.

Apocalyptic's pessimism about the present and its conviction that improvement is beyond human power relieves the faithful of any responsibility for the persecution they
suffer. The defeatism and utter reliance upon the power of God account for the lack of social and ethical teaching in apocalyptic and its complete dependence upon faith—that mark which will separate the saved from the damned with the advent of the new age. Apocalyptic envisions a dualistic cosmos imaged in the war of the forces of good and evil in the universe. In an uncomplicated and dramatic, almost Manichean, solution to the problem of evil in the world, responsibility for the evil of the present age is transferred to the forces which control it. The faithful, though powerless, participate, through their suffering, in the cosmic drama begun in the old order of reality and predestined to end time in a new order of reality. The fate of man and the cosmos are one; those who suffer terror will share in the triumph of the forces of good over the forces of evil. At bottom, apocalyptic derives from dualistic habits of thought which with relative ease allow men to escape the perplexities of resolving the contradictory experiences at the heart of the human condition.

The more orthodox consolations of Judeo-Christian religion and philosophy emphasize the limitations of the human knowledge of the divine providence for man and the universe, yet it is precisely these limitations which create the terror of uncertainty in times of particular difficulty. The painfully slow medium of history and the agonizingly
remote prospect of the after-life provide insufficient knowledge of that greater reality which gives meaning to the lives of those enduring the immediate and concrete realities of slavery and the fire of martyrdom. They demand the services of a seer who can demonstrate that their faith in the abstract will be rewarded in the concrete. "Belief in the particular inspiration of the seer as a necessary medium of revelation is a characteristic of all apocalyptic."12 As the specially selected individual to whom divine knowledge has been granted, the seer provides an authoritative account of Providence. He is equipped to deliver knowledge of the ultimate realities either through the medium of dreams, visions, and the friendship of angels or through a state of ecstatic possession, which St. John described as being "in the Spirit." The seer gains authority for his personal responses to the terror of his times by making them, in effect, not his own. No man could claim such knowledge or experience under his own identity; thus the apocalyptic writer ordinarily adopts the pseudonym of a famous man in the past of simply remains anonymous. Yet, as every reader of apocalypse is aware, the apocalyptic writer asserts his authority as the recipient of divine

12 S. J. Case, p. 131.
inspiration as he testifies to the momentousness of his experience. The seer has been transported beyond the realm of ordinary human experience to see the conflict in the whole cosmos and the end towards which it inevitably tends. The persecuted achieve consolation by putting their faith in the seer and the validity of his experience. The personal experience of the seer has freed the persecuted from the experience of terror. Through their reliance on the personal inspiration of the apocalyptic writer, the faithful have achieved immediate and comprehensive knowledge of the divine. Apocalyptic, in effect, protests against the limitations of human knowledge and, consequently, represents an effort to reach beyond the limitations of the human condition.

The seer's unique power and critical function demand a singular literary technique. As is evident upon first reading Daniel and Revelation, apocalypse has a language and rhetoric all its own. In attempting to describe what in terms of ordinary human experience is the indescribable, the biblical apocalypse is filled with elaborate symbolic machinery--animals like sheep, bulls, and birds and beings like angels and demons, Belial and the Ancient of Days, the Antichrist and the Son of Man--numerology, astrology, and detailed catalogues of woe and reward. The extravagant literary devices in apocalypse are typological expressions
which for the believer are universally applicable to both the individual and the cosmos. The intricate and obscure literary texture of apocalypse creates an aura of mystery, the visionary quality which reinforces the claim to authority and enhances the power to console by eliciting an emotional response rather than an intellectual act of cognition.

In apocalypse, perhaps more than any other literary genre, technique is a function of thought. If you will, "the association of sensibility" in apocalyptic is so strong that the apocalypse describes both the process and the product of the visionary experience and seeks to elicit the sensibility of a like experience in the reader. As Austin Farrer has noted, the apocalyptic writer yields himself to his images— that is, his inspiration. When we study an apocalypse, we study not only the images but the process of inspiration by which they were born in the mind. The writer and his apocalypse, to borrow M. H. Abrams's terms, are both mirror and lamp: reflections of the divine will in the projections of the human imagination. St. John,

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13 Austin Farrer, *A Rebirth of Images: The Making of St. John's Apocalypse* (Beacon paperback, Boston, 1963), p. 18. Not only is this an important study of the structure and meaning of Revelation, it is also a significant study of the theory of biblical typology.
no less than the poet as Hazlitt describes him, reflects a world already bathed in an emotional light he himself has projected.\textsuperscript{14} An apocalypse is the accumulation of the "mental structures" of the inspired writer. In \textit{The Philosophy of As If}, Hans Vaihinger describes the process whereby certain "mental structures" are created: "the psyche weaves this or that thought out of itself; for the mind is invention; under the compulsion of necessity, stimulated by the outer world, it discovers the store of contrivances hidden within itself. The organism finds itself in a world of contradictory sensations, it is exposed to the assaults of a hostile world, and in order to preserve itself is forced to seek every possible means of assistance."\textsuperscript{15} Apocalyptic images are among the mental structures which men develop to preserve themselves in a hostile environment. The psychic process which the seer exhibits is precisely that which his readers must undergo if they are to achieve the consolation they seek, for only in the sharing of the seer's process of inspiration can the new vision of reality be born in the mind of the reader.


Literature, indeed all art, assists men in preserving themselves in their environment, but the extravagance of apocalyptic imagery suggests a culture's intense need for assistance from time to time. Austin Farrer notes that "the human imagination has always been controlled by certain basic images, in which man's own nature, his relation with his fellows, and his dependence upon the divine power find expression. The individual did not make them for himself. He absorbs them from the society in which he was born, partly through the suggestion of outward acts and the significance of words, partly, it would seem, by some hidden means of appropriation."

The imagery of apocalypse seems to function in this way and to spring from these sources. Daniel and Revelation teem with archetypal images, like those in the mythologies and folklore throughout the world, whose function is to make sense of the human experience. They are in kind like those Milton uses to justify God's ways to man—God, Heaven, Satan, Hell, Chaos, Paradise, the first man and woman, the Winged Warrior, the Son of Man. C. S. Lewis points out that Milton does not really describe these archetypes, such a description would inevitably end in disillusionment. He simply refers to them, allowing the

16 Farrer, p. 13.
reader's imagination to build their significance as he recognizes the archetypes in his own experience. They neither need nor can bear precise explanation. Apocalyptic images work in the same way. The Old Dragon, the War in Heaven, the Sea Giving up the Dead, the Lamb, the Horsemen, the Great Whore, Gog and Magog, the Heavenly City, Armageddon--these are the stuff with which St. John expresses his experience of the divine and seeks to generate an experience of the divine revelation in his readers. Apocalyptic reveals things beyond the ordinary realms of human experience, things which have no concrete reality beyond that which the human imagination confers on them. Apocalyptic language and rhetoric stimulate the imaginative resources of writer and reader. In objectifying the responses of the human psyche to a hostile environment, apocalyptic images need to be those which will move the human soul most--that is, give it the greatest sense of reality.

Granted the above characteristics apocalypse poses significant structural problems, particularly for those with an obsession for unity-seeking. The visionary machinery seems to promise formal literary order, yet as typological elements tumble after one another, an apocalypse appears to be a chaotic pile of visions. Readers schooled in the literary conventions find themselves, as Austin Farrer has noted, "unable to reconcile themselves either
to the hypothesis of order or to the hypothesis of its absence." The difficulty in detecting the formal consistency in apocalyptic literature arises out of trying to read an apocalypse in terms alien to it. Unlike the visions of the beginning of creation, those in Genesis or in the epic, whose archetypal images draw their order from the experience of concrete reality in time past, the visions of the ends of creation must draw their structure from the unprecedented internal experience of the seer. More conventional literary forms draw their sense of order by analogy from temporal and spatial conceptions of order, from concrete, external reality. Apocalyptic, however, suspends the orders of time and space. In its vision of a new reality, apocalypse suggests, in effect, that external reality will ultimately conform to the seer's internal vision of reality. Apocalypse speaks to the reality beyond time, a realm which has no shape at all but that which the seer's images give it. The reader may perceive the order of apocalypse not through logical or rhetorical conventions, but through the experience or inspiration, for only by yielding oneself to the images may one read apocalypse in its own terms. Apocalyptic imposes extremely difficult demands upon its readers, yet they are precisely the de-

17 Farrer, p. 36.
mands most easily met by men of faith in times of intense peril.

Apocalypse and prophecy are species of sacred thought and literature so closely related that the distinctions between them are often difficult to maintain, and in common parlance the distinction is often dropped, both being called prophecy. Despite their close association, however, the differences between them are of considerable importance, for apocalypse and prophecy represent differing sensibilities to the world and means of coping with its perplexities. Apocalypse represents an escape from the harsh realities of the human condition, while prophecy insists that man engage those realities. The prophet retains his faith in the presence of God in the world and interprets the events of history in order to disclose the divine forces at work in Man and in Nature. The prophet is an instrument of instruction who directs the way for man to make his will at one with God's. "Prophecy, taking its authority from the Word of God, calls attention to the covenant, the social contract, the moral obligations of men under divine law."\(^\text{18}\) The prophet is the instrument of traditional values and of moral cognition. Apocalyptic, on the other

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hand, represents a loss of faith in tradition and assumes the dissolution of the unity of action and purpose between God and Man and Nature. Able to see only misery and miraculous deliverance, apocalyptic is blind to the providential ordering of existing conditions. Apocalyptic is the response of a weak faith, the desperate refuge of those unable to face the harshness of reality and the responsibility it imposes. Apocalyptic is, in effect, a kind of cultural psychosis; desperate men retreat from reality into the creations of their own imaginations. Prophecy speaks to man's obligation rather than his consolation.
The habits of thought and expression thus far characterized as apocalyptic reveal themselves in the seventeenth-century background of *A Tale of a Tub* in the diverse religious and philosophical controversies of the age. Throughout the period there was a vital interest in biblical apocalypse. Just as the Apocalypse had provided sorely needed scriptural foundation for the Reformation in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it continued to be a key text in the sectarian wars among Protestants in the seventeenth century. The Reformation, in effect, had revived the old Hebraic conception of the chosen people holding out against increasingly heavy odds but destined to enjoy a glorious triumph at the very end. Perhaps more importantly, the Reformation's awareness of itself in historical terms led to its embodyment of the Hebraic notion of the world as the arena of salvation as a vital element in the Christian vision. These developments are not, however, limited to the realms of explicitly religious concern.

"The early seventeenth century," Victor Harris points out, "sees an overlapping of two great philosophies: the teleological Christian vision of a moral universe and the scientific vision of mathematical order unfolding before the instruments and theorems of man's devising."\(^{20}\) Men of science felt themselves to be in an historically significant war against the formidable powers of superstition but destined to triumph in the end. The New Philosophy, particularly through the militant faith in experimental science, found the revelation of certain truth in the world, entered into a covenant with nature, and developed an earthly eschatology in the doctrine of progress. Out of the general current of Hebraism and the correspondent secular faith in Baconianism there develops an apocalyptic vision of man and the universe.

The pessimism about the present upon which apocalyptic thrives is endemic to much of the seventeenth century. Out of the Elizabethan settlement arose unprecedented religious, intellectual, political and social discord. Virtually every Englishman had or thought he had reason to feel himself persecuted at one time or another during the

century, and few men prior to the reign of Queene Anne could look upon the present with any satisfaction. Radical Christians found the world dominated by evil through the instrument of Romanism; radical philosophers found the present state of learning infected by scholasticism. As a consequence of what was viewed as the failure of tradition, the seventeenth century became an age of inspiration—that is, an age in which many men resorted to their personal perceptions as the most reliable source of either religious or philosophical truth. Whether we call it grace or reason, the life of the spirit or the life of experimentation, the two most influential movements of the seventeenth century relied on personal experience for their conceptions of reality. The voice of tradition, the public revelation of divine, natural, and human truth, was no longer heard. Men perceived truth in experiences as singular as St. Paul's on the road to Damascus or Descartes's act of cognition. The cultural imperative was replaced by the individual impulse. Spiritual and philosophical enthusiasm conferred on each man the role of apocalyptic seer. Whereas in the past men had been obedient to tradition as the arbiter of truth, the individual became the secretary of the universe. The new dispensation made everyman his own medium of revelation in the world. To anticipate for a moment a later discussion, it is important to remember that this reliance
upon personal perceptions is an issue at the heart of *A Tale of a Tub*. Precisely this cultural phenomenon informs the Digression on Madness, which is, in effect, Swift's satiric essay on the nature and function of inspiration. The *Tale* itself is presented as the work of a divinely inspired seer, one who has conceived it in his power "to reduce the Notions of all Mankind, exactly to the same Length, and Breadth, and Height of his own" (166).  

Having largely rejected the values of Scholasticism and Renaissance Humanism, the radical religious and philosophical vision of the seventeenth century derived its confidence in privative sources of truth from the Reformation's renewal of the Hebraic doctrines of covenant and election. Among radical Christians the doctrine of the elect nation is transformed into the doctrine of a personal election which creates a community of individual saints through the covenant of grace. The function of grace, Calvin had argued, is in singular acts within individuals, not, as traditional views had implied, in a general dispensation available to all. The covenant of grace was God's pact with the individual members of the community of saints and not

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with the race as a whole. Rather than calling for the subordination of self to the traditional values and laws imposed by a public and external covenant, the covenant of grace was a summoning of the elect man to yield himself to the experience of the spirit. To be born again in the spirit, as St. Paul describes the apprehension of grace, must necessarily be a unique experience, one which in every man creates a new vision of God, Man, and Nature. The formula of election, vocation, justification, sanctification, and glorification, as William Haller demonstrates, explained in general terms what happened to every human soul born to be saved, but the experience of that formula was singular to each man.  

These were the terms of the divine contract with man, and every radical Protestant zealously devoted himself, either in a life of mystic contemplation or in an active life in the world, to the discovery of evidences of grace in his own experience. The Puritan sense of mission, borrowed from Hebraic messianism, derives from the conviction that an enthusiasm for the life of the spirit was a mark of one's election to the community of saints. All the external world derived its meaning from the elect man's internal vision. Even Scripture itself became an image

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of the individual's life of grace. The Puritan mutations of the Hebraic doctrines of covenant and election suggested, in effect, that the fundamental source of truth to man in the world was that sense of reality of which he was intuitively certain—a vision of his own devising.

Radical philosophy developed its own variations on the Hebraic ideas of covenant and election. In Baconianism there is, as Harold Fisch expresses it, "a distorted Hebraism, one cut off from Covenant responsibilities and ethical restraints, but nevertheless the active impulse of Hebraism seeking through historical change and human endeavour the fulfillment of a messianic hope." Bacon had, in effect, entered into a covenant with Nature to which his followers, particularly in the Royal Society, felt bound, with religious enthusiasm equal to the zeal of radical Protestants. Bacon's covenant with nature provided the foundation of the faith in modern science. In return for devoted study, nature promised man power, health, empire, estate and great place. The promise of the covenant of nature, like that of the covenant of grace, is so great, so one-sided, that it can only be comprehended in religious terms. The power of induction replaces the power of grace in the world, and

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thereby Bacon and his followers spiritualized the secular. "With the help of Scripture imagery and rhetoric," Harold Fisch notes, "a Biblical cast is given to Bacon's philosophical writings. Science in his sense becomes a sort of religious enterprise. The urgent demand for inquiry and invention, cut off from all moral sanctions and all limitary feelings of awe, becomes a pseudo-religious impulse, a sacred task, a serious call, supported by appropriate proof-texts."

Out of the inductive experience of nature arose the scientific vision of reality. "Bacon makes Physics not a technique but a religion, and Induction becomes for him not so much a useful mechanism for the discovery of certain limited axioms, but rather a mystic path, an ultimate revelation and a millenial hope." In materialistic thought, reason assumes something of a mystical character. Hobbes, as Harold Fisch notes, confers on reason divine powers and honors, in spite of its human origin. "With it, through Science, Man comes to achieve control over the physical universe, and with it, through politics, he comes to achieve control over his own nature and may entertain the hope of ultimate complete salva-

\[24\text{ibid., p. 91.}\]

\[25\text{ibid., p. 86.}\]
Hobbes says, "Let your reason move upon the deep of your own cogitations and experience; those things that lie in confusion must be set asunder, distinguished, and every one set with its own name set in order; that is to say, your method must resemble that of the creation." For all his objections to the notion of inspiration, Hobbes made ratiocination the equivalent to divine inspiration. The life of reason has been equated with the life of the seer, and, like Bacon, Hobbes's use of the Bible gives his philosophizing the cast of a religious enterprise. "His this-worldly emphasis rests," Harold Fisch suggests, "on a theological foundation attributable to the Old Testament Scripture and the rediscovered Hebraism of his generation. As the seventeenth century progressed, the impulse of the new philosophy—particularly among the rational theologians, physico-theologians, and the Christian virtuosi who in various ways attempted to reconcile science and religion—nature became increasingly spiritualized and philosophy became a pious pursuit. In this way the results of rational speculation and scientific

26 ibid., p. 252.
28 Fisch, 242.
experimentation, for all their claims of objectivity and universality, remained the perceptions of individual experience, visions of man's own devising.

Although the seventeenth century felt persecuted by the dogmatism of the past, its response was the creation of a variety of antagonistic, and often equally dogmatic, religious and philosophical systems. It was a period of conflict, in effect, a microcosm of the cosmic dualism characteristic of the apocalyptic view of the universe. Consequently, the period habitually lapsed into dichotomizing habits of thought. Most men were inclined, or perhaps forced, to think in terms of such broad dichotomies as Roman and Protestant, Scholasticism and new philosophy, religion and science, ancient and modern, decay and progress, enthusiasm and rationalism, and the like. The radical changes in religious and philosophical beliefs throughout the century produced, as Katherine Collier points out, four basic responses: the rejection of all
new thought because it did not square with the old; the wholesale disregard for tradition because of its disagreement with the new thought; the arrangement of the mind into thought-tight compartments, preventing any influence of one set of ideas upon others; and the attempt to harmonize the new thought with the old. 29 At the heart of all these responses, even the attempts to effect harmony, is an operative recognition of the divisions in the spiritual and intellectual life of the century—if you will, a microcosm of warring conceptions of religious and philosophical truth. The impulse of the scholastic and humanistic traditions had been to bring about a unified vision of reality. The conceptual dichotomies of the material and the spiritual, the physical and the metaphysical, time and beyond time, the secular and the sacred, the temporal and the secular, and the like existed within a larger framework which, by including all of them, in effect resolved their apparent contrariety. Such doctrines as the via media, concordia discors, correspondences and plentitude, and the great chain of being produced a harmonious vision. The driving motive in traditional thought generally was the achievement of a comprehensive coherence. The rising sense that

tradition had failed in its aim brought to the seventeenth century an extensive awareness of discord. Indeed, the more radical movements in religion and philosophy seem to thrive on the perception of mutually exclusive senses of reality and the exercise of dichotomizing habits of thought.

The most significant precedent for the development of antagonistic religious and philosophical systems and of dualistic habits of thought was the Reformation, for it had rent the seamless coat of Christianity and made war the most cogent reality for Europeans for more than two centuries. Although Rome remained the spectre of evil, for the radical Protestants of the seventeenth century she became a symbol for the new establishment of Anglicanism or the notion of ecclesiastical government or a pagan liturgy, indeed, anything evil in Christianity. Beyond the realities of sectarian disputes, however, the spirit of controversy infected the doctrines and habits of religious thought of the more radical Protestants. With everyman his own interpreter of Scripture and everyman his own arbiter of the functions of grace in his life, dispute seemed an inevitable occurrence, almost a sign of the operation of the spirit. The development of Puritan theology was founded upon such fundamental dichotomies as the righteousness of works and the righteousness of faith, the stress on birth and creation and the stress on rebirth
and redemption, and the operations of tradition and the functions of grace. In the traditional view grace created concord out of discord in man and nature; in the Puritan view, grace amounts to the principle of division separating those elected to salvation from those elected to perdition. The Puritan conception of the covenant puts all of creation into mutually exclusive camps. Grace replaces nature; it does not perfect it. Faith displaces works; it does not elevate them to acceptable worthiness. An utterly transcendent God has meaning for man only when knowledge of him is supplanted by the feeling experience of grace in the elect.

These dichotomies of flesh and spirit, nature and grace, the transcendence of God and the immanence of grace, works and faith, sinner and saint, and, in the final analysis, good and evil in the universe, create for the age what amounts to the cosmic dualism typical of apocalyptic. Perhaps the favorite Puritan image for the human condition, consciously drawn from the epistles of St. Paul and the Apocalypse of St. John, is warfare. The greatest part of Puritan writing was devoted to the cosmic war of good and evil and man's participation in it. Man had to contend with evil, but he did not have to suffer any responsibility for it. Scripture derived its relevance as the image of life of the spirit, the battle plan of salvation. The individual's struggle drew the entire universe into the
dichotomies of conflict. The dichotomizing habit of thought was codified in the Puritan's disjunctive logic, as in the Ramistic method. The interest in dialectic promoted an emphasis upon the analysis of particulars, for only in particulars did man find the evidences of good and evil and only in particulars may he comprehend the dichotomies in the universe.

The general emphasis upon dualistic thought among the philosophers of the seventeenth century had its most important champion in Descartes. Although piously enough motivated, Descartes' efforts to establish the grounds of faith in purely rational terms separated theology and philosophy and initiated what was to become a competing cult of rationalism. Far more important, of course, was the Cartesian influence on the century's quest for truth and its discovery of two kinds of certainty, one objective and external, the other subjective and internal. "In respect to the external world," Basil Willey points out, "that account was 'truest' which explained the mechanics of causation; and the most 'real' of the properties of things were those which could be mathematically expressed. The internal certainties were chiefly relevant in the regions of faith and ethics, where truth came to mean that which is vouched for by the 'inner light', by 'Reason' and the
'moral sense', or by 'nature and good sense'." These two realms are, of course, those defined by Cartesian dualism, the division of reality into thought and extension. As in Puritan thought, the greatest reality is that intuitively perceived in the soul. Thought, indeed, was the source of inspiration for the mathematical vision of external reality, and, like grace in the Puritan account of the cosmos, the experience of thought is the principle which divides reality into the polarities of mind and matter. Moreover, division seems to be a significant Cartesian habit of thought. In seeking to sift appearance from reality, to determine what man can know of reality and how, Descartes defined anew the polarities of sensibility and intellect, experience and thought, and the sensible world and the intelligible world. He has proven to be the father of modern philosophy, not because he solved the problem of knowledge, but because he defined the polarities which were to shape succeeding approaches to the problem.

Hobbes's thought, for example, is not in itself dualistic, for "that which is not body is no part of the universe." The unitive vision of Hobbes's materialism, however, was likely founded upon a dualistic premise or at the

very least likely to be taken as founded upon such a premise. "Probably any system which dichotomizes reality," Basil Willey suggests, "is likely to invite attempts to resolve the divided worlds into one, and the uncomfortable antithesis of matter and mind in the Cartesian scheme seems to have made inevitable both the materialist and the idealist solutions. Either all is 'really' matter, or all is 'really' mind." Hobbes chose the first alternative, while the Cambridge Platonists more or less resorted to the second. Much of the confusion in the intellectual history of the seventeenth century arises from the combat of various materialist and idealist systems of thought; it were as if matter and spirit were mutually exclusive entities competing for man's assent to their reality.

The Baconian element in the new philosophy also injects a dualistic spirit into the century. Bacon's influence, particularly in England, far more than Descartes's, effected the revolutionary separation of philosophy from theology, forming a dichotomy whose influence was to prove equal to Calvin's separation of nature and grace. In fathering empiricism Bacon was to initiate a cult which posed a far greater threat to Christianity than rationalism. Although Bacon's separation of philosophy and theology is presented,

ibid., p. 107.
as a matter of convenience, as useful to the reformation of religion as well as learning, the practical effect in Bacon's thought and the philosophy of science which he inaugurates is that of a fundamental principle. For example, by excluding the consideration of final causes from physics, the harmonious vision of the relationships of God, man, and nature fostered in Renaissance and Mediaval Christianity is disrupted; individual parts lose their place in the comprehensive order of the whole of creation. Bacon insisted that men ought properly to study a particular link irrespective of its place in the great chain of being. "Thus," Harold Fisch observes, "the dependency of all material causes upon God's creative act, and their incorporation in the vast, purposive system of natural law, the vision which inspired Ralegh and Hooker— all this Bacon accepts, acknowledges and passes over. The religious teleology which had been characteristic of philosophical thought hitherto, is now relegated to the sphere of Faith, and Faith is finally separated from Reason."\(^{32}\)

Both Baconianism and Puritanism thus separate faith from reason; while Bacon passes over faith, the Puritan passes over reason, and both find themselves on the surest road to truth. Both establish their dualism upon empirical

\(^{32}\text{Fisch, p. 80.}\)
observation, and, although the processes are essentially the same, the products are radically different. Science's faith in nature is founded upon the inductive experience of the errors of faith and the truth of reason. Puritanism's faith in grace rests upon the experience of the errors of reason and the truth of the spirit. In both cults we find remarkably similar dualistic habits of thought. "Bacon's philosophical procedure," again as Harold Fisch explains, "may be defined as a series of dichotomies, each intended to cure a certain disease of the intellect or the Imagination. Reason is separated from Faith and Fables (a cure for Idols of the Theatre); objective truth is separated from subjective feeling (a cure for Idols of the Cave); and Philosophy is is separated from Poetry and Rhetoric, and the troublesome association of words (a cure for Idols of the Market Place)." \(^33\) In the practical analysis, the Baconian program for the new science argues, as does Cartesian thought, that reality is of two orders, but puts its faith in the physical reality as that most certainly knowable, most important for man, and possibly most truly real order of being. The clear implication is that spiritual reality is at best an academic abstraction, at worst, as it is in Hobbes's thought, simply a matter of words, hardly even an Idol of the Theater.

\(^33\)ibid.
The seventeenth century's general shift of emphasis from being to becoming, from religious dogma to religious experience, from metaphysics to physics, and from ends to means significantly affected the development of ideas of history. Much of the English thought during the period manifests an eschatology characteristic of apocalyptic. All of Judeo-Christian culture, of course, has an historical orientation, but with the Reformation there was a revival of biblical religion with, as we have seen, a special emphasis on its Hebraic content. In biblical religion, as Paul Tillich notes, the covenant symbol is applied not only to the relation between God and the nation but also to the relation between God and nature. Hebraism finds natural and human history the fundamental medium of divine revelation, the essential source of truth. "It is generally recognized," Harold Fisch points out, "that the Israelite, in replacing mythical time by historical time, gave pattern and significance to the latter by visualizing it

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as a Covenant drama in which the acts of God and the responses of Man have reference to both Covenant beginnings and Covenant ends. Creation itself is a covenant-act, and has reference to an ultimate consummation without which mere Creation as such would be meaningless. 35 In the more radical movements in religion and philosophy during the seventeenth century, those in which the Hebraic impulse is most strongly felt, we may discern variations on the Hebraic doctrine that the world is the arena of divine revelation and the development of an earthly eschatology characteristic of apocalyptic.

The concept of the personal dispensation of grace had far-reaching effects on the radical Christian view of the world and of history. The covenant of grace included individuals, not all of creation. The Hebraic covenant with creation made history the revelation of God's carrying out of the covenant promise. The individual found meaning in his life in terms of the course of external reality. The Puritan sense of the covenant, however, is just the opposite. The election of grace is a function only in individuals; mankind and creation as a whole are depraved. The individual found meaning in his life in terms of the

experience of the internal reality of grace. External reality derives its significance only through the visionary experience of the elect. The net effect is that in the Puritan dispensation, the history of the individual replaces natural and human history as the most significant medium of revelation. Since redemption and reprobation are ever functions of Providence in individuals, the individual becomes the arena of divine action in the world. The knowledge radical Christians urged men to get "was to be sought by the observation of the operations of the Holy Spirit in their own breasts and in the lives of men about them, by reading of useful books, above all by reading the Bible as the image of spiritual war and adventure." The spiritual and intellectual leaders of Puritanism were interested in biography and history, yet it is history which derives its meaning from the visionary experience rather than an historical vision which gives meaning to the lives of men in the world.

Only in the world, however, are men led to conversion—the experience of grace and the recognition of election. For the Puritan, human effort does not earn justification through, as it were, a keeping of the terms of a contract, yet the free gift of grace may be discerned through its

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36 Haller, pp. 301-302
emblematic operations in the world. The godly act in characteristic ways, but men do not become godly by acting in characteristic ways. For most Puritans, the Christian eschatology is other-worldly. The prospect of millennium and utopia, although it had its emblems in this world, remained the promise of the next life. The possibility of an earthly city of God through the offices of the Long Parliament and the New Model Army, although a source of infinite consolation, remained an emblematic shadow of the spiritual city of God. The power of the analogy, particularly among the persecuted, was strong enough to create the Puritan zeal, that missionary spirit which set the Puritans to reforming the world. The history of their progress in the world was taken as a manifestation of the progress of the spirit in their own lives. Many, however, were to take the analogy literally just as they were to read the Apocalypse literally, and there developed among radical sectarians a strong current of chiliasm, the apocalyptic belief in a millennium and utopia on earth. "By 1640 the more extreme separatists were persuaded not only that the saints knew all they needed for salvation in the next world but also that they were by the authority of the spirit destined in the not distant future to assume sovereignty in this one.... The more certain the saint became that he was already a citizen of Zion the more eagerly
and the more certainly did he expect Zion to commence here on earth." Puritanism's rise to political power and the books of Daniel and Revelation, which could be understood by the aid of no light but that of the spirit, were all the proof that was needed. Through the visionary powers of grace, radical Christianity made everyman his own interpreter of history, in effect, free to formulate his own vision of the ends of history.

For the seventeenth-century fathers of the new philosophy, eschatology is largely a matter left to religion. In order to free the study of nature from the grip of Scholasticism it was felt necessary to suspend, if not entirely eliminate, the consideration of final causes; indeed, the avoidance of the diverting interest in the ends of creation was among the principal procedural points in the program for the new learning. Bacon had divided knowledge into poetry, history, and philosophy according to the faculties of imagination, memory, and understanding. The imaginative faculty was regarded as at bottom a threat to understanding and philosophy, for the recollection of the facts of particulars allowed the scientist, through the instrument of induction, to achieve understanding of the truth of

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37 Haller, pp. 269-270; see all of Ch. VII, "Episkomastix," pp. 249-287.
nature. Bacon rejects the notion that the historian's function, inevitably operating from deductive premises, is to detect a divine plan running through the facts of history. Descartes takes a like view of history in rejecting its claim to truth. History is most often a form of escapism, is seldom trustworthy, does not truly assist understanding, and amounts, in the final analysis, to the distortions of the historian's imagination.

Despite their negative evaluation of history as a source of truth, the new philosophers had recourse to history for their polemic against tradition and in their argument for their rationalistic and scientific methods. History, under the assumptions with which they read the facts of the past, was a continuous testimony of man's ever-increasing knowledge of nature and the consequent increase in man's power over nature. History, in effect, revealed nature's keeping of her covenant with man, just as Hebrew history was a revelation of God's covenant with man. No faith in Western culture could long survive without a teleology. New Science had, in effect, put its faith in induction through the grace of reason. The end for which the new thought strove was power over nature, a state perhaps equivalent to the beautific vision. The one sure medium of revelation for the faith in new science, that which confirmed and justified the covenant with
nature, was the progress of human knowledge and power in the world. In the pseudo-religion of the new science, the inevitable course of providence was replaced by that of progress, ending in that millennium which will be of man's own making. The emerging utopian state of mankind would not only be a result of the increase in scientific knowledge but determined by it.

Many men of faith and intelligence during the seventeenth century devoted themselves to the reconciliation of their commitments to religion and philosophy. For all their particular differences, among the most significant results of their efforts were their transfusion of the idea of progress into a function of the traditional idea of divine providence. "The coming together of the New Philosophy and the revival of the belief in a literal millennial end to history produced," as Ernest Tuveson's significant study amply demonstrates, "the Idea of Progress." The apocalyptic eschatology current in the seventeenth century has its sources both in radical religion and in radical philosophy, and it is through their fusion that they were able to formulate a consensus which was to satisfy Western culture's needs for a harmonious vision of man and his fate well into the twentieth cen-

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38 Tuveson, p. iv.
tury. "The prophets of the modern faith," as Ernest Tuveson notes, "have been St. John the Divine and Lord Verulam."\(^{39}\)

The sources of the apocalyptic vision of Modernity in Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* are, then in the larger context of the work's seventeenth-century background; apocalyptic habits of thought derive, perhaps unconsciously but nonetheless inevitably, from the religious and philosophical turmoil Englishmen faced throughout the century. The pessimism, determinism, dualism, and eschatology typical of apocalyptic thought are general currents in seventeenth-century intellectual history which mark the trauma of the rejection of the traditional view of reality and the perplexities of establishing a new vision of reality. As apocalyptic's reliance upon the inspiration of the seer suggests, the modern vision of reality depended in large measure upon a new perception of the resources and boundaries of human knowledge. The means and limits of knowing are among the central issues in Swift's *Tale*, and the seventeenth-century attitudes toward the problem of knowledge, particularly as reflected in ideas about language and Scripture, provide the more immediate background of apocalyptic ideas in the *Tale*. Indeed, the

\(^{39}\)ibid.
problems the seventeenth-century found in reading the Apocalypse are those which confront the reader of *A Tale of a Tub*. 
CHAPTER THREE

As the critical intelligence looked outward in the seventeenth century, it also looked within. Its efforts to define the sources and limits of human knowledge sprang as much from religious as philosophical interests. "Thought cannot turn toward the world of external objects," Ernest Cassirer notes, "without at the same time reverting to itself; in the same act it attempts to ascertain the truth of nature and its own truth." Time and again and with growing insistence, Cassirer goes on to point out, the seventeenth century raised the question of the justification of knowledge and of the quality of the instruments of knowing. Having rejected traditional authority, the thinkers of the period were drawn as much to fresh epistemological theories as to new ontological conceptions of nature and religion. Indeed, a shift in emphasis from the product to the process of knowing was an almost necessary result of the rejection of Scholasticism. It was, Basil Willey points out, "a general transfer of interest

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from metaphysics to a bruning interest in physics, from
the contemplation of Being to the observation of Becoming.\(^2\)
In Bacon's program for the study of nature, the genuine
contribution and promise of science is not so much in its
achievements, although these were thought formidable
enough, as in its fundamental revaluation of nature as a
source of truth and of reason as an epistemological tool
independent of faith. Similarly, the Puritan study of the
spirit in Scripture, in the external world, and, most im-
portantly, in the breast of each man, implied in an episte-
mological development which lifted the scholastic veil
from personal resources of divine knowledge. Both focus on
the process of knowing, almost inattentive to the
product itself. If one devotes himself to the operations
of the spirit or carefully applies the scientific method,
he may achieve salvation of the spirit or of science, but
remain virtually blind to the immediate results or products
of his actions; many in the seventeenth century had what
amounted to a deterministic faith in the processes of sci-
ence and the spirit.

As the age confronted the problem of reconciling the
miraculous structure of Christianity with the new philo-

philosophical principles, the spiritual and scientific processes tended to merge. Christian virtuosi like Robert Boyle, Joseph Glanvill, and John Ray considered the study of nature to be a spiritual exercise and a religious experience and found in natural philosophy a basic religious duty. "No one," Glanvill observes, "can give God the glory of His providence that lets the particulars of it pass by him unobserved, nor can he render due acknowledgements to his Work that does not search the Scriptures." The formulation of "natural laws" and the recognition of the world's progress amounted to the perception of the divine power which pervades nature itself. Thereby the mechanical function of reason attained the value of spiritual endeavor. For the more idealistic of the new philosophers, right reason amounted to the perception within the human intelligence of the functions of the archetypal intellect, to sharing the processes of divine wisdom itself. The Cambridge Platonists saw reason as the candle of the Lord and the exercise of the rational faculty at the heart of the religious experience: "The very structure of things," Basil Willey observes," is

assumed to conform with the laws of the human mind."\(^4\)

Thus, both the idealist and the empiricist camps of the new thought had radically altered the resources and significantly expanded the limits of human knowledge.

The various systems within the new thought confronted the problem of knowledge boldly but by no means achieved a consensus. The optimism which had marked the questioning spirit of the sixteenth century gave way in the seventeenth to the perplexities arising out of competing philosophical systems and warring religious sects, and uncertainty became for many one of the few demonstrable truths. The absence of a popularly acceptable theory of knowledge which could account for both philosophical and theological truth seems a primary cause of the chaotic complexity of the seventeenth-century intellectual milieu. The influence of Maigne, Spinzoa, Pascal, and Pierre Bayle, while never dominating English thought, steadily grew throughout the century. What Louis Bredvold has described as "the protean spirit of skepticism" influenced to one degree or another virtually all the thinkers of the seventeenth century.\(^5\)

\(^4\)Basil Willey, p. 92.

For all the faith in reason, as it was variously understood in England during the seventeenth century, there remained a skeptical cast of mind which had been at once the impetus for and the result of an explosion of historical, scientific and theoretical knowledge. Men like Glanvill and Boyle, for example, identified the scientific spirit with an antidogmatic cast of mind; and the Cambridge Platonists also found dogmatism contrary to reason and to the religious spirit. Neither group, however, adopted the extreme position that truth was unknowable. For the English in general, skepticism was the tool with which they rejected the past, but paradoxically it was also the spur to the creation of new systems of thought, or, perhaps more accurately, new processes of knowing. As Henry G. Van Leeuwen's study demonstrates, there developed in the seventeenth century in England what may be called "constructive skepticism," a position which while taking seriously the claims of skepticism refused to acknowledge their finality. In both the theological and scientific realms, men like William Chillingsworth, John Tillotson, John Wilkins, Joseph Glanvill, Robert Boyle, John Locke and Isac Newton, while refusing to claim absolute certainty, claimed certainty beyond a reasonable doubt.⁶

⁶Henry G. Van Leeuwen, The Problem of Certainty in English Thought 1630-1690 (The Hague, 1963), see pp. 143-
For others, however, the rational sources of certain knowledge were far more limited. From the turmoil of philosophical and religious controversy, the refuge of a position of extreme skepticism undoubtedly had great appeal. In many writers of the period there is considerably more than a negative influence of Pyrrhonism. Pascal's assertion that reason is powerless to achieve certainty by its own efforts and that the truth may be had only through an unconditional surrender to faith described a position which had considerable appeal throughout the century. To many minds, the eminently rational pursuits of truth, those of mathematical speculation and scientific speculation, were fundamentally unreliable; they themselves require faith and ironically, if not paradoxically, prove the value of faith in logical terms. Sir Thomas Browne's love of paradox, it has long been noted, is a manifestation of this kind of thinking. To win his famous chess game with the devil, Browne must learn to live with paradox. "As the propositions of Faith seem absurd unto Reason," says he, "so the Theorems of Reason unto Passion, and both unto Faith." Living with these contradictions, however,

144 for a good summary of the argument.

was not a matter of endurance. For Browne it amounted to a mystical experience; for others it was an exercise of faith. "I think [it] no vulgar part of Faith," Browne says, "to believe a thing not only above, but contrary to Reason, and against the Arguments of our proper Senses."\(^8\)

Here, then, was what the Christian virtuosi and the Cambridge Platonists considered a vulgar conception of reason and nature. Although the contemplation of nature can ring an "O altitudo!" from both Browne and Boyle, the one is founded upon the impossibilities of reconciling the knowledge of faith and reason and the other upon the possibilities of such a reconciliation.

Again to anticipate for a moment a later discussion, it is important here to note that Swift manifests a marked skeptical bent. He seems, like Pascal, to have been consumed with a vision of the powerlessness of man to achieve certain knowledge through his own efforts, either through the function of reason or the operation of extra-rational inspiration. For Swift, as for Pascal, the severe limitations of man's knowledge and ability to know were to be seen as a function of the human condition, and the contradictions which burden man were to be seen as the

\(^8\)ibid., p. 18.
wages of original sin. Thus, it is not simply the weakness of human insight which denies adequate knowledge of man and nature; man and nature themselves are fundamentally contradictory and defy rationality.⁹

A direct consequent of the seventeenth century's attention to the problems of philosophical and religious knowledge was its interest in the nature and function of language. Language was at the heart of the matters of greatest concern to the critical intelligence because it is the medium of spiritual and intellectual discourse among men. Language seemed to be the source of enlightenment and yet the principal instrument of darkness—at

⁹Cassirer, pp. 143-144, contain an account of Pascal's argument in defense of original sin. The relevance of Pascal's thought to the period is adequately demonstrated in Bredvold and particularly well outlined in Martin Price, To the Palace of Wisdom (Anchor paperback, New York, 1965), pp. 1-27.
once a means of divine worship and worship of the Idols of the Marketplace, the medium of Holy Writ and enthusiastic cant, the expression of reason and passion, the agent of truth and the source of lies, the wellspring of culture and of cultural chaos.

Traditionally, particularly in the Renaissance, language was not simply viewed as a vehicle for the communication of knowledge, but nearly venerated as the mainspring of intellectual life. As an object of study, language was second only to the Bible. Scholasticism held language study to be the necessary sibling to theology, and the Renaissance regarded the study of classical languages and rhetoric as the necessary preparation for work in the Church and the world. Of course language was still commonly held to be of divine origin and the singular mark of the spiritual element in the human condition, a position for which considerable evidence was found in Scripture. The place of the Logos in Christian tradition is not simply that of a verbal icon for that divinity which informs "the Church" or "the Scriptures," suggesting something of the mythical quality in the traditional view of language. In the mythical view of language, Ernst Cassirer notes, the word is not simply a denomination; it is itself a very real part of reality which is a sense comprehends all of
reality. Scholastic and Renaissance philosophy elevated the mythical view of language through metaphysics and derived their faith in the power of language through its special place in the metaphysical structure of reality. Language thus enjoyed the status of an independent avenue to truth.

The new thought however saw in the traditional view of language all of those ontological and epistemological assumptions which it found most characteristic of the darkness and superstition of the past. With his Idols of the Marketplace, Bacon raised the issue of language, whose defects he held responsible for the violent disputes characteristic of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, for these were really concerned with words rather than realities. In condemning Aristotelian philosophy Joseph Glanvill remarks, "What a number of words here have nothing answering them? and as many are imposed at random. . . . Now hence the genuine Ideas of the Mind are adulterate; and the Things themselves lost in a crowd of Names, and intentional nothings. Thus these Verbosities do emasculate the Understanding; and render it slight and frivolous, as its objects." Glanvill's observation is character-


11 Joseph Glanvill, *The Vanity of Dogmatizing* (London,
istic of the new thought's rejection of the old learning as an occult misuse of words. The new philosophy condemned language as traditionally understood and used because, in the words of R. F. Jones, "it foisted upon the world ideas that had no basis in reality, or confused and distorted the real truths of nature so that knowledge of them became impossible." Throughout the seventeenth century it was argued that the inductive habits of thought essential to the progress of the new science demanded a new conception of language and a new rhetoric.

Both were forthcoming in the doctrine that words ought to be equivalent to things and in the general attempt to reform English prose based upon scientific principles. Inspired by mathematics, Bacon and Hobbes insisted upon the importance of definition, but the nomina of human thought were, in their view, things. The deception of self and others arising from the use of language seemed the failure to comprehend that "that which is not body is no part of the universe." Although the materialism of

1661, p. 151.


Bacon and many members of the Royal Society was not as thorough as that of Hobbes, their insistence upon the one-to-one relationship of word and thing in the philosophical use of language had a materialistic premise. For the new thought, utility was most often a function of the material world, and the utility of language must consequently be founded upon the res et verba relationship. The New science sought to make of language a cognitive wrench for practical work in the world.

Language consequently was not viewed as a divine institution but as a human creation: men invent words only to signify things. In reasserting human control over language, men of science launched attempts to reform language. William Petty, for example, drew up "A Dictionary of Sensible Words," and John Webster wished to replace the study of languages with the study of "symbolic, hieroglyphical, and emblematic ways of writing." The most ambitious and important attempt was John Wilkin's Essay Towards a Real Character, and a Philosophical Language (1668) which includes an elaborate classification of seemingly all possible nomina in human knowledge and an ingeneous hieroglyphic language. Wilkins, as did the


others, viewed his attempt as a step in the development of practical ideal which will serve learning and religion for the universal improvement of mankind.\textsuperscript{15}

These linguistic premises were, of course, the foundation of the Royal Society's attempts to reform prose according to Thomas Sprat's stylistic ideal of mathematical plainness. In the last three decades of the century, the standards of imaginative or poetic discourse became polarized to those of philosophical or prosaic discourse. Men of science generally came to look upon imaginative language as either frivolous or a means of accommodating the ignorant, a primitive kind of expression needed in ages past to make up for deficiencies in the state of knowledge. Many new philosophers were particularly impressed with the achievements in mathematics, and found in the systems of mathematical symbols a kind of language appropriate to philosophical discourse. Although the practical demands of the human condition required language, the new philosophy generally sought in so far as possible to reduce it to a system of symbolic forms, a tool which would not interfere with the mechanical reduction of the truth about nature.

\textsuperscript{15}John Wilkins, \textit{An Essay Towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language} (London, 1668; Scholar press facsimilie, 1968), see "Epistle Dedicatory to the Royal Society," and the prologegomena, a hord of information about seventeenth-century attitudes towards language.
Not all of the new thought, however, accepted the materialistic premises of the scientific view of language. While at one with the desire to rid the use of language of the scholastic excess of the past, the idealistic philosophers held a more traditional view of the nature of language. For the Cambridge Platonists especially, the greatest reality resides in the ideal realm, expressions of which must necessarily be abstract. Although they do not themselves acknowledge any mystical connection between the properties of language and ideal reality, the empirical cast of mind was bound to view such philosophizing as a form of modern gnosticism. Samuel Parker, for instance, attacked the Platonists in terms which echo Glanvill's objection to Aristotelian philosophy, finding it "nothing else but words."\(^{16}\) Notions like "particular plastic spirits," "seminal forms," "soul of the world," and "incorporeal substance," and the like must have seemed to be, in the view of experimental scientists, parts of a word game rather than an analysis of reality. Despite their undeniable interest in science, the Cambridge Platonists must have been seen as retreating from the materialism

\(^{16}\) Samuel Parker, *A Free and Impartial Censure of the Platonick Philosophie* (1666), p. 75.
of their age into the realms of the occult, a realm in which a man like Henry Moore, for example, is quite at home. And More, of course, was generally thought to be more the poet than the philosopher.

At bottom the occult is a mystical conception of language, and the general revival of interest in the occult in the second half of the seventeenth-century is best understood through its symptomatic effects on language. To a considerable degree, the interest in occult sources of knowledge was a survival of the Middle Ages, but it also was a response to the new philosophy's devaluation of the traditional sources of knowledge. Those unable to accept either the traditionally certified sources of knowledge or the new systems of thought resorted to the more or less mystical perceptions of astrology, cabbalism, Gnosticism, Rosicrusianism, alchemy and the like occult divinations of reality. For others, a positive response to the new thought promoted occultism. Bacon had contended that scientific method demanded only mediocre intelligence, and Boyle observed that one could learn more from humble, ignorant people in direct contact with nature than from the aristocrats of learning. With the distrust of Renaissance intellectual values there was, as R. F. Jones puts it, "let loose a crowd of astrologers, empirics, alchemists, rosicrusians, and a host of others who defy name and classification, all eager to pursue a path that
seemed to lead to money, respectability, and fame."¹⁷ The interests of Henry More and Thomas Vaughan in mysticism of all kinds only belong among the more sophisticated instances of a general intellectual currency motivated by both positive and negative responses to the new philosophy. Where the mysteriousness of scholastic metaphysics was done away with, it was often replaced with equally mysterious modern concepts or those of ancient dark authors. The seventeenth century worship of reason and physics was often as much a magical exercise as were the spiritualism and alchemy of the Middle Ages, and particularly among the uncritical they were often mixed. For all the talk of reforming language through a mathematical equation of word and thing, the new thought contributed to the mythical use of language whereby, as Ernst Cassirer explains, "he who gains possession of the name and knows how to make use of it, has gained power over the object itself; he has made it his own with all its energies."¹⁸ For many in the seventeenth century "reality," "truth," but above all "nature" were names which evoked the magic of language.


¹⁸ Cassirer, Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, I, p. 118.
Many, having assumed the words of the new science, presumed to hold the magical powers attached to those realities. The skeptical could look upon the new science as a mythical exercise every bit as dark as the practice of occult and both as phenomena with no reality beyond the misuse of language.

The Puritan attitude toward language is a curious blend of various seventeenth-century attitudes. Like the philosophers they held language to be simply an instrument of cognition. Both mechanic preacher and mechanic philosopher viewed language as a tool which was not in itself a source of truth. In practice, however, both Lord Bacon and St. Paul provided precedent for the magical use of language, and the highly rhetorical use of language by religious enthusiasts became the instrument with which one studied the operations of the spirit. Although the general attack on figurative language is carried by those seeking to reduce language to a system of symbolic form, Puritanism's attempt to reduce language to metaphor springs from fundamentally the same motive. J. Paul Hunter suggests that in the Puritan view "the book of nature became not a reproduction of the spiritual world nor an exact index of the attributes of God but, rather, an imperfect emblem of the spiritual world--an emblem which needed careful interpretation but which led equally
surely, if not equally easily, to truth."\textsuperscript{19} Metaphor, type, emblem, and allegory came to be seen as instruments of knowing the spirit. They provided the linguistic tools for demonstrating the operations of the spirit within man. Behind John Flavell's meditation "Upon the Pulling up of a Leek" is the notion that "the irrational and inanimate, as well as rational creatures have a Language, and though not by Articulate speech, yet in a Metaphorical sense, they preach unto Man the Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of God."\textsuperscript{20} There is not here, of course, the ideal of mathematical plainness nor the strict correspondence of word and thing, yet here is a language of symbolic forms and the notion that language ought to demonstrate rather than conceptualize. Moreover, the ideal of universal priesthood allowed each man to find divinely created icons of his own experience. In the plain language of the Bible and of simple men all creation could derive importance through the experience of individual. Whereas to create one's own images would be idolatrous usurpation of the divine prerogative, the Bible itself, with the lillies of the field, justified the interpretation of God-given

\textsuperscript{19}J. Paul Hunter, \textit{The Reluctant Pilgrim} (Baltimore, 1966), p. 95.

\textsuperscript{20}John Flavell, \textit{Husbandry Spiritualized} (1669), vol. A2, as quoted in Hunter, p. 96.
icons of the spirit. The notions, then, that London was Jerusalem and the Puritans were the chosen people were typological readings of contemporary history not only justified by biblical typology but demanded by it. Everyman became a type for the life of the spirit. In the metaphors of warfare, journey, and wilderness, the Puritans found the symbolic forms for the human condition. These metaphors constitute the Christian allegory, which is at once a metaphor for the experience of the spirit recounted in the Bible, just as the Bible is a metaphor for the experience of the spirit in every Christian.
The seventeenth century's interests in epistemology and language converge crucially in the problem of scriptural interpretation. The problems of religion increasingly became those of determining what certain knowledge was to be had from Scripture, how it was to be read, and how it squared with the knowledge of nature.

Given the monolithic impact of "the Bible" on Christianity, the way one read it made all the difference in this world and the next. Since the principal program of the Reformation had been to release Scripture from the grasp of ecclesiastical authority, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries consequently became the great age of scriptural exegesis, just as they were centuries of significant philosophical speculation, primarily because hitherto unavailable materials were opened to the critical intelligence. Initially the Protestant exposition of Scripture was exclusively the work of the learned who were both defending their break with Rome and aiding less learned readers to whom Scripture had been freed. The best Renaissance commentators, while retaining the notion that much of Scripture is written in a language to accom-
moderate the ancient Hebrews and the early Christians and is therefore in need of learned interpretation, rejected the elaborate allegorical readings, the doctrine of a multiplex sensus in every verse of Scripture which prevailed throughout the Middle Ages.

In repudiating the excessive intellectualism of scholastic interpretation, Renaissance biblical scholars emphasized textual, linguistic, historical, and literary analysis of Scripture. Recognizing that Scripture is a mixture of diverse elements, they sought in so far as possible to determine the simplest notion of the literal or moral or figurative truth of its various parts without the a priori assumptions of tradition. "Luther and Hooker," Basil Willey notes, "may both be credited with the capacity to discriminate between the different portions of the Bible, and both believed that the 'Word of God' was contained in it, rather than present in every syllable."\textsuperscript{21} In getting at the plain truth of Scripture, the commentators, who saw their task as developing from Scripture a synthesis which satisfied all the needs of their culture, sought aid in all realms of knowledge. Since the separation of the sacred and the profane did not effectively begin until the seventeenth century, all realms of learning informed

\textsuperscript{21}Basil Willey, p. 92.
their understanding of Scripture just as Scripture informed their response to all other realms of knowledge. "Genesis," Arnold Williams amply demonstrates, "was treated as religious instruction, as morality, as ethics, as history, as science, as literature. So conceived, the major commentaries are syntheses of the intellectual culture of the sixteenth century . . . . They rolled up the philosophy, science, politics, and literature of the time into a sort of summa centered around the divinely inspired account of the beginnings of things."²² For all the scholarship that went into the great commentaries of the sixteenth century, however, their aim was the exposition of the plain truth of Scripture to aid everyman in his pursuit of salvation.

The universal release of the vernacular Bible was, however, a revolutionary step which ultimately made everyman his own exegete, and among more radical Protestants it led to the priesthood of the individual. As the seventeenth century progressed, what had been the attack on the authority of Rome in the sixteenth century became an attack on all authority outside of oneself. Whereas the sixteenth-century commentator was still responsive to certain authorities, the seventeenth-century commentators were markedly less so—a manifestation of the general

tendency of the age to respond to the authority of intuitive knowledge. As Basil Willey observes, "the 'inner light' of the Quakers ranks with the 'Reason' of the Platonists, the 'clear and distinct ideas' of Descartes, or the 'common notions' of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, as another of the inward certitudes by means of which the century was testing the legacies of antiquity and declaring its spiritual independence." To this list we may add the theorems of science which, although they purport to be descriptions of nature, remain instruments of man's own devising and exhibit a supreme confidence in his own perceptions.

Among radical religionists the experience of grace sufficiently invested a man with the authority and the ability to interpret Scripture. Just as Bacon and Boyle suggested that the practice of scientific method requires little beyond a dedication to the drudgery of induction, the experience of the spirit conferred upon any man the mantle of the exegete. The Bible itself was an image of the inner life, and its function was to speak directly to the soul. No matter what the difficulties of the text or the ignorance of the reader, the spirit granted

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23Basil Willey, pp. 78-79.
certain knowledge of the divine will. Indeed, the sense of a full understanding of Scripture was a significant sign of grace. The final authority of the spirit allowed one, in practical and perhaps cynical terms, to make of Scripture what he liked. The disposition of the inner light, however, was not really in harmony with the early Reformation ideal of the plain truth of Scripture as the rule of faith. Commenting on the enthusiasm of the Quakers, Ronald Knox points out that "the truth is that if you adopt the inner light as your rule of faith, it necessarily supercedes and (if need be) overrides the authority of Scripture. Fox could not look upon the Bible as a collection of title-deeds, from which you derive your warrant for this or that; he was living in the Bible, his prophecies, his convincements, his power of reading hearts, were simply the continuation of what had been going on sixteen centuries before." This living in the spirit makes the interpretation of the emblems of nature and spiritual autobiography only slightly less important than the reading of Scripture. In each instance it is the experience of the spirit which invests the object with truth. Scripture is, then, something like a unique scientific treatise; its ultimate value is in its method,

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its directions for the demonstration of the greater truth perceived within.

The application of the methods and results of secular learning to Scripture had profound effects in the seventeenth century as the humanistic values of learning progressively gave way to those of the new philosophy, particularly experimental science. Fundamentally, the platonistic idea that reason is the candle of the Lord, the divine light in man, suggested that man's first duty to God is to follow reason and that Scripture everywhere will illuminate and confirm the dictates of reason. The best efforts of the Cambridge Platonists in the interpretation of Scripture, furthermore, were those which sought to rationalize, in the strictest sense of the term, the biblical foundations of Christianity. Lord Herbert's study of comparative religion led him to the conclusion that Scripture is a revelation of the common religious habits and instincts of mankind—itself a unique revelation but not a revelation of a uniquely Christian doctrine or a singular perception of truth. The rational theologians finally found themselves in a position, in effect, to dispense with Scripture all together. Samuel Clarke, in an effort to repel the attacks of deism, sought to demonstrate the being and attributes of God, indeed the whole of Christianity,
without the aid of Scripture. Consequently, the rational position of men like John Toland was inevitable, and in their robbing Christianity of its mystery, as many recognized, they constituted a threat to the certitude of scriptural and, consequently, religious knowledge as such.

Experimental science also seriously affected the interpretation of Scripture and eroded its authority. For the Christian virtuosi, Scripture, at least nominally, retained its ascendent position, for it dealt with a reality beyond human knowledge. Science's conception of the idea of the parallel revelations of Nature and Scripture allowed the truth and authority of Holy Writ to be confirmed by the scientific demonstration of its literal and figurative truth. Scientific method became for many a form of meditation on the grandeur of God. In the physico-theology of men like Burnet, Ray, and Durham, the critical eye is cast directly on nature where there is more than enough evidence of deity. For many indeed, to explicate Scripture was to demonstrate the truth of its reports in the history of physical and human nature: as in Spinoza's sense of the function of biblical exegesis, "the Bible," Ernst Cassirer explains, "is not the key to nature but a part of it; it must therefore be considered according to the same rules as hold for any kind of empirical knowl-
edge."25 It is, then, toward this sense of biblical exegesis that the natural religion of the late seventeenth century tends. With the virtual reversal of the roles of Scripture and nature, the latter increasingly seemed the more certain and sufficient revelation of the will of God. "An age which discovered God effortlessly in the starry heavens above," Basil Willey notes, "and in the moral law within, could not but be embarrassed by having to acknowledge dependence upon the annals and legends of an unenlightened Semitic tribe."26 The mystery and spirit of the God of their fathers was effectively stripped from the Bible, which under these circumstances could no longer be a firsthand imaginative experience.

25 Cassirer, Enlightenment, p. 186. Treating Scripture as a common part of nature also leads to the anti-religious Scriptural interpretation of Hobbes whose function, despite all the biblical material, is destructive and to the new criticism of Richard Simon whose function is also to destroy the authority of the Bible. Simon wishes to replace it with tradition and Hobbes seeks to replace it with the state.

26 Basil Willey, p. 80.
Given the turmoil of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Apocalypse inevitably became one of the most important books in the Bible; in its revelations of the ends of reality, men sought to make sense of the chaos they experienced. No less than Genesis, the Apocalypse was thought to be a key to human understanding, and it was read as dogma, ethics, science, and literature. Like those on Genesis, the commentaries on the Apocalypse synthesized the intellectual culture of the times.

The sixteenth-century commentaries on the Apocalypse are best represented by John Bale's *The Image of Both Churches after the Moste Wonderfull and Heavenly Reulacion of Sainct John the Evangelist* (1550), Henry Bullinger's *A Hundred Sermons vpon the Apocalips* (1561), and Augustine Marolorat's collection of all the major Protestant writers in *A Catholike Exposition vpon the Reuelation of Sainct John* (1574). While recognizing it as the most difficult of texts, these commentators had no doubt that Revelation could be understood in a relatively simple and direct way. In a context of biblical, historical, and literary study, the whole of it was clearly a prophecy of the Reformation, a reading only possible by bringing all of
the cultural interests of Renaissance and Reformation to
bear on the text. The Apocalypse was thought to be the
most comprehensive book in Scripture, the grand summation
of the Word. Revelation provided a key to understanding
the whole of the Bible; all of human and natural history
was thought to be revealed in the apocalyptic account of
Providence. Revelation's allegory supplied the sixteenth-
century commentator with irrefutable evidence of the
providential ordering of the Reformation. Both secular
and ecclesiastical history proved that reformed religion
was the harbinger of the millennium to follow the complete
decay of nature. Of almost equal import, the Apocalypse
provided the sixteenth century with the images for its
polemic against Roman religion. Its clearly drawn
figures of good and evil aided in the identification and
psychological justification of the cause of Protestantism.

The premises of Reformation were adhered to most
strongly among the Puritans, and from the earliest days,
the Puritan wing gave particular attention to Revelation
in its continuing reformation of the English Church. Men
like Thomas Brightman, *A Revelation of Revelation* (1615);
John Archer, *The Personal Reigne of Christ* (1641); Hanserd
Knollys, *A Glimpse of Sion's Glory* (1641) and *An Exposition
of the Whole Book of Revelation* (1689) represent, with
varying degrees of radicalism, approaches to the sixteenth-
century exegetical tradition. Brightman, for example, contends that reading Revelation is an exercise of the spirit and that his own commentary came to him in a trance, an experience of the identical spirit which inspired St. John. His exegesis draws evidence from Scripture and current history, but its authority from the experience of the spirit rather than from traditional learning.

The radical Protestant interpreters were generally more comfortable with the figurative expression in the Apocalypse than were earlier commentators who had only recently escaped the allegorical habits of the Middle Ages. In Revelation they marked precedents for their favorite metaphors of journey, warfare, and wilderness; indeed they found all of the book one great metaphor for the condition of the saint in the world. "When the major metaphors of Puritanism," J. Paul Hunter points out, "were combined, they coherently traced man's earthly existence from birth to death, highlighting spiritual triumphs and tribulations along the lines of biblical history which clarified the patterns and deepened the dimensions of modern experience." The Apocalypse was

27 Thomas Brightman, A Revelation of the Revelation (Amsterdam, 1615), fol. Cl.

28 Hunter, p. 113.
particularly important, for it completed the plot initiated in Genesis and carried through the rest of Scripture. "Daniel and the Apocalypse," as William Haller notes, "were thought to provide a detailed image of the triumph of the elect, which captivated the imaginations of men of all classes and opened a particularly thrilling prospect to the most discontented, enthusiastic, and uncritical." The applicability of Revelation to contemporary history, in the metamorphical system of the Puritans, made both sacred and profane history detailed metaphors of the progress of the spirit within individuals. In 1661 and 1662, years which numerology made ominous, there appeared pamphlets entitled Mirablis Annus which recounted inexplicable human and natural events as particular warning to the English of the second coming of Christ.

The New Philosophy was to promote a different departure from the Renaissance interpretation of Revelation. With the Key to the Revelation (1643), Joseph Mede initiated the modern criticism of biblical apocalypse.

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30 Mede's Clavis Apocalyptica appeared in 1627. Its translation was ordered by Parliament in 1643: The Key to the Revelation, trans. Richard More (London, 1643). The radical separatists made use of Mede to support their chiliastic beliefs, a doctrine Mede publicly rejected on several occasions.
As a student at Cambridge, Mede took from the seat of Puritanism a greater interest in natural philosophy than enthusiasm of the spirit. He was the most learned biblical scholar of his time and the first to suggest that the proper foundation for the study of the Apocalypse is an understanding of its structure. Although he subjected the book to what amounted to scientific scrutiny, the process, rather than being destructive, was felt to promote religious perceptions. He found in the theme and structure of the Apocalypse a clear and direct statement of the doctrine of the millennium. Like his sixteenth-century forebearers, Mede applied all available knowledge to his reading, but in his time it included the knowledge of the new philosophy. By interpreting the apocalyptic figures in terms of scientific discovery, Mede initiated the scientific interpretation of Scripture. As Ernest Tuveson observes, "increase of scientific knowledge, a long line of commentators was to hold, makes clear the 'obscure' passages particularly of the prophets and the apocalypticists. This 'obsccurity' was found very often in the metaphorical and hyperbolical passages, which could be seen as intimations (only recently understood) of meteorological, astrological, and geological phenomena."31

31 Ernest Tuveson, Millennium and Utopia (Torchbook paperback, New York, 1964), pp. 81-82.
The burgeoning studies of "primitive" cultures explained the "oriental" language and rhetoric of apocalyptic as one designed to accommodate the ignorance of earlier ages and thus provided justification for this kind of interpretation.

Particularly among the orthodox, Mede's precedent led to renewed interest in the apocalyptic and prophetic parts of Scripture. It was felt that the analytical method and the practical fruits of natural philosophy had opened the interpretation of the most obscure parts of Scripture to a more reasoned understanding than that offered by radical religionists, while still retaining the sanctity of Scripture and the historical justification essential to the premises of the Reformation. Later in the seventeenth century, however, the theory of accommodation and the spirit of scientific interpretation took hold with such force that Scripture was stripped of its mysteriousness and, consequently, much of its psychological, if not intellectual, imperative to faith. The Apocalypse, a book designed to satisfy intensely-felt psychological needs, was reduced to a peculiar exposition of divine, human, and natural history.

Among the Cambridge Platonists, but most emphatically in the works of Henry More, there was the attempt to return the life of the spirit to the rational men of the seventeenth century. In making the life of reason
the foundation of faith, it was hoped that the intellectual spirit of the age might revitalize the religious spirit—that the devotion to reason might recapture the mystery and psychological imperative of the life of faith. For Henry More these aims seemed particularly to demand the reinterpretation of biblical apocalypse. Among Henry More's many works, the *Synopsis Prophetica* (1664), "a Treatise wholly spent upon the Interpretation of Prophecies, and chiefly of Daniel and the Apocalypse" and *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos; or the Revelation of St. John the Divine unveiled* (1680) are most revealing about his reading of the apocalyptic parts of Scripture. He is supremely confident that he can indeed understand them and that he can demonstrate the meaning of their designed obscurity "even with Mathematical Certitude." The "prophetic" books (More's term in these works is equivalent to "apocalyptic" as we have defined it) consistently manifest the "Art of Obscuring," a literary art in sacred literature which More justifies with the theory of accommodation. For More, however, the language of accommodation, rather than depreciating the value of sacred literature, has a positive value as a particularly

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32 The *Synopsis Prophetica* is the second part of More's *A Modest Inquiry into the Mystery of Iniquity* (London, 1664).
fit object for the exercise of reason and faith. More, indeed, cultivates a taste for the obscure. Of the Apocalypse More says, "that the very Wit . . . and Artifice in it seems not to be Human but Angelical." To perceive the function of apocalyptic wit is to share in the wisdom of the divine. More quotes Ecclesiasticus in the epigraph to Apocalypsis Apocalypseos: "He that giveth his mind to the Law of the Most High, and is occupied in the Meditation thereof, will seek out the Wisdom of the Ancients, and be occupied in the Prophecies" [Ecclesiasticus]. To suggest that the Apocalypse is unintelligible is a blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.  

Reading the Apocalypse, he finds, is practically useful as a weapon against atheism, particularly that of Hobbes and Spinoza; as a support of natural religion; as a justification of the Reformation and for the continuance of the Reformation, particularly in the English Church; as a scriptural denunciation of enthusiasm; as an aid to the conversion of the Jews; as an antidote against the Fifth Monarchy Men; as a condemnation of idolatry in the Roman Church; and as an instrument for the universal

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33 Apocalypsis Apocalypseos, p. iv.
improvement of mankind in general. 34

Henry More's efforts to understand apocalyptic literature are unique in that he outlines in detail his method of interpretation. In the best seventeenth-century fashion, he explains the means by which the lofty ends of experience of apocalyptic literature might be achieved:

Now for the Art of obscuring Predictions wherein it consists; though I will not undertake the declaration of the whole, yet I will bring in as great a share thereof as may, at least, suffice for our present Prophetic Figures or Schemes, which I will venture to call Diorismus Hylasmus, Henopoeia, Zoopoeia, Israelismus, Ellipsis, Metalepsis Homonymia, Antichronoismus, Icasmus; most of which do as well embellish and adorn the externall Cortex of Prophecies, as conceal and cover the more precious sense of them. 35

His method has its linguistic roots in the classical rhetoric of the Renaissance, but that More should attempt a rhetoric of prophecy, drawn from the prophecies themselves, is significant. Despite the verbal echoes of traditional rhetoric, these figures are particular property of apocalyptic discourse. More contends that the visions of Daniel and Revelation represent things


35 Synopsis Prophetica, p. 213. The detailed explanation of each of the figures, with considerable biblical illustration, continues for fifty pages.
under symbols and similitudes, "and therefore to have a
settled and determinate meaning (and that upon solid and
rational grounds) of such Symbols and Iconisms must needs
contribute much to the inabling us with ease and success
to interprete these Prophecies, or to make us understand
and approve or with judgment disapprove of the Interpre-
tations of men." Through an almost scientific investi-
gation of Daniel and Revelation More comes up with an
alphabet or dictionary of "Iconisms" much like William
Petty's "Dictionary of Sensible Words." He suggests that
men might understand these "Heiroglyphicks of Prophecy"
with far greater ease than those of heraldry. Thus, just
as surely as Wilkins was working toward a universal
character and language for philosophical discourse, More
sought to formulate the standards of prophetic discourse.

Despite all the attention to method and the seeming
reasonableness of his approach, Henry More's commentary
itself proves hardly more intelligible than the visions
of St. John, yet his exercise of prophetic discourse is
no more confusing than Wilkins's exercise of his philo-
sophical language. The significance of the attempts of
both men, however, is in their theories and, above all,
their confidence in the possibility of their tasks.

36 ibid., p. 226.
More's confidence in the intelligibility of prophetic literature on rational grounds is equivalent to Wilkins's faith in the intelligibility of nature on empirical grounds. The skeptical spirit of the age made Wilkins's faith far from universally accepted, and More's confidence was even less generally shared. More feels repeatedly compelled to inveigh against those who doubt the intelligibility of prophecy:

For it is over-true that some men look upon such Attempts as very vain and frivolous, having concluded with themselves aforehand that all Prophecies are inextricable Aenigmas and Riddles, utterly uncapable of any certain Solution. Others, whose Exception were more material if it were true, have a conceit, that the searching into Prophecies, especially those of the Apocalyps and of Daniel, tends to nothing else but Faction and Confusion, to the trouble and disssetlement of the affairs of Christemdom, and to the hazard of the subversion of States and Kingdoms and the destruction of the Church of Christ.  

The depreciation of the value of Revelation was a late seventeenth-century commonplace in large measure justified by the usage of various religious, social, and political radicals. One of the explicit motives in More's attention to apocalyptic literature was to free it from the onus of radical interpretation which had made it and

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37 ibid., p. 185. See also Basil Willey's brief notes John Smith, pp. 143-157, particularly his remarks on Smith's Of Prophecy, p. 150 ff.
its interpreters proverbially synonymous with enthusiasm. Although he grants that, with the help of the divine light, some value is to be gained from the reading of the Apocalypse, Francis Roberts represents the general opinion when he says, "Yea, I verily believe no mortal creature on earth is able fully to understand and penetrate into all the profound depths and mysteries of this Book." No less an admirer of Henry More than Joseph Glanvill reveals the proverbial character of the deprecation of the study of apocalypse by using it as a simile for defective inference: "those who form the Inference, do it by a faculty that makes all kind of Compositions and Deductions, and the same that assists the Enthusiasts of our days to see so clearly all our alterations of State and Religion, to the minutest Particulars, in the Revelation of St. John." Perhaps the best expression of the skeptical, indeed cynical, view of the exegesis of the Apocalypse at the end of the century is not that of an Englishman, but that of Pierre Bayle. Bayle found the interpretations of the Apocalypse symptomatic of the rather dismal state of the human condition:

39 Glanvill, Essays, p. 5.
There are, I allow, many more private Men, at present, than formerly who are able to oppose the stream, and combat Error: But then I must answer; that our Age is easy to be impos'd upon, as any whatsoever; and after what we have seen concerning an Explication of the Apocalypse, we have no Reason to say, the World is grown wiser now a-days. It is the same it ever was: Every Delusion which flatters its Passions, is pleasing; it is not ashamed of being convinc'd it was impos'd upon; nor has it upon that Account the less Respect for the Imposter, and cries out, as much as ever, against the Incredulity of those, who will not suffer themselves to be deceiv'd. 40

Despite criticism of their endeavours and amid the confusion and controversy they created, modern men of the seventeenth century--those committed to the values of the

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40 Pierre Bayle, A General Dictionary, Historical and Critical, trans, J. P. Bernard, T. Birch, J. Lockman, et al., 10 vols. (London, 1734-41), I, 7, B. The Dictionary was first published in French in 1697; the first English translation was in 1709, but the French edition apparently had wide circulation in England soon after its appearance. The Dictionary is a veritable store house of negative remarks about the value of reading the Apocalypse and the enthusiastic impostures of its interpreters. Bayle observes that "it is a common Saying; That God forgives everything, and that Men forgive nothing: but that Maxim is false with respect to the commentators on the Revelation: it is very probable that God has not the same Indulgence, as the Public for the Boldness wherewith they handle his Oracles and expose them to the Contempt of Infidels" (II, 539, A). Virtually all the objections Henry More seeks to combat, Pierre Bayle raises in his dictionary. For important notes on Bayle's contribution to the development of historiography see Cassirer's Enlightenment, Ch. V, "The Conquest of the Historical World," pp. 197-233. His hostility to the Apocalypse and its commentators arises from his avoidance of a philosophical approach to history or a teleological interpretation of historical phenomena.
new religion, new philosophy, new science, new politics, to all the characterized the modern—were fundamentally optimistic about the promise, if not the immediate achievements, of Modernity. Despite the undeniable religious, philosophical, political, and social discord during the century, the labor of intellectual turmoil had brought forth progress. To refer to the age as apocalyptic would have meant that the worst was over and implied a prophecy of the millennium. Ernest Tuveson has demonstrated that such a notion was indeed common and linked to the interpretation of sacred apocalyptic literature during the period. Modernity, in effect, promised to be a cultural phenomenon whose beneficial impact on man was seen as second only to that of Christianity itself. For the skeptics, however, for those who, if not committed to the new values—for these men the prospect of Modern age was a source of pessimism. Their concern for the tension and discord of the age precluded any attention to the promises of a new era. The chaos they envisioned was the result of habits of thought which, if they did not spell doom, at least promised more of the same disintegration of culture. To characterize the age as apocalyptic would have meant for these men a prophecy of chaos. Jonathan Swift is such a skeptic whose
apocalyptic vision of Modernity in *A Tale of a Tub* is a prophecy of the chaos towards which English culture appeared inevitably to be declining.
CHAPTER FOUR

A Tale of a Tub offers its readers a unique literary experience, but in doing so it also places extremely severe demands upon them. Its apparent architectural and thematic disorder generates in the reader the experience of the moral and intellectual chaos Swift finds inherent in Modern culture, but the reader's bewilderment makes an understanding of how Swift's satire functions inordinately difficult. Perhaps most perplexing is the seeming impossibility of accurately criticizing the Tale in terms of notions like structural and thematic unity—traditionally the sine qua non of literary excellence. Much of the difficulty arises from our inability to place the Tale into a generally recognized literary genre; it confounds us in large measure by refusing to satisfy the almost inevitable desire of readers to understand a literary work in generic terms. Twentieth-century criticism of the Tale has generally acknowledged that it does not lend itself to conventional literary analysis, nor does its respectability as a work of art depend upon the standards implicit in such analysis.

In addition to illuminating the cultural background
essential to an understanding of *A Tale of a Tub*, the task of contemporary criticism has been to formulate approaches to the *Tale* which expand our understanding of how Swift employs the seventeenth-century background to effect his condemnation of Modern culture. As do some of the works of Laurence Sterne and William Blake, Swift's *Tale of a Tub* confronts the reader with a seemingly unprecedented satiric fiction, one whose structural and thematic development is not sufficiently made clear in reference to prior satiric practice. Students of the *Tale* are inclined to conclude that it is a unique expression of the literary imagination, a genre unto itself. We may, however, considerably expand our understanding of how Swift's satiric fiction works if we view it as an apocalyptic fiction.

As has long been recognized, satire is more clearly a cast of mind than a literary form or convention. Satire implies a view of reality whose imperative informs all manner of literary works, but perhaps none more fully than those of Jonathan Swift. Before speculating on how Swift's satiric fiction in the *Tale* works, however, it is best that we briefly consider a few of the notions which seem to motivate his attack on Modern culture.

The paramount aim of *A Tale of a Tub*, as with most Swiftian satire, is to force the reader to face the human
condition realistically and to realize that man's efforts to achieve satisfaction through human resources amount to self-deception. Although Swift readily admits the regularity and perfection of the universe, he is keenly attentive to the imperfections of the human condition and the limitations of man's ability rightly to know and act in the world. "Wherever God hath left to man the power of interposing a remedy for thought or labour," Swift reveals in his Thoughts on Various Subjects, "there he hath placed things in a state of imperfection" (HD, IV, 245).¹ Modern man, in Swift's view, too little regarded the ravages of the fall everywhere apparent in the testimony of Scripture and in the reflections upon human experience, as his sermon On the Poor Man's Contentment suggests:

The Holy Scripture is full of Expressions to set forth the miserable Condition of Man during the whole Progress of his Life; his Weakness, Pride, and Vanity, his unmeasurable Desires, and Perpetual Disappointments; the Prevalency of his Passions, and the Corruptions of his Reason, his deluding Hopes, and his real, as well as imaginary Fears; his natural and artificial Wants; his Cares and Anxieties, the Diseases of his Body, and the Diseases of his Mind; the Shortness of his Life, his Dread of the Future State, with his Carelessness to Prepare for it: And the Wisemen of all Ages have made the same Reflections. (HD, IX, 190).

In the eyes of God and wisemen, we are all poor men, subject to the desire to find satisfaction and to the consequent self-deception in seeking it.

The poor man's only contentment arises from realistically facing his discontent as an inevitable consequence of the Fall and devoting himself to the obligations the human condition imposes on him. Swift viewed himself as a man whose one great motion was submitting to the pleasure of Providence and the laws of his country (HD, IX, 262). "Swift," as Martin Price points out, "has one of the most frighteningly unsentimental minds in literature. He is capable of playfulness, tenderness, rancor, touchiness, self-pity. He has sentiments, surely, and an excess of many. But he never confuses what we ought to do with what we want to do, the right with the good." Price further argues that Swift refuses to be elaborately concerned with the rationale of right acting, "to celebrate the 'grounds' of duty or obligation." Obligation is imposed upon men by the Fall, and, like the imperfection of the human condition, it is "something immediately evident, in an act of cognition." The simple testimony of faith, the disposition to act in accordance with the will of God, Scripture, and the laws of one's country, the function of reason and the senses—all of these may aid in the perception of obligation, but they are nearly
as likely to be distorted in the pursuit of gratification. At the heart of the matter most critical to the spiritual and intellectual life of man is the simple act of cognition—the recognition of obligation as distinct from and opposed to one's own satisfaction. In this, Price points out, Swift recalls Pascal: "both insist upon disjunctions—discontinuities that eliminate moral confusions."\(^2\)

From this perspective we can begin to appreciate the depth of Swift's hostility toward Modern culture and a fundamental premise of his attack in *A Tale of a Tub*. Like Pascal and many others of a severely skeptical cast of mind, Swift generally found the imperative to obligation most clearly revealed in Renaissance values and habits of thought. The usage of time, although by no means an infallible guide, provided sufficient aids for recognizing one's duty. The Bible's simple rule of faith and Renaissance philosophy supplied the ordinary, practical needs of the spiritual and intellectual life of man. However, the Modern intellect of the seventeenth century, as we have seen, was not disposed to accept the spiritual and intellectual explanations of the past. The skeptical

spirit characteristic of the English in the seventeenth
century infected their view of the past rather than the
present. As the studies of intellectual history have
consistently shown, the seventeenth century was an age
generally intent upon rejecting the intellectual doctrines
of the remote and, to a large degree, of the immediate
past. As Basil Willey points out, "to give a 'philoso-
phical' account of matters which had formerly been
explained 'unscientifically', 'popularly', or 'figurative-
ly'--this, it would probably be agreed, has been the main
intellectual concern for the last three hundred years." 3
While actively and consciously bent upon separating the
"true" from the "false" and the "real" from the "illusory,"
men of the seventeenth century almost invariably associated
the false and the illusory with tradition. The old
explanations of the relationships of God, man, and
nature were no longer satisfying to them. "The mechanical
explanation," Basil Willey notes, "was the 'philosophical'
explanation; all others were, on the one hand, vulgar,
superstitious, and superficial; or, on the other hand,

3Basil Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background
(Anchor paperback, New York, 1953), p. 11. See in the
first chapter, his discussion of the notion that the
clarity of an idea seems to be determined by the satis-
faction it affords.
they were 'Aristotelian' or 'scholastic'.

For Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, More, Glanvill, Boyle, and a host of others the past was, in the main, a positive hindrance to the pursuit of truth and reality through scientific experimentation and philosophical speculation. The Copernican revolution had freed men to seek new explanations of the cosmos and the human condition. At best the explanations of the past were only accepted conditionally. With euphemisms like the "language of accommodation," traditional explanations were seen as necessary expedients of earlier eras of ignorance. Those traditional accounts of reality, once accepted as absolutely true, were increasingly viewed as hypotheses. Taken as hypotheses, traditional spiritual and intellectual doctrines could not withstand the test of the new thought's interest in experience and reason, and, consequently, were no longer thought to make sense.

Having denied the efficacy of traditional explanations Moderns sought to fill the resulting spiritual and intellectual vacuum with explanations of their own creation, to restore, in the terms that interested them most, the coherence lost in the rejection of tradition. The

\[\text{\textsuperscript{4}}\text{ibid}, \text{pp. 15 and 16.}\]
seventeenth century was the great age of systems of thought. Indeed, it seemed to advance the notion that the system itself—its very existence as an elaborate and invariably mathematical or mechanical complex—provided certifiable and useful knowledge. Modern hypotheses were thought to more fully comprehend reality, to be more clearly philosophical, and to be "true" because they more fully satisfied the Modern interest in mathematics and physics. The confidence of the Moderns in their own methods and explanations was nearly as great as their skepticism towards those of the past. "To be no longer at the mercy of nature," as Basil Willey expresses the point, "no longer to be encompassed by arbitrary mystery—these benefits were to be accompanied by the great new gift of power, power to control natural forces and to turn them, in Bacon's phrases, to the 'occasions and uses of life', and the relief of man's estate."5

For a man of Swift's bent the ordinances of providence and the wisdom of the ages did not offer any such prospect of relief. Modernity's overwhelming assertion of human power struck him as unrealistic and a systematic retreat from obligation in the pursuit of satisfaction.

5ibid., p. 17.
The Modern systems of thought and hypotheses about nature and the human condition, in seeking to replace the traditionally certified explanations, were instruments of chaos rather than order. Order in the world is imposed from without, and man can at best only attempt to discern that order and his duty in respect to it through a devotion to the God-given paradigms in the simple rule of biblical faith, the traditionally certified philosophical doctrine, and the laws of one's country. From this point of view, Modern attempts to restore a coherent world view in new and purely human terms—to rely only on the authority of man's defective reason and even more patently fallible senses—must have seemed to be a sacrilegious presumption of the divine prerogative and to introduce even greater imperfection and disorder into the world. In Swift's works, as in those of most satirists, the aim is to return man to his sense of reality and the obligations that reality imposes on him.

For a man of Swift's learning and cast of mind, the spiritual and intellectual aberrations of the seventeenth century must have seemed to be unprecedented in the history of Western culture and to demand a unique satiric form. Swift sets out to vex the Modern world on its own ground and in its own terms. The objects of concern and the
approaches to those objects in *A Tale of a Tub* are those of the seventeenth century. The chaotic world we see in the *Tale* is a paradigm of Modern culture as Swift sees it, an elaborate and extravagant *reductio ad absurdum*.

Understanding *A Tale of a Tub* as a paradigm of Modern culture and more specifically as an apocalyptic fiction is, I think, suggested in Hans Vaihinger's studies of the philosophical and religious implications of fictions and particularly in Frank Kermode's studies of literary fictions. A paradigm, as Hans Vaihinger describes it, is a methodological expedient. An imaginary case, a kind of scientific fiction, is constructed in which what is to be proved is dealt with as if it actually existed. This kind of acknowledged and formalized question-begging is a common and particularly useful device in demonstrative arguments. The writer may strip the object of his attention of all those characters of reality which might interfere with the progress of his argument. In social sciences, for example, one often finds the simple

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7 Vaihinger's study deals with the function of the consciously false in human thought; the "As If" referring to the appearance which plays an important part in science, world philosophies, and life (xli).
case of an isolated man, an isolated city, or an isolated state which allows the deduction, as well as the demonstration, of theoretical religious, social, economic, and political laws through very simple processes. Paradigmatic fictions are thought to retain a greater portion of reality than more conventional theoretical arguments, yet their claim to a knowledge of reality is founded upon disregarding much of it, those parts which prove uncomfortable or unsatisfying to the theory. They are in effect appearances of the confirmation of theoretical speculation in concrete reality. Although in legitimate practice, the paradigm is an acknowledged fiction—it is dealt with only "as if" it were true—there is considerable reluctance to call attention to the paradigm as a methodological expedient, an imaginary case.

Another important point about paradigmatic fictions is that they are not often simply means of demonstration. In addition to demonstrations of the products of thought, they are thought processes as well, methods of investigation and theological development. They are fictions as much designed for the generation of thought ("what if...") as its expression, means of formulating hypotheses about reality as means of explaining or even proving them. This function is perhaps most clearly evident in the utopian fictions of men like Plato, More, or even...
Huxley. Particularly popular in the eighteenth century were fictions of the primordial state which presented speculation about the original virtue of man in the world as if he enjoyed concrete existence. Theories developed in this fashion proved so convincing that many men set out to lay hands on a "noble savage." An apocalyptic fiction, like the utopian and primordial fictions, is essentially a paradigm which expresses, in so far as possible, the final state of man and the world as if they already existed. The promise of apocalyptic hope is satisfying only in so far as it is able to demonstrate the reality of its vision of the future. As we have seen, many of the theories about the future state of the world developed in this fashion and, supported with the authority of biblical apocalyptic, proved so convincing that many men actively set about instituting the new age.

As both Frank Kermode and Hans Vaihinger point out, the genuine value of a paradigm rests in its being presented and accepted for what it is, a fiction, an intellectual construct which is consciously false. The function of a legitimate fiction is to promote a greater understanding of reality. To treat a paradigm as a reality, as consciously true, yields a misunderstanding of reality and ultimately leads to chaos. It is, I suggest, in these terms that we may best understand the Tale.
From Swift's point of view, the function of the Tale, a paradigm of Modern culture, is to force the reader to confront reality, to promote his union with reality. This is to assume a point of view outside of the Tale and to view it as the consciously false creation of Swift's imagination. Swift, however, cuts himself off from the Tale, sets it adrift in the world to confound and mend it on its own terms. Swift gives it an independent existence. A Tale of a Tub enters the world not as the imaginary creation of Jonathan Swift, but as the genuine product of the mind and learning of a man who, although he remains anonymous, claims responsibility for the text and whose existence is supported by the existence of the text. From the persona's point of view, the Tale is not a paradigm but an epitome of Modern culture. He does not view Modern culture or, least of all, himself "as if" real. From the perspective within the Tale, the treatise of this Modern genius marks the development of the Modern world and its reality. The chaos of Modern culture that Swift's paradigm demonstrates arises from the persona's habit of taking his own fictions as realities and to a considerable extent from the reader's being seduced into sharing that habit.

Frank Kermode suggests that there is considerable danger in confusing fictions with myths:
Fictions can degenerate into myths whenever they are not consciously held to be fictive. . . Myth operates within the diagrams of ritual, which presupposes total and adequate explanations of things as they are and were. Fictions are for finding things out, and they change as the needs of sense making change. Myths are the agents of stability, fictions the agents of change. Myths call for absolute, fictions for conditional assent. Myths make sense in terms of a lost order of time, illud tempus as Eliade calls it; fictions, if successful, make sense of the here and now, hoc tempus.

For Swift, we may say, the thrust of Modern thought was to make myths of its hypothetical accounts of reality, to allow fictions to disintegrate into myth. As myth, Modernity challenges the position Swift accords to Christian humanism, for him the only adequate and complete explanation of things as they are, were, and forever will be. Modernity's effort to establish a new world view arises out of a fundamental deception—namely, accepting the creations of one's own mind as realities. To understand a fiction as "consciously true" is, in effect, to make a myth of it, to assume that reality has the order, organization, and form the fiction confers on it. A myth is something like an hypothesis retained as "true" even after it has failed the test of experiment. When a fiction degenerates into myth that is held to be "true," even against the undeniable pressure of reality,
then the only alternative left is to attempt to rearrange
the world to suit the myth. Myth results when men take
fictions to be products rather than learning processes.

The function of Swift's paradigm is, then, to make
his readers confront the reality of his contention that
Modern culture is an elaborate system designed to escape
reality. He does so by demonstrating the chaotic results
of taking fictions for realities and thereby turning them
into unholy myths. Perhaps the greatest and certainly
the most imaginatively exciting myth in Western culture is
St. John's Apocalypse. It is perhaps the definitive
instance of what Kermode calls a "sense-making paradigm."
In Western culture, the biblical myths of Genesis and
Apocalypse conferred organization and structure on the
cosmos and history. They "seem to do what Bacon said
poetry could: 'give some show of satisfaction to the
mind wherein the nature of things doth seem to deny
it.' . . . The show of satisfaction will only serve when
there seems to be a degree of real compliance with reality
as we, from time to time, imagine it."\(^9\) Beyond its shar-
ing in the authority of all Scripture, the Apocalypse has
been most highly valued in Western culture because of its

\(^9\)ibid., pp. 44 and 62-63.
enduring ability to show a high degree of compliance with reality as men have variously seen it through the centuries. As we have seen, an apocalyptic fiction is one which is above all justified by its success in the world. To adopt the methods of Moderns makes it only appropriate to create in the Tale an apocalyptic fiction. From Swift's point of view, however, the Modern apocalypse in the Tale is designed to confound rather than comfort his readers.

A Tale of a Tub is an image of the end of Modern culture as Swift sees it. The sense of the Tale's ending, rather than conferring organization and form on reality, quite clearly points to its disorganization and formlessness. Instead of making sense of the present in terms of the past and the future, the Tale demonstrates the nonsense of Modern culture and the progress towards the state of nothingness to which it inexorably tends. The Tale is the Modern Revelation which provides the ending for the genesis of Modern culture written by the early thinkers of the century, men like Descartes and Hobbes, but perhaps most significantly by Bacon. Bacon is the Modern Moses, the prophet of an almost mythical movement in Western thought. He was, as Basil Willey points out,

\footnote{See Abraham Cowley's "To the Royal Society," particularly 11. 69-108; the whole ode suggests this view of Bacon.}
above all the master of language, and his writings constitute the genesis in the Tale. We can see the characteristics of apocalyptic thought and literature translated into Modern terms. There is a perverse rebirth of images which strives to confer a completely material form on the condition of man and the universe. Swift ironically constructs the Tale to perform the same service in the literature of Modern culture that Apocalypse performs in the Bible. Frank Kermode points out that "Revelation, which epitomizes the Bible, puts our fate into a book, and calls it the book of life, which is the holy city. Revelation answers the command, 'write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter-- what is past, passing, and to come'-- and the command to make these things interdependent." 11 Swift's satiric fiction performs just this function. His persona, having received the command of the desires of Modern men, puts down what he has seen, reveals things as they are, and provides an appalling spectre of what is to come.

11 Kermode, p. 58.
CHAPTER FIVE

Among the most important signs of the apocalyptic character of *A Tale of a Tub* is the disposition of Swift's persona, the Grub Street Hack.¹ At the very outset, in the title and the epigraphs from Irenaeus and Lucretius, the Hack begins establishing his identity, a process which continues throughout the Tale. As the freshest of Moderns, he assumes a despotic power over all knowledge (130) and embodies the Modern spirit of self-sufficiency. The Hack tenders his treatise, "Written for the Universal Improvement of Mankind" (1), under banners of secret metaphysical and physical knowledge. His is the same monumental assurance which was traditionally associated with Gnostic religion and Lucretian philosophy. The epigraph from Irenaeus, as Ronald Paulson has shown, "is a series of unintelligible words with no discoverable meaning behind them, but with an impressive, if arbitrary, meaning ascribed to them.

by the Gnostics. On the threshold of the Tale is a symbol of the sufficiency which goes so far as to create its own religion and language.\(^2\)

The extent of the Hack's presumption is further symbolized in his devotion to Lucretius, whom he quotes and alludes to often throughout the Tale, particularly when describing himself. In a typical assertion of his pride, the Hack describes himself as the Secretary of the Universe:

\[
\text{WE whom the World is pleased to honor with the Title of Modern Authors, should never have been able to compass our great Design of an Everlasting Remembrance, and never-dying Fame, if our endeavours had not been so highly serviceable to the general Good of Mankind. This, O Universe, is the Adventurous Attempt of me they Secretary;}
\]

\[
\text{Quernvis perferre laborem Suadet, & inducit noctes vigilare serenas. (123)}
\]

On the surface of things, this quotation from Lucretius seems harmless enough, yet, like all the Hack's Lucretian material, it serves to link him with the anti-religious forces of Epicurian sensualism and Lucretian materialism. Lucretius was for the seventeenth century the archetypal atheist, and through the Hack's devotion to him, Swift points to the atheistic implications of Modern thought. The Hack's address to the universe recalls Lucretius's prayer to nature with which De Rerum Natura opens; his praise of Moderns is equivalent to Lucretius's praise of

\(^2\)Paulson, pp. 98-99.
Epicurus for having delivered man from superstition. The atmosphere of disillusionment, skepticism, and fatalism in the age which prompted Lucretius to write is essentially the same complex of spiritual and intellectual conditions, although different in time and circumstance, which prompt the Hack to discourse on the nature of things in the Modern world. The Hack is, in effect, a Modern Lucretius, and, like the ancient secretary of the universe, he rejects traditional notions of deity and providence in his account of reality. Just as Lucretius built a nearly religious system of thought upon his faith in the proposition that "nothing can ever be created by divine power out of nothing" and his trust in the sufficiency of reason, the Hack founds his entirely new revelation of the nature of things upon his nearly religious devotion to novelty and his blind faith in the arbitrary machinations of his own mind. Lucretius's doctrine of the chance formation of the world appropriately corresponds to the chance formation of the Hack's treatise and, indeed, of all of Modern culture. Again like Lucretius, the Hack views himself as a deliverer of man from ignorance, "the dread and darkness of the mind" arising from the superstition of the past. Both propose to succeed where traditional religion and philosophy had failed, to supplant the function traditionally performed by prophets, and to provide an "understanding of the outward form and
inner workings of nature." Like Lucretius, the Hack offers an entirely new system of the universe on no greater authority than his own experience in the world.

The Hack clearly reveals himself as one of the intellectual rabble of the age, which R. F. Jones has described as "a crowd of astrologers, empirics, alchemists, rosicrucians, and a host of others who defy name and classification, all eager to pursue a path that seemed to lead to money, respectability, and fame." The Hack's confidence, however, suggests a dimension in his character beyond that of the latent encyclopedist or polymath. He presents himself as a seer, a kind of Modern prophet who enjoys secret knowledge of the cosmos and its history. The Tale is, by his own account, a "momentous," "mysterious," "miraculous," and "divine" treatise. The Hack is the Modern visionary who rejects the values of tradition for those of novelty. By virtue of being the latest writer, he is the ordained individual to whom the secrets of the Modern cosmos and history have been revealed and whose word is, therefore, unquestionably authoritative. The Hack's dissertation is

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an epitome of Modern culture—a revelation of an entirely new vision of reality and the end toward which Modern culture inexorably tends. The Tale, like all apocalyptic, "derives from the dedicated experience, isolated vision, and judgment of the solitary man, the seer, the unlicensed and obscure sage." The Hack's role as Secretary of the Universe is a profane inversion of that traditionally reserved for the inspired writers of Scripture. The Hack, in effect, assumes a function no man had legitimately performed since the cessation of prophecy with the Revelation of St. John.

Perhaps the Hack's most boldly sacrilegious assertion of his claim to the role of inspired writer is made in his insistence that his dissertation be treated as a Modern scripture.

The Reader truly Learned ... will here find sufficient Matter to employ his Speculations for the rest of his Life. It were much to be wisht, and I do here humbly propose for an Experiment, that every Prince in Christendom will take seven of the deepest Scholars in his Dominions, and shut them up close for seven Years, in seven Chambers, with a Command to write seven ample Commentaries on this Comprehensive Discourse. I shall venture to affirm, that whatever Difference may be found in their several Conjectures, they will be all, without the least Distortion, manifestly deducible from the Text. (185)

The cabbalistic value of the number seven alone suggests the importance which the Hack expects his readers to attribute to his treatise, and his claim for its universality suggests that he views it as Modern culture's equivalent to Sacred Scripture itself. The Hack is here describing the third of the three classes of the Tale's readers and indicating how they will or perhaps ought to respond to it. In a typically circular argument, the Hack contends that the character of the truly learned reader is sufficiently evidenced by his willingness to devote a lifetime of speculation to the Hack's dissertation, to give it the significance and attention traditionally reserved for Scripture. Failing to supplant Holy Writ with the Latest Modern Treatise is a sure sign of the reader's being either superficial, that is, provoked to laughter, or ignorant, that is, disposed to stare and perspire. Laughter and perplexity are the appropriate responses to the satiric fiction, but the Modern treatise demands devotion. The learned man, in Swift's view, has deceived himself by putting his faith in the wrong place. In the Hack's view, however, the learned reader is like a commentator in the great tradition of Scriptural exegesis. The Tale, then, is a synthesis of the intellectual culture of Modernity, a sort of summa centered on the Hack's divinely inspired account of the nature of things. The Hack's twisted allusion to the translation of the Septuagint and the King James translation of
the Bible is far more than an appeal to the vanity of the reader or the Hack, for it points to the crucial relationship of the Hack and the reader upon which depends the very existence of Modern culture as it is revealed in the *Tale*.

The value of the Hack's treatise is determined by its success in the world, the ultimate criterion for any piece of Modern wit. The Hack, consequently, is particularly attentive to the reader's disposition towards himself and his work. Much of the *Tale*'s considerable bulk is, therefore, devoted to developing a symbiotic relationship between the Hack and the "learned" or "judicious" reader; the spirit of novelty and arrogance in the one supports the like spirit in the other. Although the *Tale* abounds with evidence of this developing relationship, the Hack's most concerted effort appears in the "Dedication to Prince Posterity," where he defends Modern works from the ravages of Time, and in Section X, occasionally labelled "The Authors Compliments to the Readers," in which he discusses "the wonderfull Civilities that have passed of late Years, between the Nation of Authors and that of Readers" (181). In the digressions particularly, the likenesses between the *Tale* and Sacred Scripture, the Hack and divinely inspired writer, and the learned reader and the scriptural exegete are drawn.
"The Epistle Dedicatory to His Royal Highness Prince Posterity" (30-38) reveals the depth and the absurdity of the Modern commitment to the good opinion of the world. In Western literary tradition the writer conventionally recognizes his dependence upon the ultimate source of truth and beauty outside of himself with an invocation to divine wisdom. The paramount commitment of the Hack and his treatise, however, is to vanity rather than truth. Appropriately, he invokes Posterity, the "sole Arbiter of the Productions of human Wit, in this polite and accomplish'd Age" (31), rather than divine wisdom. Since even Posterity, through the offices of his tutor Time, has generally chosen only to favor the productions of truth, the Hack is forced to attack Time. He seeks to convert Posterity into a patron of popularity, more fully satisfied by novelty than universal truth. The Hack's invocation, consequently, immediately degenerates into an assault against Time:

IT were endless to recount the several Methods of Tyranny and Destruction, which Your Governour [Time] is pleased to practice upon this Occasion. His inveterate Malice is such to the Writings of our Age, that of several Thousands produced yearly from this renowned City, before the next Revolution of the Sun, there is not one to be heard of: Unhappy Infants, many of them barbarously destroyed before they have so much as learnt their Mother-Tongue to beg for Pity... Great Numbers are offered to Moloch, and the rest tainted by his Breath die of languishing Consumption. (33)

The Hack's appeal is founded upon the sensibility of pity rather than the intelligibility of truth in Modern works.
Only in terms of the Hack's sensibilities, however, can the paradox of enduring novelty be resolved. In purely intelligible terms, novelty must inevitably be destroyed by Time. The Hack's defiance of Time is, in a real sense, an attempt to deny the limitations of the human condition, which by definition is bound by time. Traditionally, the only way a man may survive time is through divine grace, and his works only escape through divine inspiration. Moderns, however, seek to escape time through their own power. The Hack's proud assumption of what amounts to an extra-human character is the same sin as that of Moloch in Paradise Lost, and it is only appropriate that the Hack and his fellow Moderns be fed to him. Again the defective sensibilities of man make him prey to the sins of satisfaction, particularly those which will delude him into thinking that his intellectual reach is sufficient to deny the human condition.

Unable to defend Modern works beyond a splenitic ad hominem argument against Time, the Hack asks Posternity, indeed all of his readers, to accept his discourse on faith. He argues that his readers should share his sensibilities on no greater authority than his own sincerity:

I profess to Your Highness, in the Integrity of My Heart, that what I am going to say is literally true this Minute I am writing: What Revolutions may happen before it shall be ready for your Perusal, I can by no means warrant: However, I beg You to accept it as Specimen of our Learning, our Politeness, and our Wit. (36)
In view of the unintelligibility of most of the Tale, the Hack asks, in effect, for a faith in himself stronger than that Christianity asks in insisting that Sacred Scripture is the inspired Word of God. The Hack is continually affirming, "upon the Word of a sincere Man" (36), that what he says will advance wisdom and virtue on no other ground than his own declaration that he is the universal genius of the age. Like all apocalyptic writers, the Hack demands of his readers belief in his peculiar inspiration, an experience which confirms in him the role of the seer, the necessary medium for the revelation of the mysterious truths of Modernity. The Hack is uniquely sensitive to the revelations of Modernity by virtue of being the newest Modern and is, therefore, most worthy of the world's attention. His unprecedented treatise evidences his unique inspiration and supports his claim to authority. At the very end of the Digression on Madness, the Hack explicitly describes his own inspiration:

That even I myself, the Author of these momentous Truths, am a Person, whose Imaginations are hardmouth'd, and exceedingly disposed to run away with his Reason, which I have observed from long Experience, to be a very light Rider, and easily shook off; upon which Account, my Friends will never trust me alone, without a solemn Promise, to vent my Speculations in this, or the like manner, for the universal Benefit of Human kind; which, perhaps, the gentle courteous and candid Reader, brimful of that Modern Charity and Tenderness, usually annexed to his Office, will be very hardly persuaded to believe. (179-180)
Clearly, madness is the Modern equivalent to the traditional inspiration of divine wisdom.

As the Hack himself recognizes, only the charity of the reader predisposed to accept the validity of the Hack's experience is able to make sense of his treatise and approve of the madness which inspires it. Having abandoned the control of reason, the Hack is free to proffer the arbitrary machinations of his own mind only in so far as the "judicious reader" is willing to grant him the common privilege of a seer:

There are certain common Privileges of a Writer, the Benefit whereof, I hope, there will be no Reason to doubt; Particularly, that where I am not understood, it shall be concluded, that something very useful and profound is coucht underneath: And again, that whatever word or Sentence is Printed in a different Character, shall be judged to contain something extra-ordinarily either of Wit or Sublime. (46-47)

Rather than risk the failure of the judicious reader's faith, however, the Hack, in the best Modern style, notes the various points of wit and sublime as they arise throughout his treatise. "I hold myself obliged," says he, "to give as much light as possible, into the Beauties and Excellencies of what I am writing, because it is become the Fashion and Humor most applauded among the first Authors of this Polite and Learned Age, when they would correct the ill Nature of Critical, or inform the Ignorance of Courteous Readers" (130). Only by training his
readers may the Hack reenforce his authority and win the world's good opinion of his treatise.

In justifying his Digression in the Modern Kind, the Hack thinks fit "to lay hold on that great and honourable Privilege of being the Last Writer; I claim an absolute Authority in Right, as the freshest Modern, which gives me a Despotick Power over all Authors before me" (130).

In consequence of this power he is free to do anything he likes and, presumably, justify it entirely on his own terms. He explicitly and precisely establishes the proper method of reading his treatise:

However, being extremely solicitous, that every accomplished Person who has got into the Taste of Wit, calculated for this present Month of August, 1697, should descend to the very bottom of all the Sublime throughout this Treatise; I hold fit to lay down this general Maxim. Whatever Reader desires to have a thorow Comprehension of an Author's Thoughts, cannot take a better Method, than by putting himself into the Circumstances and Postures of Life, that the Writer was in, upon every important Passage as it flow'd from his Pen; For this will introduce a Parity and strict Correspondence of Idea's between the Reader and the Author. Now, to assist the diligent Reader in so delicate an Affair, as far as brevity will permit, I have recollected, that the shrewdest Pieces of this Treatise, were conceived in Bed, in a Garret: At other times (for a Reason best known to myself) I thought fit to sharpen my Invention with Hunger; and in general, the whole Work was begun, continued, and ended, under a long Course of Physick, and a great want of Money. Now I do affirm, it will be absolutely impossible for the candid Persuer to go along with me in a great many bright Passages, unless upon the several Difficulties emergent, he will please to capacitate and prepare himself by these Directions. And this I lay down as my principal Postulatum. (43-45)
The Hack is here demanding that his reader not only share his sensibilities but his particular sensations as the Tale was written in a particular time and place. Just as religious enthusiasts demanded that the Christian live in the Bible, the Hack demands that his reader live in his own experience. Unless the reader can share the Hack's experience in mind and body, he cannot descend to the bottom of the sublime in the Tale, live in the spirit of Modernity. The Hack asks, indeed demands, total commitment to both himself and his work. He demands a religious commitment.

In the delicate affair of creating a parity or strict correspondence of ideas and experience between author and reader, the Hack has created an unholy parody of the Christian ideal of man's being at one with God. The ordinary relationship of author and reader is one in which each meets the other part way; communication is an exchange based upon shared thought and experience. The Hack's dedication to an entirely new and wholly private vision of reality, however, makes communication impossible. The chaotic thought arising from the experience of his person at a particular time in a specific place demands that the reader meet him entirely on his own terms. The Hack, consequently, is under no obligation to make sense, as it is conventionally understood. The true Modern, indeed, is under every obligation to not make sense, for the spirit of novelty demands that a Modern work exhibit the extraordinary, that which has never been
hit upon before. (43) Imagination and invention must take precedent over all other considerations:

IN my Disposure of Employments of the Brain, I have thought fit to make Invention the Master, and give Method and Reason the Office of Lacquays. The Cause of this Distribution was, from observing it in my peculiar Case, to be often under a Temptation of being Witty, upon Occasion, where I could be neither Wise nor Sound, nor anything to the Matter in hand. And I am too much a Servant of the Modern Way, to neglect any such Opportunities, whatever Pains or Improprieties I may be at, to introduce them. (209)

Only in a dedication to the particulars of human experience can the demands of novelty be met; universal truth fails the test of Modern sublimity. Modern culture, as the Tale exhibits it, is not only founded upon the experience of chaos, but actively resists any possible encroachment of order.

The Hack places the severest possible demands upon his readers, who, in order to appreciate the miraculousness of the Tale, must abandon themselves to the chaotic experience of novelty. Just as Scripture demands that man become Christ-like, Modernity insists that they become Hack-like. In the Digression on Madness, the Hack's essay on the inspiration of the visionary, he makes the following observation:

Let us therefore now conjecture how it comes to pass, that none of these great Prescribers (the great Introducers of new Schemes in Philosophy), do ever fail providing themselves and their Notions, with a Number of implicate Disciples. And, I think, the Reason is easy to be assigned: For, there is a peculiar String in the Harmony of Human Understanding, which in several individuals is exactly of the same Tuning. This if you can dexterously screw up to its right Key, and then
strike gently upon it; Whenever you have the Good Fortune to light among those of the same Pitch, they will by a secret necessary Sympathy, strike exactly at the same time. And in this one Circumstance, lies all the Skill or Luck of the Matter; for if you chance to jar the String among those who are either above or below your own Height, instead of subscribing to your own Doctrine, they will tie you fast, call you Mad, and feed you with Bread and Water. It is therefore a point of the nicest Conduct to distinguish and adapt this noble Talent, with respect to the Differences of Persons and of Times. (167-168)

This morbid parody of the Renaissance principles of correspondence, hierarchy, and concordia discors explains not only how a madman comes to be judged sane—for that matter, how a sane man is found mad—but also provides an important gloss on the relationship of the Hack and his reader. Throughout his treatise, but most particularly in the prefatory material and in the disgressions, the Hack is not so much philosophizing for the universal improvement of mankind as he is tuning the reader, bringing him into harmony with the madness of the Modern age. The reader must be infused with the spirit of arrogance and self-sufficiency, converted to the faith in novelty, and, indeed, born again in the experience of madness. The Hack is the prophet of the faith in novelty, the Tale the scripture of the Modern creed, and the "judicious reader" the catechumen of Modernity. His utter dependence upon the good offices of the Modern reader is a perfect illustration of the "Fool among Knaves" thesis. (174) The Hack thrives upon the felicitous deception of Modern readers. He passes
for a fool in the company of "superficial" and "ignorant" readers while he is presumably accorded the honor due a philosopher amount "judicious" readers. As is characteristic of the Tale, it is not simply that the terms are ambiguous. The reader cannot accept the Hack as either madman or philosopher any more than he can accept himself as either superficial and ignorant or judicious and truly learned. The Hack has so contrived his treatise that its success in the world is dependent upon the reader's commitment to Modernity and that the reader's success in the world is bound to his commitment to the Hack.

The Modern way, as the Hack describes it, is not so much a philosophical method as a religious premise. The Hack, like all apocalyptic writers, has no hesitation in enlarging and recasting the prophecies of the past, and like Bacon, the Hack supplants traditional faith, not with the power of induction or scientific method, but with the spirit of novelty. Given their heavy reliance on biblical sources, both Bacon and the Hack are not so much secularizing the sacred as spiritualizing the profane.  

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a spiritual enterprise remarkably like the enthusiastic practice of Christianity. The Hack, far more than Jack and the Learned AEolists, is dependent upon the certainties of an inner light; the spirit of novelty is the Modern cult's equivalent to grace. The Puritan formula of election, vocation, justification, sanctification, and glorification is virtually the same model for the Modern pilgrim's progress to piety. The Tale is the Hack's spiritual autobiography; his success in the world both demonstrates the function of the spirit of novelty and seeks to bring his readers to the recognition of the Modern spirit within themselves. Again as in the Puritan formulas, the Hack's process and product are indistinguishable—the perception of the reality of salvation and the reality of salvation are one. Election is a matter of personal experience, a reality which the individual alone can testify to. The Hack seeks to make everyman a seer, an authority unto himself. Under these circumstances, considerations of doctrinal or even logical consistency yield to the demands of psychological consistency. Modernity, much like Puritanism, is not so much a doctrinal system as a habit of mind, an over-riding attitude towards oneself and the world. The sensibility of the Modern spirit, indeed, must not be disturbed by the perceptions of the intellect. The faith in novelty demands paradoxically that one be consistently inconsistent. Whatever is new, is right.
The Hack's dissertation is, then, the report of one soul's conversion to Modernity through the experience of novelty. The Tale is the Modern testament. Just as Scripture records the providential function of inspiration and the divine will in the world, the Hack's treatise records the mechanical operations of his own inspiration and mirrors the arbitrary will of man. For the Hack's reader, as for the Puritan biblical exegete, his most important qualification is the experience of the spirit. One moved by the Modern spirit will easily comprehend the Tale's fine points of wit and sublime, no matter what the difficulties experienced by those lacking faith in Modernity. A full understanding of the Tale, indeed, would be a significant sign of the grace of novelty. The Tale is an image of the life of the Modern soul; it speaks to the inner life of Modern man—in Swift's view, to his arrogance, pride, and satisfaction. Just as the man best able to appreciate St. Paul is he who has shared Paul's experience of grace, the man best able to read the Hack is he who has been born again in the spirit of Modernity.

As the apocalyptist of Modernity, the Hack, like St. John himself, must be "in the Spirit." He is transported beyond the realm of ordinary human experience either by the disruption of vapors brought on by his continual course of physic while writing his treatise or by the mystical experiences arising from his study of the occult. The
Hack's preoccupation with Cabbalism, Alchemy, Gnosticism, and Rosicrusianism further reveals his credentials as a seer. The Hack's study of "Dark Authors," in which category he proudly includes himself, show his desire to rise above the lot of ordinary men to the sources of spiritual and material power.\(^7\) The Hack is the paradigm of the Modern philosopher-magician. On the one hand, his links with Lucretius, Descartes, Hobbes, Bacon, and the Royal Society suggest his assumption of the role of rationalistic philosopher and empirical scientist—mark the authority of his secret knowledge of the material universe. The Hack's devotion to the occult, on the other hand, shows his credentials as a mystic—cites his secret knowledge of the spiritual universe. Out of these sources, presumably, arise the visions he is compelled to relate. They command him to speak the unspeakable in the name of Modernity and for the universal benefit of mankind. The benefit he seeks is human power over the spiritual and material sources in the universe. The Hack's role as philosopher-magician is remarkably like the role Harold Fisch ascribes to Bacon:

Can anyone doubt that Bacon has taken over from the magicians this Faustian (and, of course, quite irrational) dream of unlimited human power over Nature? The follies of the magicians, their inability to grasp the limitations of human power and intellect, are bound up with their intoxicating vision of the mysterious, vital properties

\(^7\)See "Notes on Dark Authors," text, pp. 354-360.
infused into the world of matter. . . [Bacon] tends to replace the analogical structure of thought which had constituted the faith of the magicians, with a blind faith in the unlimited capacity of man himself standing over against the world. But the result he hopes for is the same! This is not nominalism, but something new and dynamic—not the formal separation of the spheres, but the transference of the energies of faith into the region of technology. Bacon makes Physics not a technique but a religion, and Induction becomes for him not so much a useful mechanism for the discovery of certain axioms, but rather a mystic path, an ultimate revelation and a millennial hope.

The Hack's pseudo-religious vision is even less warranted on either physical or spiritual grounds. Science and the occult are reduced to the one common source, the Hack's personal experience. The Hack tortures his study of the material and the spiritual universe not for what a scientist or a magician might find useful, but for what is new. Utility in the Hack's view of things is the service of novelty. The intoxication of the Tale's Modernity arises from the ratiocinative powers of the Hack's own mind. Where physics sought universal laws and metaphysics sought immutable truth and magic sought vital cosmic properties, Modernity seeks what is entirely new, never hit upon before.

Novelty is at once the method, ultimate revelation, and millennial hope of Modernity. The faith in novelty in the Hack's world performs the same function as the faith in Christianity in the traditional orientation of Western Culture.

Modern culture as it is revealed in A Tale of a Tub has no reality beyond that which Swift, through his persona, gives it. We have two understandings of the Tale's author and two understandings of the Tale's "judicious readers," but these understandings are extremely difficult to separate. One of the primary targets of the satiric fiction is the tendency of men in the seventeenth century to deceive themselves, and the Tale operates in terms of deception. Indeed, Swift, the Hack, and the reader in a variety of ways participate in the Tale's deception as either deceiver or deceived. Can we, for example, conclude that the "Apology" is a statement of Swift, or the Hack, or that our understanding of it gets at the truth of the matter, or plunges us more fully into the deception which infects the Tale? The sentiments it expresses are appropriate to both Swift and the Hack and applicable to all readers whether or not they see their own image in the glass of satire. Often—as in the apology, the dedication to Lord Sommers, the judgments of Peter, Martin, and Jack and in the explanation of the Tale's title in the Preface, the account of the Edifices in the Air in the Introduction, much of the
history of criticism in the Digression on Critics, and much of the account of madness in the Digression on Madness—the reader is unable to separate the opinions of the Hack from those he is inclined to assume are Swift's. As the Hack or Swift, more likely both, suggest in the Preface (51 ff.), it is difficult to separate the panegyric on Modernity from the satire on Modernity.

The reader's confusion arises from the difficulty in resolving the ambiguity between the fiction and the reality in the Tale. He remains, as Ronald Paulson has suggested, unconvinced of the reality or the unreality of the Hack and his treatise. The Preface explains the Tale's diver- sionary character; for both Swift and the Hack it is an employment for unquiet spirits. In terms of the Digression in the Modern Kind, the Tale itself—indeed, Modern culture—is one large digression from the mainstream of human thought and learning, serving the public good more through diversion than instruction (124). In the Digression on Madness, we learn perhaps the Tale's greatest point of instruction, namely that diversion is the greatest point of human felicity, that happiness "is a perpetual Possession of being

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9 Paulson, p. 33.
well Deceived (171, 174). Deception is at the bottom of both the Hack's treatise and Swift's satiric fiction; both share in it and insist that the reader share in it, but in distinctly different ways and for significantly different motives.

The experience of confusion which Swift and the Hack impose on the reader is not so much a matter of the one expressing notions we should like to think appropriate to the other as it is a matter of their methods being so very much alike. Swift insists that the reader encounter the chaos of Modern culture so that he might be moved to embrace obligation as a source of order. The Hack promotes confusion so that man, freed from the obligations of order, may pursue satisfaction. To view the Hack as an apocalyptic writer and to see Swift as a prophetic writer suggests the significant differences in their visions of Modern culture and in their literary motives. Apocalypse and prophecy, as we have seen, are closely related. Both apocalyptist and prophet are writing in defense of a besieged culture, yet their lines of defense are markedly different. Edwin Honig's expression of the distinction most clearly bears on the point at hand:

Prophecy, taking its authority from the Word of God, calls attention to the covenant, the social contract, the moral obligations of men under divine law. It rehearses the law and stresses the punishable infringements of the law. Although the message of the prophets
may run counter to that of the priests of an established order, the prophets, whether accepted or outlawed, are there to remind men that they have strayed from their higher social and religious duties. Apocalyptic, on the other hand, derives from the dedicated experience, isolated vision, and judgment of the solitary man, the seer, the unlicensed and obscure sage. In denying the possibility of mankind's improvement, apocalyptic casts a cold eye on man's social and moral nature, and criticizes the failures and imperfections of man and his laws. Apocalyptic frequently becomes the refuge of the heretical imagination defying the contingencies of legalism and the status quo.\footnote{Honig, p. 107}

Swift's is an essentially prophetic spirit. Although his methods clearly run counter to the established order, they are in the service of a conservative world view. The Hack's is an apocalyptic spirit. His is a heretical imagination seeking to institute a radically new world vision.

The Hack is the polemicist of Modern culture, a defender of the faith in novelty while it is still in the cradle. Swift is defining traditional culture from the attack of Modernity. Swift, like the prophets of old, is intolerant. His emphasis is upon law, order, obligation. The Hack, however, is possibly the most tolerant figure in all literature, for he consumes and makes his own virtually any doctrine, idea, or expression. He affirms anything and denies virtually nothing. The voracious appetite for novelty makes him the incipient polymath. Swift, on the other hand, is the consummate skeptic, affirming only those notions
demanded by the practical realities of life and supported by tradition. The Hack has proclaimed himself secretary of a new vision of the universe; like St. John, he has seen a new heaven and a new earth. Swift is a minister of tradition, a man whose one great motion is submission to the pleasure of Providence and the laws of his country. For Swift, it is the old earth yet, and the best one can do is recognize his obligations. The Hack emphasizes the creation of the new man. For the Hack the Modern vision is one of freedom; for Swift it is the refuge of the scoundrel.
The Hack's role as seer demands a unique literacy technique, a form of expression commensurate with his inspiration. It is, after all, in the literary experience of *A Tale of a Tub* that both Swift and the Hack define Modern culture. Its language, imagery, and structure are functions of the Modern mind. Conception and expression are points seldom far apart in even the most traditional literary works, but in the *Tale* the manner of expression is far more revealing than the apparent matter. Just as Jack's frenzy and Peter's spleen make it their perpetual fortune to meet, the chaos of the *Tale* 's language, imagery, and structure and the chaos of Modernity's spiritual and intellectual doctrines consistently converge:

Both, having the same Foundation, we may look upon them as two Pair of Compases, equally extended, and the fixed foot of each, remaining in the same Center; which, tho' moving contrary Ways at first, will be sure to encounter somewhere or other in the Circumference. (199)

Swift's satiric target is presumably in the common foundation, but in the Hack's treatise, the chaos of Modern
thought is perhaps most clearly discernable in Modern literary practice.

The Hack is far more interested in the literary process, particularly the "Modern Way," than in its product. He insists that he be judged in terms of his means, whatever the results they might produce. The process is the product in *A Tale of a Tub*. The reader optimistically begins with the author's assurance that he will share in the enlightenment of a dissertation on "the numerous and gross Corruptions in Religion and Learning" (4). He has every reason to assume at the outset that the work will be intelligible in terms of the conventions of language and rhetoric. His expectations, however, soon are shattered by his recognition that the Tale has a language and rhetoric all its own, a literary technique entirely new. From the Hack's point of view, to read the Tale is to descend to the very bottom of the sublime. From Swift's point of view, to read the Hack's prose is to descend into the depth of inconsistency, contradiction, and virtual incoherence of the Modern mind. The language, imagery, and structure of the Hack's dissertation and Swift's satiric fiction force the reader to share the processes of Modern thought.

For the Hack, no less than for Swift, language is the source and mainspring of spiritual and intellectual
life, the vehicle of all enlightenment. At the bottom of the Hack's conception of language, however, is his thorough-going materialism, his equation of words and things. His linguistic theory is even more radical than that of the new science. Rather than a relationship of res et verba in which, it was argued, every word should be the sign of a particular thing, the Hack's theory and practice suggest a res est verba relationship, that words, in effect, are nothing more than things. The Hack seems to reject the notion that words are signs for intelligible concepts, that their essential character at once comprehends the abstract and the concrete. The Hack, after the manner of a dark author, consistently treats words as things which he may arbitrarily assemble into a mysterious and sublime treatise;

The Words of such Writers being like Seed, which, however, scattered at random, when they light upon a fruitful Ground, will multiply far beyond the Hopes or Imaginations of the Sower. (186)

In the Hack's theory and practice, language functions in terms of physical or psychological sensibility rather than in terms of intelligible sense. Words are things which invoke sensible impressions rather than intelligible concepts in the reader. The Hack is the first modern public relations man; he projects an image of himself and Modern culture by appealing to the sensibilities of
his readers rather than their intellects. It is the fertility of the reader upon which the Hack is dependent for the formation of wit and sublime in his treatise. In a note, Swift points out that "Nothing is more frequent than for Commentators to force Interpretations, which the Author never meant" (186), but it is precisely this habit of readers which allowed the Hack's arbitrariness to stand for genius. The Hack is not really saying anything—that is, using language for the purposes of intelligible communication. He simply casts words about, as if they were nothing more than sensible things, and trusts that the reader's sensible response to them will sufficiently move him to accept them as the language of wit and genius.

The physical and sensible character of the Hack's language is further revealed in the Digression on Madness:

...as the Face of Nature never produces Rain but when it is overcast and disturbed, so Human Understanding, seated in the Brain, must be troubled and overspread by Vapours, ascending from the lower Faculties, to water the Invention, and render it fruitful. Now, altho' these Vapours (as it hath been already said) are of as various Original, as those of the Skies, yet the Crop they produce, differs both in kind and Degree, merely according to the Soil. (163)

Although in this, as in the previous instance, the Hack's observation has every appearance of being a figurative use of speech, considerable evidence—as in the remainder
of the Digression on Madness itself and in the oratorical machines, the clothes philosophy, and the AEolian doctrine—suggests that he is here also speaking literally, or, at the very least, we cannot distinguish between the literal and the figurative in the Hack's usage. Just as the Hack's inspiration is largely a matter of biochemistry, so his language is a mechanical operation dependent upon its physical nature.

Language in the traditional view, of course, is an image of the human condition itself, and although it shares humanity's imperfection, it too is a fusion of the spiritual and the physical. The Hack, however, treats words entirely as things, just as he treats people as things in his account of madness. Language is a peculiarly human entity, traditionally accepted as a singular mark of the human condition; to pervert language is, then, to debase humanity. The seriousness of the Hack's sin against language is perhaps best explained in Ronald Paulson's account of the diction in the Digression on Madness as a parody of the Royal Society's Philosophical Transactions:

It will be useful to look again at the sentence, "Last Week I saw a Woman flay'd, and you will hardly believe, how much it altered her Person for the worse" (p. 173). Much of the force of this sentence would be lost if it said "A woman was flay'd," and
so, as one characteristic, we can point to the personal pronoun. But this in itself would carry little force if the wording had been "Last week I saw a body dissected." "Flay'd" is another non-scientific word, which suggests skinning of animals or martyrdom of saints more than dissecting of bodies. When "flay'd" and "woman" are brought together, we see an attempt to reduce woman to thing, whereupon woman reasserts her humanness and the action appears monstrous.

The Hack does to language what he does to human beings. He violates its natural, divinely ordained, character by making it entirely material and, in the process, not only goes mad himself but leads the reader to the same experience. Since language was commonly held to be of divine rather than human origin, the Hack's abuse of language is a particularly sinful assertion of his pride. For the reader who is not committed to Modernity, for whom madness is not a felicitous condition, the humanistic value of language reasserts itself when the Hack reduces words to things.

Rather than communicating intelligible truth to the advantage of mankind, writing, in the Hack's practice, becomes the process of assembling material objects. The oratorical machines, for example, are best designed to

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handle the weighty matter of the sounds of words, not their immaterial meanings. The Hack, however, prefers the even more substantial matter of print:

For, I have remarked many a towardly Word, to be wholly neglected or despised in Discourse, which hath passed very smoothly, with some Consideration and Esteem after its Preferment and the Sanction of Print. (210)

In either case, the wit of the matter is in the process of arranging things and not in the conventional cognitive structure of language. Language has become a branch of mechanics.

In a real sense, the process of writing has become the product. The emphasis upon novelty allows any unintelligible arrangement of words to pass for learning, provided the reader is willing to accept it as such. The materialistic conception of language frees the Hack to be as arbitrary and novel as he pleases. His imagination operates on the level of a child playing with tinker toys, whose generous parents, more interested in the fact that he is playing than in anything he might produce, attempt to make a windmill of his garbled assemblage of parts on no better ground than his having called it a windmill. The only value even the Hack attributes to his use of language is in its being unlike any that preceded it. He is ironically dependent upon the patronage of the reader he so miserably abuses.
The Hack's use of language most fully reveals his role as a true student of the occult, as the Modern mystic. The Hack, like dark authors of all ages, pretends to have made his work unintelligible to all except the true philosophers, the true believers in Modernity. The genius of mysticism is in the emotive power of words to satisfy the desires of those who seek satisfaction. The mystic writer is easily identified by his unintelligibility. "Wise Philosophers," the Hack notes, "hold all Writings to be fruitful in Proportion they are dark." The "true illuminated" is therefore "the Darkest of all" (186).

When one cannot achieve intelligible genius, he may enjoy the benefits of obscurity. The Hack preys on the common human failing of assuming that what one cannot understand must be profound. Lacking the substance of profundity, the Hack retreats to the appearance of it; the Tale looks and sounds like a profound dissertation. The Hack plays on the weakness and sensibilities of his readers with the magical power of words.

I will here take Leave to glance a few Innuendo's, that may be of great Assistance to those sublime Spirits, who shall be appointed to labor in a universal Comment upon this wonderful Discourse. And First, I have couched a very profound Mystery in the Number of 0's multiply'd by Seven, and divided by Nine. Also, if a devout Brother of the Rosy Cross will pray fervently for sixty three Mornings,
with a lively Faith, and then transpose certain Letters and Syllables according to Prescription, in the second and fifth Section, they will certainly reveal into a full Receit of the Opus Magnum. (186-186)

As the Hack flatters the reader as a "sublime Spirit," the Hack's self-deception is confirmed in that of the reader. Vanity in the Hack and the reader has allowed the sensible properties of language to overcome their intellects. Modern man has put his faith in what he cannot understand precisely because the magic of words provides greater satisfaction than the perceptions of the intellect. The magician subjects reality, makes it what he wants it to be, whereas the philosopher submits to reality.

The Hack's debasement of language has serious religious implications, particularly when viewed in terms of the doctrine that man is made in the image and likeness of God, who, in the beginning, was the Word. Although the fall denies perfection in the human condition, language is perhaps the least corrupted of the divine gifts. In the traditional view, language, the medium of divine revelation in Scripture and in the functions of the Church, is the most important medium of wisdom for man living after the cessation of the direct inspiration of prophecy. The inspired writers made their gift useful to all men through language. Tampering with the nature of language therefore implied tampering with
the Word of God. Although language is peculiar to man, traditionally the most cogent sign of the rational species, it is not a human artifact, but a God-given part of human nature.

The distortion of language in large measure sustains the satire in A Tale of a Tub. Through the seventeenth century and well beyond, the study of Scripture and languages was the heart of the spiritual and intellectual life of Englishmen, and it is these concerns that the Tale addresses itself to. The story of the three brothers concerns the implications of scriptural interpretation and the Hack's digressive treatise is about the reading of Modern works. As allegory and digression mix, it becomes clear that the Tale is about the characteristically human concern for wisdom and the Modern approach to it. In the Tale one's conception of language reflects his perception of the will of God. Adherence to the directives of his father's will accounts for Martin's virtue, and the distortion of the divine will through linguistic trickery accounts for the vices of Peter and Jack. The Hack is, of course, culpable on the same grounds. Each creates an anti-scripture which is not merely sacrilegious but a manifestation of Anti-Christ. The Hack, as at least the nominal source of all the deception in the Tale, assumes the role of Father of
Lies. Swift does not just expose the folly of Modernity; he reveals its essential sinfulness on theological as well as moral grounds.

The Hack errs in his arbitrary use of language, while Peter and Jack sin through arbitrary readings of their father's will. All three use language as images of themselves, to promote their own wills, and to impose on others private and particular, rather than public and universal, conceptions of reality. That Swift's attack is operative on the level of language is clear when we recall his commitment to a kind of linguistic purism and his castigation of linguistic abuse on moral grounds in Tatler No. CXXX and in A Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue. His position in the Tale seems to be based "on the notions—prominent in the eighteenth century—that language is of divine origin and hence was perfect in its beginnings but is constantly in danger of corruption and decay unless it is diligently kept in line by wise men."² Swift specifically cites the intimate connection between religion and language in the Proposal:

During the Usurptation, such an infusion of Enthusiastick Jargon prevailed in every writing, as was not shaken off in many Years after. To this succeeded that Licentiousness which entered with the Restoration; and from affecting our Religion and Morals, fell to corrupt our Language. (HD, IV, 13)

Varieties of new hermeneutics—the textual criticism of Spinzoa, Simon, and Bentley, the enthusiastic readings of the Puritans and Dissenters, the mystical interpretations of men like Thomas Vaughan and Henry More, and the incredible number of more or less scientific approaches under the banner of "physico-theology"—seemed to threaten both the integrity of Scripture and the language. The Tale is perhaps the first manifestation of Swift's vital concern about the decay of language, yet it is a concern which he shared with many of the conservative spirits of the age. "The Augustans," as Martin Price points out, "were deeply concerned with the breakdown of language. They saw it as a symptom of the decline of culture, and the greatest satires of the age have this as their central theme." That language and scriptural interpretation are central issues in A Tale of a Tub is also clear from one of the most important precedents for its title, Sir Thomas More's Confutacyon of Tyndale—a work

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vitaly concerned with the issues of scriptural interpretation and language: "Consyder the playcs and his wordes to gyther, and ye shall fynde all his processe therin a farye tale of tubbe."^4

Language has the greatest potential as an instrument of man's salvation and of his damnation. The Hack himself invokes the principle of corruptio optimi pessima (7) which underscores the satiric point that the abuse of language yields the confusion of lies rather than the wisdom of truth. The Hack as well as Peter and Jack fail the truth of the Word of God. "Their common achievement," Martin Price observes, "has been to make words malleable, easily shaped into schemes the mind wishes to impose. Words cease to be norms that control men's thinking and readily feed the illusion of a mastery of experience."^5 Just as Peter and Jack become virtually indistinguishable at the end of the Tale, the Hack is virtually indistinguishable from the two brothers. In their personalities and in their use of language "Swift," again as Martin Price notes, "has fused his two themes: the pride, self-seeking, and tortured wit of Moderns is

^4See the notes on the Tale's title in the text, p. xxvi.

^5Price, p. 213.
only a special case of the wrestling of Scripture that is the history of the Word in the world." The Bible is the proper model for human thought and expression.

Scripture was in the conservative view the linguistic standard in an age sorely in need of standards, but given, nonetheless, to arbitrarily creating its own. In the Proposal for Correcting ... the English Tongue, for example, Swift says:

> It is your Lordship's Observation, that if it were not for the Bible, and the Common-Prayer Book in the vulgar Tongue, one should hardly be able to understand anything that was written among us an Hundred Years ago, which is certainly true; For these Books being perpetually read in Churches, have proved a Kind of Standard for the Language, especially to the common People. (HD, IV, 14-15)*

This view reveals the special irony in the Hack's contention (or is it Swift's?) that the Tale "seems calculated to live as long as our Language, and our Tast admit no great Alterations" (3). The Hack here at once exposes the ephemeral quality of his material treatise and the pretension of implicitly equating it with Scripture. The standards of the Word of God are those which in kind if not degree ought to apply to the use of words by men, yet the Hack rejects those standards, and in imposing his own, creates what amounts to an anti-scripture. Peter

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*ibid.

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and Jack, in effect, commit the same sin. Their culpability and ultimate fate are appropriately defined in Scripture itself:

   Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (II Tim. 2:15)

Neither Peter, Jack, nor the Hack rightly uses language for the sake of truth. Each in his own way and for his own ends uses language as a vehicle for deception, contrary to the dictates of reason and religion. Each replaces truth with a facade of fiction, the appearance of reality. The aim of Swift's use of language, however, is to bring the reader to the experience of the effects of deception, to remind Modern men, in terms closest to their experience, to

   Let not man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. (Eph. 5:6)

The reader is nearly as culpable as the Hack for allowing himself to be deceived. Modern men have allowed the intelligible structure of language to disintegrate into simple verbalism, the material of speech and print. Culture is threatened by the loss of language as a means of communicating divine and human wisdom.

   Swift has designed the fate of Moderns after the dictates of Scripture. Ironically, the eschatology of Modern culture in the Hack's apocalypse arises from a
source the Hack rejects. The Hack unconsciously echoes Scripture when he notes the frustration involved in trying to find the works of Moderns at any point in time after their printing:

I enquired after them among readers and Booksellers, but I enquired in vain, the Memorial of them was lost among Men, their Place was no more to be found. (34-35)

Displacement is the fate of the proud and the defiant in Scripture:

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. (Rev. 12:7-8)

The Hack's linguistic practice is a sacrilegious offense because it allows him to set up an idol in the place properly belonging to the Word.

I [the Lord] said I would scatter them [idolaters] into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease among men. (Deut. 12:18)

The word of Modernity, despite its pretentions (indeed, because of them), is the very antithesis of Holy Writ. The Hack assumes a role for which he is wholly unfit. Whether it is the scholastic midwifery of Peter or the frenzied literal-mindedness of Jack or the ponderous darkness of the Hack, each perverts the word by finding in it only that meaning most congenial to himself. By extension, each perverts the Word of God to serve the
If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book. (Rev. 22:18-19)

Peter's practice adds meaning to the word where none was intended, Jack's habit is to strip the word of its intended meaning, and the Hack arbitrarily creates his own word, the scripture of Modernity. Like Christianity's great apocalypist, the Hack projects a new vision of reality in a language and rhetoric unique to it and is equally severe with those who would add to or detract from the Modern apocalypse. St. John, however, is reporting a divinely inspired vision; the substance and method of his apocalypse is that of divine wisdom. The Hack's vision is entirely his own, arising from the disruptions of his physical being. The eschatology of the one reveals the providential ordering of reality; the eschatology of the other is a revelation of chaos.

Another of the most significant signs of the apocalyptic character of *A Tale of a Tub* is its extraordinary use of figurative language, a use of figurative language particularly out of line with the conventions in force at the time of its composition. Apocalyptic, as we saw
earlier, is usually dependent upon figurative language, for it seeks to communicate a special knowledge of the universe which in terms of ordinary human experience is unintelligible. One may not directly comprehend or express the knowledge of divine revelation. St. John's Apocalypse, for example, must couch its revelation of the mysteries of the universe in an elaborate symbolic structure designed to make a sensible impression on the reader. The seer, in effect, seeks to bring the reader as closely as possible to his own experience of inspiration and thereby to an appreciation of the mysteries of the universe and to a feeling of apocalyptic consolation. Apocalyptic can work only through the mythical power of language, particularly through the suggestiveness of figurative expression.

As is characteristic of all apocalyptic, the Tale works in terms of emotional response rather than intellectual cognition, in a sharing between writer and reader of psychological sensibilities. In seeking to share his vision of Modernity, the Hack attempts to bring his readers to his level of experience through figurative language. The mysteries of Modern culture are, of course, nothing more than projections of his own imagination, and, consequently, the Hack's figurative use of language brings the reader to the experience of madness. The
chaos in the Tale's vision of Modernity in large measure arises from the Hack's revelry in extravagant imagery and symbolism. With it he seeks to bolster his authority on the premise that what is darkest is deepest, and through it he exposes not only his pretentions, but also the materialism of Modern culture and the havoc that doctrine wreaks in the mind of man. Whereas St. John's Apocalypse sought through figurative language to elevate man's perceptions through a comprehension of universal and eternal mysteries, the Hack's apocalypse, particularly through its use of figurative language, reduces man's perceptions to the level of physical experience. A twentieth-century commentator on apocalyptic literature has suggested that in apocalypse there is "a language of not only the tongue but also of thought and we must learn to read not only the one, but also the other, so that we may become familiar with another's thought-forms and ideals, and what is more important, his unconscious assumptions." The Hack's thought-forms, his images, plunge man into gross corporeality.

The Hack's images are things without certain, intelligible content. They often have every appearance of

being a traditional use of figurative language where the sensible perception either reenforces or clarifies the reader's intelligible perception. They appear as if they could make sense to a reader generous enough to work them out. Taking the effort to work them out, however, more often than not yields confusion and frustration rather than understanding. They prove not simply difficult but unintelligible; they promote in the reader the sensation of chaos. Ironically some of the sensations the Hack's images generate bring the reader to a comprehension of the inhumanity of his materialistic position.

When one finishes reading the Tale, he recalls its major images: Time as the dragon devouring Moderns (32), the tub thrown to the leviathan to protect the ship of state (40), the Mountebank in Leicester-Fields (46), the Edifices of the Air (53-63), the animal hieroglyphs of the true critic (92-100), the clothes philosophy (76 ff.), Peter's universal pickle (109), Jack's universal medicine (190), the AEolian doctrine (150 ff.), and the cutting imagery in the Digression on Madness, among a good many others. These are the archetypal images of Modernity; they are in kind, if not configuration, like the images of apocalyptic. One of Austin Farrer's remarks on Revelation seems particularly applicable to the Tale: "The human imagination has always been controlled by certain basic
images, in which man's own nature, his relation to his fellows, and his dependence upon the divine power find expression. The individual did not make them for himself. He absorbs them from the society in which he is born, partly through the suggestion of outward acts and the suggestion of words, partly, it would seem, from some hidden means of appropriation.\(^8\) The Hack's images give expression to a fundamentally materialistic nature, a relationship with his fellow man founded upon exploitation, and an arrogant assertion of his independence, not only of the divine power, but of any power residing outside himself. Although he shares the human need for expression of the fundamental relationships governing the human condition, his arbitrary vision is not controlled by the basic images applicable to all men. He appropriates from his own imagination and his own experience a new vision of reality. The archetypal images of Modernity in the Tale reveal an eccentric diversion of the mainstream of Western culture.

The Tale's images make sense only if one is in the spirit of Modern culture, is himself a modern; they have no universal significance. When the Hack asks the reader to put himself in exactly the same posture he assumed

\(^8\) Austin Farrer, A Rebirth of Images (Beacon paper-
while writing, "there is," as Martin Price puts it, "no longer any need for words: the reader lives himself into the author's views." Only after one has committed himself to Modern culture by living in it do the archetypes of that culture make any sense. Just as it requires a shared cultural experience to make sense of St. John's Apocalypse, it takes the experience of Modernity to make sense of it. The Hack seeks to provide that experience through the invocation of Modern culture's basic images. The great archetypal images of Christianity inevitably end in disillusionment and confusion if analyzed and tested by the standards of simple physical reality, and the archetypes of Modernity produce the same effect if tested by the standards of Renaissance humanism. A poet like Milton need only refer to the archetypes of Christianity, and a writer like the Hack need only refer to those of Modernity: each allows the reader's imagination to build their significance as he recognizes them in his own experience. The images of the Hack, like those of St. John, neither need nor can bear precise explanation. The apocalyptic writer appeals to the cultural psychology of the reader. Since


9Price, 213.
his aim is to ease the pain of a culture's birth or death, the apocalyptic writer must use those images which move man most—that is, give him the greatest sense of reality. In the Hack's apocalyptic vision that sense of reality is invariably materialistic. For Swift the call to faith is a cultural imperative, and the Tale, therefore, is perhaps his greatest essay on faith, for he insists that man take care that his culture be not chaos, that the light of his faith be not darkness.

There are two ways in which the Tale's figurative language reflects the materialism and darkness of the Modern vision: The image itself is treated like a thing, a container without the contained, designed to take up space upon the page, "a very considerable Addition to the Bulk of the Volume, a Circumstance by no means to be neglected by a skilful Writer" (132). Or the image, rather than reenforcing or clarifying some intelligible concept, functions to reduce what one might reasonably expect to be its cognitive content to gross corporeality. The Hack's use of language, much like Jack's is based upon an entirely literal stance. What appear to be figurative structures are taken literally. In the best Modern manner, the Hack is continually erecting metaphirical and allegorical structures only to treat them literally. The Hack is nearly a perfect Ramist; he has divorced the
cognitive parts of rhetoric from the expressive, and in the process he destroys both. Imagery, metaphor, hyperbole, allegory, and the rest are separated from dialectic, the invention and disposition of arguments. Dialectic presumably yields the essential and naked stuff of human thought without the fine dress of figurative language. It is supposed to provide the plain, intelligible meaning in language which is in no way critically affected by the use of figures in its expression. Figurative language is then almost literally taken as the dress of thought. One is at least implicitly free to use any figure imaginable because it will have no influence on the intrinsic meaning of what is expressed. Ramist logic and rhetoric were, of course, profoundly influential among Puritans and new scientists, and to their influence is attributed the logic chopping and rhetorical excesses among Dissenters, on the one hand, and a considerable impetus to the Royal Society's program for linguistic reform on the other. The Hack, however, with characteristic excess reduces the Ramistic premises to absurdity by paradoxically freeing his imagination through the equation of the word and thing.

For a useful discussion of Ramism in the Tale, particularly in regard the Hack's use of language, see Paulson, pp. 35-86.
From a traditional point of view, much of the Tale's confusion arises from the apparent failure of the Hack to make the connection between what he is trying to say and how he says it. From the Hack's point of view, however, his method is perfectly clear and consistent. How he says things, the Modern way, is all he has to express. The process is the product; the method is the point. He feels free to pass off empty linguistic containers, which, although they carry no intelligible meaning, satisfy the criterion of novelty. The Hack defines his own practice as well as that of the learned AEolists when he comments:

Nor do I at all question, but they [the learned AEolists] will furnish Plenty of noble Matter for such [a treatise] whose converting Imaginations dispose them to reduce all things into Types; who can make Shadows, no thanks to the Sun; and then mold them into Substances, no thanks to Philosophy; whose peculiar Talent lies in fixing Tropes and Allegories to the Letter, and refining what is Literal into Figure and Mystery. (189-190)

The Hack's particular talent is converting a simple, literal notion into a figurative expression and then reading the figure literally. In this process whatever meaning might have existed in the first place is forever lost in the resulting confusion. The Hack's account of the Edifices of the Air, for example, begins with the simple notion that whoever wishes to be heard in a crowd must raise himself above that crowd. This notion is
converted into the elaborate allegory of the oratorical machines, which, in turn, the Hack interprets quite literally. The Hack's discussion of the pulpit, ladder, and stage-itinerant operates on the level of material literalness. Although he has created the allegory, he does not read it, as does the footnote, as representing the "setting up of systems of philosophy, which few have ever seen, to which none pay any attention, and which quickly fall to pieces, especially if they are the work of English philosophers" (56). Here is an instance of a reader's good offices in the Hack's behalf by supplying intelligible sense where none was intended. The Hack has simply caused so much matter to be printed on the page, particularly sublime because a large portion of it is in italics. He has created a thing called allegory. In the discussion of pulpits, the only one worthy of his esteem is "that made of Timber from Sylva Caledonia, which agrees very well with our Climate. If it be upon its Decay, 'tis the better... for the Conveyance of Sound" (58). After all the verbalizing, the reader is shocked to discover that the Hack really seems to be talking about the business of being heard in a crowd. The Hack is discussing acoustics, while the reader trained in the conventions of figurative speech is finding an attack on enthusiastic preaching. The Hack has taken his figure
literally, made it an empty vessel like the Tale itself.

Throughout the Tale there is a motif of the confusion of the container and the contained; indeed, it is one of the devices which sustains the satire. In his Introduction, the Hack notes the habit "among many readers of the present Age, who will by no means be persuaded to inspect beyond the Surface and Rind of Things" (66). Although it is not clear whether the habit is a cause or an effect, it seems well enough founded, as the Hack points out:

The Grubean Sages have always chosen to convey their Precepts and their Arts, shut up within the Vehicles of Types and Fables, which having been perhaps more careful and curious in adorning, than was altogether necessary, it has faired with these Vehicles after the usual Fate of Coaches over-finely painted and gilt; that the transitory Gazers have so dazzled their Eyes, and filled their Imaginations with the outward Lustre, as neither to regard and consider, the Person or the Parts of the Owner within. (66)

In the Modern view of things, whoever has an ambition to be judged a wit need only erect intricate verbal structures. If one is permitted so to encrust the plain literal meaning with verbal ornament that the meaning is lost, then it is only by simple extension that one may make a reputation for himself by doing away with all meaning. Just as the fanciest dress has little to do with the simple function of clothing, the noblest instances of Modern wit are those not burdened with the necessity.
of having something to say. Like many of the seventeenth-century emblem writers, the Hack is more interested in the emblem itself than in the truth emblemized. The Hack's preposterous fables become the things he is talking about rather than decorations of moral or intellectual truths. He is, for example, clearly more interested in the personalities of Peter and Jack than in sectarian controversy.

In one of his many defenses of his writing, the Hack tells the tale of "A Mountebank in Leicester-Fields" (46), the meaning and significance of which is entirely unintelligible. The little fable has every appearance of portentious meaning, but, in the final analysis, it is nothing more than an illustration of his ability to create fables. The Hack's literary values are a gross parody of those moral as well as literary ideals implied in the traditional notion that language is the dress of thought. Modern wit is only the advantage of dress, expression without thought. The reader is thus more than adequately prepared for the Hack's announcement of his intention to "write upon Nothing" (208).

Much of the Tale's ambiguity arises from the reader's inability to distinguish at any given point between an apparent figurative meaning and an apparent literal meaning. When what appears to be literal expression does not seem to make much sense, the reader
assumes that sense resides in a figurative reading. To search for meaning, the plain sense, in the Hack's apparent figurative expression is to be on a fool's errand.

HOWEVER, that neither the World nor our selves may any longer suffer by such misunderstandings, I have been prevailed on, after much importunity from my Friends, to travel in a compleat and laborious Dissertation upon the prime Productions of our Society, which besides their beautiful Externals for the Gratification of superficial Readers, have darkly and deeply couched under them, the most finished and refined Systems of all Sciences and Arts; as I do not doubt to lay open by Untwisting or Unwinding, and either to draw up by Explanation, or display by Incision. (66-67)

This statement of the Hack's method reminds one of his treatment of the woman flayed. Although his intentions are to discover refined and finished systems of all sciences and arts beneath the glistening surface of Modern works, most notably his own, his mechanical processes of investigation and explanation reveal that under their material surface there is to be found only more material. The reader appropriately reaches the same conclusions. The process of refinement yields not greater or purer truth, but greater and more gross materiality. Modern wisdom, as the Hack notes, is a nut containing nothing but a worm (66). Wisdom is "a Cheese, which by how much the richer, has the thicker, the homlier, and courser Coat; and whereof to a judicious Palate, the Maggots are the the best" (66). These few among the many Modern emblems
in the *Tale* suggest the materialism responsible for the Modern decay of religion and learning. The plain truth of human and divine wisdom have been reduced to corporeality. By making the soul a suit of clothes, the clothes philosophy completely materializes the human spirit. The AEolian doctrine reduces human and divine inspiration to flatulence. The Hack's Gnostic prescription (126—127) seems more likely to produce the results of a diuretic to the kidneys than a compendium of all useful knowledge. Modern learning and criticism have become material functions of the body. The true Modern critic is a serpent vomiting the vilest material upon Modern books which accept it with perfect felicity (100). Modern scholars are "the Sieves and Boulterers of Learning; tho' it is left undetermined, whether we are to value that which passed thro', or what staid behind" (148). There are no pearls of meaning in Modern wit, only the verbalism itself. The only effect a Modern writer has upon his material is to make it more grossly material. Whether in this last instance we read the image figuratively or literally matters little; Modern learning is reduced to excrement, the lowest common denominator of man's corporeality.

Perhaps the most serious despiritualizing and dehumanizing effects of Modern materialism are revealed in
the images of the Digression on Madness—the Hack's Modern essay on philosophical psychology. In the anatomy of Madness, man himself becomes an image of materiality. The woman flay'd and the carcass of a beau are things laid open by the mechanical operations of the Hack's analysis. Having failed to find the spirit within, the Hack concludes that the material inside of a man is little different from that outside—that there is no substantial difference between the container and the contained, appearance and reality. "I do here think fit," says the Hack, "to inform the Reader... that in most Corporeal Beings, which have fallen under my Cognizance, the Outside hath been infinitely preferable to the In" (173)—a conclusion which follows from their corporeality. If only the material is real, then only the appearances of a reality beyond the material will satisfy the human psyche's need to participate in a reality outside of itself. The Hack's contention that the sublime and refined point of felicity is "the Possession of being well deceived" (174) is the result of his self-deception about the human condition. His materialism forces him to conclude that the felicity in thinking there is a greater reality beyond the material is a deception. By denying the spiritual dimension of the human condition, just as he resists the cognitive dimension of language, the
Hack must conclude that the outside reality, language is verbalism. To conclude otherwise, is to look into these things and find nothing—an act of annihilation. Indeed, the Hack's very existence and that of Modern culture depend upon his precarious embrace of "the Films and Images that fly off upon the Senses from the Superficies of Things" (174). The Hack too dearly loves the titillating life of novelty and to risk his materialistic conception of man and the universe. Given these premises, he dare not admit the reality of an immaterial and spiritual dimension, for it is out of this that arise notions of duty, obligation, and purpose which infringe upon the freedom to enjoy the life of novelty. Modernity is an artificially contrived system of thought, motivated and sustained by deception, designed to inhibit man's natural act of cognition whereby he perceives a greater reality beyond himself and the obligations that reality imposes.

The confusion of container and contained which characterizes the Tale's language and imagery also informs its structure as a whole. The most obvious yet perhaps the most perplexing of the Hack's habits is the continual shifting from discourse to digression. Not only is the narrative of the three brothers interrupted with digressions in the Modern kind, but the Hack persistently digresses from his topics of digression for no apparent
reason. The long and elaborate introductory sections have little to do with what follows. The conclusion is inconclusive. Nearly two-thirds of the whole is reputedly the container of the tale about three brothers which, if taken literally, contains little of consequence and, if taken allegorically, contains nothing more momentous than commonplaces of sectarian controversy. Initially the work promises formal consistency, but it does not deliver. As introductory parts follow one after the other for a third of the volume, what little structural consistency there is in the Modern habit of writing prefaces is lost. As the narrative begins, the promise of order is renewed only to be broken by the digressions, themselves confused accumulations of the Hack's life and opinions. Yet even with the digressions, the first three sections of the tale proper have a relatively consistent narrative order. With the fourth section of narrative, however, the promise of some semblance of structural order is completely broken as the discourse on Aeolism leads to the discussion of madness. Just as Peter and Jack become indistinguishable, the distinction between narrative and digression is utterly lost in the remainder of the work. The initially optimistic reader is plunged into literary chaos.

In the matter of structure A Tale of a Tub is again remarkably like apocalyptic. Austin Farrar's remarks on
the structural problem in Revelation seem generally applicable to those one encounters in the Tale:

The Apocalypse has a great deal of framework; no one can miss that. It bears the promise of formal consistency, or a continuous grand architecture spanning the whole book, into which all the visionary detail is to be fitted. Yet, as we advance, it does not appear to us that the promise is fulfilled. The lines of schematic architecture elude us, and the work seems in danger of disintegrating into a mere pile of visions and yet not in such order as plainly to make up the unity of a single edifice. We are left unable to reconcile ourselves either to the hypothesis of formal order or the hypothesis of its absence.  

The ambiguity of order and disorder is precisely what the Tale's reader encounters; his perception of the chaos of Modernity issues from never feeling quite certain about it. The structure of the Tale, furthermore, does not plunge us into chaos until near the end. It has, particularly in the earlier sections, every appearance of a fairly conventionally structured discourse. It is the failure of that apparent structure to perform its ordering work that brings on the experience of chaos—that is the failure of the structure to impose sense or contribute to the process of making sense. It is with books as with words; if they are to convey meaning, they must

11Farrer, 36.
speak in one voice, unambiguously. The conventions of language and rhetoric require, presumably for the sake of intelligible communication, that characters, words, sentences, paragraphs, chapters, books, all units of literary expression have a fixed relationship to one subject—that is, that they be relevant.

The function of the Tale, however, is like that of apocalyptic; its intention is not so much to make good sense, be rationally intelligible, as to evoke a positive sensibility, be emotionally experienced and psychologically satisfying. To a reader properly disposed, the obscurity and seeming incoherence of both Revelation and the Tale are in effect paradoxical profundity. Both draw their structure from the inspired writer's internal and intensely personal vision of reality. Apocalyptic "makes sense" only in its own terms. Viewed in terms foreign to it, an apocalypse is simply incoherent. Both Revelation and the Tale assume that external reality either does or will ultimately conform to the writer's internal vision of reality. The visions of John and the Hack are of realms which have no shape at all save that which their images give them. The visionary experience is beyond that of ordinary men. The structure of apocalyptic literature, consequently, must by definition be unique in terms of the ordinary order of things. Apocalyptic describes
both the process and the product of the seer's experience through images. Again one of Austin Farrer's observations about Revelation seems applicable to the Tale:

We can study in this book not only the images, but the process of inspiration by which they are born in the mind. Indeed the two studies are one. An image thrown in isolation on the screen means nothing, because it may mean anything; and everyone who has touched the interpretation of images has experienced this bewilderment. In a long concatenation of images, each fixes the sense of the others, and is itself determined by them. If we appreciate the connexion rightly, we feel the new image emerging out of the hidden mind under the evocation of the images already in place...

For the Hack, process and product are virtually indistinct; he yields himself to the images of his inspiration. The Tale itself is really one long chain of images. When we recognize the materialism and devotion to novelty which connects them, we feel the image of Modern culture emerging in our own minds, perhaps as it did in the mind of the Hack. The more the reader understands or thinks he understands the Hack and his treatise, the more he shares the Modern vision of reality. The more the reader is confused by the Tale, the more he shares Swift's negative vision of Modernity. The sensibility to Modern culture, not its intelligibility, carries the impact of

\[12\] Farrer, p. 18.
the satiric fiction in *A Tale of a Tub*.

Although the framework of the *Tale* gives the appearance of a logical order, its organization of images is at best loosely associative. There is an elaboration of themes or feelings or sensations, but they are not developed in a progression of changes from one position to another, nor are they marked with a beginning, middle, or end which conventionally signify changes. The *Tale*, like apocalypse, develops with the iteration and reiteration in a large variety of ways of essentially the same assertions about man and the universe. Peter, Martin, Jack, and the Hack are agents of expression, not instruments of developing thought or feeling. The *Tale* is a statement of feeling rather than an account of the evolution of feeling or thought. For all of the Hack's love of novelty, it is all founded upon an unchanging core of assumptions about the materiality and the machanical operation of man and the universe. The Modernity we encounter in the *Tale* is in its own way as dogmatic and boring as the Scholastic thought it so violently rejects. The structure of the Hack's treatise is that of his own mind, a consciousness obsessed with a few basic premises. However far afield his invention seems to wander, it invariably returns to the same center of consciousness. The intricate structure of the *Tale's* images, like that of apocalyptic, is then
something like the interlaced designs in Eastern art in which one line turns back upon itself again and again until the whole is formed. Each segment formed by the intersection of the continually curving line, is at once a part of the whole and the whole. To trace the course of the line is at once to perceive the process of creation and the formed product. In somewhat different terms, the Tale's structure may be likened to the stream of consciousness narrative which draws its order from the fluid realm of the psychological dimension of personal experience. If the reader finds the order of the Tale incoherent, he does so because it is derived from a culture or an experience foreign to his own. Generating in the reader the experience of incoherence and, consequently, bringing him to the recognition that the premises and habits of thought of Modern culture are indeed not his own, is the purpose of Swift's satiric fiction.
CHAPTER SEVEN

At about the middle of his history of Peter, Martin, and Jack, the Hack says that "I shall by no means forget my Character of an Historian, to follow the Truth" (133). Like all men of the seventeenth century, the Hack is profoundly interested in history, and his Modern apocalypse is an epitome of his culture, albeit in radically different terms, as St. John's Apocalypse was then commonly thought to mirror Western culture and, indeed, the history of the universe. As we see them in the Tale, the Moderns have created a universe of their own, and the Hack is the latest and, consequently, the most authoritative of Modern prophets. He has written the things which his special vision has allowed him to see—what is past, passing, and to come.

Like that of all apocalyptic writers, the Hack's is consistently an historical perspective, but one illuminated and continuously modified by his private vision. Despite the Hack's announced dedication to historical objectivity, step by step it becomes increasingly clear that "the Truth" is entirely dependent upon the way he sees things, through the intellectual filter of his
materialism. He asserts his right to a private and arbitrary choice of standards of truth just as he insists on his right to use language capriciously and indiscriminately adopt his own literary forms. As the reader increasingly recognizes that the Hack's methods depend upon his own assumptions, the reader's awareness of the deviousness of the Hack's historiography grows. What the Hack presents as the common experience of Modern culture in the past and present is nothing beyond his own experience. The end which he projects for Modern culture in the future is his own fate. From a point of view which does not share the faith in Modernity, what the Hack presents as history is little more than the appearance of history—a private fiction created by the Hack's imagination, rather than a full and true account of reality. The Hack's history of Modern culture is a fiction whose value depends upon its success in the world. Just as the value of St. John's Apocalypse—its ability to make sense, to supply a concordant view of man's place in the beginning, middle, and end of things, to assuage the terror of history, to give satisfaction—depends upon the faith of his readers, so too the Hack's apocalypse is dependent upon his reader's faith in Modernity.

The Tale, as is all apocalyptic, is marked by an acute awareness of the historical significance of the
present state of the human condition. Apocalyptic, as we have seen, burns brightest in the moment of direst anguish. The situation of Modernity, as Swift ironically presents it in the Tale, is like that of infant Christianity. Both cultures have rejected a well-established account of man and his fate, both are informed with an evangelical spirit to spread the faith in a new account of man and his fate, and both had clear and present cause to fear annihilation by the established order. These circumstances prompt the Hack to reenforce a faltering faith in Modernity by revealing its hidden purposes, the end toward which it inevitably tends. As is clear from his dedication to Posterity, preface, and introduction, the Hack has rejected the past completely and has set himself up as the evangelist or prophet of the new way. The Modern arrogance, however, is the mark of a lack of confidence, the sign of what amounts to a cultural persecution complex. The Hack's paranoia, indeed, is one of his most consistent personality traits. Nearly at the end of the introduction, he says:

I am assured from the Reader's Candor, that the brief Specimen [of the Modern manner, the seventy some pages of stuff preceding the commencement of the story of the three brothers] I have given, will easily clear all the rest of Our Society's Productions from an Aspersion grown, as it is manifest, out of Envy and Ignorance: That they are of little other Use or Value to Mankind, beyond the common
Entertainments of their Wit and their Sytle: For these I am sure have never been disputed by our keenest Adversaries: In both which, as well as the more profound and Mystical Part, I have throughout this Treatise closely followed the most applauded Originals. And to render all compleat, I have with much Thought and Application of Mind, so ordered, that the chief Title prefixed to it, (I mean, That under which I design it shall pass in the common Conversations of Court and Town) is modelled exactly after the Manner peculiar to Our Society. (71)

The Hack's posture is seldom other than defensive. Particularly when commenting on the progress of his own treatise, he manifests a sense of peril, for should his dissertation not be accepted in the world, he and his fellow Moderns face annihilation. The woes he experiences and predicts are ludicrously unlike the terrestrial and cosmic disasters which precede the new age in sacred apocalypse, but the sensibility is fundamentally the same. Appropriately, the annihilation Moderns fear is that contingent to material things. Modern works pass out of the memory of men—in the Hack's system, out of existence—by being confined "to a Jakes, or an Oven; to the windows of a Bawdy-house, or to a sordid Lanthorn" (36). Time destroys Modern men and their works as it does all material things.

The Hack and the Modern are like Jack and the learned AEolists who continually view themselves as persecuted and "count vast Merit upon every little Hardship they suffer" (197). The Tale's account of Modernity and
AEolism presents them as manifestations of essentially the same cast of mind. The Philosophical enthusiasm of Bacon, Descartes, and Hobbes is equated with the religious enthusiasm of Puritans, Dissenters, and separatists of every stripe. Out of all the chaotic variety of seventeenth-century spiritual and philosophical thought, Swift focuses on their common denominators, which include, among a good many other things, a sweeping rejection of the past, an evangelical spirit to promote one view of reality, and a fear of the established order.

The new thought, although anything but a homogeneous movement, was an intellectual milieu manifesting apocalyptic habits of thought. Traditionally certified sources of knowledge and explanations of man and the universe were supplanted by an internal vision of reality which provided greater human satisfaction. For some it was a worldly vision, for others it was a heavenly vision. In either case, God had effectively abandoned the world. Satisfaction of the human desire for order was thought to reside in the will and power of inspired men. In Swift's view, it matters little whether the inspiration to will and power is treated under the rubric of reason or grace. The enthusiasm of an internal vision of reality is fundamentally the same. The inspired system-makers had virtually supplanted the ordering function of divine
Providence. The enthusiast attempts to impose his own sense of order on the universe.

Again as is typical of apocalyptic, the Tale amounts to a piece of protest literature. The Hack objects to the ill treatment of Moderns at the hands of traditionalists, while Swift ironically protests the ill treatment of humanity at the hands of Moderns. Both the Hack's treatise and Swift's satiric fiction, however, reflect not just the tenor of crisis which infected seventeenth-century intellectual life, but also the issues out of which that crisis arose. Herbert Davis's remark that the Tale is a caricature of the extravagances of seventeenth-century thought and art is accurate precisely because the Tale addresses itself to the fundamental issue of knowledge. By the end of the century, the sectarian controversy broadly outlined in the allegory of the three brothers was a commonplace. With few exceptions, the lines between Catholic and Protestant and even Anglican and Dissenter were sufficiently well defined that, no matter how witty the treatment, the universal improvement of mankind hardly demanded a simple allegory of the Reformation. The treatise and the satire, however, do not address themselves to the effects or the doctrinal foundations of sectarian controversy, so much as to the habits of mind which led to sectarian chaos, nor to the products of
Modern philosophical and literary practices so much as to the intellectual processes behind them. The Tale, as does all apocalyptic, addresses itself to the question of knowledge. Ironically, for both Swift and the Hack, the Tale is a response to the epistemological uncertainty of the age. Just as the three brothers are most vitally concerned with the reading of their father's will, scriptural interpretation, the Hack's treatise is largely concerned with the reading of the Tale itself, the interpretation of Modern scripture. The Hack, Peter, and Jack all argue that the prophecy and law of the old religion and the premises and methods of the old philosophy are responsible for the chaos of their times. Swift's satiric fiction, however, argues that the chaos of Modern religion and learning is of man's own making, not so much in the failure of traditional values as in the failure of men to recognize the limitations of the human mind, to accept uncertainty and discontent as the fate of fallen men, and to assent to the necessity of obligation rather than yielding to the desire for satisfaction.

If the Tale is the apocalypse of the Modern vision of reality, then the Hack's efforts to explicate the "honied colours of rhetoric and crafted philosophy" in his own treatise are at least roughly equivalent to those expended upon the interpretation of biblical apoca-
lypse. The Hack's perpetual commentary on the progress of the Tale, like the exegesis of St. John's Apocalypse, is a response to a genuine need, for it involves the righteousness of the cause of Modernity, upon which he has not only staked his career as a writer but, as we have seen, his very existence. If he cannot win success in the world, he faces annihilation. The Hack's dementia, his inspiration and his vision of reality, can supplant traditional religion and philosophy only if his readers accept the explanations of Modernity as in kind like those of Western tradition. If the value of traditional spiritual and intellectual doctrines is to be tested only by their success in the world, in effect to be treated as fictions, then the value of Modernity, the propositions of the Hack's dementia, is at least potentially as great as that of Christian humanism. Swift's most violent hostility is manifested not so much against Modern culture's aspiration to what it cannot attain as its reduction of the inspiration and wisdom of the ages to its own morbid level.

Throughout the Tale the Hack adopts the roles of both inspired seer and learned exegete. He is at once both the subject and the instrument of Swift's analysis of the pathology of Modern culture. In the "Digression on Madness" the Hack aptly describes the function of both the Modern seer and the Modern exegete:
Then has this Madness been the Parent of all those mighty Revolutions, that have happened in Empire, in Philosophy, and in Religion. For, the Brain, in its natural Position and State of Serenity, disposeth its Owner to pass his Life in the common Forms, without any Thought of subduing Multitudes to his own Power, his Reasons, or his Visions; and the more he shapes his Understanding by the Power of Human Learning, the less he is inclined to form Parties after his particular Notions; because that instructs him in his private Infirmities, as well as in the stubborn Ignorance of the People. But when a man's Fancy gets astride of his Reason, when Imagination is at Cuffs with the Senses, and common Understanding, as well as common Sense, is Kickt out of Doors; the first Proselyte he makes, is Himself, and when that is once compass'd, the difficulty is not so great in bringing over others; A strong Delusion always operating from without, as vigorously as from within. For, Cant and Vision are to the Ear and the Eye, the same that Tickling is to the Touch. Those Entertainments and Pleasures we most value in Life, are such as Dupe and play Wag with the Senses. For, if we take an Examination of what is generally understood by Happiness, as it has Respect, either to the Understanding or the Senses, we shall find all its Properties and Adjuncts will herd under this short Definition: That, it is a perpetual Possession of being well Deceived. And first, with Relation to the Mind or Understanding; 'tis manifest, what mighty Advantages Fiction has over Truth; and the Reason is just at our Elbow; because Imagination can build nobler Scenes, and produce more wonderful Revolutions than Fortune or Nature will be at the Expense to furnish. Nor is mankind so much to blame in his Choice, thus determining him, if we consider that the Debate merely lies between Things past, and Things conceived; and so the Question is only this; Whether Things that have place in the Imagination may not as properly be said to exist, as those that are seated in the Memory; which may be justly
held in the Affirmative, and very much to the
Advantage of the former, since This is ac-
knowledge to be the Womb of Things, and the
other is allowed to be no more than the
Grave. (171-72)

The Hack himself, as he points out at the very end of the
digression, is a truly great man, one whose imagination
has gotten astride of his reason. Having converted him-
self, he seeks to make proselytes of his readers by deceiv-
ing them, by giving them the satisfaction of fiction. Per-
haps the Hack's greatest sin against the values of Chris-
tianity and humanistic learning is his having, in effect,
relegated their explanations of reality to the realm of
the consciously false, equated their truth with fiction.
Having denied the immutable value of the sacred and secular
learning of tradition, the Hack arrogantly condemns it
for having fallen from the good opinion of the world.
Swift entraps the reader in so far as the reader judges
Modernity and Christian humanism on the same grounds, for
to judge either in terms of the satisfaction they provide
is to evaluate them in privative terms, precisely those
which the Hack is demanding. Swift's satiric fiction is
demanding that man reject satisfaction as the ground for
human assent and insisting that the light of man's faith
be not darkness.

The dualism which infects virtually all elements in
the Tale is one of its most conspicuous apocalyptic
characteristics. The confusion of matter and spirit is, of course, at the heart of most of the Modern aberrations of religion and learning. Swift informs his attack on the metaphysics of Modernity by extending the dichotomy of matter and spirit to the whole cosmos, a dualism suggestive of Manicheanism. In the Hack's world there is never harmony between the realms of the spiritual and the material; they are warring polarities which, unlike those figured in the doctrines of concordia discors and via media, yield chaos rather than a vision of order. The material bulk of the Moderns is opposed to the spiritual genius of the Ancients, just as in the Battle of the Books where the gut of the spider contends with the light of the bee. Further, the wisdom on the surface of things is opposed to the folly of truth. The foundation of the Hack's inversions of the outsides and insides of things and the container and the contained is the unharmonized polarity of matter and spirit. The cosmic dimension of the Tale's dualism is reflected, for example, in the clothes philosophy in which the premise that the universe is a suit of clothes which "invests" everything is the foundation of the account of the three brothers, which in turn is presumably the rationale for the entire Tale. The presumably harmonious relationship between the realms of the microcoat and the macrocoat are imme-
diately lost and forever separated. In effect, the body and the soul are arbitrarily interchanged as if they had no clearly defined relationship with one another. Conscience becomes a pair of breeches easily slipped down for the satisfaction of lewdness and nastiness (78). At any given point the reader is never quite sure whether the Hack of Swift is discussing fashion or metaphysics. The Tale’s irony is not simply an inversion of analogical habits of thought; indeed it destroys them by failing to establish a fixed point of reference. The structural tension between discourse and digression is never satisfactorily resolved; we are left unable to decide whether the allegory of the three brothers is contained within the matrix of the introductory and digressive matter or is itself the container for the Hack’s digressions. The whole Tale may be viewed as a mosaic of unresolved polarities or unharmonious oppositions:

The Hack’s habits of thought are characteristically dialectical, and his devotion to the hypothetical syllogism is truly worthy of a student of Peter Ramsu. Throughout the Tale he insists on viewing reality as either spiritual or material and, with Hobbes, opts for the materialistic alternative. In the Hack’s view, one must cast his lot with either the Ancients or the Moderns; one must treat the word as a thing or as no thing at all; the reader is
either with him or against him. The dogmatic stance the Hack and his fellow Moderns assume is entirely the result of their dualistic thinking, which boxes them into what for Swift must always have been too simple and invariably unfortunate alternatives. As has been suggested, Swift himself was an uncompromising spirit and inclined to resort to disjunctions—the discontinuities which eliminate moral confusion. The Tale, however, suggests that Swift objected to the polarities of Modern thought because they did not constitute a genuine effort to get at the truth. They were, on the contrary, a concerted effort to avoid the truth. Rather than opposing satisfaction and obligation, the Modern polarities opposed forms of satisfaction; rather than methods of exposing and engaging one's moral obligation, they were avenues of escape. Opting for either the materialistic or the spiritualistic alternatives in an unharmonized vision of the dualism of matter and spirit allows man to escape the harshness of reality, human responsibility for the human condition, and obligation. Taking the order of the world as it is, accepting the human condition as a providentially ordained fusion of matter and spirit, allows man to perceive the useful disjunction between satisfaction and obligation. As in the Jewish and early Christian apocalypses, the dualism of the Hack's Modern apocalypse provides an
easy explanation for evil in the world and relieves the faithful from responsibility for their fate. The function of Swift's satiric fiction, however, is to force men to face the world's evil and their responsibility for their fate. The chaos of Modern culture demonstrates that man may achieve order only through obligation.

The cosmic dualism of Jewish and early Christian apocalypses provided them with a dramatic quality which involved the reader in the grand design of Providence. The lives of the persecuted acquired significance by playing a role in the cosmic drama in which the forces of good triumph over those of evil. Although the Tale lacks the legions of battling allegorical creatures at the heart of the dramatic effect in traditional apocalypse, the Hack's apocalypse is not without its cast of players, tension, and sense of dramatic urgency. Indeed, the antics of Peter and Jack and some few of the Hack's allegorical sketches could probably have been adapted to the Modern stage with considerable effect. (Lord Peter, one cannot help noting, is no less heroic and no more overdrawn than Almanzor, and the Tale's contemporary illustrations suggest cartoons for staging.) For the Hack, asironically as for Milton, the arena of drama is the human intellect, and the Hack's madness reflects, to borrow Martin Price's phrase, the tragedy of the mind. As has been suggested
earlier, the Tale takes on the substance and disorder of the Hack's mind. In it we see the pitched battle between the values of Renaissance humanism and those of Modern culture. The Tale is thus a sort of Modern Pilgrim's Progress of a Modern spiritual autobiography; in the Tale, we see the development of the fullness of the Modern spirit. Time, a demon worthy of Bunyan or St. John himself, is a personification of Modernity's greatest threat. The Hack, like St. John, is a character in his own apocalyptic drama, which is perhaps the first play in the theater of the absurd.

Another of the Tale's apocalyptic characteristics is its considerable eschatological content, but it is an eschatology peculiarly Modern. Conventional eschatology is founded upon a linear conception of history. Man makes sense of the present, waiting time or time passing, through reference to the beginning and to the end. Knowledge of the ends particularly confers organization and form on time, makes sense of the past and the present. In specifically Christian terms, the man of faith makes sense of human existence in terms of the significant events in the providential drama: genesis, fall redemption, and apocalypse. The creation is transformed by the fall which initiates time and introduces evil and imperfection into the world. The fallen world is in
turn transformed by the Incarnation, an event in time which promises the end of time, the defeat of evil, and the perfection of the world. For the Christian, the present is the time of waiting for the fulfillment of the promise of the Incarnation. The end defines the significance of the cosmos and the individual, and for man in the present, only knowledge of the end can mitigate the terror of the present—that is, the awareness of man's imperfection and the incompleteness of the process of redemption. As we have seen, it is particularly in times of difficulty that man needs reassurance of the reality of the end and of his place in the providential scheme of existence. Since time defines his imperfection, it is in temporal terms that he demands satisfaction. Traditional Christianity held that the redemption of man was a recognizable historical process, but that time is coexistent with the world and ends with it.

In A Tale of a Tub notions of time and eschatology, as we might expect, are eccentric. Time has an existence and a nature of its own, is an independent entity no more bound to a providential ordering of things than is any other entity in the Hack's arbitrary vision of reality. In the traditional order, the millennial hope is a consequent of the fulfillment of the messianic hope; with the passing of time, the one is transformed into the other.
In the Hack's vision they seem to be one from the outset. Through the power of his imagination, the Hack has suspended the offices of time as traditionally understood. He rejects the sense of time passing and the discomfort associated with it in his rejection of the past. In the Hack's vision, the fullness of time is not in the future but in the present. The Hack and the Moderns, that is, are experiencing the perpetual state of self-deception in the second advent of man. The millennium of Modernity, however, is the perpetual process of progress.

Having denied the efficacy of the notion of product, they have also denied the value of the notion of final cause or end. For the Moderns, the process is the product; if they hold any notion of final cause or end, it has been achieved with the institution of Modern culture.

By giving time an existence apart from that of the world, time, in effect, can be ignored. There certainly is traditional precedent for characterizing Time as a destructive monster, yet, as with all abstractions in the Tale, time is viewed quite literally as a thing. Its inconvenience can be done away with just as the inconvenience of so many other things can be done away with. While the Hack does view time as contingent to and destructive of all material things, his sense of time easily destroys the distinctions of past, present, and future. The Hack, as did Bacon, can then freely assert
without any sense of paradox that the most modern ideas are the most ancient. The present, thus, is the future, and the spirit of novelty is the enduring foundation of culture.

The existence of the Hack's sublime world, however, hangs in a precarious balance. Should progress fail to continue, should processes cease revealing products, or should novelty descend into boredom, the Hack and Modern culture face annihilation. Awareness of the present would reveal the past and subject men to fear of the future. The new age is calculated to endure only so long as the mind of man can experience novelty. In the very last line of the Tale, the Hack observes that "I shall here pause awhile, till I find by feeling the World's Pulse, and my own, that it will be of absolute Necessity for us both, to resume my Pen" (210). He appropriately remains forever silent. The plot of human and cosmic existence which he supplies is entirely his own, one which ironically ends in nothing. The reader's perception that there is no progress in the Tale, that the Tale's only product is chaos, and that Modernity ultimately proves boring fits the failure of pulse in the Modern genius and his culture.
In his Introduction, the Hack, in an effort to convey its momentous character, likens his treatise to the tale of Reynard the Fox. He contends that no learned man "will ever dispute, that famous Treatise to be a compleat Body of Civil Knowledge, and the Revelation or rather Apocalypse of all State-Arcana. But the progress I have made is so much greater" (67-68). Suggesting that *A Tale of a Tub* is much like the Apocalypse is perhaps to risk being judged a latter day Grubean Sage. It is not known in explicit terms what Swift's views on apocalyptic literature were nor what opinion he held of the commentators on Daniel, Revelation, and the other apocalyptic parts of Scripture. We cannot, therefore, suggest that Swift had in mind while writing *A Tale of a Tub* what have here been described as apocalyptic habits of thought and expression. We can only liken the *Tale* to apocalypse.

But the Hack is, after his fashion, right. The *Tale* is a far more complete body of knowledge, is much more clearly an Apocalypse than ever was Reynard the Fox. And although we have no specific Swiftian pronouncement on
apocalyptic literature and its interpreters, it seems reasonable enough to assume that he would have viewed both with extreme skepticism, for apocalypse had throughout the seventeenth century lent itself with alarming ease to the novelty and arrogance of spiritual and intellectual enthusiasm. Although St. John's Revelation enjoyed the authority of Scripture, those who interpreted or imitated him certainly did not. Since apocalypse preys on the human desire for satisfaction, Swift must have found it particularly dangerous, for it robbed man of his responsibility for evil in the world and his ability to recognize his moral obligations. Apocalyptic particularly lends itself to the development of Swift's favorite theme, the deception of self and others. The Hack's treatise "has the Faculty of teaching its Readers to find out a Meaning in everything but it self; like Commentators on the Revelations, who proceed Prophets without understanding a Syllable of the Text" (85). The Hack is a false prophet, the voice of one who would create a wilderness through deception. The authority of the true prophet, as well as that of the satirist, is founded upon knowledge of self and the obligations that knowledge invariably imposes.

Perhaps we ought to read the Tale as a piece of apocalyptic. To go about it as the Hack suggests is an
important method of finding meaning in the Tale. Apoc­

calypse is a literary genre whose commitment to the freedom
of the imagination is singularly appropriate to the extra­
vagances of Swift's satiric vision and the Modern mind as
Swift apparently viewed it. In most works wholly given
over to the satiric impulse, as in the Modest Proposal and
Gulliver's Travels or in Pope's Horatian poems or the
Dunciad, there is a conscious invocation of a well estab­
lished satiric fiction, a kind of genre whose formal and
thematic development aids in one way or another in the
apprehension or castigation of vice. The Tale's satiric
fiction is apparently unprecedented. It has often been
suggested that the Tale is Menippian satire, yet this
appellation, useful as far as it goes, avoids the issue
central to the critical efforts to understand the Tale's
satiric fiction. To call the Tale Menippian satire too
vaguely and too simply tries to satisfy the desire for
a generic tag and points more directly to what does not
rather than to what does happen in the Tale. The best
sense of genre, the one which contributes most to the
further understanding of a work, is that which does not
simply deal with structures, but with structures as
functions of the spiritual and intellectual aims of the
writer. Satire above all is a habit of the artist's
response to reality. In apocalyptic thought and literature we find those issues which most concerned Swift and his times.
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