

Review

The city of sarcasm and woe: Swift's "A description of a city shower" and "A description of the morning"

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Accepted 27 January, 2012

In his poetry, Jonathan Swift (1667 to 1745) has shown a deep concern in understanding human nature and explaining human behavior. This paper aims at studying the technical devices Swift uses to introduce a satirical image of the city in an attempt to clarify his moral outlook. With special emphasis on Swift's two poems "A Description of a City Shower" and "A Description of the Morning," this study emphasizes Swift's use of sustained irony, satire, dramatization of vice and realistic portrayal of human nature to clarify physical and spiritual degradation which has become a characteristic of the society in the eighteenth-century. Swift's description of man's nature and the exposure of the fallaciousness of man's illusory ideas reflect his repudiation of man's false and immoral conduct. He meant his poetry to be a genuine reforming force; to be evaluated by its real influence on moral sensibility.

Key words: Moral outlook, satire, irony, gradualism, realistic depiction, mock-heroic style, moral indignation, social reformation.

INTRODUCTION

Yet, malice never was his aim;
He lashed the vice, but spared the name...
His satire points at no defect,
But what all mortals may correct...
(Jonathan Swift: "Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift.")

Jonathan Swift's (1667 to 1745) satiric style has earned him a wide reputation as one of the most important poets of the eighteenth-century. Swift's satire, as Juvenalian satire, points with contempt and moral indignation to the corruption and evil of man. The persona adopts the serious tone of a moralist who uses a dignified and public style of an utterance to decry modes of vice and error. In addition, the persona/moralist evokes from readers, contempt, moral indignation, or an illusioned sadness at the aberrations of humanity (Abrams, 1993). In Swift, you feel the pain of being a man; consequently, he participated in the eighteenth-century philosophical debate: are we basically benevolent and social (Rousseau) or selfish and brutish (Hobbes). Swift also saw the irony in calling this "The Age of Reason" and

went after man's capacity (or lack thereof) for critical thinking.

Therefore, Swift's poetry and prose show a deep awareness of the follies and vices of his fellowmen and their established institutions and attempt to inspire remodeling through bitter laughter. Through poetry, Swift makes scathing social commentaries that will be part of our discussion.

PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The primary objective of this paper is first to define Swift's moral outlook and the technical devices utilized in his works to clarify such an outlook. These devices include the use of irony, hiding behind the mask of the moralist, gradual representation of abnormal situations, realistic depiction of characters and the mock-heroic style. This paper also show how these devices are exploited in Swift's two poems "A Description of a city shower" (1710) and "A Description of the Morning" (1709) to present an

image of the city. These two poems depict physical and spiritual degradation which has become a characteristic of the urban societies in the eighteenth-century.

DISCUSSION

Swift is a moralist in his own way. He shows a deep understanding of human nature. This understanding has led to a comment on man's mental habits, wrong beliefs, and different modes of behavior as well as a harsh criticism of man's vices, especially deceitfulness which is a common failing of man, selfishness and indifference which are characteristic human traits. For Swift, such predicament of humanity is the outcome of abandoning reason. Swift asserts that the "Natural" is that which is defined by reason and achieved through restraint and discipline. He believes that man is "animal rationis capax" or an animal capable of reason, yet man has deserted his common sense (Williams, 1964). Swift's words in this context are very significant. He says:

"Reason itself is true and just, but the Reason of every particular Man is weak and wavering, perpetually swayed and turned by his interest, his passions, and his Vices" (Quintana, 1955).

Man's habitually irrational conduct is the target of Swift's sarcasm. Swift's age showed a strong belief in the fundamental sanity of man and in the natural health of society. Such optimism was opposed by Swift, as suggested previously, who did believe in good sense and decency but which did not exist in the social body because man's irrational instincts were not governed by reason (McGowan, 1989). Consequently, Swift has long been accused of being a pessimist. For instance, in her discussion of Swift's mentality, Williams (1964: 121) confirms that Swift has never believed that "rational benevolence or action for the good of the species [is] possible for humanity". However, Swift believes that we are capable of something which he considers to be a sounder basis for goodness: he believes in "tolerance, compassion, responsiveness to one another's individual needs" (Williams, 1964: 121). Man is free as long as he asserts the tradition of reason against stupidity and bestiality (Williams, 1964: 123).

To share his world-view and values with his audience, Swift manipulates different techniques. One of these is the use of sustained irony. Tuveson (1972: 66) discusses Swift's employment of irony as a weapon of a great effect. It is a means for forcing his readers to see what is around them; to see everything as if for the first time. That is to say, "the despondent acceptance of things as they are subjected to moral trauma" by utilizing irony to de-familiarize the old patterns of perception and break up the old assumptions about one's surrounding. In "A

Modest Proposal (1729)", for instance, Swift reveals his resentment of the British Government's negligence of the Irish people, their misery and poverty through irony which implies the exact opposite of what the persona actually says. Irony uses distortion as its weapon, in the form of inversion, and requires a clever and responsive audience to recognize its implied meaning. Unless we understand the tone of the persona in "A Modest proposal" which is one of "ironic pseudo naiveté as it makes absurd suggestions with apparent sympathy," we could think that distortion is the work of a lunatic whose own values have been disturbed (Swift in Sanders 1964).

In addition, the persona usually hides behind a mask through which the ironic tone becomes more effective. One example is the mask of a philanthropist who claims to have "not the least personal interest" in his so-called modest proposal (A Modest Proposal, 142). Another is the mask of a sad mourner who laments the death of Marlborough - the "late General" - in "A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late General" (1722). While the persona seems to regret the loss of "His Grace" (L.1), "that Mighty warrior" (L.3), he actually denounces his avarice, his love of prominence, and his concern for family rather than national interests; in these examples, Swift perfectly disguises his true intentions. An alert reader is more likely to be aware of Swift's presence behind this mask and that he holds the puppet strings directing his persona to achieve his satirical purposes. However, the use of this mask is not very clear in the two poems which we have chosen as the target of our discussion.

Another aspect which distinguishes Swift's satire is his ability to insinuate his ideas into the mind of his readers through the method of gradualism (Sutherland, 1962). This method enables the average, moderately imaginative reader to accept abnormal situations as in "Gulliver's Travels" (1714), or cannibalistic schemes as in "A Modest Proposal". The gradual depiction of the effect of a natural phenomenon such as rain is sometimes used to magnify the dramatization of vice as in "A Description of a City Shower".

Swift's ability to dramatize vice at its source is another admirable technique. In "A Modest proposal", this dramatization is achieved through physical manifestation of the process of rearing, slaughtering and then cooking and eating children.

In "A Description of a City Shower", Swift dramatizes moral evil by describing a form of chaos created by the fall of rain and by depicting the reaction of the inhabitants of the city towards it. In addition, Swift dramatizes the appearance of the morning through concrete and auditory images which signify the morning in the city as such unattractive phenomenon, as we shall see in "A Description of the Morning".

Furthermore, Swift uses the style of the mock-heroic in which he uses lofty descriptions and classical references while addressing common or vulgar subject matter to

satirize the triviality of the city's dwellers and the artificiality of their behavior during a rainfall.

Finally, Swift's realistic portrayal of human nature is very interesting. He depicts the true characteristics of man's illusory ideas which are the subject of satire. Swift's realism can be seen in his recognition of the limitations and real potentialities of human nature. This view is not truly pessimistic but Swift seems to resent the exaggerated optimism of his age (Tuveson, 1972).

In "A Description of a City Shower," Swift introduces a satirical analysis of human behavior on a rainy day in the city of London. He shows how a shower which develops into a flood brings the normal life of the city to a standstill; how this natural phenomenon affects the artificial life of the city dwellers (Swift 1989). The first part of the poem introduces us to the city before the shower:

Careful observers may foretell the hour
(By sure prognostics) when to dread a shower:
while rain depends, the pensive cat gives o'er
her frolics and pursues her tail no more.
Returning home at night, you'll find the sink
strike your offended sense with double stink.
If you be wise, then go not far to dine:
You'll spend in coach-hire more than save in wine.
A coming shower your shooting corns presage,
Old achés throb, your hollow tooth will rage.
Sauntering in coffeehouse is Dulman seen;
He damns the climate, and complains of spleen. (1-12)

"careful observers may foretell" the fall of rain through many physical signs such as the "pensive cat" whose sense of danger motivates it to quit active and enjoyable play; the sink which becomes doubly stinking before the rain; and pain caused by the "shooting corns," "old achés" or a "hollow tooth." These are all signs of warning which precede the fall of rain. Realizing how confusing the situation will be, the persona advises inhabitants of the city to dine at home or else they would spend a fortune on hiring a coach. The atmosphere is equally annoying for the "Dulman" who suffers a melancholic mood and damns the weather.

The preliminary gradual description of the city—the vulgar image of the sink, images of pain, the image of depression and dullness associated with the dull man who saunters in a coffeehouse— foreshadows a gloomy atmosphere which extends to the second part of the poem:

Meanwhile the south, riding with dabbled wings,
A sable cloud athwart the welkin flings
That swilled more liquor than it could contain,
And like a drunkard, gives it up again. (13-16)

The persona chooses the least attractive and probably the most offensive metaphor to describe the "sable," dark

cloud which is overloaded with rain. In an ugly comparison, this cloud is seen as a loitering drunkard who has drunk so much alcohol more than he could bear and, as a result, he "gives it up a gain." In such a repulsive analogy, rain becomes a vomit. It is very clear how Swift replaces the romantic beautiful image of rain celebrated in pastoral poetry by an image which reflects the hideousness of the city itself. Clark (2000: 3) uses the term "anti-pastoral" to describe the poem and to suggest that Swift gives us an unromanticized, naturalistic vision of the working and lower classes in the city, as opposed to the romanticized images of the rural folk characteristic of the pastoral genre. The following lines present a very realistic picture of the way people of the city behave during a shower:

Brisk Susan whips her linen from the rope,
While the first drizzling shower is borne aslope;
Such is that sprinkling which some careless quean
Flirts on you from her mop, but not so clean:
You fly, invoke the gods; then turning, stop
To rail; she singing, still whirls on her mop. (17-22)

"Brisk Susan" collects her laundry so that it will not get wet while the "careless" wench or the servant girl shakes her mop carelessly from the balcony, so the pedestrian, instead of receiving a shower of rain, gets a shower from a dirty mop. Instead of correcting her behavior, the wench perpetuates it, more and more aggressively. The accurate description of the reaction of the pedestrian is very interesting. Swift's concern for minute details which has become a major feature of realistic literature, is admirable. As he receives the dirty shower, a pedestrian first flies quickly, next he "invoke[s] the gods," then he turns and finally stops to shout at "the quean" who still "whirl [s] on her mop" and sings carelessly. The previous two metaphors of rain as a vomit and as a dirty shower from a mop are followed by a third one which suggests an image of war:

Not yet the dust had shunned th' unequal strife,
But, aided by the wind, fought still for life,
And wafted with its foe by violent gust,
"T was doubtful which was rain, and which was dust (23-26).

The two striving enemies are dust and rain and the battlefield is the sky. In an "unequal strife" in which dust is aided by the wind, the earlier fights for its life, its dryness against rain. Rain wins the battle and it becomes difficult to tell which rain is and which dust is. Via this astonishing image of a battlefield, the persona hints at the problem of pollution in the city. The rain from the "sable cloud" is no less dirty than a drunkard's vomit or a filthy shower from a mop. Ironically, the winner in this "unequal strife" is also a loser for rain loses its natural cleanliness.

One of the victims of this war is the "needy poet" whose "only coat" has been invaded by the dusty-rain to be left with "a mingled stain":

Ah! Where must needy poet seek for aid,
When dust and rain at once his coat invade?
His only coat, where dust confused with rain
Roughen the nap, and leave a mingled stain. (27-30)

It is obvious that this image of the battlefield with its fighting troops, casualties, and trophies reflects Swift's manipulation of the mock-heroic style. The mundane casual scene of a rainy day in the commercial city is described in such a lofty language which is very frequent in classical literature.

As rain begins, the splattered females rush to shops, in large numbers, looking for a shelter while pretending to pursue goods. The handsome Templar is waiting till rain becomes fair and yet, seems to be calling a coach. The "tucked-up seamstress" walks quickly while streams of rain run down her umbrella which is made of oiled silk:

To shops in crowds the dagg'd females fly,
Pretend to cheapen goods, but nothing buy,
The Templar spruce, while every spout's abroad,
Stays till 'tis fair, yet seems to call a coach,
The tucked-up seamstress walks with hasty strides
While streams run down her oiled umbrella's sides (33-38).

The effect of rain is even more astonishing as it unites the triumphant Tories and the defeated Whigs who, paradoxically, forget their quarrels to protect their wigs:

Here various kinds, by various fortunes led,
Commence acquaintance underneath a shed:
Triumphant Tories, and desponding Whigs,
Forget their feuds, and join to save their wigs (39-42).

Although, he supported the Tories, Swift attacks the two fighting parties whose concern for appearances, ironically speaking, seems to be more serious than their disputes which have separated them. Although he claims to be an "indifferent spectator" of the struggles of the two parties, Swift could not hide his indignation against their policies especially in matters of religion and politics (Quintana, 1955). It is worth mentioning that Swift's criticism of human conduct is not directed here towards a certain class because the characters he chooses to satirize represent all classes of society. He shows that all the people of the city are placed in the same position: they must find shelter from the shower, no one better off than the other. The last character in Swift's list is the beau whose pleasure is disturbed by "the contiguous drops" of rain (1.31):

Boxed in a chair the beau impatient sits,
While spouts run clattering o'er the roof by fits,
And ever and anon with frightful din
The leather sounds; he trembles from within. (43-46)

Imprisoned in leather carriage, the beau sits impatiently, terrified by the sound of the "clattering" streams of water against the roof just as the Greek warriors who hid inside the wooden horse and feared to be discovered; nevertheless, impatiently waits to be freed. Swift's use of the mock-heroic diction contrasts with the mundane scene. A trivial character of the city (the beau) is compared to the "bully" Greek warriors. Swift means to exaggerate the reaction of the beau towards the rain to mock superficiality of his behavior.

In addition, Swift manipulates another analogy to expose the moral degeneration of the people of the city:

So when Troy chairmen bore the wooden steed,
Pregnant with Greeks impatient to be freed
(Those bully Greeks, who, as the moderns do,
Instead of paying chairmen, run them through),
Laocoon struck the outside with his spear,
And each imprisoned hero quaked for fear, (47-52)

The silly world of London and its dwellers is compared to the great world of Troy. Like the Trojan chairmen who were killed by the Greek warriors, the carriage chairman may be killed, in the city, instead of being paid. Nonetheless, the analogy is meaningful because it helps in dramatizing evil which has prevailed in the city. Swift attacks moral degradation and corruption which are predominant by suggesting that a flood, as Noah's flood, is needed to cleanse the city of its sins, wickedness and immorality. Swift's indignation at moral corruption which has become a characteristic of human behavior is very strong:

Now in contiguous drops the flood comes down,
Threatening with deluge this devoted town (31-32).

Swift's ironical reference to the city as "devoted" is very provocative. The city is doomed to be destroyed by a "deluge" not because it is "devoted" to God in any sense, but because its people are sinful. The image of chaos and imminent destruction, suggested in the previous lines, is recurrent in Swift's art. It implies a state of confusion which man causes and for which he must be punished. In his early poem "Ode to the Athenian Society" (1692), we have the Flood and the descent of the Goth's European civilization. "A Tale of a Tub" (1704) invokes the English Civil War and the split in Christendom as the twin corruption of politics and religion (Swift in McGowan, 1989). In "A Modest Proposal" (1729), Swift creates an anti-utopia (a different form of chaos) in which babies are sold at a year old for butchering. The concluding lines of the poem are

remarkable for their language and their wonderful energy, both typical of realism which in the eighteenth century was so often a defiance of all the polite traditions (Quintana, 1955):

Now from all parts the swelling kennels flow,
And bear their trophies with them, as they go;
Filth of all hues and odors seem to tell
What street they sailed from, by their sight and smell.
They, as each torrent drives with rapid force,
From Smithfield, or St. Pulchre's shape their course,
And in huge confluent joined at Snow Hill ridge,
Fall from the Conduit Prone to Holborn-bridge (53-60).

The lines describe the passage of water from "Smithfield" (the meat market) to "Holborn-bridge." The gutters bear their "trophies" which are, ironically, different kinds of garbage of various "hues and odors." Swift specifies the grossness of reality. His grimly circumscribed physical vision of London includes not only physical but also spiritual degradation, moral filth and smells, the detritus of garbage as well as wasted lives and hopes:

Sweeping from butchers' stalls, dung, guts, and blood,
Drowned puppies, stinking sprats, all drenched in mud,
Dead cats, and turnip-tops, come tumbling down the
flood (61-63).

The concluding lines make, perhaps, an excellent heroic triplet in which the rainstorm sweeps the trash-ridden streets of London and implies that the purgation of the city is not simply a matter of cleaning it of all sorts of dead waste ("dung," "guts," "blood," "drowned puppies," "stinking sprats"). Unless people themselves change, the city will never be cleansed. Swift's poetry suggests that the world will be a healthier place when false sublimations are denied and the fallen city recognizes its follies. On the other hand, by describing what can be found floating up out of the sewers when there is a down pour, Swift tries to level all the pretensions of the streets' human dwellers to a more dirty, animalistic sense of humanity. The disgusting things that spring from the city gutters during the rain serve to eliminate the illusion of difference between people (city dwellers) and force them to acknowledge their fundamental similarities. The poem expresses a sense of gradual development- a major feature of Swift's style- until we reach the climax in the last part. This part is the crescendo of the poem. The "drizzling shower" (1.18) which becomes rain in the second part develops into a "flood" or "deluge" (1.31-2) in the third part, and in the last part, all streams of water pour into one confluence. An increase in the movement and amount of water leads to a culmination of garbage. Moreover, the length and the rhyme of the triplet emphasize the idea of culmination because these lines are the longest and they share the same rhyme while

the rhyme scheme of the whole poem is the couplet rhyme. This stylistic device is used to create a dramatic effect. Swift meant the last part of the poem to dramatize the epitome of ugliness rather than beauty of the city so that his message would reach out and grip the reader in spite of himself. In addition, Swift did more than merely satirize, he recorded historical information. "A Description of a City Shower" is disconcerting in the evidence it gives to the state of disgust people felt for London, and the level to which the city needed improvement in sanitation, food, etc. Before concluding this discussion of Swift's "A Description of a City Shower", it is worth referring to the ironic title of the poem by which Swift meant to sound satiric.

The title suggests a gentle drizzling falling over a commercial city.

This assumption is soon reinforced by the opening lines of the poem which portray a picture of a town waiting patiently under gray skies for the drops to fall. However, the poem describes a deluge that seems second only to the Great Flood, complete with "blood" and "dung," "drowned puppies," and "dead cats." Instead of an innocent spring shower, rain in this poem is awesome in its sheer power and destructive force. The reader, consequently, starts to focus on the destruction that rain causes.

The persona describes "swelling kennels" bearing "trophies" and "filth," expanding on this image to include all manner of disgusting refuse. Swift does not offer us in this poem any consolation to his disturbing images and metaphors. The ending of the poem is just as bleak as its content. The poem is a comment on the sense of entrapment and depressing monotony of life, the superficial worries that burden the human existence.

Swift's second poem, "A Description of the Morning," is, as well, ironically presented in contrast to the sights and sounds of the pastoral poem:

Now hardly here and there an hackney-coach
Appearing, show'd the ruddy morn's approach.
Now Betty from her master's bed had flown,
And softly stole to discompose her own.
The slip-shod prentice from his master's door,
Had pared the dirt, and sprinkled round the floor.
Now Moll had whirled her mop with dexterous airs,
Prepared to scrub the entry and the stairs.
The youth with broomy stumps began to trace
The kennel-edge, where wheels had worn the place.
The small coal-man was heard with cadence deep,
Till drowned in shriller notes of chimney-sweep,
Duns at his lordship's gate began to meet;
And brick dust Moll had screamed through half the
street.
The turnkey now his flock returning sees,
Duly let out a nights to steal for fees.
The watchful bailiff's take their silent stands,

And schoolboys lag with satchels in their hands (Swift in McGowan, 1989).

The images of peace, tranquillity, and simplicity of the rustic life are replaced by other less attractive images in this ironical parody of pastoral poetry. The approach of the morning is associated with many activities which are characteristics of the city life. Betty, the maid, sneaks from her master's bed to "discompose" her own before anyone discovers her secret adventures. The careless apprentice cleans the "dirt" and sprinkles the floor with water. Moll moves her mop cleverly and skillfully preparing for the scrubbing of "the entry and the stairs." The "youth" traces the gutter-edge with big steps. Besides, the sounds one can hear in such a morning are distressing. The cry of the "small coal-man" who cleans the charcoal can be heard along the street. Gradually, his voice becomes "shriller notes" as he descends while sweeping the chimney. Another harsh sound is the screaming of Moll as the bill collectors ("Duns") gather at her "lordship's Gate." It is obvious how the beautiful charming sounds of nature which a pastoral poem celebrates are replaced by high sharp sounds, painful to the ears to present a gloomy image of the city as the persona views it. As in the previous poem, an unromanticized naturalistic vision of the city dwellers is introduced. The apprentice is slipshod, the chimney-sweep is shrill, and brickdust Moll screams through half the street. Far from harmonious pastoral idyll, we are presented a scene of chaos, noise, and corruption. Clark (2000) argues that Swift's work indicates that he found the urban setting conducive to good poetry- a poetry filled with tension, ambiguity, and vivid imagery. Placed aside to the energy, confusion, and noise of the city, the pastoral landscape must have seemed quite dull to Swift (2).

In addition, the previous lines reflect a desire to keep social classes apart. "Duns at his Lordship Gate begin to meet" suggests that both the working and lower classes are waiting outside the gates of the upper classes. Only this physical structure separates the rich from lower classes. The fact that creditors are waiting outside implies that even his Lordship is in financial trouble, and the luxurious life he seems to enjoy is nothing but a lie. The fact that "his Lordship" lives in the city raises the assumption that he is a member of the upper-middle class, as opposed to the landed nobility- and the same can be said of the master who sleeps with his servant Betty. So, it is the upper-middle class characters who serve as the target of Swift's satire, rather than the lower classes whom Swift treats much better (Moll and the Small-Coal Man). Apparently, Swift is more kindly disposed to the working and lower classes. Loffler (1999) notes that:

Swift's manners were habitually easy with common people [...] Swift's attitude was certainly exemplary in his

time: There was an increasing interest in the 'common people': this [enlightened view] interest was- partly at least- based on the observation that among the 'common people' there were to be found specimens that possessed outstanding talents and abilities and were able to make the best of them (7).

This kind of native talent appears probably in Moll, who "whirl'd her mop with dext'rous airs," as well as in the singing of Small-Coal Man.

The concluding lines of the poem emphasize corruption and degeneration of jailers and bailiffs alike. The jailers accept bribes from prisoners in return for special privileges. They allow the prisoners to steal at night and pay them "fees" in the morning. The word "fees" suggests how frequent the practice is. Ironically, the "watchful bailiffs" ignore the whole vicious action. The reference to their "silent stands" suggests their passivity which is most dangerous because they are supposed to protect people and prevent such crimes. Furthermore, the persona implies that the whole city accepts corruption of the jailers and "bailiffs" and does nothing about it, an implication that is asserted in the last line. The reference to the "schoolboys" walking slowly and carrying their small bags suggests the fact that despite all these vices, life goes on. It is worth mentioning that the portrayal of these vices is achieved gradually. In other words, the poem begins with a small vice, that of betrayal (Betty having an affair with her master), which develops into a treason that is both individual and communal.

As in the previous poem, the image of chaos and disorder is very clear. Smith (1990: 191) makes the point that, in Swift's poetry, "the order of the world has been disturbed". In Swift's poem, most of the people from Betty to the bailiffs, are going about putting things in order, although the order is inevitably a masquerade - the "masquerade that time resumes" each morning (193). Ironically, the servant Betty, who awakens in her master's bed, preserves appearances by discomposing her own bed- Betty's disturbed bed thus maintaining the façade of decorum, which rests on the separation of social classes. Thus, disorder that this poem portrays reflects the threatened breakdown of strict class division.

On the other hand, a number of critics (Manlove, 1989; Real and Vienken, 1986; Smith, 1990) have found order underlying the disorder of Swift's "A Description the Morning" and other of his poems. However, I do not believe that Swift was naïve or optimistic and that England's (1984) statement about "order from confusion sprung" must be taken ironically. England (1984: 10-11) writes that "Swift was well aware of the human mind's impulse to find order in apparently random sequences, and he capitalized on this with his poetry so as to create 'revolutionary realism'".

Clark (2000: 5), on the other hand, believes that this conventional reaction, the ordering impulse, might

therefore be seen as "the reader's effort to get past or deny the initial discomfort associated with the perception of disorder".

To sum up, Swift's depiction of the true characteristics of human nature and the exposure of the fallaciousness of man's illusory ideas have created this critical attitude he maintains towards the world. Swift has been criticized for being a pessimist who writes out of "a bitter mind and a bitter heart" and who sees only "man's ineptitude and failure" (Quintana, 1955:39). Swift was accused of being a misanthrope, in other words, a hater of mankind who declares: "I love mankind; its people I can't stand". To the casual observer, mankind and people appear to be the same. However, mankind is an abstract while people are specific and concrete. Swift seems to be brutal as he criticizes specific actions of particular people and he does it in such a way that the reader laughs about. George Orwell refers to Swift's values and world-views as those of a reactionary who has come to believe that the ordinary life is not worth living (Quintana, 1955:34). On the other hand, Gilmore (1976: 34) asserts that Swift's primary aim is to make us laugh, something that modern critics hesitate to consider lest they "play into the hands of predecessors who regard Swift as a brute or a psychopath".

I believe that a perceptive reader of Swift's satirical prose and poetry will realize that Swift's repudiation of the false and immoral behavior is the indictment, by the moral rationalist, of man's irrational conduct. Swift meant his satire to be a genuine reforming force. Satire, he believes, must be evaluated by its real influence on moral sensibility. In discussing Swift's ideas about the role of the satirist, Tuveson (1972) refers to Swift's belief that the greatest test of a satirist is "to bring the message to readers' bosoms, to make men see themselves as well as their neighbors in the glass of satire". Indeed, Swift wished his satire to be more pragmatic than literary; that is, to anticipate social reformation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper was funded by Applied Sciences Private University, Amman, Jordan.

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