Language and Madness

It is usually conceived, that the Elder Brutus only personated the Fool and Madman, for the good of the Publick.

While reading, in another context, some contemporary studies of the language patterns and thinking processes of schizophrenic patients, I was struck by the fact that the major symptoms exhibited by those patients would serve well as a description of the major characteristics of the style of *A Tale of a Tub*. Transcriptions of schizophrenic language often sound like passages of the *Tale*. Although from this recognition I have been led back to studies of madness in the seventeenth century,¹ as well as to speculations on Swift's possible acquaintance with the language of madness, my approach remains essentially the one with which I began: the results of twentieth-century investigations of schizophrenic language and thinking can be used as a tool for describing and better understanding the style (and the thinking processes it depicts) of Swift's confusing satire.²

Swift is not, as some earlier readers believed, himself a madman; but neither is he, as our persona-critics would have it, clearly distinct from his Modern Author.³ Although the Modern is often the butt of the joke, he is sometimes Swift himself, or at least he represents a point of view Swift could agree with. After all, Swift is—quite literally—a modern author,⁴ and he has, in writing the *Tale*, explored his likeness to his persona as well as his difference from him, and also the ancient associations between madness and wisdom, pathology and creativity.⁵ I share absolutely John Traugott's distaste for critics who argue away "the human condition that the living man risked his very sanity to think on."⁶ Swift's choice of persona is all-important: in opting to deliver himself through the mind of a madman, and thus to tie himself to that persona's digressiveness, illogicality, and layered metaphors, Swift
Language and Reality

has, paradoxically, liberated his own mind. The madness of the Modern Author enables Swift to get at meanings he could not have otherwise. Focusing on the schizophrenic style of A Tale of a Tub can provide us with an awareness of the ambivalent relationship between Swift and his persona.

Swift and madness are often linked. There is, of course, the old legend that he was himself insane. This view was in part spawned by Swift's fascination with the subject in his satires. "Madness," says Michael DePorte, "is their obsessive theme; they expose and isolate one source of insanity after another, and taken together they contain an alarming gallery of lunatics." It is a fact that Swift was elected a governor of Bethlehem Hospital on 26 February 1714. And in later years he became concerned that Dublin had no public asylum like London's and resolved to use his modest fortune at his death to endow such a hospital. But more interesting is Swift's knowledge of madness, along with its causes, effects, and cures, as displayed as early as A Tale of a Tub. Much of this knowledge reflects current seventeenth-century views of insanity and is specific enough to suggest that Swift's reading extended beyond Hobbes and Locke and into medical treatises such as Thomas Willis's Practice of Physick (translated in 1684), which included his historic Anatomy of the Brain.

But Swift must also have gotten a good deal of his descriptive detail from firsthand observation at Bedlam, which had become by his day a popular Sunday tourist attraction. Note this entry in the Journal to Stella:

At Night. Lady Kerry, Mrs. Pratt, Mrs. Cadogan, and I, in one coach; Lady Kerry's son and his governor, and two gentlemen in another; maids and misses, and little master (lord Shelburn's children) in a third, all hackney's, set out at ten o'clock this morning from Lord Shelburn's house in Picadilly to the Tower, and saw all the sights, lions, &c. then to Bedlam, then dined at the Chophouse behind the Exchange; then to Gresham College (but the keeper was not at home) and concluded the night at the Puppet-Shew, whence we came home safe at eight, and I left them.

Distasteful as we may find the idea of Swift's visit to the King's menagerie, Bedlam, and a puppet show in a single day, it was in no way uncommon. The sheer casualness of his account to Stella suggests both that this trip to Bedlam was not unique and that he
was confident Stella would not be shocked by it; so too we may infer that Swift's appointment to a governorship was due to an interest in the hospital that was well known. At any rate, specific details in the Tale such as the 'woodden Window' (p. 177) of one of Bedlam's cells argues for Swift's close attention during visits there. Although the Modern's cell-by-cell tour of the hospital has literary antecedents such as that in Ned Ward's London-Spy (1700), it may well be a thin fiction based on Swift's actual experience.

In Swift's era madness was commonly defined as an extreme subjectivity, as imagination beyond control of reason. One of its symptoms—and perhaps its cause—was seen to be pride. DePorte suggests that the Augustans' association of madness and subjectivity was owing to their preoccupation with epistemology. "They were disturbed," says DePorte, "by the arguments of Descartes, Hobbes, and Locke that the secondary qualities of objects—their colors, smells, and tastes—were not inherent. The question of how much of what we perceive in things is inherent and how much a construct of the mind unsettled them. If normal experience involved such mental constructs must one not be on guard against further impositions? Might it not, in fact, be the mind's inclination to impose?"

Swift in particular seems to have recognized the intimate connection between an understanding of madness and the theory of knowledge; no one work illustrates these concerns of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries better than A Tale of a Tub, which combines so closely the problem of madness with the problem of epistemology. "For whatsoever in this state," argues the humanitarian Thomas Tryon in 1695, "is represented unto the Soul by the uncontrollable and unbounded Imagination, is essential unto them, whether it be good or evil." Similarly, the psychiatrist Silvano Arieti has said recently that "what for us are truth and error share for the patient equal right to existence, inasmuch as they are both acts of consciousness." Ignoring both sense data and moral dicta, madness was in the Augustan age usefully exploited as an example of our tendency toward mental distortion, or at least as a metaphor for such distortion. Swift uses it as both. "How fade and insipid do all Objects accost us that are not convey'd in the Vehicle of Delusion?" (p. 172), exclaims the Modern, and his rhetorical question betrays his madness as well as the unempirical basis of his epistemology; in fact, the former becomes a metaphor for the latter. To speak more generally, madness is for Swift the cause of the
Modern's ridiculous modernism as much as it is the effect of that modernism, and also a convenient symbol for the pervasive errors of his time.

"The central issue for Swift is cognition," says Martin Price. "Swift's typical mode, therefore, is the ironic dramatization of the mind that chooses not to see. Such a mind may, and in fact usually does, have great energy. It is prompted by strong passions which capture the imagination, freeing it from the control of reason and its adherence to truth. (The relationship of imagination to truth may be oblique, but its existence remains, for the Augustans, a test of all serious art.) Once the imagination is given rein, its fertility is enormous and its energy untrusting." In *A Tale of a Tub* Swift interweaves the style of madness with the style of reason and discovers that there is often truth in the former and error in the latter. The sheer energy of the Tale's style results from the dramatic interplay between the rational, commonsensical Swift and the irrational, jumble-headed Modern Author. Yet both are Jonathan Swift. No wonder we find the meaning of the Tale to be so elusive: what we have is the inconsistent style of a madman, or rather, the electric current that jumps incessantly, unpredictably, between Swift's style and point of view and the Modern's. The result seems to fit one of Jerome S. Bruner's "conditions of creativity": "I would like to suggest that it is in the working out of conflict and coalition within the set of identities composing the person that one finds the source of many of the richest and most surprising combinations." The Modern's insanity becomes for Swift a means to a brilliant creativity. In writing the Tale Swift confronted the madness not only in the world but also in himself, and discovered there a source of great inspiration.

The warp and woof of the Tale are a logical, step-by-step, "vertical" way of thinking and an analogical, associative, "horizontal" way of thinking. The difference between these two modes of thinking is the difference between what Freud calls "primary" and "secondary" processes. Primary process thinking is pleasure-oriented thinking characteristic of the child and is dominated by the untroubled coexistence of opposites, thinking by allusion or metaphor, and the absence of any apparent intellectual goal. Secondary process thinking, on the other hand, is thinking characteristic of the mature adult and is dominated by the rules of Aristotelian logic, conventional syntactic patterns, and a sense of
working toward some goal. Primary thinking is inborn, private, and unconscious; secondary thinking is learned, socialized, and altogether conscious.

Of course, as Freud pointed out, primary process thinking is not restricted to the yet-to-be-socialized child but is dominant also in dreams, jokes, slips of the tongue, and certain forms of mental illness.23 The artist likewise taps into this more primitive kind of thinking. Thus Brendan A. Maher sees in schizophrenic writing examples of "the literary imagination gone mad": "It would seem, therefore, that the mental substrata in which certain kinds of poetry are born probably are associative in a more or less schizophrenic way.... The intelligence that shapes, cuts, edits, revises and erases is fed by many unconscious sources, most of them cultural; but the wellsprings seem to be, as poets have been telling us for centuries, sort of divine and sort of mad."24 In "A Digression on Madness" Swift deliberately explores this connection between the artist and the madman. The Modern Author admits that he was formerly an inmate of Bedlam: "that honourable Society, whereof I had some Time the Happiness to be an unworthy Member" (p. 176).25 His writing is a kind of therapy: "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" (p. 180).

In A Tale of a Tub Swift simultaneously exhibits two styles and two sorts of thinking, the secondary or logical and the primary or analogical. Swift in principle mocks both the Modern's logic and his redundant, farfetched metaphors; however, though he in effect demonstrates the absurdity of formal logic, he utilizes the Modern's crazy metaphors for his own purposes. Swift undermines both the socialized style of secondary thinking and the eccentric style of primary thinking. But many of the satiric meanings of the Tale are found in the Modern's associative, metaphorical madness, which we can understand only if we ourselves respond on a primary level.26

A general awareness of the distinction between primary and secondary thinking existed in Swift's day and is found especially in seventeenth-century discussions of the differences between madness and dreams on the one hand and sane, waking life on the other. To Hobbes and Locke the distinction is between a runaway "Trayne of Thoughts" (Hobbes) or "Association of Ideas" (Locke) and those kept in check by judgment.27 "Without Steddiness, and Direction to some End," argues Hobbes, "a great Fancy is one kind of Madnesse;
such as they have, entring into any discourse, are snatched from their purpose, by every thing that comes in their thought, into so many, and so long digressions, and Parentheses, that they utterly lose themselves.”

Locke traces madness to the uncontrolled connection of ideas in the mind: “I shall be pardoned for calling it by so harsh a name as madness, when it is considered that opposition to reason deserves that name and is really madness; and there is scarce a man so free from it but that, if he should on all occasions argue or do as in some cases he constantly does, would not be thought fitter for Bedlam than civil conversation.”

Locke’s view of madness as a mere exaggeration of perfectly normal thought patterns is a bold departure from earlier accounts of mental illness and one that may have influenced Swift. But for the moment we ought to notice the distinction in both Hobbes and Locke between rational and irrational thought, between disproportionate ideas and unconventional connections on the one side and orderly, proportionate, conventional thinking on the other.

Imagination must be restrained always by reason, as in the Modern Author it is not: “I my self, the Author of these momentous Truths, am a Person, whose Imaginations are hard-mouth’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” (p. 180). Swift in part may be talking here about himself; after all, it is his galloping imaginations we meet in *A Tale of a Tub*, *Gulliver’s Travels*, and his other works. As G. S. Rousseau says of Addison, Swift, and Pope, “the role of imagination in literature was perhaps the most vexing aesthetic problem of their time.”

By exploring the nature of madness in the *Tale*, and by making his mad persona also a writer, Swift faces this problem head-on. As an artist Swift knew, as did Freud, that primary process thinking is not the sole property of children, dreamers, and madmen.

As we have seen, Hobbes and Locke suggest that the difference between a sane man and an insane man is often a difference in speech patterns. This distinction is made even more explicitly by Thomas Tryon, that independent-minded merchant and sometime student in physic who wrote in his *Treatise of Dreams and Visions*: “The one speaks and forms every thought into words: having not the Bridle of sense nor Reason to restrain him; the other often times cuts off such and such thoughts and Imaginations in the Budd, or at
least shuts the grand Gate, the *Mouth*, and keeps those Stragglers in, not suffering the Organs and Properties of Nature to form them into Articular Expressions." Swift makes a very similar distinction in *Some Thoughts on Free-Thinking*:

Discoursing one day with a prelate of the kingdom of Ireland, who is a person of excellent wit and learning, he offered a notion applicable to the subject, we were then upon, which I took to be altogether new and right. He said, that the difference betwixt a mad-man and one in his wits, in what related to speech, consisted in this: That the former spoke out whatever came into his mind, and just in the confused manner as his imagination presented the ideas. The latter only expressed such thoughts, as his judgment directed him to chuse, leaving the rest to die away in his memory. And that if the wisest man would at any time utter his thoughts, in the crude indigested manner, as they come into his head, he would be looked upon as raving mad.

Again I am reminded of Freud's primary and secondary process thinking. The madman, and to some degree the artist, speaks as his imagination prompts him; the mature, "normal," properly socialized man speaks only those ideas his judgment chooses from among the many presented by the imagination. In *A Tale of a Tub* Swift shows over and over the collapse of the Modern's judgment and demonstrates thereby the positive and negative effects of alogical, unconventional, and digressive speech and thinking.

Swift's fascination with the language of schizophrenia is apparent in his emphasis on speech throughout "A Digression on Madness." The Modern refers to philosophers as "Persons Crazed, or out of their Wits, having generally proceeded in the common Course of their Words and Actions, by a Method very different from the vulgar Dictates of unrefined Reason" (p. 166)—and the italicization only heightens Swift's irony. Philosophers, enthusiasts, and critics in this digression all deliver their doctrines in unconventional language. And in the Modern's tour of Bedlam, each inanimate is marked by a peculiar style of speech: one is "eternally talking, sputtering, gaping, bawling, in a Sound without Period or Article" (p. 176); another is "in much and deep Conversation with himself" (p. 177); another "has forgot the common Meaning of Words, but an admirable Retainer of the Sound" (p. 178); and yet another is "very sparing in his Words, but somewhat over-liberal of his Breath" (p. 178). Swift must have paid close attention to the speech patterns of the madmen he encountered inside—as well as outside!—Bedlam, and he
Language and Reality

seems to have modeled his style in *A Tale of a Tub* as much on what he heard there as on the style of the *Anatomy of Melancholy* or *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*. It is not hard to see that the speech habits of the Bedlamites in "A Digression on Madness" are characteristic also of the style of the Modern Author himself.

I introduce here two recent examples of what John D. Benjamin terms "schizophrenic pseudo profundity." Their relevance to a study of the mad style of the *Tale* is readily apparent:

The players and boundaries have been of different colors in terms of black and white and I do not intend that the futuramas of supersonic fixtures will ever be in my life again because I believe that all known factors that would have its effect on me even the chemical reaction of ameno acids as they are in the process of combustrability are known to me.

The subterfuge and the mistaken planned substitutions for that demanded American action can produce nothing but the general results of negative contention and the impractical results of careless applications, the natural results of misplacement, of mistaken purpose and unrighteous position, the impractical serviceabilities of unnecessary contradictions. For answers to this dilemma, consult Webster.

As psychiatrist Maria Lorenz says of the language of one of her patients: "The words swell with an implication of meaningful thought. But the full fruition of a thought, a meaning, does not occur." There is in both passages a veritable rush of ideas, too many ideas for too few sentences. "In my head," explained one patient after recovery, "there ran like an endless clockwork of a compulsive, torturing, uninterrupted chain of ideas. Naturally, they were not too sharply defined or clearly developed. There were joined idea upon idea in the most remarkable and bizarre associations although there was always a certain definite or inherent connection from link to link." This rush of ideas is behind the associational quality of most schizophrenic language and is the source of the chaining effect such as that in the latter half of the second passage above.

Another major characteristic of these passages is that described by Eugen Bleuler (who in 1911 first introduced the term "schizophrenia") in his groundbreaking *Dementia Praecox or the Group of Schizophrenias*: "The wording is preferably bombastic; indeed it is not so merely in the passages which are intended to convey emphasis or feeling. The patients utter trivialities using highly affected
expressions as if they were of the greatest interest to humanity." As schizophrenics often are, the authors of these two passages are proud in their belief that they are communicating something of immense importance: the signs of that self-satisfaction are the pseudoscientific polysyllables ("futuramas," "supersonic," "subterfuge") and vague Latinisms ("reaction," "contention," "applications"), plus the phrase "all known factors . . . are known to me" in the first paragraph and the cocky reference to Webster in the second. Although the effect here is of the presence of great meaning, or at least potential meaning, none emerges because the patients feel the pressure of too many ideas, or ideas of overblown significance, and are unable to edit some of them out, judge their relative importance, or bring them together into a unified whole.  

"The schizophrenic," says Norman Cameron, "is shooting at the target with a verbal shotgun where he should be sighting along a rifle." That everything I have said here concerning these two examples of schizophrenic writing would apply as well to the Modern's style in A Tale of a Tub is, I suggest, no mere coincidence: Swift put his keen ear for speech to good use on his visits to Bethlehem Hospital. But there are other similarities between the language of madness and the style of the Tale. Schizophrenics often give undue emphasis to the mere verbalization of words, as in the second of the above passages, where there is a toying with prefixes (e.g., "subterfuge" and "substitution," "mistaken" and "misplacement"), and where the reference to Webster shows that the lexicographical nature of the passage even hits the patient himself. And there is in each paragraph a neologism, typical in schizophrenic language: "combustronability," a noun where an adjective is required, seems to mean "combustible" but looks like an inaccurate fusion of "combustion" and "ability"; "serviceabilities," an adjective converted to a noun, seems in fact to mean simply "service," and like "combustronability" it demonstrates the schizophrenic's unconventional play with words and parts of words. Moreover, the reason in each case for the patient's heightened concern for expression is helpful in understanding the Modern's similar concern. In The Divided Self R. D. Laing points out that the schizophrenic is desperately afraid of being exposed and thus spends most of his energy maintaining a "false-self system" for keeping others at a distance; one aspect of the patient's cultivated persona or personas (he frequently adopts more than one) is his kaleidoscopic, fragmented, intentionally misleading
talk, what Laing calls “red-herring speech.” When one of the patients quoted above says, “I do not intend that the futuramas of supersonic fixtures will ever be in my life again,” he is for a split second revealing his terrible fear and also attempting to hide that fear behind a string of big words. Analogously, in the Tale the insane Modern Author distances his readers by means of his continual verbal flamboyance; yet we are meant to discover behind his deflecting style Swift’s very sane meanings. The Modern—like many schizophrenics—has little more than a verbal existence. In this powerfully paradoxical work, Swift pretends to be psychotic, and the Modern is a sort of grotesque caricature of himself, just as the style of the Tale, though essentially Swift’s own, is in fact a caricature of that style.

As a basis for discussing these characteristics of the style of A Tale of a Tub in greater detail, here is a paragraph from “A Digression in the Modern Kind”:

To this End, I have some Time since, with a World of Pains and Art, dissected the Carcass of Humane Nature, and read many useful Lectures upon the several Parts, both Containing and Contained; till at last it smelt so strong, I could preserve it no longer. Upon which, I have been at a great Expence to fit up all the Bones with exact Contexture, and in due Symmetry; so that I am ready to shew a very compleat Anatomy thereof to all curious Gentlemen and others. But not to Digress farther in the midst of a Digression, as I have known some Authors inclose Digressions in one another, like a Nest of Boxes; I do affirm, that having carefully cut up Humane Nature, I have found a very strange, new, and important Discovery; That the Publick Good of Mankind is performed by two Ways, Instruction, and Diversion. And I have farther proved in my said several Readings, (which, perhaps, the World may one day see, if I can prevail on any Friend to steal a Copy, or on certain Gentlemen of my Admirers, to be very Importunate) that, as Mankind is now disposed, he receives much greater Advantage by being Diverted than Instructed; His Epidemical Diseases being Fastidiosity, Amorphy, and Oscilation; whereas in the present universal Empire of Wit and Learning, there seems but little Matter left for Instruction. However, in Compliance with a Lesson of Great Age and Authority, I have attempted carrying the Point in all its Heights; and accordingly throughout this Divine Treatise, have skilfully kneaded up both together with a Layer of Utile and a Layer of Dulce. (Pp. 123–24)

In this paragraph the seemingly knowledgeable Modern speaks first of his dissection of human nature (which has died?) and how he reassembled the bones “with exact Contexture, and in due Symmetry.” For all his talk of symmetry, however, he soon catches
himself digressing, apologizes for it, then wanders off into further digressions. "Their Phantasies or Imaginations," says Willis of madmen, "are perpetually busied with a storm of impetuous thoughts." The Modern is plagued with so many thoughts—the dissection, the symmetry of bones, the problem with digressions, his other writings, his friends, his admirers, and so forth—that he cannot work them into a coherent whole. Like the symmetry of human nature, the symmetry of this paragraph breaks down and its meaning becomes confused. Although the Modern speaks in the aloof, bombastic language of the intellect, and although he has an overweening pride in the efficacy of his book ("this Divine Treatise"), his arguments have little direction, and he proceeds from one association to another with very little logic. The Tale is fractured at every level—chapters, paragraphs, and sentences—because Swift intends to give the impression of a fractured authorial consciousness. The Modern lacks integrity in part because his creator does not mean for him to be a full-bodied, consistent character like Gulliver; but Swift must also have realized that a madman lacks integrity and is apt to flip from one false self to another.

Swift in addition recognized that an overemphasis on verbalization is a characteristic feature of a madman's speech. Notice how the Modern's ideas cease to have much beyond a purely lexical significance: a dissected corpse becomes the italicized "Humane Nature"; there is a play on the words "Containing" and "Contained," from Wotton; the Modern takes times out for a consideration of literary digressions; he draws attention to his writings on the subjects (as if they were new!) of instruction and diversion; the words "Fastidious" and "Amorphy" are the Modern's neologisms; and the concluding aphorism is a lexical absurdity cooked up from a classical writer. In schizophrenia even the autonomy of words may be disrupted, as when the three brothers (two of whom are mad) break up the word "knot" into its constituent letters so as to manipulate its meaning the way they want (pp. 82-84). "A word," says Lorenz, "is denatured and neutralized by converting it into an alphabetical object," just as, in a more general way, troubling reality is denied by converting it into a purely verbal phenomenon. As Freud tells us, for the schizophrenic "word-presentation" replaces "object-presentation." Nothing truer could be said of Swift's Modern Author.
But so far I have not commented on one of the chief features of this and other passages of the *Tale*: the Modern's loose handling of categories and his inability to distinguish between the literal and the figurative, the particular and the general. "Such qualities as being fictitious, metaphorical, potential, assumed, and presumed," says Arieti, "are not always possible for schizophrenic ideation." There is an unnerving imprecision to the Modern's thinking processes. For example, though he alludes to what would seem to be a real autopsy of a real corpse, this corpse is called "Humane Nature" and would thus seem to be an abstraction, and the dissection a metaphor for a rigorous study of mankind. But the Modern subsequently admits that "at last it smelt so strong, I could preserve it no longer," thereby reasserting the real existence of a certain overripe corpse. "Having carefully cut up Humane Nature," a phrase that follows the Modern's short digression on digressions, jams the literal and figurative up against one another, the verb suggesting the one, the noun the other. By the time we get to the Modern's discovery itself—"that the Publick Good of Mankind is performed by two Ways"—we are unsure what to think, although the second half of the paragraph would suggest that "Humane Nature" is indeed to be understood in its generic sense; even here, however, the term "Epidemical Diseases" implies a literal corpse. And more generally, when at the end of the paragraph the Modern refers to his "Compliance with a Lesson of Great Age and Authority" (note the Milnesque use of capitals), we can only wonder why he has been making so much of his inductive method, when he has in fact been working deductively from some ancient principle.

As psychiatrists frequently have pointed out, schizophrenics lack the capacity to make generalizations and tend to jump quickly from the hypothetical to the real. Maurice J. Quinlan has shown that the literalization of metaphor is one of Swift's favorite rhetorical devices; but it is in the *Tale* that he first discovered the satirical virtues of this trick, and it may be that his attempt to duplicate the language of madness inspired him to it. Like most schizophrenics, the Modern exhibits a concrete attitude toward his ideas and seems incapable of making an unreal assumption or of accepting a fictitious situation. One of the most pervasive and disturbing features of the style of the *Tale* is this slippage of meaning between the general and the particular, the metaphorical and the literal. The tiniest instances of such slippage are the schizophrenic's character-
istic punning, such as the Modern's word "Layer" at the end of the above passage; together with the verb "kneaded up" (here meaning "molded" or "shaped"). "Layer" (used frequently at this time with reference to cookery) suggests a sort of Horatian layer cake.

This ambiguity between the literal and the figurative infuses the Tale at every level, even affecting its structure: Arieti says that in an advanced stage of schizophrenia a patient may think of some people who once came to visit him, and as he does so he quite literally sees those people before his eyes; similarly, as the Modern, who was once an inmate of Bedlam, begins to speak of the hospital, he suddenly seems to be there and slides into an account of his tour through the building—in the present tense—as if he were walking through it at that very moment. "At once confounding things past with things present, or to come," says Willis of madmen. As in the Modern's case, a patient may confuse the present place—"the very Garret I am now writing in" (p. 169)—with somewhere else, or the present time—"what I am going to say is literally true this Minute I am writing" (p. 36)—with some future or past occurrence. Thus while writing in his garret the Modern (should we say Swift?) may imagine he is touring Bethlehem Hospital, his presence there neither past nor future, but right now; like one of the schizophrenics Laing describes whose life is totally contemporaneous, for him a thing is modern or it is nothing. Confusing fact with fiction at every level, the speech of the schizophrenic Modern is Swift's epitome of modern man's epistemological daydreaming, which is a kind of madness.

Another passage will shed more light on the relation between fact and fiction—and how each relates to Swift's satiric "truth"—in A Tale of a Tub. This amazing sentence takes up an entire paragraph of section 11 and is nevertheless only the second half of the Modern's extended comparison of riding and writing. Swift puns on "rides."

On the other side, when a Traveller and his Horse are in Heart and Plight, when his Purse is full, and the Day before him; he takes the Road only where it is clean or convenient; entertains his Company there as agreeably as he can; but upon the first Occasion, carries them along with him to every delightful Scene in View, whether of Art, of Nature, or of both; and if they chance to refuse out of Stupidity or Weariness; let them jog on by themselves, and be d--n'd; He'll overtake them at the next Town; at which arriving, he Rides furiously thro', the Men, Women, and
Children run out to gaze, a hundred noisy Curs run barking after him, of which, if he honors the boldest with a Lash of his Whip, it is rather out of Sport than Revenge: But should some sourer Mungrel dare too near an Approach, he receives a Salute on the Chaps by an accidental Stroak from the Courser’s Heels, (nor is any Ground lost by the Blow) which sends him yelping and limping home. (Pp. 188–89)

At the start the sentence would seem to be following a certain logical form: “when a Traveller”; “when his Purse”; “[then] he takes the Road.” It is only with the phrase “but upon the first Occasion” that we get the first alteration of direction of the Modern’s thinking; by the time we reach the clause “and if they chance to refuse,” however, we have relinquished logic altogether. This disturbance of the logical function is one of the most frequently mentioned symptoms of schizophrenic thinking; recent studies indicate that such disturbances are the result of lapses in the person’s attentional abilities. Maher explains the proliferation of associational linkages in this way: “The schizophrenic in his use of language may therefore be seen as suffering from a process whereby irrelevant associations reach a strength equal to those of relevant associations, leading to a breakdown in the discriminations necessary to the precise use of words.” Notice how the Modern’s logic shatters precisely at the moment his tone changes from polite (“every delightful Scene in View”) to antagonistic (“out of Stupidity or Weariness”); when he thinks of a possible objection to a rider’s—or writer’s—meanderings, the Modern gets angry, and logic is replaced by concrete narrative.

Having once left rational argument behind, the mere mention of the next town leads the Modern to describe his traveler’s reception; his reference to men, women, and children compels him to think also of barking dogs; and barkings dogs prompts him to consider how such beasts should be dealt with. By the conclusion of the sentence the Modern has been foolishly derailed by his own thoughts into an account of a single rider’s dealings with a single dog. What begins as a quite general argument concerning a typical, hypothetical traveler has by the middle of the paragraph slipped into a pseudoautobiographical adventure story, which, finally, dwindles into a parenthetical phrase and a dependent clause. The Modern has difficulty dealing with the hypothetical and tends to concretize his arguments. Yet it is important to recognize that it is the Modern alone who loses his rational grip;
Swift temporarily gives over his style to his persona but himself uses the Modern’s lapse into concrete narrative as a way of laying bare his own satiric truth. Since writing is like riding, the movement of the sentence demonstrates both the dangers and the possibilities of a spontaneous approach to traveling and, likewise, to the digressive approach to writing. The image of the dogs barking at the ego-centric rider-writer has a double function: it is Swift’s hint as to how we should respond to the Modern and his runaway imagination; it is also his prognostic nose-thumbing at anyone who dares criticize his way of writing. To say this, however, is not to turn Swift into a great compromiser, but rather to suggest that he suspects logic and relies instead on concrete situations chock full of implications to get across his meanings. Above all we should not overlook the fact that it is the Modern’s craziness that allows Swift to make his points, and brilliantly.

Swift makes fun of formal logic. The Modern says, seemingly satisfied with the Aeolists’ reasoning: “First, it is generally affirmed, or confess’d that Learning puffeth Men up: And Secondly, they proved it by the following Syllogism; Words are but Wind; and Learning is nothing but Words; Ergo, Learning is nothing but Wind” (p. 153). Swift here shows how one can prove anything at all by logic. Although the structure of the syllogism—it follows the form Barbara—is impeccable, its major premise is absurd, and thus what results is a formally valid conclusion that is nevertheless in its content quite unacceptable.

Swift may have lifted a page here from Aristotle. In the Tale he alludes disparagingly to Aristotle’s Dialectica, “and especially that wonderful Piece De interpretatione, which has the Faculty of teaching its Readers to find out a Meaning in every Thing but it self” (p. 85). The reference to the Dialectica, however, is apparently to any compendium of Aristotle’s logical treatises, including De sophisticis elenchis, which contains a collection of logical fallacies like the following:

There must be sight of what one sees.
One sees the pillar.
Therefore, the pillar has sight.

As Aristotle explains it, the problem here arises from a verbal ambiguity or “amphiboly,” for the word “sight” in this syllogism may refer either to that which sees or that which is seen. It is interest-
ing that many of the Modern's supposedly logical arguments are betrayed by the double meaning of words, as above "wind" means both "breath" and "hot air." In such instances the reader must catch the pun in order to catch Swift's irony. "It is a general rule in dealing with arguments that depend on language," says Aristotle, "that the solution always follows the opposite of the point on which the argument turns."68 This is sound advice for the unraveler of Swift's fallacious logic in the Tale.

But beyond this, though Swift seems to have despised every minute of his enforced two years of logic at Trinity College, he seems also to have remembered many of its forms and phrases.69 As with so much in the Tale, we are led back ultimately to Swift's simultaneous dislike of and fascination with the same rhetorical device. Imagine Swift's frustrated endeavors at Trinity to make sense of such labyrinthine scholasticism as this from De interpretatione:

Yet from the proposition "it may be" it follows that it is not impossible, and from that it follows that it is not necessary; it comes about therefore that the thing which must necessarily be need not be; which is absurd. But again, the proposition "it is necessary that it should be" does not follow from the proposition "it may be," nor does the proposition "it is necessary that it should not be." For the proposition "it may be" implies a twofold possibility, while, if either of the two former propositions is true, the twofold possibility vanishes.70

On the other hand, what earlier had been a student's frustration was transformed in the Tale into a budding writer's pseudoacademic parody of the subject he hated most. Swift gets the last laugh. Yet the Modern's stubborn attempts to reason through literally everything by means of Aristotelian logic—or a semblance of it—is in truth not Swift's parody of Aristotle but of the discipline of logic, which he saw as so much hot air. Whether he is recalling Aristotle directly or the manual of logic written by his teacher Narcissus Marsh, Swift surely was aware of the absurdity of a speculative science that busied itself with logical and linguistic paradox rather than confronting the world's very real contradictions.

Swift would have found equally absurd Antoine Arnauld's popular La logique ou l'art de penser (Paris, 1662), a so-called Cartesian logic that departed from scholastic logics in its emphasis not on the memorization of forms but on the usefulness of logic in the real world. "Had we written," says Arnauld, "an arid logic employing the ordinary examples of animal and horse, however,
precise and methodical our book, it would have served only to increase the world's already overabundant supply of such texts—none of them read." Instead Arnauld aims to furnish examples "which allow a student to see both the principle and the practice of logic at one and the same time." He offers a practical as opposed to a speculative science, a logic that might be applied to everyday experience. Since a great deal of the satire of *A Tale of a Tub* is directed at attempts to apply logic to real circumstances, this may represent Swift's parody of *L'art de penser*. Recall, for example, the Modern's several rationalizations of a reeking human carcass, Peter's "thundring Proof" that a crust of bread is a leg of mutton, and Jack's spontaneous logicalizations upon knocking his head against a post.

But Swift goes well beyond parody of formal logic. Again and again he shows the Modern drawing on the grammar of logic without being able to maintain its logical force.

The *True Criticks* are known by their Talent of swarming about the noblest Writers, to which they are carried meerly by Instinct, as a Rat to the best Cheese, or a Wasp to the fairest Fruit. So, when the King is a Horse-back, he is sure to be the dirtiest Person of the Company, and they that make their Court best, are such as bespatter him most. (P. 103)

The following Maxim was of much Weight; That since Wind had the Master-Share, as well as Operation in every Compound, by Consequence, those Beings must be of chief Excellence, wherein that Primordium appears most prominently to abound; and therefore, Man is in highest Perfection of all created Things. (P. 151)

And therefore, I the Author of this miraculous Treatise, having hitherto, beyond Expectation, maintained by the aforesaid Handle, a firm Hold upon my gentle Readers; It is with great Reluctance, that I am at length compelled to remit my Grasp; leaving them in the Perusal of what remains, to that natural Oscitancy inherent in the Tribe. (P. 203)

Although in each case the Modern's pseudosyllogistic thinking works ploddingly but correctly from a questionable premise toward some conclusion, which, if arrived at at all, is scarcely worth the trouble, he at the same time slips repeatedly into an analogical way of thinking that is the source of many of his misconceptions. In the above passages the Modern gets sidetracked by analogies that obviously strike him as more compelling than his logic. His analogies are for him quite literal: court flatterers are critics; wind is human breath; and readers are held by handles. In I. A. Richards's
terms, the Modern is repeatedly seduced by his own rhetoric into mistaking "vehicles" for "tenors." Secondary process thinking in the Tale keeps regressing to that primary process thinking characteristic of madmen and artists.

We are now in a position to consider in greater detail the nature of logical dysfunction in the Tale. As a point of departure, I introduce a transcription of an interview with a schizophrenic patient who seems to have some of the same difficulties with language as the Modern Author:

In the halls of the Justice Department there is an understanding of a bona fide agreement between any people scheduled to meet within government circles, within government triangles, within government rectangles or any place else. It is hard to speak with a language which has an idiom of opposition. I mean insofar as there are so many bulwarks in historical content representative of a, the revolutionary victory won over an English prosidium. It's made this country great in its self-containment. It might be of interest but it's hard to understand what I mean through a nonutilization of English grammar books. A small faction usually arises to call themselves leaders, forever after apologizes for it, who oppose learning. I don't know whether that's wholly correct or not, but Jimmy Cagney in one of his movies specified the fact that people who come up from the depths usually have a right to authority. The depths of the Anglo-Saxon language has no use for anything that is nonutilized, that is nonutility. What I mean is that progress is foolish when you consider the fact that through language and leadership you can augment the process of future generations being of foreign parentage.74

Irvin Ehrenpreis speaks of the Modern's "gestures of logic," a phrase reminiscent of Julius Laffal's reference to the schizophrenic's "show of logic."75 Although in the above passage there is a hint of logical argument—or perhaps of more than one—that argument never comes off. The characteristic markers of rational discourse are here ("I mean insofar as," "It might be of interest," "when you consider the fact that," for example), as are a proliferation of intellectual-sounding, quite separable phrases that seem as if they ought to mean something ("understanding of a bona fide agreement," "bulwarks in historical content," "the depths of the Anglo-Saxon language"). But the connectives only give the illusion of connection, and the fine phrases jangle in their contexts. Although we can discern two major themes—language and government—in the passage, we cannot make out their relationship, nor exactly what the speaker is attempting to say about each of them. These two
subjects come together at several points in the paragraph, most notably in the alliterating “language and leadership” and the neologism “prosidium,” which could be a pun on “presidium” and “prose idiom.” Is the speaker saying that politics has so corrupted our language that it is difficult to make meaning out of it? Or is he perhaps praising the American conquest of the English language? Although his words tantalize us with potential meaning, the patient would appear to be totally illogical and this passage a good example of what is commonly termed schizophrenic “word salad.”

But to describe this passage and others like it as illogical is too easy. What we have here is not illogical so much as it is alogical or paralogical—a way of thinking quite apart from the rules of Aristotelian logic. In primary process thinking there is no such thing as a logical contradiction, and a proposition may both be and not be at the same time. Thus in this paragraph the patient seems simultaneously to be praising the American system while condemning it, applauding revolution while lamenting it, and attempting to bring his two subjects together while keeping them safely apart. Much of the difficulty here stems from the patient’s failures to maintain accepted grammatical connectives and his dependence instead on purely associative, often emotional linkages that have meaning only within the private world of the schizophrenic himself; for example, the allusion to Jimmy Cagney in the midst of such a serious argument seems quite out of place and entirely personal to the speaker. Other associations are equally idiosyncratic: there is a playful repetition of words (“nonutilization,” “nonutilized,” and “nonutility”); a linkage due only to the application of a word within different contexts (“people who come up from the depths,” “depths of the Anglo-Saxon language”); and an absurd instance of what David Rapaport calls “phrase completion” (“within government circles, within government triangles, within government rectangles”). The schizophrenic typically gets trapped in word, phrase, or sound associations that he cannot repress and that completely override any logic he may be pretending to. Schizophrenic thinking is primary process thinking, and if we manage to identify in a patient’s speech some fragments of society’s logic, his thinking is nevertheless at its core decidedly eccentric and egocentric. In this passage it is not even clear that government and language are both real topics for the patient, for it is possible that one may exist in his mind as a metaphor for the other. Yet through
the verbal smoke screen we can make out a desperate concern for communication: "It is hard to speak with a language that," "it's hard to understand what I mean," and "I don't know whether that's wholly correct or not." There is in this passage a tension between a terrible desire to be understood and a terrible fear of being understood.

Willis says that the madman’s speech contains “contrary or opposite things” and that “some evilly joined or wonderfully divided, are confounded with others, the imagination suggests manifold Phantasms, and all of them only incongruous.” In the following passage from “A Digression on Madness” we find some of the same incongruities we discovered in the speech of the schizophrenic discussed above:

For, if we take a Survey of the greatest Actions that have been performed in the World, under the Influence of Single Men; which are, The Establishment of New Empires by Conquest: The Advance and Progress of New Schemes in Philosophy; and the contriving, as well as the propagating of New Religions: We shall find the Authors of them all, to have been Persons, whose natural Reason hath admitted great Revolutions from their Dyet, their Education, the Prevalency of some certain Temper, together with the particular Influence of Air and Climate. Besides, there is something Individual in human Minds, that easily kindles at the accidental Approach and Collision of certain Circumstances, which tho' of palatey and mean Appearance, do often flame out into the greatest Emergencies of Life. For great Turns are not always given by strong Hands, but by lucky Adaption, and at proper Seasons; and it is of no import, where the Fire was kindled, if the Vapor has once got up into the Brain. For the upper Region of Man, is furnished like the middle Region of the Air; The Materials are formed from Causes of the widest Difference, yet produce at last the same Substance and Effect. Mists arise from the Earth, Steams from Dunghils, Exhalations from the Sea, and Smoak from Fire; yet all Clouds are the same in Composition, as well as Consequences: and the Fumes issuing from a Jakes, will furnish as comely and useful a Vapor, as Incense from an Altar. Thus far, I suppose will easily be granted me; and then it will follow, that 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, meerly according to the Soil. I will produce two Instances to prove and Explain what I am now advancing. (Pp. 162-63)
The Modern gives the superficial impression of being rational; like Swift he has learned his logical figures well. Indeed, the whole argument is laid out in a formally acceptable fashion: the Modern suggests first a survey of new systems, says the authors of these systems were all mad, traces the origin of such madness to his theory of vapors, and draws a series of analogies for their effect on the brain. "Thus far," he interjects, "I suppose will easily be granted me," apparently convinced that the mere appearance of logic will pass as honest thought. But Swift's irony is that though formally we may accept the Modern's argument, we ought to be dubious about his conclusion—"then it will follow"—that vapors, like rain, water the invention and bring it to positive fruition. Madmen, says Locke, "do not seem to have lost the faculty of reasoning, but having joined together some ideas very wrongly, they mistake them for truths, and they err as men do that argue right from wrong principles." In this passage from the Tale it is not the form of the Modern's argument that we question, but rather his assumptions concerning the value of new systems, the validity of such a meteorological analogy, and perhaps the existence of bodily vapors in the first place. When at the end of the paragraph the Modern says, "I will produce two Instances to prove and Explain what I am now advancing," we realize that such proofs and explanations will be no more valid than the Modern's premises. It takes a madman to argue so forcefully from a purely surface similarity between weather conditions and the human understanding.

Ernst von Domarus has said that the difference between logical and paralogical thinking is that whereas in the former there is argument from identical subjects, in the latter there is argument from identical predicates. It is the difference between this logic:

All men are mortal.
Socrates is a man.
Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

and this:

Butterflies are beautiful.
Helen is beautiful.
Therefore, Helen is a butterfly.

In the first syllogism the identical concept is the subject "man"; in the second the identification is made on the basis of the predicable
“beautiful” as it is shared by two subjects. “The paralogical thinker,” says von Domarus, “finds identity of subjects whenever and wherever he finds identity of predicables.” Of course, the second “syllogism” is not really a syllogism at all, but an example of argument by analogy. Thus the schizophrenic discussed above would seem to confuse language and government simply because he discovers that they have “opposition,” “revolution,” or “nonutilization” in common, just as, coincidentally, the words “language” and “leadership” have a sound in common, or “circles” have something in common with other geometric figures.

But for our purposes what is important is this: that whereas the true syllogism yields no new knowledge (since the concept “man” belongs by implication to Socrates, and he thus by definition shares man’s common mortality), the paralogical “syllogism” yields an absurdity that is in its way quite new, creative, and incisive (since it brings together, within a single context, two things not ordinarily thought of together). It is interesting that Freud cited wit as an example of the working of primary thinking and showed how its success often depends upon a short-circuiting of logic. To say that language is like government—or is government—is perhaps illogical, but it is at the same time fresh, jarring, and full of possibilities. Analogies can sometimes grasp things that syllogisms cannot: Helen is a butterfly.

I find von Domarus’s account of this feature of schizophrenic thinking to be especially useful in discussing the faulty reasoning in the Tale. The Modern Author’s mind works in a dangerously predicative way. “The Hack is quite literally a crazy man with a metaphor,” says Ronald Paulson. Thinking of vapors rising from some source, he connects mists rising from dung hills, exhalation from the sea, smoke from a fire, fumes from a jakes, and incense from an altar. What matters to the Modern is neither the differences between “mists,” “exhalations,” “smoke,” “fumes,” and “incense” nor those between “dung hills,” “sea,” “fire,” “jakes,” and “altar”; because he senses a similarity in the outward effects—the predicables—of vapor rising in each case, he identifies the quite different types of vapors and also the quite different sources of vapors. Moreover, a larger confusion is the Modern’s mixing of meteorology with the workings of the human understanding, which is again based on a few predicative parallels between the two. Having mentioned near the beginning of the passage that one’s reasoning abilities are
determined by "the particular Influence of Air and Climate," the Modern cannot let this idea go; he introduces more and more references to the weather—"at proper Seasons," "Clouds are the same in Composition," and so forth—as he proceeds, until at last the idea overtakes him, and he concludes with an explicit, fully developed, and quite absurd analogy between the weather and the human understanding. What begins as a minor point becomes for the Modern a subject equal to his real subject. Notice how he uses weather metaphors for describing human beings ("to water the Invention, and render it fruitful") as freely as he uses personification in describing the weather ("as the Face of Nature never produces Rain"). In all of these instances the error is one of treating mere predication as if it were identification, of confusing what is predicated of a subject with the subject itself. As we can see here the madness of the Modern is not so much his failure with logic as it is his inability to see differences between things.90

Thus in the Tale there is an interweaving of the logical, syllogistic approach to knowledge and the paralogical, analogical approach. However, though each seems to be satirized, and though it is clear that we are meant to see the fallacies inherent in each, we must recognize that it is not logical but analogical thinking that makes possible many of the powerful meanings of Swift's satire. His view of logic is comparable to Locke's: "I am apt to think that he who shall employ all the force of his reason only in brandishing of syllogisms will discover very little of that mass of knowledge which lies yet concealed in the secret recesses of nature, and which, I am apt to think, native rustic reason (as it formerly has done) is likelier to open a way to and add to the common stock of mankind rather than any scholastic proceeding by the strict rules of mode and figure."91

Swift uses the Modern's ridiculous analogies as a way of getting at some of these meanings beyond logic. As Paulson says, Swift "exploits resemblance for all it is worth, but makes us see the difference; his metaphors reveal rather than overcome difference."92 For example, he wants us to see the resemblance between fumes from a jakes and incense from an altar (for that metaphor contains a swipe at Catholicism), but he likewise intends for us to see the difference between the two and thereby to separate him from his crude persona: the odor of incense is indeed pungent, and its value as a spiritual cleanser suspect; but Swift wants us to identify neither fumes with incense nor a jakes with a Catholic altar. The analogy is
true in one sense and certainly untrue in another. Thus we can see how the effect of this passage depends not upon the force of its specious logical argument, but upon a whole array of imaginative associations and counterassociations: aside from the analogies themselves, we are meant to see that Swift is continuing the "air" theme of the previous section, that the mere use of the words "Dunghils" and "Jakes" in connection with the human understanding ironically degrades reason's confidence in its own powers, and that the Modern's mental leapfrogging demonstrates that his own brain has become vaporized. Swift typically makes the Modern's difficulty in fixing reality our difficulty as well. Confusions between fact and fiction are simultaneously mad and poignant.

Metaphors compress judgments into simple and instantaneous perceptions of things. Swift uses them boldly in the Tale, forcing on us perception after perception, a mass of tiny judgments, each one containing a great deal of the Modern's fiction, but more than a little of Swift's satiric truth. As readers we must be willing to go some distance with the Tale's primal metaphors without rejecting them out of hand as mere symptoms of the Modern's madness. I think we can say of Swift's persona what Arieti says of other para-logical thinkers: "In a certain way the universe of the schizophrenic, of the primitive, and of the child is closer to the immediate perception, to the phenomenological world, at the same time it is farther from the truth than ours because of its extreme subjectivity." Paradoxically, the solidest reality in the Tale is to be found in its metaphors. Fumes, jakes, razors, cheese, maggots, hemp, ladders, horses, barking dogs, wasps, asses, stockings, and corpses: these things are in effect not metaphorical at all, but pinprick realities employed by Swift to deflate his persona's high-flying argumentation.

In the madness of his Modern, Swift discovered a freedom from propriety, conventionality, and single-mindedness. Tryon sees in madmen something of the innocence of children, for "they no longer remain under a Mask or Disguise, but appear even as they are, which is very rare to be known in any that retain their Senses and Reason." And in The London-Spy one of Ned Ward's Bedlamites tells him:

Prithee come and Live here, and you may talk what you will, and no Body will call you in Question for it: Truth is persecuted every where Abroad, and flies hither for Sanctuary, where she sits as safe as a Knave in
a Church, or a Whore in a Nunnery. I can use her as I please, and that's more than you dare do. I can tell Great Men such bold Truths as they don't love to hear, without the danger of a Whipping-Post, and that you can't do: For if ever you see a Madman Hang'd for speaking the Truth, or a Lawyer Whip'd for Lying, I'll be bound to prove my Cap a Wheel-Barrow.96

The Modern's unwitting contradictions, perfectly acceptable in a madman, permit Swift to explore his subjects from several points of view at the same time; like Picasso in his cubist period, he can argue simultaneously for something and against it, make fun of the Modern and speak through him. So too his persona's insane running together of the specific and the general, the literal and the metaphorical, and the accidental and the substantial allows Swift to raise the questions: What is real? What is fiction? Why is it so important to distinguish between them? Furthermore, the liberation of opinion in the madman is precisely the position the satirist requires: when the Modern speaks of "the Art of exposing weak Sides, and publishing Infirmities" (p. 172), he is talking about the art of satire, which is, perhaps, nothing but the art of impersonating the madman. But of course that impersonation can never be complete. "In listening to a schizophrenic," says Laing, "it is very difficult to know 'who' is talking";97 this is precisely the difficulty we have in reading A Tale of a Tub. DePorte suggests that Swift utilized the seventeenth-century notion of the madman's "lucid intervals" as a model for the style of the Tale.98 The importance of this symptom for Swift is that is allows him to speak out in his own voice without destroying the credibility of his persona. Yet Bedlam gave him something more: I suggest that Swift's tours of the asylum demonstrated to him the peculiar flux of mad talk, and that he intentionally reproduced this effect in creating one of the most brilliant, difficult styles in English.

Swift does not advocate—as does the Modern Author—the release of all inmates of Bedlam; but neither does he share the paranoia of many of his contemporaries concerning the insane. As Michel Foucault has shown, the so-called Age of Reason feared unreason more than anything else.99 The sane locked up the insane in asylums like Bedlam and kept them out of sight except on tour days, when they could be viewed through a grate or watched as if they performed before an audience or jury of "normal" people. Even Willis was able to write that in hospitals for the insane we "may behold, not
without wonderful spectacle, as it were a new and monstrous nation of men, contrary to rational people, as it were our Antipodes."

Swift's view was closer to Locke's and Tryon's. Locke saw that sanity and insanity were not antipodes but were on a spectrum, and Tryon asked: "Are not all those Intemperances, Violence, Oppression, Murder, and savage Evil, and Superfluities deservedly to be accounted the worst Effects of Madness? As also Lying, Swearing, vain Imaginations, and living in and under the power of Evil Spirits, more to be dreaded than the condition of those that want the use of Senses and Reason; and therefore are esteemed Mad?"

The Modern argues that Epicurus, Lucretius, Descartes, and others, "if they were now in the World, tied fast, and separate from their Followers, would in this our undistinguishing Age, incur manifest Danger of Phlebotomy, and Whips, and Chains, and dark Chambers, and Straw" (p. 166). Of course, at least part of Swift would have thought that these thinkers, in the cause of good sense, should be used this way. But I take "this our undistinguishing Age" to be Swift talking, for the failure to distinguish, as we have seen, is the Modern's chief error. The boldest technique of A Tale of a Tub—Swift's partial identification of himself with his mad persona—by itself proves that he did not care to write about modern insanity from the safe position of modern sanity. The responsibility for distinguishing between sanity and insanity, truth and error, is in the Tale turned over to us; the Modern, himself insane, cannot do it, and Swift does it only indirectly, through irony. Swift agreed with Dryden that "Great wits are sure to madness near allied": he chose a madman as his persona and used the style and perceptions of that persona in order to score his own points—or, rather, in order to force us to experience an alternate, quite mad approach to a quite mad world.

1. In particular, Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason, trans. Richard Howard (New York, 1965); and Michael V. DePorte, Nightmares and Hobbyhorses: Swift, Sterne, and Augustan Ideas of Madness (San Marino, Calif., 1974). Here at the start I acknowledge my special debt to DePorte. Against the background of abnormal psychology in seventeenth-century England, he defines Swift's attitude toward the imagination, and then goes on to show how the Modern Author's madness affects the structure and style of A Tale of a Tub. I have pursued DePorte's connection between madness and style and have found, contrary to him, that Swift is not patly critical of the Modern's runaway imagination, but uses it for his own purposes.

2. It is interesting that one psychiatrist has urged the opposite, that literary
criticism might be used as a tool for understanding schizophrenia. See Maria Lorenz, "Criticism as Approach to Schizophrenic Language," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 9 (September 1963): 235–45. See also two recent books: Marshall Edelson, in *Language and Interpretation in Psychoanalysis* (New Haven, Conn., 1975), and Richard Bindler and John Grinder, in *The Structure of Magic*, vol. 1 (Palo Alto, Calif., 1975), recommend using transformational grammar as a tool for understanding patients in therapy. Edelson's discussion of linguistic "deviance" in literature and psychoanalysis is particularly relevant to the present study.

3. We ought to listen to R. D. Laing's warning in *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (1960) and *The Politics of Experience* (1967) that we have been too quick to clamp the term "schizophrenic" on certain unconventional people. We have also been too quick to call Swift's persona "mad."

4. In Swift's day the word "modern" could mean one thing in reference to the ancients-and-moderns controversy and another in reference to a contemporary author. Thus in *The Battle of the Books* Swift says: "This Temple having been educated and long conversed among the Ancients, was, of all the Moderns, their greatest Favorite, and became their greatest Champion" (p. 228).

5. "Great wits are sure to madness near allied," says Dryden in *Absalom and Achitophel* (lines 163–64); but the idea is found in Aristotle, Seneca, Shakespeare, Burton, and elsewhere.


12. In the *Tatler*, no. 30 (18 June 1709), Steele speaks of taking three boys (ages 12, 14, and 16) "a-rambling, in a hackney-coach, to show them the town, as the lions, the tombs, Bedlam, and the other places which are entertainment to raw minds, because they strike forcibly on the fancy" (*The Tatler*, ed. George A. Aitken [London, 1898], 1:247).


15. Tryon, p. 252.


19. John C. Nemiah, *Foundations of Psychopathology* (New York, 1961), p. 204, cites a patient who said to him: "I know what I was saying, but it doesn't seem as though I'm saying it to you; it seems as if I'm saying it to myself."

21. This is not, of course, the same as equating the madman and the artist. See Arieti, "Schizophrenic Cognition," p. 41; and J. S. Kasanin, *Language and Thought in Schizophrenia* (Berkeley, 1944), p. 102.

22. Freud outlined the main differences in a brief essay entitled "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning" (1911); but the theory lies also behind *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), and *The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming* (1908). Cf. Henry B. Veatch's distinction in *Two Logics: The Conflict between Classical and Neo-Analytic Philosophy* (Evanston, Ill., 1969). It is interesting that Veatch begins his book with a lengthy discussion of Swift's *Battle of the Books*, and carries throughout an opposition between what he calls "spider-logic" and "bee-logic."


25. And "happiness," we ought to recall, has been defined above as "a perpetual Possession of being well Deceived" (p. 171).

26. Cf. Brenner, p. 159: "From this point of view we may say that an activity like wit involves for both author and audience the partial and temporary reinstatement of the primary process as the dominant mode of thought."


29. Locke, 2. 33. 4.

30. Swift has literalized the common metaphor of the "unbridled" imagination as it is used, for example, by Willis (p. 201). Paradoxically, horseback riding was at this time recommended by some doctors as a treatment for madness.


32. Tryon, pp. 278-79. Cf. this other riding metaphor in Tryon, pp. 255-56: "The heart akes, the inward Body seems to swell, and becomes too little for the Soul ... and flings up the Reins of Government, and lets Reason, like a wilde Horse that hath cast off Bit and Bridle, and thrown his Rider, ramble confusedly whithersoever the Imagination shall hurry it." It is interesting that both Tryon and Swift use riding metaphors to describe the relationship between reason and imagination; but in Tryon reason is either the bridle or the horse, whereas in Swift reason is the overthrown rider.


34. Cf. Willis, p. 202: The animal spirits, "whilst they flow, they produce unaccustomed notions, and very absurd, whence there is a necessity, that the distempered do speak, and imagine for the most part incongruous and discomposed things."

35. J. D. Benjamin, "A Method for Distinguishing and Evaluating Formal


37. Ibid., p. 402.

38. Lorenz, p. 239.


42. Cameron, pp. 53–54.

43. Arieti, *Interpretation of Schizophrenia* (New York, 1955), pp. 209–19. Cf. Rudolph Arnheim, who in *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye* (Berkeley, 1954), p. 104, points out that formalism is characteristic of the pictures produced by schizophrenics: “The secluded intellect weaves fantastic cosmologies, systems of ideas, visions, and grandiose missionary projects. Since the sensory sources of natural form and meaning are clogged and the vital passions dried up, formal organization remains, as it were, unmodulated. The tendency to simple shape operates unhampered in the void. The result is order as such, with little left to be ordered. Remnants of thoughts and experiences are organized, not according to their meaningful interaction in the world of reality, but by purely formal similarities and symmetries.”


46. Cf. Lorenz, p. 243: “Language thus ceases to inform, although it continues to perform.”

47. Cf. case studies described by Laing in *The Divided Self*, pp. 104, 164.

48. Willis, p. 201.

49. See Guthkelch and Smith, p. 123 n. 2.

50. See Glossary under both words.

51. Lorenz, p. 242.

52. See Freud’s essay *The Unconscious* (1915), esp. chap. 6 and app. C.


55. Ned Ward’s *London-Spy, Compleat* (1700; rpt. London, 1924) offers a couple of examples of madmen’s confusion of the real with the hypothetical: literalizing a common metaphor, one Bedlamite is seen stomping on the floor and explains, “I am trampling down *Conscience* under my Feet” (p. 65); another inmate, when asked why he does not petition the Man in the Moon for some much-wanted claret, replies,
"I sent to him for a Dozen Bottles t'other day, and he swore by his Bush, his Cellar had been dry this six Months" (p. 68).


60. Laing, The Divided Self, p. 197.


63. Cf. Arieti, Interpretation of Schizophrenia, p. 243: "The more paleologically a person thinks, the more deprived he becomes of concepts or of Plato's universals. His ideas become more and more related to specific instances."

64. Swift's change in punctuation from the fuller stop of the semicolon to the lesser stop of the comma is indicative of the movement of this runaway sentence.


68. Ibid., p. 179a.


71. In England the work came to be known as The Port-Royal Logic. According to Wilbur S. Howell, Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700 (New York, 1961), p. 351, there were eight London editions between 1664 and 1700, including three English translations (1685, 1698, and 1696).


75. Ehrenpreis, p. 200; and Laffal, p. 29.
76. Laffal, p. 132 n. 1.
77. On this feature of schizophrenic thinking see Bleuler, *Dementia Praecox*, p. 23; and Arieti, *Interpretation of Schizophrenia*, p. 256.
80. Willis, pp. 202, 182.
81. Willis's discussions of the role of animal spirits in causing madness may have influenced Swift, and he may even be parodying Willis's water and fire metaphors. Cf. Willis: "the Animal Spirits, together with the juice watering the Brain" (p. 203); and "being agitated by the former, and as it were inkindled, cause as it were a flamy, though most thin contexture" (p. 103).
82. Cf. Rapaport's "phrase completion" cited above. The *Tale* is full of examples of this phenomenon, although none more humorous than the following: "The other Instance is, what I have read somewhere, in a very antient Author, of a mighty King, who for the space of above thirty years, amused himself to take and lose Towns; beat Armies, and be beaten; drive Princes out of their Dominions; fright Children from their Bread and Butter; burn, lay waste, plunder, dragoon, massacre Subject and Stranger, Friend and Foe, Male and Female" (p. 165).
83. Locke, 2. 11. 13.
85. Von Domarus, p. 112.
86. Ibid., pp. 109–10.
91. Locke, 4. 17. 6.
92. Paulson, p. 82.
95. Tryon, p. 261.
98. DePorte, p. 77. Cf. p. 119, where Swift refers to Peter's "lucid Intervals," and p. 209, where the Modern excuses the "short fits or Intervals of Dullness" he encountered in writing the *Tale*. Cf. Swift's *Discourse of the Contests and Dissentions Between the Nobles and the Commons in Athens and Rome* (1701): "This encourages me to hope, that during the present lucid Interval, the Members retired to their Homes, may suspend a while their acquired Complexions; and, taught by the Calmness of the Scene, and the Season, re-assume the native Sedateness of their Temper."

99. Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, for example, p. 76: "More effectively than any other kind of rationalism, better in any case than our positivism, classical rationalism could watch out and guard against the subterranean danger of unreason, that threatening space of an absolute freedom."

100. Willis, p. 208.

101. Locke, 2. 33. 4; and Tryon, p. 267.

102. Swift's concern for distinguishing is suggested by the following phrases from sections 9, 10, and 11 of the *Tale*: "a Point of the nicest Conduct to distinguish" (p. 168); "It will be a very delicate Point, to cut the Feather, and divide the several Reasons" (pp. 169-70); "the sole Point of Individuation" (p. 170); "Upon so nice a Distinction we are taught" (p. 175); "between whom and the former, the Distinction is extreamly nice" (p. 185); and "it was a Point of great Difficulty to distinguish" (p. 195).