

**JONATHAN SWIFT'S**  
**LITERARY INDEBTEDNESS**  
**TO TOM BROWN**

by

**Ronald Keith Olson**

**B.A. University of Colorado, 1958**

**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of the University of Colorado in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
Department of English  
1962**

**This Thesis  
for the M. A. degree by  
Ronald Keith Olson  
has been approved for the  
Department of  
English  
Date 19 February 1962**

Olson, Ronald Keith (M.A., English Literature)

## Jonathan Swift's Literary Indebtedness to Tom Brown

Thesis directed by Professor Henry Pettit

Traces of the influence of the writings of Tom Brown in the works of Jonathan Swift have been noted by certain scholars in the present century, Elbert N. S. Thompson, Benjamin Boyce, and William Eddy. The main contentions of these scholars are here examined for the purpose of finding perspectives in the Brown-Swift relationship.

There are four general areas in which the similarities between Swift and Brown are traceable. Most significant are the similarities that have been noted between Swift's A Tale of a Tub and various works of Brown, especially his pamphlet, Mr. Alsop's State of Conformity. Although this pamphlet is the most relevant, it also represents a significant, and unresolved, problem concerning dates. Brown's pamphlet, though written in 1687, was not published until 1704, the same year as A Tale of a Tub, and the very obvious similarity between the two is very difficult to explain without more precise knowledge of the publishing dates of the two works. Swift's Gulliver's Travels is the second major work discussed as a reflection of Brown's influence. The third is Swift's Bickerstaff Papers as they relate to Brown's Predictions of Sylvester Partridge. The fourth area of similarity is noted in some of Swift's poems and their resemblance to various works of Brown.

Delineating the areas of similarity between the two writers with the attendant discussions strongly suggests the need for recognition of a Brown-Swift relationship in any consideration of Swift's achievement. Also indicated is a greater focus upon an unduly neglected Tom Brown, perhaps lamentably tagged with the ironic epithet--"of facetious memory."

This abstract of about 250 words is approved as to form and content. I recommend its publication.

Signed [Henry Pettit]  
Instructor in charge of dissertation

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

| CHAPTER  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| I. INTRODUCTION .....  |      |
| II. <u>GULLIVER'S TRAVELS</u> AND THE WORKS OF TOM BROWN.....            |      |
| III. THE <u>BICKERSTAFF PAPERS</u> AND THE WORKS OF TOM BROWN .....      |      |
| IV. <u>THOUGHTS MORAL AND DIVERTING</u> AND THE WORKS OF TOM BROWN ..... |      |
| V. SWIFT'S POETRY AND THE WORKS OF TOM BROWN.                            |      |
| VI. <u>A TALE OF A TUB</u> AND THE WORKS OF TOM BROWN.                   |      |
| VII. CONCLUSIONS.  |      |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY   |      |



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Jonathan Swift, 1667-1746, one of the greatest satirists in English Literature, needs little introduction. His Gulliver's Travels and A Tale of a Tub have caused his to be described as a "literary artist of the greatest brilliance."<sup>1</sup> He has been proclaimed to be one whose "pen has opened to generations a treasury of mental delight and moral teaching that will enrich life so long as the English tongue exists."<sup>2</sup> There are undoubtedly many who would be unwilling to accept such statements without some reservations, but there are few who would seriously challenge the ever present need to enlarge our image and broaden our knowledge of such a figure as Swift.

Less known, but equally important to this paper, is Tom Brown, 1663-1704. Brown is described by one of his biographers as "small beer."<sup>3</sup> When the total picture of Brown is viewed, this seems to be an unfair and ill-chosen

---

<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels: and Other Writings, ed. Ricardo Quintana (New York: Random House, 1958), p. vii; hereafter cited as Quintana's Swift.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Swift, The Works of the Rev. Jonathan Swift, D.D., ed. D. Laing Purves (London: William P. Nimmo, 1879), p. 40; hereafter cited as Purves' Swift.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Boyce, Tom Brown of Facetious Memory (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1939), p. vii.

---

description, for although he was not a leading figure himself, his influence will be seen to be deeper than heretofore recognized. To many, Brown simply the author of the quatrain:

"I do not love you Dr. Fell.  
But why I cannot tell  
But this I know full well,  
I do not love you, Dr. Fell."<sup>4</sup>

To others known only by the name given to him by Joseph Addison, "T-m Br-wn, of facetious Memory."<sup>5</sup>

The most recent and thorough historian of Brown, Benjamin Boyce, lists Brown's birthplace as Newport in Shropshire and the date of his baptism as January 1, 1663.<sup>6</sup> The son of a tanner or farmer, Tom received his early education at Newport's free grammar school. His later education was at Christ Church, Oxford, where the well-known incident with Dr. Fell, the Dean, occurred.<sup>7</sup> For a while Brown "taught school at Kingston-on-Thames; afterwards settled in London."<sup>8</sup> In 1688, Brown attacked the leading poet of the day,

---

<sup>4</sup> Tom Brown, Works of Mr. Thomas Brown, 8th ed. (London: Henry Lintot, and Charles Hitch, 1744), IV, 100.

<sup>5</sup> Boyce, p. 181.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-8.

<sup>8</sup> The Concise Dictionary of National Biography, ed. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee (London: Oxford University Press, 1920), p. 155.



John Dryden, in a pamphlet entitled, The Reason of Mr. Bays Changing his Religion. According to Boyce, his satire and the two succeeding parts, published in 1690, definitely established his reputation; even at court."<sup>9</sup> His reputation grew until he became established as won- of the foremost professional men of letters in his day . . . demonstrated by the fact that his name frequently appeared on the title page of books to which he actually contributed very little."<sup>10</sup> A more relevant statement of his position among his contemporaries is made by Swift, who, speaking through Simon Wagstaff, says, "I have read Mr. Thomas Brown's works entire, and had the honour to be his intimate friend, who was universally allowed to be the greatest genius of his age."<sup>11</sup> Dr. James Drake, Brown's close friend and enthusiastic associate. in writing a preface to the collected works of Brown some forty years after Brown's death concurs in Swift's evaluation and says that Brown was "undeniably one of our greatest genius's."<sup>12</sup> He goes on to say that "'tho' some may have excell'd him in some particular, scarce anyone has reached him in all."<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Boyce, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup> Benjamin Boyce, "The Life and Works of Tom Brown, 1663-1704," Harvard University Summaries of Theses (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1933), p. 278.

<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Swift, The Works of Jonathan Swift, ed. Sir Walter Scott (London: Bickers & Son, 1883}, IX, 366. Hereafter cited as Scott's Swift.

<sup>12</sup> Brown, Works, I, xii.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

After a rather short life, "Brown died in Aldersgate Street on 18 June 1704, and was buried in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, near his friend Mrs. Aphra Behn."<sup>14</sup> It was after his death that Brown's reputation took its greatest downgrading, for, as Dr. Drake says, "perhaps one, and the main reason, why Mr. Brown has been charged with inequality in his writings, is, that most of the anonymous things that took with the town were father'd upon him."<sup>15</sup> That modern scholarship agrees with Drake's diagnosis is to be seen in Boyce's biography in the chapter entitled, "After Death, Damnation."<sup>16</sup>

Thus Brown, who died "as probably the best known journalist of his day,"<sup>17</sup> was defamed by those "men he had attacked"<sup>18</sup> and has continued to meet a similar fate from those of later generations. The condemnations first made from wounded vanity were continued, according to Boyce, because of "the grossness of his realism and the ribaldry of his humor"<sup>19</sup> and without proper consideration of Tom Brown's milieu

---

<sup>14</sup> The Dictionary of National Biography, ed. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee (London: Oxford University Press, 1886), VII, 30.

<sup>15</sup> Brown, Works, I, xi.

<sup>16</sup> Boyce, Tom Brown of Facetious Memory, p. 178.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

The primary purpose of this study is to add to the present fund of knowledge Of Swift and Brown via a pattern of relationships. This approach has been spoken of as "The most obvious, and one that has been treated most frequently and constitutes a staple of traditional scholarship."<sup>20</sup> Further comment on this approach adds the assurance that, "the establishment of literary relationships between authorities obviously a most important preparation for the writing of such literary history,"<sup>21</sup> such a history being any comprehensive historical study of a given period.

A second goal of this study will be to present a better perspective, than has yet been made available, of the debt of Swift to Brown. The nature and depth of this debt will be made more apparent by bringing together for the first time the most relevant comments of those authorities who have studied the Swift-Brown relationship. In pursuance of this goal, each work of Swift will be related to the various works of Brown according to the patterns already outlined by the various scholars. This is, in effect, a restatement of the present views of the relationship. Any new evidences or similarities indicating a connection between the two writers should come to light in the process.

---

<sup>20</sup> Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (New York Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1956), p. 747.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 247-248.

The search for literary relationships between Brown and Swift should not be permitted to obscure the fact that they both are indebted to Samuel Butler, 1613-1680, whose "usual methods are burlesque, through distortion, and travesty, through vulgarization."<sup>22</sup> Butler is best known for Hudibras,<sup>23</sup> which is largely filled with attacks on Puritans<sup>24</sup> It will become apparent, as this study develops, that both Swift and Brown strongly resemble Butler in their approach, which was for the most part satirical, and in their objective to expose "the ridiculous folly and knavery"<sup>25</sup> of the Dissenters. Swift's strongest attack is found in A Tale of a Tub in his recounting of the adventures of Jack, who is representative of the Dissenters. Brown is outspoken in his condemnation of the dissenting groups in both prose and verse; instances are scattered throughout his works. As will be seen, both Swift and Brown abound in "vulgarization" and "distortion."

That Swift was familiar with Hudibras is a certainty established by the many references to the work that are found throughout the Tale of a Tub. Brown's familiarity with Hudibras is evidenced in the Amusements Serious and Comical

---

<sup>22</sup> A Literary History of England, ed. Albert C. Baugh (New York. Appleton-Century- Crofts, Inc., 1948), p. 735.

<sup>23</sup> A Collection of English Poems, ed. Ronald S. Crane (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932), p. 149.

<sup>24</sup> Baugh, p. 734.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 735.

wherein he says: "As if (as Hudibras has it) they worshipped God for spite."<sup>26</sup> He also refers to Butler as "the ingenious Butler."<sup>27</sup>

A brief resume of the main works of Swift and Brown is necessary here to serve as a frame of reference and broad outline of the study. The progression, it will be noted, is from Swift's later works to his earlier ones. This is the same pattern followed in the study. The primary reason for this system is to avoid any conflict of dates of publication until the latter part of the paper. Therefore the section on Tale of a Tub is reserved for the last section since considerable difficulty is encountered with regard to dates.

Gulliver's Travels is a satiric work by Swift published in 1726 which purports to be an account of several voyages to various unexplored regions of the world. The places and people encountered are used as a means to satirize various facets of English life.

The Bickerstaff Papers are an assortment of papers published in the years 1708-1709 in which Swift predicts the death of a charlatan astrologer, John Partridge. The papers include the prediction itself, a paper describing the death scene, and one in which Bickerstaff is vindicated. The latter paper is an answer to the objection of Partridge, who steps into Swift's snare by proclaiming he is not dead; Swift snaps

---

<sup>26</sup> Brown, Works, III, 104.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

shut his satiric trap by pointing out that surely no man alive could write such as appeared in Partridge's writings and therefore that Partridge was dead was not open to question. Thus, the theme throughout is an attack upon John Partridge.

A Tale of a Tub is Swift's brilliant satiric attack upon the three main religious groups of England. Swift represents these groups as three brothers--Peter (Roman Catholics), Jack (Dissenters), and Martin (Church of England}. This work is believed to have been written in 1696-1697; it was first published in 1704. The allegory is built around three identical coats given the brothers by their father and the will he left concerning the wearing of the coats; it is liberally interlarded with "digressions" of ostensibly irrelevant concern.

No one work of Brown's is as long as any of Swift's; they are, for the most part, short papers of a few hundred words. The one exception to this is Brown's Amusements Serious and Comical. It is a work consisting of a series of commentaries on life of the times. The range of Brown's subjects was wide and included comments on almost every aspect of life from the court down to bawdy houses. Some of the work was translated from a French book, Amusements Serieux et Comiques (1699), however, the parts relevant to this study are believed to be Brown's own. Brown achieved objectivity in his Amusements through the use of an Indian

who supposedly was seeing English society for the first time. The Amusements was published in 1700.

Brown's Laconics, published in 1701 is a series of short paragraphs that are unconnected in thought or content. In general they are comments on philosophy, religion, politics, and whenever other subject happened to interest the author. It serves to illustrate the diversity and depth of Brown's thought.

Mr. Alsop's State of Conformity is typical of the type of pamphlet that Brown wrote most frequently. The theme arises out of the Declaration of Indulgence (1687). The pamphlet is a record of a mythical conversation between an Oxford student and a Mr. Alsop in the course of which a story is told that in many respects strongly resembles the three brothers theme in Swift's Tale of a Tub. The work, written in 1687, was not published until 1703.

## CHAPTER II

### GULLIVER'S TRAVELS AND THE WORKS OF TOM BROWN

The first allusion to a Swiftian debt to Tom Brown was made "In 1917," when Elbert N. S. Thompson called attention . . . to the influences of Brown upon Swift."<sup>1</sup> It was Thompson who "noted unmistakable borrowing from Brown's Amusements Serious and Comical, in the occupations of some of the members of the Academy of Lagado."<sup>2</sup>

William Eddy concurs with Thompson's contentions and restates Thompson's case in his study of Gulliver's Travels.<sup>3</sup> In addition to this, Eddy states his own belief that Swift owes Brown a considerable debt," and "in Gulliver pages, satirizing physicians, soldiers, and lawyers, are all but verbal counterparts of similar passages in the works of Brown."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> William A. Eddy, Gulliver's Travels: A Critical Study (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1923), p.64.



<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 46-47.

The influence of Brown's Amusements is also noted by Benjamin Boyce who speaks of the "echoes in Gulliver, . . . . of the Amusements."<sup>5</sup> Boyce's chapter on the Amusements, in his biographical study of Brown, is given mostly to a consideration of precedents and possible sources. The possible influences that the Amusements might have exerted on Swift are left to Eddy. In a footnote, Boyce says, "The probable debts to Brown in Swift's account of Laputa are described by W. A. Eddy (Gulliver's Travels: A Critical Study, pp. 37, 162-163)";<sup>6</sup> these debts will be considered through this chapter as they fit into the overall scheme.

When N. S. Thompson opens the door to a comparative study of Gulliver and Amusements Serious and Comical, he suggests that "the satire at the expense of the scientists and philosophers in the third book of Gulliver's Travels may have been suggested by Brown."<sup>7</sup> Thompson selects three specific points from the Amusements to support his views. The first comes from a "satire, among the relics of interest to Papists,"<sup>8</sup> wherein Brown speaks of "the Quadrant that a Philistine Taylor took the height of Goliah by. when he made

---

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin Boyce, Tom Brown of Facetious Memory, p. 182\* All subsequent references to Boyce will be to the cited in this note. unless otherwise noted.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>7</sup> Elbert N. S. Thompson, "Tom Brown and the Satirists," Modern Language Notes, XXXII (1917). 93.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

his last Suit of Cloaths."<sup>9</sup> The similarity to Gulliver, mentioned but not developed by Thompson, occurs in the first adventure of Gulliver, in his "Voyage to Lilliput."<sup>10</sup> To determine "a Quantity of Meat and Drink, sufficient for the Support of 1728 Lilliputians" which was to be Gulliver's ration of food "his Majesty's Mathematicians, having taken the Height of my Body by the Help of a Quadrant"<sup>11</sup> were able to make their computations. It is in the use of a quadrant to determine bodily proportions that the similarity is apparent. quite unique, and worthy of note.

Thompson's second instance of similarity refers to Brown's "Amusement X, The Philosophical, or Virtuosi Country"<sup>12</sup> wherein Brown "professed to find"<sup>13</sup> gentlemen they called improvers of nature, . . . an old bard cutting asp-leaves into tongues, which were to be fastened into the mouths of flowers, fruits, herbs, and seeds, with design to make the whole creation vocal."<sup>14</sup> Thompson also draws attention to scientists engaged in "Putting a period to the abtruse

---

<sup>9</sup> Thompson, p. 93.

<sup>10</sup> Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels: and Other Writings, ed. Ricardo Quintana (New York: Random House, 1958), pp. 3-56. Hereafter cited as Quintana's Swift.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> Tom Brown, The Works of Mr. Thomas Brown, 8th ed. (London: Henry Lintot, and Charles Hitch, 1744), III. 86.

<sup>13</sup> Thompson, p. 93.

<sup>14</sup> Brown, Works, III, 86-87.

debates between the Engineers and Mouse-trap makers." No further attempt to develop the similarities is made other than to state that "The scientists whom Gulliver found were wasting their tire in speculations very similar to these."<sup>16</sup> This case for Brown's influence on Swift needs elaboration if it is to be seriously regarded.

The "scientists"<sup>17</sup> referred to are, of course, those that Gulliver encounters in the "Academy of Lagado."<sup>18</sup> William Eddy points out the most obvious and clearly drawn instance of a Swift debt to Brown in the affair of the construction of buildings.<sup>19</sup>

| <u>Brown</u>  | <u>Swift</u>                        |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| "They lay their foundations ingenious in the air, and when they are contrived | "There was a most architect who had |

come to solid ground, the building disappears, and the architects tumble from the downward clouds."<sup>20</sup> a new method for houses, by beginning at roof. and working to the foundation."<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Brown, Works, III, 87.

<sup>16</sup> Thompson, P. 93.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Quintana's Swift, p. 143.

<sup>19</sup> Eddy, p. 163.

<sup>20</sup> Brown, Works, III. 86.

<sup>21</sup> Quintana's Swift, p. 143.

Eddy also draws attention to the division of the academies of both Swift and Brown when he states "that the Academy described by Brown is divided into two departments, 1.-Experimental Philosophy (Science), and 2.-Contemplative Philosophy. The Academy of Lagado likewise divides itself into 1.-The Projectors, and 2.-Advancers of Speculative Learning."<sup>22</sup>

This very obvious structural similarity is merely pointed out as another one of the "parallels" that have never "been noted before."<sup>23</sup> Eddy adds the two similarities he has

noted<sup>24</sup> to the "resemblances between the two academies, pointed out by Thompson . . . ; the total being, I believe, sufficient to establish the influence of Tom Brown at this point."<sup>25</sup> The scope and intent of this paper, however, require elaboration of these "parallels" with greater attention to specific similarities.

An absolutely true line cannot be established between the corresponding departments of the two academies even though the similarities are quite obvious. "The Philosophical or Virtuosi Country"<sup>26</sup> wherein are found the "improvers

<sup>22</sup> Eddy, p. 162.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p. 163.

<sup>26</sup> Brown, Works, III, 86.

of nature"<sup>27</sup> corresponds to Swift's "Academy of PROJECTORS."<sup>28</sup> Both the "improvers of nature" and "Projectors" have the same stated goal. For the "Projectors," "the universal Artist" seems to speak for the group when he says, "he had been Thirty years employing his Thoughts for the Improvement of human life."<sup>29</sup> The counterparts of the "Projectors," the

"improvers of nature," seek "great discoveries for the publick advantage of mankind!"<sup>30</sup>

The second sections of both academies correspond most strongly in their avowed general nature. Brown's department of "Contemplative Philosophy"<sup>31</sup> is composed of a "curious collection of contemplative gentlemen, that had their employments severally assigned to them."<sup>32</sup> The nature of the second section of Swift's academy is best noted, for the purpose here, in its name--the section of "speculative Learning."<sup>33</sup> The similarity is not strong enough to be pursued further because of the brevity and unclear delineation of this section of Brown's academy.

---

<sup>27</sup> Brown, Works, III, 86.

<sup>28</sup> Quintana's Swift, p. 141.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>30</sup> Brown, Works, III, 86.

<sup>31</sup> Eddy, p. 162.

<sup>32</sup> Brown, Works, III, 87.

<sup>33</sup> Quintana's Swift, p. 145.

A heretofore unmentioned relationship must be produced at this juncture. The chapter immediately following "The Philosophical Country" in the Amusements is entitled "Physic" and is wholly given to a satiric attack on medical

science in general and doctors in particular. Thus the first relationship is a matter of similarity of subject. The ignorance of the doctors and their ludicrous treatments are satirized by Brown throughout the chapter; the following example typifies his attack:

How I pity a patient of good sense that falls into th'r hands; He is obliged at once to combat the arguments of the doctor, the disease itself, the remedies and emptiness.<sup>34</sup>

Brown's attack on the physicians is sustained throughout the chapter and is composed for numerous such situations.

Two of Swift's satires on doctors will serve to illustrate the similarity. The first example develops when Gulliver "complaining of a small Fit of the Cholick" led. . . into a Room, where a great Physician resided, who was famous for curing that Disease."<sup>35</sup> The cure consisted of using a bellows to force air in and out of the patient's anus. The second attack by Swift on physicians occurs when Gulliver is visiting the academy of "speculative Learning." hence the relationship of Brown's chapter on "Physic" must be considered to transcend the bounds of the relationships

---

<sup>34</sup> Brown, Works, III, 88-92.

<sup>35</sup> Quintana's Swift, pp. 144-145.

adhered to in noting the similarities of the corresponding sections of the two academies. This satire is presented as a

suggestion by one of the doctors in the academy that "When parties in a state are violent," their heads should be split and one of the halves exchanged for a half-brain from one member of the opposition. The doctor claimed "the Cure would be infallible" for the controversy could then be reconciled within one skull.<sup>36</sup>

Additional evidence of a similarity between Brown's "Physic" and Swift's academy is seen when Swift's Academy of the "Projectors in speculative Learning" is likened to the "college" of the physicians "erected. . . for the improvement of the mystery of manslaughter."<sup>37</sup> The "college," like the academy, is departmentalized for it has a "chymical elaboratory" and in "another place were apothecaries preparing medicines."<sup>38</sup> Both Swift and Brown then, visualized an academy that provided for separate departments, and it is in this sameness of structure that the similarity lies.

Further similarity between "Physic" and Swift's academy is seen in the fact that in both works the inhabitants are engaged in ludicrous activities. For example, the "ugly incident" in "Physic" wherein a boy had swallowed a knife and "the members of the college being sitting, he was brought

---

<sup>36</sup> Quintana's Swift, p. 151.

<sup>37</sup> Brown, Works, III, 89.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

among them to be cured, if it were possible."<sup>39</sup> Various preposterous suggestions were advanced such as that of



applying "a loadstone to his arse, and so draw it out by magnetick attraction."<sup>40</sup> When this is contrasted to Swift's doctors who for "Favorites of Princes . . . troubled with short and weak Memories; . . . proposed. . . a Tweak by the Nose, or a Kick in the Belly, or tread on his Corns, or lug him thrice by both Ears, or run a Pin into his Breech, or pinch his Arm black and blue;"<sup>41</sup> the similarity in general atmosphere of the "college" in "Physic" and the Academy in Lagado becomes at once apparent.

To complete the case for similarities between works of Brown and Gulliver's Travels, two works of Brown remain to be considered. The first needs only a brief acknowledgment. It concerns a work in which Brown is involved only because of his having translated it from Italian. E. B. Reed uncovered this aspect of the Swift-Brown relationship which is based upon conversations with horses.

I believe it is possible that another book by Brown gave Swift certain hints for the Fourth Voyage of Gulliver. This book is

The Circe of Signior Giovanni Battista Gelli of the Academy of Florence. Consisting of Ten Dialogues between Ulysses and several Men transform'd into Beasts: Satirically representing the various Passions of Mankind and the many infellicities

---

<sup>39</sup> Brown, Works, III, 91

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Quintana's Swift, p. 151.

of human Life. Done out of Italian by Mr. Tho. Brown, London, 1702.<sup>42</sup>

The second relationship, only slightly more significant, is treated by Eddy who says, "Gulliver's visit with the departed spirits in Glubbudbrib is modelled on Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead, and their imitation by Tom Brown, Lyttleton, Pryor, and many others."<sup>43</sup> The similarity is very general and limited to the fact that both works center around the same theme, i.e., revelations of the dead.

Much more relevant as a related work to Swift's "Voyage to Glubbudbrib" is Brown's series of Letters From The Dead to the Living.<sup>44</sup> Although Brown was more selective of subjects for his attacks, the theme of both is very similar in that both strike out against the corruptions that existed in recent history. Swift speaks out directly after Gulliver's visit with the dead:

I was chiefly disgusted with modern History. For having strictly examined all the persons of greatest Name in the Courts of Princes for an Hundred Years past, I found how the World had been misled by prostitute Writers. . . . How many innocent and excellent Persons had been condemned to Death or Banishment, by the practising of great Ministers upon the Corruption of Judges. and the Malice of Factions.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Edward B. Reed, "Gulliver's Travels and Tom Brown," Modern Language Notes. XXXIII (1918), 57.

<sup>43</sup> Eddy, p. 164.

<sup>44</sup> Brown, Works, II, 1.

<sup>45</sup> Quintana's Swift, pp. 159-160.

Brown's Joseph Haines, who is conducted on a tour of Hell by a Mr. Nokes, makes his discoveries known via a letter "to his Friends at Will's Coffee-House."<sup>46</sup> The most general statement that is comparable to the one cited from Gulliver's Travels and that best reveals the thematic similarity is made by Haines upon his visit to Hell's bedlam:

But of all the various sorts of mad-men that came hither, the rhimers or versifiers far exceed the rest in number: most of these fellows in the other world were mayors or aldermen, or deputies of wards, that knew nothing but the rising and falling of stocks, squeezing young heirs, and cheating their customers . . .<sup>47</sup>

As the tour continues:

So my friend and I turn'd up to the apartment where the republicans were lock'd up, who made such a hurricane and noise, as if a legion of devils had been broken loose among them.<sup>48</sup>

Remembering Swift's complaint against the "prostitute writers" the following comments of Brown' Joe Haines are especially relevant. "But what think you of my memoirs cries Ludlow, for if you talk of histories, there's a history for you. which for sincerity and truths, never saw its fellow since the creation."<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> Brown, Works, II, 1.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

The relationships between Swift and Brown seem very real. They extend beyond the general statements set forth by the authorities who have thus far commented upon the relationship. However, the similarity is not limited to Gulliver's Travels and The Works of Brown; other works of Swift yet remain to be compared.

## CHAPTER III

### **THE BICKERSTAFF PAPERS AND THE WORKS OF TOM BROWN**

Before speaking of the Bickerstaff Papers, it is necessary to outline exactly the confines of the term. Throughout this study reference to the Bickerstaff Papers will be restricted to the following:

"Predictions for the Year 1708"

"The Accomplishment of the First of Mr. Bickerstaff's Predictions"

"Being an Account of the Death of Mr. Partridge"

"A Vindication of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq.

"A Famous Prediction."<sup>1</sup>

John Partridge, the subject of the above series of works was "a well known astrologer and a thorough rascal," and "had since the days of Charles II been putting out an annual almanac, the Merlinus Liberatus, containing predictions of forthcoming events."<sup>2</sup> As shall be seen, Partridge had been

---

<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Swift, The Works of the Rev. Jonathan Swift, D.D., ed. D. Laing-Purves (London: William P. Nimmo, 1879), pp. 544-556; hereafter cited as Purves' Swift.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels: and Other Writings, ed. Ricardo Quintana (New York: Random House, 1958), p. 419; hereafter cited as Quintana's Swift.

set upon before Swift took up the attack in 1708 with his "Predictions for the Year 1708" which "purporting to be by one Isaac Bickerstaff, also an astrologer, appeared before the end of January, 1708."<sup>3</sup> One of Swift's predecessors in this affair was Tom Brown. The ensuing discussion will seek to establish the extent of Swift's debt to Tom Brown, the nature of this debt, and also to evaluate the significance of this indebtedness with respect to the broader pattern of Swift-Brown relationship being developed.

Again Elbert N. S. Thompson is the first to bring Brown's part in the Partridge case to light. Thompson points out that Swift began tormenting Partridge after the stage had already been set by Drown. Bickerstaff may indeed have thrown the final blow at Partridge but, according to Thompson, after Brown had set the stage "Swift had simply to carry on the joke."<sup>4</sup>

Brown's cause is taken up with a good deal more zeal by William Eddy, who, attempting to set the record straight, declares that accounts of the Bickerstaff-Partridge affair, which fail to acknowledge attacks on Partridge prior to Bickerstaff, are "inaccurate and incomplete."<sup>5</sup> Eddy then goes on to say,

---

<sup>3</sup> Quintana's Swift, p. 419.

<sup>4</sup> Elbert N. S . Thompson, "Tom Brown and the Satirists," Modern Language Notes, XXXII (1917), 92.

<sup>5</sup> William A. Eddy, "Tom Brown and Partridge the Astrologer," Modern Philology, XXVII (November, 1930), 163.

Investigation shows Brown was the earliest as well as the most persistent of Partridge's tormentors, and that his mock predictions, published in 1700, anticipated almost every point in Bickerstaff's later attack, except Swift's inimitable gravity and pseudo-seriousness. <sup>6</sup>

Eddy's emphasis is upon "the character of Brown's parody of the astrologer to prove how important was his share in the attack upon Partridge. "<sup>7</sup> Since the concern here is with specific similarities between Brown and Swift, Eddy's comments will be helpful primarily in the role of a guide to Brown-on-Swift influence. Eddy's findings are also useful, incidentally, in that they reinforce the assertions that Brown sustained the earliest assault on Partridge, who served as the magnet that attracted first Brown's then Swift's attention.

In the interests of chronology, the latter use of Eddy's comments will be made to briefly trace the history of Brown's attention to Partridge. Brown makes his first comment to Partridge in 1685 in an imitation of Horace:

Damn your Gadbury, Partridge, and Salmon together,  
What a puling discourse have we here of the weathert<sup>8</sup>

Brown mentions Partridge at least one more time--  
1694—before 1700 when "Brown published weekly a series of  
mock predictions

---

<sup>6</sup> Eddy, "Tom Brown and Partridge the Astrologer," p.  
163.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Tom Browns The Works of Mr. Thomas Brown, 8th  
ed. (London: Henry Lintot and Charles Hitch, 1744), IV, 7.

under the title:

"A Comical View of the Transactions that will  
happen in the cities of London and Westminster . . .  
. . . by SYLVESTER PARTRIDGE, Student in  
Physick and Astrology."<sup>9</sup>

It is noted that these mockeries of "John Partridge" are  
signed by "Sylvester Partridge." This is one of Brown's means  
of satire; the satiric aspect arises out of the fact that because  
"Sylvester" was "so obscure" the use of his name was a  
"doubtful honor."<sup>10</sup> Thus the fact that Brown preceded Swift is  
well established.

The extent of Brown's writings on this subject is  
noteworthy in that the substantial number of pamphlets--"John  
Nichols tells us . . . that he saw eighteen numbers among the  
Harleian MS5 at the British Museum, all dated 1700"<sup>11</sup>--  
increases the probability of Swift's familiarity with them. This  
probability is heightened to an almost certainty when it is  
noted that Brown's papers were "reprinted in Brown's Works  
in 1705 and again in 1707, the year before Swift wrote his first  
Predictions."<sup>12</sup>



---

<sup>9</sup> Eddy, "Tom Brown and Partridge the Astrologer." p. 164.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 164

<sup>12</sup> William A. Eddy, "The Wits vrs. John Partridge, Astrologer," Studies in Philology, XXIX (January, 1932), 35.

One of the most striking similarities between the predictions of "Sylvester Partridge" and "Isaac Bickerstaff" occurs at the outset of the respective works. "Sylvester Partridge" justifies his predictions by noting that

Whereas the town has been banter'd near two months with a sham account of the weather, pretended to be taken from Barometers, Thermometers, Microscopes, Telescopes, and such heathenish instruments . . . and likewise whereas the planets that have regulated the almanacks for about two thousand years, have been most wickedly slandered by a late author, . . . the publisher of this paper has been persuaded by his friends, to print these infallible predictions.<sup>13</sup>

The corresponding words of "Isaac Bickerstaff" illustrate the close similarity in both subject and approach. "Bickerstaff," in the headnote, declares his paper to be "written to prevent the people of England from Being Farther imposed on by Vulgar Almanack-Makers."<sup>14</sup> Then in the first sentence of text he begins by saying "I have considered the

gross abuse of astrology in this kingdom, and . upon debating the matter with myself, I could not possibly lay the fault upon the art, but upon those gross imposters who set up to be the artists."<sup>15</sup>

Further similarity occurs when both "Bickerstaff" and "Sylvester Partridge" lay claim to the ability to forecast

---

<sup>13</sup> Brown, Works, IV, 145.

<sup>14</sup> Purves' Swift, p. 544.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

the happening of events in foreign countries. "Sylvester Partridge" claims that "I could much enlarge my predictions, and foretel what would happen in foreign countries, as well as what will fall out in London."<sup>16</sup> Approximately a year later, "Bickerstaff" announces that "As for the most signal events abroad in France, Flanders, Italy, and Spain, I shall make no scruple to predict them in plain terms."<sup>17</sup>

Still other similarities between the two astrologers have been noted, "Swift and Brown both adroitly confess to slight errors of time and place in their predictions, thereby implying their own honesty and general credibility."<sup>18</sup> In addition to this tactic for achieving verisimilitude, in "Brown's daily predictions . . . he anticipates Swift and resembles the real Partridge in his Protestant zeal, in his vagueness and ambiguity, and in his preference for incidents that are sure to occur somewhere to the inevitable credit of the prophet."<sup>19</sup>

These assertions are best illustrated by the "Protestant zeal" mentioned by Eddy which can be seen in "Sylvester

Partridge" as he tells his readers, after speaking disparagingly of the Pope, and referring to himself as a "Protestant astrologer," that "I hope I shall never change my

---

<sup>16</sup> Brown, Works, I, 147.

<sup>17</sup> Purves' Swift, p. 544.

<sup>18</sup> Eddy, "Tom Brown and Partridge the Astrologer," p. 166.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 167.

religion, tho' the king of Poland do so."<sup>20</sup> The same "Protestant zeal" is evidenced by "Bickerstaff" who, relating that an objection was raised because of the failure of one of his prophecies to occur, turns to an ad hominum argument and speaks out against the objector, "but how for a Frenchman, a Papist, and an enemy, is to be believed in his own cause against English Protestant who is true to the government, I shall leave to the candid and impartial reader."<sup>21</sup>

A more complete development of Brown's "Sylvester Partridge" and the satire of his mockeries of John Partridge is available, but is not of further value here.<sup>22</sup> What is more relevant to this study is the inescapable fact that Tom Brown did, indeed, through his predictions by "Sylvester Partridge" have an effect on the shaping of Swift's "Isaac Bickerstaff." Swift's debt to Brown seems deep enough to suggest that Swift borrowed both general ideas, as evidenced by the beginnings

of both predictions, as well as specific subjects, which is indicated by numerous incidents of both attacking the same institution, i.e., the Catholic Church. With regard to the extent of borrowing, it is extensive enough to justify saying that Swift certainly was very familiar with Brown's "Sylvester Partridge." The general

---

<sup>20</sup> Brown, Works, I,153-154.

<sup>21</sup> Purves' Swift, p.554.

<sup>22</sup> Eddy, "Tom Brown and Partridge the Astrologer," "The Wits vrs. John Partridge, Astrologer."

pattern of the Brown-Swift relationship that is being developed is strengthened by this new series of similarities and suggests much that is yet to be done.

## CHAPTER IV

### **THOUGHTS MORAL AND DIVERTING AND THE WORKS OF TOM BROWN**

The suggestion of a similarity between Swift and Brown in the area to be covered in this chapter was made by Eddy who tells his reader to "Compare Swift's Thoughts Moral and Diverting, with Brown's Laconics."<sup>1</sup> He also suggests that "It is possible. . . to point out close imitation of Brown . . . in Swift's collections of satiric epigrams and witty sayings."<sup>2</sup>

It is my intention here to pursue Eddy's suggestion to "compare" the two works. Any valid similarities discovered

will advance the case for the relationships by providing a firmer foundation for Eddy's general assertion. The primary basis of comparison will be subject matter and the attendant attitude toward the subject.

The Thoughts of Swift bear two dates, 1706 and 1726, and are said to have been motivated when "Pope and Swift, being once in the country, agreed to write down the

---

<sup>1</sup> William A. Eddy, Gulliver's Travels: A Critical Study (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1923, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

involuntary thoughts that occurred to them during the day."<sup>3</sup> Both parts will be considered since both were preceded by the Laconics which first appeared in 1701, and again in 1705.<sup>4</sup> Boyce presents a good general picture of the Laconics when he says they "consist of a general statement and an illustrative anecdote of a droll or curious nature."<sup>5</sup>

Brown composed his "Maxims of Conversation" during a period in which "his abilities as a translator was now generally acknowledged" and he "was living, we may assume, on the proceeds of several works which would appear early in the following year."<sup>6</sup> The wide range of interest that is indicated by the Laconics perhaps better than any other single work reveals that aspect of Brown's nature that moved him to

write in so many different areas and helps explain the great energy that seems to pervade everything he wrote.

The subjects of the Laconics are numerous but it is possible to detect four areas that seem to prevail and occupy the central position. These subjects are: religion, politics, medicine, and morality. Boyce also detects four such areas, but omits religion and counts government and politics

---

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Swift, The Works of the Rev. Jonathan Swift, D.D., ed. D. Laing Purves (London: William P. Nimmo, 1879), p.515; hereafter cited as Purves' Swift.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Boyce, Tom Brown of Facetious Memory, p.198.

All subsequent references to Boyce will be to the work cited in this note, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>6</sup> Boyce, pp. 148-151.

separately; he also notes that there are "135 jottings on government, morals, politics and people."<sup>7</sup> Swift's Thoughts Moral and Diverting are quite similar in this regard, for the subjects seem to be, for the most part, the same, with some degree of varying emphasis.

Religion occupies a prominent position in both works and is commented on by Brown and Swift respectively:

Brown

"A speculative religion is only calculated for a few philosophers, and not the gross vulgar. 'Tis to them a diet for

coarse appetites, as we find soops and sallads are for common on English stomachs.<sup>8</sup>

Swift

"We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love, one another."<sup>9</sup>

The professionalism of the clergy also attracted the attention of both:

Brown

"Some clergymen in the pulpit are such different animals from what they are elsewhere, that Mrs. K\_\_\_\_, when she \_\_\_\_\_

Swift

"Since the union of divinity and humanity is the great article of our religion, it is odd to see some clergymen,

---

<sup>7</sup> Boyce, p. 150.

<sup>8</sup> Tom Brown, The Works of Mr. Thomas Brown, 8th ed. (London: Henry Lintot and Charles Hitch, 1744), IV, 107.

<sup>9</sup> Purves' Swift, p. 515 .

Brown

acts the virtuous part upon the stage, is not more different from Mrs. K\_\_\_\_ with a rummer in her hand at the Horse-Shoe."<sup>10</sup>

Swift

in their writings of divinity wholly devoid of humanity"<sup>11</sup>



A similarity of thought is clearly in evidence in the following passages, wherein both are concerned with regression.

Brown

"In some grounds every thing degenerates. Wheat runs into barley, artichokes turn to thistles, grapes give nothing but verjuice."<sup>12</sup>

Swift

"Religion seems to have grown an infant with age, and requires miracles to nurse it, as it had in its infancy."<sup>13</sup>

The second area of similarity of subject is politics, or more generally, affairs of state. Brown and Swift concerned themselves with both domestic and foreign affairs and their comments are directed at both the King and Parliament. In the following passages, Brown and Swift speak out against the incompetency of ministers of the monarch:

---

<sup>10</sup> Brown, Works, IV, 106.

<sup>11</sup> Purves' Swift, p. 519.

<sup>12</sup> Brown, Works, IV, 117

<sup>13</sup> Purves' Swift, p. 515.

Brown

"A Minister, by ill advising his prince, and putting him upon wrong methods, has often had the honour to see a flourishing country reduced to beggary."<sup>14</sup>

Swift

"Princes usually make wiser choices than the servants whom they trust for the disposal of places: I have known a prince more than once choose an able minister; but I have never observed that minister to use his credit in the disposal of an employment to a person whom he thought the fittest for it."<sup>15</sup>

On corruption in the administration of affairs of state:

Brown

"A long reach and little conscience are as necessary qualifications to a minister of state, as a long hand and little fingers are to a man-midwife."<sup>16</sup>

Swift

"Politics, as the word is commonly understood, are nothing but corruptions, and consequently of no use to a good king, or a good ministry; for which reason all courts are so full of politics."<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Brown, Works, IV, 112.

<sup>15</sup> Purves' Swift, p. 517.

<sup>16</sup> Brown, Works, IV, 107.

<sup>17</sup> Purves' Swift, p. 518.

As was noted earlier in this study, both Brown and Swift have satirically attacked physicians; this is again apparent in the notes under consideration here. It is at once clear that Brown's comments are the more caustic, and a

reading of both works reveals that his assault on physicians is far more voluminous.

### Brown

"A soldier, a vintner, and a physician, are the three degrees of comparison; and so are a cut-throat, a back-biter, and a flatterer: But the physician is the superlative murderer, and a flatterer the superlative villain."<sup>18</sup>

### Swift

"Apollo was held the god of physic, and sender of diseases. Both were originally the same trade, and still continue."<sup>19</sup>

The fourth area in which a similarity has been noted between the Laconics and Thoughts on Various Subjects is the broad category of morality. Within this framework numerous examples of many sub-categories could be cited, however, only those that are most representative of a substantial sub-category will be mentioned. These examples will illustrate both the wide scope of the topic "morality," and will

---

<sup>18</sup> Brown, Works, IV, 100.

<sup>19</sup> Purves' Swift, p. 518.

also serve to point out the similarities relevant to this study.

On life in their times, in general, both writers seem somewhat critical.

Brown

"We naturally love to cheat; 'tis interwoven with our constitution."<sup>20</sup>

"Tho' life is so short, we spend it as improfitable as if we had Methuselah's to squander away."<sup>21</sup>

Swift

"As universal a practice as lying is, and as easy a one as it seems, I do not remember to have heard three good lies in all my conversation, even from those who were most celebrated in that faculty."<sup>22</sup>

Both works contain remarks on vanity:

Brown

"Vanity is so inseparable from our nature, that it survives our ashes, and takes care of epitaphs and tombstones before we die."<sup>23</sup>

Swift

"There is no vice or folly that requires so much nicety and skill to manage as vanity; nor any which by ill management, makes so contemptible a figure."<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Brown, Works, IV, 100.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>22</sup> Purves' Swift, p. 518.

<sup>23</sup> Brown, Works, IV, 102-103.

<sup>24</sup> Purves' Swift, p.519.

Observations on prosperity and its effect on man make an appearance.

Brown

"Well, this thing called prosperity makes a man strangely insolent and forgetful. How contemptibly a cutler looks at a poor grinder of knives, a physician in his coach at a farrier on foot . . ." <sup>25</sup>

Swift

"Men who possess all the advantages of life are in a state where there are many accidents to disorder and discompose, but few to please them." <sup>26</sup>

On a subject more closely allied to the narrower concept of morality, Brown and Swift exhibited similar sentiments.

Brown

"The generality of women would sooner be found in bed with a gallant, than in their undress . . ." <sup>27</sup>

"A woman may learn one useful doctrine from the game of Backgammon, which is, not

Swift

"When a man observes the choice of ladies now-a-days in the dispensing of their favours, can he forbear paying some veneration to the memory of those mares mentioned in Xenophon, who, while their manes wore on,

<sup>25</sup> Brown, Works, IV, 108.

<sup>26</sup> Purves' Swift, p. 515.

<sup>27</sup> Brown, Works, IV, 102.

Brown

to take up her man till she's sure of binding him."<sup>28</sup>

Swift

that is, while they were in their beauty, would never admit the embraces of an ass."<sup>29</sup>

The absence of a specific publication date makes it impossible to include in the above considerations a work by Brown entitled Table Talk, or Short Amusements.<sup>30</sup> However, it is safe to assume that this piece did appear in the various editions of Brown's collected works which appeared in 1707, 1708, 1709, 1711, 1712, 1715, 1720, and 1723.<sup>31</sup> There were, of course, editions subsequent to these; the significance of the editions enumerated is that they all appeared prior to Swift's Thoughts dated 1726. This establishes the possibility of Swift's familiarity with Table Talk. The structure, content and general tone of Table Talk is very similar to Brown's Laconics, thus the possibility that Table Talk exerted some influence on Swift's Thoughts cannot be ruled out.

The examples cited in the section do not in any way prove conclusively that Swift had even read Brown's Laconics.

---

<sup>28</sup> Brown, Works, IV, 101 .

<sup>29</sup> Purves' Swift, p. 516 .

<sup>30</sup> Brown, Works, I, 337-144. The page numbered 337 cited here is on the page between pages 136 and 138, and is apparently a misprint; the page should be number 137.

<sup>31</sup> Boyce, pp. 203-204.

The two works can be properly compared only in their entirety and excerpts can only indicate general areas of similarity. However, the evidence presented here does add to the concept of the Brown-Swift relationship as it has been thus far developed. This relationship is added to in two ways. First, the above evidence adds to the claim that Swift read Brown thoroughly. Secondly, it suggests another area in which Swift's writings were directly or indirectly affected by Tom Brown.

## Chapter V

### SWIFT'S POETRY AND THE WORKS OF TOM BROWN

Again it is Eddy who indicates the general area of study when he asserts that he believes it is possible to "point out close imitation of Brown in the coarse poems of Swift, especially those dealing cynically with marriage."<sup>1</sup>

Specifically he suggests a comparison of "Swift's poems: Strephon and Cloe, The Ladies' Dressing Room, and The Progress of Marriage, with Brown's obscene poems."<sup>2</sup>

Although the poems that will be presented here do not represent the best work of either Brown or Swift, they do have a value to this study. This value is the influence that might be indicated by them, through similarities unique to both. Many of the poems exhibit a tone that by present standards is obscene. In Swift, this has been, to a large extent ignored or rather overshadowed by his other great writings. Brown, however, has no such other writing, and his vulgarity has been a large part of the force that has suppressed him into obscurity.

---

<sup>1</sup> William A. Eddy, Gulliver's Travels: A Critical Study (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1923), p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



In relating the poetry of these two writers, mechanics, for the most part, will be ignored, and content will be given primary consideration. This is done because structural elements are not unique to either writer.

A striking parallel is afforded by Brown's A Satire on Marriage and Swift's The Progress of Marriage. In Swift's poem a "Dean" who "Is sixty, if he is a day;"<sup>3</sup> marries a young woman. Inconstancy develops as, according to Brown, it almost invariably does. Brown's poem satirizes marriage in general:

This pagan confinement, this damnable station,  
Suits no order, nor age, nor degree in the Nation.

The Levits it keeps from parochial duty,  
For who can at once mind religion and beauty?<sup>4</sup>

Swift deals with a specific case but the thought is the same. Speaking of the "Dean," he says, "His mind is full of other cares." Farther on:

And drops him at the church, to pray, While she drives  
on to see the play, He, like an orderly divine,

---

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Swift, The Works of Jonathan Swift, ed. Sir Walter Scott (London: Bickers & Son, 1883), XIV, 228. Hereafter cited as Scott's Swift .

<sup>4</sup> Tom Brown, The Works of Mr. Thomas Brown, 8th ed. (London: Henry Lintot and Charles Hitch, 1744), I, 58.

Comes home a quarter after nine,  
And meets her hasting to the ball:<sup>5</sup>

Of inconstancy Brown says:  
But it palls your game. Ah, but how do you  
know, Sir,  
How often your neighbor breaks up your inclo-  
sure?<sup>6</sup>

Swift's poem also treats adultery in the same somewhat  
jocular vein.

“But now, though scarce a twelve-month  
married,  
Poor Lady Jane has thrice miscarried;  
The cause, alas! is quickly guest;  
The town has whisper'd round the jest.”<sup>7</sup>

The Ladies' Dressing Room, 1735, and Strephon and Chloe, 1731, deal with the same fundamental theme. In both works a lover becomes disillusioned when he has occasion to see the more realistic and unpublic aspect of the subject of his adoration. Strephon ventures into the dressing room of Celia and The Ladies' Dressing Room is a listing of his findings. One example will serve to illustrate both the nature of the

---

<sup>5</sup> Scott's Swift, XIV, 229.

<sup>6</sup> Brown, Works, I, 58.

<sup>7</sup> Scott's Swift, XIV, 229

poem and its theme.

But, oh! it turn'd poor Strephon's bowels,  
When he beheld and smelt the towels,  
Begumm'd, bematter'd, and beslimed,  
With dirt, and sweat, and ear-wax grimed;<sup>8</sup>

In Strephon and Chloe, the lover's idealism persists until after marriage. On the wedding night, when the bride is forced to relieve herself of "Twelve cups of Tea,"<sup>9</sup> Strephon found her "As mortal as himself at least."<sup>10</sup> His disillusionment is complete and permanent.

The little Cupids hovering round,  
(As pictures prove,) with garlands crown'd,  
Abashed at what they saw and heard,  
Flew off, nor ever more appeared.<sup>11</sup>

Brown's opinion of women is clearly expressed throughout the work A Satire on Marriage. The similarity to the tone and thought of Swift's works can only be fully appreciated by a complete presentation of Brown's poem; since its length prohibits this, only the passage relating to women and marriage is presented.

---

<sup>8</sup> Scott's Swift, XIV, 238.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 252.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 253.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Fire, female and flood, begin with a letter,  
And the world's for them all not a farthing the  
better.

Your flood is soon gone; your fire you may  
humble,

If into the flame store of water you tumble;  
But to cool the damn'd heat of your wive's  
titillation

You may use half the engines and pumps in the  
nation.<sup>12</sup>

Brown also uses the name Strephon in A Satire Against Women,

when he assails one woman in particular who caused a gentleman to "die for love of her."<sup>13</sup> Brown then speaks out against all women:

Thy sex are all Pandora's, mischiefs all,  
Which only on your foolish vassals fall.  
The happy man, that scorns your idle charms,  
Lives most secure from all their racking harms;  
While he that yields to your insulting eyes,  
Jilted, deceiv'd, betray'd, in sorrow dies.  
What lasting pleasures can from woman spring,  
Woman! that various and that changeful thing?<sup>14</sup>

In the same satire, Brown also uses the name Celia. It was

---

<sup>12</sup> Brown, Works, I, 58.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

Celia who had her room toured by Strephon in Swift's The Ladies' Dressing Room. Although Brown condemns all women, he excuses Celia. "Celia alone's exempt from all these crimes, / At once the charm and honour of these times."<sup>15</sup> It could well be this exemption which prompted Swift's The Ladies' Dressing Room because his Celia is also pardoned.

When Celia all her glory shews,  
If Strephon would but stop his nose,  
(Who now so impiously blasphemes  
Her ointments, daubs, and paints, and creams,  
Her washes, slops, and every clout,  
Which he makes so foul a rout;)  
He soon will learn to think like me,  
And bless his ravish'd eyes to see  
Such order from confusion sprung,  
Such gaudy tulips raised from dung.<sup>16</sup>

Boyce suggests that Swift's A Beautiful Young Nymph Going To Bed reflects an idea expressed earlier in one of Brown's letters.<sup>17</sup> A Beautiful Young Nymph is a description

of "Corina, pride of Drury-lane"<sup>18</sup> preparing to retire for the evening. As these preparations are made, the beauty is

---

<sup>15</sup> Brown, Works, I, 57.

<sup>16</sup> Scott's Swift. XIV, 241.

<sup>17</sup> Benjamin Boyce, Tom Brown of Facetious Memory, p. 182. All subsequent references to Boyce will be to the work cited in this note, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>18</sup> Scott's Swift, XIV, 245.

unmasked and all her attractions exposed to be a sham.

Then, seated on a three-legged chair, Takes off her artificial hair; Now picking out a crystal eye. She wipes it clean, and lays it by.<sup>19</sup>

Swift continues this process until hardly a shell remains, pointing out in the process false eyebrows, false teeth, false breasts, and false hips, then goes on to mention: "Her chancres, issues, running sores."<sup>20</sup>

Brown anticipates this entire vein of humor in his letter that is written to persuade Petrus Noxetus to marry his mistress.<sup>21</sup> Brown reasons that he should marry her because he knows all about this particular woman, but this is not the case universally.

Tis true, they meet perhaps, with a sparkling eye, a pretty pouting mouth, an artificial complexion, and the like: But the devil on't is, that a fine face to a woman, is like a fair carv'd sign to tavern, it serves to draw you in, but then you find nothing but stumm'd claret, and

other diabolical mixtures. 'Tis like the gilding to a pill, the gold makes the nauseous Dose go down, which without it you wou'd keck at. Thus a gaudy outside often sets off secret defects: The silk emboss'd manteau, and lac'd petticoat frequently cover crook'd or gouty legs, and boulster'd shoulders, besides nameless evils, more disagreeable. Paint and fine washes sham a complexion, which is none of their own; and those bubbles, which seem full and swelling, in stays, fall down

---

<sup>19</sup> Scott's Swift, XIV, 246.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Brown, Works, III, 237-243.

flabby and lank, when the lady's undressed: The disguise thrown off, the monster appears; and when you hope to press a goddess you find an Incubus your arms,<sup>22</sup>

Numerous other examples in Brown's writings express the same sentiment often with a vividness and exactness which encourages censorship and reflects personal experience. The parallel between Brown and Swift is the idea of the artificial exterior of beautiful women.

It is in the theme of disparagement of women that one similarity lies; this similarity is amplified by the coarseness of the approach by both writers and the use of satire to attain their ends. The use of identical names, Strephon and Chloe, strongly suggests that Brown's A Satire Against Women might have prompted Swift's The Ladies' Dressing Room.

Finally, Swift's debt to Brown is, in this area, less positive than in others for it is not certain that Swift's works are in "close imitation"<sup>23</sup> of Brown. Yet the similarity is strong

enough to indicate a close familiarity of Swift with Brown's satires. This advances the relationship between the two writers by adding to Swift's debt to Brown.

---

<sup>22</sup> Brown. Works, III, 240-241

<sup>23</sup> Eddy, Gulliver's Travels, p. 64.

## CHAPTER VI

### A TALE OF A TUB AND THE WORKS OF TOM BROWN

When the satirical, A Tale of a Tub first appeared in the spring of 1704, there was considerable doubt concerning the identity of the author. Much speculation pointed to Thomas Swift, a cousin of Jonathan Swift and "Some hinted that Sir William Temple had a hand in it."<sup>1</sup> Only the contentions made for Thomas Swift, however, were considered serious enough to merit consideration by Guthkelch and Smith, and after reviewing the evidence, they conclude that "It [the evidence for T. Swift] is wholly disposed of by the letter which [Jonathan] Swift wrote to Benjamin Tooke, the publisher, on June 29, 1710, when they were making arrangements for the fifth edition of the Tale."<sup>2</sup> Thus, "All



doubt is now laid to rest"<sup>3</sup> and there are no unanswered questions serious enough to admit any doubt that Jonathan Swift is the author of the Tale.

---

<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Swift, A Tale of a Tub, ed. A. C. Guthkelch and D. Nicol Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), p. xii. Hereafter cited as Guthkelch's Swift.

<sup>2</sup> Guthkelch's Swift, pp. xv-xvi .

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. xvii.

The date of composition has yet to be established with absolute certainty. The most commonly accepted dates are 1696 and 1697 which are given by Swift himself. "It is difficult to see why he should have given these dates if the book was not written then."<sup>4</sup> In view of the fact that "he had no obvious motive to give a date that was wrong we must accept Swift's statements."<sup>5</sup>

The period, in which the Tale was composed, was one of Great religious turmoil with dissension centering around three religious groups--Dissenters, or extreme Protestants, Catholics, commonly called "Papists," and Anglicans, or adherents to the Church of England. One view of the Tale is that it is "a series of brilliant and fortuitously arranged fragments, the digressions, tied together very loosely by a story of three brothers, Peter, Martin, and Jack (Catholicism, Protestantism, and Nonconformity), who rent the cloaks of

original Christianity left then by their father."<sup>6</sup> It is also said that "the tale proper," meaning the story of the brothers, is the part that carries "the satire on the abuses in religion."<sup>7</sup> The story of the brothers is often interrupted with digressions in which "he satirizes modern learning,

---

<sup>4</sup> Guthkelch's Swift, p. xi.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. xii.

<sup>6</sup> Miriam K. Starkman, Swift's Satire on Learning in A Tale of a Tub (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1950), p. xiii.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

criticism and the self-sufficiency of moderns."<sup>8</sup> Putting the aspects of the Tale together, it is seen as a satiric commentary on the times with a scope broad enough to include a variety of aspects of life. Dr. Samuel Johnson, as he questions Swift's authorship in his Life of Swift, provides an excellent review of the style of the Tale as he says, "It exhibits a vehemence and rapidity of mind, a copiousness of images, and vivacity of diction, such as he afterwards never possessed, or never exerted."<sup>9</sup> This seems an honest and accurate evaluation of the work which prompted Swift in his later years to comment, "Good God! what a genius I had when I wrote that book."<sup>10</sup>

Tom Brown, four years the senior of Swift, was throughout the latter two decades of the seventeenth century,

busily engaged in writing satires on a multitude of facets of the life that surrounded him. Brown originally "was intended for holy orders."<sup>11</sup> How long he pursued this course is not known, "but that he did make some inroads upon theological literature is indicated clearly in the various satiric pamphlets he was soon to write."<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> A Literary History of England, ed . Albert C . Baugh (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts,Inc.,1948), p. 859.

<sup>9</sup> Guthkelch's Swift, p. xvii.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Benjamin Boyce, Tom Brown of Facetious Memory, pp. 9-10. All subsequent references to Boyce will be to the work cited in this note unless otherwise noted.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

Brown's sentiments on religion are noteworthy because it is his writings on religion that are relevant to this study. Boyce says that "he abhorred Rome,"<sup>13</sup> and, as will be made apparent later, he scorned the Dissenters. What his religion is, is not clear, but he did confine most of his attacks to the "Papists" and the Dissenters, which would indicate that his sentiments, if he had any, were with the Anglicans.

These two groups, "Papists" and Dissenters, which were so often the target of Brown's attacks, form the links that attach him to Swift's Tale. Thus, the similarity of subjects, methods, and the proximity of time, in addition to elements

unique to Brown and Swift, all constitute parts of the basis for the ensuing comparisons.

Any flow of influence that occurred had to be from Brown to Swift because of the dates involved. Since Brown died in June of 1704, and the Tale was published in the spring of 1704, it is impossible that Brown could have, in any of his writings, incorporated anything from the published Tale, therefore, almost any positive similarity between the works of Brown and the Tale can only indicate a debt of Swift to Brown. Although the dates of composition for the Tale—1696-1607—would permit Brown to have become familiar with the work, it is highly improbable that he had access to any of the “three copies of the manuscript of the Tale.”<sup>14</sup>

---

13 Boyce, p. 16.

14 Guthkelch’s Swift, p. ix.

One of which the “author had by him,”<sup>15</sup> another one “which Swift had lent to Thomas Swift,”<sup>16</sup> and the third which Swift had “lent to a person ‘since dead’ and which came to the bookseller’s hands in 1698.”<sup>17</sup> The only possibility is that Brown was the “person ‘since dead’”;<sup>18</sup> since no evidence exists to encourage this speculation, it must be abandoned. Concern on this score is mitigated, however, by the fact that, with three disturbing exceptions, the works of Brown involved bear publication dates prior to 1696.

The most significant parallel that exists between Brown and Swift is one of the exceptions referred to above.

Brown's Mr. Alsop's State of Conformity was written in 1687. No reason can be advanced for this piece bearing a false date, on the contrary, events of that year, i.e., the Declaration of Indulgence, sustains the date. "Mr. Alsop's State of Conformity appeared first in The Second Volume of Miscellaneous Works. . . .1705."20 The delay of eighteen years between composition and publication is mentioned by Boyce who says, "The fact that they did not incline to print

---

<sup>15</sup> Guthkelch's Swift, p. ix.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Tom Brown, The Works of Mr. Thomas Brown, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Henry Lintot and Charles Hitch, 1744), IV, 129-141.

<sup>20</sup> Boyce, p. 16.

it until nearly twenty years later when its author had also become an editor is not surprising."<sup>21</sup> This does not, however, explain the delay between composition and publication and no acceptable reason is available.

Various possibilities might be advanced to explain Swift's very apparent familiarity with the piece. One is simply that he read the unpublished manuscript. A second is that the piece was published prior to 1698 but all copies of it have disappeared, this is a rather remote speculation because

some illusion to such an earlier printing would still exist. A third possibility exists which is, of course, unsubstantiated but is worthy of mention. In 1691, Brown became acquainted with a “genial young fellow of twenty-five . . . named William Pate, . . . who was later to become Dr. Arbuthnot’s agreeable landlord and an occasional dinner companion to Dean Swift.”<sup>22</sup> Brown not only became acquainted with Pate, he joined with him in publishing The Lacedemonian Mercury, a periodical in competition with John Dunton’s Athenian Gazette.<sup>23</sup> The possibility, then, is that the gist of Brown’s Mr. Alsop was transmitted to Swift via a mutual friend.

Guthkelch and Smith note that “The allegory of the Tale—the dispute of the three brothers, Peter, Martin, and

---

<sup>21</sup> Boyce, p. 16.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 26-27.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 38-39

Jack—has often been said to have been borrowed”<sup>24</sup> In their discussion of the “main sources which have been suggested, and the evidence for Swift’s use of them,” they completely ignore the works of Brown.

It will be remembered that in the Tale the three brothers are given identical coats by their dying father who admonishes them to “wear them clean, and brush them often.”<sup>26</sup> He also provides the sons with a will in which there

are “full instructions in every particular concerning the Wearing and Management of your Coats.”<sup>27</sup>

In contrast to this, Mr. Alsop's State of Conformity becomes significant. Here the story is told of a “gentleman of a very large esatate”<sup>28</sup> who “in process of time, . . . had occasion to go a journey into a far country, and so calls his tenants together, and tells them he's leaving them for a little while; but advises them, as they tender his love, to mind their plantations, keep up the fences, and watch for one another with a mutual help and love.”<sup>29</sup>

The similarities at this point are evident. The tenants can be equated to the brothers—the father's death

---

<sup>24</sup> Guthkelch's Swift, p. xxviii.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Brown, Works, IV, 132.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

is the equivalent of the landlord's long journey. The brothers are told to live together as the tenants are told to “watch for one another.”<sup>30</sup> The list of similarities does not end there for Brown antedated Swift in the use of the name Jack and in the still more important area of Jack's nature. Swift, in the Tale, made jack the Dissenter or radical. In the Tale, Jack, after his split with Peter and being in very ill temper, “made a Shift to find a very plausible Name, honoring it with the Title of

Zeal.<sup>31</sup> Jack fortifies himself with it; his resultant activities are best described by Swift; “I record therefore, that Brother Jack, brimful of this miraculous Compound, reflecting with Indignation upon, PETER’S Tyranny; and farther provoked by the Despondency of Martin; prefaced his Resolutions to this purpose.”<sup>32</sup> Jack then proceeds to rip from the coat its false symbols.

high

Having thus kindled and enflamed himself as

as possible, and by Consequence, in a delicate Temper for beginning a Reformation, he set about

the Work immediately, and in three Minutes, made

More Dispatch than Martin had done in as many Hours. For, (Courteous Reader) you are given to

understand, that Zeal is never so highly obliged, as when you set it a Tearing: and Jack, who doated on that Quality in himself, allowed it at this Time its full Swinge.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Brown, Works, IV, 132.

<sup>31</sup> Guthkelch’s Swift, p. 137.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

The parallels with Mr. Alsop are immediately evident. In the first instance Jack becomes enraged only after the



schism, “at last, it came to a breach; for Jack said, it was contrary to the landlord’s will that there should be any enclosures.”<sup>34</sup> The enclosures around the plots of the tenants represent, as do the decorations on the brothers’ coats, the misrepresentations and additions to the original doctrines. As had been seen, Jack of the Tale ripped the trappings off his coat—Jack of Mr. Also anticipated him and did the same to the enclosures.

But Jack, vex’d to the heart at this, coming drunk home one night, and as full of malice as liquor, . . . the moon shew’d him an agreeable prospect of his neighbor’s enclosure on one hand, and the very dunghil his own was grown, on the other; what does he me, but leaps into the mote, and scrambles up the bank, demolishes the dam, and lets the water into the lower grounds.<sup>35</sup>

Not only did Jack destroy the enclosure, but he became “drunk” before he did it, all of which amplifies the similarity to Swift’s related incident in the Tale, wherein it was “Brother Jack, brimful of this miraculous Compound,” who ripped at his coat.

That the Jack of the Tale represents dissenters has never been challenged. Brown’s creation of Jack as a dissenter, likewise, cannot be questioned, because Brown clearly identifies Jack when Mr. Also says, “You make Jack

---

34 Brown, Works, IV, 133-134.

35 Ibid.

an obstinate fellow, and a mischievous invader of his neighbor Harry's enclosures; whereas the dissenters are men of tender consciences."<sup>36</sup>

The similarity between the Tale and Mr. Alsop is too strong to be passed over as coincidence and yet remains to be satisfactorily explained in the face of the difficulty of the dates that has been mentioned. It is possible that they are dependent upon a common source, but if so, it has not come to light. The nature of the similarity goes to the heart of the structure of the Tale, and is a similarity of theme, subject, and even names.

The second very relevant exception to the coincidence of dates is seen in the two parallel passages below:

Brown

"In Leicester-fields I saw a montebank on the stage, with a congregation of fools about him."<sup>37</sup>

Swift

"A Montebank in Leicester-Fields, had drawn a huge Assembly about him."<sup>38</sup>

The passage from Brown's Amusements Serious and Comical was first published in 1700, hence the parallel, which is too strong to be dismissed as coincidence, and is limited to the passage noted above, must be noted but left unexplained.

---

<sup>36</sup> Brown, Works, IV, 132.

<sup>37</sup> Brown, Works, III, 67.

<sup>38</sup> Guthkelch's Swift, p. 46.

Brown's involvement in still another interesting circumstance must be mentioned here. Guthkelch, in his notes concerning "Peter's Banter . . . upon Transubstantiation"<sup>39</sup> calls attention to the fact that a close parallel was noted between this and a similar event in an edition of Buckingham's Work edited by Tom Brown. This similarity was first noted by William Wotten who, in pointing it out, commented about the author "be he who he will, I shall observe, Sir, that his Wit is not his own, in many places."<sup>40</sup> Wotten extends his comments and declares the names, Jack, Peter, and Martin, were also borrowed from the same source. Swift denies the debt in the Apology,<sup>41</sup> dated 1709, and prefixed to the 1710 edition of the Tale. All this becomes significant when it is noted that Brown did indeed edit "a miscellaneous collection of the writings of the Duke of Buckingham and other nobles."<sup>42</sup> This collection appeared in 1703, but was dated 1704.<sup>43</sup> Webster also enters this area and expands upon Brown's role in influencing Swift's comments on transubstantiation. In a letter to the London Times Literary Supplement, he says:

Sir,- In The Men and Women Saints in an Uproar or, the Superstition of the Romanish Church

---

<sup>39</sup> Guthkelch's Swift, p. 13.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 323.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>42</sup> Boyce, p. 174.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

Exposed, 1687 . . . Tom Brown uses a theme of satire which is quite like one made famous by Swift in The Tale of a Tub.<sup>44</sup>

That the date 1687 for The Men and Women Saints not be deceptive, it must be pointed out that this piece first appeared in the Miscellaneous Works of the Duke of Buckingham in 1703. Webster goes on to quote from this passage in The Men and Women Saints:

Mess, messenger to Pluto A venerable old Gentleman, who, they say, had been high pontiff of Rome in the days of yore, pointing to a rusty spear, and a cloak of antiquity and fashion, I command you good people, says he, to pay your respect to these two most incomparable saints and martyrs, St. Longinus and St. Amphibalus: upon my infallibility they have not their fellows in the almanack. Why surely, reply'd I to him, you have a mind to banter folks out of their senses: What, is not this a spear? No, Sir, his name is Longinus, and he was one of the earliest sufferers for the christian faith. Very well, but won't you own this to be a cloak? A cloak, Sir! have a care what you say. A cloak! Why he was the undaunted companion of St. Alban, his name Amphibalus, suffer'd with him near Verulam, and for this I prefer'd him to the Calendar.<sup>45</sup>

This, says Webster, resembles the passage in the Tale where Peter gives a dry crust to Martin and Jack and becomes angry when they deny it is mutton and wine.<sup>46</sup> He also says that "Both, Brown and Swift mocked the infallibility of Papal decrees both represent the Pope as irascible and

---

<sup>44</sup>Clarence M. Webster, "Tom Brown and The Tale of a

Tub," Times Literary Supplement (February 12, 1932), p. 112.

<sup>45</sup>Brown, Works, I, 73-74 .

<sup>46</sup> Webster, TLS.

tyrannical."<sup>47</sup> Webster goes on to explain the dissimilarity, "Swift changes the theme to ridicule of the theory of transubstantiation, but the same fundamental idea—satire of Papal insistence that things are what they are proclaimed to be—is the same in both writers."<sup>48</sup>

All the above discussion is made in light of the fact that according to the dates as known, Swift could not have seen The Men and Women Saints prior to his publishing the Tale. A possible solution is suggested by Webster who says that if we accept the above parallel as valid we have "more than additional proof that Swift was indebted to his fellow satirists . . . we have proof that certain parts of The Tale of a Tub were written after 1696."<sup>49</sup>

The relationship between the Tale and other works of Tom Brown will now be developed in areas where known publication dates permit the possibilities of influence of Brown-on-Swift to exist. The connections to be developed center primarily around the satiric attacks of both writers on the Dissenters. As has already been noted, Swift's approach was through the character, Jack; Brown's have been through a variety of avenues. Neither Swift nor Brown was original in his disparagement of the Dissenter for when speaking of Swift, Webster says, "there was a century of attack on the

---

<sup>47</sup> Webster, TLS.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

Puritans behind him.”<sup>50</sup> In a bibliography of "non-dramatic satire" of the Puritans, Webster encompasses the period "from the Anatomy of Melancholy, 1621 to Tom Brown, c.a. 1710,"<sup>51</sup> as the area of satiric attack on Dissenters that preceded Swift.

From this point on, the dates 1696-1697 will be recognized as the period of composition of the Tale. The approach will be to bring forth each of the works of Brown and concurrently develop the relevant similarities with the Tale. This development will, for the sake of logical consistency, follow the general pattern of theses in the Tale.

Webster detects fourteen "themes of attack . . . found both in the Tale of a Tub and in the earlier satires."<sup>52</sup> Of these Brown was involved in writing only four.

2. Hypocrisy of the Puritans.

5. Ridicule of the Puritan 's use of the Bible as a guide in the most trivial affairs of life.

11. Ridicule of the sex irregularities of the Puritans .

---

<sup>50</sup> Clarence M. Webster, "Swift's Tale of a Tub Compared with Earlier Satires of the Puritans." PMLA, XVII (March, 1932), 171.

<sup>51</sup> Clarence M. Webster, "The Satiric Background of the Attack on the Puritans in Swift's Tale of a Tub," PMLA (March, 1935), 210.

<sup>52</sup> Webster, "Swift's Tale of a Tub Compared with Earlier Satire. . . ," pp.171-178.

12. Mockery of the Holy Dialect, the artificial and very pious language the Puritans were supposed to use.<sup>53</sup>

Two works of Brown deserve mention here because they serve to illustrate, probably better than any others, Brown's attitude toward the Dissenters, and more importantly his involvement in the themes listed above. The first is Mr. Brown's Sermon at a Quaker Meeting.<sup>54</sup> This satire includes, to some degree, at least three of the themes mentioned. It is a short piece that describes an episode of sexual "irregularity" of two members of a group of Quakers. In the short excerpt below, the satiric use of the dialect is also evident.

Dear sister Ruth, the spirit moveth me to lay thee down, that I may fructify on thee; and she answered him again, and said, Resist not the spirit, for from thence proceedeth no ill. So he took her and laid her down; and when it came to pass that she was down ....<sup>55</sup>

The theme of hypocrisy of the Dissenters is also apparent later in the sermon when the two are not only forgiven but praised for their act.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup>Webster, "Swift's Tale of a Tub Compared with Earlier Satire . . . .," pp. 171-178.

<sup>54</sup>Brown, Works, I, 105-107.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., pp. 105-106.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

The second work by Brown serves to illustrate his feeling toward the Dissenters and is representative of the overall tone of many of his writings.

Directions to make the Fanaticks Diascordium. Take of the herb of hypocrisy and ambition, of each one handful; of the spirit of pride, two grains; of the seed of dissention, discord, and sedition, of each one ounce, of the root of obstinacy, stubbornness, and covetousness, of each one quarter of a pound. Bruise the herbs, break the seed, slice the roots, and pound them all together in the mortar of vain-glory, with the pestle of contradiction; put in a pint of the water of strife, to be infus'd over the fire of feign'd zeal, adding thereto four ounces of syrup of self-conceit.<sup>57</sup>

Webster closes his bibliography of the satiric background of attack on the Dissenter in the Tale with Brown since "he marks a singularly reactionary tendency in satire of the Puritans . . . . With Brown we have once more . . . the old ridicule of a people who must have changed greatly since the days of Peters and the Quaker Christ, James Mayor."<sup>58</sup> Brown's attack was more of the old type and seems to indicate "that in some English minds the Dissenters were the same



lustful hypocrites of old."<sup>59</sup> Webster cites sixteen articles by Brown that, although all are not known to precede the Tale, "are part of the English scene in the last years

---

<sup>57</sup>Brown. Works, III, 342.

<sup>58</sup>Webster, "The Satiric Background of the Attack on the Puritans . . . ," p. 220.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 221.

of seventeenth century and were undoubtedly available to Swift."<sup>60</sup> Webster then raises the question of whether Brown was reflecting the feelings of a large segment of people or speaking out against the Dissenters in a fashion that was unique in being of an earlier type. "If Brown were but catering to the public taste. then we have established one important phase of the immediate background of Swift's treatment of Jack."<sup>6</sup> He goes on to conclude that because parts of the Tale

were very much in keeping with earlier traditions of satire, it is, therefore possible that Brown was the spokesman for a large group of English people who looked upon the Puritans in much the same way as has; their fathers and grandfathers in the days when Dissenters were really quite fanatic,<sup>62</sup>

Accepting Webster's propositions, the obvious conclusion is that Brown did constitute a very real and substantial part of Swift's background that was written into the Tale.

One area of similarity between the works of Brown and Swift's Tale of a Tub yet remains to be developed . This involves the propensity of both to attack other writers of the day. This assault by Brown is carried on in almost everything

he wrote, but one example stands out. It occurs in "The first production which made Brown known to the town . . .

---

<sup>60</sup>Webster, "The Satiric Background of the Attack on the Puritans . . .," p.221.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

a pamphlet entitled The Reason of Mr. Bays Changing his Religion.<sup>63</sup> This production consisted of the first part "published in 1688"<sup>64</sup> and two succeeding parts, published in 1690.<sup>65</sup> As the title implies, the work concerns itself in the main with religion and was intended to be a satiric attack on the seeming intellectual hypocrisy of John Dryden. The most positive similarity to the Tale lies outside the area of religion for Brown, in his Mr. Bays, "offers a Bays who lives and who, in his loquacity, his logical ingenuity, and his perfect faith that all he does and thinks and writes will be of absorbing interest to the reader."<sup>66</sup> The satire here is of "the Dryden of the printed prefaces."<sup>67</sup> In the Tale, Swift attacks the same feature of Dryden. Often lamenting the trend toward excessive prefatory writing, Swift says,

Our Great Dryden has long carried it as far as it would go, and with incredible Success. He has often said to me in Confidence, that the World would never have suspected him to be so great a Poet, if he had not assured them so frequently in his Prefaces, that it impossible they would either doubt or forget it.<sup>68</sup>

Further similarities between the Tale and Brown's Mr. Bays

---

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid. p. 24.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Guthkelch's Swift, p. 131.

pamphlets are of a general nature, i.e., the attack on Dryden, who was the target of many satirists, and the assaults on Catholics of Swift and Brown, in their respective works.

One has merely to scan the table of contents of any of Brown's works to see the wide scope of his satiric attacks on other writers. In the Tale, Swift also attacks many other writers. "His relegation of Dryden, Wotton, Bentley, D'Urfey, Dennis, Blackmore, and L'Estrange to the purlieus of Grub Street is a little startling in its lack of discrimination."<sup>69</sup> Starkman goes on to say "that as Swift uses the term Grub Street it is pejorative rather than descriptive. This pejorative connotation would explain, for example, why Dryden is made the prototype of the Grub Street hack, rather than Tom Brown who is conspicuously absent from A Tale of a Tub."<sup>70</sup> Brown's absence is undoubtedly conspicuous because he was so well "known to the town"<sup>71</sup> and known "even at court."<sup>72</sup> As to why Brown was absent is not known, if as William Ewald suggests, Swift was writing from behind a mask,<sup>73</sup> then the speculation seems warranted that perhaps that mask was none other than Tom Brown.

---

<sup>69</sup>Starkman, p. 108.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>Boyce, p. 17.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>William B. Ewald, The Masks of Jonathan Swift (Oxford, 1954).

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS

Relationships between writers regardless of their subjects or periods are elusive to pursue and precarious to hold once they have been caught. These difficulties are amplified by the nature of literary relationships which are shaped by an infinite number of forces, great and small, working in many directions with varying amounts of force.

Jonathan Swift and Tom Brown are prime examples of these many subtleties of literary cause and effect. Both lived in an "England that was hard, coarse, skeptical, and serious" and yet an England that had its "indolent follies and witty debaucheries of one court set after another,"<sup>2</sup> Both had, to some extent, a similar educational background for Swift was a clergyman and Brown studied a short time for the ministry. Still another similarity is seen in the fact that both men were

able scholars; this is evidenced in Swift by the Tale and in Brown by his many very excellent translations

---

<sup>1</sup>Benjamin Boyce, Tom Brown of Facetious Memory, p. 3. All subsequent references to Boyce will be to the work cited in this note, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

from Latin, Italian, and French. Other similarities have been noted,

The two men were fundamentally sympathetic in many respects--in their love of irony and scorn for the Yahoo, in their fondness for the extravagant humor of Lucian and Rabelais, in being either unable or unwilling to appreciate the new experimental science, in their irritation with Dr. Bentley and loyalty to the cause of the ancients, and in the possession, both as men and as authors of temperaments that were masculine to the last degree.<sup>3</sup>

As they were much alike, so there was much about them diametrically opposed. Swift's involvement throughout his lifetime with only two: women, Stella and Varna is in sharp contrast to the debauched life of Brown. Swift's life seems calmer when compared to the dashing, drunken tempest that

caused Brown to have far more enemies than friends and probably was in large measure the cause of his death at the age of forty-one. Where Swift was constant and persistent and able to write the relatively extensive Gulliver's Travels, Brown's works are all short snatches and the reader feels they were thrown down as Brown hurried by. His most extensive work is Amusements Serious and Comical which runs only to one-hundred eighty-four pages of which only one hundred were original. Although both lived in the same period, Brown died almost simultaneously with the publication of Swift's first major work--A Tale of a Tub.

---

<sup>3</sup>Boyce, p. 182.

The primary conclusion of this study is that Swift did indeed read most, if not all, the writings of Brown and was influenced by them to the extent that elements of Brown occur in Swift's work and are positive enough to be traced. The first evidence for this is in Gulliver's Travels, wherein it was seen that Swift used ideas from Brown's Amusements. The proposition is also supported by the fact that an examination of the evidence surrounding the Bickerstaff Papers reveals that Brown antedated Swift by many years in the attack on John Partridge. Swift, far from originating the idea, merely carried on that which Brown had already begun. Other works of Swift also show evidences of the influence of Brown. The similarities in this area--Swift's poetry--and his Thoughts Moral and Diverting do bear distinct traces of Brown in them, specifically his satire on marriage and his Laconics

respectively bear witness of Brown's influence, though perhaps not as strongly as other works . Finally, the proposition that declares Brown to have influenced Swift is far advanced by the similarities between Brown's writings and Swift's Tale of a Tub. Because Brown's writings are so various the similarities are more difficult to pin down, but they are nonetheless in existence. In this area there is still a shadow being cast by the publication dates of some of Brown's works. His Mr. Alsop's State of Conformity is an especially relevant work and demands more detailed and systematic investigation of the possible ways it could have become known to Swift.

Swift's debt to Brown is primarily one of ideas. This is indicated by the relationship that has been shown to exist between Brown's attack on Partridge and Swift's continuation of it. The academy developed by Brown in his Amusements recurs in Gulliver and again the debt is to the idea .

Another aspect of the relationship is a debt that is more exact--a verbal parallel. Of these there are two; the first is seen in the similar passages where buildings are said to be built in air. The second verbal parallel occurs in the Tale and the Amusements wherein both recount the experience of seeing a mountebank in Leicester-Fields.

One of the aims of this study was to bring together the widely scattered comments of the various authorities who have mentioned a connection between Swift and Brown. After

viewing these authorities as they have been accumulated, the conclusion seems warranted that Brown has been more positively fixed as an influence on Swift . Therefore, Brown is deserving of more consideration by Swiftian scholars and merits a place in future studies of Swift's life and writings.

It is not contended that any fundamental change has been made in the present concepts of Swift . What is said is that the image of Swift has, in some measure, been brought into sharper focus. In addition to this, at least two new areas have been opened for future study. The first arises out of the omission of Brown from the Tale. A valid avenue of study would seem to be a pursuit of the reason for his being excluded. The second question is of perhaps more interest and centers around Mr. Alsop's State of Conformity. The need for a complete and conclusive explanation for the incredible similarity between this piece and A Tale of a Tub should challenge every student of Jonathan Swift.

## A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baugh, Albert C. A Literary History of England. New York: Appleton-Century-Croft, 1948.

Beattie, Lester M. John Arbuthnot Mathematician and Satirist. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935.

Boyce, Benjamin. "The Life and Works of Tom Brown, 1663-1704," Harvard University Summaries of Theses, 1933.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Predecessors of the Tale of a Tub," Notes and Queries, CLXVIII (19 3 5 ).



\_\_\_\_\_. Tom Brown of Facetious  
Memory. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939.

Brown, Tom. Amusements Serious and Comical: and  
Other Works by T. Brown, ed. Arthur L. Haywood.  
London: George Routledge and Sons, 1927.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Works of Mr. Thomas  
Brown, ed. James Drake, M.D., 4 vols. London: Henry Lintot  
and Charles Hitch, 8th ed., 1744.

Collection of English Poems, A, --1660-1800, ed.  
Ronald S. Crane. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932.

Concise Dictionary of National Biography, The., ed.  
Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee. London: Oxford  
University Press, 1920.

Dictionary of National Biography, The, ed. Sir Leslie  
Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee. London: Oxford University  
Press, 1886.

Eddy, William A. Gulliver's Travels: A Critical  
Study. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1923.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Tom Brown and Partridge the  
Astrologer," Modern Philology, XXVIII (November, 1930).

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Wits vrs. John Partridge,  
Astrologer," Studies in Philology, XXIX (January, 1932).

Ewald, William Bragg, Jr. The Masks of Jonathan  
Swift. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954.

Reed, Edward B. "Gulliver's Travels and Tom Brown," Modern Language Notes, XXXIII (1918).

Starkman, Miriam Kosh. Swift's Satire on Learning in A Tale of a Tub. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950.

Swift, Jonathan. A Tale of a Tub, ed. A. C. Guthkelch and D. Nichol Smith. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920.

\_\_\_\_\_. Gulliver's Travels: and Other Writings, ed. Ricardo Quintana. New York: Random House, 1958.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D., ed. Temple Scott, 11 vols. London: George Bell and Sons, 1901.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Works of Jonathan Swift, ed. Sir Walter Scott, 19 vols. London: Bickers & Son, 1883.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Works of the Rev. Jonathan Swift, D.D., ed. D. Laing Purves. London: William P. Nimmo, 1879.

Thompson, Elbert N. S. "Tom Brown and the Satirists," Modern Language Notes, XXXII (1917).

Webster, Clarence M. "Tom Brown and the Tale of a Tub," Times Literary Supplement (February 12, 1932).

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Satiric Background of the Attack on the Puritans in Swift's Tale of a Tub," PMLA, L (1935).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Swift's Tale of a Tub Compared with Earlier Satires of the Puritans," PMLA, XLVII (1932).

Wellek, Rene and Warren Austin. Theory of Literature. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1956.

Wilson, Charles. Swiftiana, 2 vols. London: Richard Phillips, 1804.

