Building the Bildungsroman: How Jonathan Swift’s Early Satire Helped James Joyce Find His Voice

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Building the Bildungsroman: How Jonathan Swift’s Early Satire Helped James Joyce Find his Voice

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A Thesis in the Field of English for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

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Abstract

This study investigates the stylistic affinities between Jonathan Swift and James Joyce, in particular those resemblances which are present in their earlier works—A Tale of a Tub, The Battle of the Books, and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. It demonstrates that both Swift and Joyce use similar literary devices in their work to enliven it and make it exuberant. Some of those devices are personification, zoomorphism, synesthesia, auditory implication, juxtaposition, amplification, anthropomorphism, and an abundant incorporation of kinesthetic language. Moreover, Swift and Joyce abjure the temporal and structural approaches to most novelistic literature that render slow-moving plot and ordinary language. They instead create episodic movements and quick changes, at even the sentence level, to make their work vivified, vibrant, and exciting. Additionally, this thesis indicates when James Joyce became interested in Swift as a writer—because he was not always so—and pinpoints the timeframe where Swiftian influence may have driven him to make alterations to his own writing style. While other scholars have shown that Swift’s influence is readily apparent in Joyce’s Ulysses and Finnegans Wake, this thesis will show that that influence may well have come earlier. Finally, this thesis tracks the numerous personal similarities between these two great authors, including their significant hardships, arrogance, and brilliance, which may have some bearing on why Joyce felt a kinship with Swift and why he was a personal hero and inspiration to him.
Acknowledgements

My journey through Harvard University’s Continuing Education Master of Liberal Arts program has been a challenging one but it has also been very rewarding. Many talented and thoughtful teachers and advisors have welcomed me to the emotionally gratifying world of English literature and facilitated an understanding of immense human achievements across literary genres. They also helped me learn to write with grace and clarity. These educators include teaching assistant Rob Fox, Professors Todd Carmody, Leo Damrosch, Joyce Van Dyke, Lewis H. Miller, Jr., Sue Weaver Schopf, and Michael Shinagel. Moreover, Lewis H. Miller, Jr., my Reading James Joyce professor, gave me the opportunity to work as a Teacher’s Aid and has been very considerate in answering questions about Joyce’s work. He was the first person to mention a Swift/Joyce connection, in class, and this interesting concept eventually led to the topic of my thesis. Too, Professor Todd Carmody allowed me to work as a Faculty Aide and thoughtfully offered his advice on various aspects of my thesis. My advisor Talaya Delaney responded to my proposals and questions with patience, enthusiasm, kindness, and much needed guidance. Lastly, a special thanks to my thesis director and teacher Leo Damrosch for his expertise, support, and encouragement. I feel privileged to have studied at the Harvard Extension School and to have worked with such brilliant teachers as these.
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Chapter I
Introduction

At first glance, when contemplating connections between Jonathan Swift and James Joyce, dissimilarities between them stand out more distinctly than similarities. After all, they were born over 200 years apart, a fact that guarantees generational disparities in their values and experiences and thus a different focus in their writing. Likewise, there is the consideration of genre in each author’s most notable work: Swift is best known for the exceptionally fantastical satire *Gulliver’s Travels* which transports the reader to an oftentimes hilarious world of impossibilities; Joyce, on the other hand, is a Modernist giant who revolutionized the literary form by documenting thinking in real-time in his stream-of-consciousness narrative *Ulysses*. Furthermore, while religion looms large in each of their lives, they have different opinions on that too. Joyce was adamantly anti-Catholic and elucidated that fervently in his writing. Whereas Swift was at least an outwardly religious person, having been Dean of the Anglican St. Patrick’s Cathedral for thirty-two years while longing still for a more prominent leadership role in the church—that of Bishop. Lastly, there is politics. While both opposed British Imperialism in Irish affairs in their writings, they otherwise had disparate political views. The politically astute and outspoken Swift was nestled in with the conservative Tories by age forty-one, and throughout his life was more committed to political writing than to “literature.” Joyce—a socialist by age twenty-two—was uninterested in politics
by the time he reached his forties, commenting at one point, “Don’t talk to me about politics. I’m only interested in style.”

Cursory glances, however, do not paint the whole picture. Scholars have dug deeper and successfully demonstrated that there are indeed many points of unity between Swift and Joyce, perhaps more similarities than there are differences. For instance, both men had chronic and debilitating physical illnesses—Swift a disease of the inner ear and Joyce a struggle with his eyes. Conceivably, these bodily ailments led them to have what Joseph McMinn declares in his essay, “A likely pair: Joyce and Swift,” to be a “shared sense of physical rot” (32). They also had mixed feelings about living amongst the Irish for cultural and intellectual reasons; therefore, Swift left Ireland for England as often as he could and Joyce fled to continental Europe. McMinn explains that while Joyce physically exiled himself from Ireland, Swift, whose family had recently moved to Ireland from England, had a “cultural sense of exile in Ireland, and estrangement from [his perceived home] England” (29). Since Swift and Joyce used their sharp political acumen to courageously expose the moral and political corruption of society, they were both punished for it—one had to publish his works secretly and anonymously while the other was made to wait many frustrating years for publishers to have the courage to print his work. Other character and literary likenesses that scholars have uncovered include the following: H.G. Wells’s observation in his book review of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* that Joyce and Swift shared an “unsavory aspect” of their characters—a “cloacal obsession”; Mackie L. Jarrell’s conclusion in “Joyce’s Use of Swift’s Polite Conversation in the ‘Circe’ Episode of *Ulysses,*” that Swift’s “peculiar vein of humour”—a phrase copied from the Earl of Orrery book, *Remarks on*
the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift—is something he shares with Joyce⁴; and Harry Levin’s skillfully worded explication of the many similarities between Swift and Joyce in James Joyce: A Critical Introduction:

…besides their mutual fascination with language, Joyce and Swift have in common a controlled style and an uncontrollable imagination, a disposition to take trifles seriously and to trifle with serious things. Personally, they seem to possess the same sensitive ear for dissonances, the same delicate nose for ordures, the same acute perception of incongruities; the same dehumanized rigour in pursuing a point; the same unabashed familiarity in confiding details; the same strange blend of misanthropic sentimentality and humanitarian detachment. (141-2)

While Levin astutely and beautifully captures many of the commonalities between Swift and Joyce in his passage, other scholars have demonstrated that Swift was indeed an important literary influence on Joyce—one of the reasons, perhaps, for the many parallelisms between them. For instance, there are numerous conspicuous and inconspicuous allusions to Swift in Joyce’s Ulysses and Finnegans Wake. Jarrell noticed over twenty examples in Ulysses’ “Circe” chapter where Joyce “makes direct use of [Swift’s] Polite Conversation” through eerily similar word choices and sometimes exact copies of Swift’s wording (545). Both Jarrell and Arthur T. Broes did extensive studies that reveal the deep impact Swift had on Joyce’s Finnegans Wake as well.⁵ McMinn also points out that Swift’s literary influence on Joyce is considerable by arguing that readers of Finnegans Wake will find “not only multiple allusions to Swift and his writings, but the only example in the Joycean canon of a work whose thematic design and structure owe a great deal to the legend of Swift”—to which he adds, it owes “too much” (31). Other scholars have pointed out that Joyce continues Swift’s themes further in his own work. For example, Michael Patrick Gillespie notes in “A Swift Reading of Ulysses” that Joyce used “contributions from Swift at a number of points in the final
third of [Ulysses] to develop, without specifically evoking, material derived from his predecessor [Swift]” (188). Swift the person and Swift the writer, then, are well-documented inspirations for Joyce, at least in Ulysses and Finnegans Wake.

Specifically stylistic affinity between Swift and Joyce, however, is an area of literary comparison that appears to be under-analyzed. The stylistic links that have been alluded to in scholarly articles have been vaguely defined. Jarrell, for example, notes that there is “a certain pared exuberance of style” in Swift’s A Tale of a Tub and Joyce’s “Oxen of the Sun” chapter in Ulysses, captured in their respective papal bull stories (552). While McMinn rewords the linking that Jarrell identifies as a “sense of a ‘Swiftian ‘feel’ about [Joyce’s] style,” his words convey an equally vague description (31). Stuart Gilbert—a friend and translator of Joyce—invoked a “manner of Swift” when remarking upon Joyce’s form and content in Ulysses. 6 The phrases “pared exuberance,” “Swiftian feel,” and the “manner of Swift,” however, are imprecise expressions which draw out the following questions: is there scholarly criticism pertaining to the individual styles on these authors that is collectively similar and can thus be compared?; what are the reasons for Swift’s influence over Joyce—could their personal stories provide clues?; would a more detailed explication of Swift and Joyce’s work elucidate the matter of stylistic affinity between them?; and how would one go about defining when Swift’s influence on Joyce’s literature began?

This thesis aims to answer those questions. By closely examining many scholars’ comments about the stylistic techniques of these two giants of literature—sometimes in the form of relatively casual asides—one finds that when brought together and considered collectively, they provide a new and deeper understanding of a Joyce/Swift
connection. They present a solid foundation for the case I make in this thesis and, therefore, you will find that the volume of quotations I include from modern critics is considerable. I advance the notion, through research into their respective biographies, that Joyce turned to Swift for inspiration because of the many commonalities in their personal lives that may, in turn, have prompted a sense of kindred-spiritedness. The thorough analysis I introduce on some of the early works of Swift point out his unique stylistic traits and give many examples of what these modes do for his works, pieces of literature that Joyce was especially fond of. By tracing Joyce’s recorded interest in Swift over time and uncovering changes in his own style from stage to stage of his coming-of-age work, this thesis will offer compelling evidence of an adoption by Joyce of the stylistic tools that Swift used frequently.

Joyce’s thoughts on Swift—his early dismissal and later admiration—are found in his letters, notes, and annotations. Joyce received a letter from his brother Stanislaus in 1906, for instance, that praised Jonathan Swift, yet Joyce’s response shows he did not share Stan’s opinion: “I am very pleased with your admiration for Swift. I suppose I shall get interested in him some day.” 7 Before these letters between the brothers were written, Joyce had already finished his prose essay “A Portrait of the Artist” and his first novelistic attempt Stephen Hero and, therefore, his indifference to Swift seems to rule out any of Swift’s influence on these first two emerging works of formation. Joyce’s famous Bildungsroman, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, however, was started in the summer of 1907, which means that Joyce had time after Stan’s letter to become familiar with Swift’s biography and his work. By November 1913, it is certain that Joyce was very impressed by Swift, again perhaps because of the prompting of Stan’s
letter. As Joyce was nearing completion of *A Portrait* he gave the highest praise imaginable to Swift. This encomium is found in the “Notes” for his play *Exiles*. There Joyce declares that Swift and the 19th century politician Charles Stewart Parnell—to whom he refers at length in *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*—are “the two greatest Irishmen of modern times” (175). Nicholas Fargnoli and Michael Patrick Gillespie, the authors of *James Joyce A to Z*, argue that naming Swift as “one of the two greatest modern Irishmen” shows that by then Swift was “in the forefront of Joyce’s artistic consciousness” (211). Joyce’s fascination with Swift is also exhibited in the generous markings in books found in his library in Trieste where he lived while he composed *A Portrait*. Joyce placed one hundred ninety-one of his distinctive annotations in *The Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D.*, one of the three Swift books he owned. Sixty-one of the markings were in Swift’s early satires—fifty in *A Tale of the Tub*—one of Joyce’s favorites—and eleven in its appendage, *The Battel of the Books*. Moreover, Joyce placed thirty-four markings in *The Works*’ biographical sketch of Swift which points to a significant interest in Swift’s personal life.8

When comparing the first stages of Joyce’s own coming-of-age work—his essay “A Portrait of the Artist” and his fragment of a novel *Stephen Hero*—with the final stage *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, one finds that two preliminary works lack the artistic merit and stylistic sophistication of their successor. Joyce undeniably made dramatic changes to his final stage Bildungsroman, including altering its form to an overall episodic and kinetic mode that is similar to Swift’s *A Tale of the Tub* and *The Battel of the Books*. Many literary tropes that are utilized in *A Tale of the Tub* and *The Battel of the Books* are featured in Joyce’s *A Portrait* as well. For example, they both
apply personification and anthropomorphism to objects, concepts, animals, and body parts which serves to vivify that which is not human and that which lacks agency. These non-human entities, in turn, appear conscious, sentient, and even sapient. Conversely, they employ zoomorphism and chremamorphism to attribute animal and object qualities to humans. Swift and Joyce also imply auditory sensation by incorporating words that conjure sound, indicate kinesis by suggesting action, and include frequent changes in scenery and shifts in plot. Synesthesia is made use of by appealing to more than one of the senses at a given time which, in turn, makes vivid and lasting images in the mind. Finally, amplification is used to exaggerate and emphasize points and juxtaposition draws parallels and creates tension which also serves to enliven the text. Swift made stylistic choices in his earlier works which created literature that is dynamic, animative, cinematic, and evocative, and Joyce adopted similar techniques—likely as a result of increased familiarity with Swift and a sense of personal camaraderie—that enliven his work as well, forging a kinetic link in their respective styles.
Chapter II
The Prototype—Swift and his Early Writing

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) did not have what one might consider a stable or
typical upbringing. Swift’s father died before his son’s birth and when Swift was a year
old his mother moved to England, leaving him in Ireland in the care of a nurse and his
father’s family. Shortly after, the nurse unexpectedly abducted him to her home in
England, and the Swift family didn’t bring him back for several years. He may never
have seen his mother at all after his infancy until he was grown. He boarded at Kilkenny
Grammar School as a young boy and later, at age 14, he began studying at Trinity
College, Dublin. There he is described by 19th century biographer D. Laing Purves as
having been “irregular, eccentric, inattentive to prescribed studies, and a frequenter of
unscholastic haunts” (Purves, 3). Swift admits in his autobiographical essay, “The Family
of Swift,” that a lack of interest in offered subject matters at Trinity was one of the
reasons he “too much neglected some Parts of his Academick Studies” (*Essential
Writings* 691). He would have preferred to explore the subjects that he enjoyed—
“history and poetry” (Purves 3). Besides suffering through classes he did not enjoy,
though, Swift openly admits in his essay that a second contributor to his poor
performance in college was the “ill Treatment of his nearest Relations” (*Essential
Writings* 691). Swift earned his B.A. in 1686 and remained at Trinity to study for his
M.A. He continued to commit “offences” throughout his college years which were
documented in his educational record (Purves 3).
Swift left Ireland in late 1688 for England and soon he was working as a secretary for Sir William Temple—an “exceptionally distinguished” retired diplomat, “close friend of King William III,” and acquaintance of his mother’s friend (Purves 4). For 10 years Swift kept busy working for Temple, yet during this period he found the time to tutor the young Esther Johnson (who later became his closest friend in life and possible secret wife), obtain an M.A. at Oxford,¹ become an Anglican Deacon, and run a parish in Kilroot, Ireland. Furthermore, Swift remedied the unremarkable education he received at Trinity while living at Temple’s estate. Leo Damrosch points out in his biography, Jonathan Swift: His Life and His World, that Swift made ample use of Temple’s “superb” library, reading several Greek classics more than once and “numerous books in French, and histories in both French and English” (80). Too, Damrosch points out that Swift honed his writing and editing skills while he “work[ed] with Temple on preparing his essays and correspondence for eventual publication… read[ing] aloud from earlier drafts, [taking] down changes as directed, and wr[iting] out the revised texts in fair copies suitable for sending to a printer” (43). Although Swift came to resent Temple’s condescending treatment of him, he always praised the clarity of Temple’s style.

By 1691, Swift was composing his own poetry. He wrote several Odes that were likely written “to impress Temple,” often involving subjects and ideas that Temple would have approved of: Temple himself, Temple’s friends, or Temple’s beliefs (Damrosch 83). Five years later Swift began work on his early satires, A Tale of a Tub and the Battel of the Books, the former being a controversial work on religion with some digressions on other topics, and the latter a mock-heroic battle among ancient and modern books and their authors. A dispute involving the perceived superiority in achievements and wisdom
of either ancient or modern thinkers had been a long-standing one dating back to the Renaissance era when humanists revived an interest in ancient works. *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Battle of the Books* were published anonymously, but not until 1704 after Temple had died, perhaps because *A Tale* contained controversial subject matter that would have been offensive to Temple. Following Temple’s death in 1701, Swift “became deeply interested in English politics” while working as chaplain to the nobleman who was the “king’s representative in Ireland” (Damrosch 101, 125). That same year he wrote a long political pamphlet called *A Discourse of the Contests and Dissensions between the Nobles and the Commons in Athens and Rome, with the Consequences They Had upon Both Those States*. This piece could have been viewed solely as a history of ancient political battles, but upon closer inspection, readers versed in the politics of Swift’s day would have noticed that “every ancient personality and controversy had a direct parallel in modern English history” (Damrosch 127). Swift’s unique skill for analogy and allegory is demonstrated here and more prominently elsewhere, specifically in *A Tale of a Tub*, *The Battle of the Books*, and *Gulliver’s Travels*.

Swift became very well acquainted with political matters and controversies both of his time and of ancient time and grew into a prolific and extraordinarily gifted writer of many genres, including epistle, pamphlet, poetry, essay, novel, and satire. He did some writing for a Whig ministry in the early eighteenth century, and when the Tories came in he became an invaluable propagandist for their policies. In 1713, when the Tories foresaw of that they would fall from power at the imminent death of queen Anne, they secured for him the post of Dean of St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Dublin, the position that he continued to hold until his death.
His early difficulties in school and home-life did not end his personal problems, though, for he is known too for his long and complex relationships with the women that he named Stella and Vanessa—Esther Johnson and Esther Vanhomrigh. His unwillingness to be open about the nature of his relationship with them, to live with either of them, or to openly declare that Stella was his wife—if she was—have led some to believe that Swift’s emotional cruelty led to these women’s early deaths. Swift’s enduring boldness and courage in exposing human hypocrisy and immorality in writing—even in religious matters—often antagonized his contemporaries. While he paid for his outspokenness during his lifetime with the contempt of the narrow-minded in high places and, in turn, the loss of their corresponding patronage, he earned a legacy among readers as an exceptionally brilliant, hysterically funny, and searingly honest humane man. Thanks to the savage Fourth Voyage of *Gulliver’s Travels*, however, he also gained a reputation as a bitter misanthrope.

*A Tale of a Tub*

Swift’s satire *A Tale of a Tub* is a mix of parodic digression and allegory with a religious message. In spite of the religious context, however, this work is at times profane, vulgar, scatological, sexually suggestive, and provocative in its criticisms of religion. Swift’s decision to publish it without authorial acknowledgement was prescient because the pious in high places did not look past *A Tale’s* bawdy moments to its humor or central message—exposing “numerous and gross corruptions in religion and learning” (*The Writings* 265). Just as Joyce’s sexual frankness aroused criticism, so Swift’s breezy way of treating religion gave offense to many readers, and not just the queen. Swift’s
religious allegory is unique in that the representatives of all three sects – the admired Martin included – beat up watchmen, sleep with prostitutes, and catch venereal disease. Even though its author remained anonymous, *A Tale* was widely believed to have been written by Swift as a general attack on religion. Its existence cost Swift dearly—it is thought to have robbed him of the coveted appointment of bishop by those who could have granted it. Eugene Hammond argues in *The Irish Blow-in* that, in particular, it was Swift’s “use of the phrase ‘God dam,’” in the section on papal bulls which “got him into more trouble than did all other parts of the *Tale* combined” (205).

While *A Tale of a Tub* does criticize specific aspects of religion it does not criticize all religion; instead, it praises the merits of the Anglican Church in contrast to the Catholic Church and the Low Church (made up of the Dissenters who followed Calvinism). In the main story, three brothers represent the aforementioned sects of Christianity. They inherit coats from their father’s will with specific instructions on how to maintain the coats. The sons choose, however, to tend to their coats in the traditions and practices of their respective branches of faith instead. Martin, who represents the English church and is the most moderate and wise of the three brothers, follows his father’s will relatively closely. The arrogant Peter and extremist Jack, however, do not. *A Tale*’s various digressions are parodies of such subjects as literary critics, stylistic digressions, and madness, and its lengthy front material mocks the loquacious prefaces commonly found in Swift’s time. Even though his authorship was kept secret, Swift was “intensely proud of his achievement,” as evidenced by the only known utterance he made to his caretaker in his elder years: “Good God! What a flow of imagination had I, when I wrote this!”^5
*A Tale of a Tub* has a unique structure. Its segments include a twenty-six-page multi-part prefatory section, five parts of allegory, and six of digressions—the latter two alternating back and forth. Even within a section, such as Section II’s allegory containing the introduction of the three brothers, there are quick shifts of emphasis. While the first few paragraphs explain the coat inheritance, the next details the brother’s goings-on in town, that is followed too by a description of the tailor idol, and lastly there is an explication of assorted embellishments one may add to a coat. Swift often sneaks some of his digression arguments into the allegory sections too. Consequently, *A Tale* jumps around at an unusually rapid rate. This winding and changeable style is something that is not only seen in *A Tale* but in Swift’s other works as well. William Freedman notes in his “The Grotesque Body in the Hollow Tub: Swift’s Tale” that Swift’s “expansive habit permeates and defines almost all of [his] satiric writings” (298). “A Modest Proposal,” for example, is noted by F.R. Leavis in "The Irony of Swift," as having “continuous and unpredictable movement of the attack, which turns this way and that, comes now from one quarter and now from another” (368).

Swift’s particular case of creating much movement in plot and argument has facilitated discussion among scholars as to its role in the literary efficacy of *A Tale*. Some, such as Ronald Paulson, have found that Swift’s mode of expansiveness promotes a well-composed, integrated text; *A Tale*, he concludes, has “balanced sections, subjects, and characters” (Freedman 294). Martin Price is similarly positive when he indicates that *A Tale* makes a clear attack on various abuses with its “middle way that lies between opposed forms of corruption” (Freedman 294). Still constructive—but on the micro-level—are Irvin Ehrenpreis comments in “Swift: the man, his works, and the age,”
Volume I of a three-volume biography: Swift’s “quick, colloquial rhythms” are part of the “best of his prose style” and because of Swift’s lack of “periodicity,” his “clauses turn on articulations which are more evocative because one could not foresee them and they are therefore, surprising” (236).

Yet, while Swift’s plethora of structural shifts and figurative allusions make *A Tale* integrated, exciting, and remarkable, some think his stylistic choices are antagonistic to his work. Freedman is one such critic. He argues that while “we appreciate [Swift]…for the sheer creative wizardry of [his] discourse” his dynamic style can be detrimental to the content:

> [Swift’s] penchant for flight to and across surfaces and the contradictions it generates are evident in the flamboyant style as well as the conflictual content of [his extended metaphor on Wisdom in *A Tale* (298)]. As often happens in Swift’s writing, the infectious exuberance of style works against a content that deems such rampant energy. As the argument proceeds, our attention is diverted from meaning to play, from substance and idea to inventive metaphoric surfaces. (300)

Others find an even darker purpose to Swift’s style. Robert C. Eliot posits in his “Swift’s Tale of a Tub: An Essay in Problems of Structure” that *A Tale*’s unconnected parts are so diverse that they present as a “confusing mass of prolegomena,” where the reader “cannot possibly find in it alone a principle of organization” (442). Ricardo Quintana contends that “beneath [Swift’s] brilliantly crazy orchestration” is a gradual and purposeful build to the “climactic statement in the Digression concerning Madness.” 6 Furthermore, Ehrenpreis advances the theory that Swift’s “succession of unpredictable flowerings” are meant to take the place of “suspenseful plot” because Swift has “little gift for narrative plot.” (*In Swift the Man* 201, 236). Finally, Leavis, offers an explanation that is sinister: *A Tale*’s “inexhaustibly surprising” text with its “unpredictable movement of attack” and
“rapid shifts of source and target” is written that way to “intimidate, demoralize, and betray the reader” for the “insolent pleasure of the author.”?

These scholars have valuable opinions, but Swift may have simply preferred amusement and movement in literature and believed that one learns more from allegory and episodic-oriented story-telling than straight didactic prose. In his “A Letter to a Young Gentleman, Lately Entered into Holy Orders, by a Person of Quality” he attests that “[He had] never been better entertained, and more informed by a Chapter in Pilgrim’s Progress, than by a long Discourse upon the Will and the Intellect, and simple or complex Ideas” (The Writings 483). What Swift’s comment indicates is a desire to be interested and enthralled in what he reads—an observation similar to one made by Ehrenpreis hundreds of years later: “what we enjoy, remember, and prize is the action” (“Show and Tell” 453-4). The frenetic and jerky episodic style in A Tale is due also, in part, to Swift being a parodic writer by nature who in this case is mocking the incoherence of contemporary writers during his time.8 Certainly, A Tale’s rapid structural shifts ensure that there is rarely a dull moment in this work—except perhaps the “Digressions Concerning Criticks” which, while very passionately written, is at seven pages a bit long-winded. Whether for or against Swift’s overall kinetic form, it seems clear that A Tale’s shifting goals create an exciting, oscillating, and surprising text.

Another literary technique that Swift uses in A Tale is metaphor. This device makes abstractions seem concrete and vivifies that which is not human and, therefore, lacks agency; consequently, Swifts’ concepts appear conscious, sentient, and even sapient. Metaphor also provides humor—and sometimes even laugh-out-loud moments—as it aids in the visualization of words into vivid images. The various types of metaphor
that Swift uses add complexity to his text and help transform it into a seemingly three-dimensional, cinematic art-form. Swift shows “Bombast and Buffoonry,” for example, to be moving structures in the Modern Theatre; they “soar highest of all, and would be lost in the Roof” if the architect had not turned them into a “Twelve-Peny Gallery” for critics (The Writings 296). Likewise, Swift provides stand-ins for the Catholic church’s inventions, exchanging objects with concepts: The large continent that Peter purchases signifies Purgatory and a whispering office is the act of confession.

Swift creates extended metaphors, such as in Section VI when he explains how Jack, as a representative of the puritanical Low Church, has a “quite different spirit” from Martin (The Writings 334). Swift homes in on the word “zeal” to explain Jack’s passion, elucidating zeal expansively as follows: “…I have deduced a Histori-theo-physi-logical Account of Zeal, shewing how it first proceeded from a Notion into a Word, and from thence in a hot Summer, ripned into a tangible Substance. This work contains[s] three large Volumes in Folio…”; to this Swift adds, “Zeal is never so highly obliged, as when you set it a Tearing” (The Writings 334). Swift has taken zeal from a concept, to a word, into matter, then three substantial books, and finally it becomes someone or something capable of performing an action upon a garment. Another instance of extended metaphor is in Section XI where Jack covets and obsesses over his Father’s will to such an extent that the scripture becomes much farther-reaching than it was intended to. For example, the coat—a stand-in for scripture—becomes his “meat, drink, and cloth…the Philosopher’s Stone, and the Universal Medicine”—Jack can work it “into any shape he pleased; so that it served him for a Night-cap when he went to Bed, and for an Umbrello in rainy Weather” (The Writings 361).
Swift shows a particular enthusiasm and predilection for utilizing the form of metaphor known as personification. Personification applies human characteristics to things that are not human. Swift’s use of personification creates living, breathing, thinking, and feeling entities out of objects. The following examples demonstrate several things that act in ways that humans do in A Tale’s “Apology” section:

“Treatises…flirted”; a “Syllable…Defen [ds]”; a “Book…live[s]”; “Tast[e] admit[s]”; the “World [is] nauseated”; and “Years [are] mature” (The Writings 265). Similarly, in other sections of A Tale, “Structures… possessed [reputation]” and “Nature itself hath instructed” (The Writings 292, 295). Swift also enlivens and humanizes concepts when addressing the brothers’ embarrassment over their plain coats which are devoid of the popular and fashionable shoulder-knots of their day: “Our three brothers soon discovered their Want by sad Experience, meeting in their Walks with forty Mortifications and Indignities” (The Writings 306). That example of personification shows that when concepts are turned into structures and given human descriptors a metaphorical implication of movement may be created too. Another example with movement is this one: “whining Passions and little starved Conceits, are gently wafted up by their own extreme Levity, to the middle Region, and there fix and are frozen by the frigid Understandings of the Inhabitants” (The Writings 296).

Swift elaborates on shoulder-knots—a knot of material worn as part of a ceremonial dress—and other articles of clothing to underscore humankind’s desire for possessions. One of Swift’s satiric targets is modern materialism, treating mind and soul simply as manifestations of matter. He satirizes these wants with a tool that is the opposite of personification—chremamorphism. This device gives qualities of inanimate
objects or concepts to humans and thus shows how people can be dehumanized by their belongings. It works in *A Tale* to make materials seem more important to superficial people than a person’s emotions are. Swift uses chremamorphism when establishing that a certain sect of people “worshipped a tailor” as a God because of the clothing he makes (*The Writings* 303). Since all things, including the universe, are considered “fine” and “fashionable” items of clothing to this tailor-worshiping sect, the narrator ironically wonders, “what is Man himself [then] but a Micro-Coat, or rather a compleat Suit of Cloaths with all its Trimmings?” (*The Writings* 304). Too, some ladies of this sect shallowly conflate the brothers’ plain coats with a lack of spirit: “That Fellow, cries one[woman], has no Soul; where is his Shoulder-knot?” (*The Writings* 306).

Swift has a fascination with animals and often draws metaphors and similes with animal links. He employs zoomorphism to paint a vivid picture of a person, object, or concept as being akin to a particular animal, its essence, and its traits. For example, when discussing scholars of his day who preferred modern writing and thinking to ancient and who also lacked respect for ancient texts Swift states, “…the Writers of and for GRUBSTREET, have in these latter Ages so nobly triumph’d over Time; have clipt his Wings, pared his Nails, [and] filed his Teeth” (*The Writings* 297). Swift portrays these True Critics as either “Ass[es],” “Asses with Horns,” “strange animals about India,” “Serpents,” or “young wolves” (*The Writings* 314-6). He also creates a delightful extended metaphor concerning papal bulls. An actual papal bull is an edict issued by the pope—here humorously represented as “Emperor Peter”—yet Swift presents the papal bulls as if they are mythical bulls, like the ones “that guarded the Golden Fleece” (*The Writings* 320-22). Swift’s papal bulls roar, fly, and breath fire, are given “Fishes Tails” so
they “could out-fly any Bird in the Air,” and are sent “roaring to fright Naughty boys, and make them quiet,” all to intimidate and smear those who, as Hammond notes, “do not obey [Peter’s] various whims (The Writings 321, Hammond 205). By mixing zoomorphism and personification, Swift amusedly explains that the papal bulls “would Roar, and Spit, and Belch, and Piss, and Fart, and Snivel out Fire, and keep a perpetual Coyl, till you flung them a Bit of Gold” (The Writings 321).

A final type of metaphor Swift utilizes in *A Tale* is synesthesia. This cross-sensory metaphor creates vivid and lively imagery by exploiting the senses. Synesthesia can be used to appeal to more than one of the reader’s senses at a time so as to elicit a strong effect from the passage on the imagination. Swift includes multi-sensory imagery not only in his early satires but in all genres of his literature. For instance, in his poem “A Description of a City Shower,” he invokes the senses of sight and smell found in a city street after it rains: “Returning Home at Night, you’ll find the Sink/Strike your offended Sense with double Stink” (The Writings 519). More vividly descriptive are the following two lines from the same poem: "Filth of all Hues and Odours seem to tell / What Street they sail'd from, by their Sighth and Smell" (The Writings 519). In *Gulliver’s Travels*, Swift employs synesthesia too in “A Voyage to LaPuta, Etc.” While presenting a wide variety of hilarious and outrageous experiments carried out at an “Academy,” Swift sardonically has Gulliver tell of “a Man born blind, who had several Apprentices in his own Condition: Their Employment was to mix Colours for Painters, which their Master taught them to distinguish by feeling and smelling”; too which Swift comically adds—“It was indeed [his] Misfortune to find them at that Time not very perfect in their Lessons” (The Writings 151,153). Too, Swift wrote a riddle “On the Five Senses,” which
includes references to the “dark,” to “victuals,” to “ten thousand cannons roar,” to the “pierce…of wounding steel,” and, finally, “smell.”

In *A Tale*, Swift utilizes synesthesia in Section I with his orator who is attempting to be higher than the group of people he is speaking to so that he may be “heard in a Crowd”; one of the problems, though, with such contraptions as a raised basket or a pulpit is that “Foundations being laid too high, they have been often out of Sight, and ever out of Hearing” (*The Writings* 292). In Section V., he elicits sight, touch, and smell in the following passage: “To this End, I have some Time since, with a World of Pains and Art, dissected the Carcass of *Humane Nature*, and read many useful Lectures upon the several Parts, both *Containing* and *Contained*; till at last it *smelt* so strong, I could preserve it no longer” (*The Writings* 327).

Because Swift repeatedly presents ideas, concepts, people, gods, and animals through a metaphorical and representative lens in order to get at a deeper meaning—to the point where nearly everything in *A Tale* is ironic and symbolic—the text is, in turn, a complex and often difficult one to read. Swift’s expansive and discursive language of conscious abstractions shape interesting and even startling allegories which emphasize his views on politics, religious hypocrisy, tyranny, and the importance of ancient knowledge in a modern society.

*The Battel of the Books*

Swift’s *The Battel of the Books* was published in 1704 as an appendage to the longer *A Tale of a Tub*. The controversy that prompted the writing of this satiric work is explained in the first section, “Bookseller to the Reader” and is as follows: Sir William
Temple had written “An Essay upon the Antient and Modern Learning” in 1692 which argued that modern intellectuals had not added much to the accumulation of knowledge since the time of antiquity. Literary critic William Wotton disagreed with Temple’s contention and called upon his friend, classicist Richard Bentley, to use his knowledge of ancient texts to denounce Temple’s spurious examples that claim age-old intellectual superiority. The bookseller explains that since the argument is still dragging on, with “no End of the Quarrel” in sight, the “BOOKS in St. James library, looking upon themselves as Parties principally concerned, took up the Controversie, and came to a decisive Battel” (The Writings 374). The battle which thus results is presented in a mock-heroic fashion between the books in St. James library.

As in A Tale, there is structural movement in The Battel via digressions in plot. One such digression is the spider and bee parable, a story similar to the book battle because it too is an allegory of the modern vs. ancient disagreement. By reworking this ancient tale, Swift cleverly highlights a work of antiquity while adding a second modern vs. ancient dispute to The Battel. Aesop’s spider and bee fable pitted the mathematically impressive but self-seeking spider against the selfless and universal bee and concluded that while the bee takes what it needs from various herbs and flowers and, in turn, produces honey and wax for everyone, the spider works alone for his own use. Swift’s updated spider and bee tale has much more detail, drawing a spider that kills “infinite Numbers of Flies, whose Spoils lay scattered before the Gates of his Palace” while holed up alone in his overly fortified home, like a literary critic who works unaccompanied to destroy writers’ careers (The Writings 381). When Swift’s bee enters the spider’s home through a broken window and gets caught in the web, the spider rants about his
superiority over the bee. The spider believes that his ability to singularly build a “large Castle…with [his] own Hands” trumps the “vagabond” bee who “Plunder[s] upon nature,” and “rob[s] a Nettle as readily as a Violet” (382-3). The bee knows, however, that he uses “universal Range…long search [and] much Study” to produce honey and wax for all to consume without harming anyone; the spider, conversely, “turns all into Excrement and Venom; producing nothing at last, but Fly-bane and a Cobweb” (383). Another digression in The Battel concerns the Gods and their point of view about the battle of the books. While the God’s senate was “divided in their affections” between ancient and modern “creatures,” Momus, the god of blame and disgrace in Greek mythology—here the “Patron of the Moderns”—flies to discuss the matter with the “malignant deity Criticism” (The Writings 386). Momus finds her “extended in her Den, upon the Soils of numberless Volumes half devoured” (The Writings 386). Criticism ultimately flies “over infinite Regions, shedding her Influence in due Places, till…she arrived at her beloved island of Britain” in order to give her “Blessings” to the Royal Society and Covent-Garden coffeehouses.11

The excursions in plot are only one of the ways Swift implies movement in The Battel. Kinesthetic language and imagery is indeed the very quintessence of it. In the very first sentence we learn that in 1697 “the famous Dispute was on Foot” (The Writings 374). By using the word foot, Swift starts the text off bringing an abstraction to life with the implication of action and motion. Swift concocts lively and humorous imagery throughout The Battel, e.g., when he portrays the moderns’ envy of the ancients in their occupation of a higher spot, or “superior Rock,” on the hill Parnassus (The Writings 379). Because the ancients reject the moderns’ request to trade places with them so the
moderns can be on the taller rock and reject their idea to “level the said Hill, as low as they shall think it convenient” so both sides are on level ground, Bentley tries to climb the mountain and “to knock down two of the Antient Chiefs who guarded a small Pass on the superior Rock” (The Writings 377-9). Bentley finds, however, that although he and his critic friends have a certain “light-headed[ness]” that leads them to believe that there is “nothing too high for them to mount,” Bentley is unable to climb because he is overweight: the “mighty Pressure about [his rear] and…Heels” holds him back (The Writings 379-80). While Leavis mentions in his criticism the “copiousness of images [and] vivacity of diction” in A Tale, one could argue that this liveliness is even more on display in The Battel (369). The following excerpt brilliantly showcases the action, vivid dynamism, and inventiveness of Swift’s writing therein. This passage explains in metaphor the armament and realm of the competing writers:

Now, it must here be understood, that Ink is the great missive Weapon, in all Battels of the Learned, which, convey’d thro’ a sort of Engine, call’d a Quill, infinite Numbers of these are darted at the Enemy, by the Valiant on each side, with equal Skill and Violence, as if I were an Engagement of Porcupines. This malignant Liquor was compounded by the Engineer, who invented it, of two Ingredients, which are Gall and Copperas, by its Bitterness and Venom, to Suit in some Degree, as well as to Foment the Genius of the Combatants. (The Writing 378).

Even though porcupines’ quills do detach easily when touched, it was once thought that porcupines could shoot their quills at predators. The quills, then, act as an actual weapon and metaphorical weapon, a playful way to turn the goose quill of Swift’s day into a very different kind of weaponized quill.

Along with digression and movement in plot and in sentence structure, Swift implies auditory sensation and, in turn, kinesis with his use of words that imply sound. The following examples demonstrate how he does this: As Aristotle “drew his bow” and
“let fly his Arrow” it “went hizzing over his [enemy Bacon’s] Head”; geese “cackle loud, and flutter o’er the Champain”; and a soldier’s “Armour was patch’d up of a thousand incoherent Pieces…and the Sound of it, as he march’d, was loud and dry, like that made by the Fall of a Sheet of Lead” (*The Writings* 389, 392, 395). A different example uses sound—and the negation of sound—to not only build a visual image in the reader’s mind, but in this case build Swift’s argument for ancient superiority: “Away the Launce went hizzing, and reach’d even to the Belt of the avert Antient, upon which, lightly grazing, it fell to the Ground. *Temple* neither felt the Weapon touch him, nor heard it fall” (*The Writings* 394).

Swift makes use of juxtaposition as a literary mechanism in *The Battel* to draw parallels, create tension and suspense, and to enliven the text. Swift uses it to pit ancient authors and their ideas against modern thinkers and in doing so contrasts humanists vs. pedantic sophists, polite learning vs. selfish egoism, and quiet strength vs. swagger. The spider and the bee parable similarly pits the modern-acting arachnid against the ancient-philosophizing insect. In “Swift’s satire and parody,” Michael F. Suarez explains that Swift “is one of the greatest writers of Menippean satire… which emphasizes combining parody with satire and mixing together several different kinds of discourse in a single work…”; as a result, “Swift’s satires are typically vigorous literary hybrids produced by juxtaposing and combing multiple discursive forms” (116). Ehrenpreis’ explains his opinions on Swift’s use of juxtaposition in *The Battle* and in *A Tale*:

…the “[spider and the bee fable] provides an early example of one of Swift’s most characteristic and effective devices: to pick up some commonplace distinctions, embody them in ‘naturally’ appropriate creatures, and dramatize the resulting juxtaposition in a comic scene with dialogue. He tells no story but brings home the ironies implicit in the
clichés. To this genre belong the fat man and the weaver in the ‘Preface’ to *A Tale of a Tub* (Mr. Swift and his Contemporaries 235-6).

While Ehrenpreis is correct that the spider and the bee and the fat man and the weaver are comic tales with dialogue, these stories deserve more credit. The spider and the bee is an expansive tale that does indeed tell a story. Its two and a half pages of text explain the spider and the bee’s disparate ethos and provide a penetrating metaphor for their counterparts, the modern and the ancient intellectuals. On the other hand, the Mounteback, or fat man, and the weaver is but a mere paragraph. In that short space, though, Swift tells of an obese man complaining that there is little space to be had at an assembly while not realizing that his large size is to blame for there being so little room. This metaphor supposedly anticipates future complaints over the lengthy preface by explaining that modern writers usually write verbose prefaces.

Swift employs juxtaposition in his poems as well. In “A Description of the Morning,” he contrasts various images of urban life in heroic couplets. For example, a maid has two beds to consider in the morning, “her Master’s” that she “had flown” from and her own whose linens she “discomposed” to appear as if she had instead slept there (*The Writings* 518). It seems that Swift is using the idea of an aubade here, a type of poetic love song about lovers separating at dawn, but is altering that form by showing the reality that class distinctions have on love affairs. The entire poem speaks to the not-so-pleasant work and life of the lower class juxtaposed with the hypocrisy of the upper class—people such as the highborn “silent” bailiffs who let their prisoners out at night to steal for them (*The Writings* 518). Freedman highlights Swift’s use of contrast in “The Lady’s Dressing Room” too where “rapid vacillation between infatuated curiosity and
recoil,” demonstrates the contradictory elements of woman’s spaces – “ordure and order, dung and tulip” (295).

Another aspect of The Battel that conjures vivifying imagery is its anthropomorphism. This type of personification gives human characteristics, emotions, and motivations to non-human entities. In The Battel, Swift uses anthropomorphism to assign various human qualities to insects, objects, and Gods. The books in St. James library, for example, have in them “the Spirit of each Warrior, while he is alive; and after his Death, his Soul transmigrates there, to inform them” (The Writings 378). These books do just about everything people do: they are capable of committing “mutual violence against each other”; they are “Advocate[s]” for ancients and modern authors; they choose a leader among them to “concert their Affairs”; and they plan and execute an all-out war against their enemies (The Writings 378, 380). The parable of the insects—the bee and the spider—is likewise anthropomorphic. The spider, representing a modern intellectual, has a “Palace” that is “guarded with Turn-pikes, and Palissadoes” and piles of dead fly carcasses “scattered before [his] gates” “like human Bones” would be to a “Giant” (The Writings 381). When the spider is bothered by the jostling and shaking his home endures when a bee gets tangled in its web, just like a person, the spider “stormed and swore like a Mad-man” (The Writings 382). Moreover, a heated discussion ensues between them wherein the spider argues that the bee should have “more Respect to a Person, whom all the World allows to be so much your Betters” while the bee maintains that he, unlike the spider, is not arrogant and out for “injury” but is instead capable of “much Study, true Judgement [and] Distinction of Things” (The Writings 382).
Like the Olympian gods of classical mythology, Swift’s gods are anthropomorphic. One has a “large apartment,” one “made an excellent speech,” one “read [a] Decree,” and another “convokes a council in the Milky-Way” where the “Senate [then] assembled” (The Writings 385-6). Swift not only employs anthropomorphic devices with these gods but uses zoomorphic tools too. The animalistic terms Swifts uses to describe the god Criticism summon a vivid and insulting picture of her. She has “Claws like a Cat [and] Her Head, and Ears, and Voice, resembled those of an Ass” (The Writings 386-7). Moreover, in the digression with the gods, Swift employs the literary device reification to make abstractions seem more concrete. He names the god Criticism’s entire family after negative concepts. “Ignorance” is her father, “Pride” is her mother, and her children include “Noise,” “Impudence,” “Dullness,” “Vanity,” and “Pedantry” (The Writings 386). Moreover, her sister—described as “light of Foot, hoodwinkt, and headstrong, yet giddy and perpetually turning”—is named “Opinion” (The Writings 386).

A literary method that Swift uses in The Battel which enhances its meaning and increases its understandability—something he also uses in A Tale of a Tub—is amplification. This tool helps create an overall satiric effect because it multiplies the ironic episodes in an artistic exaggeration. An example of The Battel’s amplification follows the “long Descant of Aesop,” at the point where the two sides “heightened their Animosities” and start assigning jobs to their army’s members (The Writings 385). While the ancients are described in an understated fashion, e.g., “Homer led the Horse…Euclid was chief Engineer,” Swift elucidates the moderns and their roles in an elaborate fashion and thus highlights differences in humility between the two sides. The aggrandized
Bowmen’s leaders, for example — Des-Cartes, Gassendi, and Hobbes— are described as having “Strength[that] was such, that they could shoot their Arrows beyond the Atmosphere, never to fall down again, but turn like that of Evander, into Meteors, or like the Cannonball into Stars” (*The Writings* 385). Similarly, Swift draws dissension only in the ranks of the moderns and, moreover, delineates this with hyperbolic details. In regard to choosing leaders, for example, with the moderns, “nothing less than the Fear impending from their Enemies, could have kept them from Mutinies upon this Occasion” (*The Writings* 385). Likewise, Tasso, Milton, Dryden, and Withers—those moderns who Swift believed to have a particular proclivity for argument—vied against each other by entreating “to the chief” for the role of Horse (*The Writings* 385). Swift continues to particularize the moderns by adding that unlike the small ancient army, their army is a massive “Squadron of Stink-Pot-Flingers,” a “vast Body of Dragoons, of different Nations,” “several Bodies of heavy-armed Foot,” a group called “a confused Multitude,” various “Swarms,” “Rout[s],” and “Rogues and Raggamuffins” (*The Writings* 385). Finally, the moderns’ weapons are varying and abundant and include: “Scythes,” “Launces,” “long Knives, all steep in Poison,” “Bullets of a most malignant Nature,” and “white Powder which infallibly killed without Report” (*The Writings* 385). What adds to this ostentatious portrayal of the moderns’ soldiers’ hubris, competitiveness, and aggression, is that Swift mentions everything that was just covered before the battle even gets started.

An especially striking example of amplification in *A Tale* is when Swift explains how the brothers act in town when they come of age. A three-dimensional picture is formed with their dizzying array of activities that include the following:
They Writ, and Raillyed, and Rhymed, and Sung, and Said, and Said Nothing; They Drank, and Fought, and Whor’d, and Slept, and Swore, and took Snuff; They went to new Plays on the first Night, haunted the Chocolate Houses, beat the Watch, lay on Bulks, and got Claps; They bilkt Hackney-Coachmen, ran in Debt with Shop-keepers, and lay with their Wives; They kill’d Bayliffs, kick’d Fidlers down Stairs, eat at Locket’s, Loitered at Will’s; They talk’d of the Drawing-Room and never came there, Dined with Lords they never saw; Whisper’d a Dutchess, and spoke never a Word; exposed the Scrawls of their Laundress for Billet-doux of Quality; came ever just from Court and were never seen in it… (The Writings 303)

Swift uses amplification in A Tale too to poke fun at his literary contemporaries and their overly verbose and grand prefaces. His front matter, for example, is a series of documents which never seem to end. There is an apology, a letter to a judge, a note from bookseller to the reader, an “Epistle Dedicatory, to His Royal Prince Highness Prince Posterity,” and a preface all before the introduction.

While Swift’s style of using overstatement to draw contrasts and provide humor is effective and pleasing to those that enjoy satire, not everyone finds that Swift’s general propensity for exaggeration and amplification has artistic merit. Roger D. Lund, for one, contends in his “Parody in Gulliver’s Travels” that besides Gulliver being someone who spews “splendid nonsense” in his explanations of things, “[he] is also a master of fulsome panegyric, a literary bad habit that Swift earlier burlesqued in A Tale of a Tub” (82). Lund uses Gulliver’s remarks on the “most Mighty Emperor of Lilliput, Delight and Terror of the Universe, whose Dominions extend five Thousand Blustrugs (about twelve Miles in Circumference) to the Extremities of the Globe…” to explain one of many examples where Swift goes too far and renders “a comically exaggerated version” of things (82). Ehrenpreis argues, though, that Swift is courageous in writing his extraordinary and outlandish satire that “reveals the dark side of human nature” and,
moreover, that Swift’s invective begins right away, or “early” on in a particular text; Swift does not wait until his stories get further along to fearlessly lampoon, as a less daring writer might (“Show and Tell” 455).

Swift’s willingness to go to extremes to expose humanity’s ugly side has secured him the label of misanthrope. He advances the subject of his cynicism directly in a letter to his friend Alexander Pope written after finishing *Gulliver’s Travels*. He states that indeed, “Upon this great foundation of Misanthropy…the whole building of my Travells is erected” (*The Writings* 585). Yet, he explains further that contrary to what others may assume, it is groupings of men that are problematic to him and not all men individually, for he has “ever hated all Nations professions and Communityes…for instance… the tribe of Lawyers” –and thus collectively “that animal called man”—but he loves individual people (*The Writings* 584). Swift did, in fact, care deeply for his friends, Pope and Dr. Arbuthnot among them, so much so that he lamented “O, if the World had but a dozen Arbuthnetts in it I would burn my Travells…” (*The Writings* 585). Swift relayed to Pope that his purpose in writing *Gulliver’s Travels* was to bother or “vex” the world, seemingly enough so that they would come to understand the general themes and repetitive patterns in humankind that he had uncovered after a lifetime of acute observation and experience (*The Writings* 584). Whether the purpose of his writing was to display his broad learning as an educational role-model for others or to show that he detested some of his fellow human beings, Swift was a prolific and politically astute writer, one whose works of autonomy, independent thinking, and satiric genius have won him legions of fans in his lifetime and thereafter.
Chapter III

Joyce’s Analogous Profile and Coming-of-Age Prose Stages

James Joyce was born in Ireland in 1882, some two hundred and fifteen years after Swift; yet, there are many parallels which run through their personal lives. Like Swift, Joyce had a childhood that was unconventional, emotionally difficult, and financially lacking. While it is thought that Swift’s family likely gave him a “very meager allowance” in school—something that led him to track expenses to the point of “obsession” during the remainder of his life—Joyce’s family was perhaps even worse off (Damrosch 28). While the Joyces were of middle class status when James was born, his father John squandered his familial inheritance. John moved his family from apartment to apartment, the likes of which worsened over time, because he was unable to hold a job for much of his adult life. Unlike Swift, Joyce played-out a fictionalized version of his childhood in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. The character Simon Dedalus, for example, is a stand-in for Joyce’s perennially unemployed, loquacious, eldest-son-favoring father John. Joyce’s brother Stanislaus’ biography My Brother’s Keeper, though, illustrates that Simon Dedalus is actually a substantially toned-down version of John Joyce—a seemingly abusive narcissist. Whether or not Joyce himself was abused, he witnessed the abuse of his siblings, perhaps the same kind of abuse Swift was referring to with his “ill treatment of his nearest relations” comment in “The Family of Swift.”

Like Swift, Joyce was given the opportunity for a solid education. He attended the prestigious Catholic boarding school Clongowes Wood College for three years as a child but left when his family could no longer afford the tuition. He also attended the Jesuit
schools Belvedere College from 1893-1898, and later University College, both likely on scholarship. At University College Joyce was known for his “keen intelligence,” being possibly the “cleverest man at the university,” a position Swift “may well have been” too at Trinity (Fargnoli and Gillespie 5; Damrosch 27). While Swift was known as “something of a rebel” who was “disciplined often” and wrote a “devastating character sketch” of the provost of the college while he attended Trinity, Joyce was likewise rebellious (Damrosch 24). Joyce was also an intellectual iconoclast with a “sophisticated” and extensive knowledge base, far beyond what his classmates had (Fargnoli & Gillespie 5). Joyce was someone who on the one hand, like Swift, “did not seem to exert himself in his studies,” but on the other hand was confidently outspoken and critical on a number of societal issues his friends dared not be, even presenting and publishing essays while still an undergraduate student (Fargnoli & Gillespie 5). It seems that Joyce, then, was better educated than Swift at the same age. As previously mentioned, out of necessity, Swift made up for his lack of knowledge after graduating college at Trinity by self-teaching. After leaving college Swift spent “eight strenuous hours each day…devoted to repairing the defects of his college course; and this continued during the five years of his first residence with Temple” (Purves 4).

Religion played a big role in both Swift’s and Joyce’s worlds. Even though Swift was known for “cutting chapel” during his years at Trinity College, the church offered the best opportunity for a young man without patronage or money to enter an occupation in which he could gain distinction (Damrosch 25). While it is not clear that Swift was himself religious, and many of his contemporaries doubted that he had much religious belief at all, his biographer Damrosch argues that he probably did (147-150). Joyce, on
the other hand, admits in his letters that he lost his faith in religion as a teenager; however, he kept his status as religious apostate quiet while at the Catholic University. A 1904 letter to partner Nora Joyce gives the date of his departure from the church as 1898: “Six years ago I left the Catholic Church,” Joyce wrote, “hating it most fervently…I made secret war upon it when I was a student and declined to accept the positions it offered me…Now I make open war upon it by what I write and say and do” (*Selected Letters* 25-26). Joyce’s disillusionment with the Catholic Church and religious dogma is especially evident in his semi-autobiographical novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

After college, Joyce left Ireland for continental Europe, as Swift had done when he went to work for Temple in England. For both men, leaving Ireland gave them worldly experience and a chance to reflect more deeply on their native land in their writings. Joyce lived briefly in Paris in 1902-03, moved back to Dublin during his mother’s fatal illness, and by October 1904 left Ireland domestically for good with his partner Nora, returning only periodically for the rest of his life. He and Nora had two children and remained together as a couple until Joyce’s death in 1941. Like Swift, Joyce endured personal hardships, among them his frequent and debilitating health issues and the institutionalization of his daughter Lucia for psychiatric problems. Swift and Joyce were prolific writers talented enough to write across multiple genres. They are two of English literature’s most celebrated authors, writing some of the most intricate and stunningly original work of all time. Joyce, however, considered himself to be primarily an artist who wrote fiction whereas Swift was a public figure who wrote chiefly to draw attention
to public issues and arouse his contemporaries. Swift’s *A Tale of a Tub* and *Gulliver’s Travels* are his only extended fiction works whereas Joyce’s fiction canon is much larger.

Swift and Joyce shared a disappointment in the Irish and their native land at times too. Swift called Ireland “the land of slaves and fens” in the “Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift,” and Stephen Dedalus states in *A Portrait* that “Ireland is the old sow that eats her farrow” (*The Writings* 560, Joyce 220). Swift, though, was much more directly involved with the people of Ireland than Joyce was and had deep social and political immersion as Dean of St. Patrick’s Cathedral. He was a bitter opponent of exploitation of Ireland by England and, in fact, wrote many political essays and poems over a period of thirty years on Ireland’s economic and political plight as a subjugated underling to England. While Swift became frustrated with the failure of his countrymen to resist English oppression—as he so sardonically affirms in “A Modest Proposal”—his role in arousing a national consciousness made him a hero in his time. Even though Swift complained, at times, that Ireland was a kind of banishment and though a native of Ireland he most often regarded himself as an exile from England, he still loved the Irish countryside and seems increasingly to have identified with Ireland. But when Joyce was alive he was a literal and deliberate exile from Ireland. Even so, the setting of his major works is Ireland and he obsessively acquired detailed information from people, such as his aunt, for information regarding Dublin circa 1904, to ensure that his work would be historically accurate. For Joyce, *Ulysses* must have been like a resurrection of his own young adulthood in that city, with Stephen Dedalus clearly standing in for him. Joyce became, like Swift, one of Ireland’s most celebrated sons. While Swift was honored with bonfires and the ringing of church bells every year on his birthday, each year on June 16th there is
a Bloomsday celebration and festival in Dublin marking the special day which the events from Joyce’s most famous work, the groundbreaking 20th century novel *Ulysses*, takes place.

“A Portrait of the Artist” and *Stephen Hero*

Joyce’s novel of education, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, has its origins in his biography—in the events and people who made an impression on his early years. Joyce compiled epiphanies¹, or observations, from his boyhood and young adulthood to use in his Bildungsroman. Robert Scholes and Richard M. Kain establish in their book, *The Workshop of Daedalus*, that there were autobiographical prose stepping-stones, or “principal building blocks,” to the novel as well: Joyce’s “A Portrait of the Artist” essay and his unfinished novel manuscript *Stephen Hero* (6). The confusedly expressed “A Portrait of the Artist” is a two-thousand-word essay that was finished on January 7th, 1904. Scholes and Kain call it a mix of “manifesto” and “narrative” (56). Moreover, John Eglington² of the Irish periodical *Dana* refused to publish the essay because he considered it “incomprehensible” (56). Those familiar with *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, though, can easily recognize in the foregrounding essay several of the novel’s themes. For example, the it mentions a religious awakening and the realization that dogmatic religion can steer one off the course of “common sense”; it also reflects on “boyhood,” “field sports,” and friendships (60, 61, 64). “A Portrait of the Artist” is similar to *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* too in that it combines a “fictional narrative and philosophical exposition, and this amalgamation leads to a dramatized description of the evolution of artistic sensibilities in the
consciousness of a…young man” (Fargnoli and Gillespie 180). The essay also includes, as an appendage, a sketch of plot and characters, epiphanies, tentative themes, and the skeleton of the religious retreat made famous later in the novel *A Portrait*—identified as “Six lectures” (Scholes and Kain 69).

After Eglington’s rebuff of his essay, Joyce abandoned the form for a fresh attempt at a Bildungsroman, the weightier novelistic endeavor *Stephen Hero*. What is extant of *Stephen Hero* is only a fragment—the manuscript begins somewhere in the middle of its Chapter XV and ends at a point in Chapter XXVI. Several of the characters in *Stephen Hero* are familiar to those who have read *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, people such as Stephen, Simon, and Cranly; however, some characters are different, including Stephen’s younger sister Isabel who dies in this first novel. While *Stephen Hero* is a recognizable predecessor of *A Portrait* it does not have the same modern feel and instead is written in what Fargnoli refers to as “traditional, 19th century novel form” (*Critical Companion* 155). This pragmatic manuscript has static, linear scenes that demonstrate little of the stylistic innovation of its successor. Some of the other important differences between the extant manuscript of *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait* are: Stephen Dedalus does not age from a child to a young man in the former and as a result there is no movement via chronological aging (although the missing first chapters may have involved a juvenile protagonist); the pivotal and electrifying Christmas dinner scene is missing from *Stephen Hero* and, moreover, there is little suspense or tension anywhere else in *Stephen Hero*; there is an over-abundance of dialogue—and dull dialogue at that—in the earlier work; and, the character Stephen is too present in *Stephen Hero*, to the exclusion of other characters. Furthermore, there is an unappealing look to the text as
the paragraphs are exhaustingly long and there are few vivifying qualities to its. Joyce
does, however, incorporate instances of interesting and unique personification in *Stephen
Hero*, like he does in his later work, including the phrases “bold, careless pride,”
“shamefaced venom,” “somber gravity,” and “arms of love,” and he introduces a handful
of kinesthetic and auditory implications (57, 66,165). His use of devices such as these,
though, are dramatically developed in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and
*Ulysses*.

After working on *Stephen Hero* for a year and a half, Joyce became unhappy with it. According to letters contained in Ellmann’s *Select Joyce Letters*, in April and May of
1905, Joyce called it a “terrible opus,” and pondered how he would “have the patience to
write [any more of] it”; moreover, he did not “believe” there would be “money in [the]
 novel” (59, 61). The bookseller and publisher Sylvia Beach communicated in her 1935
catalogue that in 1908 an angry Joyce threw the *Stephen Hero* manuscript into a fire and
that it had to be rescued by Nora Joyce (*Critical Companion* 155). In 1938 Sylvia Beach
sold the manuscript to Harvard. It was published by Theodore Spencer in 1944 with the
permission of Joyce’s executors even though Joyce had made clear in his lifetime that he
did not want it published.

**A Metamorphosis**

After setting aside *Stephen Hero*, but before starting *A Portrait of the Artist as a
Young Man*, Joyce’s life completely transformed. Between 1905-1907 he was living with
a life-partner in a new country, managing a household on meager wages, and becoming a
father two times over. This era was also filled with exciting and time consuming
activities that Joyce involved himself in, including: “studying Danish…with constancy”; taking voice lessons to sing “for the theatre”; “learn[ing] German”; becoming politically aware; giving English lessons to Italians; and working at a bank (Selected Joyce Letters 63-4). Joyce was writing his book Dubliners too, a collection of 15 short stories that deal with the “oppressive effects of religious, political, cultural and economic forces on the lives of lower-middle class Dubliners” (A to Z 60). Joyce infuses Dubliners with the fine points of Irish life and, therefore, the reader gets a sense of the history, the vernacular, and the morality of its citizens circa early 20th century. Joyce said he wrote Dubliners “in a style of scrupulous meanness” because if he had not done so he would be falsely representing life in Dublin which “seemed to [him] the center of paralysis” (Letters I.134). The book’s tales are presented in chronological order with the first few stories representing childhood, the next few adolescence, the following adulthood, and the remaining few concern adult public life (Critical Companion 47). The final story in Dubliners, the highly original “The Dead,” is longer and more developed than the rest of the stories. It was written last, in the spring of 1907, just before Joyce began A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, and was inspired by a moving story Nora told him about the death of a former lover. “The Dead” has more depth than the other stories, something that is developed through nuanced language and multiple characters with complicated personal relationships. The timeline of his work on the noteworthy “The Dead” confirms that by mid-1907 Joyce’s writing style had evolved significantly since he started his “A Portrait” essay. Like Joyce’s earlier prose work, though, all of Dubliners was written in a realistic, linear, unadorned manner.
While changes in his personal life, maturity level, political awareness, and knowledge of the type that was acquired to attempt writing a book such as *Dubliners* were important to his growth, whatever books Joyce was reading at the time were likely an influencing factor on his future work as well. Luckily, Richard Ellmann’s *The Consciousness of Joyce* provides a listing of the books that filled Joyce’s early library in Trieste. Of the six hundred or so items on Ellmann’s list, forty percent—or two hundred and forty—were non-fiction works that likely did not influence his writing style (although Joyce did make good use of both his fiction and non-fiction works later when he wrote the brilliant “Oxen of the Sun” chapter in *Ulysses*, a chapter made up of a series of stylistic parodies throughout history, including non-fiction early Latin prose from Roman historians). Many other items were songbooks, biographies of composers, operas, and books that Joyce wrote negative or mediocre reviews on or disparaged in letters.

There appears, then, to be about twenty-five prose fiction authors in Joyce’s library that may have influenced him between 1905-1913, when *A Portrait* as written.

Ellmann’s book received controversial retorts from, among others, Michael Patrick Gillespie. Gillespie’s essay, “A Critique of Ellmann’s List of Joyce’s Trieste Library,” maintains that Ellmann does not provide a much needed “overview” of the items in Joyce’s library, information which may have explained, for example, Joyce’s waning interest in some artists and negative assessments of others in his own critical writings (27). Gillespie went on to write two of his own books about Joyce’s Trieste library including his 1983 *Inverted Volumes improperly arranged: James Joyce and his Trieste library,* in which he states that “once [Joyce] went abroad [in 1904], [he] was far less interested in the general topic of poetry than he had been in Dublin” —a contention
which, for this purpose of this essay and its prose fiction comparisons, removes poetry as inspiration for *A Portrait’s* prose fiction stylistic changes (8). That is not to say that lifelong influences from playwrights, especially Henrik Ibsen, are unimportant to Joyce’s work since many scholars, such as Vivien Koch Macleod, have found that Ibsen’s “fiery and consuming ideal” “warmly invade[s]” Joyce’s “conduct both as a man and as an artist” (879).

Gillespie’s second book—*A Catalogue of James Joyce’s Trieste Library*—aids in narrowing down the list of influences found in Ellmann’s book because it does something Ellmann’s does not—it quantifies and explains the annotations that Joyce made in each book. Of those books that Joyce moderately or heavily annotated are several of Joseph Conrad’s—*The Secret Agent: A Simple Tale, A Set of Six, and Tales of Unrest*; however, in private letters and critical writings Joyce was silent on Conrad’s impact on his own work. Scholar Anna Tavora finds a commonality between Joyce and Conrad, though, in that they defamiliarize their characters’ actions “in an attempt to make the reader feel as disconnected from these actions as they themselves are” (15). Séan Molloy posits too that Joyce and Conrad “try too hard” to” knock the reader off his feet.”6 Joyce heavily annotated H.G. Wells’s *The History of Mr. Polly* and Sir Walter Scott’s *The Bride of Lammermoor*. He “never tired of reading Scott”—perhaps because of his diverse use of vocabulary—yet there does not appear to be scholarly mention of stylistic affinity between them; with Wells, whom Joyce knew personally, any affinity seems to come from areas other than style.7 Joyce generously marked Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Grey* and thought the “central idea [was] fantastic,” yet, he told Stan in 1906 that Wilde’s “book is rather crowded with lies and epigrams” and concluded that “if [Wilde]
had had the courage to develop the allusions in the book it might have been better” (Selected Letters 96). Moreover, Joyce’s 1909 critical essay, “Oscar Wilde: The Poet of ‘Salome,’” continues his mixed view on Wilde in that Wilde’s “vain pretences,” as “court jester to the English,” and deathbed conversion to Catholicism are derided but his “brilliant books sparkling with epigrams” are lauded (Critical Writings 205).

The book that Joyce annotated most, at least twice as much as he did the works of Wells and Wilde, is The Works of Jonathan Swift by D. Laing Purves. Gillespie’s book has almost four pages of notes devoted to explaining where Joyce placed his cryptic markings in The Works whereas Wells and Wilde’s books garner 1 1/2 pages each. This makes sense, since Angus Ross and David Woolley note in their Introduction to Jonathan Swift: A Tale of a Tub and Other Works, that Swift and Joyce are in the company of few:

[A Tale of a Tub] is the freest, liveliest, and most trenchant expression of a deeply satirical temperament that Swift was ever to achieve...[It] establishes Swift with Juvenal, Rabelais, Sterne, and James Joyce as one of the great European writers in a particular mode. The text of A Tale, like the text of Finnegans Wake is dense, capricious, full of unsignalled references, hints, and obliquities. (xi)

The Draw of Swift the Man and Swift the Master Stylist

Joyce was not always enthralled by Swift. In 1906, Joyce’s brother Stanislaus wrote him a letter lauding Swift but Joyce’s November response indicated that he, on the other hand, was not “interested” in Swift at that time. Approximately five months after he sent the letter, though, on April 27, 1907, Joyce gave a speech in Italy on Irish political and cultural history where he heaped considerable praise on Swift, arguing that “Jonathan Swift, author of Gulliver’s Travels... shares with Rabelais the place of the best satire in world literature” (Joyce, Mason & Ellman 170). Did Stan’s admiration of Swift
prompt Joyce to take a second look at him in the intervening months before his speech? Stan’s opinion did matter to Joyce. These brothers were exceptionally close for much of their lives and, as noted in Stanislaus’ book, My Brother’s Keeper, as a teenager Joyce used to read Stan’s diary as inspiration for his own stories. Seven years to the month after the brothers’ initial correspondence regarding Swift—by November of 1913—Joyce was a full-blown Swift enthusiast, one who deemed Swift “one of the two greatest modern Irishmen” (Joyce Exiles notes). It appears, then, that Joyce become interested in, familiar with, and even astounded by Swift’s work just before and during the re-working of Stephen Hero into the masterful Bildungsroman A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

Some of the allure of Swift may be due to Joyce’s reading D. Laing Purves biography of Swift in The Works. While Joyce was a young adult in Trieste, he had read and annotated this emotionally-laden biography with thirty-four markings and may have noticed that in several ways Swift’s life and persona were similar to his own. For example, perhaps he underlined that while Swift grew up poor, he still managed to pluck himself out of obscurity to become “the idol of Ireland”—an awe-inspiring aspiration for the young Joyce to contemplate (Purves 1). Joyce may have lingered over passages about Swift’s literary recognition because he longed for the same fame that his fellow Irishman Swift acquired in life. According to Purves, A Tale and The Battel “gave proof of [Swift’s] most trenchant and formidable literary power,” while Gulliver’s Travels “be[came] one of those few works of human genius, of which the scope and appreciation are peculiar not to one country only, but to the whole family of intelligent mankind” (Purves 12,33). This extraordinary praise is of the kind rarely applied to anyone, yet is
often said about Joyce’s writing as well. Joyce may have noticed too that while he had eye problems—having his first recorded bout of uveitis in 1907—Swift had a disease that Purves believed “afflicted all his life, and at the last deplorably impaired his faculties.”

Purves comment reflects a misunderstanding that was widely shared up until the early twentieth century and that is that Swift became insane. It is now understood that he simply succumbed to dementia, noticing lapses of memory relatively early, and in his final years being unable to care for himself at all.

Too, Swift was a “haughty young man” who when first acquainted with the notable writers of his day seemed to them “brusque and actually rude” whereas in a similar way Joyce was called “proud as Lucifer” by George Russell; meanwhile, Yeats said of the 21-year-old Joyce—coincidentally using Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels imagery—that “such a colossal self-conceit, with such a Lilliputian literary genius I never saw combined in one person” (Purves 6, 12; Ellmann 100-01). Finally, both were fond of walking and so were their protagonists. Joyce’s earliest published poem, “The Holy Office,” has a peripatetic bent to it, a mirror of his own tendencies. Joyce’s brother called Joyce an “indefatigable walker” and Harry Levin remarked that “It should be noted that the principal action of the Portrait of the Artist, whether in conversation or revery, is walking” (Joyce 42, Levin 43). Swift enjoyed physical exercise even up until the end of his life where he would “eat [food] walking...[and] was on his feet ten hours a day” and he often ran up and down the stairs of his home or otherwise exercised vigorously (Purves 37; Damrosch 69). Gulliver of Swift’s Travels was peripatetic too. Probably too, because of his own bold humor, Joyce enjoyed Swift’s saucy and disrespectful tone in his early satire. Purves finds that A Tale is “teaming with irreverence and coarseness” while
A Portrait has, according to H.G. Wells, “Coarse, unfamiliar words…scattered about the book unpleasantly,” and thus is irreverent too (Purves 12; Wells Review of A Portrait).

Swift’s accessibility of form may have been one of the things that drew Joyce to him as a reader. Even though Swift was an Augustan, his brevity and conciseness had a contemporary flair and thus was stylistically ahead of its time. Swift insisted that the best style is always the least grandiose whereas his contemporaries aspired to a kind of elaborate elegance that now seems very dated. Randy Robertson, among others, notes A Tale’s “brilliant modernism,” with its “singularity, its sundry narrative personae, its topicality, [and] its “frenzied” style (193). Leo Damrosch finds that Swift’s “writing was exceptionally clear and straightforward” and that he was “consciously committed to every one of [George Orwell’s] principles” of good prose, including to “never use a long word where a short one will do” (209-10). That Swift’s writing style was deemed modern is somewhat paradoxical given that he often jeers at that which is modern in A Tale of a Tub, The Battle of the Books, and Gulliver’s Travels. It seems, though, that Swift scoffing was due to reasons other than literary volubility: for instance, a lack of morality in his age, the elaborate and sometimes ridiculous modern scientific trends of his time, and an elitist modern intellectualism. The word modern is used to describe Joyce’s style too, starting with A Portrait. Joyce is sometimes referred to as the father of Modernism, an avant-garde, radical, and groundbreaking literary movement that was concerned with overturning traditional modes of expression by being experimental with form and content.

Over time, Swift appears to have risen to the level of icon for Joyce. It is an indisputable fact that Swift heavily inspired Joyce’s writing, especially his later works.
Likewise, it is obvious that the story of Swift’s life made a deep impression on Joyce as well, as Swift the man is also discernible in his later work. Arthur T. Broes explains that:

…nearly all of the Dean’s biography and pseudo-biography are included in *Finnegans Wake* as Joyce takes him from conception to the grave. Swift is a central, if not the chief historical figure in the *Wake*, his life both a primary source for the characteristics of the novel’s declining hero… and an illustration of many of the book’s basic esthetic and philosophical tenets (120)

W. Y. Tindall advances in “James Joyce, his way of interpreting the modern world,” that “Swift was one of Joyce’s heroes, and *A Tale of a Tub* was among his favorite books” (89). Considering the timetable of Joyce’s praise of Swift, the level of praise for him, and the profusion of annotations in *The Works*, it is reasonable to infer that several of the significant stylistic choices Joyce made in writing *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* may be Swiftian in origin. The enlivening and kinetic changes that set the exuberant, exciting, and readable *A Portrait* apart from *Stephen Hero* seem likely to be informed by the man Joyce called “the greatest” Irish writer, his icon and the most annotated author in his library, Jonathan Swift.
Chapter IV

*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

As stated earlier, some themes remain constant across all stages of Joyce’s coming-of-age work. These thematic similarities, though, serve to spotlight the exceptional modifications Joyce made in reworking *Stephen Hero* into *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.1 The non-traditional form and expression of Literary Modernism certainly played a role in the adjustments Joyce made to his final Bildungsroman. Modernists tended to write in reaction to established religious, social, and political mores and in doing so altered traditional form, rendering it innovative and experimental. Joyce’s use of free indirect discourse in *A Portrait*, for example, was a popular technique used by modern writers. It is a mode of story-telling that allows the reader access to the protagonist’s ongoing thoughts and feelings through third-person narration with interior monologue. The following paragraph, set early in the novel, demonstrates this narrative technique by revealing a young Stephen Dedalus’ discursive ideas and concerns:

It would be nice to lie on the hearthrug before the fire, leaning his head upon his hands, and think on those sentences. He shivered as if he had cold slimy water next his skin. That was mean of Wells to shoulder him into the square ditch because he would not swop his little snuffbox for Well’s seasoned hacking chestnut, the conqueror of forty. How cold and slimy the water had been! A fellow had once seen a big rat jump into the scum. Mother was sitting at the fire with Dante waiting for Brigid to bring in the tea. She had her feet on the fender and her jewelly slippers were so hot and they had such a lovely warm smell! Dante knew a lot of things. She had taught him where the Mozambique Channel was and what was the longest river in America and what was the name of the highest mountain in the moon. Father Arnall knew more than Dante because he was a priest but both his father and uncle Charles said that Dante was a clever woman
and a wellread woman. And when Dante made that noise after dinner and then put up her hand to her mouth: that was heartburn. (7)

Joyce’s use of free indirect discourse is an antecedent to his stream-of-consciousness narrative mode in Ulysses, a mode that enabled him to explore several characters’ inner truths as they passed through their minds in a continuous flow over the course of one day.

Just as free indirect discourse and stream-of-consciousness modes of narrative seem to jump from one topic to the next, other structural changes Joyce made when reworking his Bildungsroman aid in varying the story too. A Portrait’s snippets of narrative divide the action into distinct incidents and, therefore, this text contrasts sharply with the plodding and sequential narration of the earlier Stephen Hero. In his review of A Portrait in “The New Republic” in 1917, H.G. Wells confirms Joyce’s dynamic new style:

It is a mosaic of jagged fragments that does altogether render with extreme completeness the growth of a rather secretive, imaginative boy in Dublin. The technique is startling, but on the whole it succeeds...He breaks away from scene to scene without a hint of the change of time and place.

With A Portrait, Joyce makes a fundamental shift away from static story-telling, experimenting that much more with changeable form in Ulysses and Finnegans Wake. The ground-breaking novel Ulysses, for example, has a scattered form that includes marked changes of scenery with each new chapter and within a chapter. “Oxen of the Sun,” for example, has alternating writing styles from page to page which are meant to show the progression of English prose over its history. One of the benefits of an amalgamation of fascinating morsels of unrelated text in A Portrait and Ulysses is that
the work prods readers to piece together meaning for themselves which, in turn, leads to a more stimulating and satisfying reading experience.

In his aforementioned review, Wells coincidentally connects Swift to Joyce. Although Wells generally heaps praise on *A Portrait* throughout the review, he appears to take exception to the “unsavory,” “cloacal obsession” that both Joyce and Swift have, leading him to state that *A Portrait*’s “claim to be literature is as good as the claim of the last book of *Gulliver’s Travels*” (Wells). Moreover, when Wells purports that Joyce is “like so many Irish writers from Sterne to Shaw [in that he] is a bold experimentalist with paragraph and punctuation,” he oddly leaves out Swift’s name; in light of what has been analyzed thus far in this thesis, Wells quote clearly applies to Swift’s writing as well (Wells). As discussed in Chapter II, Ehrenpreis believes that Swift’s quick rhythms and lack of periodicity make his work surprising and exciting. *A Tale*, for example, has scraps of plot that oscillate between the main story and various digressions and a continual shifting of emphasis, source, and target. Likewise, *The Battel* alternates between the ancients and moderns, gods, and the spider and the bee stories. The enlivening and unstable style that Joyce attempts in *A Portrait*—although considered modernist in form—could have actually been derived from Swift (who, as I have mentioned was also considered modern) and, in turn, this style could have been borrowed by contemporaries in the Modernist movement.

Joyce dramatically increases his use of vivifying and kinesthelic imagery in his final coming-of-age stage as well. While *Stephen Hero* has some action verbs, such as “leaping,” “sprang,” “swept,” and “jumped,” *A Portrait* has many more. It is plausible that Swift helped Joyce find his more exuberant voice in *A Portrait* because Swift’s early
satires are remarkably lively. Consider the brothers’ action-filled night on the town in *A Tale* and in the introduction where, for example, his orator must “press, and squeeze, and thrust, and climb with indefatigable Pains” in order to get into the pulpit to speak to the crowd (292). Joyce uses similarly exuberant and animating writing in *A Portrait*. All throughout the young boys’ “whirl of a scrimmage” at Clongowes there is moving imagery, including “ben[ding],” “look[ing],” “struggling,” “groaning,” “rubbing,” “kicking,” “stamping,” “dodg[ing],” and “stopp[ing]” (6). Moreover, a boy named Wells “shoulder[s]” Stephen into a “square ditch” during a game (6-7). Objects come to life, too, as when Stephen’s white rose “began to flutter” on his jacket during a game of sums against the red-rose Lancastrians and “fluttered and fluttered” again when he “worked at the next sum” (8-9).

One of the most vivid and memorable of Joyce’s moving objects is the soutane, a robe-like garment that priests wear. It is first mentioned as simply “fluttering in the breeze” but its movement takes on a more sinister meaning as the story progresses (6). For example, Stephen feels “the swish of the sleeve of the soutane as the pandybat was lifted to strike” when he is first hit in class by the priest, and sees a “swish” again when he is hit a second time (51). This word “swish” helps embolden Joyce’s recurring motif of clergy abuse upon the boys at Catholic schools. Other kinesthetic and enlivening elements that are not in *Stephen Hero* but are in *A Portrait* include the following: the Dedalus family continually moves as their wealth declines; Stephen frequently walks across town and through the countryside; the napkin ring conspicuously rolls in the dinner scene; there is a shift from third person narration to first person in the last six pages of the novel; and Stephen makes a plan to leave Ireland in the last few pages.
Joyce increases his use of kinesthetic and lively language that much more in *Ulysses*, especially in “Hades” with its intense carriage ride to the funeral in which nearly every squeak of the wheel or jostle from a turn of the carriage is documented and the decomposition of a dead body with an emphasis on swirling maggots is highlighted. Movement is also evident in the “Proteus” chapter of *Ulysses* with the “crush crash crick crick” of the seashells under Stephen’s boots and description of water in “long lassoes” which “flop, slop, and slap” over rocks, “purling, widely flowing, floating foampool, flower unfurling” (31, 41).

The technique of deploying sound as a literary device helps the reader realistically experience what is going on in a scene. The phrase “swish of the soutane” in *A Portrait* relays sound imagery as well as kinetic imagery (53). While there are a few instances of imagery related to auditory sensation in *Stephen Hero*, such as when Stephen “prayed clamorously” as he “spent days and nights hammering noisily as he built a house of silence,” while the “band bawled to the comedian and the comedian bawled to the band”; and, likewise, when he wished his friend would “shut his jaws with a clap,” two out of these three word groupings serve a different purpose: one is an oxymoron and one a chiasmus and thus their place in the text may not solely be to awaken sensory perception (30, 101, 125).

*A Portrait, A Tale, and The Battel,* on the other hand, all include multiple examples of sound implication that seems explicitly included to appeal to the readers’ senses. For example, the Introduction of *A Tale* satirizes oratory by describing “Oratorial Machines”—a pulpit, a ladder, and a stage itinerant—and the “Conveyance of Sound” from these devices (294). Swift tells the reader that “Whoever hath an Ambition to be
heard in a Crowd” must find some altitude, but not too much height so as to be “ever out of Hearing” (292). The Battel’s fight scene describes “the Speed” of Dryden’s horse as “less than his Noise,” and “tho’ it made slow advances” towards Virgil, it “caused a loud Clashing of his Armor, terrible to hear”; moreover, when the ridiculously outfitted Dryden spoke, his “voice was suited to [his] Visage, sounding weak and remote” (389-90). In A Portrait, noise conjures images and impressions, some related to Stephen’s childhood and his keen sensitivity to sound sensations. For example, while in the playroom at Clongowes Stephen remarks on “the little song of the gas,” and when he fluctuates between thinking about school terms and vacations he compares the idea to a moving train which sounded “like the noise of the boys eating in the refectory when you opened and closed the flaps of the ears” (10,14). Sound also conjures feelings of anxiety and suffering for Stephen, such as when he is hit by the teacher and the pandybat makes “a loud smacking sound “— “six loud quick smacks” to be specific (50). A Portrait has sounds related to religious imagery too as when Stephen hears “a mad nun screeching in the nuns’ madhouse beyond the wall,” and at the retreat where he learns that in hell “the damned howl and scream at one another” and “the yells of the suffering sinners fill the remotest corners of the vast abyss” (131-2, 189).

As I pointed out in Chapter II, Swift utilizes synesthesia in his Gulliver’s Travels, “A Description of a City Shower,” and in A Tale. While Joyce does not use this literary device in Stephen Hero he does in A Portrait and, therefore, he could have appropriated this use of cross-sensory metaphor from Swift. Joyce connects sound and touch when Stephen imagines the noises objects make and the associated pain they would inflict if they were to hit him. Since “cricketbats” go “pock” when hitting a ball, Stephen reasons
that one would “feel pain” if hit with one; likewise, he supposes that a “long thin cane [with]… a high whistling sound” would cause pain too (45). Joyce conflates sound, physical pain, and ones’ emotions (a hypothetical seventh sense) in other examples. While a fellow student is being hit with the pandy bat, Stephen is in “great [psychological] pain” because of the “terrible” noise; after he too is hit “the sound and the pain [bring] scalding tears… into his eyes,” and a “cry [that] scalded his throat,” (50). As Swift combines sight and smell in “A Description of a City Shower,” Joyce similarly combines the two as Stephen and a friend walk by a canal bridge; there, “a crude grey light, mirrored in the sluggish water, and a smell of wet branches over their heads seemed to war against the course of Stephen’s thought” (224). Sight, touch, sound, emotions, and conscience (a theoretical sixth sense) are incorporated into this next passage as well: “When evening had fallen he left the house and the first touch of the damp dark air and the noise of the door as it closed behind him made ache again his conscience, lulled by prayer and tears” (150).

The following extended examples of synesthesia concern Stephen’s first visits with sex workers. Although sexual liaisons with prostitutes are undoubtedly risky and perhaps morally questionable, the following words associated with Stephen’s first encounter are full of sensory imagery and are arguably among the most beautiful and powerful of any Joyce created:

With a sudden movement she bowed his head and joined her lips to his and he read the meaning of her movements in her frank uplifted eyes. It was too much for him. He closed his eyes, surrendering himself to her, body and mind, conscious of nothing in the world but the dark pressure of her softly parting lips. They pressed upon his brain as upon his lips as though they were the vehicle of a vague speech; and between them he felt an unknown and timid pressure, darker than the swoon of sin, softer than sound of odour. (108)
Joyce’s words capture the excitement of this youthful, and morally prohibitive, sexual encounter in a strange and palpable way with an especially striking fusion of two senses in the expression “sound of odour.” Stephen returns to the brothels the following night and Joyce’s words again conjure the senses, conveying the colors, emotions, smells, and sounds of his experience:

…the yellow lamps would light up, here and there, the squalid quarter of the brothels. He would follow a devious course up and down the streets, circling always nearer and nearer in a tremor of fear and joy…He would pass by [the women] calmly waiting for a sudden movement of his own will or a sudden call to his sinloving soul from their soft perfumed flesh. Yet as he prowled in quest of that call, his senses, stultified only by his desire, would note deeply all that wounded or shamed them; his eyes, a ring of porter froth on a clothless table…his ears, the drawling jargon of greeting… (109)

Like Swift, Joyce generously employs other types of figurative language in his work too. While he personifies a few objects, concepts, and body parts in *Stephen Hero*, he increases his utilization of personification at least three-fold in *A Portrait*. He draws such distinct images as the “rude feet” of the footballers that scare Stephen at Clongowes, the “troubled vision” that accompanies Stephen’s nervousness upon seeing the brothel quarters, a “wasting breath of humiliation” that touches Stephen’s soul once he realizes how he had sinned against God, and the “grave and cordial voice” of the priest who attempts to manipulate Stephen into choosing priesthood as a vocation (4, 107, 152, 166). When Stephen decides to attend a university instead of studying to be a priest, Joyce paints an exuberant and uplifting image of “notes of fitful music leaping…like triplebranching flames leaping fitfully” (179). Likewise, in an amorous and romantic few passages Joyce describes how a young girl’s “glance” travels to “[Stephen’s] corner,
flattering, taunting, searching, [and] exciting his heart” (72). Her eyes can metaphorically speak too, as Stephen “heard what her eyes said to him,” and in response, “his heart dance[d]” (72). Furthermore, Joyce conjures feelings of jealousy and social disgrace in the young protagonist by describing those feelings as “rude brutal anger,” the “Shame [that] rose,” and “shame [that] rushed” (124, 239). *A Portrait* ‘s personifying adjectives harken back to the “ill eyes” of *A Tale* ‘s ignorant readers who stare at what they do not understand and *The Battel* ‘s “learned Dust” which a “perverse Wind blew off from a Shelf of Moderns,” (358, 380). Likewise, Swift’s “malignant liquor,” which is used to attack ones’ enemies in writing and helps to ferment the “ill blood [that] was plentifully bred” between the ancients and moderns is not so different from Joyce’s “rude feet” and “troubled vision” (Joyce 4, 107; Swift 378, 380).

In a reverse sense, like his stylistic predecessor who fashioned men as mere clothing, Joyce utilizes chremomorphism to objectify a person and their experience. After the particularly terrifying sermon on hell at the retreat in *A Portrait*, when he was alone in his room, Stephen had a wakeful nightmare. He imagined himself dead and the fires of hell were consuming his body. The way he envisions this scene—while on the one hand clearly emotionally devastating to consider—objectifies his experience because his descriptions of what his body endures likens it to two objects: as his “flesh shrank together” and “dried up” when the “fire swept through” one may think of how a tree limb would burn; and, he envisions that his “brain began to glow” while its contents were “simmering and bubbling within the cracking tenement of the skull”—a description that conjures hot metal and its attributes (134). In this scary vision, Stephen is both emotionally afraid of God’s persecution of perceived sins but also reflecting on the
insignificance of his body by likening its demise and destruction to that of mere objects. Personification and chremamorphism, then, help to capture the tone of the moment and make the reading more vivid and enjoyable in both Swift and Joyce’s work.

While there are no perceptible zoomorphic metaphors in *Stephen Hero*, there are several in *A Portrait*. Swift’s liberal use of this literary device makes it a plausible inspiration for Joyce. While Swift uses animal references often to liken people, Gods, and edicts to birds, cats, asses, and bulls, Joyce’s work has heavy bird imagery. For instance, Joyce’s prefect “was hustling the boys through the vestry like a flock of geese, flapping the wings of his soutane nervously and crying to the laggards to make haste,” and a girl with “long slender bare legs [as] delicate as a crane’s” is standing on the beach like “a strange and beautiful seabird,” (77,185). Furthermore, the name Dedalus is fashioned after Daedalus of Greek Mythology, a man who escapes imprisonment by making a set of wings for himself and his son Icarus, the latter dying after falling to his death when the wax holding his wings together melts from flying too close to the sun. When Stephen is taunted by his friends over the similarity of his last name to Daedalus he seems “to hear the noise of dim waves and to see a winged form flying above he waves and slowly climbing the air…a hawk-like man flying sunward above the sea…a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop” (183). In this reverie, Stephen felt “his soul was in flight” (183). Finally, Stephen’s friend Heron has a face that is “beaked like a bird,” a “shock of pale hair [that] lay on [his] forehead like a ruffled crest,” a “thin hooked nose” and well as “a bird’s name,” (80). By frequently conflating birds and people in *A Portrait*, Joyce forms some of the most striking images in his book.
Where zoomorphism is a literary technique that imposes animal characteristics onto non-animal objects, and personification gives human characteristics to animals or objects, anthropomorphism is at play when something behaves like a human in an extended metaphor. Swift’s *The Battel* is highly anthropomorphic in that the books in St. James library argue and take up arms against one another, the spider and the bee have a protracted intellectual conflict, and Gods live in an “apartment,” have families, and hold “assemb[lies]” (385-6). Joyce uses this literary device conspicuously during the 3-day religious retreat that is described in painstaking detail for nearly thirty pages at the center of *A Portrait*. Although the concepts of God, Lucifer, and Archangels are in the Christian bible and in *Paradise Lost*, among other works, and, therefore, are not of Joyce’s own creation, as Swift expanded upon Aesop’s spider and bee parable, Joyce reworks Christian concepts to form his own petrifying story. At the retreat, Father Arnall describes the abstractions God, the Archangel Michael, and Lucifer as if they had the agency and attributes of human beings. Michael is described as a “glorious” and “terrible” prince who blows from a trumpet and exclaims “words of doom” (121,123). Lucifer is a “pride[ful]” “son” who makes mistakes, “envie[s]” others, and uses the “eloquence” of his “tongue” to lie, as a manipulator would (126-7). God is anthropomorphized to the greatest extent and is thus the concept most recognizably human in the rector’s sermons. Although many of the anthropomorphic terms Joyce uses to describe God have surely been used before, his point seems to be to draw the strongest portrait possible of a man-like being so as to render the fantasy of this make-believe abstraction as realistic as possible. This “supreme judge,” for example, is “merciful,” “just,” “patient,” and “infinitely good”; he also “speaks,” “calls,” has “pity,” “pardons,”
is “pleading,” “sparing,” and “reward[ing],” yet when crossed is “stern,” “punish[es] the wicked,” and sends people to hell for an eternity (120-2, 128, 137,143).

Like Swift, Joyce uses juxtaposition in his novel. While Swift utilizes it to highlight comparisons between the ancients and the moderns or the spider and the bee, Joyce uses it to develop contrasts during the religious retreat. For example, Father Arnall affirms traditional ideas of gender by calling God “great and stern,” and the “Blessed Virgin” Mary “pure and holy” (124) Arnall also compares good with evil in the entities God and Lucifer by described one as having “grace” and “majesty” while the other is a “foul fiend” and shape-shifting “serpent”³ (118, 121, 126-7). Furthermore, heaven, hell, death, and judgement are the four “last things” in life that the retreat is supposed to address and thus compare (119). A breakdown of the retreat, though, on pages 116-146, shows the following: four pages address Stephen’s time off from the retreat; four are devoted to the rector’s introduction to the retreat; four to death and judgement; and the remaining twenty-six pages are devoted to explaining hell. Conspicuously, heaven is missing in Father Arnall’s discourse. He focuses almost exclusively on hell and its physical and spiritual torments in this frightening retreat (116).

The hyperbolic treatment of hell at the retreat signals that amplification is at play in *A Portrait*. The exaggeration in the retreat was possibly motivated by the amplification Joyce found in Swift’s work because there is no amplification in *Stephen Hero*. Like Swift, who spent sixteen lines describing the common yet often debauched things the three brothers do in town in *A Tale*—and used thirty-six action verbs to do so—Joyce amplifies Stephen’s retreat by spending an inordinate amount of time describing it, and by using outrageous details to do so. For example, the walls of hell are “four thousand
miles thick” with a “neverending storm of darkness, dark flames and dark smoke of burning brimstone, amid which the bodies are heaped one upon another without even a glimpse of air” (128-9). This “dark prison” has an “awful stench,” “filth,” “offal,” “scum,” “foul and unbreatheable” air, “putrid corpse(s),” and “dense choking fumes of nauseous loathsome decomposition” (129). Joyce combines amplification and synesthesia to draw an image of the “torment of fire” that spans two pages (131). These passages include the detailed explanation of how the dark flames of hell are retributive and will torture the senses of human beings:

[Hell’s fire] proceeds directly from the ire of God, working not of its own activity but as instrument of divine vengeance. As the waters of a baptism cleanse the soul with the body so do the fires of punishment torture the spirit with the flesh. Every sense of the flesh is tortured and every faculty of the soul therewith: the eyes with impenetrable utter darkness, the nose with noisome odours, the ears with yells and howls and execrations, the taste with foul matter, leprous corruption, nameless suffocating filth, [and] the touch with redhot goads and spikes, with cruel tongues of flame. (131)

Nearly all the senses at are play in this powerful and extreme passage. Touch, sight, smell, sound, emotions, and conscience are mentioned, leaving only the sense of taste out of consideration. Joyce also devotes ten pages to Father Arnall’s descriptions of the “spiritual torments of hell”; those torments include “the pain of loss,” “the pain of conscience,” “the pain of extension,” and “the pain of intensity” (137-8, 140-1). Father Arnall’s final terrifying speech to the boys, to which Joyce devotes four full pages of text, concerns the “Last and crowning torture of all the tortures of that awful place…the eternity of hell” (142).

Swift was a master satirist who used overstatement and hyperbole in many of his works, among other literary devices, to lambaste human nature and Joyce’s retreat signals
a kinship with Swift’s work. While Joyce’s satire in this retreat is of a serious and disturbing tone, an adult reader may find it humorous because the concepts these boys are inculcated to believe in are so far-fetched that they are preposterous. The satirical religious retreat for boys also serves to castigate human nature by revealing the manipulation and lies that predatory church elders perpetuate on children, whereby exposing the lengths the Catholic church could go to in order to brainwash its members. Joyce, for example, clearly delineates the physical and psychological effects of these manipulations on his protagonist Stephen. During one break in the retreat Stephen:

…came down the aisle of the chapel, his legs shaking and the scalp of his head trembling as though it had been touched by ghostly fingers. He passed up the staircase and into the corridor along the walls of which the over-coats and waterproofs hung like gibbeted malefactors, headless and dripping and shapeless. And at every step he feared that he had already died, that his soul had been wrenched forth of the sheath of his body, that he was plunging headlong through space. (134)

At the end of the retreat, Stephen is so out-of-sorts and terrified that he appears to have a panic-attack. When he reached his bedroom, and turned the knob he “waited in fear…praying silently that death might not touch his brow as he passed over the threshold…Faces were there; eyes: they waited and watched”; as he knelt beside his bed his “hands were cold and damp and his limbs ached with chill” (147). After spending some time ruminating over what he had learned at the retreat, thinking over his sins, and imagining “stinking, bestial, malignant” goat creatures with “malice of evil glittered in their hard eyes” and a “riectus of cruel malignity [that] lit up greyly their bony faces,” Stephen “vomited profusely in agony” (149). While Swift’s later satires like Gulliver’s Travels and a “Modest Proposal” are far more unpleasant, at least in sections, than his earlier A Tale and The Battel, Joyce could have taken inspiration for A Portrait from A
Tale’s irony, hyperbole, and religious-inspired satire and well as The Battel’s willingness to confront unpleasant aspects of humankind. Lastly, while Swift probably never experienced the alarming religious indoctrination that Joyce did, especially since the Anglican Church of his day was much more tolerant and undogmatic than the Catholic, he was strongly opposed to the emotional enthusiasm characteristic of the Puritans and his own preaching emphasized moral behavior rather than theological concepts. He would have appreciated Joyce’s dramatization of the way religious emotionalism can produce painful psychological effects and because Joyce was brave enough to uncover them: as Swift tells us of his day in A Tale, “they tell us [religion] ought not to be ridiculed” (267).
Chapter V
Summary and Conclusions

For this master’s thesis, I researched the influence Jonathan Swift had on James Joyce’s writing. The original contributions I have made to the field of Swift/Joyce studies are the following: I uncovered the specific literary devices that Jonathan Swift used in his early satires *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Battle of the Books*, devices that rendered his work kinetic and vivifying; I demonstrated that Joyce increased his use of overall kinesthetic imagery—including sound imagery—and personification of body parts, objects, and concepts when he reworked *Stephen Hero* into *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; I revealed that Joyce changed the way he presented form in *A Portrait* by abandoning static narrative for the fragmented bits of text and quick shifts in plot often found in Swift’s early satire; and I showed that the literary devices of zoomorphism, anthropomorphism, synesthesia, satire, amplification, chremamorphism, and juxtaposition were new to Joyce’s work starting with *A Portrait* and that these innovative devices closely align with the techniques Swift employs in his satires *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Battle of the Books*.

Early on in my investigation of these two authors, I read the work of many scholars who came before me. I found that Swiftian allusions, direct quotations, and references to Swift the man in Joyce’s work increased over time, eventually culminating in a near obsessional level in *Finnegans Wake*. Most scholars interested in Swift’s influence on Joyce focus on what can be found in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* because, I presume, of the great deal of evidence of a Swiftian connection there. Since there was so
much research on Joyce’s later Swiftian flair, I knew I could not add anything fresh or exciting to that area of research. Therefore, I turned to Joyce’s earlier work to uncover the effects of Swiftian influence there. Moreover, I noticed that research on stylistic affinity between Swift and Joyce, in any stages of their work, was under-developed and vague. Consequently, I conflated these two objectives and decided to focus my thesis primarily on the style of Swift’s early satire, *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Battel of the Books*—because they were among Joyce’s favorite works—and compare it to the style of Joyce’s early coming-of-age work in hopes of exposing the origins of Joyce’s inclusion of Swift in his work.

I felt intuitively, after doing preliminary research, that Swift was important to Joyce on a deep, psychological level. I researched, compared, and contrasted the many similarities in their lives that biographies and scholarly work indicated and found evidence of a parallel personal history. It seems likely, for instance, that the poverty and probable abuse Swift and Joyce endured in their childhoods had a lasting impact on their lives. It may have led them to have a certain kind of perfectionism in their work and a drive to replace an inner emptiness with the adoration of the public. Furthermore, their familial calamities may have driven them to persistently express the suffering of others in their trail-blazing perspectives of societal ills. These two brave warriors confronted corruption on a small and grand scale, whether uncovering the behavior of bullies and phonies or institutions like government and religion. Their searing intellects matched the depth of their understanding of humankind. Stanislaus Joyce indicates in *My Brother’s Keeper* that Joyce had “extraordinary moral courage (VIV). That can be certainly stated of Swift as well. Also, both of these men were quite arrogant and that too may be a front
for the insecurity left over from their childhoods. The fact that the great Swift was unable
to secure the post of Bishop, had a tragic love-triangle, and lived nearly the last decade of
his life with dementia make his life story heart-wrenching and easy to sympathize with. I
think that when Joyce read D. Laing Purves’ biography of the courageous and brilliant
Swift it made a big impression on him on an emotional level and he saw, at least, a few of
the similarities in their early lives. The markings Joyce made in Swift’s biography
indicate a strong interest in Swift the man.

I started my textual discovery of Swiftian influence on Joyce by closely reading *A
Tale of a Tub*, and *The Battle of the Books*. I began my analysis with Swift’s work so as
to establish what stylistic devices he, as predecessor, used. Once I discovered the kinetic
language, metaphors, personification, zoomorphism, and other literary devices and
specific aspects of form in Swift’s work, I made graphs of these separate components and
where they were located in his texts. Next, I read Joyce’s early Bildungsroman work with
a sharp eye for the devices that I found in Swift’s works and charted those as well. My
research has found that the vast changes Joyce made from *Stephen Hero* to *A Portrait of
the Artist as a Young Man* may well be attributed to Swiftian influence since the stylistic
commonalities between the two are striking. As stated earlier, Swift made stylistic
choices in his early satire which created literature that is dynamic, animative, cinematic,
and evocative, and Joyce adopted similar techniques—likely as a result of increased
familiarity with Swift and a sense of personal camaraderie—that enliven his work as
well, forging a kinetic link in their respective styles.

Possible conclusions as to why they used the literary devices described in this
thesis and a lively, fragmented form are that each artist uses it as an artistic catharsis—a
psychological response to their physical and emotional vulnerabilities caused, in part, by difficult childhoods. Additionally, they may have done so for pleasure and as a means to show off their extraordinary skills. As mentioned previously, when Joyce’s brother Stan once tried to discuss contemporary issues with Joyce in his later years, Joyce exclaimed, “Don’t talk to me about politics. I’m only interested in style” (xix). While Swift’s work is often fantasy inspired, Joyce, on the other hand, conjures a three-dimensional world in his work to create a sense of realism. This reality, though, comes in a flexible, modern form, which serves the reader well in its intriguing exploration of religious themes, social isolation, and vulnerability. Swift and Joyce’s distinctive yet similar styles both defamiliarize—or render strange—literature. Strange is never boring and with their collective genius, it becomes extraordinary. Finally, it is likely that Joyce’s hero Swift, who died 137 years before Joyce was born, helped him find his voice and thus create his signature style from *A Portrait* onward. Swift may, then, be the true father of Literary Modernism.
Notes

Chapter I

1. In a 1904 letter to his brother Stan, Joyce calls himself a “socialist.” This quote is found in Selected Letters of James Joyce (Viking, 1975), p.41; he refers to himself as a “socialistic artist” in a subsequent letter to Stan, in the Letters of James Joyce (Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 205. Stan says Joyce told him, while working on Finnegans Wake, “Don’t talk to me about politics. I’m only interested in style,” Stanislaus Joyce My Brother’s Keeper; James Joyce’s Early Years (Viking, 1958), xix.

2. Swift had what is now known as Ménière’s disease and Joyce had a terrible time with his eyes, suffering through iritis, conjunctivitis, glaucoma, many surgical procedures, and near blindness.

3. Joyce’s 1912 poem “Gas from a Burner.” The Critical Writings of James Joyce, ed. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann (Cornell UP, 1989), p. 242, is a “broadside” that details the disputes involving him and his publisher. All of Swift’s satiric works were published, at least originally, anonymously.


7. From Selected Joyce Letters, ed. Richard Ellmann, p.131: Joyce’s response was sent in November, 1906.


Chapter II

1. See Leo Damrosch, Jonathan Swift, His Life and His World, (Yale University Press, 2013), p. 70, where he explains that “…no extra work was required to earn [an M.A.] degree, just the payment of a fee after an interview to confirm that the candidate’s work for the B.A. had been satisfactory.”
2. Ibid., 131
3. John Boyle Orrery, Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick’s, Dublin, (1759), pp.113-119. Here Orrery discusses Swift’s indifference to the suffering of Stella and Vanessa, and claims that his cruelty to the latter led to her death.


5. Ibid., 133. See also Marcus Walsh, A Tale of a Tub and Other Works (Cambridge UP, 2010), xl.


8. See page 5, ““Such Opinions Cannot Cohere”: Swift’s Inwardness”” by Sophie Gee


10. The Bee and the Spider is one of Aesop’s fables.

11. This is a group that Swift lampoons again in Gulliver’s Travels “Voyage to Laputa.”

Chapter III


2. Joyce retaliates against Eglington by including him as a character in his “Scylla and Charybdis” chapter of Ulysses.

3. Joyce lived in Trieste, Italy from 1905 to 1915 and then again from 1919-20.
4. Reviews are found in *The Critical Writings*, letters in *Selected Joyce Letters* (Viking, 1975), ed. Richard Ellmann, and comments about authors are found in Ellmann’s *James Joyce* (Oxford UP, 1965).

5. Inverted Volumes is a phrase taken from “Ithaca” in *Ulysses*.

6. In “Deriding the Exotic: Techniques of Defamiliarization in Joseph Conrad, Ernest Hemingway, and James Joyce,” *Papers on Joyce*, vol. 5, 1991, p. 15, Tavora found defamiliarization in common between the three and also points out that they all “offer a description of actions that appear to be exotic and foreign to the characters in an attempt to make the reader feel as disconnected from these actions as they themselves are”; See "Conrad, Joyce, and the English Reader." *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia* vol. 24, 1992, p. 88, for Séan Malloy’s discussion on their linguistic and modernistic connections.

7. Ellman describes Wells as “always appearing to be thrusting” and assertively masculine whereas Joyce has an “almost effeminate delicacy” in *Selected Letters*, xxviii. Ellmann’s biography, *James Joyce*, includes Wells praise of *A Portrait*, Wells “great personal liking” of Joyce, his dislike of *Finnegans Wake*, and Joyce’s witty limerick of the science-fiction writing Wells, a retort at being labeled “cloacal”: “There once was an author named Wells/Who wrote about science, not smells…/The result is a series of cells,” pages 414, 607.

8. In Elaine M. Kauvar’s "Swift's Clothing Philosophy in A Tale of a Tub and Joyce's 'Grace'." *James Joyce Quarterly* vol. 5, 1968, pp. 162-65, she posits that Joyce used *A Tale* as inspiration when writing his “Grace” chapter in *Dubliners* in late 1905. Since Joyce told Stan in Nov 1906 that he was not interested in Swift her argument seems to lack merit.

9. Since they were young boys the boys shared a bedroom and a close friendship. Stan caught Joyce reading his dairy at times and, in doing so, got inspiration for his stories from Stan’s entries. See Stanislaus Joyce’s *My Brother’s Keeper: James Joyce’s Early Years*.

Chapter IV


2. Father Arnell’s sermon is derived from Pinamonti, Giovanni Pietro. *Hell Opened to Christians: To Caution Them from Entering into It: Or, Considerations of the Infernal Pains* (1715).

3. Joyce uses zoomorphism on Lucifer too by calling him a “beast of the field” (127).
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