An Arab Perspective on Jonathan Swift

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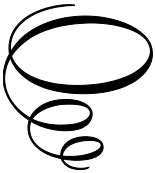
Edited by

Samira al-Khawaldeh

Cambridge Scholars Publishing



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Wisdom is the quest of the believer,
wherever he finds it, he is the worthiest of it.
—An Arabic Maxim

Go, traveller, and imitate if you can
one who protected liberty
with all his strength.
—Jonathan Swift

Swift haunts me;
He is always just round the next corner.
—William Butler Yeats

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To have an idea grow into a book requires vision, love for knowledge and perseverance. Once those are realised, time and effort will be generously granted. This is the genesis of this book: a PhD course on the English literature of the eighteenth century revealed itself as living a universal experience that individuals and societies go through at a certain moment in any geography. That experience led those intellectuals of the English Enlightenment to transcend their aesthetic tendencies, creating a social reform project, in a language and imagery that are remarkably powerful and inspiring. Not only did they write to teach and delight, but also to move and unsettle, creating a mood of general dissatisfaction that should always lead to action and change.

That was the young PhD scholar's reception of Swift and his fabulous company. They admired his courage in critiquing the world around him, his keen observations on human nature, and his choices of methods of expression. They started their research work on the subject, examining it from different perspectives, evident in the variety of the chapter titles in this book. I hope the readers will see this effort as it is meant to be: a salute to the great achievement of Swift in his service not only for his people and society, but for all mankind. Truly, this is world literature.

I must begin by expressing our deepest gratitude, mine and that of the contributors, to every person who helped advance and refine the project from its inception. First of all, we are grateful to the University of Jordan: its president, the Dean of the School of Foreign Languages, the Dean and the staff of the Deanship of Scientific Research, and the Head of the English Department. They made this project possible through their encouragement and the grant they generously provided to cover the expenses of the workshops and other related activities; all this issuing from a solid policy that the University of Jordan has adopted to promote scientific research, and foster and develop the spirit of scientific enquiry and production among faculty and students.

Our gratitude is also extended to the distinguished professors who enriched the work of the present scholars with their insightful views and

invaluable suggestions: from the University of Jordan, Professor Emeritus Muhammad Shaheen, Professor Mahmoud Al-Shetawi Al-Shra'ah, and Assoc. Professor Mahmoud Jaran; from Yarmouk University, Professor Fadia Suyoufie and Assoc. Professor Ghada Sasa'a; and, from the Arab Open University, Professor Tahrir Hamdi. They generously gave their time and effort to make this intellectual experience more vigorous and stimulating by reading the manuscripts and sharing their views in the discussions at the workshop that we organised at the University of Jordan on "Why Swift Matters" (November 21, 2021). We also owe special thanks to the distinguished professors from the Centre for Enlightenment Studies, King's College London, Professor Clare Brant, Dr Emrys Jones, Dr James Metcalf, and Dr Rowan Boyson, who liberally offered insightful comments and highly appreciated views in an online seminar held on March 10, 2022. I would also like to thank my friend and colleague Dr Eman Al Khalaf, Assoc. professor at the University of Jordan, for kindly and effectively helping with the administrative procedure of the project.

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Finally, with deep gratitude, I wish to acknowledge the vital role and efficient administrative assistance provided by Assistant Editor Odai Maaitah, PhD candidate at the University of Jordan. Odai's dedication, academic research proficiency and profound digital expertise were important factors in the process of materialising this book. He competently organised the two workshops and seminars, and responsibly managed coordination and liaison with the Deanship of Scientific Research and the Finance Department of the University of Jordan.

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INTRODUCTION

SAMIRA AL-KHAWALDEH

Why does Swift matter to young Arabs in the twenty-first century? A question the present book is trying to answer. Jonathan Swift (1667–1745) does matter, not only to the present scholars who celebrate his heritage in these essays, but also to the contemporary world as a whole. Patrick Deane, in his study of twentieth-century Neo-Augustanism, asserts that one of the most important links between our time and the Augustan Age of Swift is that complicity between literature and the historical moment.[1] Expecting literature to lead, to wake the mind, to raise and fulfil is not a new thing, but sadly it has been contested, even vanishing from human consciousness for quite some time under the impact of science and materialism. Ever since Plato censured Homer for misrepresenting the divine and demanded poetry to tell the truth, present beauty, represent virtue, and do good, many poets and literary writers, in general, have been trying to do just that, each according to his truth and sense of beauty; regardless of the risk they venture upon: to be misunderstood or oppressed.

In this sense, being a Neo-Classicist, following the advice of Plato, Swift laid out his goals quite clearly at the beginning of his masterpiece Gulliver's Travels, where he argued through Gulliver, the "author" and protagonist, with his imaginary publisher on the matter of why write and publish: the "publisher" answers that one writes for the public good. Gulliver retorts that it all seems useless; for the world shows nothing in the way of positive change even after some time has passed after the publication of his Travels. Except for the element of exaggeration, the following must be the comprehensive aspects of Swift's society that he was actually targeting:

> [B]ehold, after above six months warning, I cannot learn that my book has produced one single effect according to *my intentions*. I desired you would let me know, […] when party and faction were extinguished; judges learned and upright; pleaders honest and modest, with some tincture of common sense, and Smithfield blazing with pyramids of law books; the young

[1] Patrick Deane, *At Home in Time: Forms of Neo-Augustanism in Modern English Poetry* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 6.

> nobility's education entirely changed; the physicians banished; the female Yahoos abounding in virtue, honour, truth, and good sense; […] These, and a thousand other reformations, I firmly counted upon by your encouragement (Italics added).[2]

The keyword here is "reformations." Someone must step forward to bear responsibility. As Derrida explicates, when Denmark is rotten, and nobody cares enough to call for reform, the ultimate strangeness takes place; a ghost from the past, King Hamlet, comes to tell the truth in order to fix the future. In his uniquely eloquent mourning, the spirits that need to be summoned from the past are those that excel in "radical critique" at the individual level, along with the collective duty to undertake "self-critique."[3] It is interesting that Derrida locates such a critical spirit in the Enlightenment: "It is heir to a spirit of the Enlightenment which must not be renounced"; it is an "emancipatory" spirit with "messianic affirmation."[4]

This may help explain why Swift, the voice of the Enlightenment, is the focus of this book and why he is important in the here and now. It is because Swift took it upon himself to be that radical critic of transnational, transtemporal stature. Swift "is battling not for our right reason," Harold Bloom explains, "but for our sanity, and ruggedly he fights for us, against us, and for himself, against himself."[5] Swift, Bloom adds, acted as the "therapeutic ironist," "strangely akin to Hamlet. Like the prince of Denmark, the Anglo-Irish wit *intends our good*, if he can persuade us to self-recognition" (italics added).[6] Derrida, on the other hand, uses words like "transformation, re-evaluation," and "self-reinterpretation."[7]

Derrida's conjuring of the spirits of radical critics seems to issue from two precepts: their questioning stance, and the affirmation they bring, which is emancipatory and messianic. Times were out of joint in Denmark, and times are out of joint now; the spectres of those radical thinkers can be invoked when the living fail the cause. Our contemporary world is in dire need of voices to provoke and invigorate its collective consciousness with a sense of what must be done; voices that intend our good. This, in a

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[2] Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) (Planet E-book, n.d.), 5–6.
[3] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), 110.
[4] Derrida, *Specters*, 110–11.
[5] Harold Bloom, *The Eighteenth-Century Novel* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2014), 11.
[6] Harold Bloom, ed., *Jonathan Swift* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), xii.
[7] Derrida, *Specters*, 110.

nutshell, is why Swift matters. He lived in times of prevalent corruption and was keenly aware of what had to be done to set things right. Still, the world is rife with the same stubborn evils Swift encountered in the eighteenth century, along with some newly invented, more hideous ones. Derrida effectively sums these up:

> Under the heading of international or civil-international war, is it still necessary to point out the economic wars, national wars, wars among minorities, the unleashing of racisms and xenophobias, ethnic conflicts, conflicts of culture and religion that are tearing apart so-called democratic Europe and the world today? Entire regiments of ghosts have returned, armies from every age, camouflaged by the archaic symptoms of the paramilitary and of the postmodern excess of arms (information technology, panoptical surveillance via satellite, nuclear threat, and so forth).[8]

Why does Swift matter to us in the world of the twenty-first century, in lands far from his and to people unlike the audience he wrote for and targeted in his criticism? Globalisation may well do for an answer, where no land is an island, and where borders may stop the free flow of people but not the ideas and influence: economic, cultural and political; influence that often amounts to neo-colonialist dimensions with the same old centres of power and polarisation. This is the dark side of globalisation; the bright side, however, is the free movement of ideas and intellectual exchange that we may enjoy, utilise and appropriate.

Modernist literature came with a different type of concerns relating to form and style, but with less interest in ideas and emotions, in up-front rejection of the spirit of Enlightenment embodied in Swift and his work. This is demonstrated in "the [modernist] perpetually oscillating patterns of sense- and memory-data, their powerfully charged—but aimless and directionless—fields of force."[9] Poets, except for a handful, relinquished their ancient covenant: to believe and do good. The Enlightenment brought with it another Classical given. In ancient Greece, poet and prophet were one. Homer himself scribed for his people their religion, though great minds like Socrates and Plato, taking the matter in a huge corrective move, contended against, not the role itself, but the knowledge it generated. Philosophy had to speak. Plato's refutation of poetry is not all about poetry

[8] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), 100.

[9] Georg Lukacs, "The Ideology of Modernism," in *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*, edited by David H. Richter, third edition (Bedford: St. Martin's, 2016), 1218–19.

as a beautiful or special use of language; it is about poetry as the false prophet, as letting down the truth.

> Then, though there are many other things that we praise in Homer, this we will not applaud, the sending of the dream by Zeus to Agamemnon, nor shall we approve of Aeschylus when his Thetis 'avers that Apollo, singing at her wedding, 'foretold the happy fortunes of her issue' […] neither will we allow teachers to use him for the education of the young if our guardians are to be god-fearing men and god-like in so far as that is possible for humanity.[10]

In a PhD course on eighteenth-century literature, it was remarkable how the students felt at home with the intriguing discourse of self-criticism, social satire, and formidable calls for reform by the literature and rhetoric of those brilliant minds; Pope's "Essay on Man," Johnson's "Vanity of Human Wishes," and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Members of that class could not help but set up analogies and further investigations to understand and gain a deeper insight. What made it even more familiar is the fact that it transcends the usual allegiances, religious, political, partisan, and national, though it issues from a profound desire to reform society and combat the ills of corruption, poverty, social injustice and the like.

It seems there is another factor for this familiarity, a sort of uncanny family resemblance. We learn that the European Enlightenment, and the English Enlightenment in particular, had a special connection with the Arab/Islamic intellectual heritage at its inception, through translation, and that the latter left some significant impact on the formation of that Enlightenment. A considerable amount of research has been recently conducted to demarcate that impact in terms of time and content. It is thought to have lasted almost a whole century, from 1650 to 1750; although, as Nabil Matar mentions in his thorough study, *Henry Stubbe and the Beginnings of Islam*, "by mid-1630s, the 'world' of Arabic manuscripts had been 'brought thither,' that is, to Oxford," where a chair of Arabic was established in 1636, launching a facility for a group of English thinkers to "write about (and against) Islam."[11] Naturally, what is brought to light, here, is the fact that a partial but powerful and far reaching change, working against the current, took place in that period. For the first time, an account

[10] Plato, *The Republic*, 197–8.
[11] Nabil Matar, *Henry Stubbe and the Beginnings of Islam: The Originall & Progress of Mahometanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 17.

of Muhammad in England was "chronologically presented and not theologically argued."[12]

The content of that scholarship was mainly philosophical and historical. According to Alexander Bevilacqua, it was a "Republic of Arabic Letters," the title he chooses for his book, identifying the phenomenon of Arabic and Islamic learning, present in the European Enlightenment. "They [the *founders* of this republic] form an Enlightenment, now largely lost from view, in which Europeans learned Arabic and read Islamic manuscripts."[13] In his book, Bevilacqua offers a history of this Arabic-reading Enlightenment, with an emphasis on the essential philosophical attitude of the European founders, which seems a counter movement to Orientalism as expounded by Edward Said; more of a benign sort of liaison.

> The translation movement described in this book was grounded in a perception of analogy between Western Christian and Islamic traditions. Analogy was one of the chief intellectual tools that European scholars used to make sense of Islamic history, religion, and letters and to make these intelligible to their readers […]. In particular, one of their most powerful comparisons was between Muslims and the "good pagans" of classical antiquity. The Christian tradition had, since the time of the Church Fathers, assimilated many aspects of pre-Christian Greco-Roman literature and thought. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the presence of so much classical culture at the heart of the Western tradition seemed to grant scholars permission to study Islamic materials as well. Through an analogy with good paganism, Europeans could validate their new interest in Islamic letters.[14]

Bevilacqua, in his explanation, seems to forget that it was not simply a matter of Muslim-pagan comparison, but the fact that the two heritages, the Arab and the ancient Greek, were entwined. It was the Arabs who "retained, improved upon, and carried forward Greek scholarship in different fields, enabling Europe to trigger the Renaissance movement."[15] However, the secular nature of this republic of letters became evident as Bevilacqua explained how the study of Islam became "normatively decontaminated:

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[12] Nabil Matar, *Henry Stubbe and the Beginnings of Islam: The Originall & Progress of Mahometanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 31, 71.
[13] Alexander Bevilacqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters: Islam and the European Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 1.
[14] Bevilacqua, *The Republic*, 3.
[15] Rajan Gurukkal, "European Roots: Progress of Greek and Hellenic Knowledge in the Arab World," in *History and Theory of Knowledge Production: An Introductory Outline* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 109.

Muhammad the impostor became Muhammad the legislator."[16] Voltaire and Gibbon included original materials and interpretations from the scholars of Arabic into the body of their Enlightenment thought.[17] This positive attitude lasted, in Bevilacqua's estimate, from 1650 to 1750, an epoch in which Western intellectual traditions and biases were reformulated,[18] leaving room for a "keen sense of analogy, even kinship, felt by several generations of European scholars."[19] It must be noted, here, that this Arabic heritage that enriched European intellectuals of the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries is the product of another enlightenment that took place in the Arab/Muslim world in the middle ages, approximately, from the eighth to the fourteenth centuries; thus, wisdom and knowledge continually travel across borders, tongues, and faiths.

The nature of this analogy and kinship is further investigated by Humberto Garcia in his interesting book *Islam and the English Enlightenment, 1670-1840*, in which he argues that radical Protestant interpretations of Islam are to be regarded as "central to the English Enlightenment rather than as a marginal anomaly to be ignored."[20] In order to validate this, Garcia has only to look at some texts "forgotten by literary critics today" such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Mahomet," which was composed in 1799, casting Prophet Muhammad as a "Protestant revolutionary."[21] Garcia states that his book "argues that positive (and negative) perceptions of Islam were conditioned by Anglo-Islamic encounters in India, Ottoman Europe, and elsewhere in the Muslim world. As a result, the radical Enlightenment was in constant dialectical engagement with Islam."[22]

In order to trace this dialogue to the beginnings of the Enlightenment, when the most radical of its representatives, Swift, grew into a famous and influential figure, two scholars in particular must be singled out in this context for tying the two enlightenments together: Henry Stubbe (1632–1676) and Simon Okley (1678–1720), both from British academe in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. They had the strength and courage to go against the grain and speak of what they learned from Arabic

[16] Alexander Bevilacqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters: Islam and the European Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 3.
[17] Bevilacqua, *The Republic*, 5.
[18] Bevilacqua, *The Republic*, 5.
[19] Bevilacqua, *The Republic*, 200.
[20] Humberto Garcia, *Islam and the English Enlightenment, 1670–1840* (New York: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 2.
[21] Garcia, *Islam and the English Enlightenment*, 2.
[22] Garcia, *Islam and the English Enlightenment*, 3.

heritage, paving the way for similar objective minds to take the same path. It was a moment of crossing barriers and challenging misconceptions.

Henry Stubbe lived and wrote in the Restoration period, "but his influence continued through the remainder of the Restoration and after the Revolution of 1688-9, until at least 1720."[23] In his book, *Henry Stubbe, Radical Protestantism and the Early Enlightenment*, James R. Jacob seeks

> to connect through Stubbe the radicalism of the mid-century English revolution with the radicalism of the early eighteenth century. The principal medium of this connection, it will be seen, was Stubbe's manuscript *An Account of the Rise and Progress of Mahometanism*, which circulated underground between the 1670s and 1720.[24]

Stubbe's *Account* could not be published then, as it was regarded as dangerous. Nevertheless, in 2014, a new contextualised edition was published by Nabil Matar, under the title *Henry Stubbe and the Beginnings of Islam: The Originall & Progress of Mahometanism*. Matar presents Stubbe to the reader as follows:

> In the study of Islam Stubbe moved away from Euro-Christian sources to the canon of Arabic histories and chronicles in Latin translation, instituting thereby a sharp methodological and historiographical break with the past. […] Stubbe recognised how integrated 'Muslim history [was] with that of the Roman and Byzantine empires.' Islam was not an appendage to Greco-Roman civilization, but a fresh start, 'a revolution' in world history.[25]

On the other hand, Simon Okley, a Cambridge specialist in Arabic, translated two seminal works that deeply impacted Europe's perception not only of Muslims, but of the possible reconciliation of faith and reason. The first one was *The History of the Saracens*, published in 1708 and 1718. In his introduction to this translation, Okley made a significant plea, wishing for more Arabic books to be made available, basically, for the benefit of British young learners to reflect on and benefit from:

> I wish that some public spirit would arise among us, and cause those books to be bought in the east for us which we want. I should be very willing to lay out my pains for the service of the public. If we could but procure 500 to be judiciously laid out in the east, in such books as I could mention for the

[23] James R. Jacob, *Henry Stubbe, Radical Protestantism and the Early Enlightenment* (Cambridge University Press, 1983)، 139.
[24] Jacob, *Henry Stubbe,* 139.
[25] Nabil Matar, *Henry Stubbe and the Beginnings of Islam: The Originall & Progress of Mahometanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 1–3.

> public library at Cambridge, it would be the greatest improvement that could be conceived: but that is a happiness not to be expected in my time. We are all swallowed up in politics; there is no room for letters; and it is to be feared that the next generation will not only inherit but improve the polite ignorance of the present.[26]

The last sentence strongly reminds us of Swift's protests. Okley published another book in 1711 under the title of *The Improvement of Human Reason, Exhibited in the Life of Hai ebn Yokdhan*, stating that it was a translation of a treatise written in Arabic more than 500 years ago. The book was written by the Andalusian Abu Jaafar Ibn Tufayl (c. 1105–1185), probably written in 1150. Okley seemed thrilled by reading the Arabic original of this work, which was already circulating in Europe and England in Latin translations. He offered his own English translation to the reader as a work "in which is demonstrated by which method one may, by the mere light of nature, attain the knowledge of things natural and supernatural; more particularly the knowledge of God, and the affairs of another life."[27] This advertisement was quite secularised, in the sense that it concentrated on epistemology rather than religion per se; "knowledge" of which God? As he was addressing a Christian audience, he must have been referring to God in Christianity; though the book was originally meant to solve the problem of the rigid binarism between reason and revelation, which impaired Muslim religious thought at a certain period in time. Still, the secularism in Okley's statement reflected the secular nature of the Ibn Tufayl's novel itself.

The impact and the journey of the narrative, a short bildungsroman of the solitary self-educated philosopher Hayy, was thoroughly researched by Samar Attar, who looked closely into the many translations the work went through and its influence on Europe. Attar published her findings under the title of *The Vital Roots of European Enlightenment: Ibn Tufayl's Influence on Modern Western Thought*. In her discussion, Attar highlighted two concepts the philosophical novella dealt with: the man of reason and the construction of the cosmopolitan identity, which were, at the same time, commonly held concepts by tenth–twelfth-century Arab philosophers and great Sufis. The two were also major concepts in the English Enlightenment and Swift's work, specifically.

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[26] Simon Okley, *The History of the Saracens*, 5th edition (London: Henry J. Bohn, 1848), xi.
[27] Ibn Tufayl, *The Improvement of Human Reason Exhibited in the Life of Hai Ebn Yokdhan*, trans. Simon Okley (London: E. Powel, 1711), i.

The cosmopolitan identity as well as the universal mind are among the intrinsic characteristics that constitute the Enlightenment; they are manifestations closely connected to its assumption of the perennial nature of the human being. It is the universality of Swift's worldview that makes it possible for its satire to still matter; for, as he wrote, his satire "points at no defect, / but what *all mortals* may correct (italics added)."[28] Samuel Johnson, too, saw mankind as having basically the same burdens and aspirations:

> Let observation with extensive view,
> Survey mankind, from China to Peru;
> Remark each anxious toil, each eager strife,
> And watch the busy scenes of crowded life.[29]

Hence, Classical Plato, medieval Averroes, and Renaissance Shakespeare have appealed to and inspired thinkers across time and geography, and will continue to do so, because, contrary to the subsequent philosophies of progressive evolutionism, the measure of good, evil and corruption in the world seems, to the Enlightenment intellectual, constant in the world. Johnson, here, was perfectly at home imitating Juvenal, the first-century Roman satirist. Seventeenth-century English Okley promoted the work of twelfth-century Andalusian Ibn Tufayl. Forms may change, but essence remains the same. The notion of perennialism is metaphorised in Gulliver's complaint that the printer carelessly wiped out all time references in his *Travels*: "I find likewise that your printer has been so careless as to confound the times, and mistake the dates, of my several voyages and returns; neither assigning the true year, nor the true month, nor day of the month";[30] which renders the text timeless; atemporal critique for all times to come. Swift wittily added a touch revealing his real purpose of this gesture, when he continued to say, "but [I] shall leave that matter to my judicious and candid readers to adjust it as they please."[31] The time and place are left to the readers, to fit their positions, circumstances and pleasure.

There is another meeting point between the Enlightenment and Arab culture, this time a contemporary one. It is between Swift and Edward Said (Palestinian Arab American and an influential intellectual among Arab scholars, the young in particular, as evident in the collection of articles in

[28] Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) (Planet E-book, n.d.), 6.
[29] Samuel Johnson, "The Vanity of Human Wishes" (1749), 1–4.
[30] Swift, *Gulliver's*, 6–7.
[31] Swift, *Gulliver's*, 7.

the present volume), whose immense interest in Swift became a "career-long engagement."[32] Said invokes Swift the way Derrida invokes Marx, or Wordsworth Milton, also an early Enlightenment intellectual, in his significantly titled poem "London, 1802"; centring London, the space and the time as the sufferer, and the revolutionary poet as the means of remedy and renewal:

> Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
> England hath need of thee: […]
> And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
> Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
> Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
> Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
> So didst thou travel on life's common way,
> In cheerful godliness.[33]

Of course, such affinities among leading intellectuals have their justifications, lucidly delineated in Wordsworth's poem. It is a matter of inheritance, of legacy and connected roots. The revolutionary is not, after all, a complete avant-gardist.

Said considers Swift an exemplary intellectual for certain reasons: First, there is Swift's enigmatic character that draws scholars to challenge and get hold of it; Said's early article on "Swift's Tory Anarchy" stated that "Swift's work is a persisting miracle of how much commentary an author's writing can accommodate and still remain problematic."[34] Second, Swift is one of those that Edward Said calls "the nay-sayers, the individuals at odds with their society and therefore outsiders and exiles so far as privileges, power, and honors are concerned."[35] Significantly, Said referred to Swift's work as "a long series of occasional pieces,"[36] which epitomizes Swift's conception of the function of writing: It is interactive, crucially intervening in the affairs of the people and society as the needs arise. Third, in Said's "metaphysical"[37] sense of "exile" mentioned above, Swift was actually restless, always

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[32] Helen Deutsch, "Living at This Hour: Jonathan Swift, Edward Said, and the Profession of Literature," *Boundary* 46, no. 4 (2019): 31.
[33] William Wordsworth, "London, 1802," 1–2, 8–13.
[34] Edward Said, "Swift's Tory Anarchy," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 3, no. 1 (Autumn, 1969): 48.
[35] Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 52–53.
[36] Said, "Swift's Tory Anarchy," 48.
[37] Said, *Representations*, 53.

"unsettled, and unsettling others";[38] he aggressively defended the helpless, though he could not tolerate their helplessness, against tyranny, facing exile and loss of privileges. He was the one who could turn his anguish into productivity.[39] One might venture to say, here, that only well-guided anger and an extremely powerful mind can achieve this kind of disciplined creativity.

There is also Swift's anti-colonialism, which bestowed on his writing the contemporaneity of our time. Through his character, he opposed the European colonial enterprises in a move certainly ahead of his time. What chance did this man have to be popular in an age of Empire? His English sailor/doctor is posed as a parody of the European colonizer of the early eighteenth century; for, in a carnivalesque move, Swift made him a victim of the inhabitants in the new lands which, according to the European pattern, he is supposed to conquer. He is not allowed to win anywhere he goes. Advising the government against invading the lands he has "discovered." Swift portrayed the idea as almost impossible: The Lilliputians are not worth it; the giants may not be easily conquered or controlled; the Flying island, too, would bewilder the English army, hovering over their heads; while the Houyhnhnms, total strangers to war, still have "[t]heir prudence, unanimity, unacquaintedness with fear, and their love of their country, [which] would amply supply all defects in the military art."[40] Did Swift deliberately design these lands so as to reach this conclusion, posing them as untempting, uninviting, unconquerable?

Swift's anti-colonialism is stated in such plain language, devoid of metaphor or satirical techniques in order to leave no room for ambiguity. Towards the end of *Gulliver's Travels, Book Four*, the anti-hero bluntly states: "But, instead of proposals for conquering that magnanimous nation, I rather wish they [the politicians of his country] were in a capacity, or disposition, to send a sufficient number of their inhabitants for civilizing Europe by teaching us the first principles of honour, justice, truth, temperance, public spirit, fortitude, chastity, friendship, benevolence, and fidelity."[41] Europe's civilising mission is reversed. He also dwelt on the European atrocities in the New World, where natives were exterminated, and their world was destroyed.

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[38] Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 53.
[39] Said, *Representations*, 53.
[40] Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) (Planet E-book, n.d.), 377.
[41] Swift, *Gulliver's*, 378.

It is this kind of discourse that keeps Swift alive in the consciousness of generations of people who care about the direction the world is heading in. Hence, this project reflects, directly or indirectly, the thoughts and ideas the contributors have gained while reading, discussing and analysing Swift's work. Each one selected an aspect that he or she thought very important for readers to know.

In the first chapter, I worked with Eman E'layan on the reception of Swift in the Arab world with the aim of presenting an analytical survey of Arabic scholarship on his work, whether in translation, criticism, or reviews. In the first half of the twentieth century, the interest among Arab scholars was mainly in translation, where we find several attempts serving different purposes and at variance in their degree of reliability and accuracy. However, soon after that, some critical studies have been published, though still scarce, in the forms of graduate dissertations, scholarly critical and analytical studies, in addition to some interesting non-academic articles expressing personal impressions and interactions with Swift's work. In this respect, and as expected, *Gulliver's Travels* retains the major share of interest, where some critics work, interestingly, on the subject of influence and continuity. The study singles out one Swiftian scholar, Muhammad Al-Dureiny, who has dedicated more time and effort to the translation and examination of Swift's work and biography than any other in this area.

The second chapter, written by Bayan al-Dahayyat aims to vindicate Jonathan Swift's attitude towards women, dismissing the popular claim of his misogyny. The chapter, titled "Is It Misogyny or Simply Satire? The Representation of Women in Swiftian Satire," is divided into two parts: The first provides a glimpse of Augustan satire, focusing on the Juvenalian Sixth Satire, for it is related to Swift's scatological poems, as well as the nature of satire as a tool of reformation and change. It also presents Swift in the company of women and shows his appreciation of the presence of particular women in his life. The second part comprises the textual analysis of two poems, "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed," and "The Lady's Dressing Room," with emphasis on their portrayal of not only women but also men and society at large. The chapter refers to feminist criticism that either attacks the poems or reads them anew; seeking to dispel the illusion of his misogyny.

The third chapter is about Swift as the amateur intellectual, written by Hamzeh Almahasneh. It addresses Edward Said's notion of amateurism and how it can operate in the analysis of Jonathan Swift's satirical and ironic project, especially his themes of emancipation, representation, intellectual

resistance, enlightenment, and non-reconciliation. Amateurism, here, is pitched against the idea of *professionalism* and all dogmatic political, hierarchical, canonical, and pedagogical discourses of imperialism and colonialism. The chapter aims to investigate how Swift's thinking functioned in a secular, exilic form of amateurism, in the Saidian understanding of the terms, which deeply counters the idea of intellectual professionalism and specialisation. The non-reconciled spirit of amateurism as manifested throughout Swift's oeuvre, testifying to his position as the indomitable, unreconciled, insurgent, and secular intellectual who could not be easily domesticated, or co-opted by the Whigs' oppressive and coercive political machine. Certainly, Swift's intransigence issuing from his unconfined amateurism sustains him with maverick courage and the audacity to "speak truth to power" and not to be enslaved by it.

Khawla Dwakiat chose to write about the interesting comic/satiric Scriblerus Club and their literary hack Martinus Scriblerus, where satire and laughter function as corrective and reformative. We learn that the year 1713 witnessed a cluster of prominent writers and radical thinkers introducing themselves to the eighteenth-century intellectual world under the name of the Scriblerus Club. Jonathan Swift, John Arbuthnot, Henry St. John, Thomas Parnell, John Gay, and Alexander Pope's satirisation of their contemporary society, its politics, art, philosophy, education, religion, and manners was the telos behind the creation of this intriguing club and its literary hack Martinus Scriblerus. Headed by Jonathan Swift, the group collaborated to make this project a powerful forum from which to parody current trends and express dissent and anxieties. Through examining *The Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*, the Club's major collaborative work, this chapter aims at excavating the narrative behind the inception of the idea, as well as its historical context.

The fifth chapter is written by Aseel Dar Khaleel who tackles another aspect of Swift's life: the political. "The Representation of Robert Walpole in the World of Swift" delves into the accusations levelled against Swift by critics like David Nokes—that he attacked Walpole's government for personal gain and power grabbing. This chapter sheds light on the portrayal of Walpole in a selection of Swift's works, whether metaphorically alluded to, or defiantly addressed by his name. In addition, the chapter examines, for the sake of comparison and through textual and contextual analysis, other critical views and attacks on the Prime Minister and his corrupt government expounded in the literary works of Swift's circle: Alexander Pope, John Gay, and Samuel Johnson.

Moving from the practical to the theoretical, Nour ‘Abed, in the sixth chapter, traces the philosophical allusion to Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave* in Jonathan Swift’s *The Battle of the Books*. The proclaimed supremacy of a particular brand of thought and the suppositions of the inferiority of other perspectives certainly lead to shallowness of perception and restricted-mindedness. In this respect, the discussion examines how Swift’s neo-classical work endeavoured to emulate the tenets of ancient thought. He attacked societal principles and thought that reflected rigidity of cognition and fixity of perception so as to reach rational restoration and moral revival. Hence, Swift was Platonic in the sense of idealising and reforming man and society. Thematised by didactic implications and philosophical exemplifications, *The Battle of the Books*, following Platonic/Socratic dialogic argument and counter-argument, dramatises the essences of moral, societal and intellectual clashes, and accentuates the futility of parochialism caused by prejudice and intellectual intransigence.

The book concludes with the seventh chapter titled “Anarchy and the Humanist Intellectual” by Ola Salim Kittaneh. It is a fact that the importance of the Enlightenment writers Swift and Voltaire in the history of Western literature has been great enough to make them the subject of innumerable studies, but it is still necessary to re-articulate their roles as intellectuals whose thoughts correspond with our contemporary views on the role of the humanist, anarchist intellectual. Informed by Edward Said and Noam Chomsky’s recent theorisations on the intellectual, this chapter compares Swift’s and Voltaire’s works in an attempt to excavate how effectively each deviated from the prevailing orthodoxy of his time and stood at the margins of society. It concludes that Swift’s criticism functions in a humanist and oppositional way to all forms of hegemonic and political entities, while Voltaire’s criticism may be described as functioning in a semi-humanist way as it seems to ultimately consolidate European prejudices. This is achieved through examining Swift’s *A Tale of a Tub* and *A Modest Proposal*, together with Voltaire’s *Candide* and “Treatise on Tolerance.”

Thus, this book project is the result of the belief that Swift’s thought is extremely relevant to the world we live in. In such a world in disarray, as diagnosed above, we need to embrace all the voices, old and new, that express concern and courage, in a unifying movement that calls for justice, hope and benevolence. Perhaps that is why intellectuals are amazed at the “extraordinary contemporary wave of interest in Jonathan Swift and his

work."[42] It is because he is one of those universal minds that worry about humanity; he worried about the beggars of Ireland, the lost women in the streets of London, and the massacred natives in the New World. Behind the ridicule, harshness and despair, apparent in his words, "*if* their natures had been capable of the least disposition to virtue or wisdom (italics added),"[43] there is hope and trust; otherwise, why bother to write? And we, today, are still holding on to this exact hope:

> So our culture clings, more than ever, to the hope of the Enlightenment, the hope that drove Kant to make philosophy formal and rigorous and professional. We hope that formulating the right conceptions of reason, of science, of thought, of knowledge, of morality, the conceptions which express their essence, we shall have a shield against irrationalist resentment and hatred.[44]

Scholars of world literature have the responsibility to keep those candles of critical minds lit and enlightening; for it is an invaluable heritage for all mankind. And we are aware that people in our part of the world, as everywhere else, can very much benefit from such gifts from the past and from far lands.

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[42] Nada Hteit, "The Intellectual's Contradictions: The Case of Jonathan Swift," (*Tanāqudāt almuthaqqaf*: *Jonathan Swift namu:thajan*) *Middle East Newspaper* (April 2, 2017).

[43] Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) (Planet E-book, n.d.), 6.

[44] Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism (Essays: 1972–1980)* (University of Minnesota Press Minneapolis, 1982), 170.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE RECEPTION OF JONATHAN SWIFT IN THE ARAB WORLD

SAMIRA AL-KHAWALDEH
AND EMAN E'LAYAN

This chapter aims to present an analytical survey of Arabic scholarship on Jonathan Swift (1667–1745). It addresses the reception of Swift and his work in the Arab world, whether in translation, criticism, or reviews. In the first half of the twentieth century, the interest among Arab scholars was mainly in translating Swift and introducing his work to Arab readers, serving different purposes and varying in their degree of honesty and accuracy. However, soon after that, some critical studies have been published, though still scarce, in the forms of graduate dissertations, scholarly critical and analytical studies, and some interesting journalistic articles, expressing personal impressions and interactions with Swift's thought. In this respect, and as expected, *Gulliver's Travels* retains the major share of interest, where some critics work, interestingly, on the subject of influence and continuity. This study singles out one Swiftian scholar, Muhammad al-Dureiny, who has dedicated more time and effort to the examination of Swift's work and biography than any other in this area.

Introduction

Unlike his Gulliver, who travelled into unchartered seas, Swift's work actually travelled into known geographies, old and new. And, as his anti-heroic sailor/physician exerted his wits to convey the civilisation of a troubled Europe to alien "nations" over those imaginary seas, his narrative was, rather, let loose in the real world to be interpreted, downsized, and modified by all types of translators and readers who, in their diversity, resemble the characters created by Swift himself. Undoubtedly, it is at the hands of children's literature that the text of his major work, *Gulliver's Travels*, has suffered the most; where verbal wit, rich commentary and

profound ideas all vanish leaving a comic skeleton, entertaining yet not so edifying as intended by the author. The other type of insult committed against Swift's novel is that by the visual arts, movies in particular, where the physicalities of the inhabitants of Gulliver's world are all that draw the audience's attention, leaving no room for philosophical reflections or even the significance of satire.

As one may expect, most of the translators' and scholars' attention has been concentrated on Swift's most popular novel. In his article "*Gulliver's Travels* in its Country of Origin and in the Arab World: An Uneven Career," Swiftian scholar Muhammad al-Dureiny stated, towards the end of the twentieth century, that *Gulliver's Travels* had not yet been properly introduced in an Arabic version. Pointedly, before presenting his main topic, al-Dureiny began his study by tracing the career of *Gulliver's Travels* in England, its land of origin, from its publication, in 1726, to the present time. He made it clear that the text's reception has gone through roughly three stages. In the first stage, it was extremely popular, distributed widely and received warmly; while the second stage (1752–1882), nevertheless, witnessed a divided attitude towards the book and its author, where the first two voyages of the book mainly received a huge amount of acclaim, while the third book was considered an "artistic failure," the fourth a "morally blasphemous obscenity," and the author was labelled a "lunatic misanthrope." The last and current stage in al-Dureiny's analysis has witnessed a favourable turn and the book is now classified as "one of the great literary masterpieces of the world."[1]

This history of *Gulliver's Travels* in its country of origin is very important as it has affected its fortunes in the Arab world. It is noticed that the harsh judgments of the second stage had quite harmful effects because they gave license to publishers and editors to distort, misinterpret and mistreat the book. Most often, publishers opted for the first and the second voyages of Gulliver, and ignored the third and the fourth. Others abbreviated, purged and changed the text completely. The book has been turned, according to al-Dureiny, into "an entertaining narrative commodity rather than a thought-provoking as well as a highly amusing literary work; being transformed into a children's story of dwarfs and giants, totally

[1] Muhammad al-Dureiny, "*Gulliver's Travels* in Its Country of Origin and in the Arab World: An Uneven Career" (*Riḥlat Gulliver fi: mawṭinih al-aṣli: wa fi: al-'ālam al-'arabi:: Maseerah Muta'aththirra*) (University of Kuwait) *Journal of the Faculty of Arts* 13, no. 85 (1993): 9.