

Late Style and Exile in Jonathan Swift's *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift*

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Abstract: This paper investigates Edward Said's notion of late style and its implications along with the concept of exile as they implicitly and explicitly operate in Jonathan Swift's *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift* (1739). In addition, the paper examines how late style and exile function as two transformative states that maintain Swift's secular humanist intellectual stance and praxis to be unresolved and un-reconciled. Drawing on Said's notion of late style and its multiple implications, this paper proposes that Swift's *Verses* functions as an aesthetic form of lateness. More concretely, this paper is intended to shed more light on *Verses* as an aesthetic and political form of intellectual intransigence and non-reconciliation. Moreover, it presumes that despite the unfinished multiple interpretations directed by critics to such a poem, it has been overlooked as a late work whose difficulty and unresolved contradiction function under the heading of late style. As un-reconciled satirist, Swift continues his longstanding moral resistance and political activism against all forms of tyranny and oppression practiced by the Whigs and all other unjust forces. As such, Swift's non-reconciliation and radicalism is rendered throughout *Verses* by using a vivid dynamic power of irony and satire that function as two aesthetic gestures of late style. It goes without saying that Swift's intellectual resistance is inextricably bound up with universal humanist principles of justice, truth and freedom.

Keywords: non-reconciliation, intransigence, difficulty, unresolved contradiction, exile, late style.

Introduction:

Both Theodore Adorno and Edward Said offer an alternative paradigm shift of understanding to the classical notion of "late style" that is reflected aesthetically in art forms and bound up inextricably with the later stages of writers and artists' careers. The classical notion of "late style" is reflected in acquiring a state of reconciliation and serenity whenever writers and artists grow old and approach their mortality in their declining years. As such, the late authorial presence of late writers and artists is characterized by seeking a new spirit of reconciliation, resignation and resolution. At the end of their literary career, writers and artists tend toward resolving all problems and embracing forgiveness and peacefulness with the surroundings. A state of serenity is metaphorically injected as a vaccine that transforms them to be calm and reconciled. Such conventional understanding and perception of late style can be seen where Shakespeare himself became a reconciled playwright with his audience in his last two romances *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* which constitute the farewell to his stage. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare tends to transform the tension and the conflict between Prospero and Caliban into a state of forgiveness, peace, serenity and reconciliation. Contrary to the classical notion of late style, both Theodore Adorno and Edward Said have complicated and perceived it as a form of non-reconciliation, intransigence, opposition, resistance and unresolved contradiction.

The late musical works of Beethoven gripped Adorno for their power of irreconcilability, discontinuity and dissonance. The radical negativity and difficulty of Beethoven's late works

constitute one of the many implications of late style. According to Adorno as argued by Said, Beethoven's late musical works represent a form of refusal and resistance to conform to the bourgeois order. In his book, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain*, (2006) Said goes on to elaborate on the power of Beethoven's musical compositions as conceptualized by Adorno by arguing that:

Beethoven's last works constitute an event in the history of modern culture: a moment when the artist who is fully in command of his medium nevertheless abandons communication with the established order of which he is a part and achieves a contradictory, alienated relationship with it. His late works constitute a form of exile. (7-8)

As Beethoven's late works represent a form of exile for Said, they detach and alienate themselves from the established given order of music and art. They do not fit any musical system and cannot be reconciled. As such, the constitutive and constructive form of Beethoven's late works functions in an eccentric and peculiar way that break away from the established order. Again, Said argues:

Beethoven's late works remain unreconciled, uncoopted by a higher synthesis: they do not fit any scheme, and they cannot be reconciled or resolved, since their irresolution and unsynthesized fragmentariness are constitutive, neither ornamental nor something else. Beethoven's late compositions are in fact about "lost totality," and therefore catastrophic... Late-style Beethoven keeps the irreconcilable apart, and in doing so "music is transformed more and more from something significant into something obscure—even to itself... late style Beethoven, remorselessly alienated and obscure, becomes the prototypical modern aesthetic form, and by virtue of its distance from and rejection of bourgeois society and even a quiet death. (12-14)

For Said, late style cannot be understood away from exile because of their semantic interconnectedness. Both terms function interchangeably to form a force of protest, resistance and an aesthetic non-reconciliation that break away with all fixed forms of totality. The term "non-reconciliation" constitutes the profound basis of late style. It goes without saying that Said's concept of non-reconciliation and opposition have to do with his general philosophy of the essential need to speak truth to power.

Late style as perceived by Said has a lot to do with difficulty and unresolved contradiction as he defines it by arguing: "But what of artistic lateness not as harmony and resolution, but as intransigence, difficulty and unresolved contradiction? What if age and ill health do not produce the serenity of "ripeness is all"? (7) As such, difficulty, non-reconciliation and unresolved tension are considered as the underpinnings of late works. Accordingly, late style can be thought as dynamic form of resistance and exile that enhances late writers' intransigence, transgression and opposition against all forms of oppression and dominant political systems that are unscrupulous, dominant, unjust and oppressive. Moreover, Said goes on to vindicate the notion of late style by contending: "To be late meant therefore to be late for (and refuse) many of the rewards offered up by being comfortable inside society, not the least of which was to be read and understood easily by a large group of people" (22).

The resistance to conveying meaning lucidly formulates the idiosyncrasy of late style. Yet, such resistance and difficulty do not mean that writers who are late in Saidian terms lean heavily on mystification and obscuring meaning and transform it into intricacy and abstruseness. On the contrary, late writers take writing as a form of resistance against all hegemonic discourses of totality, orthodoxy and conformity. Therefore, late style according to Said is an exilic resistant form of heroism and intransigence against all forms of totality, hegemony, dogmatism and essentialist modes of thinking and identity that are practiced by hegemonic political oppressive and dominant system and power.

Considered from this angle, Swift's works remain unresolved and un-reconciled. In his book, *The World, the Text and the Critic* (1983) Said emphasizes difficulty as a feature that is swaddled in Swift's work by contending: "SWIFT'S work is a persisting miracle of how much commentary an author's writing can accommodate and still remain problematic." (54) As such, the multiplicity of interpretations that Swift's work can offer accentuates his oppositional and radical mode of thinking against all hierarchical, canonical discourses and dogmatic concepts of political and hegemonic power.

Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift represents the extraordinary density and the culmination of the un-reconciled spirit of Jonathan Swift, the bitterness of his soul. In his article, "Swift's life" in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift*, Joseph McMinn elaborates on Swift's *Verses* by contending that the poem can profoundly be seen as: "an explanation of his own personality and artistic method. The eternal problem, still unresolved, is the extent to which the poem is autobiographical (28). McMinn's contention about Swift's *Verses* as being unresolved poem leads one to think of it as an aesthetic form of difficulty that functions under the heading of late style. The difficulty of this poem emanates from Swift's satire, irony and resistance against all forms of the Whigs dogmatic and hegemonic power.

Accordingly, the concept of difficulty plays a central role in sustaining a course of misinterpretation and contradiction among writers and critics. In his article, "Comic and Tragic Satire in Swift's poetry" (1983) Harold Weber comments on the *Verses* as being the most difficult poem by arguing: "*Verses* is one of the most profound attempts to reconcile the comic and tragic satirist; and, as the long critical debate has demonstrated, one of Swift's most complex, ironic, and elusive works" (460). Accordingly, such a poem remains unresolved and difficult since its difficulty generates and instigates a multiplicity of irreconcilable consensus over a unified form of interpretation. The poem cannot be easily pigeonholed to one fixed form of interpretation or analysis.

In *Verses*, Swift continues his satirical and ironic project that he unremittingly unleashes against all forms of tyranny, hypocrisy, political corruption, oppression and domination that were profoundly pervasive and prevalent in the Age of Enlightenment. In the poem, Swift's satire and irony is maintained in an indignant, angry and furious tirade against all the Whigs who betrayed principles of justice and truth and at the same time his Scriblerian friends: Alexander Pop, John Arbuthnot and John Gay who were not faithful to the universal meaning of friendship, begrudging and envying Swift for his prestigious position in the Tory or As Said argues in *The World, the Text and the Critic* (1983) that "his time and good fortune—the heyday of the Tory power—displeased them" (68).

The thematic core of the poem revolves around Swift's eulogy of himself but at the same time, it expresses his personal irritation, rage and anger with his own friends and the corrupted oppressive political system of the Whigs. He folds his political radicalism into the aesthetic in order to keep his opposition and confrontation alive. In his book, *Swift's Angers* (2014) Claude Rawson elaborates on Swift's disgruntled feelings and rage with the hegemonic power of the Whigs by arguing that:

The bitterness of Swift's personal disappointment was to merge into a spirit of political indignation and impassioned activism in Irish affairs. If the hurt that triggered this particular intensity partly derived from a perceived slur about the Irish Deanship, and if that appointment was an enduring sadness for Swift, the sadness came with a poignant paradox, which lies in the fact that all Swift's greatest writings, apart from the Tale, were to belong to the period of this deanship, as did his most signal services to Ireland. (15)

As such, in Swift's writings, the immersion of the political within the aesthetic functions as a way of maintaining resistance and opposition in hope of creating and achieving emancipation, freedom and justice to his oppressed Irish. Swift's version of non-reconciliation, opposition and intransigence are intended to challenge all forms of dogmatic orthodoxy and oppression.

Despite the fact that the poem was written towards the end of Swift's life which was characterized with the infliction of illness and the decay of the body, Swift himself never lost touch with the power of his imaginative artistic creation but remained a productive prolific writer among his generation. Challenging illness and the decay of the body contribute to lateness which Said argues: is being at the end, fully conscious, full of memory, and also very (even preternaturally) aware of the present" (14) As such, neither age nor ill health could affect or put a closure to Swift's productivity of writing. His style of writing remained powerful and demonstrated him as the most flamboyant and indomitable satirist writer in his time.

As an elegiac poem, *Verses* reveals how much Swift imagines his own death to be totally different from the death of other writers and poets of his own time. He wants his death to be remembered by the posterity and to be a universal event that transcends time and place. As such, Swift's death will be remembered by his friends and everyone comes after him as he is saying:

Suppose me dead; and then suppose
A club assembled at the *Rose* ;
Where, from discourse of this and that,
I grow the subject of their chat. (65-68)

Swift appears to be profoundly obsessed with the idea of self-making, fame before his death. For him, death cannot be dodged. Despite the inevitability of death, Swift is haunted with almost entirely the survival of the power of his writings and reputation throughout future ages.

Swift's moral, ethical intellectual stance and his belief in the humanist universal principles of justice and freedom are encapsulated in a line in *Verses* where he says: "Fair Liberty was all his Cry," (347) These words represent Swift's unyielding and unstoppable radical resistance against all forms of oppression and political jurisdiction to achieve universal humanist principles such as

emancipation, freedom and justice. His intransigence and stubbornness against all forms of oppression maintain him to be a defender of liberty. As a humanist writer, Swift dedicated his savings to charitable institutions and to the building the first psychiatric hospital in Ireland as he says: “He gave the little wealth he had,/ To build a house for fools and mad” (479- 480). It goes without saying that Swift’s humanist moral consciousness and keeps his undiminished force of irony and satire unrestrained and trenchant to all forms of oppressive dominant political power and hegemonic system.

The secular and intellectual praxis of Jonathan Swift is strongly and intimately rooted in his very exilic form of late style that would unveil and display his humanist, political and intellectual moral grounding. Swift’s radical negativity, difficulty and unresolved contradiction come close to Beethoven’s late style which Said defines: “is negative, or rather *it is negativity*: where one would expect serenity and maturity, one instead finds a bristling, difficult, and unyielding—perhaps even inhuman—challenge.”(12) Needless to say, the unwavering power of Swift’s radical negativity, opposition and the scathing caustic irony that he prodigiously employs in constructing his satirical project testifies to his un-reconciled, unresolved, unsatisfied and unsettled position with the hegemonic, dominant oppression and injustice of the political system of the Whigs and all other forms of imperialist and colonialist dogmatic ideologies.

In the poem, Swift’s bitter satire functions mordantly to displease and dissatisfy all those who are entangled and embroiled in betraying universal principles of justice and truth. Such trenchant satire deeply reflects Swift’s discontented, conflicted and unappeased feelings and attitude towards his friends and the Whigs. Not surprisingly, Swift’s sharp satire appears not only to be directed against the Whigs and their corrupted policy but it is unleashed in a dynamic ironic and unfriendly way to his Scriblerian friends.

Swift resolutely stands in a courageous and unflinching way that is emphatically cleansed from any sense of reluctance and hesitancy to unleash his satire and irony. He satirizes his friends for being ignoble, disloyal and dishonest to the meaning and values of friendship by saying:

Why must I be outdone by Gay
In my own hum’rous biting way?
Arbuthnot is no more my friend, who dares irony to pretend,
Which I was born to introduce, Refin’d it first, and show’d its use,

St. John, as well Pultney, knows
That I had some repute for prose;
And, till they drove me out of date,
Could maul a minister of a state.
If they have mortify’d my pride,

And made me throw my pen aside;
If with such talents Heav'n has blest'em,
Have I not reason to detest em.? (66)

Consequently, Swift's ironic words about his friends profoundly reveal that they are unfaithful to the meanings and the incontrovertible values of friendship. They appear to be disloyal and dishonest to the universal principles of friendship. It can be deduced that the main concern of Swift's friends is to mortify, smear and slander his reputation and above all to lower him down. Yet, Swift's humanist intellectual stance in defending universal principles maintains him to be always an indomitable writer whose reputation and fame inevitably remain vivid, untarnished, present and not affected by what had been said about him.

Swift's writing in its difficulty comes close to that of Adorno which according to Said makes him "impossible to assimilate to any system." (21) The difficulty of Swift's work challenges writers to imitate him as he writes in his own monument epitaph:

SWIFT has sailed into his rest;

Savage indignation there

Cannot lacerate his breast.

Imitate him if you dare,

World-besotted traveller; he

Served human liberty

(Translated by William Butler Yeats: *The Winding Stair and Other Poems*)

Swift's powerful writing in its inimitability can be said to make him a figure of late style. The difficulty of his writing functions as an aesthetic form of late style that is constructed on difficulty and unresolved contradiction. In his introduction to *Swift and Others* (2015) Claude Rawson elaborates on the difficulty of Swift's writing by contending:

Pope seemed easier to teach, a favorite of the academy and a familiar figure in the literary environment. He was not 'difficult' while Swift's writing seemed discursively baffling and temperamentally conflicted. The Tale was at least as obscure as Joyce's *Ulysses* or Beckett's novels, which significantly derive from it, and I assumed that if I started chronologically with such an intractable work, it would be deterrent to inexperienced readers." (5)

Undoubtedly, the power of irony in Swift's writing that has a lot to do with late style can trouble and baffle readers to get an easy understanding and to form a unified form of interpretation.

Swift was a subject of envy, jealousy and resentment because of his powerful wit and inimitable writings. In his introduction to his book *Fair Liberty Was All His Cry: A Tercentenary Tribute To Jonathan Swift 1667-1745* (1967) A. Norman Jeffares elaborates on how much envy Swift had experienced by arguing:

In his own period Swift incurred the envy of lesser men: his pen and his tongue were sharp, and he did not spare them in the service of his religion and his political beliefs. He loathed cant and hypocrisy; his sense of satiric irony ran deep; his wit and invention were virtually irrepressible. He was often an unhappy man, a despairing man, and yet he could be the best and the gayest of friends. He played a powerful part in public affairs: and was in consequence a target for contemporary jealousy and envy—even his fellow clergy, for instance, did not necessarily treat him with Christian charity. And the suspicions and doubts continued after his death. (X)

In the poem, Swift addresses his fortune as if it is a generous man and telling it to be magnanimous with all except his friends by saying:

To all my foes, dear Fortune, send
Thy gifts; but never to my friend:
I tamely can endure the first,
But this with envy makes me burst. (67-70)

These lines assert that Swift lost trust in his friends who become his real enemies. Such friends seem to be unfaithful and betrayal to all universal principles of friendship.

In *Verses*, Swift's disillusionment, disenchantment and disappointment with his friends and the hegemonic system of the Whig is rendered into a language that is blasted with anger and rage. Such a language is fully encapsulated and engulfed by irony which has a lot to do with late style because of its power to deceive readers and writers from constructing any easy understanding and interpretation. In his introduction to *Jonathan Swift* (2009) Harold Bloom comments on the power of irony that revisits easy reading by arguing: "Irony is a dangerous mode, an invitation to misunderstanding. Voltaire, Carlyle in *Sartor Resartus*, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Freud risk weak misreading, as did Swift, particularly in his masterwork, *A Tale of a Tub*." (xi)

Consequently, irony as one of the many implications of late style constitutes a dynamic state of contention and controversy among readers and writers over a unified final form of interpretation. Swift's irony, as Claude Rawson argues: "is aggressively mercurial. It does not mean the opposite of what it says, as irony is supposed to do, but acts with elusive directions designed both to cover himself and wrongfoot his readers." (3)

Swift's irony constitutes radical resistance to easy understanding and interpretation. As such, Swift's irony maintains a dynamic state of contention and controversy among readers and writers. As another gesture of late style, irony functions in a contradictory and paradoxical way. The paradox of irony adds much difficulty to understand the poem and deduce Swift's intended meaning. In the poem, Swift appears to be ironic and satirical of Alexander Pope and his way of writing poetry. As such, the power of Swift's irony leads readers to find difficulty in deducing the embedded meaning that Swift intended. Swift goes on to say:

In Pope I cannot read a line,
 But with a sigh I wish it mine;
 When he can in one couplet fix
 More sense than I can do in six;
 It gives me such a jealous fit,
 I cry, "Pox take him and his wit!" (47-52)

Swift's satirical and ironic approach is intended to deeply expose and reveal his friends' envy, begrudges and dissatisfaction for his reputation and fame. In his introduction to *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain*, (2006) Michael Wood comments on the tone of the un-reconciled late writer who according to Said remains intransigent and oppositional by saying: "The tone of the individual cases may be tragic, comic, ironic, parodic, and much else, but every artist who is late in Said's sense of the word of the word will be un-reconciled." (xv) As such, the unwavering caustic irony that Swift prodigiously employs in constructing his satirical project testifies his un-reconciled, unresolved, unsatisfied and unsettled position with the hegemonic, dominant oppression and injustice of the political system of the Whig and all other forms of imperialist and colonialist dogmatic ideologies.

Reading Swift's *Verses*, one can formulate an understanding of how much Swift is frustrated with his false friends who are dispassionate and unsentimental to him as he grows old, being inflicted with age, the decay of the body, infirmities of age and dizziness and vertigo that the Meniere's disease (a disease in the inner ear) causes to Swift as he says: "That old vertigo in his head/ Will never leave him till he's dead. (83-84)

In addition to the depressed and conflicted sense that Swift feels as he grows old, being inflicted with illness and disease, he also becomes deeply despondent and loses trust in his friends and all treacherous to humanist principles. According to Swift, his friends wish to quicken and precipitate his death in order to drive him "out of date". The idea of driving Swift "out of date" reminds us of the us Palestinian poet Mahmmoud Darwish and his poem *They Would Love To See Me Dead* where he says:

They would love to see me dead, to say:

He belongs to us, he is ours.

For twenty years I have heard their footsteps on the walls of night.

(*Unfortunately It Was Paradise: 21*)

Prophetically, Swift goes on to describe the indifference and carelessness that his friends will show after his death. He imagines them as being heartless, dispassionate and showing less sadness and sorrow for his death. Swift says:

Here shift the scene, to represent

How those I love my death lament.

Poor Pope will grieve a month, and Gay

A week, and Arbuthnot a day. (208)

Swift's reductive description of the feelings of his friends from a month to a week and then to a day accentuates his prophecy about how much they love to see him dead and to celebrate his corporeal absence. Swift imagines how much glee and joy they will share after his death by saying: "Then hug themselves, and reason thus:/ "It is not yet so bad with us" (115-116). Such ignoble and dishonest friends make Swift consider them as no more friends and to despair and lose all meaning of hope and trust in them. Whether his friends become extremely happy, joyful or not, Swift's humanist intellectual, moral literary legacy and his indefatigable resistance to all forms of oppression cannot be neglected. His untarnished reputation proves him to be always present.

Undoubtedly, Swift's powerful and artistic creative writings transcend time and place to haunt modern writers. His visible presence looms in modern writers' texts such as William Butler Yeats who writes in his introduction to his play *Words Upon the Window Pane* (1936) in *Fair Liberty Was All His Cry* (1967) "Swift haunts me; he is always just round the next corner" (186). Metaphorically speaking, Swift's powerful personality and his creative imaginative writings cannot be confined to the cultural and geographical boundaries and barriers of the eighteenth century. His personality and writings prove to be ubiquitous, erupting out of the past to present in modern writings. As such, Swift and his writings erupt out of the past, out of the eighteenth century time to be visibly present in the twentieth century writings. Neither Swift nor his literary and political writings can be evaded or neglected from the course of history.

Despite the decay of the body, deteriorating and crumbling of the health that accompany Swift as he grows old, he remains mentally agile and never loses touch with the imaginative power of his artistic creation. In his article, "Gulliver's Travels and the later writings" in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift* (2003) J. Paul Hunter comments on the power of Swift's artistic productivity by arguing:

Even though Swift had begun worrying about the decay of his imaginative powers much earlier, the evidence of *A Modest Proposal* suggests that Swift was still at the top of his form, both intellectually and rhetorically, into his early sixties. There the force of his irony is at its most powerful—issues of Ireland always seemed to focus or even heighten his considerable linguistic and imaginative skills—the poems written at about the same time show him near the peak of his stylistic and tonal control. His irony and comic sense are clearly undiminished in the *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift* where he imagines the responses of his contemporaries, including his best friends, to his own death. (235)

Accordingly, neither ageing nor the sense of approaching mortality could curb and impede Swift from pursuing the power of his satirical and ironic writing. His latter writings do not differ from

the earlier ones; they don't lose their aesthetic power and artistic value. His humanist intellectual stance maintains him to be unreconciled and oppositional to all forms of oppressive power.

One of the many lines that encompass gestures of late style in the poem is that when Swift says:

“Besides, his memory decays: He recollects not what he says; He cannot call his friends to mind: Forgets the place where last he din'd;” (85-88). Swift's words reflect his irony, non-reconciliation and resistance even to the infirmities of the body and the Ménière's disease that he is inflicted. The irony is that despite of all the physical flaws, Swift remains and active and prolific who never loses the power of his creative and imaginative writing.

In his article, “Jonathan Swift: some observations” D. Nichol Smith elaborates on the power of Swift's satire by arguing: “No one will deny that Swift's satire was a powerful weapon, which, when he wielded it freely, might do more than he intended.” (5) Undoubtedly, Swift's main concern to enfold satire in his literary and political writings is to profoundly reduce everything to its own size in a sarcastic and humorous way. Moreover, it functions to debunk and deflate vanity, conceit, hypocrisy and human sins as Swift says:

As with a moral view design'd
To cure the Vices of Mankind:
His vein, ironically grave,
Expos'd the fool, and lash'd the knave. (316)

Swift's humanism and fixed belief in justice and truth permeates his writings that advocate universal principles. His method of writing has the power to agitate human consciousness against all forms of political oppression. Again, Said argues that Swift's literary and political works involve: “anything connected with human aggression and organized human violence.” (84) Such words reflect how much Said is interested and impressed by but as a defender of liberty. Said goes on to express his admiration of Swift by arguing that he was:

Able to place such disparate things as war itself (about which he never had a good word to say: a remarkable fact), conquest colonial, colonial oppression, religious factionalism, the manipulation of minds and bodies, schemes for projecting power on nature, on human beings, and on history, the tyranny of the majority, monetary profit for its own sake, the victimization of the poor by a privileged oligarchy. (84)

Undoubtedly, Swift vigorously dedicated his humanist stance to resist and to denounce all political powers that are entangled in making war and aim to colonize other nations. This can be obviously reflected in *The Conduct of the Allies* which was written in 1711. In the *Conduct*, Swift shows a more merciless and scathing literary attack against the policy of the Whig that wages and maintains the destructive war against France. Moreover, *The Conduct of the Allies* that aims to inform the public to be fully aware of the corrupted policy of the Whigs and its leaders like Robert Walpole and Duke of

Marlborough in legitimizing the war against France in order to plunder and serve their economic concerns.

Ultimately, Swift's belief in humanist universal principles of justice and truth always actuates his consciousness to be oppositional and resistant intellectual who, as Christopher Fox in his introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift* (2003) argues: "was not afraid to speak truth to power." (1)

Swift's *Verses* is not a consolatory poem in which he condoles, mourns and laments his own death in a sad way. Conversely, he takes death in a courageous and determined manner that shows no signs of fear. Again, in his Introduction, Norman Jeffares argues that:

Swift believed in the bagatelle: he liked teasing, and in the 'Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift' he may have been setting himself another target, of being 'cheerful to his dying day', for he had a hatred of the infirmities of age. Resilient and tough despite the giddiness and deafness which plagued him, he believed in exercise and wished his friends to do the same. (xi)

In *Verses*, Swift intends to see his own death in a different way from all others. Despite the fact that death is looming, he remains an indomitable writer who writes in an exquisite and brilliant way. His belief to advance human freedom keeps him to be courageous in front of death itself. In his article, "Swift as Poet" A. L. Rowse elaborates on Swift's intellectual genius stance and the richness of his writing that remains powerful till his later years by citing the words of Ricardo Quintana who in his book *The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift* (1953) argues:

"Nothing is further from the truth than the idea commonly entertained regarding Swift's latter years of activity. He was still the great artist, producing verse and prose of undiminished brilliance and intensity, and he remained an imperious public figure. (101)

Again as death is looming in his final years, Swift remains un-reconciled and intransigent. He is preoccupied with self-making and perpetuating his reputation throughout his language. Said continues his elaboration on *Verses* by arguing:

This summational fiction of his own death is made to take place in the course of the poem as fragmentary responses to a loss being transformed into an event. Thus Swift could become a part of history and a master of it despite the misfortune attributed by him to language. (1983: 66)

In Swift's *Verses*, politics is deeply imbedded within the aesthetics; one cannot uncouple, disentangle or draw a line of demarcation between the two. This demonstrates the idea that Swift never pretends to be an apolitical writer who swerves from rocking the boat in the face of all oppressive political system. As such, Swift's embroiled entanglement in politics is profoundly employed in an artistic way in his literary writings as a way of non-reconciliation and refusal to surrender. In *Verses*, the politics is embedded within the aesthetic and the personal within the collective. This adds much difficulty to the poem to be easily interpreted. In her article, "Swift on 'Swift': *From the Author upon Himself to The Life and Genuine Characters*", Ashley Marshall argues that: "*Verses* is full of phases, political and personal; it is a poem of timelines,

ages and stages” (347) This demonstrates that the humanist intellectual stance of Swift remains un-reconciled and oppositional to all forms of political oppressive power.

In the poem, Swift does not show any sign of reluctance or retreating from satirizing, impeaching and condemning all those who betray universal principles of justice and truth. This can be explicitly demonstrated where Swift in *Verses* keeps opposing, confronting and audaciously speaking truth to power as he says:

With Princes kept a due Decourm,
 But never stood in Awe before ‘em:
 And to Her Majesty, God bless her,
 Would speak as free as to her Dresser,
 She thought it his peculiar Whim,
 Nor took it ill as come from him,
 He follow’d David’s Lesson just,
 In Princes never put thy Trust. (339-342)

Swift’s words reflect his radical resistance to the limits of political power. Such words profoundly accentuate his stance with the Whigs as un-reconciled and oppositional to their oligarchy. Moreover, they demonstrate his rage, anger and the bitterness of his soul. As such, Swift’s radical resistance and opposition against the political power makes him an invincible intellectual and champion of liberty who, as Fox asserts, “was not afraid to speak truth to power” (1)

In his article, “Intellectual Exile: Expatriate and Marginals” in *The Edward Said Reader*(2000) Said elaborates on the exilic intellectual as being the one whose thinking functions in a secular way that transcends all dogmatic orthodoxy, geographical and cultural confinements and fixed identity nodding to Swift by arguing:

The intellectual as ranting Thersites perhaps. A great historical type of what I have in mind is a powerful eighteenth-century figure, Jonathan Swift, who never got over his fall from influence and prestige in England after the Tories left office in 1714, and spent the rest of his life as an exile in Ireland. An almost legendary figure of bitterness and anger—*saeve indignation* he said of himself in his own epitaph—Swift was furious at Ireland, and yet its defender against British tyranny, a man whose towering Irish works *Gulliver’s Travels* and *The Drapier’s Letters* show a mind of flourishing, not to say benefiting from such productive anguish. (374)

According to Said, the demise of the Tory had left Swift discontented and disgruntled exile whose latter writings after 1714 had been extraordinarily saturated with more of non-

reconciliation, intransigence and difficulty. Swift's return to Ireland left an unhealable wound in his soul and caused him to always feel as an exile. It goes without saying that exile cannot be merely a geographical but a metaphorical and psychological one. It can strongly touch the inner consciousness and the internal spirit of any writer who feels a kind of alienation and emotional disinclination from the surroundings. As such, Swift's return to Ireland is transformed into an inner exile that affects his life and his literary writings.

According to Said, exile functions as a transformative state of emancipation and freedom to the intellectual. It liberates the intellectual from all dogmatic forms of thinking, geographical and cultural barriers and boundaries and above all from the burden of fixed dogmatic identity. Again, in his article, Said elaborates on the notion of exile by contending:

Exile for the intellectual in this metaphysical sense is restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others. You cannot go back to some earlier and perhaps more stable condition of being at home; and, alas, you can never fully arrive, be at one with your new home or situation. (373)

As such, exile sustains the intellectual with a dynamic state and space of movement, self-discovery and traveling beyond fixed geographical and cultural boundaries. The exilic experience transforms the intellectual's mode of thinking to be always in a state of mobility crossing and resisting all forms of dogmatic, essential and conventional forms of thinking. This can be reflected where Swift says:

In exile, with a steady heart,
He spent his life's declining part;
Where folly, pride, and faction sway,
Remote from St. John, Pope, and Gay. (431-434)

Accordingly, the experience of exile activates and stirs Swift's self-consciousness to be always in a constant alertness with the policy of the Whig and not to feel any kind of rest with their forms of oppression and corruption. It functions as a transformative state that keeps Swift far from any dogmatic modes of thinking and identity. Exile is an emancipatory state for Swift; it functions in a way that freely allows him to strip himself from all biological filiations and to immerse himself with new alternative modes of thinking and perception.

In his book, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*(2000) Said elaborates on the idea of exile as being productive and transformative state against all fixed filiations and closures by contending that:

The exile knows that in a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional. Borders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become a prison, and are often defended beyond reason or necessity. Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience. (185)

As such, Swift's metaphorical feeling of exile can be said to have its own effects on his mode of thinking and the way he perceives the world. His return to Ireland after the Tory fall in 1714 makes him feel that he is an exile. Such return transforms his writings to be more difficult and

resistant to the power of the Whig as Said contends: “After 1714 Swift occupied no place except as outsider to the Whigs' monolithic machine. He had become the scribbler and projector he once impersonated (in *A Tale of a Tub*) and attacked (in *The Examiner* and elsewhere)” (1983: 62)

The poem represents a form of alienation and exilic state of non-reconciliation, intransigence and opposition. Swift's discontent and dissatisfaction with the corrupted status quo is transformed into a state of internal exilic experience and alienation that keeps him apart and at odds with the socio-political system of his own time. Again, Said elaborates on Swift's *Verses* by arguing that:

The poem demonstrates how his Irish exile is reinstated as a subject of discourse, but not at all as a personality, nor as a body of works, but rather as a presence for those who can simultaneously accept as he did, waste and power. (1983: 71)

The undiminished power of irony in *Verses* presents a sheer difficulty for interpretation and understanding. The paradox of irony makes critics to offer endless forms of interpretation and open-ended discourse of disparity and debate over a final fixed interpretative frame work. As such, irony has to do with late style that is constructed on non-reconciliation, difficulty and unresolved contradiction.

As such, late style functions in a way that reflects the writer's deviation, defamiliarization and estrangement. In his article, “Swift's Personality”, T. G. Wilson comments on the difficulty of Swift's writings by arguing that:

Much of the more modern comment is, of course, due to lack of understanding of the nature and purport of his writings, but it is true to say that he was a most enigmatic and contradictory person, one whose public life abounds with puzzles and paradoxes and whose private life, particularly his relationship with women, seems equally peculiar. (16)

It goes without saying that the dexterous ability of Swift's coruscating wit and the power of his writings testify that his works almost without exception are difficult to be imitated. The inimitable style of Swift functions as another implication of late style. Needless to say, the undiminished power of Swift's irony and satire resists writers to easily imitate, understand and assimilate the style of his writing. Evidently, Swift's epitaph powerfully shows that his works remain inimitable as he explicitly says.

Accordingly, the inability to imitate Swift's works can be ascribed to the sheer brilliant use of his wit, satire and irony that prodigiously function in forms of non-reconciliation, difficulty and unresolved contradiction. Therefore, Swift's writing appears to be difficult and inimitable. Such difficulty has a lot to do with late style.

Again, Rowse in his article elaborates on Swift's intellectual difficulty by arguing: “For one thing his chief emotion was intellectual passion, a rare thing in an Englishman; which is perhaps why the English have never properly understood him and his poetry.” (106).

In his book, *A Political Biography of Jonathan Swift* (2008) David Oakleaf elaborates on the difficulty that Swift *Verses* offers by arguing:

When he contemplated his own posthumous fame in *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift*, after all, he anticipated interested and obtuse uses of it. The hardest won lesson of his political life was recognition that the price he paid for his effectiveness was his inescapable vulnerability to misunderstanding and misappropriation. (1)

Like all of Swift's writings, *Verses* has the power to make writer and critics wrangling in their controversy and debate over a final unified form of interpretation. The unfinished interpretations profoundly testify that Swift's works profoundly remain difficult and cannot be easily interpreted and understood as Ricardo Quintana in his book, *Swift: An Introduction* (1954) asserts:

If the history of Swift commentary and criticism makes anything clear, it is assuredly this: misinterpretation of one degree or another is unavoidable unless a man and writer he is approached in terms of his historical period and the patterns of thought and behavior which characterized it. (26)

Accordingly, Swift's writing has peculiarity, puzzles and enigmatic and wayward gestures. All of these have a lot to do with the notion of late style. Undoubtedly, the result of unresolved contradiction in Swift's work instigates and maintains a state of bafflement and trouble among modern readers and writers as Said confirms that: "[His] Swift imagination was the transactor of that difficult business, and an extraordinarily difficult challenge for the twentieth-century reader." (1983: 71)

Swift's writing becomes a form of challenge that resists easy understanding and interpretation. The power of his writing testifies him to be an indomitable satirist who cannot be easily imitated. In his article, "Language and style" Ian Higgins elaborates on the power of Swift's style by arguing: "Beneath the seeming simplicity of his concise plain style is a challenging complexity. Swift is not reader-friendly." (149) As such, Swift's style functions in a way that resists reconciliation and resolving contradiction. Moreover, such style contradicts Swift's premise about the definition of style as "proper words in proper places". Such contradiction which is another gesture of late style is still unresolved. Again, Higgins goes on to affirm the sheer difficulty that Swift's style generates by arguing:

Swift's project to fix the English language sought plainness and permanence. Yet his polemic and satire characteristically exploit the ambiguity and instability of language, but for precise effects in specific historical situations. Swift's use of language is at its most unstable when his political satire enters the discursive pace covered by the English statute defining High Treason. (158)

For Swift, writing can be said to become an exilic form of resistance, challenge and protest against the hegemonic dominant political discourses of the Whig. The un-reconciled spirit of Swift is transformed into an act of writing that challenges readers and writers. Such writing functions as a weapon that dismantles all canonical discourses of hegemonic power as Said asserts that: "Ahead of his critics, Swift is always aware—and troubles the reader with this awareness—that what he is doing above all is writing in a world of power." (1983: 87)

In his book, *Jonathan Swift: Major Prophet* (1975) A.L. Rowse comments on Swift's personal difficulty and the complexity of his writing by arguing: "This man would be difficult for any

woman to catch. But, of course, such a man would be very difficult for ordinary fools, as he proceeded to describe them, to understand.” (18) As such, Swift appears to be un-reconciled and unresolved writer who remains an open question for twentieth century readers and writers.

According to Said, late style cannot be detached from exile because of their semantic interconnectedness contradict with all inherited forms of dogmatic identity, biological, cultural filiations. Said goes on to affirm that: “Lateness therefore is a kind of self-imposed exile from what is generally acceptable coming after it and surviving beyond it.” (16)

As such, Swift’s writing functions in an oppositional way against the established order and the grain in the eighteenth century. His secular exilic consciousness always functions in a state of mobility against totality or as Said affirms: “The life of such an encounter is, so to speak, the active content of Swift’s mind as we are able to grasp it in its essential resistance to any fixed boundary.” (Said, 1983: 55) Accordingly, the exilic experience strongly sustains Swift with passion for thinking that crosses distances, borders and boundaries of knowledge. Therefore, exile nourishes Swift with inexorable, relentless intellectual stance that refuses all forms of conformity, confinements and restrictions. His passion for knowledge cannot be quenched and satisfied. Such thinking always moves in a constant, incessant way that knows no limitations or boundaries.

As un-reconciled artist, Beethoven keeps his form of late style to be oppositional, contradictory and difficult in order to resist and reject the bourgeois society and not to offer any form of reconciliation. Said elaborates on the power of difficulty, dissociation and discontinuity that permeate Beethoven’s late musical works as stated above. Said’s definition of Beethoven’s late style can be applicable to Swift’s latter works especially his *Verses* which produces difficulty that makes an endless debate of interpretation and analysis. As such the power of this poem resists and challenges easy understanding and interpretation.

In his article, “*Gulliver’s Travels* and the later writings” in J. Paul Hunter elaborates on the difficulty of understanding Swift’s texts by arguing:

It is one kind of tribute to Swift that he continues to vex us philosophically and ideologically now in a quite different world, and it is another to notice how his clear style and tough prose continue to please and perplex our sense of art. (233)

The discursive process of writing *Verses* demonstrates Swift’s mental and intellectual capacity that functions in a state of dynamic exilic consciousness, transcending all cultural and dogmatic modes of thinking. His secular oppositional thinking sustains him from not falling in and in dogmatism, essentialism and fixed identity. Consequently, Swift’s works demonstrate him to be a writer whose aim is to defend universal and humanist principles of justice and truth as Said contends that: “Swift is among the most worldly of writers—perhaps the most world” (Said, 1983: 88) Therefore, Swift’s writings do not only address specific people or power. It functions in a universal and worldly manner to defend all of “the wretched of the earth”.

Needless to say, the audacious intellectual praxis of Swift against hegemony, totality, oppression and all other forms of imperialism and colonialism as manifested in all of his literary and political works is what preoccupies Said and makes him to express his unbounded admiration to Swift. As such, the radical negativity and difficulty of Swift’s works are eventually the evident

proofs that characterize Swift to be like Adorno a figure of lateness itself as Said vindicates his own understanding of Swift in his book *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2004) by arguing:

It became possible following the example of Yeats to read Swift in a revisionist way, as a demonic and tigrish a writer as has ever been lived. Yeats magnanimously envisioned Swift's internal world essentially as a ceaseless conflict with itself, unsatisfied, unappeased, un-reconciled in an almost Adornian way, rather than as settled into untroubled patterns of tranquility and unchanging order. So it is with the canon, which one can venerate from afar or more actively wrestle with, using aspects of modernity in the struggle to evade a lifeless monumentality. (25)

According to Said, Swift represents the most un-reconciled, oppositional, intransigent and radical writer in his own time. The power of Swift's writings remain problematic that baffle modern readers and writers. His recalcitrance, resistance and transgression to all forms of oppression and political power as manifested in his *Verses* and other works make him to a defender and champion of liberty.

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