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‘Whole Swarms of Bastards’: *A Modest Proposal*, the Discourse of Economic Improvement and Protestant Masculinity in Ireland, 1720-1738

R. W. Connell's declaration in 1995 that 'masculinities are, in a word, historical',¹ has had a far-reaching impact, not least on eighteenth-century studies. Already transformed by new research on women's history, women's writing, histories of the body and sexuality, and queer studies, eighteenth-century studies was well placed to respond to the new call for historicized analysis of masculinity and its operations within society and culture. Research on women, the body and sexuality has highlighted the eighteenth century as a critical period in the construction of modern gender and sexual identities. In the words of Thomas Laquer, 'sometime in the eighteenth century, sex as we know it was invented'.² This is moreover a process in which literary and print culture has been argued to play a crucial role.³ The focus, however, for these researchers was in the main on women and on men who did not conform to social and cultural norms. The new concern with masculinity by contrast involves a radical reexamination of previously unquestioned assumptions, particularly as regards what Connell calls 'hegemonic masculinity'. As Tim Hitchcock and Michele Cohen articulate it, 'the project of writing the history of masculinity is about de-centring and problematizing [the] male standard and exploring the highly complex and gendered behaviour illuminated in the process'.⁴ The challenge that this represents should not be underestimated. Writing on the history of masculinity and modern citizenship, Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann and Anna Clark observe that approaching the subject of gender and citizenship 'from the angle of

masculinity' involves them in discussing a formation that 'seems to be both omnipresent and invisible', thus proving particularly recalcitrant to analysis.⁵

The challenge of 'mak[ing] "visible" the implicit presence of masculinity'⁶ is one that has only very recently been taken up by researchers on eighteenth-century Ireland. In spite of the small body of work that exists, it is nonetheless clear that the political, linguistic and sectarian divisions that continue to characterize Irish society in this period offer a very rich field within which to examine how different constructions of masculinity emerge in response to shifting power relations. In his study of patriotism in late eighteenth-century Ireland, Padhraig Higgins for instance foregrounds 'gender, the social and discursive construction of masculinity and femininity' as 'a central category for understanding patriot politics'.⁷ In Higgins's account of the Volunteers, the stress on manliness that characterized the movement is linked to its call for unity in defense of 'the nation', thus articulating a new version of national identity 'united across social and religious boundaries against a common enemy'.⁸ Whereas masculinity may have figured as a unifying and empowering construction in the later eighteenth century among an increasingly confident Anglo-Irish population, Sarah McKibben's discussion of the trope of 'endangered masculinity' in the work of Gaelic poets from the early modern period to the late eighteenth century reveals that in a community experiencing increasing marginalization and disenfranchisement, masculinity was invoked in order to reinforce the boundaries between language and religious communities. McKibben traces a rhetorical tradition in Gaelic poetry centred on the contrast between 'normative masculinity and emasculation – between the manhood of heroic, unfeminine, autonomous resistance and a failed, subservient masculinity'.⁹ In the texts that

McKibben discusses, anglicization is frequently figured in terms of emasculation, or punished through the sexual violation of a transgressive woman. What is abundantly clear in both Higgins's and McKibben's work is that the contested nature of territory and power in Ireland and attendant disputes over the legitimacy of claims to leadership have been linked to assertions of or anxieties about masculinity.

This essay offers a discussion of how masculinity figures in the attempts to claim and legitimate authority in the contested space of eighteenth-century Ireland by analyzing the construction of Anglo-Irish Protestant masculinity in texts focusing on the Irish economy and plans for its improvement in the period from 1720 to 1738. It reads *A Modest Proposal* (1729) as both a satiric response to a contemporary body of pamphlet literature that emerged in response to economic crisis in the 1720s, but also as an influence on later writers, specifically Samuel Madden, whose *Reflections and Resolutions Proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland* (1738) is a fascinating example of how satire can influence the forms it parodies. 1720 saw the passing of the Declaratory Act, which asserted the right of the British parliament to pass legislation binding on Ireland and reignited Anglo-Irish resentment at Ireland's legislative and political subordination to Britain.¹⁰ 1720 was also the year of the South Sea Bubble, which triggered an economic crisis that was exacerbated in Ireland by a series of very poor harvests, resulting in several local incidences of famine in the late 1720s. If the Declaratory Act dealt a blow to the Anglo-Irish elite by emphatically underlining the limits of their political and legislative autonomy, the economic crisis also severely undermined their claims to legitimate leadership.

The Williamite settlement that followed the defeat of James II and his Catholic supporters in Ireland created a new establishment in Ireland, in which power was explicitly aligned with the elite members of the Anglican church. Given Ireland's majority Catholic population, the sectarian element of the conflict lead to fears about the resurgence of opposition to the established order under William III, and prompted the introduction of a series of laws directed against the residual power of Catholics in Ireland.¹¹ The need for an ideological justification for the concentration of power in the hands of a minority gave rise to what was known as a culture of 'improvement', in which Ireland as whole was to benefit from the stewardship of an Anglo-Irish elite. As Toby Barnard has noted of these 'improvers', 'an article of their faith was the superiority of their culture: they and their ways epitomized civility. Believing this, adherents had a mission to spread their beliefs and practices. Others, presently inferior, would benefit – materially and morally – from being improved.'¹² This conviction of superiority was however shaken by the economic crisis, and the texts produced from the late 1720s manifest at times a kind of panic in the face of a country that seemed not to be improving or progressing, but in fact to be regressing into greater poverty.

Among the most significant consequences of this period of political controversy and economic crisis was 'an explosion of ephemeral literature',¹³ and, in fact, this period has been argued to have seen the first emergence of a distinctive public sphere of print in Ireland.¹⁴ In spite of the resentment caused by the Declaratory Act, most Anglo-Irish commentators were acutely aware of the need for British political and military backing, and thus avoided political controversy, focusing instead on 'alternative outlets for patriotism',¹⁵ such as

identifying solutions for economic and social problems. Writers including George Berkeley, Francis Bindon, John Browne, Arthur Dobbs, Francis Hutchinson, Samuel Madden, Viscount Molesworth, Thomas Prior, Thomas Sheridan, analyzed the elements of the economy, discussing agricultural production, manufacturing industries, domestic and overseas trade, and the circulation of money in an effort to understand the economy's apparent underperformance and the problems of unemployment and vagrancy, and propose schemes for its development. It was in the context of this specific surge in publications on Irish affairs that some of Swift's most enduring and significant texts were written, including *A Proposal on the Universal Use of Irish Manufactures* (1720) *The Drapier's Letters* (1724-5), and, of course, *A Modest Proposal* (1729). The interplay between Swift's pamphlets and those of his contemporaries is a complex topic. As James Kelly has noted, Swift 'was an avid reader of tracts and pamphlets' and much of what he had to say echoed the work of writers such as Molesworth and Dobbs.¹⁶ His literary stature however lent his contributions significant weight, and attracted attention to the causes he championed, thus encouraging further comment. Much of his writing on Irish affairs was moreover sincere in its concern for the improvement of conditions in Ireland; *A Modest Proposal* is thus in many ways written from *within* the position it satirizes.

What has hitherto been implicit in discussions of this body of material to date, but never fully articulated and analyzed, is that these texts are also involved in the construction and adaptation of forms of what Broomhall and Van Gent call 'governing masculinity'. The term 'governing masculinities' denotes 'the varied ideals, practices, and characteristics of masculinity for men in positions of power, authority, and governance'.¹⁷ Defining governing further as 'the exercise

of power', Broomhall and Van Gent crucially note that this power 'needs to be legitimized, is transient, socially contested, and often unstable.'¹⁸ In this period, confronted with diminished political power and seemingly intractable poverty, the Anglo-Irish 'improvers' sought legitimacy as a ruling class through public debate on Irish economic and social conditions. This claim to legitimacy incorporated a claim to masculinity appropriate to a leadership class. In the absence of political and legislative power, the conscious project of civilization and improvement which provided the ideological framework for Protestant power in Ireland could continue to confirm the active masculinity of the Anglo-Irish citizen.¹⁹

In these texts, the native Irish acquire significance as figures whose poverty and distress is invoked and deplored as part of a discourse of patriotism and public spirit. In relation to a Catholic majority necessarily imagined as powerless, Protestant writers could potentially construct themselves as powerful and benevolent fathers. These texts also however express the writers' insecurity as to their legitimate leadership through images of a teeming and parasitic population who *lack* legitimating fathers. The seemingly irresolvable nature of Irish economic underperformance threatens the Anglo-Irish self-image of effective leadership and governance, and is figured through images in which women and fatherless children evade and subvert patriarchal control, thus revealing these writers to be profoundly uncertain as to their capacity to function as 'fathers of the nation'. Reading *A Modest Proposal* alongside these texts reveals firstly that Swift's satire extends to the constructions of masculinity present in the work of his contemporaries, and also that his recognition of the self-implication of the supposedly authoritative male author/speaker influenced

subsequent constructions of Anglo-Irish masculinity, notably Madden's *Reflections and Resolutions proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland*.

I

The work of William Petty provides us with one of the earliest examples of a new model of Anglo-Irish power and of Anglo-Irish masculinity in the late seventeenth century. As Toby Barnard has commented, Petty's 'credo was to reduce all issues to number, weight, and measure': Petty's Ireland is one in which control is exercised through the mastery of information.²⁰ In the Preface to his *Political Anatomy of Ireland* (1691), Petty refers to Francis Bacon's '*judicious Parallel ... between the Body Natural, and Body Politick*' and remarks that '*to practise upon the Politick, without knowing the Symmetry, Fabrick, and Proportion of it, is as casual as the practise of Old-women [sic] and Empyricks*', thus clearly locating himself and his work within the new scientific methodology.²¹ Ireland is presented as particularly suitable for a 'first Essay of Political Anatomy' because it is a 'Political Animal, *who is scarce twenty years old; where the Intrigue of State is not very complicate, and with which I have been conversant, from an Embrion*' (1: 129). Petty's confidence is striking and is expressed through the position of one who can trace the existence of the Irish body politic to its embryonic beginnings. The linkage between the superior scientific method outlined by Petty and a claim to govern grounded in masculinity is evident in his use of analogies of gestation and birth and his dismissal of the practice of '*Old-women*': the confident announcement of a new scientific study of politics, based on Ireland as exemplum, is made using language

and imagery that draw on the contemporary shift which saw the management of pregnancy, labour and childbirth pass from midwives to the new male experts of medical obstetrics.²²

Discussing this shift, Lisa Forman Cody has argued that ‘medical and technological developments in obstetrics, fascination with embryology, the life sciences, and population studies repositioned reproductive topics epistemologically’, with the result that ‘reproductive issues [were transformed] into topics fit for “rational-critical” discussion.’²³ Petty’s use of the embryo as image and his implicit presentation of himself as a ‘man midwife’ operating according to scientific principles is therefore more than merely figurative language. Petty was a pioneer in a new field of knowledge in which matters of reproduction were transformed not only into a topic fit for ‘rational-critical discussion’ but also into an instrument of governance and power.

The exercise of power through the transformation of people into statistical data had particular resonance in Ireland in the period immediately following the Williamite settlement. The period of military conquest was over, but the need to control the potentially disloyal Catholic population remained a central concern for the Anglo-Irish elite. These links are explicitly articulated by Petty, who for instance famously proposed mass transfers of population between England and Ireland as a means of overcoming, or, more properly, obliterating differences of language, religion and political loyalty.²⁴ For Charlotte Sussman, Petty’s theories enable a ‘kind of biological conquest’, as populations are imagined as transportable and female fertility is estimated and projected.²⁵ In writing produced in the period 1720-38, however, although the desire to exercise power through the discursive control of the population is still strongly

in evidence, the confidence that characterizes Petty's writing is not.²⁶ Whereas Petty's assertions of mastery over an embryonic Ireland assume a naturalized link between masculinity and power, authority and governance, this is precisely what is under strain in the difficult economic and political conditions of the 1720s and 30s. The new sciences of statistics, demography and political arithmetic promised a new type of 'governing masculinity', in which the assumption of statistical mastery over populations and scientific control over women's reproductive capacity reinforced the power of male elites. In these texts, however, two persistent tropes emerge: Ireland is threatened alternately by barren sterility or by chaotic, ungovernable fertility; both in different ways attest to the failure of the Anglo-Irish elite to exercise masculine power.

The power and, by extension, the masculinity of the Anglo-Irish ruling class was already significantly qualified by their dependence on England. The link between the political subordination of the Irish parliament and the emasculation of the Anglo-Irish is made very clear in Swift's fourth *Drapier's Letter* (1724), addressed to 'the whole people of Ireland'. Here the Drapier refers angrily to visitors from England who

Whenever, in Discourse, we make mention of *Liberty* and *Property*, shake their Heads, and tell us, that *Ireland* is a *depending Kingdom*; as if they would seem, by this Phrase, to intend, that the People of *Ireland* is in some State of Slavery or Dependance, different from those of *England*: Whereas a *depending Kingdom* is a *modern Term of Art*; unknown, as I have heard, to all antient *Civilians*, and *Writers upon Government*.²⁷

The Drapier's emphatic rejection of the term 'depending Kingdom' is illuminated by Matthew McCormack's discussion of the gender politics of citizenship in the

eighteenth century. McCormack argues firstly that the ideal of 'independence' was critical to political participation in the period, and secondly that it was invariably associated with manliness and masculinity, the state of being 'dependent,' on the other hand, 'connoting a degrading lack of manliness, virtue and free will'.²⁸ The assertion that England has a right to make laws binding on Ireland therefore implies, to the obvious outrage of Swift's speaker, not only that the people of Ireland are in a state of 'slavery' but also that its citizens are stripped of this manly virtue.

The invocation and rejection of the status of political slave can also be found in Robert Molesworth's *Some Considerations for the Promoting of Agriculture* (1723), a text which Swift admired and praised.²⁹ In the *Considerations*, however, Molesworth is concerned with the responsibility of Irish gentlemen to prove that they are independent and thus truly free. He laments the fact that gentlemen are forced to engage themselves with the day-to-day running of their farms and the management of their land, a preoccupation which in Molesworth's eyes engrosses so much of their time and attention that it is incompatible with independence: 'How can the Business of Parliament, the Duty owing to ones [sic] Country and the Value of Publick Liberty be understood, under such a cramp'd, and low Education, help'd by little or no reading?' he asks.³⁰ He goes on to detail the ways in which the practical absorption in their business deprives the Anglo-Irish gentlemen of the independence that, for Molesworth, defines a true citizen as opposed to a 'slave:'

They grow narrow Spirited, covetous, and ungenteel; they are more subject to the snares and temptations of little Employments for themselves or relations, Smiles, good dinners, Threatenings, &c., and in

short, their Morals and Principals grow so debas'd that ... 'tis a shame to see ... how low the rate of generous and polite Learning runs among our Nobility and Gentry. 'Tis true, we are told we are Slaves, but it must be our Care not to deserve being so. (29)

The concept of 'governing masculinity' was thus evidently significantly qualified for the Anglo-Irish in eighteenth-century Ireland. Ireland's constitutional subordination to Britain and its perceived inferiority in virtually every sphere of life undermined the credibility of claims to political equality and threatened to render the Anglo-Irish subject an emasculated 'slave'.

Although Ireland's economic problems in the 1720s and 30s on the one hand undermined Anglo-Irish claims to rule in Ireland's best interests, on the other hand these conditions provided an opportunity for elite Anglo-Irishmen to construct themselves as active and concerned members of the public, without stirring up political and constitutional controversy. John Browne dedicates his *Essay on Trade* (1728) to Sir William Conelly because of 'that Publick Spirit for which You have always been remarkable' and aligns himself with this same spirit, claiming that his 'Labours' have been 'very freely bestowed ... for the good of my Country.'³¹ Samuel Madden, likewise, links his decision to publish his *Reflections and Resolutions proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland* (1738) to his concern about an impending crisis, asserting that 'nothing but the near prospect of our Ruin, could make me address my self to the Publick in this Manner', and is confident that 'any Pamphlet that is wrote, how meanly soever, for promoting the publick Good' will be welcomed by 'any Irishman that can read.'³² For Madden, the extent of the perceived problem in fact serves to emphasize the need for action and intervention in the public sphere.

The interdependence between the active political subject and the impoverished Catholic population is made even clearer in David Bindon's *Scheme for Supplying Industrious Men with Money* (1729). It opens with a reference to the 'Universal Poverty that Reigns among the Common People of Ireland'; this and the upsurge in emigration are, he says, 'such strong Presages of yet greater Calamities as will, without doubt, render every attempt to remove the Causes of them, acceptable to those who have the Interest of this Country truly at Heart.'³³ Bindon goes on to dwell in more detail on the image of the beggar as a spur to sympathy, referring to the sorry sight of 'our Streets crowded with beggars of all Sizes, and such Objects of Compassion exposed to publick View, as makes a good-natur'd Man's Heart bleed to behold his Fellow-Creatures reduced to such Misery' (12). Ostensibly focused on the problems of poverty and vagrancy and the need to find solutions to these problems, Bindon's essay is in fact equally concerned with the idealized male subject who observes these 'objects of compassion'. The function of the essay is thus partly to construct that subject – one who is masculine in that he is both motivated and equipped to serve the public good of his country, but who is also characterized by proper feeling.

The use of statistics and rational methods, the claims to be motivated by a desire to serve the public good, and the appeal to sympathetic feeling are all features of contemporary pamphlets that are ruthlessly satirized in *A Modest Proposal*. The *Proposal* uses parody to devastating effect, and a comparison of Bindon's pamphlet, for instance, with Swift's opening paragraph reveals a striking similarity. The Projector echoes Bindon in framing his proposal with a reference to the spectacle of beggary and its effect on those who witness it: 'It is a melancholly Object to those, who walk through this great Town, or travel in the

Country; when they see the *Streets*, the *Roads* and *Cabbin-doors* crowded with *Beggars* of the Female Sex, followed by three, four, or six Children, *all in Rags*.’³⁴ But Swift then radically undermines the claim both to sympathetic feeling and to public-spiritedness, when it is revealed that the projector’s infamous plan to make the unwanted children of Ireland ‘beneficial to the public’ is to rear them for slaughter – a plan in which he says he has ‘no other Motive than the *publick Good of my Country*’ (150). The apparently distinct and mutually reinforcing positions of the virtuous male citizen and the ‘object of compassion’ that characterize Bindon’s text therefore completely fall apart in *A Modest Proposal*.

It is perhaps surprising that, to date, no consideration has been given to the Proposal as a satiric response to the constructions of masculinity in the pamphlets written by Swift’s contemporaries. The Projector after all advances a proposal to prevent the *children* of the poor from being a burden on their parents and the state, thus assuming in effect the role of an apparently more responsible and caring guardian than the parents of the children themselves. Sean D. Moore does note the importance of the father/child trope in *A Modest Proposal* when he claims that it ‘invents the Anglo-Irish public as godfather’ of the vagrant children, granting readers ‘custody’ over them, but he seems to suggest that the ‘fatherhood’ proposed by the Projector is disembodied and ‘public’.³⁵ Typically, indeed, the troping of masculine leadership in terms of fatherhood, in contrast to tropes of motherhood, is free of any consideration of the sexed body. One of the reasons that ‘fatherhood’ is seen as an appropriate metaphor for leadership is that although it suggests a ‘natural’ link between masculinity and power, it does so without reference to the body of the leader in question. The contemporary pamphlet literature displays an evident desire to

claim an authoritative masculinity that is properly disembodied, but the writers in fact do *not* succeed in neatly separating masculinity as an attribute of public power from masculinity in its more specifically sexed and embodied forms. This collapse into the body is registered in *A Modest Proposal*, and, as my reading of *Reflections and Resolutions* will show, Samuel Madden is evidently strongly influenced by Swift when his fears as to the ability of the Anglo-Irish elite to exercise power are expressed in images that foreground a disordered male body.

II

One way of avoiding the question of the male body was to see the problems of unemployment, vagrancy and 'overpopulation' in terms of women and children. The Projector's description of lone mothers surrounded by a rapidly proliferating number of starving children ('*Beggars of the Female Sex*, followed by three, four, or six Children') encapsulates this perspective. He does subsequently make reference to fathers who are also occasionally accompanied by a 'prodigious number of children', but the reference is secondary, and he stresses that the 'great Advantage in my *Scheme*' is that 'it will prevent those *voluntary Abortions*, and that horrid practice of *Women murdering their Bastard Children*; alas! too frequent among us' (144). In other words, the proposal is presented to the reader in terms of a solution or response to the problem of unchecked and immoral female fertility; the issues of overpopulation, illegitimacy and specifically female immorality are all conflated here. Here as elsewhere the *Proposal* is uncannily accurate in its parody of the contemporary pamphlet literature. Throughout the discourse of the texts of economic improvement, we find a pervasive anxiety about the unchecked fertility and

immorality of women, and the resulting parasitic consumption of unwanted and seemingly surplus people.

In his outline of the best 'Methods for Regulating the Poor', one of William Fownes's chief concerns is 'strolling Women loaden with Children, some hir'd to beg with, some their own' (9). The apparently excessive fertility of those regarded as the poorest and the idlest is also noted with alarm by Samuel Madden who, in one of his several allusions to Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees* describes beggars as 'Drones' who 'do not only neglect all Work themselves, but they live on the little stock and Provision of the Industrious Bees, and what is worse, are like those, the greatest Breeders in the Hive, and Produce a Race every way resembling them' (155). In Arthur Dobbs's *An Essay on the Trade and Improvement of Ireland* (1729-31) the proliferation of beggars is linked not only to excessive fertility but also explicitly to immorality and vice. He claims that amongst vagrants, it is common for the girls to be 'debauched'; they then 'then go about Bigg-belly'd, pretending their Husbands are dead or sick' and begging for their apparently fatherless children.³⁶

Viscount Molesworth goes further in linking the problem of vagrants and the unemployed to an uncontrolled and immoral fertility. While measures need to be taken to offer relief to the 'Poor, who are overburden'd with Children' he restricts this to 'such Children as are the product of matrimony' and excludes from consideration children

such as are every where permitted, most shamefully to live under Hedges, and in Ditches, and Hutts, worse than Hogsties; from whence you will often see creeping out like Vermin whole swarms of Bastards, the

Produce of Adultery and Incest, and whereof there are more in the neighbourhood of Dublin, than any other part of the World. (40-41)

The fertility of beggars is problematic, in Molesworth's account, because it is inseparable from immorality and vice. The violation of moral norms means that they 'would be hard put to it to tell you the relation they have to each other, all the rules of Affinity and Consanguinity being confounded' (41). The apparent collapse of patriarchal order is so profound that Molesworth describes vagrants as people with no home and no point of origin other than the degraded state of nature in which they seem to exist: 'they are most commonly *Aborigines*, the Product of that very Ditch where you find them' (41).

The manner in which both Dobbs and Molesworth insist on immorality as the defining feature of the unchecked fertility of beggars, and the imagery of a vermin 'swarm' as the product of this licentiousness has its roots in a Christian view of female fertility as inherently negative and sinful. As Marilyn Francus points out in her discussion of the figure of the monstrous mother in Swift and Pope, 'the female body as the site of reproduction is the sign of sin, for reproduction evokes, if not reenacts, the initial fall from grace.'³⁷ According to Francus, female fertility is inherently threatening to patriarchal order and must be symbolically subordinated to patriarchy in order for that threat to be dissipated and fertility to be positively redescribed: 'By redefining progeny in terms of the patriarchal imperatives of masculine inheritance and social authority, man is able to contain the fecund female by controlling her products.'³⁸ The fear and disgust evinced in these texts suggest that the Anglo-Irish ruling class feared the loss of control over systems of inheritance and authority. Ireland's ruin is therefore directly connected with the failure of men to

assert clear patriarchal control over women and children, so much so that, in Molesworth's lurid depiction, not only can the vagrants not define or state their relation to one another in terms of the normative patriarchal family, they are in fact literally spawned by savage nature, emanating from the earth, the ditch in which they are found.

The colonial dimension of this discourse cannot be ignored. We might consider for instance Arthur Dobbs's remarks on population growth and decline in Ireland, and the sectarian explanation he offers for higher rates of fertility amongst the Catholics of Ireland:

The Papists make it a principle of Conscience, to increase their Numbers, for the good of the Catholick Religion, as they call it; and for want of Nunneries and Monasteries, breed faster here than in Countries, where their religion is Establish'd; and, Fornication being accounted but a Venial Sin with them, their Girls are easily persuaded, to have Children very early, and take great care of them when they have them. (2: 13)

Dobbs's observation makes it very clear that unchecked fertility was a concern not only amongst the idle and undeserving poor – the grotesquely imagined vagrants of Molesworth's imagination, for instance – but amongst the Catholic population in general. In Dobbs's view, Catholicism and immorality are clearly aligned in so far as Church-lead exhortations to 'increase' are compounded by casual fornication and the resulting children are imagined to thrive in households in which fathers are notable by their absence. In her discussion of 'savage motherhood' Felicity Nussbaum quotes Hobbes's comments on the effective absence of paternal authority in the 'condition of mere nature', in which, according to Hobbes, 'there are no matrimonial laws, [and] it cannot be

known who is the father, unless it be declared by the mother: and therefore the right of dominion over the child dependeth on her will, and is consequently hers.’³⁹ The connection made by both Molesworth and Dobbs between Catholic fertility and the absence of paternal authority constructs Catholic mothers as ‘savage’, revealing both the fundamentally patriarchal basis of colonial power in Ireland, and the extent to which this power was threatened by the apparent failure to regulate the reproduction of the Catholic population.

The underlying logic of this discourse is spelt out with ferocious clarity in *A Modest Proposal*, when the Projector remarks that the new system he plans, in which only a quarter of the children reserved for breeding purposes will be male, will not be a departure from existing practice among the lower Irish: ‘these Children are seldom the Fruits of Marriage, a *Circumstance not much regarded by our Savages*’ (145). One of the curious effects of reading the *Proposal* alongside the texts it satirizes is the realization that what might initially appear as the most grotesque parody is in fact in many cases simply an amplification of existing tropes and tones.

In both *A Modest Proposal* and in the economic improvement texts, the rising and parasitic Catholic population is set alongside a fall in Protestant numbers. The Projector explicitly contrasts the numbers of Catholics, ‘the principal Breeders of the Nation’ (147) with ‘the Absence of *so many good Protestants*, who have chosen rather to leave their Country, than stay at home, and pay Tithes against their Conscience, to an idolatrous *Episcopal Curate*’ (148).⁴⁰ One of the most highly-coloured commentaries on this topic is from Madden, who resorts to apocalyptic imagery to express his fears:

so many of the best Families and Hands in the Nation [...] are gone or going off to *America*, that in a little Time, betwixt Madness and Despair we shall be left desolate, and it is to be fear'd, he that shall write to keep our People at home, will but resemble the Zeal of St. *John* the Baptist, *a Voice crying in the Wilderness*. (4)

Madden is explicit in his conviction that the decline in the numbers of Protestants and the increase in the numbers of Catholics presents a grave threat to Ireland's future, when he says that 'of the few Hands we have, at least Four-fifths are *Papists*, and this sad Disproportion is likely every Day rather to enlarge than lessen' (206). He goes so far as to imagine the disappearance of the Irish nation, by which he clearly means the Protestant nation:

It is probable the Race of Men will last as long as the World itself will, but if some Helps and Encouragements be not given to our People, I will not maintain that this will hold true of *Ireland*, for as Things go on, it may become an uncultivated Desart in Time, inhabited by nothing but Beasts, and Savages. (205)

The failure of Ireland's leaders is here depicted in terms of a failure to claim the country for the realm of culture, as it is imagined returning to a state of uncultivated nature.

As one of the most prominent 'improvers' of his time, Madden shared what Ruth Perry has called 'the heady new belief in the rational manipulation of natural forces for greater productivity'.⁴¹ Perry argues that this belief extended into the 'operations of the family' and lead to the construction of childbearing women as a 'national resource'.⁴² Madden's overt concern with issues of population and depopulation indicates that he shared this view of how female

reproduction could be aligned with programmes of economic and social improvement. The management and control of natural resources was one of the primary goals of those who, like Madden, wished to 'improve' Ireland, and the imagined failure of this project, resulting in Ireland's becoming an 'uncultivated Desert' represented the ultimate failure for those charged with the civilizing mission in Ireland. The writings of this period give expression to their fears that this programme of control and improvement was indeed in jeopardy, and a key indicator of this was the failure to constitute childbearing women as a resource. Molesworth, Dobbs and Madden voice the fear that those who bear the most children escape and frustrate control, while those who might be considered as a useful national resource are insufficiently (re)productive.

This apparent inability to control and manage the population in the service of economic improvement meant that Ireland was, according to Swift in any case, a unique exception to the mercantilist belief that a nation's wealth and strength was related to the size of its population. This belief was widely held by his contemporaries: Dobbs for instance opens his *Essay* with the stated intention of estimating the population in Ireland and discussing by what means it might be encouraged to increase. Asserting however that in Ireland 'at least five children in six who are born lie a dead weight upon us for the want of employment', Swift dismissed the 'undisputed Maxim, that People are the riches of a nation' as uniquely inapplicable to Ireland.⁴³ What we find in *A Modest Proposal*, therefore, is a satiric inversion of Dobbs's discourse on population growth. Dobbs for instance estimates that in 1691, accounting for casualties in the recent wars, there were '200,000 breeding Women in the Kingdom' (2: 11) each of whom might have a child every two years, thus producing 100,000 infants each year.

Swift's Projector, by contrast, calculates the number of 'Breeder's' in Ireland in order to reduce rather than increase the population. Ireland's unfortunate exceptionality in the area of population size is clear from the Projector's remark to the reader that 'I calculate my Remedy *for this one individual Kingdom of IRELAND, and for no other that ever was, is, or, I think ever can be upon Earth*' (116). Once again, Swift's satire exposes the underlying logic of the texts of economic improvement – or in this case, the paradox at their centre. Thus although Dobbs begins his *Essay* conventionally, stressing rising population numbers as an indicator of national strength and wellbeing, it becomes clear that this 'undisputed Maxim' does not apply to the Catholic population, whose fertility and even whose careful mothers, as we have seen, are portrayed as a danger rather than an asset to the state. What Claude Rawson calls Swift's 'extermination rhetoric'⁴⁴ is on one level simply an extension of the underlying ideology present in texts by writers such as Dobbs and Molesworth.

A Modest Proposal takes to an extreme a perspective that views other human beings as objects, first to be quantified, then to be managed, then controlled, and finally, the Projector suggests, eliminated. It is therefore extremely significant that the *Proposal* ends by turning the spotlight on the Projector himself, who states that he cannot be accused of having any interest other than 'the *publick Good of my Country*', because 'I have no Children, by which I can propose to get a single Penny; the youngest being nine Years old, and my Wife past Child-bearing' (150). Whereas some critics have read this as underlining the separation between the Projector and the objects of his discourse, I agree with Brean Hammond that in the *Proposal*, 'one of Swift's targets [...] is Swift himself', and that the text marks a 'reflexive, pessimistic turn'

in Swift's writing.⁴⁵ The *Proposal* is a performance of masculine authority and claims explicitly to be such, through its references to 'publick Good' and the 'Nation', but in its last line it raises questions about the capacity of the speaker to function in the role of father, thus focusing attention on the sexed male body. He cannot himself contribute to the growth of Ireland's civilized population, and this failure is papered over with hollow and grandiose claims to be acting in the public interest. As we have seen, all of the texts produced in this period stress the desire of the writers to contribute to public life and the public good, motivations which confirm that the subjects under discussion are properly masculine. Swift's satiric conclusion however paradoxically equates public service with sterility: this 'exemplary' public servant cannot himself produce any more legitimate children and is thus effectively part of the problem he claims to solve.

In the final section of this essay, I will show that Swift's seemingly surprising turn to the Projector's body and his generative capacity is in keeping with the anxious masculinity of the contemporary pamphlets. Fears over the legitimacy and effectiveness of Anglo-Irish power is expressed by the failure to create a 'natural' alignment between masculinity and social and political leadership.

III

The specific ideological significance of population growth in the context of Anglo-Irish leadership is explicitly articulated by Arthur Dobbs, who links population

increase directly to the establishment of Protestant rule in Ireland. He asserts that he wishes to establish 'how we have increas'd since the late happy Revolution and Reduction of Ireland, the Establishment of our Civil and Religious Liberties, and Security of our Properties' (2: 3-4). The gap between this optimistic statement and the realities of life in Ireland in the 1720s and 30s is apparent in the texts discussed thus far. As we have seen, these texts displace and project the fears and anxieties of the Anglo-Irish male elite onto women and the poor, but the self-implication of the writers is ultimately inescapable: women, whether immoral and avaricious or selfish and proud, fail in their duty to bear and nurture children within properly regulated, patriarchal family structures. The responsibility for this lies ultimately with the men who head the family unit and also the state.

The potential for paternalistic leadership from landlords is stressed by Dobbs, who outlines the benefits to Ireland that would result from the creation of a yeomanry, a settled and improving class of freehold farmers. This was inhibited in Ireland by the practice of granting short leases of only twenty-one years. In contrast to Madden's apocalyptic vision of an 'uncultivated Desart,' Dobbs declares that given a strong yeomanry, 'the whole country would appear like a regular Plantation or Garden, by the Industry and frugality of the People: and Nature would seem always to smile' (2: 82). The arguments against granting long leases and freeholds were rooted in the desire of landlords to profit from potential future rises in land values and rents. Significantly, Dobbs claims that these patriarchs do not grasp the full meaning of posterity – he accuses them of having a narrow focus on their immediate descendants, and failing to realize that

we ought to have a great regard to the good of our Posterity, but it is not only in leaving them a great Fortune and Riches, that we act for their good; but in leaving it to them in a well regulated free Government, flourishing by Trade and Industry. (2: 83)

Dobbs here clearly registers a sense of breakdown about the relationship between masculinity – here figured primarily in its reproductive function, as producing children and heirs – and social and political leadership. Whereas Swift's Projector can no longer father children but proclaims nonetheless to act for the greater good, Dobbs worries that Anglo-Irish landlords are too narrowly focused on their children's future, thus disregarding their wider social and political responsibilities. In neither case is there a mutually reinforcing endorsement of masculine roles.

The existence of a 'natural' link between masculinity as sex and masculinity as a quality of leadership is explicitly asserted in Madden's *Reflections*, which is addressed to the 'gentlemen of Ireland' and carries an extensive subtitle, which lists their various roles: as landlords, as 'masters and fathers of families,' as Protestants, as 'descended from British Ancestors,' as country gentlemen and farmers, as Magistrates, as Merchants, and, finally, as Members of Parliament. It soon becomes clear, however, that Madden's text is not so much a confident assertion as a rallying cry and a plea for effective masculine leadership.

In his comments on the role of the Magistrate, Madden articulates his vision of benevolent masculine power he says that a gentleman can be 'in the best sense of the word, a Father to his Country' (149). However, in Ireland, the image of the leader as 'father' was, as we have seen, fraught with anxiety given

the fears as to population decline amongst Protestants and unchecked fertility amongst Catholics. We have already seen the highly-coloured language used by Madden when he contemplates the apparently imminent depopulation of Protestant Ireland. He sees the urgent need for more Protestant births as a matter of public interest and national importance, and he writes at length on measures that could or should be taken to this end. Madden shares with his contemporaries in Britain a conviction that the practice of wet nursing is a significant factor in inhibiting population increase, asserting initially that the children of both the nurse and the upper-class lady suffer: 'we often see two of those Innocents pay the Fine of their Lives, to the unnatural Pride of one Mother, and the wicked Avarice of the other' (208-9). However, Madden then contradicts himself by claiming that wet nursing is in fact yet another factor in the increase of the Catholic poor and the decline of the Protestant population. This he attributes to the medically dubious theory that 'by not suckling their own Offspring, they breed double the Numbers, which Nature design'd them ... [and they thus] over-load the State ... with useless, idle Loiterers, with Beggars for beggarly Employments' (209).

The women of Madden's own class and religious community also clearly fail to carry out their proper role as wives and mothers, not only through their refusal to breastfeed, but also through their excessive consumption of imported luxury products.⁴⁶ In this, as in many other of his preoccupations (such as Protestant emigration), Madden echoes Swift, who repeatedly denounced the women of Ireland for demanding imported silks and lace and thus damaging not only the balance of trade but also the profits of Irish weavers and drapers, claiming for instance that 'it is to gratify the vanity and pride, and luxury of the

women, and of the young fops who admire them, that we owe this insupportable grievance of bringing in the instruments of our ruin'.⁴⁷ Madden in fact not only echoes but heightens Swift's already highly-charged rhetoric. The female consumer of luxury goods is depicted as a bloodthirsty enemy of the nation: 'drest out in the Spoils, and Pillage of their Country, and riding in Triumph, like a Barbarous Conqueror, great by the Murther of half a Nation' (60-61). The description of the fine lady as a 'Barbarous Conqueror' contrasts significantly with Madden's depiction of himself and other 'Gentlemen' as modern and enlightened patriots. Convinced that only 'a good Degree of publick Spirit' can 'preserve this Island from Destruction', they 'used their Endeavours, by the Help of the Press, to sow the Seeds of this great Principle among us' (20). The Anglo-Irish male elite are depicted as using reason and the modern print media to forward an improving agenda, whereas the Anglo-Irish lady is associated with earlier and bloodier chapters in Ireland's history. Her 'barbarism' is emphasized by the grotesque inversion of her supposedly natural role as a mother: she is great with, or pregnant, not with new life, but with the numbers of those she has 'murdered.'

The misogyny of Madden's attack on the vanity and vice of women can on one level readily be understood in the terms suggested by Laura Mandell, who writes of Swift's grotesque portrayal of Corinna in 'A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed' that it 'gives him the opportunity to master anxiety about social changes, felt ... to augur the decay of a paternalist social order.'⁴⁸ The female consumer – a figure for the modern economy and emergent capitalism – is here 'mastered' by being recast as an archaic remnant of Ireland's bloody but apparently superseded past. But this attempt to master the course of Irish

history and Irish society depends upon the construction of Anglo-Irish women, critical to the civilizing mission of elite Anglo-Ireland, as powerfully destructive rather than as available to be constructed as (in Ruth Perry's words) a 'national resource'. Somewhat like Swift's Projector with his wife 'past childbearing', one wonders where exactly Madden's gentlemen intend to 'sow the Seeds' that will ensure the reproduction and growth of Ireland's civilized population. The breakdown in this text between masculinity and leadership in Ireland is expressed even more starkly in two remarkable and striking representations of the male body.

Reflecting on the problematic nature of Ireland's sectarian divide, Madden imagines the 'body' of the nation as a divided and disordered male body:

This poor Kingdom is divided ... by two Religions Our continuing thus divided ... lessens our Natural weight and Strength, and makes us as Spiritless and unactive, as a Paralitick body when one half of it is dead, and just dragged about by the other. It often puts me in mind of the poor *Italian* in *London* who had a little Twin-Brother that grew out of his chest, whom he carefully nourisht and cherisht, being sensible that when his brother died, he could not long survive him. (92)

Whereas Petty imagined himself as a surgeon 'anatomizing' the simple animal that is Ireland, Madden is here trapped in the body of the nation that he is supposed to govern. The second image is on one level that of fraternal relations – two brothers, who are conjoined twins.⁴⁹ But it is also an image of failed birth, as the elder brother 'nourishes and cherishes' the twin, but he cannot separate himself from his twin, and finds his own existence threatened by this failed birth. As I have shown, many writers in this period expressed anxiety about their

failure as leaders in terms of the failure to control female fertility in the interests of the colonial nation. These fears reach a kind of nightmarish climax in Madden's text. In the absence of either elite or subaltern women who can be constructed as sources for the reproduction of the nation, the Anglo-Irish male elite are imagined both as unsuccessfully struggling to 'give birth' to the nation and also to separate themselves from the bodies they wish to control.

Following the Williamite settlement and the military defeat of the Jacobite army and its Catholic supporters in Ireland, Anglo-Irish identity was gradually reshaped in a new context in which military force was replaced by civic and social leadership as the primary marker of power, and the strength of nations was increasingly measured in terms of commerce and trade. In a system of established power based on sectarian division, however, the elite were charged with the paradoxical task of maintaining division while supposedly acting in the interests of Ireland as a whole. Thus Berkeley in *The Querist* reflects the Anglo-Irish insistence on the difference and inferiority of the native Irish when he poses the question 'Whether the bulk of our Irish natives are not kept from thriving, by that cynical content in dirt and beggary which they possess to a degree beyond any other people in Christendom?' (Q 19), but also asks 'Whether a scheme for the welfare of this nation should not take in the whole inhabitants? And whether it be not a vain attempt to project the flourishing of our protestant gentry, exclusive of the bulk of our natives?' (Q 255).⁵⁰ This fracture at the heart of Anglo-Irish identity is of course a commonplace of comment on the period. What has not been discussed hitherto, however, is the fact that the Anglo-Irish contradiction also splintered the masculinity of the ruling class.

I argue that in *A Modest Proposal* Swift responds to and highlights the troubled relationship between masculinity and power in Ireland in this period, and also that his creation of the Projector persona gives enduring expression to the failed attempts of his contemporaries to construct appropriate forms of 'governing masculinity'. The *Proposal* ends with an image of the Anglo-Irish father at the head of a small, self-contained and absurdly complacent family unit, set in opposition to and disconnected from a nightmarish scene in which mass extermination is the only alternative to the chaos of uncontrolled natural fertility. The divisions in Irish society thus work against the 'natural' link between masculinity and the exercise of legitimate power that is otherwise assumed in this period. Domestically, the Projector is a husband and father, but publically he advocates the slaughter of children and reduces relations between the 'natives' to their basest aspects. The failure or inability to align the private and public aspects of masculinity is for Swift clearly an indication of a completely dysfunctional social and political system.⁵¹ Published some nine years after the publication of the *Proposal*, Samuel Madden's *Reflections and Resolutions* is a call to recreate the link between masculinity and power, but also an expression of an even more pessimistic view of the Anglo-Irish male elite. Madden's Ireland is one in which the problems that beset the country in the years of economic crisis are represented not in terms of Molesworth's 'swarms of bastards', which Swift's Projector proposes to control simply by extermination, but as a male body that cannot separate itself from the bodies that it wants to control. Based on my analysis of *A Modest Proposal* in the context of the writing to which it responded, and which it in turn influenced, I suggest that there is much further scope for

work on the ways in which masculinity functions in constructions of power and claims to discursive authority in this period in Ireland.

¹ R. W. Connell (1995) *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press), p. 185.

² Thomas Laquer (1990) *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), p. 149. See also Anthony Fletcher (1995), who argues that the 'triumph of the gentry' in England in the period after 1660 was brought about in part by new and increasingly rigid understanding of gender: 'by 1700 the gentry had established a sense of class identity [...] which differentiated them from the multitude. This class consciousness became the very essence of their way of life. Moreover their view of class henceforth was always gendered, that is, it took its strength from an increasingly rigid and elaborate scheme of gender construction with which they marked themselves off from the masses.' *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England, 1500-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press), p. 283.

³ Nancy Armstrong's (1987) *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) is foundational in this debate, arguing that the eighteenth-century novel was critically important in shaping the new intertwined gender and class identities that underpinned the 'rise of the middle class'. See also Michael McKeon (1995) 'Historicizing Patriarchy: The Emergence of Gender Difference in England, 1660-1760', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 28(3), 295-322.

⁴ Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen (1999) 'Introduction', in Hitchcock and Cohen (eds) *English Masculinities, 1600-1800* (London: Longman), pp. 1-22, p. 1.

⁵ Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann and Anna Clark (2008) 'Historicizing Male Citizenship', in Dudink, Hagemann and Clark (eds) *Representing Masculinity: Male Citizenship in Modern Western Political Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. ix-xv, p. ix.

⁶ Dudink, Hagemann and Clark, p. ix.

⁷ Padhraig Higgins (2010) *A Nation of Politicians: Gender, Patriotism and Political Culture in Late Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press), pp. 17-18. See also Catriona Kennedy (2007) "'A Gallant Nation: Chivalric masculinity and Irish nationalism in the 1790s', in Matthew McCormack (ed.) *Public Men: Political Masculinities in Modern Britain* (Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 73-92.

⁸ Higgins, p. 151.

⁹ Sarah McKibben (2010) *Endangered Masculinities in Irish Poetry, 1540-1780* (Dublin: UCD Press), p. 7

¹⁰ Anglo-Irish opposition to legislative interference from Westminster can be traced back to William Molyneux's *Case of Ireland Stated* (1698), which was written in response to restrictions imposed on the export of Irish woolen manufactures to Britain under the Woolen Act. The *Case* asserted Ireland's right to legislate for itself, and became a key text in the development of a 'patriot' identity among the Protestant Anglo-Irish, focusing on Ireland's legislative and constitutional independence and equal status under the crown. See for instance J. G. Simms (1976), *Colonial Nationalism, 1698-1776: Molyneux's The Case of Ireland Stated* (Cork: Mercier Press). The focus on the trade restrictions as a key obstacle to economic growth is questioned by L. M. Cullen, who describes it as an 'economic mythology': *Anglo-Irish Trade, 1660-1800* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968), p.229. See also S. J. Connolly, 'Swift and Protestant Ireland: Image and Reality,' in Aileen Douglas, Patrick Kelly and Ian Campbell Ross (eds.), *Locating Swift: Essays from Dublin on the 250th Anniversary of the Death of Jonathan Swift, 1667-1745* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1998), pp.28-46.

¹¹ For a recent discussion of the purpose, scope and impact of the penal laws, see McBride (2009), pp. 194-245.

- ¹² Toby Barnard (2008), *Improving Ireland? Projectors, Prophets and Profiteers, 1641-1786* (Dublin: Four Courts Press), p. 13.
- ¹³ L. M. Cullen (1981) *The Emergence of Modern Ireland, 1600-1900* (London: Batsford Academic), p. 30. For a detailed analysis of this material from the perspective of the history of economic thought in Ireland, see Patrick Kelly (2000), 'The politics of political economy in mid-eighteenth-century Ireland,' in S. J. Connolly (ed.), *Political Ideas in Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts), pp. 105-129.
- ¹⁴ David Dickson (2000) has for instance argued that the Woods Halfpence affair marks the earliest notable use of the print media to create and inform public opinion in Ireland: *New Foundations: Ireland, 1660-1800*, 2nd ed. (Dublin: Irish Academic Press), p. 74. Toby Barnard (2004), similarly, notes that 'soon after [1698] the readership within Ireland for both angry and calm statements of Irish grievances increased' and that this led directly to an increase in the number of printers in Ireland: *The Kingdom of Ireland, 1641-1760* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), p. 75. With specific reference to Swift's writings on Ireland, Sean D. Moore (2010) makes a case for 'the emergence of the Irish book' in this period 'as a vehicle by which the Irish nation was formed and a means by which Irish identity came to exert political, commercial and cultural influence: *Swift, the Book and the Irish Financial Revolution: Satire and Sovereignty in Colonial Ireland* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press), p. 2.
- ¹⁵ McBride (2009), p. 90.
- ¹⁶ James Kelly (1991), 'Jonathan Swift and the Irish Economy in the 1720s', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland* 6, p. 8. For a detailed discussion of the 'source texts' of *A Modest Proposal* see George Wittkowsky (1943) 'Swift's *Modest Proposal*: the Biography of an Early Georgian Pamphlet', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 4(1), 75-104 . <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2707237>
- ¹⁷ Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline Van Gent (2011) 'Introduction', in Broomhall and Van Gent (eds) *Governing Masculinities in the Early Modern Period: Regulating Selves and Others* (Farnham: Ashgate), pp. 1-22, p. 2.
- ¹⁸ Broomhall and Van Gent, 'Introduction', p. 6.
- ¹⁹ See Mary Carter (2013) 'Swift and the Proposal for Badging Beggars in Dublin, 1726-1737', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 37(1), 97-118. Carter links Swift's concern with Irish poverty and the problem of beggars and vagrants in particular with his resentment at Ireland's dependent status: 'The Irish pamphlets voice repeatedly his savage indignation over legislative and economic interventions that prevented Ireland from taking care of its own people and of itself as a nation', p. 108.
- ²⁰ Barnard, *Improving Ireland?* p. 41. For a discussion of Petty's contribution to 'forg[ing] the relationship between numbers and impartiality that has made the modern fact such a crucial instrument for policy-making,' see Mary Poovey (1998) *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (London: University of Chicago Press), p. 123.
- ²¹ William Petty (1899) *The Political Anatomy of Ireland*, in Charles Henry Hull (ed.) *The Economic Writings of Sir William Petty* 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1: 129.
- ²² See Jean Donnison (1988) *Midwives and Medical Men: A History of the Struggle for Control of Childbirth* (London: Historical Books).
- ²³ Lisa Forman Cody (1999) 'The Politics of Reproduction: From Midwives' Alternative Public Sphere to the Public Spectacle of Man Midwifery', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 32(4), 477-95, p. 479, p. 480.
- ²⁴ See Danielle Spratt (2012) 'Gulliver's Economized Body: Colonial Projects and the Lusus Naturae in the Travels', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 41, 137-159, p. 151.
- ²⁵ Charlotte Susmann (2003), 'The Colonial Afterlife of Political Arithmetic: Swift, Demography and Mobile Populations', *Cultural Critique* 56, 96-126, p. 108.
- ²⁶ Carole Fabricant (1999) argues that the impact of the Declaratory Act went far beyond a political crisis, provoking a 'crisis in representation, making it in certain crucial ways impossible for any group in Ireland to speak for the Irish': 'Speaking for the Irish Nation: The Drapier, the Bishop, and the Problems of Colonial Representation,' *ELH* 66(2), 337-72, p. 352. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30032076>
- ²⁷ Jonathan Swift (1991) *The Drapier's Letters*, in Joseph McMinn (ed.) *Swift's Irish Pamphlets: An Introductory Selection* (Oxford: Colin Smythe), p. 79.
- ²⁸ Matthew McCormack (2005) *The Independent Man: Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), p. 13.
- ²⁹ See Irvin Ehrenpreis (1983) *Swift: The Man, his Works and the Age*, vol. 3 (London: Methuen) p. 288.

- ³⁰ Robert, Viscount Molesworth (1723) *Some Considerations for the Promoting of Agriculture and Employing the Poor* (Dublin), p. 29. *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given parenthetically.
- ³¹ John Browne (1728) *Essay on Trade in General, and that of Ireland in Particular* (Dublin). *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*.
- ³² Samuel Madden (1738). *Reflections and Resolutions Proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland* (Dublin), pp. 16-17, p. 21, *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given parenthetically.
- ³³ David Bindon (1729) *Scheme to Supply Industrious Men with Money* (Dublin), p. 5, *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given parenthetically. See also William Fownes (1725) *Methods Proposed for Regulating the Poor* (Dublin). *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*. Fownes addresses 'the Nobility and Gentry' in order to solve the problem of poverty, begging and vagrancy, though his reasoning is more self-interested than benevolent: 'I hope every Body will agree in this, that it is high time that the Poor were taken into our Consideration, and that we ought in Charity to them, as well as in Kindness to our selves, set about that Work now, which if delay'd, may bring us under a Necessity, of doing it at a far greater Expence and Trouble', p. 5.
- ³⁴ Jonathan Swift (1991) 'A Modest Proposal', in McMinn (ed.) *Swift's Irish Pamphlets*, p. 143. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given parenthetically.
- ³⁵ Moore, *Swift, the Book and the Irish Financial Revolution*, p. 176.
- ³⁶ Arthur Dobbs ([1729]-1731) *An Essay on the Trade and Improvement of Ireland* 2 vols (Dublin), 2: 45. *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given parenthetically.
- ³⁷ Marilyn Francus (1994) 'The Monstrous Mother: Reproductive Anxiety in Swift and Pope', *ELH*, 61(4), 829-51, p. 829.
- ³⁸ Francus, 'The Monstrous Mother', p. 831.
- ³⁹ Quoted in Felicity A. Nussbaum (1991-2) "'Savage' Mothers: Narratives of Maternity in the Mid-Eighteenth Century', *Cultural Critique*, 20, 123-51, p. 128.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1354225>
- ⁴⁰ Swift here also targets Presbyterians specifically, who were frequently the butt of his satire. He also addresses the topic of Protestant emigration in the *Intelligencer* 19 (1728), in which he adopts the persona of a Northern Irish landowner: McMinn (ed.) *Swift's Irish Pamphlets*, pp. 115-124.
- ⁴¹ Ruth Perry (1991) 'Colonizing the Breast', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 2(2), 204-34, p. 206. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3704034>.
- ⁴² Perry, 'Colonizing the Breast', p. 206.
- ⁴³ Swift (1991) 'Maxims Controlled in Ireland' in McMinn (ed.) *Swift's Irish Pamphlets*, p. 139.
- ⁴⁴ Rawson (2001), *God Gulliver and Genocide*, p. 186.
- ⁴⁵ Brean Hammond (2010), *Jonathan Swift* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press), p. 135.
- ⁴⁶ The association between women and the vice of luxurious consumption was of course not specific to Ireland: see for instance Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace (1997) *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press); Terry Lovell (1995) 'Subjective Powers? Consumption, the Reading Public and the Domestic Woman in the Early Eighteenth Century', in Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (eds) *The Consumption of Culture: Image, Object, Text* (London: Routledge), pp. 23-41.
- ⁴⁷ Swift (1964) 'A Proposal that all the Ladies and Women of Ireland should appear constantly in Irish Manufactures', in Davis (ed.) *Irish Tracts 1728-1733*, pp. 121-127, p. 126. See also 'A Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture', 'A Letter to the Archbishop, concerning the Weavers', and 'A Letter to a Young Lady, on her Marriage'.
- ⁴⁸ Laura Mandell (1999) *Misogynous Economies: The Business of Literature in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky), p. 2.
- ⁴⁹ The story of the Italian conjoined twins appears in a 1637 news ballad: see Leslie Shepherd (1973) *The History of Street Literature* (Detroit: Singing Tress Press), p. 17. I have not been able to trace a version of the story in print in the eighteenth century.
- ⁵⁰ George Berkeley (1760), *The Querist: Containing Several Queries, Proposed to the Consideration of the Public* (Glasgow), p. 8, p. 57. *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*.
- ⁵¹ The Projector's use of political arithmetic and statistics as a means of objectification and thus a key strategy in framing his barbaric plans as a 'civilized' intervention was highlighted by Wittkowsky (1943), and is a recurrent feature of comment on the text: see Spratt (2012),

Sussman (2003), and Thomas McLoughlin (1999) *Contesting Ireland: Irish Voices against England in the Eighteenth-Century* (Dublin: Four Courts), pp. 85-7. There is however considerable disagreement on whether this satire on political arithmetic amounts to a rejection of the conventional opposition between the savage and the civilized. Claude Rawson for instance stresses evidence elsewhere of Swift's insistence on the important distinction between the native ('wild', 'savage') Irish and his own Anglo-Irish community and is sceptical of postcolonial readings that claim that the *Proposal* deconstructs this hierarchical relationship. See (2001) *God, Gulliver and Genocide: Barbarism and the European Imagination, 1492-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), especially pp. 79-91 and (2014) 'Swift, Ireland and the paradoxes of ethnicity', in Rawson, *Swift's Angers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 21-46. My own argument here is different in emphasis. The fact that the Projector's private identity as a father is not analogically connected to his proposals for the benefit of the public is clearly depicted as a form of social and political dysfunction. Thus the separation between the Projector and the people he claims to be acting for is evidently critiqued as an aspect of a failing system. This does not mean however that Swift advocates the destruction of hierarchical systems of leadership, but that in the Irish context they do not operate successfully.