

# Carly of the day” as the editor

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2017 The Lady's Dressing Room Known as a satirist, the Irish author

Jonathan Swift was born on November 30, 1667. Swift was born with and suffered from Meniere's Disease. His father died two months before he was born and since his mother could not provide Swift was raised by his uncle.

Swift received the best education in Ireland and at the age of 14 began his undergraduate studies at Trinity College in Dublin (Jonathan Swift). When Swift moved from Ireland to England his mother found him a secretary position under an English statesman, Sir William Temple. While working for Temple, Swift was influenced to begin writing. When Temple died, Swift found a job outside of Dublin and here he released his first political pamphlet. Swift's writings earned him a reputation and welcomed by the Tories, Swift became "the most brilliant political journalist of the day" as the editor of the Examiner (The Norton Anthology of English Literature). Here he wrote letters to his lifelong love, Ester, which he later published as The Journal to Stella. When Swift returned to Ireland he began leading a congregation and there he wrote what is now his best work. "He has been called a misanthrope, a hater of humanity, and Gulliver's Travels has been considered an expression of savage misanthropy" (The Norton Anthology of English Literature).

Swift is known for taking a hard look at the facts of the body and life itself. The Lady's Dressing Room was published in 1732. Swift suffered from a stroke in 1742 and died three years later. The beginning stanza begins with the reader meeting the beautiful Celia, after taking five hours to get ready in her dressing room. Strephon, her lover, finds the room to be empty and sneaks in to take a look around the mysterious room. What Strephon

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finds next changes everything. What Strephon then sees in each stanza make Celia appear more and more nauseating.

Strephon sees a dirty smock with sweat stains and covered in filth. He even swears that any man to call Celia clean is lying. The horror continues as Strephon discovers combs filled with dandruff, cosmetics from Celia's dead dog, and "beslimed" towels that turned Strephon's bowls (The Norton).

At the center of Celia's dressing room Strephon finds that she does in fact "shit" (The Norton). Swift then alludes to Pandora's Box to express Celia's dressing room and Celia herself as horrid. He says that Strephon venturing into Celia's room was the lifting of the lid which released the secret monstrosities. The goddess that never sleeps, Vengeance, then punishes Strephon for snooping. His punishment be that he will see the truth of every woman, no longer will he be tricked by the "charms of womankind" (The Norton).

Finally, Swift ends by saying Strephon would soon learn to think like him and realize that women are lying, disgusting creatures who cover up their true appearance. This satire by Jonathan Swift is specifically targeting

the female sex. The Lady's Dressing Room takes the private affairs of Celia, representing womankind, and shoves them into the light of the public.

Strephon invading Celia's dressing room is a perfect model for illustrating the connection between public and private life and the role of each in Swift's society. This poem takes the woman's dressing room, an object of femininity, and uses it to introduce a nauseating perception of the female sex. Swift

loved individuals, but hated " that animal called man," meaning humankind in general.

Although the focus of the poem is based on misogyny, the idea that lies beyond the lines is more extensive than Swift's opinion of pride and women. Swift points out the idiocy of society's pursuit to mask what cannot be concealed; the basic nature of humanity no matter the advancements. A reference to the divine is how this poem begins. Celia is referred to as " the goddess" (The Norton). Using the imagery of a goddess, this alludes to the traditional idea that feminine beauty is divine. By comparing illustrations of human excrement with the divine, Swift urges against the habit to idealize humanity.

The tone of the poem turns scientific when Strephon enters and discovers Celia's secrets, " an inventory follows here" (The Norton). Strephon is on a mission to discover what truly occurs in Celia's dressing room. What he discovers drastically changes how Strephon perceives women.

Through seeing Celia's filth and cosmetics the true essence of humanity is revealed by showing the eccentric means by which the truth is veiled. " The virtues we must not let pass, of Celia's magnifying glass. When frightened Strephon cast his eye on't, it showed the visage of a giant." (The Norton).

This line acquaints the reader with Celia's mirror as a scientific tool and not just an object of reflection. Magnifying glass is used to enlarge an image and reveal the truth which we cannot see. Strephon is surprised to see himself as a giant in the reflection.

Strephon has molded from a curious man into a man subject to the hideousness of womankind. The transformation of Celia from the divine beauty to a horror represents unveiling the true animalistic nature of humankind. "As from within Pandora's box, when Epimetheus opened the locks, a sudden universal crew of human evils upward flew" (The Norton). By alluding Celia to Pandora and Strephon to Epimetheus, Swift is not discouraging exploration but simply cautioning that discoveries should be taken for what they are and not romanticized. Swift's satire unfairly focuses on womankind and holds a misogynistic tone.

However, there is more than meets the eye. Swift attempts to portray life how it really is, without the curtain of deception. Instead of divine beauty, Strephon finds feces in Celia's dressing room. Under a magnifying glass, humanity should be able to see the truth; the animal nature that lies at the base. Swift displays to his readers that the truth can be perilous if not revealed. Not everything can be placed perfectly in the history of humankind.

The Lady's Dressing Room satirizes the attempt of society to conceal the basic nature that is found in every person. Regardless of their made-up divinity.