

University of Windsor

Scholarship at UWindor

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Theses, Dissertations, and Major Papers

1-1-1967

The reputation of "Gulliver's Travels" in the eighteenth century.

Mary Gerace
University of Windsor

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd>

Recommended Citation

Gerace, Mary, "The reputation of "Gulliver's Travels" in the eighteenth century." (1967). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 6478.

<https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd/6478>

This online database contains the full-text of PhD dissertations and Masters' theses of University of Windsor students from 1954 forward. These documents are made available for personal study and research purposes only, in accordance with the Canadian Copyright Act and the Creative Commons license—CC BY-NC-ND (Attribution, Non-Commercial, No Derivative Works). Under this license, works must always be attributed to the copyright holder (original author), cannot be used for any commercial purposes, and may not be altered. Any other use would require the permission of the copyright holder. Students may inquire about withdrawing their dissertation and/or thesis from this database. For additional inquiries, please contact the repository administrator via email (scholarship@uwindsor.ca) or by telephone at 519-253-3000ext. 3208.

THE REPUTATION OF GULLIVER'S TRAVELS
IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BY
MARY GERACE

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through
the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario

1967

UMI Number: EC52659

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform EC52659

Copyright 2008 by ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest LLC
789 E. Eisenhower Parkway
PO Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

ABC 0339

APPROVED:

Raymond Smith, Ph.D.

Roderick Franz, Ph.D.

[Signature]

167520

ABSTRACT

Gulliver's Travels is the most enigmatic and consequently the most studied work of Jonathan Swift. Many of the problems which face the critics of today were issues during the early years of criticism. This thesis, through an evaluation of the attitudes towards the Travels during the eighteenth century, will reveal the original interpretation of the book as well as suggest the manner in which the seeds of Swiftian criticism were sown.

When Gulliver's Travels was published in 1726, its contemporaries greeted it enthusiastically. To the public it was a general satire, a believable and entertaining tale. The Scriblerians, Swift's own circle, considered it as a witty and comic satire. A few months after the first publication of the book, a pseudonymously written key, since attributed to Swift, was published. In this, the author, "Corolini," in pointing out specific political allusions, identified it as a Tory satire on the Whigs. This immediately led to a quick exchange of pamphlets which used political beliefs as the critical criterion for the book. In the process of party warfare, Swift and his book were attacked, not only for their political tenets, but also their moral soundness.

By the middle of the century, the topical political interpretation was completely replaced by a moral evalu-

ation of Gulliver's Travels. Lord Orrery, the first biographer of Swift, in considering the book as an overt moral tale, saw its obliqueness and irony as flaws in its homeletic character. In addition, it was considered as an immoral and debased production of an equally depraved and demented genius.

In response to Orrery's defamation of Swift, a number of authors rallied to his defense. Their opinions all fluctuated between that of Orrery and a view of a virtuous and undefiled Swift. In each case, the central aim was to reconcile the seemingly debased Gulliver's Travels with a portrait of a benevolent Swift. In order to do so, the book was grossly simplified and altered to fit the view of the Dean each biographer wished to endorse. By the end of the century, criticism had come almost full circle. Swift was restored as the virtuous genius, while Gulliver's Travels was considered an effective homeletic tale befitting its pious author.

Consequently the Travels, which was first seen as a witty and comical satire, came to be viewed as an overt moral and ethical tale. Devested of its complex vision, Gulliver's Travels became a straight-forward statement of Swift's philosophy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Professor Raymond Smith who brought to life the eighteenth century and the roaring Dean of St. Patrick's.

To Professor Roderick Huang whose initial comments were invaluable in the revision of this thesis; and to Reverend John O'Meara, C.S.B. from whom I learned the creative force of history.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter	
I. THE POLITICAL EVALUATION OF <u>GULLIVER'S TRAVELS</u>	5
II. THE GULLIVER-SWIFT DILEMMA	24
III. THE REAPPRAISAL OF <u>GULLIVER'S TRAVELS</u>	36
CONCLUSION	62
BIBLIOGRAPHY	65
VITA AUCTORIS	67

INTRODUCTION

Gulliver's Travels, in the more than two hundred years since its publication, has experienced a most peculiar and precarious history in regard to public acceptance. Besides being the most famous work of Jonathan Swift, it also did more to condemn the man as a depraved and demented genius than anything else in his canon. This criticism found expression in the straight-laced nineteenth century attitude, which viewed Gulliver's Travels as the dissipated production of an equally immoral man.¹ Thackeray is said to have read aloud sections of the Travels to horrify his genteel Victorian audience. A century later, using the close reading techniques of the twentieth century, Ricardo Quintana artfully separated the man from the work, stemming the negative approach of the Victorians, and redeeming a white-washed Swift.² Scholars continue to employ new approaches to discover Swift's true intent in the creation of his satiric masterpiece, yet it still retains a certain enigmatic quality. With all that has been written, there remains an area of study which has been almost totally ignored: the eighteenth century critical evaluation of Gulliver's Travels and its relationship to the prevailing attitude towards

1 Milton Voigt, Swift and the Twentieth Century (Detroit, 1964), pp. 3-27.

2 Ibid., pp. 93-99.

Swift.

The body of criticism which first appraised the Travels has received little recognition. Merrill D. Clubb, in 1941, considered the initial attitude to the fourth voyage, proving that the last part suffered from a bad reception even in its early days.³ In 1949, Sir Harold Williams, the editor of Swift's poetry, wrote a critical evaluation of Swift's early biographers.⁴ In assessing their worth as biographers, Williams all but ignored their critical statements. Furthermore, little of this early material has been re-edited. With the possible exception of A Casebook on Gulliver among the Houyhnhnms,⁵ the only discussions of Gulliver's Travels which have merited reprinting were written by such men as Pope, Arbuthnot and Johnson, men famous in their own right. The early material, seemingly dated by modern critical approaches, lies scattered in the rare book rooms of today's libraries. Yet by looking closely at the early works on Swift, one can see the body of modern criticism in a rudely developed microcosm.

The eighteenth century was, first of all, an age in which the literature was socially orientated. Swift received as much attention as his works. When Gulliver's

3 Merrill D. Clubb, "The Criticism of Gulliver's Voyage to the Houyhnhnms, 1726-1914," Stanford Studies in Language and Literature, ed. Hardin Craig (California, 1941), 203-32.

4 Sir Harold Williams, "Swift's Early Biographers," Pope and His Contemporaries, ed. J.L. Clifford and L.A. Landa (Oxford, 1949), pp. 114-128.

5 Milton P. Foster, ed., A Casebook on Gulliver Among the Houyhnhnms (New York, 1963).

Travels was published in 1726, Swift had already gained renown through his political liaison with Lord Oxford and Viscount Bolingbroke. Branded a Tory during the reign of Queen Anne, he supported his cause through his pamphleteering, then an integral part of party warfare. As the devout Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin, he also built a reputation as a vehement defender of the Irish. Swift had many identities during his lifetime. When Gulliver's Travels was viewed as the natural extension of the man, the enigma of the man created complications in the evaluation of the work. This kind of biographical criticism prevailed throughout the eighteenth century.

The Travels appeared during a period of great literary flux. It was the end of an age which was highly sophisticated, deeply intellectual, and well adapted to the comic satiric genre. The Augustan avidly read the highly comic Tale of a Tub, which first brought Swift into the public eye. The Travels was also viewed by many of the same people as a conventional and very amusing political satire. This age of satire, however, which had been accustomed to the highly ironic political tracts of Swift and his fellow pamphleteerists was finally breathing its last. The middle class Whig society was not sympathetic to the oblique and objective point of view of a man like Swift. Instead the sentimentalist school was now beginning to dominate the literary scene.

As early as the first quarter of the eighteenth century, Addison and Steele were appealing to the taste of the new reading public by offering them periodicals dealing

with public manners and mores. In addition, the school of natural benevolence, headed by the Earl of Shaftesbury, dictated the popular opinion about man, stressing his innate goodness. The comic view was no longer the prevalent view, which is perhaps best illustrated in the sentimental novels of Samuel Richardson. So it happened that Gulliver's Travels, which was first looked upon as a highly comic moral tale, came to be seen in the light of contemporary straightforward moral tales. It is at this point that much of the confusion concerning Gulliver's Travels arose. To follow the reception of the Travels from its publication in 1726 to the last eighteenth Century biography of Swift in 1789, would reveal not only the development of criticism during this time but also a reason for the gross misinterpretation of the man and the work in subsequent times.

CHAPTER I

THE POLITICAL EVALUATION OF GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

It is perhaps fitting that Swift himself offered the first critical comment on his soon to be published Gulliver's Travels. In a letter to Alexander Pope he expressed the much quoted purpose behind the creation of The Travels:

the chief end I propose myself in all my labours is to vex the world rather than divert it, and if I could compass that design without hurting my own person or Fortune, I would be the most Indefatigable⁶ writer you have ever seen without reading.

Swift wished to be more than comic and obviously saw satire as a means of reform. The means was not provided by simple statement but rather by confronting his audience with an annoying and agitating problem. He was realist enough, however, to believe such an end could be hampered by unfavorable reactions to himself as author, and this is perhaps the reason for the creation of Gulliver.

Swift was author, however, and Pope sardonically reminds him of this in a tongue-in-cheek reply to the Dean's impossible request.

But I find you would rather be employed as an Avenging Angel of Wrath, to break your Vial of Indignation over the heads of the

⁶ Sir Harold Williams, ed., The Correspondences of Jonathan Swift (Oxford, 1963), Vol. III, pp. 102-3. All quotations are taken from this edition

wretched and pitiful creatures of this world; nay would make them Eat your book, which you have made as bitter a pill for them as possible (p. 108)

For Pope, Swift is the moral and indignant Juvenalian writing bitter satire, but just how bitter Gulliver's Travels was considered during the early days of publication can only be seen by looking at the initial reaction.

Swift was in Ireland in 1726, the year in which Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World by one, Lemuel Gulliver, was introduced to the London audience. It was for the members of the Scriblerus Club to relate to the Dean the controversy over this new and mysterious book. In their correspondence with Swift, they recorded not only their own invaluable opinions but those of the reading public. During this initial period it was both comedy and biting satire. John Arbuthnot was the first to react to the Travels. In a letter to Swift, he makes reference to its popularity as well as its gay spirit. "Gulliver's Travels...will have as great a run as John Bunyan. Gulliver is a happy man that can at his age write such a merry work." (p. 178) Arbuthnot's description of it as a "merry work" neatly encompasses the initial reaction to the work. The Avenging Angel was hidden by the happy Gulliver, and the bitter pill prophesized by Pope was yet to be tasted. The book was an immediate success and was the rage of all of London. Lemuel Gulliver became as familiar a figure as Swift himself, yet the two remained un-associated. For some Gulliver was bigger than life and at least a few believed that such a man existed. Some such

examples are related to Swift.

Lord Scarborough who is no inventor of Storys told me that he fell into company with a Master of a ship who told him that he was well acquainted with Gulliver, but that the printer had Mistaken, that he lived in Wapping & not in Rotherbith, I lent the book to an old gentleman who immediately went to his map to search for Lillyput. (p. 178)

Just as Gulliver is real, so are his escapades. As absurd as such a report may seem, it does serve to illustrate one of the major cruxes in the early criticism of Gulliver's Travels. Swift's use of verisimilitude was so masterful that it ceased to be considered a satiric technique. If, for some, the voyages fell short of being real, they were at least entertaining imitations. By accepting the minor details at face value, the reader was gulled into making more serious thematic misinterpretations.

Not only was the Travels a believable tale, but it was also looked upon as a witty satire. Pope reports of this in a letter to Swift.

I find no considerable man very angry at the book: some indeed think it rather bold, and too general a Satire: but none that I heard accuses it of particular reflections (I mean no persons of consequence and good judgement; the mob of critics, you know are always desirous to apply Satire to those that they envy for being above them.) (p. 181)

The wise saw the universal quality of the satire. Pope's Dunces, however, true to form, were already engaged in trivial applications. Those to whom it appeared primarily comic, Pope seemed to favor.

It was John Gay who recorded many of the specific reactions, re-expressing many of Pope's attitudes.

The Politicians to a man agree, that it is free from particular reflection, but the Satire on the general societies of men is too severe. Not but we now and then meet with people of greater perspicuity who are in search for particular applications in every leaf; and it is highly probable that we shall have keys published to give light into Gulliver's design. (p. 183)

The book at this early stage is seen as primarily a social commentary, very fitting to the Augustan rhetorical aim. The politicians' yet favorable views mentioned by Gay, are soon to be changed when the key, which he scorns, is published. Gay goes on to mention one of the first condemnations of this "merry work". Lord Bolingbroke, one of the avid followers of Shaftesbury, the advocate of natural benevolence, voices the first important denunciation of Gulliver's Travels. Here the "misanthropy" of Swift is suggested for the first time.

Your Lord Bolingbroke is the person who least approves it, blaming it as a design of evil consequence to depreciate human nature, at which it cannot be wondered that he takes most offence, being himself the most accomplished of his species, and so losing more than any other of that praise which is due both to the dignity and virtue of a man... (p. 183)

Bolingbroke's precious chain of being is subtly mocked here as well as the entire idea of the innate goodness of man. Bolingbroke is a fitting representative of the new sentimental point of view. As much as Gay is jesting, Bolingbroke is deadly serious. Gulliver's horses become for him an absurd distortion of the chain of being, a perversion of the rightful place of man. Others follow the approach of Bolingbroke, seeing the Travels as "an insult on Providence

by depreciating the works of the Creator". (p. 183)

Most of the correspondence received by Swift at this time stresses repeatedly the innate humor of the book, although both the elements of bitter satire and social allegory are simultaneously accepted. The seemingly horrible depreciation of man in Part IV which appalled Bolingbroke, was, for example, looked upon as a purely comic incident by one, Mrs. Howard, who, after complimenting Swift on his book, imagines herself a Yahoo, mirroring his verisimilitude. "Our Island is in great joy; one of our Yahoos having been delivered a creature, half Ram and half Yahoo...in time our female Yahoo will produce a race of Houyhnhnms." (p. 184)

Another letter with apparently the same purpose came to Swift. The Earl of Peterborough supported the comic view, commenting for the first time on Swift's successful use of the mask.

For they pretend to bring in certain proofs of his appearing in severall shapes, at one time a Drappier, at another a Wapping surgeon, sometimes a Nardac, sometimes a Reverend Divine.
(p. 191)

The first seeds of Swiftian criticism have been sown in some fashion throughout the few letters that passed during the first few months of the publication of Gulliver's Travels. The book is both bitter and humorous, a debasement of man and a rollicking satire. It is viewed as too particular in its details and too general in its aims. The private comments of the Scriblerians are in some ways the most substantial proof of the reception of the Travels. These men were also Swift's best critics. Because they knew Swift personally they could comment discriminately on the scene.

Others were not as fortunate, including the critics, the men of "greater perspicuity", of whom John Gay spoke. In December of 1726, the reading public was provided with a key to Gulliver's Travels. A Key Being Observations and Explanatory Notes Upon the Travels of Lemuel Gulliver was pseudonymously written by Signior Corolini in the form of four letters addressed to Dean Swift.⁷ The Key, attributed to Swift,⁸ provides the particular political applications which were initially overlooked, while making a corresponding ironic statement about such an approach. In the four letters specific political allusions are drawn from everything that Gulliver says. The first three books of the Travels are concentrated upon, with "Corolini" pointing out Swift's satire of the Court, Parliament, and the Royal Academy. The verisimilitude of Swift's voyage is immediately regarded as a device of specific, if hidden, invective.

For you who are to know, that under the allegory of a Voyager, Mr. Gulliver gives an admirable System of modern Politicks. And I dare you will agree with me, that so remote are his nations, that you never found any of them in the Maps either of Sanson or DeL'isle. Therefore we must allow Mr. Gulliver to be the Columbus of the present age, and that these nations which he has discovered are more fertile and surprising than the vast tract of land so accurately described by that Geographical French Gentleman Father Hennipin, the Isthmus of America. (pp. 5-6)

7 "A Key being Observations and Explanatory Notes, upon The Travels, by Signior Corolini, "in Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World by Lemuel Gulliver (London, 1726). All quotations are from this edition.

8 Samuel Halkett and John Laing. Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous English Literature, Kennedy, Smith & Johnson, eds (London, 1926), Vol. III, p. 216.

The satire, earlier considered to be overly general, now becomes embarrassingly particular. "Corolini's" parallels include the equation of the ribbon prizes in Lilliput to the honour societies in Britain.

Now Sir, one would swear, if one were not fully convinced that Mr. Gulliver was a man of the strictest veracity his intent could be no other than to ridicule our three most noble Orders of the Garter, the Thistle and the Bath. But indeed the meanness to which the Lilliputians are subjected by an Arbitrary Prince can never be the fate of Britain thanks to the happiness of our admirable constitution. (p. 16)

In a seemingly ironic vein, the author points out something which has now come to be accepted as fact. Light touches, such as the above, are tempered by more serious political equations. The conspiracy against Gulliver in Lilliput is paralleled to that against Lord Oxford. "The severities threatened against poor Lemuel, some have resembled to the late Earl of O....d's Sufferings." (p. 26) With this serving as a basis, the author then draws comparisons between the Lilliputian conspirators and the members of Parliament. An allusion of this sort is apropos because the charges against Gulliver are similar to those against Oxford.

In this vein "Corolini" elaborates his key. Whether he is to be regarded as a Tory sympathizer publishing a diatribe against the Whigs or a naive critic is incidental. What is important is the fact that Gulliver's Travels is first interpreted as a political and social satire, providing a new focus of criticism for the first half of the eighteenth century. It is also significant that the politi-

cal allegory had to be made perceptible so that it would be apparent to the reading public. The Key, as a whole, reads like a modern day digest. The explanations of the allusions are tied together by a running narrative which paraphrases the story. It is entirely possible to see the satiric object within its framework without once perceiving the satiric art. Its estimated value can be seen in the fact that it was appended to the third edition of the Travels.

The Toryism of Swift, brought to the surface in the Key, could not rest without comment from the Whig faction. In A Letter from a Clergyman to his Friend, the first open invective against Swift is presented.⁹ On first reading the letter, the reader is faced with a serious denunciation of Gulliver's Travels, which is, in turn, viewed as a reflection of Swift. After referring to the first three books as amusing and diverting, the author rails against Swift for the creation of Part IV.

In the fourth book;...he [Swift] loses his vivacity, and in my Opinion, maintains little of his former Spirit, but the Rancour. This indeed appears most plentiful in this Part, and the Captain seems so wholly influenced by it, that he makes a sort of Recapitulation of Invectives he had vented before; and having revived a fresh supply of Gall, appears resolved to discharge it, though he has no way than by varying the Phrase, to express in other words the unjust Sentiments: In this long and tedious part the Reader loses all that might have been engaging to him in the

9 "A Letter from A Clergyman to His Friend, with an Account of the Travels of Capt. Lemuel Gulliver, and a Character of the Author," in Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World by Capt. Lemuel Gulliver (London, 1726) Vol. II. All quotations are taken from this edition.

three former; the Capacity and Character there given of Brutes, are so unnatural; and especially the great Predominance asserted of them, to the most virtuous and noble of human nature, is so monstrously absurd and unjust, that 'tis with the utmost pain a generous Mind might endure the Recital... (p. 7).

The diatribe against Part IV is not surprising when taken at its face value. The author cleverly expresses such criticism first, and only after establishing the vile nature of Swift's work does he castigate him for voicing such a vicious invective against George I and the Whig government. It appears, then, that the condemnation of Swift is, in reverse, a defense of the Whig government. Swift, now recognized as the author of The Travels, is looked upon as an envious, insolent and avaricious man for being so unjust to the English cause.

The Doctor divests himself of the Gentleman and Christian entirely; and in their stead assumes, or if my instructions are right, I should rather have said, disclosed the reverse to them both; a character too gross to be described here and is better conceived than expressed; He makes a collection of all the meanest, basest, Terms the Rabble use in their contests with one another in the Streets, and these he discharged without any other distinction than only, that they who are Persons of the greatest Worth and Desert are loaded with the greatest number of 'em. (p. 11)

It slowly becomes clear that the attack of Gulliver's Travels is nothing more than a renunciation of Swift's political tenets. It is much more effective and lasting to be specific in invective; thus he attacks the man rather than the beliefs. After this diatribe, the author then feels safe to give an example of one of the "persons of great worth" and the unjust manner in which he was treated by Swift. The defense of the

renowned Whig, Walpole, obviously becomes the sole purpose of the essay. As in the Key, critical comment is nothing but a mask for political aims. But even when the political manipulation becomes perceptible, it does nothing to alter the myth of Swift as a morally debased individual.

When Swift wrote to Pope of his reason for writing the Travels, he stated that he did not wish to impede his fortune. The particular applications which were made thus far probably did much to deter this end. The specific political allegory, however, was never once publicly recognized by members of the Scriblerus Club. They remained faithful to Swift, never once forsaking the comic element of his work. Their reactions are recorded in a group of poems which were prefixed to a 1727 edition of Gulliver's Travels.¹⁰

The four poems, which have been attributed to Pope,¹¹ adapt the fiction of Swift's work, carrying it to a ludicrous extreme. The poems, written to Gulliver, are penned by such figures as a Lilliputian and Mary Gulliver. Dealing with some of Gulliver's episodes, they laughingly attest to his madness. The two horses who neigh at Gulliver at the end of Part IV are represented in one of the poems, "The Grateful Address of the Unhappy Houyhnhnms Now in Slavery and Bondage in England." They attest to Gulliver's great learning in

¹⁰ Jonathan Swift, Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World: To which are Prefix'd Copies of Verse Explanatory and Commendatory, Never Before Printed (London, 1727), n.p. All quotations are taken from this edition.

¹¹ Alexander Pope, The Poems of Pope, Henry W. Boynton, ed. (Boston, 1931), pp. 121-25.

reason and virtue among the Houyhnhnms, which conditioned his personal reformation. He is ludicrously parodied as a contemporary of Caesar.

You went, you saw, you heard: with virtue
fought,
Then spread the morals which the Houyhnhnms
taught. (ll. 21-22)

This extension of Gulliver's own madness is a clever manipulation of Swift's verisimilitude as well as a perceptive account of the absurdity of the horse nation.

Yes, we are slaves - but yet by Reason's force,
Have learned to bear misfortune like a horse. (ll.31-32)

The madness of Gulliver is further developed in Mary Gulliver's epistle, "Mary Gulliver to Captain Lemuel Gulliver". In this, the horses are seen as horses, no longer reason's outward form. Mary, completely beside herself for being replaced by a horse, voices her lasting love for Gulliver, and her desire to please him.

...would kind Jove my organs so dispose,
To hum harmonious Houyhnhnm thro' the nose
I'd call thee Houyhnhnm, that high sounding name
Thy children's noses all shouldst twang the same.
So might I find my loving spouse of course
Imbued with all the virtues of a horse. (105-10)

If Gulliver was not yet considered mad, he certainly proves himself to be so by this point. The view of the Scriblerians is entirely comic. Because the rational horses are so absurd, so is Gulliver, and regardless of the satiric purpose, the satiric form certainly incorporates much comedy.

The comedy was not perceived by everyone, and in most cases the book was looked upon as an allegory with a one to one relationship. The Key gave the Tory viewpoint,

the Letter, that of the Whig. The next essay to appear combines the two. In a satiric key, a Whig author attempts to associate the political allegory with the reign of Queen Anne and ironically prove Swift's authorship.

12

The article Gulliver Decypher'd is written as a piece of source study, which traces the book to a fifteenth century manuscript dealing with the reign of Queen Zenobia and her ministry. It finds a supposedly surprising parallel to the reign of Queen Anne, Oxford and Bolingbroke. The authorship of Gulliver's Travels falls to a famous triumvirate which coincidentally parallel the brothers in A Tale of a Tub.

...and the Pontiff Martin (for that was his name in plain English) had the chief Hand in composing it, being his Creature and Domestick, tho' there is great reason to believe that Peter and Johnny were concerned in it from several Peculiarities remarkable in their writings. (p. 13)

Now that Swift is indirectly accused, he can be ironically defended.

Another reason why this book cannot be the D---, is, that it plainly appears to be the work of a Heathen or a Jew there being not one word of true Christianity in it, but several ludicrous and obscene Passages, which are shocking even to common Decency and every Body is acquainted with the D---'s great piety and devotion as well as his Abhorrence of Blasphemy and religion. (p. 9)

The author is saying in an ironic fashion precisely what the Clergyman said straightforwardly, the purpose for doing so

12 Gulliver Decypher'd or Remarks on a Late Book, Entitled Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World by Capt. Lemuel Gulliver: Vindicating the Reverend Dean on Whom it is maliciously Fathered (London, 1727). All quotations are taken from this edition.

being exactly the same. After suggesting a depraved Swift, the author ironically implies his political affiliations.

A third Reason why this book cannot be the worthy D---'s is the many oblique Reflections it is said to cast upon the present happy administration to which 'tis well known he is devoutely attach'd and affected. (p. 10)

Swift is being condemned, not for his general social satire, but for the specific reference to Whig politics. For this reason, anything which was previously accepted as a political allusion is immediately dismissed as irrelevant.

Your dealers in Mysteries will certainly find strange meanings in the description of Dancing upon Ropes and Leaping over Sticks; and give a political turn to every Circumstance of it. But how can matters done so long ago affect us; but if they needs be more modern; from thence we argue, That the Reverend De'n could have had no hand in them since he is wholly devoted to Piety and Religion. (p. 21)

In the case that reflections are made, and the Whigs implicated, the allegory is immediately fathered on the author of the fifteenth century manuscript. This not only negates the application to the present political situation but also suggests its appropriateness to the reign of Queen Anne.

It must indeed, be acknowledged, that both the diversion of Rope-Dancing and Leaping over Sticks, as well as the account of the quarrel about breaking eggs at the small End, and of High and Low Heels, is in some pretty ancient copies, and a friend assures us, that he has seen one in the Harleian Library, wherein all these particulars were contained Word for Word. (p. 28)

Throughout this essay a clear distinction is made between Swift and the author of Gulliver's Travels, who is strangely enough not considered to be Gulliver. After making this

distinction, Swift is then ironically implicated for all the abuse. The stress placed upon Gulliver as author, possessing a peculiar point of view, which was so evident in the writings of the Scriblerus is completely ignored here. Instead there is a concentration entirely upon Part I with its abounding political allegory. The critical method is used both as a technique and a mask for party warfare.

The Scriblerians look at the Travels one more time, and, as they did in their own writings, stress the verisimilitude used by the author. John Arbuthnot, in 1728, wrote an article, Critical Remarks on Capt. Gulliver's Travels.¹³ It was pseudonymously penned by one, Doctor Bantley, who is undoubtedly a caricature of the contemporary scholar, Doctor Bentley. Swift, as it has already been seen, has been accused of debasing mankind in his fourth book. Lord Bolingbroke commented on this for philosophical purposes and the Clergyman for political. At this time, Arbuthnot saw fit to come to Swift's defense and treat the problem of the Houyhnhnms in a witty and satiric manner.

He never once admits that the Houyhnhnms should be taken for anything other than reasoning horses. The popular notion that Swift is upsetting the chain of being by debasing man to a level below a horse is comically twisted. He castigates the reader for allowing himself to be insulted and

¹³ John Arbuthnot, "Critical Remarks on Capt. Gulliver's Travels by Dr. Bantley" (pseud.) in The Miscellaneous Works of the Late Dr. Arbuthnot, 2nd. ed. (Glasgow, 1751). All quotations are taken from this edition.

proves conclusively that Gulliver's Houyhnhnms come from a long line of such animals extending back into ancient times. Man should be flattered to be compared to such a noble breed.

Just as those who saw man compared to beast through a superficial reading of Gulliver's Travels, Arbuthnot superficially reads his ancient sources and ironically points out the ridiculousness of the whole interpretation.

I shall undertake to convince the learned by sufficient evidence, that such a notion as he calls the Houyhnhnms, was perfectly known by the Ancients: The fame of their private and public virtues were spread through Athens, Italy and Britain... (p. 20)

He is the perfect neo-classic, finding an ancient source for his problem horses. Homer and Vergil are cited, when Arbuthnot takes into consideration the noble horses which appeared in their epics. One of the most ludicrous sources is the case of the raging Roman Emperor, Caligula.

Caligula, as we are told by Dion. Cassius, frequently invited this consular Houyhnhms (whose real name was Lunbiyhnhay, but in Latin Incitatus) to supper and treated him with more Ceremony and Veneration than did the noblest Family of Rome...the King himself swore, by no greater Oath than the Health and Fortune of the Honourable Creature, which was as high a Degree of respect as he could pay even to the Father of the Gods. (p. 125)

By asserting the superiority of the Houyhnhnms, Arbuthnot purposely misses Swift's irony in the creation of a rational animal. The persona, Bantley, takes the rational appearance of the horses, tries to place it in a contrived historical context, and in this way, superficially attempts to interpret Swift's comparison between man and beast. The

satiric object is emphasised through another reference to Caligula.

It is to be wondered at, indeed, that Caligula profited so little by these instructive Conferences which he held so often with that wise Ambassador: but, we all experimentally know, that nothing is so difficult as to mend a bad Nature...(p. 125)

If an equation of Caligula and Gulliver is to be drawn from this, Arbuthnot seems to be attesting to the same comic end suggested in the poems, a Gulliver who is happily mad. The facts of Swift's story are carefully applied to state subtly that the satire is not to be taken at its face value, either as a good or bad reflection of man. For Arbuthnot, the author of the Travels can only be Captain Gulliver and, although Swift has been established as the real author, the fine distinction between Swift and Gulliver is subtly maintained. It is significant that in every line written by the members of Swift's circle, the two, Gulliver and Swift, are never interchanged. Gulliver remains the storyteller and Swift the craftsman, as indeed it was originally intended to be.

Arbuthnot concludes his argument with a careful refutation of the ridiculous charge that Swift is debasing man.

I do not doubt that this will clear Gulliver from another severe Imputation - which he lay under for debasing human nature - by making Men inferior to Horses. Because in the Treatise, it is so plain, that Antiquity professed to be of a very different Opinion, and it is so manifest, that the whole history is a Fact and not a Fiction, that if we think Mankind disgraced by the Comparison, it is to their own Vices - and not to the Traveller's Relation we ought to impute it.

Arbuthnot is aware of the audience who interpreted Swift according to Shaftesbury's view of the natural benevolence of man. The distaste for the evaluation of man as inferior to a horse is not a distaste for the particular relationship between Gulliver and the Houyhnhnm or the debasement caused by the relationship between the man and the horse. Instead the distaste is caused because the relationship is used as a means of underscoring man's vices.

Gulliver's Travels was defended one more time during Swift's lifetime. Ten years after Arbuthnot's Remarks, another pseudonymous writer, John Wagstaff published in The Gentleman's Magazine, "A Defense of Mr. Gulliver's Voyages, Truth Asserted, or, A Demonstration that the Relations in Mr. Gulliver's Voyages are No Fiction."¹⁴ The scholars had obviously, by this time, carefully perused the Travels and revealed the folly of those gulled into believing that such an adventure was real. The opinion developed that such things as the size of the Lilliputians and Brobdignagians as well as Gulliver's deliverance by the eagle were incredible. Mr. Wagstaff satirizes this type of trivial and superficial evaluation by ironically re-emphasizing Swift's use of verisimilitude.

As in the writings of the Scriblerians, the author asserts the authorship of Gulliver, never once mentioning

¹⁴ John Wagstaff, "A Defense of Mr. Gulliver's Voyages, Truth Asserted, or, A Demonstration that the Relations in Mr. Gulliver's Voyages are no Fiction," The Gentleman's Magazine, Vo. IX, 1739, 55-59. All quotations are taken from this edition.

Swift.

I have made it my Business to enquire into the Character of Mr. Gulliver from his Neighbours, Friends, and Relations, and all in general allow him to have been a plain, downright, sincere, moral Man, and one that always abhorred a lye, and indeed he seems to have been such by his writings; his Faithfulness appears through the whole work, which is but a Transcript of his life, and a Picture of the Simplicity of Manners, for which he was so remarkable. (p. 55)

In this manner the satire and irony of the Travels are subtly rejected as the author gives a fairly valid evaluation of Swift's mask, Gulliver. The various incidents in the book are viewed in much the same way as Arbuthnot's approach to the Houyhnhnms.

I presume that Gentlemen take Offence because Mr. Gulliver induces the Houyhnhnms with the faculty of speaking and thereby places them in a Station of Dignity equal to Man, the Glory of Creation. But wherein lies any Absurdities? Do we not daily hear Parrots, Starlings, Magpies, etc. speaking articulately? Why then not horses? Are they not more tractable and docile than most other creatures? And if less perfect animals learn to speak, why not they? (p. 58-9)

He makes reference to another talking horse, the steed of Achilles, who reasons, moralizes and prophesizes. Wagstaff is dealing with what seems to be the basic problem of the early eighteenth century audience, the purpose for the minute attention to verisimilitude throughout Gulliver's Travels. This technique was present in Robinson Crusoe, but the utilitarian and materialistic end was probably recognized. The voyage as allegory was represented in The Pilgrim's Progress, but for obvious religious purposes. Political and social allegory could well dismiss the first

three books of The Travels, but the problem of the talking horses still remained. The critics who sympathized with Swift subtly mocked the prevalent preoccupation with the superficialities. They did so, however, in an equally confusing satiric manner and may have only complicated the critical scene.

During Swift's lifetime there was a tendency to concentrate only on the political satire. The critical criterion depended on the critics own political position. The character of Gulliver as distinct from Swift was recognized only by his intimate associates. Thus, for the rest of the Augustan world, the mask of Gulliver was dismissed, as Swift became the direct author of all of Gulliver's observations. As soon as the initial favorable reception of the book had worn off, the public began to look more closely at the book, especially at the Houyhnhnms and Yahoos. As great as the problem of the fourth part was, however, it never interfered with the inherent comedy of Gulliver's Travels. Despite the obvious moral overtones of the book, coupled with Swift's "vexing" dilemmas, the Augustans never lost sight of the Dean as the witty satirist.

CHAPTER II

THE GULLIVER-SWIFT DILEMMA

All the problems which first arose with the publication of Gulliver's Travels continued through the eighteenth century, the system of allegory, the satiric purpose, and the book's oblique vision. The comedy, however, which was an essential feature of the Travels, amusing the early audience, began to fade as readers began to concentrate on the moral nature of the book. The political allegory of the government of Walpole and the court of George I, no longer a relevant issue, also was bypassed. By the middle of the eighteenth century at least one man was reading Gulliver's Travels as a deadly serious, moral and ethical satire.

John Boyle, the Earl of Cork and Orrery, did more to influence Swiftian criticism of the eighteenth century than any other figure. A friend of Swift's during the Dean's last years in Ireland, Orrery was highly praised by him as a budding scholar.¹⁵ The favour in which he was held did little to alter his vile critical and biographical appraisal. In 1752, he published his very controversial Remarks on the Life and

¹⁵ Biographical Information on Orrery based on sketch in DNB s.v. "Boyle".

Writings of Jonathan Swift. Orrery is a fitting representative of the influential group who saw literature as a means of overt moral statement, not complicated by the ambiguity caused by Swift's irony and use of the mask. Both Swift and Gulliver's Travels are enigmas to Orrery. Superficially he is a very self-assured writer and critic, judging Swift by the new dictum of the sentimental audience. His book, however, is filled with contradictions. Swift's wit and humour are constantly referred to, but the explication of Swift's work is made solely on the grounds of the type and effectiveness of the moral essay.

Orrery cannot reconcile the Swift of Gulliver's Travels with the Swift he personally knew. So rather than engaging in a close textual analysis of the mysterious work, he prefers to fit the enigmatic Swift to the misanthropic Gulliver. Swift is first viewed as a paradox.

He was a mixture of avarice, and generosity; the former was frequently prevalent, the latter seldom appeared, unless exacted by compassion. He was open to adulation, and could not, or would not, distinguish between low flattery and just applause. His abilities rendered him superior to envy. He was undignified and perfectly sincere. (p. 5)

The favorable qualities which might have tempered the view of Swift as a debased man are soon eliminated when Orrery begins to consider Swift's life. Much of his evil is undoubtedly due to the "madness" contracted in Ireland caused

16 John Boyle, Earl of Cork and Orrery, Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift (London, 1752). All quotations are taken from this edition.

by the eating of an "immoderate quantity of fruit." (p. 19) His "madness" made him a reflection of his own Struldbruggs, "devoid of every appearance of human nature except the outward form."(p.19) This portrayal of Swift as a less than rational man is further substantiated when Orrery looks at his writings.

He delighted in the scenes of low life. The vulgar dialect was not only a fund of humour for him, but I believe verily was acceptable to his nature; otherwise I do not know how to account for the many filthy ideas and indecent expressions (I mean indecent in the point of cleanliness and delicacy) that will be found throughout his works. (p. 34)

Yet within a few pages he can say:

...while he entertains the ignorant and the vulgar, he draws an equal attention from the learned and the great. While he is serious his gravity becomes him. When he laughs, his reader must laugh with him. But what shall be said of his love of trifles, and his want of delicacy and decorum... they proceeded from the misanthropy of his disposition which induced him peevishly to debase mankind, and even to ridicule human nature itself. (p. 62)

Orrery's composite picture of Swift is that of the genius completely perverted by his own pride and love of flattery. The power that pride exerted over him is seen in the manner in which he treated Stella, refusing to marry her because she was beneath his station, and in his political activities in which he unknowingly became a pawn in the intrigues of court. Swift's disappointment found vent in his works, in which the twisted and sour character of the man was revealed.

This type of biographical criticism is bound to present problems, the greatest of which lies in connection

with Gulliver's Travels. Orrery finds this book all but impossible to evaluate. By tradition it was thought to be a witty humorous satire of human folly. Yet, for Orrery, it is the product of a debased moralist. Thus it is viewed in the light of the portrayal of Swift already developed, the misanthropic, dissipated genius. The form of the book is that of a very overt moral fable endowed with a few glimpses of wit.

To correct vice, by shewing her deformity in opposition to the beauty of virtue, and to amend the false systems of philosophy, by pointing out errors, and applying salutary means to avoid them, is a noble design. This was the true intent ... of my hieroglyphic friend. (p. 134)

The political allegory which captivated the Augustan audience is only mentioned by Orrery.

In his description of Blefuscu, he seems to intend the people and kingdom of France: yet the allegory between these nations is frequently interrupted and scarce anywhere compleat. Several just strokes of satire are scattered here and there upon errors in the conduct of our government... (p. 136)

Instead the book is frequently interpreted as a satire of the greater order of the universe.

Gulliver in his voyage to Lilliput dares even to exert his vein of humour so liberally, as to place the resurrection (one of the most encouraging principles of Christian religion) in a ridiculous and contemptible light. (p. 146)

What was once an example of political allegory is now just a further example of Swift's total debasement.

For Orrery, the first two voyages are for the most part distasteful. The Lilliputians are "a set of puny insects,

or animalcules in human shape, ridiculously engaged in affairs of human importance." (p.135) The voyage to Brobdingnag

contains such sarcasms on the structure of the human body, as to plainly shew us, that the author was unwilling to lose any opportunity of debasing and ridiculing his own species. (p. 137)

The very obvious allegory on which Orrery wishes to comment provides further examples of Swift's debasement. In other instances, the allusions are a pivot for his own moralizing.

It is not surprising then that Part III would elicit the greatest response from Orrery. It is the most straightforward of the four, and ironically, the one which least entertained the Augustan audience. A detailed elaboration upon Swift's objects of satire is presented. For example, his treatment of mathematics is commended.

...the abuses of this study, the idle, then, immechanical refinements of it, are just subjects of satire. The real use of knowledge is to invigorate, not to enervate the faculties of reason. Learning degenerates into a species of madness, when it is not superior to what it possesses. (p. 148)

Orrery not only explains Swift, but offers his own reflections on the problem. The emphasis on Part III provides him a vent for his own highly estimated knowledge. Choosing passages which he considers highly moralistic, Orrery evaluates them according to his own conception of didactic literature. The apparitions, for example, regarded as a typical vehicle for moral satire, are considered to be badly handled by Swift.

Perhaps, Swift's general design might be to arraign the conduct of eminent persons after their death, and to convey their

names and images to posterity, deprived of those false colours, in which they formally appeared. If these were his intentions, he missed his aim; or at least, has been so far carried away by his disposition to raillery, that the moral, which ought to arise from such a fable, is buried in obscurity. (p. 156)

It is not evident to Orrery that such overt moralizing might not have been the design of Swift. His satiric art is scorned as raillery, while any intentional obscurity is viewed as a deliberate perversion of his aim. In an attempt to rectify the false wit that Swift has perpetrated, Orrery discusses in detail the apparitions, interpreting them within his own moral context. In doing so, he completely divests them of their inherent comedy. Alexander's drunkenness, for example is included to

convince us how far the native excellencies of the mind may be debased and changed by passions which too often attend success and luxury. (p. 158)

The Brutus-Caesar incident provides even greater opportunities to moralize. Caesar's sardonic comment to Gulliver, "that the greatest action of his life, were not by many degrees equal to the glory of taking it away," is somewhat perverted by Orrery's interpretation. It is not that, in this particular case, the myth became greater than the man, but that the death of Caesar provided the world with a fund of moral implications about a degenerate Rome.

If the conspirators had restored liberty to their country, their act had been completely glorious, and would have shewed, that Caesar, not Rome, was degenerate. But if we may judge from the consequences, Heaven disapproved of the deed: a particular fate attended the conspirators not one of whom died a natural death. (pp. 161-2)

The characters of Brutus and Caesar also merit close attention. Orrery goes far beyond anything ever implied in the Travels, drawing similar homeletic conclusions from their lives.

In his public character, Caesar appears a strong example, how far the greatest natural and acquired accomplishments may lose their lustre, when made subservient to false glory, and an immoderate thirst for power: as on the other hand, the history of Brutus may instruct us, what unhappy effect the rigid exercise of superior virtue, when misapplied and carried too far, may produce in the most steadfast mind or the soundest judgement. (p. 164)

Through an inability to discriminate between the good and evil aspirations of life, two virtuous men met tragic destruction. In the case of all the apparitions, the tragic elements are always emphasized, the comic are unnoticed. Homer provides for Orrery an opportunity to digress on epic greatness; Aristotle for philosophical perversions. In similar manner, he forces overt moral meanings from Swift's various examples. This section, which Orrery finds particularly adaptable to moral reflection, is proportionately longer than the space devoted to any of the other three parts.

The Voyage to Houyhnhnmland most appals Orrery. He retains the ambivalent view towards the rational horses which was evident during the earlier Augustan age. Swift's sin, however, is seen as being far more serious to the mid-century audience. In open hostility, Orrery denounces Swift as well as his supposed satiric device and object.

The representation which he has given us of human nature, must terrify, and even debase the mind of the reader who views it. His sallies of wit and humour lose

all their force, nothing remaining but a melancholy, and disagreeable impression; ...we are disgusted not entertained; we are shocked, not instructed by the fable.
(p. 184)

For Orrery, the satire must be read as an allegory with a one to one relationship. The Houyhnhnms are rational beings higher than man. The Yahoos are the picture of man, devoid of reason, ruled by passion, and subservient to the beast. The discussion of Part IV is introduced by a discussion of the contemporary view of the benevolent man which Swift so violently perverted. Man is made of two components, body and soul, acting as one. The soul is the principle of organization, the ruling force, which raises man to a level higher than the rest of creation.

It is from the pre-eminence of the soul over body, that we are enabled to view the exact order, and curious variety of different beings; to consider and cultivate the natural productions of the earth; and to admire and imitate the wise benevolence which reigns through the whole system of the universe. It is from hence that we form moral laws for our conduct. (p. 187)

Man possesses the innate goodness of Shaftesbury, endowed with natural benevolence, carved in the image of his creator. Such a man is likened to the good, working naturally towards this end. After establishing this structure of belief, Orrery states that Swift writes in complete defiance of this, that he "deduces his observations from the wrong principles". (p. 184) This perversion of nature is most blatantly expressed in the beasts of Houyhnhnmland. According to Orrery, in the Yahoos, Swift

considers the soul and body in their most

degenerate, and uncultivated state: the former a slave to the appetite of the latter. He seems insensible of the surprising mechanism, and beauty of every part of the human composition...In painting Yahoos he becomes one himself. (p. 188)

The Yahoos cannot be considered as a true reflection of the benevolent man, but rather as the despicable creation of a depraved moralist. The equation of "man-Swift-Yahoo", which will become an accepted axiom in eighteenth century criticism is bluntly stated by Orrery. The humour of the Yahoo seen in Mrs. Howard's letter is replaced by a figure which is the complete perversion of the eighteenth century ideal. The elements of Swift's satire which entertained the Augustans only disgust Orrery. His main criticism is that the vulgarities in the book detract from its effectiveness as overt moral teaching. "We cannot stay long enough to examine whether wit, sense or morality, may be couched under such odious appearances." (p. 190) The Yahoos possess this odious quality, and Orrery finds it impossible to closely evaluate them. Choosing to ignore them, he feels it is not necessary "to assert the vindication of human nature." (p.184)

Orrery shows unusual perception when he analyzes the Houyhnhnms, presenting in a straightforward manner the ironic statement made earlier by Arbuthnot.

We there view the pure instincts of brutes, unassisted by any knowledge of letters, acting within their own narrow sphere, merely for their own preservation. They are incapable of doing wrong, therefore they act right. It is surely a very low character given to creatures, in whom the author would insinuate some degree of reason, that they act inoffensively, when they have neither the power or the motive to act otherwise. Their

virtuous qualities are only negative.
(p. 189).

The concept is expanded no further than this. The paradoxical view of the rational horses is seen only as a lack of authenticity on the part of Swift in the creation of his characters. The irony inherent in the paradox is not thought to be a part of Swift's overall structure of Part IV. It is instead just another example of Swift's misguided genius. In presenting the base, passionate Yahoo and the absurd Houyhnhnm, Swift completely destroys any moral lesson which might be drawn from the book.

Orrery seems to believe that the purpose of literature is to ridicule vice in order to bring back those who go astray to the great benevolent fold. Swift occasionally achieves this end in the first three voyages, but the fourth is "a real insult upon mankind". (p. 191) If the moral is not obvious it does not work, and consequently the Travels fails miserably as a moral fable. The lesson is not to be obliquely presented by using such techniques as irony and the mask. It is not by "vexing" one's audience that folly is averted, but rather through a clear and recognizable description of it. Because Swift refused to do so, he was considered a failure as a moral satirist.

The question is then asked by Orrery whether a virtuous man can write debased literature. For this he finds only a negative answer. Since Gulliver's Travels is an odious and vulgar work, the view of Swift which ultimately emerges from the biography is that of a depraved

moralist, the insane man unwilling to forsake his art. That Swift would use indelicacies for satiric ends is absurd; they are nothing more than the manifestation of a twisted mind. While the comedy of Gulliver's Travels is destroyed through forced moral implications, the stature of Swift is undercut through the biographical references Orrery sees throughout the book.

The Remarks was considered to be the definitive work on Swift when it was published in 1752. From this point on, the name of Orrery appeared in every critical biography of Swift. When Swift's works were published in that same year, the editor paraphrased Orrery and prefixed this life to the edition.¹⁷ The Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and¹⁸ Ireland, published in 1753, attributed to Theophilus Cibber, also drew on Orrey's account only to embellish it with more vicious examples of Swift's "misanthopy". Orrey's book did more to influence eighteenth century criticism of Swift than any other work. His sentimental stances found sympathy in his audience, whose belief in the new dictum would certainly allow them to tolerate an invective against such a blatant disbeliever. There were those, however, who wished to re-establish the stature of Swift. In order to do so Orrery's influential book had to be taken into account. For this

¹⁷ Jonathan Swift, The Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift to which is Prefixed the Doctor's life, 7th ed. (Dublin, 1752).

¹⁸ Theophilus Cibber, The Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland (London, 1763), Vol. V, pp. 73-100.

reason subsequent criticism of Swift was as equally concerned with the denunciation of Orrery as with the defense of the Dean.

CHAPTER III

THE REAPPRAISAL OF GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

Swift's reputation was hopelessly smeared by Orrery. It was natural, therefore, to try to stem the tide and re-establish the Augustan view of the witty, satiric genius. In order to do so, Gulliver's Travels, the work which formed the pivot of Orrery's appraisal of Swift, had to be reconsidered. The biographer's task was to reassess his subject by means of a new and unincriminating approach to the Travels. This in turn was supported by vicious attacks on Orrery's reliability as a critic and biographer. The first such attack, written in the form of a poem from a resurrected Dean Swift, was A Candid Appeal From the Late Dean Swift to the Right Hon. Earl of Orrery Vindicated, published in 1752.¹⁹ The author castigates Orrery for many of his slanderous remarks, accusing him of ulterior motives in writing the book.

Explain good Manners, teach good Sense
At poor departed Swift's Expense
What more remains, a simple Tale:
(Permit an injured Shade to rail)
Dévoid of Humour, Taste and Wit.

The author cleverly reveals Orrery's concealed reasons, and after attacking the book as a vehicle for self-adulation,

¹⁹ A Candid Appeal from the Late Dean Swift to the Right Hon. Earl of Orrery Vindicated (London, 1752), p.5, ll. 31-35.

he implies that such a biography would never have appeared if Swift had been living. But since Swift could not come to his own defense, it fell upon his friends and associates to right this misrepresentation. All the biographers who follow Orrery have the tendency to whitewash Swift and apologize for the indelicate Gulliver's Travels, rather than to consider it as a means of implicating him.

The first of these who countered Lord Orrery's attack was Patrick Delany, a fellow clergyman and intimate friend of Swift while he was in Ireland.²⁰ In 1754, he anonymously published Observations upon Lord Orrery's Remarks on the Life and Writings of Jonathan Swift.²¹ It was a defense of Swift, an apology for Gulliver's Travels and an attack on Lord Orrery.

The defense of the Dean takes the form of a number of anecdotes which illustrate Swift's kindness, generosity and humour- all the qualities which Orrery denied him. Orrery is constantly called into question for debasing Swift, and is made to look ridiculous for voicing such scandalous attacks. The Swift who emerges is a fun-loving, kind, and easygoing genius, a sardonic guardian angel. After refuting Orrery's views of the depraved Dean, Delany then takes into account the writings, a further manifestation of character. Swift is cleared of the charge of vulgarity by means of a

²⁰ Biographical information on Delany based on sketch in DNB s.v. "Delany."

²¹ Patrick Delany, Observations Upon Lord Orrery's Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift (London, 1754). All quotations are taken from this edition.

subtle distinction between the satirist and the man. The indelicacies of the satire are considered to be more the product of an unbridled wit than a depraved spirit.

This man is certain that Swift never could keep his style clear of offence when a temptation of wit came his way. This also I know with the utmost certainty: that the defilement became much more conspicuous, upon his return from his first long visit to Mr. Pope: and in all the time I had the honour to know him, antecedent to this era, his ideas, and his style throughout the whole course of his conversation, were remarkably delicate and pure.

(p. 74-5)

Not quite convinced of this distinction between the man and the craftsman, Delany quickly asserts an alternative answer, blaming this weakness in Swift on the evil influence of Pope.

Delany has subjected himself to an appraisal of a prelapsarian man indulging in literary depravities, and as such he involves himself in a dilemma similar to Orrery's. It is admitted that Swift, in some way, fails to create the proper perspective of a moral fable. He destroys his moral aim, and perverts the perfect Utopian structure, a fitting vehicle of instruction, which lay at the base of the Travels and more particularly in the flying island.

... something might have been imagined in the idea of such a government, analogous to that of God's dominion over the earth, in various circumstances of which, the presidency, appointment, and determinations of Providence, might be nobly and delightfully imitated. But doubtless ... this required all the powers of the greatest Genius, in its full vigour, whereas Swift's genius was then ... verging towards the decline. (p. 139)

The only reason for a mistake such as the Travels is senility if not admitted madness. Delany, however, clarifies that such a decline is not unusual. Specific reference is made to Aristotle's notion that human abilities decline in the forty-ninth year. (p. 140) Swift conveniently fits into this classification and should be justly excused for his writings after this age. Delany asserts that just trifling satire remains from this terminal period of life. In addition to his falling into senility. Swift's prolonged activity as a satirist completely soured his former humanitarian perspective on life.

Another cause of this decay in his understanding, was the sourness of temper which his disappointments first created in him: and the indulgence of his passions perpetually increased. This also inflamed his spirit of satire, and with that his aversion to mankind. For satire is a kind of anti-flattering glass, which shews us nothing but deformities, in the objects we contemplate in it: and deformities naturally create aversions. (p. 144)

In this treatment Swift the misanthrope emerges. As much as Delany attempts to avoid this characterization, he is no longer able to shroud it when he evaluates Gulliver's Travels. Swift's inclination to satire has badly influenced him, perverting the benevolence Delany tries to portray.

In complete agreement with Orrery's treatment of the Travels, Delany only wishes to expand upon some of the points left undeveloped. Concentrating on Part IV, Delany indulges in a lengthy analysis of the Houyhnhnms and Yahoos. Like Orrery, he sometimes shows amazing but misguided perception. He elaborates upon the physical features of each species,

beginning with the Yahoos.

The picture he draws of the Yahoos is too offensive to be copied, even in the slightest sketch. And therefore we shall only observe, that whilst he is debasing the human form to the lowest degree of a defiled imagination, he yet allows some powers in it, of a very distinguished nature. Strength, activity, and a prodigious agility. (p. 162)

This provides a stepping stone for a digression on the human form, much in the same vein as Orrery's digression on man's benevolence.

He can dart himself into the air; turn in it, heels over head, inverting the centre of gravity, with an amazing power; and then bring his feet firm to the ground with the utmost security. (p. 163)

After providing a variety of examples, Delany objects to Swift's satirizing of man's erect posture, one of the advantages and distinctive features of the human species. One concession, however, is made to Swift's art, that "he [Swift] had enough sense to put the objection made to it, into the mouth of Houyhnhnm, who could know no better." (p. 164)

The distasteful portrait of the brute Yahoo is complimented by that of the absurd rational Houyhnhnm. Delany perceives some discrepancy in the placement of a rational soul in an irrational body.

Next to man, a horse is generally allowed the noblest animal of the inferior world. And yet what a clumsy condition does the human soul appear to be in, when supposed to be lodged in that form, utterly incapable of the meanest of those innumerable and important actions, and offices, which distinguish the lowest class of mankind. (p. 165)

Why Swift would ever permit such a discrepancy is ques-

tionable and Delany offers a simplified solution.

This voyage is considered as a satire of Swift's upon the human frame ... it was intended only as a satire upon human corruptions: be that as it may, it is most certainly in effect a panegyrick upon the human frame, by shewing the utter inability even of the noblest structure of inferior animals: to answer the purposes of a reasonable life in this world. (pp. 165-6)

The Houyhnhnms serve a dual purpose, on one level a satire on man, on another, an inverted praise of the human form. This provides an acceptable and straightforward explanation of Swift's ludicrous equation of the horse's form and human dexterity in the absurd rational Houyhnhnms. What is overt comedy is again seen as a product of senility. Delany laments the fact that Swift's superior wit would only allow his Houyhnhnm to carry "oats between his hoofs and fetlock." (p. 166) After commenting on the central paradox, he refers to other blatant discrepancies of the Houyhnhnms. They are graced with decency and cleanliness, the natural manifestations of reason, but such qualities are given to creatures who cannot clean themselves. A similar parallel is drawn in connection with the qualities of friendship and benevolence, of which Swift was professedly void. Delany concludes the discussion of the Houyhnhnms with one perceptive statement:

... he deprives them of all those tender passions, and affections, without which life would be a load... And what are the effects of those superior powers of unbiased reason with which he endows them? they met once a year to run and leap ... and once in four years to make laws which nobody was bound to obey. (p. 169)

The meaning of the Houyhnhnms lies within Delany's

UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR LIBRARY

reach, yet blinded by his search for an overt moral lesson, he is oblivious to Swift's use of irony. Oblique satire of this kind is not to the benefit of mankind because the moral remains imperceptible.

The only satire that can do any good is that which shows mankind to themselves, in their true light; and exposes those follies, vices and corruptions of every kind, in all their absurdities, deformities, and horrors, which flattery, self-love, and passions of any kind, had hitherto hide from their eyes. That magnifying glass, which enlarges all the deformed features into monstrous dimensions, defeats its own purpose: for no man will ever know his own likeness in it: and consequently, tho' he may be shocked, he will not be amended by it. (p. 171)

As was Orrery, Delany is looking for something he will never find. Gulliver's Travels is not evaluated as the satiric moral tale it was intended to be, but is criticized in the context of the moral literature which was written contemporaneously with it. Because of this shortsightedness, Delany's many perceptive illustrations cannot be developed as a part of Swift's satiric structure; they can only be considered absurd. It becomes apparent why Delany dismisses Gulliver's Travels as one of the follies of Swift's life.

Delany seems to have some hesitation about his denunciation of the Travels. At the end of the letter he adds a postscript, an afterthought in which he continues his adulation of Swift. Orrery has equated Swift with the Yahoo and Delany himself made similar unpleasant implications in the discussion of the Houyhnhnms. In order to counteract this, he feverously rushes to Swift's defense and makes a

clear distinction between the Yahoo and Swift. The Dean, to him, was of "a character so very contrary to those hateful animals, which he so strangely brutalized, even below brutality." (p. 173) In order to support his statement Delany gives a number of naive examples of Swift's delicacy.

His hands were not only washed, as those of other men, with the utmost care, but his nails were kept pared to the quick, to guard against the least appearance of a speck upon them. As he walked much, he rarely dressed himself, without a basin of water by his side, in which he dipt a towel and cleansed with the utmost exactness. (p. 173-4)

Because the Yahoos are so physically despicable to Delany, he makes a point of presenting a Swift who is completely opposite. It is as though Swift's personal hygiene prevents him from wallowing in his own odious satire.

Delany cannot resist one last chance to justify Swift's satire before he concludes his analysis. He explains why Swift characterized the Yahoos in a manner so contradictory to his own behaviour.

It could proceed from nothing, but either that general misanthropy, which unhappily he contracted; or an opinion that he had a right to satirize a vice, (for sloth and all its issue, are at least personal vices) from which he himself was so remarkably clear. (p. 176)

Delany attempts to make the distinction between the man and the satirist, in which he completely eliminates the presence of Gulliver as narrator. His approach becomes hopelessly confused when Gulliver's Travels is evaluated. A good man cannot write such a debased satire. The only logical answer, now that Gulliver has been ignored, is that Swift is mad, an

acceptable solution to the problem. Delany muddles through his attack on Orrery, agreeing with him on major misunderstandings and then characteristically ignores the dilemma:

... the character of his life will appear like that of his writings; they will both bear to be reconsidered and re-examined with the utmost attention; and will always discover new beauties and excellencies, upon every examination. (p. 290)

Delany's intentions are commendable, but even as a defender of Swift, he was swayed by Orrery's evaluation. The Observations provide only further distortion of Swift's image. Although he has been partially liberated from the depraved portrait of Orrery, Gulliver's Travels still resides among the condemned. Delany's book was not successful, and for this reason prompted other such attempts. The next biography, written by Deane Swift, a cousin of the Dean of St. Patrick's, attempted to re-evaluate the man and his works in the light of both Orrery and Delany.

An Essay Upon the Life, Writings and Character of Dr. Jonathan Swift, a superficial answer to the biased accounts²² of Orrery and Delany, was published in 1755. Deane Swift follows Delany's precedent of criticising Orrery's treatment of Swift.

I have been sometimes afraid lest the generality of the world should content themselves with the literal significance of the Remarks without making any sort of allowances for that superlative talent and skill in raillery, which are the known characteristics of this amazing author Swift. (p. 70)

²² Deane Swift, An Essay Upon the Life, Writings and Character of Dr. Jonathan Swift (London, 1755). All quotations are taken from this edition.

Not only did Orrery falsely appraise Swift's writings, but in so doing, created a vile caricature of the man. Delany only further reviles Swift's person:

... he degrades, he reviles the Doctor, with whom he had the honour to be acquainted; and shoots the most fiery darts, even in the most bitter words, the most cruel sarcasms ... against the most innocent of all the human race. (p. 265)

For Deane Swift, Orrery's evaluation begins with his obliviousness to satiric technique which in turn influences the confused portrayal of Swift. After refuting The Remarks he takes into account Delany's Observations and the minor biographies. While Delany's defense of Swift is confused and valueless, the others are pedantic rehashings of the original misconceptions. After such stern condemnations, Deane Swift can blithely begin his own account of the Dean's life and works. The major problems which faced Deane Swift's predecessors, that Gulliver's Travels can be explained only through reference to Swift's madness or that it is a manifestation of his misanthropy, are ignored by him. Even the accusation that Swift's mental and physical decline, evident in his inability to create a Utopia out of Laputa, is refuted by Deane Swift.

Swift had more religion, more sobriety, and more good sense, than to proceed on a plan so impious, visionary and absurd.
(p. 276)

After moulding an innocent Swift, the author considers the problem he sees presented in Gulliver's Travels. Deane Swift brings into contrast all of Orrery's remarks, pointing out their absurdity, through a presentation of his equally absurd

evaluations. The first two voyages are skimmed over as being entirely political and beneath the common sense of man to have to provide an explanation. The treatment of Lilliput and Brobdingnag is limited to a refutation of Orrery. For example, Deane Swift is appalled by Orrery's misinterpretation of the burial of the Lilliputians. Rather than being an indication of the anti-Christian Swift, the incident only reveals Lilliputian beliefs.

I cannot but infer, that instead of placing the resurrection in a ridiculous, contemptible light, Gulliver hath fairly manifest the opinion of a state hereafter, (although connected with some vanities and absurdities, which are the effects of superstition) to be the ground work of all religion, founded on the clear and strong dictate both of nature and reason. (p. 181)

Throughout the discussion of the Travels, Swift points out that the Dean is in some manner upholding Christian doctrine, is being decorous in his expression or is trying to enhance the probability of the tale. That man is degraded in any way is ridiculous. Specific reference is made to the designation of Gulliver as a "grovelling insect." Such an expression is seen as being "highly proper" for a patriot king, "so venerable and so beneficent to his people." (p.174) Similarly, when Gulliver asks to see Aristotle, his stooped appearance is not an indication of Swift's contempt for the philosopher as Orrery implied, but

Swift's portrait of Aristotle is ... strong and masterly: He is stooped much, saith he, and made use of a staff; that is, he thought, he considered, he ruminated, he pondered deeply, on the most intricate and obtuse points, relating to the sciences; and by the force of reasoning, which is

meant by his staff, he cleared his way through briars and thorns, until he struck into the road which leads to science and philosophy. (p.284)

Deane Swift absurdly allegorizes the entire episode in order to preserve the reputation of the Dean. All of the episodes on which Orrery dwelt are handled in this manner by Swift.

There seems to be a natural build up of defense as Deane Swift approaches Part IV. The author justifies the vile portrait of the Yahoo, seeing it not as a reflection of the man Swift, nor necessarily the satirist, but now the preacher.

... shall we condemn a preacher of righteousness for exposing under the character of a nasty unteachable Yahoo the deformity, the blackness, the filthiness, and the corruption of those hellish abominable vices which inflame the wrath of God against the children of obedience; and subject them without repentance, that is, without a thorough change of life and practice to everlasting perdition? (p. 219)

The fourth part is considered as a sermon, the Yahoos a manifestation of sin, the sin of Lucifer, the "Old Serpent" (p. 220), who fell from his high place because of his abuse of intelligence. Swift's tale is like that of the beast fable, illustrating the way of truth.

... that glorious creature man, is deservedly more contemptible than a brute beast, when he flies in the face of his Creator by enlisting under the banner of the enemy; and perverts that reason, which was designed to have been the glory of his nature, even the directing spirit of his life and demeanour, to the vilest, the most execrable, the most hellish purposes. And this manifestly appears to be the groundwork of the whole satire contained in the voyage to the Houyhnhnms. (p. 221)

That Swift is part of a long tradition of preachers to use beast allegory to simplify the state of fallen man is Deane Swift's conclusion to the section on the Houyhnhnms. The horse nation is curiously ignored in this application in favour of the more controversial Yahoos. Reference is made to Issiah's, Esdras' and St. Paul's various applications of man as beast as a means of providing suitable precedents for Swift. It is therefore quite possible that the vile nature of the Yahoos is completely in keeping with Swift's satire, asserting his piety rather than debasement.

... if the brutality and filthiness of the Yahoos be represented by the satiric genius of Dr. Swift in colours the most shocking and detestable; as they certainly are, as in fact they ought to have been; the picture is the most striking, as well as the most terrible; and upon that account, more likely to enforce the obligation of religion and virtue upon the souls of men.
(p. 225)

All the inexplicable passages in Gulliver's Travels are identified as religious allegory used by a dedicated preacher of the fire and brimstone school. In order that this approach be successful, Deane Swift makes the distinction between Swift and Gulliver, but it is used to no advantage. His primary purpose is to redeem his famous relative, but his avid devotion to the Dean makes the whole discussion absurd. In trying to revile Orrery and Delany, he goes to an opposite extreme and completely whitewashes Swift, depriving him of any role but that of the Anglican prelate.

Orrery, Delany and Deane Swift were all personal acquaintances of Swift, and consequently much of what they said

was biased by their own personal attitudes. When Swift's works were republished in 1755²³, the editor, John Hawkesworth²⁴, attempted to provide an objective critical biography. He used his three predecessors as sources, weighed their remarks and tried to evolve a more neutralized view of Swift. The biography consists of many anecdotes which are used to illustrate the various aspects of the Dean's character, as well as to provide insights into the reasons for the popular misconceptions.

An abhorrence of hypocrisy was a striking particular in Swift's character, but it is difficult to determine whether it was a virtue or a vice, for it brought upon him the charge of irreligion, and encouraged others to be irreligious. In proportion as he abhorred hypocrisy, he dreaded the imputation of it, which custom had not made reputable. (p. 38)

Swift's possession of virtuous qualities is not questioned, but rather the distorted effect caused by his extreme moral beliefs. Hawkesworth concludes his biography with a general statement on Swift's purpose as a satirist.

Such was Dr. Jonathan Swift, whose writings either stimulated mankind to sustain their dignity as rational moral beings, by shewing how low they stand in mere animal nature, or fright them from indecency by holding up its picture before them in its native deformity; and whose life, with all the advantages of genius and learning, was a scale of infelicity gradually ascending until pain and anguish

23 John Hawkesworth, ed., The Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift (London, 1755), Vol. I & II. All quotations are taken from this edition.

24 John Hawkesworth was a respected eighteenth century editor. He was an intimate friend of Johnson, as well as a member of the Rambler's Club. Biographical information from sketch in DNB s.v. "Hawkesworth".

destroyed the faculties by which they were felt ... his life therefore does not afford less instruction than his writings, since to the wise it may teach humility and to the simple content. (p. 40)

In effect, Swift's satire is constructed to appeal to the reader's perception of vice or to his natural abhorrence of evil, equally effective on both levels. The analogy is carried further, in that Swift's life itself is just another example from which to draw a moral lesson once his ironic tragedy is known. For Hawkesworth, then, Swift is not a debased man, nor a paragon of virtue, but a living moral example; what is evident in his life is manifest in his works.

Critical comments on Swift's works are relegated to footnotes which form a sort of moralistic key to all of the satire. In the remarks on Gulliver's Travels, Hawkesworth draws largely upon Orrery, agreeing or disagreeing in various circumstances. Agreeing with Orrery that the Travels is a "moral political romance" he goes on to evaluate the various implications of the allegory. For example, the occasion on which Gulliver displays his belongings, including his Scymiter, to the Lilliputians, eliciting a "magnanimous" response from the Emperor is carefully qualified. Hawkesworth is apprehensive that such a reaction might seem ludicrous to the reader.

He who does not find himself disposed to honour this magnanimity should reflect, that a right to judge of moral and intellectual excellence is with great absurdity, and injustice arrogated by him who admires, in a being six feet high, any qualifications that he despises in one whose stature does not exceed six inches. (p. 21)

The size of the Lilliputians should not alter one's opinion of them: the good nature of the little Emperor should not be judged despicable or ludicrous because of size.

In Brobdingnag, Hawkesworth finds the enormous size of the people a device for satire. He makes special note of Gulliver's abhorrence of the queen's eating habits, viewing this as a moral statement of the bestiality of man in eating animal flesh. The size discrepancy in the first two voyages, for the most part, permits the reader moral reflection.

When human actions are ascribed to pigmies and giants, there are few that do not excite either contempt, disgust or horror: to ascribe them, therefore to such beings was perhaps the most probable method of engaging the mind to examine them with such attention, and judge of them with the impartiality, by suspending the fascination of habit, and exhibiting familiar objects in a new light. (p. 139)

In the Voyage to Laputa, etc., Hawkesworth cites many of Orrery's statements, finding the apparitions also suitable for comment. The one incident, however, which elicits the greatest moral digression is that of the Struldbruggs.

It is to be said, that although the folly of desiring life to be prolonged under the disadvantages of old age is here finally exposed; yet the desire of terrestrial immortality upon terms, on which alone in the nature of things it is possible, an exemption from disease, accident and death is tacitly allowed. It may be answered, that as we grow old by imperceptible degrees, so for the most part we grow old without repining, and every man is ready to profess himself willing to die, when he shall be overtaken by the decrepitude of old age in some future period; yet when every other eye sees that this period is arrived, he is still tenacious of life, and murmurs at the condition upon which he received his existence: to reconcile old age therefore to the thoughts of a dissolution appears to be all that was necessary in a moral writer for practical purposes. (p. 199)

Hawkesworth thus states Swift's moral purpose, to make one aware of the approach of old age by warning him of the folly of senility. He concludes that Swift successfully fulfilled his purpose as a moral writer.

The Voyage to the Houyhnhnms is examined very little by Hawkesworth. He argues with Orrery on questions of semantics, never providing a critical examination of either Yahoo or Houyhnhmn. The one incident that elicits any response is the conversation between the Houyhnhnm master and Gulliver concerning war.

It would perhaps be impossible, by the most laboured argument or forceful eloquence to shew the absurd justice and horrid cruelty of war so effectually as by this simple exhibition of them in a new light: with war, including every species of iniquity and every art of destruction, we become familiar by degree under specious terms, which are seldom examined, because they are learned at an age in which the mind implicitly receives and retains whatever is imprest.
(p. 234)

This provides a basis for further digression on the inhumanity of war and man's oblivion to this. It is significant that the incident which Hawkesworth finds most worthy of comment is the one which is most overt. Even the fact that Gulliver is talking to a rational horse is not considered. The conversation is just a new treatment of an old problem. The sparse treatment of Part IV may have been a means of avoiding the Yahoo-Swift equation, as well as an intentional elimination of all which is not readily explainable as moral instruction. The absence of discussion of the problem Yahoos and Houyhnhnms allows Hawkesworth to maintain his objective

and unemotional portrayal of Swift. The editor concludes with a note summarizing the purpose of the Travels.

To mortify pride, which indeed was not made for men, and produces not only the most ridiculous follies, but the most extensive calamity, appears to have been one general view of the author in every part of these travels. Personal strength and beauty, the wisdom and virtue of mankind, become objects, not of pride but of humility, in the diminutive stature and contemptible weakness of the Lilliputians, in the horrible deformity of the Brobdignagians, in the learned folly of the Laputians, and in the parallel drawn between our manners and those of the Houyhnhnms. (p. 286)

By attacking pride, Swift elicits humility in his reader, which after being realized, opens the true way to virtue, beauty and wisdom. Thus Swift by satirizing vice makes virtue perceptible, and for this reason he assumes the title of a teacher of very overt morality.

The years immediately following Hawkesworth's edition saw a number of publications in which reference to Swift is made. He was biographized twice. The first was in an edition of his works printed in 1768²⁵. Swift is presented in an ambiguous position, in an amorphous conglomeration of his earlier biographers. Here Orrery is held in the highest esteem and is the source of most of the notes and quotations. In the Bibliographica Britannica of 1763²⁶, the Orrery and

²⁵ Jonathan Swift, The Works of Jonathan Swift with the Author's Character: notes Historical, Critical, Explanatory, no editor cited (Edinburgh, 1768).

²⁶ Bibliographica Britannica or The Lives of the Most Eminent Persons who have Flourished in Great Britain and Ireland (London, 1763), Vol. VI, pt. I, pp. 3856-79.

Delany accounts are regurgitated, resulting in a middle of the road view of Swift.

Even in material written on other subjects Swift often serves as a means of illustration. James Beattie, in his Essay on Nature and Immutability sees Swift as an author of the ugly and violent as opposed to the beauty and sublimity of Thompson.²⁷ For his distasteful turn of mind, Swift is heartily condemned. Edward Young in Conjectures on Original Composition sees the fourth voyage as a piece of madness written by a man who would presume himself to be greater than the human species in order to condemn it.²⁸ The name of Swift, his vulgarity and supposed misanthropy seems to have become a byword. Whenever mention is made of Swift in passing it is usually the character whom Orrery created.

One might expect that the Augustan view of Swift as the witty satirist might have been restored by Samuel Johnson, the great neo-classic of the late eighteenth century. Johnson, however was also more interested in overt moral instruction than in wit. This view is established in his biography of Swift, contained in his Lives of the Poets, published in 1779.²⁹ Johnson states his indebtedness to his

²⁷ James Beattie, Essay on the Nature and Immutability ... On Poetry and Music as they Effect the Mind; on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition, on the Utility of Classical Learning (Edinburgh, 1777), p. 387.

²⁸ Edward Young, "Conjectures on Original Composition", The Complete Works of the Reverend Edward Young (London, 1854), Vol. II, p. 576.

²⁹ Samuel Johnson, Lives of the English Poets (London, 1932), Vol. II, pp. 192-228. All quotations are taken from this edition.

intimate friend, Hawkesworth, whom he undoubtedly sees as the most authoritative of Swift's biographers. Like Hawkesworth, Johnson's account is objective, striding the path between the biases of Orrery and Delany, and as his source does, draws moral implications from Swift's character and practices. He does, however, incorporate his own critical comments on the literature. Swift is considered a craftsman of the English language, often decorous, and concise, and for this he is justly praised. Much of his political satire is viewed as the proper attack of vice, but Gulliver's Travels somehow falls short of some of the great satire Swift has written.

Johnson begins his evaluation by recapitulating the reception of the Travels by the eighteenth century audience.

Gulliver's Travels was a production so new and strange, that it filled the reader with a mingled emotion of merriment and amazement ... it was read by the high and low, the learned and illiterate. Criticism was for a while lost in wonder; no rules of judgement were applied to a book written in open defiance of truth and regularity. But when distinctions came to be made ... that which gave rise to the most disgust must be the history of the Houyhnhnms. (p. 213)

Johnson's criticism of Gulliver's Travels seems somewhat tame in the light of what had preceded it. His primary complaint seems to be Swift's lack of decorum, his defiance of the rules of taste. All propriety is sacrificed in Part IV which Johnson sees as despicable.

The greatest difficulty that occurs in analyzing his character, is to discover by what depravity of intellect he took delight in revolting ideas, from which almost every other mind shrinks in disgust

... Delany is willing to think that Swift's mind was not much tainted with corruption before his long visit to Pope. But the truth is, that Gulliver had described his Yahoos, before the visit, and had formed those images and had nothing filthy to learn. (p. 226)

The distinction between Gulliver and Swift is recognized by Johnson, but he incorporates it in such a way as to resurrect the previous equation of the two, probably as a means of diminution. What he expected of Swift was perhaps something similar to his own fable Rasselas, an overt moral lesson. Swift's refusal to conform results in a complete perversion of the moral, the primary purpose of satire. The following comment, in which Johnson summarizes his opinion of all of Swift's work, may well be applied to Gulliver's Travels.

He pays no court to the passions; he excites neither surprise nor admiration; he always understands himself and his reader always understands him.

This easy and safe conveyance of meaning it was Swift's desire to attain, and for having attained it he deserves praise, though perhaps not highest praise. For purposes merely didactic, when something is to be told, that is not known before, it is the best mode, but against inattention by which known truths are suffered to lie neglected, it makes no provision, it instructs but it does not persuade.
(p. 220-1)

It is not enough for the satirist, Swift, to develop some kind of satiric norm which his reader can follow. He must instead lead them, convince them to follow virtue. His even and supposedly lucid style does not promote this homiletic end, and for this reason, the satire of Swift suffers greatly. What is gained in expression is lost in the ability of the literature to persuade. For convincing didacticism, Swift

UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR LIBRARY

should have sacrificed the regularity and smoothness of his prose.

The Swift portrait was the subject of much controversy during the entire eighteenth century, during which many authors tried to neutralize the vehement Orrery. One of the last of these was Thomas Sheridan, a godson of Swift and the son of Swift's intimate Irish associate, Doctor Sheridan.³⁰ In 1784, he published The Life of the Rev. Doctor Swift,³¹ in which he questions the validity of the preceding biographies in an attempt to establish an authoritative account. Orrery is condemned because of his derogatory portrait of Swift, and for his own self-adulation; and Johnson, for presenting such a negative attitude in the light of his great learning. Sheridan's evaluation of Swift is an attempt to redeem the Dean from the accusations of these two biographers. He relates both Swift's public and private lives, stressing his innate perfection. Each of his remarks is supported by suitable anecdotes attesting to Swift's virtue and benevolence. In case this approach lacks conviction, Sheridan then openly clears Swift of all the charges brought against him: misanthropy, misogyny, vulgarity and pride. He concludes his book by saying:

Upon the whole, when we consider his character as a man, perfectly free from all vice, with

³⁰ Biographical information from the sketch in DNB s.v. "Sheridan".

³¹ Thomas Sheridan, The Life of Doctor Swift (London, 1784). All quotations are taken from this edition. This biography was prefixed to Sheridan's edition of the works of Swift.

fewer frailties and such exalted virtues; and as an author possessed of such uncommon talents, such an original view of humour, such an exhaustable fund of wit, joined to so clear and solid an understanding; when we behold two characters blended in one and the same person; perhaps it would not be thought too bold an assertion to say, that his parallel is not to be found either in the history of ancient or modern time. (p. 544)

Sheridan presents the most elaborate panegyric of Swift seen in the eighteenth century. The Dean rises from the position on which Orrery placed him, somewhere below the station of man, to a level on which he can converse with the angels. Both author and man reflect the same superior virtue, so that the "debased" satirist present no problem for Sheridan.

Swift, the satirist, is discussed in an appendix to the biography, in which Sheridan uses the bright light of Swift's virtuous life as a means of illuminating his works. They too, become further illustrations of his piety. In the treatment of Gulliver's Travels, Sheridan makes the distinction between Gulliver and Swift, but it provides no critical insight. The first three parts are completely ignored in favor of the Voyage to the Houyhnhnms. Sheridan is inclined to agree that the fourth part presents the most problems especially in the characterization of the Yahoos.

The last charge ... against Swift ... is that of perfect misanthropy; and this is chiefly founded upon his supposed satyr on human nature, in the picture he has drawn of the Yahoos. (p. 502)

To read the Travels in the manner just suggested would provide only a surface evaluation. Sheridan sees beneath the

shell of misanthropy into the true value of Swift's Houyhnhms and Yahoos.

... the whole apologue of the Houyhnhms and Yahoos, being intended as a debasement of human nature, if rightly understood, is evidently designed to shew in what the true dignity and perfection of man's nature consists, and to point out the way by which it may be attained. (p. 503)

Swift's method of illustrating this perfection is through the exhibition of

two new portraits; one of pure unmixed vice; the other, of perfect unadulterated virtue. In order that the native deformity of the one, might excite in us a deeper abhorrence of evil; and the resplendent charms of the other, allure us to what is good. To represent these to us in sensible forms, he cloaths the one with the body of a man; the other, with that of a horse. (p. 503)

Both Houyhnhm and Yahoo are considered as purely allegorical figures representing the two aspects of man, good and evil. While the Houyhnhms are to be admired for their virtue, the Yahoos are to be abhorred for their vice, but for the conceptual attribute rather than their resemblance to man.

But it is evident from the whole account given of this creature of his fancy, that the author intended it should be considered as a mere beast; of a new species; for he has not only deprived it of all characteristic distinctions of man before recited, but has superadded some material differences even in his bodily organs and powers, sufficient to distinguish it from the human race. (p. 504)

The figures of the Yahoos and Houyhnhms represent the two states of man, body and soul, in positions extrinsic from one another. Through the simplification of the dichotomy,

Swift presents a very clear choice, advocating through the vile portrait of the Yahoos, the selection of passion ruled by reason, the neo-classical ideal. For Sheridan, the fourth part is overtly moralistic, void of all the confusing elements discussed by his predecessors.

After stating the pious purpose of Gulliver's Travels, Sheridan laments the fact few people were aware of the great value of Part Four, viewing it instead as a manifestation of Swift's "misanthropy". By denying the vile elements which attracted the earlier audiences, Sheridan easily clears Swift of any accusations of debasement and misanthropy. By first establishing Swift's piety, the author criticizes Gulliver's Travels in this light, conforming all his observations to fit his preconceived portrait of Swift. The value of the Travels as a piece of literature is forsaken as it is considered as another building block in the creation of the Swift myth.

Finally in 1789, George Monck-Berkeley, a contemporary philosopher greatly influenced by Locke,³² published Literary Relics,³³ the last defense of Swift in the eighteenth century. Following Sheridan's approach, Berkeley attempts to clear Swift of the charges of misanthropy and impiety, by making vile accusations against Swift's earlier biographers. In

³² Biographical information from the sketch in DNB s.v. "Berkeley". Vanessa left half her property to Berkeley when she disinherited Swift.

³³ George Monck-Berkeley, Literary Relics: To Which is prefixed an Inquiry into the Life of Dean Swift (London, 1789). All quotations are taken from this edition.

this manner he indirectly clears Swift of the charges. Berkeley refutes the accusation that Swift is attacking human dignity by illustrating philosophically the two levels on which dignity can be evaluated. He suggests that it can be either innate or acquired. The confusion arose because Swift's biographers' understood that Swift was satirizing the innate, while the Dean, fully aware of the innate, chose to comment on the acquired dignity of man.

The writers on this subject seem to have involved themselves in an error by not distinguishing between the terms natural and acquired. That human nature is, by the practice of virtue, capable of acquiring great dignity, is what I most readily admit, but the dignity of an individual, thus acquired by himself, cannot be said to be the dignity of the species. (p. xxiv)

The method of vindicating Swift is a bit different in Berkeley, but his purpose is precisely the same as what has already been seen in biographers such as Deane Swift and Sheridan. He ushers in all his philosophical background and uses it as a means of evaluating the Travels whether it is applicable or not.

CONCLUSION

When the criticism dealing with Gulliver's Travels is considered in retrospect, two approaches stand out as the most influential. The first, A Key Being Observations and Explanatory Notes Upon the Travels of Lemuel Gulliver, printed one month after the publication of the Travels, introduced its audience to the specific political allegory of the satire. Until the middle of the century, the emphasis on the political far outweighed any other critical approach, including that of the Scriblerians. When Orrery's Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift was introduced in 1752, the emphasis shifted from the political to the moral and the ethical. The effectiveness of the lesson which Swift incorporated into his Travels became the main criterion of criticism. This approach persisted to the end of the century.

Orrery's book introduced to the criticism of Gulliver's Travels other aspects perhaps more influential than the emphasis on overt didacticism. The Remarks, the first biography of Swift, subjugated literary criticism to biographical evaluation. Because the distinction between the man and the work could not be maintained, the two became inextricably tangled. The criticism of Gulliver's Travels cannot be considered apart from Orrery's biography, and the same fate met all such evaluations in the eighteenth century. Orrery's criticism of Swift was so scandalous, that he elicited from his predecessors two

important reactions. The evaluation of Gulliver's Travels became part of the critical argument with Orrery. Subsequent biographers were as concerned with condemning Orrery as with vindicating Swift. As the spotlight shifted from Swift to Orrery any kind of pertinent evaluation of Gulliver's Travels retreated into the shadows. When Swift's reputation became the prime concern of the biographers, the value of Gulliver's Travels was judged according to its effectiveness in redeeming Swift. Consequently criticism became extremely strained; interpretations were imposed upon the satire rather than growing from it. Those who favoured Swift saw the Travels as an overt moral tale, virtuous in design and purpose, while those who were opposed to the Dean saw it as obscure, vulgar and depraved. Even dependable and objective biographers such as Hawkesworth and Johnson became so immersed in the preceding criticisms, that their highly estimated evaluations of Gulliver's Travels blatantly reflect the biases of their predecessors.

Gulliver's Travels became the central issue in the criticism of Swift. If the Travels could be rationalized as being virtuous, Swift could be satisfactorily vindicated from all his questionable attributes. The intense search for moral purpose and virtue, in a work accused of viciousness and immorality, negated any concentration on Swift's mode of expression, on his comedy and satiric techniques. Despite the many attempts to vindicate Swift through the rationalization of the Travels, the eighteenth century preferred Orrery's approach. It was the Gulliver-Swift dilemma which

he created that conditioned nineteenth century criticism. Since the major problem lay in the fourth part, this became the focal point for subsequent times.

By the end of the century, Gulliver's Travels had been viewed in a multitude of ways - as a political allegory, a moral tale and a 'beast fable - and was considered in a social, moral, ethical and philosophical context. The critics assessed the Travels as comic and delightful, absurd and depressing, the sign of genius and senility. In short, they anticipated some of the approaches of modern critics. The insights of the early critics are few, however, and their reading for the most part superficial, but they represent a very early stage in the development of the biographical and social criticism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arbuthnot, John. "Critical Remarks on Capt. Gulliver's Travels by Doctor Bantley (pseud.)" in The Miscellaneous Works of the Late Dr. Arbuthnot. 2nd. ed., Glasgow: James Carlile, 1851.
- Beattie, James. Essays on the Nature and Immutability of Truth in Opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism; On Poetry and Music as They Effect the Mind; On Laughter and Ludicrous Composition; on the Utility of Classical Learning. Edinburgh: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1777.
- Berkeley, George-Monck. Literary Relics To Which is Prefixed an Inquiry into the Life of Dean Swift. London: C. Elliot, 1789.
- Bibliographica Britannica or The Lives of the Most Eminent Persons Who Have Flourished in Great Britain and Ireland. London: J. Walthoe, etc., 1763.
- A Candid Appeal From the Late Dean Swift to the Right Hon. Earl of Orrery Vindicated. London: M. Cooper, 1752.
- The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, ed. Harold Williams, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963.
- Cork and Orrery, John Boyle, Earl of. Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift. London: A. Millar, 1752.
- Cibber, Theophilus. The Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland. London: R. Griffiths, 1753.
- Delany, Patrick. Observations Upon Lord Orrery's Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift. London: W. Reeve, 1754.
- Gulliver Decypher'd or Remarks on a Late Book, Entitled Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World by Capt. Lemuel Gulliver.
- Hawkesworth, John, ed. The Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D., London: C. Bathurst, 1755.
- Johnson, Samuel, Lives of the English Poets. London: Oxford University Press, 1932.
- "A Key Being Observations and Explanatory Notes Upon the Travels of Lemuel Gulliver, by Signor Carolini" in Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. London: Benj. Kotte, 1726.

"A Letter From a Clergyman to His Friend, With an Account of the Travels of Capt. Lemuel Gulliver: And a Character of the Author," in Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World by Capt. Lemuel Gulliver, Vol. II. London: Benj. Motte, 1726.

Sheridan, Thomas. The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift. London: C. Bathurst, 1784.

Swift, Deane. An Essay Upon the Life, Writings, and Character of Dr. Jonathan Swift. London: C. Bathurst, 1755.

Swift, Jonathan. Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World: In Which are Prefix'd Several Copies of Verses Explanatory and Commendatory; Never Before Printed. 2 d. ed. London: Benj. Motte, 1727.

. The Works of Dr. Jonathan Swift with the Author's Character; Notes Historical, Critical and Explanatory, (no editor). Edinburgh: A. Donaldson, 1768.

. The Writings of D. Jonathan Swift to Which is Prefixed the Doctor's Life. 7th ed. Dublin and Edinburgh: G. Hamilton, 1753.

Wagstaff, Jonathan (pseud.). "A Defense of Mr. Gulliver's Voyage, Truth Asserted, or A Demonstration that the Relations in Mr. Gulliver's Voyages are no Fiction," The Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. IX (1730), 55-9.

Young, Edward. "Conjectures on Original Composition" in The Complete Works of the Rev. Edward Young. London: William Tegg, 1854.

VITA AUCTORIS

1944 - Born, Windsor, Ontario

1965 - Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Windsor.

1967 - Master of Arts Degree from the University of Windsor.