Satiric Structure and Tone in the Conclusion of *Gulliver's Travels*

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Much of the disagreement over interpretation of the conclusion of *Gulliver's Travels* results from current misconceptions of the structure of satire, based on theories which state that in satire "evil and good are clearly distinguishable," so that satire scants "the complexity of human existence." But good satire only assumes a stance of moral certainty; it actually discusses the psychological and philosophical complexities which impede man's attempts to follow his ideals. Gulliver's extraordinary behavior in the concluding chapters demonstrates the danger of trying to live by pure ideals without attempting lesser ideals first. Gulliver's failure consistently to argue an idea demonstrates that life is complex for all humans, even satiric narrators. The work becomes prophetic, for Swift implies the long-range danger in 18th-century trends which put faith in simplified ideologies. The penultimate chapter, concluding Book IV, is dramatic-narrative. Gulliver dramatizes the danger of those who would try to live by pure ideals. The last chapter, concluding the four books, is formal satire. Gulliver, like all narrators in good satire, is unable to maintain his own ideals. Hence much modern criticism, which insists that the work is either for or against the Houyhnhnm ideal, exemplifies the single vision which Swift denounces, for literature is complex, as are all aspects of mankind. Accepting the "complexity of human existence" is the satiric alternative to the pride which this work denounces.

THE FOURTH BOOK OF *Gulliver's Travels* has, to be sure, been the object of much discussion. Yet some of the criticism, I think, has been obscured by certain misunderstandings of the structure of satire and by insufficient attention to the changing response to satire. This paper is concerned both with theories of the criticism of satire and with the application of these theories to the problems of Gulliver and the Houyhnhnms.

The last two chapters, on which a large part of the discussion concentrates, can yield a wide range of interpretations. One can demonstrate, by judicious choice of passages, images, actions, and words, that Guliver is mad or sane, that his madness is a light-hearted joke or a deadly horror, that he is sane but an object of satire, or that he is not only sane but is Swift's spokesman, showing the acute vision of a Horatian or a Juvenalian satirist. And one can come to several apparently contradictory conclusions, depending on one's evaluation of Gulliver, about the meaning of the work: that Gul-

liver's insanity shows the Houyhnhnm ideal to be dangerous and undesirable,[1] that Gulliver's irrational behavior results from his pride in thinking such an ideal is easily attainable,[2] or that Gulliver's denunciation of pride and low opinion of mankind reflect an attitude similar to Swift's.[3]

At times, in these last two chapters, Swift endows Gulliver with images that imply madness by almost any standard: when Gulliver is restrained from jumping overboard only by the threat of chains, when he cannot bear to let a tailor take his measure, when he falls "in a Swoon for almost an Hour" at the touch of his wife, when he talks with horses, when he is fearful of every human's teeth and claws. His actions at other times, if not those of madness, are extremely odd, foolish, eccentric, or petty, certainly not admirable: his petulent grumbling that "Mr. Herman Moll . . . hath rather chosen to follow other Authors" in his maps, his horror at wearing Don Pedro's shirts, his preference for the smell of the stable and the stable boy, his treatment of various humans. And at still other times he is the satiric spokesman for Swift. He is a Juvenalian satirist when he describes contemporary colonizing,

> Ships are sent with the first Opportunity; the Natives driven out or destroyed, their Princes tortured to discover their Gold; a free License given to all Acts of Inhumanity and Lust; the Earth reeking with the Blood of its Inhabitants: And this execrable Crew of Butchers employed in so pious an Expedition, is a *modern Colony* sent to convert and civilize an idolatrous and barbarous People.

He is a Horatian satirist when he says, in the penultimate paragraph, "I am not in the least provoked at the Sight of a Lawyer, a Pickpocket, a Colonel, a Fool, a Lord, a Gamester, a Politician, a Whoremunger, a Physician, an Evidence, a Suborner, an Attorney, a Traytor, or the like; This is according to the due Course of Things."

[1]Samuel Holt Monk, "The Pride of Lemuel Gulliver," *Sewanee Review*, LXIII (1955), 69.

[2]Irvin Ehrenpreis, "The Meaning of Gulliver's Last Voyage," *Review of English Literature* III (1962), 37-38.

[3]R. S. Crane, "The Rationale of the Fourth Voyage," *Gulliver's Travels: An Annotated Text with Critical Essays*, ed. Robert A. Greenberg (New York, 1961), pp. 306-307; Edward W. Rosenheim, *Swift and the Satirist's Art* (Chicago, 1963), pp. 163-167, 214-222; Conrad Suits, "The Role of the Horses in 'A Voyage to the Houyhnhnms,'" *University of Toronto Quarterly*, XXXIV (January 1965), 128-131.

The tone creates further complexities. The above quoted paragraph on colonizing is followed by a paragraph in which Gulliver straightforwardly praises England as a colonizer, "But this Description, I confess, doth by no means affect the *British* Nation, who may be an Example to the whole World for their Wisdom, Care, and Justice in planting Colonies," and so on for an entire paragraph without any satiric device to indicate that Gulliver is being ironic. Gulliver's insistence on his own honesty also has an elusive tone. One can see, in the repeated instance, evidence of Gulliver's virtue or of Swift's joke, considering the fantastic story it follows. Gulliver's self-identification with Sinon, the liar of Troy, makes one wonder if the joke is on us or on Gulliver. When Swift has Gulliver want Herman Moll, a real cartographer, to change all the maps to include his own findings, something is neither quite straightforward nor quite satiric. So, also, is it difficult to define the tone with which to read Gulliver's attack on pride, when Gulliver's diction often demonstrates his own pride, as in the closing lines of the work, "I here intreat those who have any Tincture of this absurd Vice, that they will not presume to appear in my Sight."

Further complications emerge from the structure of these two chapters, which do not always follow the more obvious patterns of satire. Some of the recent interpretations of this section err because critics have tried to force them into certain conventional patterns. Irvin Ehrenpreis, for example, says that Gulliver is like Alceste in *Le Misanthrope* and demonstrates the chaos brought on by a man who tries to live by impossible standards.[4] To be sure, it would bring *Gulliver's Travels* in line with many other great satirical works—*Troilus and Cressida, Timon of Athens, The Plain Dealer, Candide, Rasselas*—if Gulliver naively tried to behave like a Houyhnhnm among a race of humans unprepared for such unrealistically high ideals. When he meets the Portuguese sailors and Don Pedro, he has a good model for behavior, the behavior of the Houyhnhnm when he met Gulliver. Gulliver does, to be sure, try to be somewhat rational, but soon stops, not, it should be noted, as a result of any human's actions. By the time he meets his wife, all traces of Houyhnhnm-like behavior have disappeared. The Houyhnhnms, we recall, could bear the company of a Yahoo when his presence served a rational

[4]loc. cit.

purpose. For whatever reason, Gulliver does not behave like a Houyhnhnm and so does not behave like Alceste.

The late R. S. Crane says that Gulliver's odd behavior results from the contrast between the human world and Houyhnhnm-land, that after Gulliver has become accustomed to the brilliant light of a rational world he is "blinded by the darkness," as were those who returned to Plato's cave. Man, Swift says, is not a rational animal, so even the best man, when compared to the Houyhnhnms, is not good enough.[5] But this theory seems to force *Gulliver's Travels* into another conventional pattern, a satire of deep pessimism, such as *A Satyr against Mankind* or *The Dunciad*. If the structure of *Gulliver's Travels* were what Crane says it is, we, as readers, must also be partially blinded, either must share Gulliver's feelings that a good man is intolerable when compared to Houyhnhnms, or understand why we are in error when, "in terms of ordinary human judgments," Don Pedro impresses us "as unmistakably good." Swift, a master at revealing the reprehensible in ordinary human behavior, has not endowed the Portuguese sailors or Don Pedro with ordinary human qualities which become shameful when contrasted to the virtue of the Houyhnhnms. On the contrary, he has not given them any faults, has placed all references to human evils (the mutiny of Gulliver's sailors, the Portuguese Inquisition) in the past or at a distance, and has given the only active Yahoo-like behavior to Gulliver, with his extreme emotion and fainting fits. Swift, in preventing Gulliver from acting like a Houyhnhnm and in not presenting other humans who act at least superficially like Yahoos, either wrote bad satire or had something in mind other than what these critics suggest.

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One difficulty in interpretation of *Gulliver's Travels* results from some current theories of satire which are, in my opinion, erroneous. Several influential theorists of satire argue that the affirmative side of satire, the recommended alternative to the object of attack, can be reduced to one clear, easily paraphrased statement, a simple dogma, a precisely stated standard of behavior. Mary Claire Randolph, in "The Structural Design of the Formal Verse Satire," presents a definition of

[5]loc. cit. and "The Houyhnhnms, the Yahoos, and the History of Ideas," *Reason and Imagination*, ed. J. A. Mazzeo (New York, 1962), pp. 234-235.

formal satire which, as she notes, can in many ways apply to all satire. She says, "This positive side of satire toward which the whole exegetical and rhetorical procedure is pointed is usually a dogma of a rationalistic philosophy."[6] Maynard Mack says, "Satire . . . asserts the validity and necessity of norms, systematic values, and meanings that *are* contained by recognizable codes. . . . Satire tends to fortify our feeling that life makes more immediate moral sense. . . . Evil and good are clearly distinguishable . . . and standards of judgment are indubitable."[7] Northrop Frye says, "Satire is militant irony; its moral norms are relatively clear. . . . Whenever a reader is not sure what the author's attitude is or what his own is supposed to be, we have irony with relatively little satire."[8] And Alvin Kernan says, "The satirist . . . sees the world as a battlefield between a definite, clearly understood good, which he represents, and an equaly clear-cut evil."[9] The result of such satiric structure is inevitably an extreme simplification of both the vice which is condemned and the alternative which is proposed. Most modern theorists accept this limitation. Kernan, for example, says, "In no art form is the complexity of human existence so obviously scanted as in satire" (p. 23).

I submit that satire, like all art forms, recognizes the "complexity of human existence" and attempts to deal with it. The satirist usually assumes a stance, a tone, a posture of one who sees the truth as obvious. And some forms which are related to but less aesthetic than satire—sermons, moral treatises, political tracts, lampoons, invectives, diatribes—go no further. But good satire, however much it may pretend to do otherwise, acknowledges and discusses the enormous psychological, social, moral, and philosophical complexities which make difficult man's attempt to live in accord with seemingly clear truths.

Ehrenpreis says something roughly similar about *Gulliver's Travels* but seems to find it necessary to go outside satire to justify his point. "Unattainable ideals are regularly set before us by moral instructors, with intermediary examples to soften our despair."[10] On the contrary, the device Ehrenpreis refers

[6]Mary Claire Randolph, "The Structural Design of the Formal Verse Satire," *Philological Quarterly*, XXI (1942), 374.
[7]Maynard Mack, "The Muse of Satire," *Yale Review*, XLI (1951), 85.
[8]Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957), p. 223.
[9]Alvin Kernan, *The Cankered Muse* (New Haven, 1959), pp. 21-22.
[10]op. cit. p. 37.

to is common to satire. Belinda and other characters in *The Rape of the Lock* cannot achieve the heroic behavior of the courageous warriors faintly sketched in the battle of the fifth canto, or the true dignity of kings and queens implied in the high cards, or the orderly worship echoed in Belinda's Rites of Pride, or the maidenly virtue in the person Belinda pretends to be, or the truly honorable behavior everyone always talks about. And Belinda, the Baron, and Thalestris are made to look ridiculous when they try to do so. But the implication is that one should try to work toward such ideals instead of pretending to have achieved them. Behavior not controlled entirely by ill-nature or affectation, Clarissa's somewhat over-practical realism, and the sense of proportion called for in the concluding lines are "intermediary examples," not so much "to soften our despair" as to give us other, more easily attainable satiric norms. These norms acknowledge man's limitations and difficulties but do not deny the desirability of higher ideals. Hence Gulliver's behavior at the end, no matter how irrational, does not, within the form of satire, negate the ideal. It shows, instead, that we must approach lesser ideals first. It allows that man is morally, psychologically, and socially complex.

* * *

One explanation for the frequent shifts in tone and for Gulliver's varying attitudes lies in the nature of satire. Many have pointed out that satiric spokesmen often change their points of view and that satiric authors often drop their masks and speak directly. In *A Modest Proposal,* for example, Swift speaks directly when he says, "I desire those Politicians, who dislike my Overture . . . that they will first ask the Parents of those Mortals, Whether they would not, at this Day, think it a great Happiness to have been sold for Food at a Year old."[11] Martinus Scriblerus, in his *Memoirs,* is at times a fool, at other times an accute satiric commentator. And Gulliver is by no means consistent in the first three books. In both Books I and II Gulliver defends England's customs and is ashamed of them. In Book III Gulliver describes Lord Munodi's house as "a noble Structure, built according to the best Rules of ancient Architecture" (Ch. IV), and a few pages later, in the Academy of Lagado, describes "a most ingenious

[11]cf. Irvin Ehrenpreis, "Personae," *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature,* ed. Carroll Camden (Chicago, 1963), pp. 34-36.

Architect who had contrived a new Method for building Houses, by beginning at the Roof, and working downwards to the Foundation" (Ch. V). As Robert C. Elliott says, much of this shifting is the phenomenon of the satirist satirized. Gulliver becomes the "purveyor and target of satire."[12] When Gulliver attacks colonizing and then exemplifies its worst characteristics, when he attacks pride and then falls prey to it, Swift is using a satiric style something like Byron's:

> I hate inconstancy—I loath, detest,
> Abhor, condemn, abjure the mortal made
> Of such quicksilver clay that in his breast
> No permanent foundation can be laid;
> Love, constant love, has been my constant guest,
> And yet last night, being at a masquerade,
> I saw the prettiest creature. . . .
>
> (*Don Juan*, II. ccix)

A satirist can make himself an example of the error he attacks without completely undercutting his ideal. As Elliott says, "It is a measure of the greatest satirists (perhaps the greatest men) that they recognize their own involvement in the folly of human life and willingly see themselves as victims . . . of their own art" (p. 222). Such involvement also serves to remind the reader that no important ideal is easily attained. The technique dramatizes the "complexity of human existence."

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Another explanation lies in what F. A. Pottle has called "shifts of sensibility." He says, "The basis of feeling suffers extraordinary shifts at given historical points, and . . . these shifts . . . mark off the 'periods' in literature."[13] Satire is especially sensitive to such shifts because it often uses specific contemporary events as part of its metaphor and always sets up norms of behavior; and historical events and norms of behavior evoke widely differing responses in later ages.

Swift's contemporaries may well have seen *Gulliver's Travels* as, in Arbuthnot's terms, a "merry work."[14] As Merril D. Clubb says, "many people . . . considered the 'Voyage to

[12]Robert C. Elliott, *The Power of Satire* (Princeton, 1960), p. 222.
[13]F. A. Pottle, *The Idiom of Poetry* (Ithaca, New York, 1946), p. 21.
[14]*Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Harold Williams, III, 179, November 5, 1726.

the Houyhnhnms' a highly amusing and perfectly legitimate joke."[15] Pope's several poems prefixed to the "Second Edition" (1727) of *Gulliver's Travels*, probably with Swift's consent,[16] provide evidence for Clubb's assertion. In "To Mr. Lemuel Gulliver, the Grateful Address of the Unhappy Houyhnhnms, now in Slavery and Bondage in England," Pope seems not to take the horses very seriously, as: "Yes, we are slaves—but yet, by Reason's Force,/ Have learnt to bear Misfortune, like a Horse" (ll. 31-32). (The Earl of Peterborough wrote to Swift describing a "Neighing Duetto appointed for the next Opera.")[17] In "Mary Gulliver to Captain Lemuel Gulliver" Pope finds Gulliver laughable and is the first, after the Portuguese sailors, I believe, to suggest that he may be mad: "Some think you mad, some think you are possest/ That *Bedlam* and clean Straw will suit you best" (ll. 35-36). And Pope suggests amusingly that Gulliver's interest in the stable is really motivated by sexual perversion[18] when he has Mary say:

> *Where sleeps my* Gulliver? *O tell me where?*
> The Neighbors answer, *With the Sorrel Mare.*
>
> 'Tis not for that I grieve; no, 'tis to see
> The *Groom* and *Sorrel Mare* preferr'd to me!
> (ll. 47-48, 59-60)

If Swift's contemporaries thought Gulliver mad, they saw the madness not as the solemn and terrible dehumanization that modern criticism has described, but as something rather funny, like the madness of the narrator in *A Tale of a Tub*, of the inhabitants of the Cave of Spleen, or of the Lord in "The Second Epistle of the Second Book of Horace, Imitated by Mr. Pope." Similarly, the life of pure reason was not a grim categorical imperative but an amusing hypothesis. Jokes about the Houyhnhnms in *Gulliver's Travels* are part of this general tone. Swift is saying, if you think reason is sufficient to do everything, let it thread a needle, you may as well ask

[15]Merril D. Clubb, "The Criticism of Gulliver's 'Voyage to the Houyhnhnms,' 1726-1914," *Stanford Studies in Language and Literature* (Stanford, 1941), p. 211.

[16]*The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. Norman Ault and John Butt (New Haven, 1954), VI. 266-267.

[17]*Swift Correspondence*, III, 191, November 29, 1726.

[18]Lady Mary Wortley Montagu [*The Complete Letters*, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford, 1966), II, 71-72, November 1726] made a similar observation with as much wit but less good humor.

a horse to do so. Even the severe attacks made on mankind in the description of the Yahoos can be taken as one amusing point of view, provided the reader does not take it as the only point of view—man can be seen as a doll, a monstrous giant, a crazy scientist, or a wild animal. And Gulliver has been a comic figure through much of *Gulliver's Travels,* including his stay in Houyhnhnmland, as in his solemn defense of man as cleaner than pigs (Ch. VII). Gulliver's identifying himself with Sinon, the liar of Troy, after he has said he will "strictly adhere to *Truth,*" is a delightful private joke for the learned, a charming anticipation of those contemporaries reputed to have taken *Gulliver's Travels* literally. That Gulliver fails to behave like a Houyhnhnm as soon as he meets the first challenge, that the humans he rails about really behave more rationally than he does, that he exemplifies pride as he denounces it, are all parts of the joke. So Gulliver's madness at the end is consistent with a light tone throughout. I find it difficult to believe that Swift would have expected the reader to take the fainting, raving, horse-smell-loving, human-tooth-and-claw-fearing Gulliver with an entirely straight face. Swift is saying that if we really think man is already a rational animal and are surprised every time he acts otherwise, we will soon be crackers.

Yet many of us modern readers have found the conclusion to be the opposite of "merry" because its meaning seems excruciatingly relevant. Many of us find Gulliver's rejection of Don Pedro disturbingly analogous to racial prejudice. We find Gulliver's rejection of all mankind, because it fails to live up to some abstract ideal, disturbingly similar to twentieth-century and anti-human ideology. The arguments, which claim that Swift intended Gulliver to be taken as mad, ridiculous, an object of satire, not only defend Swift against holding beliefs most of us find horrendous, but grant his greatest work the status of a prophetic satire, make it a work in which Swift saw things with such terrifying clarity that he was able to foresee the logical results of events in his own time. Those who deny such interpretations seem to believe that, however desirable it would be to make Swift comparable to an Old Testament Prophet, one can do so only by exalting the ingenuity of the critic at the expense of the integrity of Swift's writing.

It seems to me that a good bit of trouble would be avoided if we admitted that satire allows for two mutually helpful

but essentially independent approaches, one in which we see satire in relation to its own time, as a work which helps us understand the age in which it was written, and another in which we see it, like all great art, as forever relevant.

Those of us who see *Gulliver's Travels* as a prophetic satire see the satirist, like the poet, as a man

> endowed with more lively sensibility . . . [than is] supposed to be common among mankind. . . . [Who] in spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs: in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed . . . binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time.
>
> (Wordsworth: Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*)

Swift may well have thought madness amusing, but he also saw its broader philosophic and symbolic implications. Swift's contemporaries probably thought it delightfully fantastic that humans were portrayed as wild animals, that Gulliver thought of himself as so divorced from humanity he could make shoes and a canoe out of Yahoo skin (Chs. III and X), and that the Houyhnhnms seriously contemplated genocide (Ch. IX). They probably considered such ideas much too far from man's known or expected behavior to be taken for anything but satiric extravagance. That Swift's prediction was only so far wrong as shoes are different from lampshades is not a coincidence or just a handy gimmick for an undergraduate lecture. The accuracy derives directly from Swift's vision.

Swift saw in many contemporary movements a naive optimism, the beginning of an excessive faith in abstract schemes and ideologies, to the exclusion of awareness of man's complexity, which was to lead mankind into trouble. Swift may have directed his attack, on the surface, against the latitudinarian, the sentimentalist, the Deist, but we do not have to patronize him by replacing "the equine symbol by what ideal we please."[19] We instead can grant that he detected the erroneous thinking at the root of these movements. Nor do we need to relieve Swift of responsibility by hunting for faults in the Houyhnhnms. The few examples of faults among the Houyhnhnms, of incidents which can be taken as satires on them, lack the boldness of attack that is characteristic of

[19]Ehrenpreis, "Personae," pp. 37-38.

satire. To make the Houyhnhnms anything other than satiric alternatives requires a violent shift in tone, indeed in genre, with no warning from Swift that we should make such a great adjustment. By making the Houyhnhnms ideal, Swift is saying that even the best ideas, if complacently insisted upon without regard to man's limitations, will not work, that even those who most ardently profess these schemes cannot live by them for more than a few minutes, after which they become travesties of their own professions.

The harm Gulliver does, through his belief in an abstract scheme, is not primarily, as Ehrenpreis says,[20] to his family, which remains shadowy, but to himself. He becomes dehumanized. Pope's poems on *Gulliver's Travels* suggest that Swift's contemporaries saw only an individual destroyed. But Swift's images are so suggestive that we, in the twentieth century, need make no distortion in order to see the work prophesy a time when whole nations of dehumanized Gullivers try to sail back to Houhnhnmland in canoes made from the skins of all Yahoodom.

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Another difficulty seems to result from the general assumption that the last two chapters form a unit, a single conclusion either to the Fourth Book or to the whole work. I submit that the penultimate chapter concludes Book IV specifically and the final chapter concludes all four books.

The penultimate chapter continues the dramatic-narrative satire of the latter half of the Fourth Book. Swift puts so much emphasis on Gulliver's reaction in this latter half that Gulliver's feelings and actions become as important as the feelings and actions of a character in a satiric drama or novel. The penultimate chapter carries out this structure by concentrating on the satiric choice Gulliver is offered and on his response to it. In the first half of the chapter we share, I think, Gulliver's nostalgia for Houyhnhnmland, a longing made greater by the several references to human depravity. At the center of the chapter, when Gulliver meets humans, he is given a choice, as are Absalom, Belinda, Timon, Alceste, and other heroes of dramatic or narrative satire. He starts to make one seemingly correct choice by attempting to imitate the rational behavior of the Houyhnhnms, but he cannot

[20]Ehrenpreis, "Personae," pp. 37-38.

attain sufficient rationality to continue his objectivity. When his rationality fails, he does not try an alternative. Instead, he discovers that his "Hatred and Contempt seemed to increase"; he begins to lose his much-insisted-upon honesty in "pretending" sickness; and, in trying to be completely rational, becomes a victim of his own excessive emotionalism.

The style in the final chapter changes to something resembling formal satire. Gulliver ceases to be the dramatic character he was in the second half of the Fourth Book—he now acts less, has fewer emotions, directs his satire more specifically. He becomes again the "target and purveyor of satire," as he was in the first three and a half books. (All the instances of the "satirist satirized" in the conclusion come from this chapter.) Swift speaks directly more often. And the tone changes. Gulliver may become a super-patriotic bore or a man made ridiculous with pride, "I began last Week to permit my Wife to sit at Dinner with me," but he is not a terrifying madman or a misanthrope. He even assumes the ancient satiric role of instructor.

In the final chapter, for the first time, all four books are drawn together, both by reference to incidents from all four books and by the echoing of past diction. The self-effacing boast, "I rather chose to relate plain Matters of Fact in the simplest Manner and Style," recalls to the reader the detailed description of the removal of his excrement, which description he defends because, "I have been chiefly studious of Truth, without affecting any Ornaments of Learning or of Style" (Bk. II, Ch. I) and the Project for Abolishing Words in Book III. It also recalls the speech of the Houyhnhnms, "Where nothing passed but what was useful, expressed in the fewest and most significant Words" (Ch. X). (What is absurd to expect from imperfect man, Swift seems to be saying, is admirable in an ideal state.) The unironic praise of "The British Nation" recalls Gulliver's speeches to the King of Brobdingnag. The emotionally detached discussion of subduing countries he has visited recalls Gulliver's offer of gunpowder to the King of Brogdingnag and the Laputan methods of suppression. His coy pomposities, such as "I had conceived a few Scruples" about ruthless colonization or "I could never give my Advice for invading them," recall Gulliver's naive confusion about the "lenity" of the King of Lilliput or his irrelevant superiority, "There is indeed another Custom,

which I cannot altogether approve of" (Bk. III, Ch. IX), in describing the odious methods of the court of Luggnagg. It also recalls the Houyhnhnms' cool plan for eliminating all Yahoos. Gulliver's Horatian and Juvenalian denunciations recall such direct and indirect denunciations in all four books.

The object of attack in the last chapter, especially in the last paragraphs, is pride. Yet pride is less obviously the focus of attack in Book IV than in the three other books—it is not one of the notable sins of the Yahoos and its virtuous alternative, humility, is not a characteristic of the Houyhnhnms. But in a sense, pride is always the subject of great satire, which says that we, the readers, think of ourselves as one thing but ought to see ourselves as something quite different, that we have no cause for self-satisfaction either in the present or for the future. *Gulliver's Travels* says, further, that any scheme, any project for quick improvement that does not allow for the "complexity of human existence" is doomed to failure, will bring on harm, is the product of a pride which thinks man has greater control over himself, his environment, and his destiny than he does have. It is in this sense that the final chapter relates Book IV to the other three books.

Book IV shows how abominable man appears when viewed from a distance, how beastly man appears when viewed from perfection, what true perfection looks like in serenity and splendid isolation, and how far such perfection is from the possibility of human attainment. The penultimate chapter shows what is available to us and what happens if we, proudly, refuse such alternatives in favor of unreachable ones. The last chapter, with its naive confidence in its own truthfulness, with its simplified patriotism, with its narrator who demonstrates how inconsistent man inevitably is, and with its denuncation of pride, concludes all of *Gulliver's Travels.*

Gulliver's Travels is an especially clear example of the error of modern criticism of satire, which says that in satire "standards of judgment are indubitable" or that in satire the reader is "sure what the author's attitude is or what his own is supposed to be." And much of the criticism of *Gulliver's Travels,* which insists that a single meaning be attached to the work, or that it be approached from a single point of view, seems to be an unwitting demonstration of the single vision which Swift denounces. The almost unlimited diversity of the final chapter, the playful variations, the shifts of

personality, the alternations of tone, the logical self-contradictions, the images that reveal different meanings to different ages, all demonstrate Swift's belief that man and his environment are desperately complicated, and that any attempt to reduce them to simple schemes, whether the reduction be in terms of politics, science, history, psychology, literary theory, or critical practice, only demonstrate man's limitations the more clearly.

The detached, almost gay tone of most of the final chapter presents a problem. When viewed from the eighteenth-century point of view, the chapter is beautifully consistent with the whole work, but when seen as the conclusion of a prophetic satire, it becomes almost anti-climactic. The subject is as broad as mankind, but the tone is generally lighter than the previous chapter's or than the whole Fourth Book's would lead us to expect. Perhaps we can explain the change in tone as a way to remove us from the intense involvement of the penultimate chapter so that the final chapter refers to all four books. And perhaps we can interpret it as an attempt to lighten some of the pessimism that the earlier parts have been steadily building toward, in order to reveal that Gulliver's tragic choice, in the penultimate chapter, is not the only one. For in accepting the "complexity of human existence" we can achieve some reconcilement with "the due course of things."

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