AN EVALUATION OF THE LITERARY SOURCES
OF GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

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AN EVALUATION OF THE LITERARY SOURCES
OF GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

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PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis, as the title indicates, is to examine and evaluate the literary sources of *Gulliver's Travels*. As a prelude to such an analysis, I found it necessary to acquaint myself in large detail with the mass of material which comprised Swift's literary background. Naturally, this background is much more extensive and complex than the restricted phases here studied.

To safeguard the study of specific sources, which in Swift's case is so frequently futile, I have endeavored to understand Swift's broad cultural background. In addition, I have investigated his methods of writing.

It is unfortunate that some scholars, who in theory recognize Swift's great literary value, are in the zeal of their research sometimes persuaded to attribute his ideas, in a large part, to certain specific sources. Realizing the dangers of undiscriminating parallel hunting, I have recognized the validity of comparisons between authors working in the same materials or in the same stage of history. Occasionally I have emphasized evidence that indicates indebtedness. On the whole, relationship, not indebtedness, is the theme. Although incomplete, this study may help one to understand more clearly than hitherto Swift's general literary background.
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CHAPTER I

GENERAL SURVEY OF POSSIBLE SOURCES

"My God! What a genius I had when I wrote that book!" exclaimed Swift. It so happened that he was not speaking of his Travels, but the world has elected to apply his estimate to the most savage satire on humanity in our literature. It headed the list of best sellers for the polite year of 1726. As it turned out, this testimony to the book's overwhelming appeal to all classes and ages within a few days of its appearance proved to be a prophecy of undimmed popularity for two centuries.\(^1\) Children all over the world have followed Gulliver through the land of the Lilliputians, and persons older than they have watched or shared this amusement without considering too seriously the significance of the work.

As William A. Eddy said almost twenty years ago:

"The investigation of the sources of Gulliver's Travels is not a new venture, though I am not convinced that the task would be any harder were the field still virgin soil."\(^2\) Sir Walter Scott's statement of the sources, such as it is, prefixed to his edition of the Travels, 1814, is remarkably

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\(^{1}\) Paul Kaufman, "Literary Centenaries of 1926," The Bookman, LXII (January, 1926), 572.

free from error. Sources listed by him are accurate in detail, though not adequate. The many and varied contributions of contemporary critics have increased our information but have also added to our confusion of the subject.

A host of parallels to incidents in the Travels have been discovered or pointed out by critics from time to time, and these will be discussed later under the individual voyages. Before going parallel hunting throughout the entirety of Gulliver's Travels, however, it is well to give a general account and a brief summary of the possible sources and their relative influence on Swift.

Homer

Even the casual reader notices immediately the general similarity between the outlines of Homer's Odyssey and Swift's Gulliver's Travels. George McCracken makes the following comment relative to this resemblance:

Both [Odyssey and Gulliver's Travels] are accounts of extensive voyages in which the chief characters experience many marvelous adventures, meet many strange people, and undergo many great dangers. The hero of each tale has an insatiable hunger for adventure and travel. Odysseus, though longing greatly for home, is nevertheless willing to prolong his absence still further by staying at the court of Alcinous, while Gulliver, having arrived at the Downs on April 13, 1702, after his escape from the Lilliputians, departs from his wife and children in search of more adventure on June 20 of the same year.

3Ibid.

4George McCracken, "Homerica in 'Gulliver's Travels,'" The Classical Journal, XXIX (April, 1934), 536.
Swift had a wide knowledge of Homer. This is evidenced by his many references to Homer in his correspondence. The scene on the island of Glubbdubdrib, when Gulliver summons the departed spirits from the dead, proves Swift's familiarity with Homer and his works.

In the Iliad, Homer's allusion to the war between the pygmies and the cranes might conceivably be considered a source for Swift's Lilliputians and their battles.

It seems very probable that Swift was thinking of passages in the Odyssey as he wrote certain parts of his work. Some of the parallels which will be cited later are very striking, but they do not amount to definite proof of conscious imitation. They are, however, sufficiently important to warrant careful investigation.

Philostratus

Hints for Lilliput might well have come from the Imagines of Philostratus. In the second book of the Imagines, there is narrated an attack on Hercules by pygmies. This could have suggested to Swift the capture of Gulliver by the Lilliputians. In his edition of 1814, Sir Walter Scott describes Swift's personal copy of Philostratus, on the blank leaves of which Swift's

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5 Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels, edited by Harold Williams, p. 272.
6 McCracken, op. cit., p. 536.
comments are scribbled in his own handwriting. Scott's statement has never been challenged, and it needs no modification. 7

Rabelais

For a long time the Rabelaisian element in Gulliver's Travels has been recognized. The similarity in obscene incidents has been taken as sufficient evidence of a literary debt. 8 The incident in which Gulliver extinguishes the fire in the palace of Lilliput resembles the joke played by Gargantua upon the Parisians. The parallel is first of all in the coarse situation; and secondly, in the devastation and widespread terror produced in each case by the flood. 9 The occupations of the pedants in the Academy of Lagado, in the third voyage, seem to be largely modelled upon Rabelais' account of the Abstractors in the Court of Queen Whim. 10

There are some resemblances in style between Swift's Gulliver's Travels and Rabelais' Pantagruel. The fondness for the filth of the body with its odors, pollutions, and excrements appears in both. In Rabelais this element of


8Ibid., p. 57.

9William A. Eddy, "Rabelais, A Source for 'Gulliver's Travels'," Modern Language Notes, XXXVII (November, 1922), 416.

10Ibid., pp. 416-417.
obscenity is drawn out to burlesque proportions, while in *Gulliver's Travels* it is restrained though not re-

11 fined. Rabelais delights in filth for comical effect. Swift's use of it is never suggestive but always dis-
gusting.

Swift's mind was evidently well stored with incidents from Rabelais, whose works he must have known almost by heart, since he was able to quote him offhand in his cor-

12 response with verbal accuracy.

Lucian

Swift's familiarity with the works of Lucian, proved by his many borrowings from the satires of the latter, is verified by his purchase in 1711 of d'Ablancourt's three volumes in French. 13 It is almost certain that Swift also knew the Dryden *Lucian*. This work, of which Dryden himself wrote only the introduction, was translated mostly by Tom Brown, the writer whose works Swift said that he had "read entire". 14

There is a great similarity between Lucian's *True History* and *Gulliver's Travels*, both in prefatory matter and in narrative. William A. Eddy says:

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12 Ibid., p. 57.
13 Ibid., p. 53.
14 Ibid., pp. 53-54.
Both Gulliver and Lucian despise falsified "Travels" and aim to be admired by posterity for their singular veracity. Both boast that they record plain facts without bias or prejudice. Both promise to omit technical descriptions and to avoid pedantic display of knowledge. Within the narrative, also, there are parallels in situation and satire. The travellers are hospitably received; they learn that the inhabitants are engaged in a desperate war; and they enlist to help fight the enemy.\textsuperscript{15}

The race of pygmies is one of the most notable features of resemblance and will be discussed in the following chapter. Other similarities will be pointed out in the fourth chapter. Most of these similarities are found exclusively in the d'Ablancourt edition, and Eddy has unearthed evidence to prove Swift's knowledge of this work. He says:

To assume that Swift had read Lucian is not a scientific procedure. So far as we know Swift had never read Shakespeare. Fortunately we can do a little better. In the Journal to Stella, Letter XIII, January 4, 1710-11, there occurs the following entry:

"I went to Bateman's the bookseller . . . and bought three little volumes of Lucian in French, for our Stella."

To make a long story short, among other translations of Lucian, there is one made by Perrot d'Ablancourt in the year 1648. This translation included both parts of the True History; and in addition a third and fourth part written by d'Ablancourt himself by way of sequel, in which the traveller visits a land of pygmies. . . . A clinching argument for this source was that d'Ablancourt's Lucian was published in "three little volumes" in 1707; hence this edition is, from every angle, most likely to have been the gift to Stella.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{15}William A. Eddy, "A Source for 'Gulliver's Travels,'" Modern Language Notes, XXXVI (November, 1921), 419.

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., pp. 420-421.
Cyrano de Bergerac

Swift appears to have borrowed, consciously and no doubt unconsciously, details from the works of Cyrano de Bergerac. These borrowings are more extensive and more numerous than from any other source. The evidence of the debt is wholly internal; nowhere does Swift mention Cyrano or his works.

Cyrano's *Histoire Comique de la Lune* must have been the model for the adventures of Gulliver in Brobdingnag. There is a host of major and minor parallels, and the type of detailed accounts appearing in both leaves no doubt about the influence upon Swift. The nature and the sequence of the adventures in Brobdingnag are based upon Cyrano's romance, and the latter anticipates the idea of relativity of the physical world, implied in the contrast between Lilliput and Brobdingnag. It is impossible to summarize all parallels, but the most important will be given in my study of the individual voyages.

Cyrano's second romance, *Histoire Comique du Soleil*, did not furnish Swift with so many miscellaneous ideas as did the lunar narrative, but it probably served as a model for the withering satire that is heaped upon Gulliver by

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the Houyhnhms. A tribunal of animals try Cyrano, and
he is found guilty of the unspeakable sin of being a human
monster. Nowhere else before *Gulliver's Travels* is there
such scathing satire directed at the human race. 20

It is impossible to derive from de Bergerac the whole
original idea of *Gulliver's Travels*, however, because the
French work is written in a spirit directly contrary to the
whole spirit of the *Travele*. Cyrano wanders here and there
without object and is always uncertain between satire and
Utopia. 21

Samuel Sturmy

One of the certain sources of *Gulliver's Travels* is
the description of a storm in Samuel Sturmy's *Mariner's
Magazine*, 1679. Churton Collins has shown this to be copied
almost verbatim by Swift in the description of the storm
on the way to Brobdingnag. Collins makes the following
comment:

> It is certain that Swift was, like Sterne,
a diligent student of curious and recondite liter-
ature, and that, like Sterne, he was in the habit
of turning that knowledge to account. . . . Few
readers who know anything of nautical science have
not been surprised at the minuteness and accuracy
of the technical knowledge displayed by Swift in
his account of the manoeuvres of Gulliver's crew
in the storm off the Moluccas. It is curious that

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Scott, who ought to have known better, describes the passage as merely a farrago of sea-terms put together at random. Now the whole of the passage was taken nearly verbatim from a work then probably circulating only among naval students, and in our time one of the rarest known to bibliographers. This was Samuel Sturmy’s Mariner’s Magazine, published at London in 1679, a copy of which may be found in the British Museum.

The obvious reason for this particularly verbal theft, so unlike Swift’s general practice, was that he desired to heighten the realism of his narrative by accuracy of nautical language, which he could not hope to counterfeit with any measure of success. 22

Tom Brown

Tom Brown exercised a great amount of influence upon Swift. From Brown’s Amusements Serious and Comical, Swift obtained several hints for the occupations of some of the members of the Academy of Lagado. The Academy’s division into departments can also be traced to this source. Brown translated, 1702, the Circe of Giovanni Battista Gelli, consisting of ten dialogues between Ulysses and the beasts. If Swift was acquainted with all of Brown’s works, as he stated, this volume must certainly have suggested passages in the conversations of Gulliver with the Houyhnhmns.

22John Churton Collins, Jonathan Swift, pp. 206-207. (The descriptions are printed in parallel columns in this volume, pp. 206-207.)

The influence of Brown is apparent not only in *Gulliver's Travels* but also in many of Swift's other prose works and poems. The latter's satiric style denotes great familiarity with the witty and satiric expressions of his contemporary. Swift praised Brown and greatly respected his literary ability.

George Berkeley

Berkeley was also a contemporary of Swift. William A. Eddy maintains that the skeptical view of man's greatness, the rejection of any stable unit of measurement, implied in Lilliputian and Brobdingnagian views of man, is based upon Berkeley's *Theory of Vision*, published in 1709. As revealed by his correspondence, Swift was an intimate friend of Berkeley, visited with him, associated with him for many years, and praised his works. He certainly must have read his philosophical treatises.

It is impossible to determine whether Swift's ideas are reflections of Berkeley's theories, but because of their close friendship and similarity of philosophical thoughts it is logical to assume that Berkeley's publications influenced the author of *Gulliver's Travels*.

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24 Ibid., p. 65.

Lewis Holberg

The Journey of Nicholas Klimius to the World Underground was written by the Danish dramatist Lewis Holberg, but the date of composition is unknown. The work was written in Danish, but soon afterwards it was translated into German, Italian, French, and English, in all of which translations it is now available. The earliest notice of the work was a review in the Hamburg Gazette, 1732, but Holberg stated that the work was completed several years before it was given to the press.\(^{26}\) The date of the first publication in Danish cannot be far from the time when Gulliver's Travels was published. Some have suggested that this work might have been founded on the Travels, but there is at least a possibility that the Danish story may have suggested to Swift some of the incidents in his work. Be that as it may, there remains a close parallel in situations.

Joseph Hall

An obscure Latin satire by Joseph Hall, Mundius Alter et Idem, is mentioned by Eddy as a possible source for Gulliver's Travels.\(^{27}\) This work, written about 1610, has never been translated in full and is practically unknown, but Eddy proves that it is not unlikely that it was familiar to Swift. He says:


\(^{27}\)Ibid., p. 68.
The only known attempt at translation is one made by Swift's friend, Dr. William King, sometime before his death in 1711. It is a translation of the first six chapters only; less than one-third of the entire work. For several years Swift and King were associated on rather intimate terms. Swift succeeded King as editor of the Examiner, and later secured employment for him as gazetteer, on giving his pledge to the effect that King would remain sober. There is at least the possibility that Swift saw King's partial translation of the Mundus; or on the other hand Swift may have interested King in it himself. This sort of reasoning is wholly gratuitous and proves nothing; we have no real reason for believing that Swift ever saw the satire of Hall. It is, however, at least suggestive to note that the only existing English translation of the Mundus was made by a friend and associate of Swift, sometime before 1711.

Hall describes in his book an academy of impractical innovators which could have influenced Swift's account of the Academy of Lagado. Inasmuch as the satiric method used in the Mundus is strikingly similar to Gulliver's Travels, the possibility of the former as a source of material for Swift must be considered.

The Weekly Comedy

G. S. McCue points out that The Weekly Comedy, a little known periodical first published on May 10, 1699, may have influenced the composition and contents of Gulliver's Travels. This periodical made use of a club-like gathering of twelve men who told stories

22Ibid.
while sitting in a coffee-house. One of these narratives by Scribble, a newswriter, tells of the recent discovery of a fertile, pleasant island, situated forty-three leagues from Ireland. An encounter with pygmies is described, which might possibly have supplied Swift with the idea of Gulliver's initial affair with the Lilliputians. Concerning Swift's use of this periodical as source material for his Travels, McCue says:

The original, it will be seen, is vague and poor in detail, never rising above the level of Grub Street writing. Its carelessness is shown in the inconsistency in the size of the pygmies: at one time they are about fifteen inches tall, at another, three feet. Swift certainly did not copy The Weekly Comedy; he may, however, have taken his idea from it, making use of the following suggestions: an island originally connected with Prester John's country, the race of pygmies who greet a visitor with a flight of arrows, and the curiosities brought back by the traveller.

McCue emphasizes the importance of the dates of Gulliver's first departure from Bristol and the publication of The Weekly Comedy. He continues:

An interesting feature is the date of Gulliver's first departure from Bristol, 4 May, 1699. This is almost the exact date of The Weekly Comedy. If the sixteen hundred odd weeks of Swift's career as a writer be added to the number of weeks in England's previous maritime history, it will be seen that the chance of picking that particular date was one in ten thousand. On the other hand, if the date be not the result of a chance shot, three possibilities present themselves. First,

Swift may have begun Gulliver’s Travels soon after reading this periodical; second, he may have made a note which he used later; or third, Swift’s impression of the odd journey in The Weekly Comedy may have been such that in developing his own story years later, the month and year of the original came spontaneously to his mind through subconscious association of ideas.\(^{30}\)

It is not inconceivable that one of these possibilities might have occurred, but it is more than likely that Swift adapted his date to fit an incident cited by Dampier in his Voyages. A. W. Secord makes the following comment:

The date of Gulliver’s departure and the name and destination of his vessel are directly from Dampier’s Voyages. Dampier had reported meeting the Antelope on 3 June, 1699, as she rounded the Cape of Good Hope enroute to the East Indies; and Swift chose 4 May as a suitable sailing date for a ship which was to reach the Cape by 3 June. The evidence is convincing as it stands. The fact that Swift owned a set of Dampier’s books and mentions them in the prefatory letter makes it incontrovertible.\(^{31}\)

Le Theatre Italien

Three or four comedies in Le Theatre Italien clearly belong to the genre of imaginative voyages. In 1716 the troupe of Italian actors was recalled to Paris, and, in response to a widespread demand, all the plays were spoken in French from 1719 on. At least four of these are satiric voyages. These, together with the dates of their first

\(^{30}\)Ibid.

\(^{31}\)A. W. Secord, “Gulliver and Dampier,” Modern Language Notes, LI (March, 1936), 159.
production on the stage are *Arlequin Sauvage* (1721), *Timon le Misanthrope* (1722), *l'Isle des Sauvages* (1725), and *l'Isle des Talens* (1743), in all of which the scenes are laid in imaginary, fantastic latitudes where Swiftian satire is diluted with music and farce. Many elements of the satiric voyage are present: a journey and a shipwreck, pointed satire on contemporary European life, and a contrast of civilizations and manners. Parallels to Gulliver's Travels will be cited in the following chapters.

One may ask if Swift was familiar with these comedies. To begin with, Swift admired the wit and humor of Le Theatre Italien to the point of ranking it first among foreign humor. In an essay for the Intelligencer wherein he analyzes the nature and purpose of satire, he writes:

> I agree with Sir William Temple, that the word [humour] is peculiar to our English tongue; but I differ from him in the opinion, that the thing itself is peculiar to the English nation, because the contrary may be found in many Spanish, Italian, and French productions; and particularly, whoever has a taste for true humor, will find a hundred instances of it in those volumes printed in France under the name of Le Theatre Italien; to say nothing of Rabelais, Cervantes, and many others.

Could Swift reasonably be expected to have read *Arlequin Sauvage* in time to consider it at all in the composition of Gulliver's Travels? The essay just quoted was written in

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1723. Gulliver's Travels appeared in 1726. Relative to the publishing of Arlequin Sauvage, Eddy says:

We know from many sources that Arlequin Sauvage was first acted publicly in Paris in 1721, and that it was revived on the stage for a second run in 1723. No collected edition of the plays was printed until 1733, but the editors of this and later editions tell us that private printings were broadcast throughout France by the authors to advertise their productions. From these irregular printings the later collections were made. Certainly a number must have found their way into Swift's hands if he located a "hundred instances" of true humor in them. We may assume, then, that Arlequin Sauvage was printed at the time of its production in 1721, and most likely again at its revival in 1723.34

At least one of the plays, therefore, might reasonably be considered as a source for Gulliver's Travels.

Wasobiyoe

Gulliver's initial adventures in the land of the giants, as well as several other incidents, are paralleled in detail in an anonymous Japanese work, Wasobiyoe. This story, published in Japan in 1774, should be mentioned in connection with possible source material. The book contains a number of imaginary voyages analogous to Gulliver's journeys to Brobdingnag and Struldbruggland.35

34William A. Eddy, "'Gulliver's Travels' and 'Le Theatre Italien,'" Modern Language Notes, XLIV (June, 1929), 361.

A striking and verbally exact parallel occurs in the circumstances of the travellers' entrance into the giant land. Another similarity is in the account of the immortals visited by Wasobiyoe; a people who, like the Struldbruggs, desire death above all else. These parallels will be treated fully in the following chapters.

What does the Japanese story, published in 1774, have to do with Gulliver's Travels? Eddy says:

To begin with, the date of the earliest known edition of Wasobiyoe, 1774, means little or nothing. The story may have circulated long before, in forms now lost. At any rate I have the word of a prominent Japanese scholar that the story goes back to the writings of a Chinese philosopher who lived two thousand years ago. [The scholar Eddy refers to is Yoshi Kuno, a professor in the Department of Oriental Literature, University of California.] Then, also, the fact that Japan deliberately shut herself off from European influences for a long period of years, would make it more likely that the Dutch traders would bring back a Japanese tale to Europe, than that a Japanese author should copy the work of an Englishman.

A statement made by Swift, or rather Gulliver, concerning the Struldbruggs is very significant. He says:

There is indeed a perpetual commerce between this kingdom and the great empire of Japan, and it is very probable that the Japanese authors may have given some account of the Struldbruggs . . . I hope the Dutch upon this notice will be curious and able enough to supply my defects.

36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., p. 70.
38 Swift, op. cit., p. 297.
Wasobiye can not be classed as a definite source for *Gulliver's Travels*, but it is certainly possible that Swift may have got hold of the story in some manner, perhaps from Dutch traders.

Francis Godwin

Francis Godwin published the *Voyage of Domingo Gonzales* in 1638. This work is not so important for its direct influence on Swift. It did, however, influence Cyrano de Bergerac, and we have seen that Swift was very familiar with the narratives of the French writer.

There are only a few resemblances between Godwin's narrative and *Gulliver's Travels*. There are moon-men in the former which are similar to the Brobdingnagians, and the two stories agree in assigning to the dwarfs a meaner spirit than the giants, although there is only one dwarf in Brobdingnag.39 Godwin's giants are friendly people, and in this respect they closely resemble the inhabitants of Brobdingnag.

The chief importance of the *Voyage of Domingo Gonzales*, however, is that it served, through Cyrano, as an indirect source of *Gulliver's Travels*.

T. S. Gueulette

Eugene Rovillain has suggested that T. S. Gueulette's

Tartarian Tales might have served as a source for Gulliver's Travels. This work, first printed in 1712, attracted such attention that five editions were published. The proficiency of Swift in the French language would have enabled him to read the original work. The first English translation did not appear until 1759.

The point stressed by Rovillain concerns the method by which Gulliver extinguished the fire which was destroying the palace of Lilliput. Numerous similitudes relative to this incident are found in Tartarian Tales and Gulliver's Travels. A full discussion of these parallels will follow in the chapter on Lilliput.

Scriblerus Club

The famous Scriblerus Club came into existence toward the end of 1713 or early in the following year. The leading spirit was Arbuthnot, with Parnell, Pope, Gay, and Swift supporting him. The great purpose of this group was the joint composition of the Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus. How the Memoirs was composed we shall never know, but there was undoubtedly constant collaboration on the part of the five members. Swift was responsible for handling the incidents of Martin's voyages. Quintana remarks upon the relationship of the Memoirs and Gulliver's Travels:

Gulliver's Travels and the Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus are more than distantly related. ... It will be remembered that in 1714 Swift, as one of the Scriblerians, was engaged upon fragments of a satiric nature dealing with Martin Scriblerus's supposed voyages to strange lands. Though these fragments have not survived, something of their contents can be told; it seems certain that two distinct voyages had taken shape, one to a land of pygmies, another to a kingdom of philosophers. Swift had not proceeded far, however, when the shadow of the approaching political disaster drove all thought of Martin from his mind and in a few weeks sent him into retirement at Letcombe. ... Before his retirement to Letcombe he had completed certain portions of Martin's voyage to the kingdom of philosophers; these he now incorporated into the account of Gulliver, taking from the 1714 manuscript chapters i and ii and probably other parts of the Voyage to Lilliput, and many passages of the Voyage to Lemuria. 41

It seems evident that the root of Gulliver's Travels lies in the Scriblerus Club. While the latter has little to do with a study of specific sources, it does help to explain certain parts of the narrative and to clarify the origin of the idea of the book.

Simon Tyssot de Patot

John Robert Moore suggests that a French imaginary voyage, Voyages et aventures de Jacques Masse, might have been known and utilized by Swift. The author of this book, Simon Tyssot de Patot, was born of French parents in London but spent much of his life in Holland.

The original French text seems timed for Swift's reading before the composition of the *Travels*. It appeared four times in the first year (1710), and the publication of four English translations some twenty years later indicates popularity in England. 42 Moore says:

The probability that Swift saw it in 1710, or during the years immediately after, seems to me very great. It created considerable stir in the intellectual world, and its form was the form which Swift most admired and practiced — imaginative prose satire. Its appearance was timed not very long before the Scriblerus papers were first undertaken, with the travels into strange countries which eventually led to *Gulliver*.

Patet's book tells of the experiences of a young ship's surgeon who has many exciting voyages. Moore points out many explicit resemblances between this volume and *Gulliver's Travels*. These will be included in later discussions.

**Miscellaneous**

Several other works might be listed as possible sources for the *Travels*, but points of resemblance are so very slight that they merit but little consideration. They will, however, be mentioned in the following chapters where occasion demands.

Swift was beyond a doubt familiar with William Dampier's *Voyages*. Dampier's works were included in the dean's library,


43 Ibid., p. 68.
and he mentions them in the prefatory letter to *Gulliver's Travels*. *Gulliver's* voyages might be said to follow the same general pattern as Dampier's journeys, but there the similarity ends. There are few parallels in content. As previously stated, Swift more than likely took the name of Gulliver's ship, *Antelope*, directly from Dampier. Other than this, there is little to link Swift with Dampier.

In the journey to Houyhnhnmiland, Swift possibly drew on the *Arabian Nights*. This is a mere conjecture, however, for he could have obtained his ideas about the horses from any number of other sources. John Churton Collins' remark that "several strokes for the Yahoos were borrowed from the *Travels* of Sir Thomas Herbert"\(^{44}\) is likewise unconfirmed. Swift and Herbert wrote about similar subjects, but there is no substantiating evidence that the latter was a source for *Gulliver's Travels*.

Aristotle and Juvenal, in addition to Homer, made classical allusions to pygmies, but pygmies were a common topic of discussion in Swift's day, and he had no need to refer to the ancients for this information. A poem by Joseph Addison, *Machinae Gesticulantes*, first combined the pygmy legend with a Lilliputian paraphrase of the human race, but here again there are no convincing parallels between this work and the *Travels* of Swift.

\(^{44}\text{Collins, op. cit., p. 205.}\)
Daniel Defoe's *Consolidator* as a forerunner to Swift's masterpiece is important only because it is a fantastic voyage. There are no parallels between the two stories.

The purpose of this chapter has been to show Swift's literary relationships to his predecessors, and to summarize the extent of their influence upon *Gulliver's Travels*. Individual parallels and similitudes will be discussed in the following chapters.
CHAPTER II

THE VOYAGE TO LILLIPUT

Descriptions of pygmy empires and races are almost as old as the beginnings of literature. The conception is one which makes an inevitable appeal to the imagination of everyone. The Voyage to Lilliput has always been the most popular part of Gulliver's Travels.

It is the purpose of this chapter to point out the similarities and relationships existing between the Voyage to Lilliput and other literary productions. It is first necessary to review the references to pygmy commonwealths before the advent of Gulliver's Travels.

Ancient Pygmy Kingdoms

Not alone Swift but every one of his predecessors, fortunate enough to be educated in the classics, was familiar with the pygmy myth recorded by more than a dozen of the writers of antiquity: poets, historians, and travellers.¹ The importance of those accounts is not so much due to the fact that notable ancients mentioned pygmies, as to the circumstance that the myth, originated by them, was current and popular in and before Swift's time.

William A. Eddy summarizes the elements of the classical myth as follows:

A savage race of pygmies, about one cubit high, located variously from northern Africa to India, lives in caves, and wages a defensive warfare continually against the cranes, by whom it is finally exterminated.

Homer, Aristotle, Juvenal, and Herodotus allude to the diminutive race of beings, but none of these accounts served as a source for Swift. Homer's description of the blinding of the Cyclops, however, may have suggested to Swift the proposal of the Lilliputians to put out the eyes of Gulliver in order to render him less capable of harming them.²

The only classical account to which Swift was indebted is Philostratus' story of the capture of the sleeping Hercules by the pygmies. This statement occurs in the Imagines:

The pygmies . . . having found Hercules napping in Lybia, mustered up their forces against him. One phalanx assaulted his left hand; but against his right hand, that being the stronger, two phalanxes were appointed. The archers and slingers besieged his feet, admiring the hugeness of his thighs; but against his head, as the arsenal, they raised batteries, the King himself taking his post there. They set fire to his hair, put reaping hooks in his eyes; and, that he might not breathe, clapped doors to his mouth and nostrils; but all the execution they could do was only to awaken him, which, when done, deriding their folly, he gathered them all up, into his lion's skin and carried them to Euristhenes . . .

The parallel in Gulliver's Travels is very close. Gulliver falls asleep and is attacked by pygmies armed with bows and arrows. The leader marches up Gulliver's leg and

²Ibid.

³McCracken, op. cit., p. 536.

assaults his head. The Man-Mountain's hugeness is vocally
admired by one of the pygmies. "In an instant I felt above
an hundred arrows discharged on my left hand . . . Some of
them attempted with spears to stick me in the sides, but . . .
I had on a buff jerkin which they could not pierce."\(^5\) Then
a battery is erected near Gulliver's head and an ultimatum
delivered to the invader. The parallels are very close, but
Swift's debt to Philostratus must not be overestimated. The
pygmies of the latter cannot be identified with the natives
of Lilliput.\(^6\)

G. S. McCue's discussion of The Weekly Comedy\(^7\) was listed
in the first chapter, and it merits no further study. The
island inhabited by a race of pygmies who greet the visitor
with a flight of arrows appears to be the only similarity to
the invention of Swift, and even this resemblance is remote
and indefinite.

Eddy suggests the possibility of d'Ablancourt's trans-
lation of Lucian's True History as a source for Swift's
Lilliputians. There is added a third and fourth part written
by d'Ablancourt himself in which the traveller visits a land
of pygmies. These pygmies closely resemble the Lilliputians
in many respects. Eddy says:

\(^5\)Swift, op. cit., p. 18.

\(^6\)William A. Eddy, Gulliver's Travels, A Critical Study,
p. 77.

\(^7\)McCue, op. cit., pp. 34-35.
The race of pygmies is most important. Unlike the little savages which attack Hercules in the classical legend, but like the Lilliputians, the pygmies of d'Ablancourt are governed by human laws, ruled by a benevolent king, skilled in waging war, and highly ingenious in the management of their domestic affairs. To be sure, the race is idealized, not ridiculed, as it is by Swift; but it is for a source to the fiction and not the satire that we seek in d'Ablancourt. There is also something of Swift's careful proportions in the extended and detailed account of the pygmy life. The minute rations consumed, the diminutive utensils used, are all in strict conformity with the scale of life. The traveller is entertained with a vaudeville performance which links well with Gulliver's adventures and lacks only the tight-rope walking exhibited at the court of Lilliput. In short, no other account of pygmy life gives anything like such a parallel to Swift.

If we add the parallels in d'Ablancourt's sequel to the similarities contained in the True History itself, we are forced to the conclusion that we are in the presence of a very considerable source for Gulliver's Travels.

Lilliputian Satire

Few accounts of pygmy life embody the same satiric method as is exhibited in Gulliver's Travels. In only one of the philosophic voyages before the Travels is there any use made of a reduced scale of life to expose the gratuitous nature of human vanity. In Lewis Holberg's The Journey of Nicholas Klimius to the World Underground, the traveller hovers in the air and is mistaken for the moon. Eddy states:

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8William A. Eddy, "A Source for 'Gulliver's Travels,'" Modern Language Notes, XXXVI (November, 1921), 421.
The only satiric use made of this reduced scale, is in the first chapter, in which Klimius is filled with exaggerated pride on discovering that he is himself of no less importance than a celestial body, and further, on the discovery that he is the center of attraction for smaller satellites. . . . Before he has travelled far in the underworld, Klimius discovers that his self-satisfaction is ill-founded. Similarly Gulliver, intoxicated with his prominence in Lilliput . . . discovers later the fallacy of his supposed grandeur.9

Punch and Judy shows, which we commonly regard as burlesque amusements, frequently contained elements of satire in Swift's day. Certainly the opportunity was present to ridicule the serious actions of men, and to represent in parody the persons of statesmen, in the figures of the tiny puppets.10 Joseph Addison twice alludes to the puppets as pygmies, and Swift must surely have read his works.11 As stated in the first chapter, it was the Machinæ Gesticulantes of Addison that first combined the pygmy legend with a Lilliputian parody of the human race.

Another of Addison's poems, Praelium Inter Pygmaeos et Grues Commissum, revives the battle between the pygmies and the cranes. This poem, written in 1699, proves that the notion of a pygmy people was familiar to the educated readers of Gulliver's Travels.

10Ibid., p. 108.
11Ibid.
Gulliver and the Lilliputians

The fact that Lemuel Gulliver was a ship's surgeon has prompted John Robert Moore to suggest Simon Tyssot de Patot's *Voyages et aventures de Jacques Masse* as a new source for *Gulliver's Travels*. Moore comments:

In these two books of imaginary voyages, and apparently in these two only, the hero is a ship's surgeon. . . . Both Masse and Gulliver found their income from medical practice on land very small, and they were alike in wishing to travel and see the world.\(^{12}\)

There is another interesting fact relative to Swift's choice of occupation for his hero. In the earlier editions of Daniel Defoe's *History of the Pirates*, it is repeatedly indicated that surgeons were in special favor with the pirates, whereas captains and other officers were often cast aside. From whatever event or source Swift got this information, he carefully promoted Gulliver from surgeon to captain in the fourth voyage to qualify him for the honor of being marooned by piratical crews.\(^{13}\)

There are two very slight points of resemblance between Homer's *Odyssey* and Gulliver's adventures in Lilliput. There is a suggestion of Polyphemus' cannibalism in the idea that occurs to Gulliver as he holds a Lilliputian in his hands: "I made a countenance as if I would eat him alive."\(^{14}\)

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\(^{12}\)Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

\(^{13}\)Ibid.

George McCracken mentions that the Cyclops' bad table manners are suggested by the appetite of Gulliver, which seems like gluttony to the Lilliputians.  

The ideas for several adventures of Gulliver during his stay in Lilliput were suggested to Swift, not by other pygmy stories, but by the giants of Francois Rabelais, Gargantua and Pantagruel. The parallels are frequently so close that Swift's debt to the French author is a certainty. Gulliver's appetite, referred to above, resembles the hunger of Pantagruel. Orders are given to prepare for the Man-Mountain a daily supply of "six beves, forty sheep, and other victuals . . . together with a proportionable quantity of bread, wine, and other liquors."  

The capacity of Pantagruel is even greater. 

At every one of his meals he supped up the milk of four thousand six hundred cows; and to make him a skillet there were set to work all the braziers of Anjou, Normandy, and Lorrain.  

Gargantua's supper was equally enormous. 

Sixteen oxen, three heifers, two-and-thirty calves . . . three hundred barrow pigs souced in sweet wine, eleven score partridges . . . For venison . . . only eleven wild boars . . . and eighteen fallow deer.  

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15 McCracken, op. cit., p. 537.  
16 Swift, op. cit., p. 32.  
18 Ibid.
In the clothing of Gulliver, Swift is likewise repeating the ideas of Rabelais. "Rabelais devotes a whole chapter to the task of clothing Gargantua, a task which requires eleven hundred and five ells and a third of white broadcloth for his breeches alone." Two hundred seamstresses are employed to fashion Gulliver's shirts, and three hundred tailors are hired to make his complete outfit. There is, of course, no similarity in the figures, but it is obvious that Swift was following the general pattern of Rabelais.

Lilliputian methods of warfare are also reminiscent of Rabelais. Gulliver says:

> In an instant I felt above an hundred arrows . . . which pricked me like so many needles. . . . Some of them had the impudence to shoot their arrows at me, whereof one very narrowly missed my left eye.

Again he says:

> The enemy discharged several thousand arrows, many of which stuck in my hands and face. . . . My greatest apprehension was for mine eyes, which I would have infallibly lost, if I had not suddenly thought of an expedient.

Eddy points out that Rabelais sends Gargantua into several fights which resemble those in Lilliput. The closest parallel is the following:

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20 Swift, *op. cit.*., p. 33.


A ruffian gunner . . . let fly and hit him [the giant Gargantua] with that shot most furiously on the right temple of the head, yet did him no more hurt than if he had cast a prune or a kernel of a winegrape at him. . . . Those within ran to the towers from whence they shot at him above nine-thousand-and-five-and-twenty falcon shot and harquebusades, aiming all at his head, and so thick did they shoot at him that he cried out, 'Ponocrates, my friend, these flies here are like to put out my eyes.'

Gulliver's manipulation of the Lilliputians resembles the pranks of the Rabelaisian giants. He permits them to hold war exhibitions on his handkerchief, dance on his hand, and march between his legs. Gargantua and Pantagruel instigate similar adventures.

A belief attributed to the Lilliputians, that of permitting children to be under no obligation to their parents, was probably suggested by a passage in Cyrano. In Klimius the normal order of things is inverted, and parents obey their children.

It is evident that Swift's use of filth in his first chapter of the Travels was modelled on Rabelais. A debt has been assumed in the incident of Gulliver extinguishing the fire in the palace of Lilliput, which resembles the joke played by Gargantua on the Parisians. Eddy says:

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25Ibid., p. 113.
The parallel is first of all in the coarse situation; and secondly, in the devastation and wide-spread terror produced in each case by the flood. ... Swift's mind was evidently well-stored with incidents from Rabelais, whose works he must have known almost by heart, since he was able to quote them offhand in his correspondence with verbal accuracy.26

Eugene Rovillain disagrees with most critics in regard to Swift's source for the palace fire episode. He attributes a story in T. S. Gueulette's Tertarian Tales to be the direct source for this incident. Tertarian Tales was published in French in 1712. The first English translation of this book did not appear until 1759, but Swift's proficiency in the French language would have enabled him to read the earliest edition. Commenting upon the similitudes in Gueulette's story and the account of the fire in the Lilliputian palace, Rovillain says:

There are many resemblances between this story and Swift's. Gulliver is alarmed in the night by the cries of many people; the word fire is shouted incessantly; the high officers of the crown come to him and entreat him to go to the palace as only his intervention can save it from instant destruction; he has to get out of bed; a natural and urgent want, caused by previous drinks, is suddenly increased by the heat of the fire, just as in Gueulette's story it is increased by the warmth of the bath. Furthermore, the hero of Gueulette's story refers twice to his fear that giving free rein to his natural want might lay his own land under water and drown the inhabitants. This recalls the deep distrust of the Admiral of Lilliput who expresses his fear that Gulliver might raise an inundation ... 27

26 William A. Eddy, "Rabelais, A Source for 'Gulliver's Travels,'" Modern Language Notes, XXXVII (November, 1922), 417.
27 Rovillain, op. cit., p. 365.
John Robert Moore suggests that a hint for Gulliver's method for extinguishing the fire might be found in Patot's *Voyages et avventures de Jacques Masse.* The parallel in this case, however, is too indefinite to merit consideration in a discussion of the sources of Gulliver's *Travels.* Rabelais and Gueulette dwarf the importance of Patot as a source for the above incident.

Relativity of Human Life

Swift's satiric concept of human values and his theory of relativity concerning human life are apparent throughout the first two voyages of Gulliver.

In respect to one fundamental idea the *Voyages to Lilliput* and *Brobdingnag* must be considered together, and that idea is the relativity of human life and of its values. It is clear that Swift intends mankind to be viewed in three different aspects. The first representative of the race is Gulliver himself, a typical human being, in no way extraordinary, who learns many things, in the course of his travels, to the shame and humiliation of his race. ... Here Gulliver is a man. ...

In the second place Swift represents the human race in the life and actions of the Lilliputians, a race of pygmies six inches tall. ... Swift implies that man is in effect a Lilliputian; not only is the physical disparity no real distinction, but the mental and moral aspect of human civilization is as absurd and as petty as that of Lilliput. Finally in the persons of the Brobdingnagians, Swift presents mankind grotesquely magnified, so as to bring out into the light of day the coarse and unpleasant features of the human body. ...
This skeptical view of man's greatness seems to be based upon Berkeley's *Theory of Vision*. This essay, published in 1709, is an interesting discussion of the relativity of all magnitude. As narrated in the first chapter, Swift was a close friend of the philosopher, an admirer of his works, and a frequent visitor in his home. Certainly Swift must have read the *Theory of Vision*.

Gulliver himself refers us to the theories of philosophers when he says, "Undoubtedly philosophers are in the right when they tell us, that nothing is great or little otherwise than by comparison."\(^{30}\) This is precisely what Berkeley had stated in a more lengthy manner in 1709. The question of whether man is six feet or six inches tall is likewise anticipated by Berkeley as follows:

Inches, feet, etc. are settled, stated lengths, whereby we measure objects and estimate their magnitude. We say, for example, an object appears to be six inches or six foot long. Now that this cannot be meant of visible inches etc. is evident, because a visible inch is itself no constant, determinate magnitude.\(^{31}\)

There is, therefore, nothing essentially constant about our units of measurement. Gulliver's magnitude depends entirely on the attitude from which he is viewed.

The ideas embodied in *Gulliver's Travels* resemble the *Theory of Vision* so closely that it seems logical to consider the latter as a source.


Summary

The Lilliputians were, to some extent, an outgrowth of a very definite and ancient pygmy myth. Many classical writers had testified to the existence of the pygmies; imaginary travellers had repeatedly reported their discovery of the race; and scholars were actually debating the fact of pygmy life during the lifetime of Swift. In no classical author, however, nor in any revivals of the pygmy myth by authors nearer to Swift's own time, is there anything which can be supposed to have furnished him with more than an occasional hint. Evidence seems to indicate that he was familiar with Philostratus' *Images* and d'Ablancourt's edition of Lucian's *True History*. Perhaps he had read Holberg's *Klimius*, Addison's poems, and the works of the Frenchmen Patot and Gueulette. Beyond doubt, some of the incidents in the first chapter of *Gulliver's Travels* are directly traceable to Rabelais, and the philosophy expressed resembles the views of George Berkeley. Swift's literary art, nevertheless, is supreme. There is no other consecutive narrative as complete and consistent as the *Voyage to Lilliput*. 
CHAPTER III

THE VOYAGE TO BRODBIDNAG

Swift's Brobdingnagians do not conform to any single literary or local tradition. There was no unified or definite myth about giants or giant land such as there was concerning pygmy life. Almost every country had its giant mythology and folk tales, but the general public possessed no universal belief nor attitude. We find, consequently, that the Brobdingnagians resemble the giants of various, independent tales and narratives. Gulliver's second voyage must be compared in turn to each of these myths and imaginary voyages.

Giants of mythology and Folk-lore

There is little similarity between Swift's giants and the giants of classical mythology. The Brobdingnagians were kind, and in order to be like them a race of giants must be friendly and humane. The classical giants were untamed, extremely strong, and of negligible mentality. Homer's Polyphemus, mentioned previously, serves as a good illustration of the monstrous being of the classics. One notes little similitude between Homer's creation and the Brobdingnagians, although there might be a general similarity between the picture of Polyphemus chasing the ship of Odysseus and that of the Brobdingnagian giant pursuing the
ship of Gulliver's companions into the sea. Swift did utilize Homer in some parts of *Gulliver's Travels*, but there are few episodes in the second voyage which resemble either the *Odyssey* or the *Iliad*.

The humorous giants of German mythology, on the other hand, share some of the qualities of the broad and lengthy Brobdignagians. They are hospitable, fraternal, and gifted with a sense of humor which expresses itself in practical jokes. The many adventures of Thor, familiar to everyone, illustrate the character of the northern giant. The German giants are kind to the traveller, laugh at his conceit, and amuse themselves by his antics. In these respects they resemble Swift's characters.

Giants are characters in many old Irish folk tales. Since Swift lived for many years in Ireland, it is logical to assume that he came in contact with many of these narratives. Some critics aver that Swift secured occasional hints for several of Gulliver's adventures in Brobdignag from this source, but no concrete evidence has ever been found to substantiate these claims. Although the general theme is frequently the same, there are no individual parallels in content.

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1 McCracken, *op. cit.*, p. 537.

The popular tradition of giants in English folk tales, as it was known to Swift's contemporaries, is best represented by the cycle of *Jack and the Giants*, or, as it is otherwise known, *Jack, the Giant Killer*. These stories were very popular during the life of Swift, and it is certain that they appeared in print at least as early as 1711. There are no single parallels between them and *Gulliver's Travels*, but Swift might have conceived the idea for the second voyage from this source. Certainly he could expect his readers to be familiar with tales of giants.

**Imaginary Voyages**

The chief sources for the adventures in the second part of *Gulliver's Travels* are imaginary voyages. We may secure the general characteristics of the giant in fiction from mythology and folk tales, but it is in the imaginary voyages narrated by a traveller that we find the individual parallels to Brobdingnag.

**Lucian's True History.**—A race of moon-giants is discovered by Lucian.

The men from the waist upwards were as big as the Colossus of Rhodes, and their horses as large as a good merchantman; I purposely omit to set down their vast numbers, because they may seem incredible.  

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3. *Ibid.*, p. 120.  
The giants of Lucian are described as barbarous and gruesome monsters. They are totally unlike the friendly and generous inhabitants of Brobdingnag.

Rabelais' Gargantua and Pantagruel.—The influence of the Rabelaisian giants upon Swift was very apparent in the adventures of Gulliver at Lilliput, the land of the pygmies, but, strangely enough, the Brobdingnagian journey bears little resemblance to the works of Rabelais. The only similarity appears in the characteristics of the King of Brobdingnag, a pacifist. He lectures Gulliver against the use of firearms and against the horror of war, and in this respect is identical with Grangousier, the first of Rabelais' giants. The latter says:

The time is not now as formerly to conquer the kingdoms of our neighbor princes, and to build up our own greatness upon the losses of our nearest Christian brother: this imitation of the ancient Herculeses, Alexanders, Hannibals, Scipio, Caesars, and other such heroes is quite contrary to the profession of the Gospel of Christ... And that which heretofore the Barbers and Saracens called prowess and valour, we do now call robbing, thievry, and wickednes. All the days of my life I have laboured for nothing so much as peace.

Godwin's Voyage of Gonzales to the Moon.—The narrative of Godwin is important because it influenced the writings of Cyrano de Bergerac. It will be shown that the works of the latter influenced Swift greatly in the composition of both the second and fourth parts of Gulliver's Travels.

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There are, however, a few similarities between the *Voyage of Gonzales* and the *Voyage to Brobdingnag*. Gonzales and Gulliver describe their moon-men and Brobdingnagians in much the same manner, although the sizes of the creatures are not identical. Gonzales says:

> There was no door about the house less than thirty feet high, and twelve broad; the rooms were forty or fifty feet in height, and answerable in proportion; neither could they be much less, the master thereof being full twenty-eight high, and I suppose his body would weigh twenty-five or thirty of ours.

The king interrogates Gonzales in much the same manner as Gulliver is questioned by the King of Brobdingnag. As related in the first chapter, both Swift and Godwin assign the dwarfs a meaner spirit than the giants, although there is only one dwarf in Brobdingnag. The moon-men are very friendly hosts, and they compare favorably in this way to the Brobdingnagians.

The Arabian Nights.—A few years prior to the publication of *Gulliver's Travels*, a French version of *Arabian Nights* was translated into English. One of the tales therein, an imaginary voyage concerning the adventures of Hassan al Bassri, affords a parallel to Gulliver's adventure with the Brobdingnagian maids of honor. It is not unreasonable to think that Swift read a work of such universal popularity, and Eddy considers the parallel very significant. He says:

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No other story corresponds so closely as this the predicaments into which Gulliver is led by the Maids of Honour. Swift, however, does not describe his scene in a suggestive manner. The whole point of the incident is the loathsome effect upon Gulliver of the contact with the female giants. Their bodies are repulsive to his acute senses. . . . In the Arabian story no such satire is intended; the intrigue is frankly and wholly obscene. And yet the parallel is an interesting one. The traveller is captured by the giants, taken to their king, and is made the victim of amorous attentions by a giantess at court. The "many other tricks" omitted by Swift are included in the oriental story. In both, a great deal is made of the traveller's unwillingness to reciprocate the passion of his admirer. The main difference between the two is in the importance of the incident. What in the story of Hassan constitutes his principal adventure in giant-land, is only a minor incident in Gulliver's Travels.

The fable of the roc, a monstrous bird, might be traced to Arabian Nights. Two stories concerning this bird appear in the book, and it is probable that Gulliver's escape from Brobdingnag might be copied indirectly from one of these Arabian stories. A discussion of the roc will follow later in this chapter.

Patot's Voyages et aventures de Jacques Masse.—John Robert Moore mentions a parallel between Patot's work and Gulliver's adventures at Brobdingnag.

The king of Patot's imaginary country lectures against the use of firearms and against the horror and futility of European war in a fashion strikingly like that of the King of Brobdingnag and of Gulliver's master among the Houyhnhnms. Some of the resemblances (such as

the statements in both books that a million men have been slain in a war in Europe, and that twenty thousand have been slain on one side in a single battle) could be explained by the fact that Patot and Swift were writing of the same war.

For Swift in 1726, as for most of us after 1918, there was only one great war. For Swift the World War was the War of the Spanish Succession. Patot actually wrote his book in Holland at the very time the war was at its height. . . . There is one striking difference between Patot's account of the war and Swift's. Swift dwells primarily upon the destructive force of gunpowder and upon the horror of the battle field. Patot . . . sees also the after effects of war in the dislocation of trade, the spread of unemployment, and the degeneracy of a people.

Holberg's *Journey of Klimius to the World Underground.*---

A close parallel to Gulliver's adventures among the giants is found in the *Journey of Klimius to the World Underground.* Klimius is granted an audience with the King of Potu, and he expounds upon the manners and habits of his native land.

I [Klimius] expatiated with much warmth on the intellect and virtues of man; and on the morals, good-breeding, and other accomplishments, of which mankind in general are accustomed to pride themselves. But he was quite indifferent at the recital, and even yawned at several circumstances, which I conceived most likely to excite his admiration. Alas, thought I, . . . that which is the most charming and agreeable to us, awakens in this people nothing but disgust and nausea. What appeared to grate mostly on his princely ear, was that which I related to him concerning our method of pleading causes at the bar; respecting the eloquence of our barristers; and the alacrity of our judge in deciding questions, and pronouncing the verdicts.  

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9 *Moore, op. cit.*, p. 75.

Gulliver encounters a similar experience at the hands of the King of Brobdingnag. Each of the monarchs extolls the superior virtues of his country.

Wasobiyoe.--The adventures of the Japanese traveller, Wasobiyoe, in the land of the giants is a much shorter narrative than Swift’s production, but there are remarkably close parallels. One of these is to be found in the details of the reception given Wasobiyoe by the giants.

On alighting in Giant-land, Wasobiyoe espied a broad road running through a large bamboo thicket, which soon turned out to be merely a foot-path through a corn-field, where every stalk was as tall as one of the largest Japanese bamboos... Even the most ordinary little trees would be, some one-hundred-and-fifty, some one-hundred feet in circumference.  

Wasobiyoe is discovered by the inhabitants of the land in the following manner:

A sixty-five foot man picked him up, and putting him in his left hand and covering him up carefully with his right, as a child does who has caught a fly, carried him off to his house... They picked him up between thumb and fore-finger and made him stand upon their hands.

Gulliver’s initial adventures are almost identical with those of Wasobiyoe. They begin as follows:

I fell into a high road, for so I took it to be, though it served to the inhabitants only as a foot-path through a field of barley... the trees so lofty that I could make no computation of their altitude.

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12 Ibid., p. 132.
13 Swift, op. cit., p. 111.
Gulliver's discovery by the giant greatly resembles the account in *Wasobiyoe*.

One of the reapers... looking about under him for some time, at last espied me as I lay on the ground... At length he ventured to take me up behind by the middle between his fore-finger and thumb and brought me within three yards of his eyes... He held me in the air about sixty foot from the ground, although he grievously pinched my sides for fear I should slip through his fingers.\(^4\)

The agreement of this anonymous Japanese story and Swift's *Travels* might very well be a mere coincidence. Regarding this possibility, Eddy states:

> Given the situation of a human being, thrown among sixty or seventy foot giants, the details that follow might easily appear in stories of independent origin. The traveller would of course walk along a road, which, if a giant's foot-path, must of necessity seem to him to be a broad high-way. The giants could not pick him up more naturally than between thumb and fore-finger; and, unless the giant were left-handed, it would be done with the right hand, and the object placed upon the left. The most interesting point of agreement is the idea of a giant race differing from the traveller in nothing but size; a conception not common to giant stories, but that is essential to the satire of Brobdingnag.\(^5\)

*Cyrano de Bergerac's Histoire Comique de la Lune*—It has been recognized for many years that *Gulliver's Travels* owes quite as much to Cyrano as to any other writer. The resemblance is one of general ideas, taken up and exploited by Swift, rather than of parallel passages. Many of these

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are apparent in Gulliver's adventures among the giants of Brobdingnag. In addition to the similarity of ideas, a number of parallel situations occur in this part.

Both Swift and Cyrano place constant emphasis upon the difference in size between the traveller and his hosts. The greater size of the giants is used as a means for humiliating the traveller. When Cyrano arrives at the moon, a discussion is held concerning his species.

When the people saw me pass, seeing I was so small and my body supported by two feet only, they could not believe I was a man; for they hold that since Nature has given men two arms and two legs like the beasts, they ought to use them in the same way... I noticed from the buzz and the gestures made by the people and the magistrates that they were arguing together about what I might be.\(^\text{16}\) Gulliver is involved in the same type of situation by the Brobdingnagians.

His majesty sent for three great scholars... These gentlemen, after they had awhile examined my shape with much nicety, were of different opinions concerning me. They all agreed that I could not be produced according to the regular laws of nature, because I was not framed with a capacity of preserving my life.\(^\text{17}\)

Both travellers become objects of curiosity, and each is exhibited for money. Gulliver's master "demanded the rate of a full room, whenever he showed me at home, though it were only to a single family."\(^\text{18}\) Cyrano's owner also made money

\(^{16}\text{Cyrano de Bergerac, Voyages to the Moon and the Sun, translated by Richard Aldington, pp. 82-83.}\)

\(^{17}\text{Swift, op. cit., p. 136.}\)

\(^{18}\text{Ibid., p. 129.}\)
from exhibiting his pet. The function of the travellers was to show off, perform tricks, and entertain the crowd in every way possible.

A certain citizen who kept rare beasts begged the aldermen to lend me to him until the Queen sent for me to live with my male. No objection was made. This mountebank took me to his home; he taught me to play the buffoon, to throw somersaults, to make grimaces and in the agreement he took money at the door for showing me.19

There are numerous other similitudes in outline and in adventure. Eddy makes the following comparison:

In both stories, the traveller becomes the pet of the queen, and wins her favor against the unfriendly dwarf. In each case the king desires to have the traveller mate and propagate his own kind. . . . The affection felt for Gulliver by the Queen's maid, Glumdalclitch, is anticipated in the French romance. The love of the giant maid for Cyrano is wholly chaste, but rumor is not. She is compelled to visit with him in secret to avoid the accusation of committing with him the unnatural sins practised with Gulliver by the Maids of Honor. . . . Gulliver notices particularly that the birds in Brobdingnag are not afraid of him. With Cyrano, the enormous moon-birds are equally at ease. At the close of their sojourn among the giants, both travellers are borne away by native birds; Gulliver, by an eagle, which carries him off in his box, and Cyrano, by a roc, which carries him in his cage, suspended by a cord passed around his neck.20

Cyrano's narrative is quite inferior to Swift's story. It is evident, however, that the latter used the French work as source material. The parallel is not only in identical situations, but also in outline and sequence of adventures.

19 Bergerac, op. cit., p. 33.
Miscellaneous Sources

Samuel Sturmy's Mariner's Magazine.--One of the direct sources for the second voyage of Gulliver's Travels is the Mariner's Magazine of Samuel Sturmy, published at London in 1679. The description of the storm at sea is copied almost word for word from Sturmy's publication. This source was fully discussed in the first chapter and needs no further elaboration.

The Fable of the Rukh, or Roc.--Bddy has this to say about the gigantic, legendary bird:

One of the oldest of fables is that of the rukh, or gigantic bird, which pounces upon men and elephants and carries them away. The question of its origin, which has been traced to the folklore of Arabia, does not concern us here. Cyrano is borne away from the moon by a roc, and Gulliver is carried away from Brobdingnag by an enormous eagle.... Interest in the rukh was no doubt heightened by the introduction into Europe of the Arabian Nights in the seventeenth century. This collection contains at least two accounts of travel by means of a monstrous bird; one of these, the story of Sinbad's escape by tying himself to the rukh's feet with his turban, is too familiar to need quotation here. To me it seems highly probable that the incidents in Cyrano and Brobdingnag are based ultimately upon these Arabian stories. 21

The Theory of Relativity.--As mentioned in the last chapter, the voyages of Gulliver to Lilliput and Brobdingnag suggest the problem of objective magnitude and the theory of relativity discussed by George Berkeley in his Theory of Vision. Gulliver himself does not grow or diminish in

21 Ibid., pp. 138-139.
tangible magnitude; he is something less than six of our feet, whether he is in Lilliput or Brobdingnag. His visual magnitude depends wholly on the attitude from which he is viewed, and ranges from a huge man-mountain to an insignificant freak of nature. This is the same philosophy which was set forth by Berkeley in his publication of 1709. The philosophy of the first two voyages seems to rest upon one clear axiom: the true values of the human drama are those which are wholly independent of the size of the actors.

Summary

Among the literary sources from which Swift probably drew hints for Gulliver's second voyage are three which relate of giant races on the moon. These are Lucian's True History, Godwin's Voyage of Gonzales to the Moon, and Cyrano de Bergerac's Histoire Comique de la Lune. Lucian's monsters contributed nothing to Swift's narrative, and Godwin's tale offers no significant parallels. Similarities between Cyrano's voyage and Gulliver's experiences, however, are too numerous and close to be explained as mere chance. The discussion by the King's scholars on the origin of Gulliver has a close analogy in Cyrano's romance. Both travellers are shown for money; both perform tricks for the entertainment

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22 Ibid., p. 103.
23 Ibid., p. 154.
of the public; each becomes a favorite of the Queen; both notice that the native birds do not fear them; both escape by means of a large bird. These incidents may have been borrowed, consciously or unconsciously, but Swift is far superior in wit and effectiveness of satire. In fact, Cyrano's work is written in a spirit contrary to that of the Travels.

Many other parallels in various publications have been listed and discussed, but the only other direct and indisputable source for the second voyage is the Mariner's Magazine. Swift undoubtedly copied this bit of nautical information to heighten the realism of his story. Certainly it makes his narrative more convincing.

For his voyage to the land of the giants, Swift beyond a doubt borrowed several ideas and appropriated a few phrases from preceding literary efforts. This, however, does not detract from his originality of thought and presentation. In all that gives the work its character, Swift's originality remains unchallenged.
CHAPTER IV

THE VOYAGE TO LAPUTA AND OTHER LANDS

Swift did not attempt to create an agreeable world of the imagination in the third part of Gulliver's Travels. It is a miscellany of unrelated situations that are, with one exception, Struldbruggland, uninspired and dull.¹ The third part is shapeless and disordered in comparison with the other three parts.

The satire is chiefly directed against men of science, mathematicians, philosophers, and vain pedantry. The inconsequences of this voyage are to some extent to be accounted for by a change in Swift's attitude. It is clear that, if we regard the Travels as a whole, he began to write while thinking of England, and finished with Ireland and Irish affairs in his mind.² The process of this change affected the third voyage more than any other parts of Gulliver's tale.

It is difficult to explain many incidents occurring in this section, and the source material utilized by Swift is very scattered and largely indefinite. A discussion of several individual parallels will follow, but the sustained satire of this voyage seems to have originated in the mind of the author.


Laputa

No one has been able to trace Swift’s attack on theoretical science to any definite literary source, and most critics agree that it was inspired by one of the author’s idiosyncrasies. Attempts have been made to detect allusions to the work of Newton and other contemporary scientists, but these have proved unsuccessful. 3

For the flying island of Laputa, Swift is almost undoubtedly indebted to Lucian’s True History. In the latter work, Lucian and his companions sail on a ship through the air until they encounter a land in the sky.

We continued thus our course through the sky for the space of seven days and as many nights. At last on the eighth day we discover’d a great land in the sky, like a shining island, round and bright, where ... we went ashore, and soon found it to be inhabited ... Below us was another earth, containing cities and rivers and seas and woods and mountains, which we conjectured to be the very same with that which is inhabited by us. 4

Gulliver’s discovery of the flying island is very similar to the account of Lucian.

The sky was perfectly clear ... when all on a sudden it became obscured, as I thought, in a manner very different from what happens by the interposition of a cloud. I turned back and perceived a vast, opaque body between me and the sun. ... It seemed to be about two miles high, and hid the sun six or seven minutes. ... As it approached nearer over the place where I was, it


appeared to be a firm substance, the bottom flat, smooth, and shining very bright from the reflection of the sea below.

Lucian discovers that the inhabitants of the aerial island are fighting the natives of the sun. The king tells him:

At present I am engaged in a war with the inhabitants of the sun... Phaeton, the king of these people, has, for this long while, carried on a fierce war against us.6

Similarly, the greatest fear of the Laputans is that they might become annihilated by their enemy, the sun. Both Lucian and Swift describe a well stored with astronomical instruments. When he descends from the island to his native land, Lucian says:

On the fourth day about noon, having a fair and gentle gale, we were let down upon the sea. As soon as we touched water, you cannot imagine how greatly we rejoiced.7

Gulliver is also greatly elated to be lowered to the earth. He says:

The island then hovering over a mountain... I was let down from the lowest gallery in the same manner as I had been taken up... I felt some little satisfaction in finding myself on firm ground.8

These parallels indicate that we may safely assume the flying island episode to be an imitation of the True History.

5Swift, op. cit., p. 214.
7Ibid.
8Swift, op. cit., p. 240.
Lagado

While in Balnibarbi Gulliver spends much time at the Academy of Lagado, and withering satire is heaped upon the scientists and academicians in general. This was a common theme in several imaginary voyages preceding Gulliver's Travels.

Joseph Hall, in his Mundus Alter et Idem, describes an academy of impractical innovators. As mentioned previously, the only known attempt at translation of this Latin publication is one made by Swift's friend, William King. We have no proof whatsoever that Swift saw King's translation, but it is possible that it served as a partial source for the satire of Lagado.

Holberg's Klimius contains a very entertaining satire on a community of philosophers. In the general tone, Holberg is very near to Swift.

Klimius visits the land of the philosophers, which adjoins Koleku. He asks a peasant how far it is to the land of the philosophers, to which the peasant replies, "You ought rather to ask how far you have got to go before you get out of it, for you are now just in the midst of it." The astonished Klimius replies, "How is it then, that this country, which is inhabited by nobody but philosophers, should be more like a haunt for wild beasts, than a cultivated and inhabited kingdom?" The native explains that the inhabitants have "little leisure to attend to such like bagatelles. For the present we must excuse their suffering the fields and meadows to remain untouched, as they have something very celestial and sublime in their heads, and are speculating on discovering a way up to the sun." Klimius concludes his description as follows: "Through the streets
I saw promiscuously walking herds of swine and philosophers, which were only to be distinguished from each other by their form; for the latter were equally besmeared and filthy with the former. All the philosophers wore a sort of gown or cloak; but of what color I was not able to discern, as it was impossible to discover it through so much dust and filth as were hanging upon them. I stopped before one of these sages...

'I beg your pardon, Sir,' said I, 'May I ask the name of this city?' He remained immovable for a length of time in a standing position, with his eyes closed, as if his immortal part had taken leave of his body; but came at last again to himself, and answered with a look toward heaven, 'It is not far from midday.' This unseasonable utterance, which betrayed a perfect insensibility and inattention, proved to me, that it was much more advisable to study with moderation, than to become deranged from too great a store of learning.

Klimius, like Gulliver, visits the national academy and listens to dissertations similar to those invented by Swift.

The actual setting for the satire of Lagado, a succession of descriptions of the occupations of the professors, is based on Rabelais, bk. V, ch. 21, 22. Many of the obscene incidents are borrowed directly from Rabelais with only slight revision. Several other occupations, including the distilling of human excrement by Archasdarpenin and the plowing of the shore with foxes, are modified somewhat by Swift and included in the third voyage of Gulliver. Further parallels to Rabelais will be noted in the discussion of the spirits of Glubbdubdrib.

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Occupations of some of the members of the Academy of Lagado might be traced to Tom Brown’s *Amusements Serious and Comical*, but more than likely Brown also borrowed from Rabelais. Several hints, however, might have been secured by Swift from this source. One parallel seems to be much closer than the others. In Brown’s work is the following:

> Their philosophers build these haughty edifices they call systems upon a quite different bottom. They lay their foundation in the air, and when they think they are come to solid ground, the building disappears, and the architects tumble down from the clouds.\(^{11}\)

Swift employs the same idea in his account of the occupations at Lagado. He says:

> There was a most ingenious architect who had contrived a new method for building houses, by beginning at the roof, and working downwards to the foundation.\(^{12}\)

Swift stated that he was familiar with all of Brown’s works, and similarities are sufficient to establish the influence of *Amusements Serious and Comical* upon *Gulliver’s Travels*.

Regarding the experiments at Lagado, Eddy says:

> Attempts have been made to show that the experiments carried on in Lagado allude to inventions produced by members of the Royal Society . . . It seems more reasonable to suppose that Swift simply tortured his memory to invent . . . grotesque illustrations of scientific pedantry.\(^{13}\)

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The Kingdom of Tribnia

This section of Gulliver's Travels is a satire on the use of anagrams and acrostics in literature. Eddy says:

Gulliver's account of the Kingdom of Tribnia is the only instance in Gulliver's Travels of the satire of anagram names, so popular in France in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Tribnia, is Britain, with the letters transposed, Langden is England, etc. The section is itself a satire on the anagrammatic and acrostic devices in literature. The youthful Fontenelle was the first, as far as I can determine, to employ these devices in the description of a supposedly strange land. His Relation de l'île de Porneo is a thinly-veiled satire on the Huguenots, in which MREO is the anagram of ROME, and EENEGY the anagram of GENEVE. Louis Fontaines' Pays de Jannesie, in which the provinces are named after religious sects of France, is another example of the same general type of the satire of names, though the letters are not transposed. The voyage of discovery in all of them is a transparent subterfuge, much as is Christian's pilgrimage from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. The journey is only an elaborate metaphor.\(^{14}\)

Glubbdubdrib

There are several possible sources for the adventures of Gulliver on the island of Glubbdubdrib. Concerning the traveller's conversation with the departed spirits of the great, Eddy states:

Gulliver's visit with the departed spirits in Glubbdubdrib is modelled on Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead, and their imitations by Tom Brown, Lyttleton, Pryor, and many others. Certain passages echo more especially ideas in that part of the True History, which describes the Island of the Blessed. In both cases, the author converses

\(^{14}\) Ibid., pp. 163-164.
with Homer and Aristotle, who discourse on the stupidities of their commentators. The dominant theme of the True History is the misrepresentations and wilful lies of historians, whose accounts are refuted in the Island of the Blessed by the great men of history themselves. Precisely the same thing happens in Glubbdubdrib.\textsuperscript{15}

A similar opinion is expressed by Eddy in another article. He says:

Lucian's conversation with the departed spirits of Elysium, in so far as it includes Homer, Alexander the Great, and Hannibal, is reproduced by Swift in Gulliver's visit to the island of Glubbdubdrib. Especially close is the common satire directed at the unfortunate commentators of Homer. The departed spirits unite in heaping disgrace upon historians who write untruly.\textsuperscript{16}

George McCracken believes that Swift's departed spirits spring from an entirely different source.

The scene on the island of Glubbdubdrib, when Gulliver summons from the dead the departed spirits of Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Caesar, Pompey, Brutus the assassin and his ancestor, Socrates, Epaminondas, Cato the Younger, Sir Thomas Moore, Homer, and Aristotle, together with the commentators on the last two ancients, calls to mind Odysseus' visit to the abode of the dead and his conversations with the spirits of the heroes in the eleventh book of the Odyssey.\textsuperscript{17}

Eddy also mentions Rabelais as a source for incidents on Glubbdubdrib.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 164.

\textsuperscript{16}William A. Eddy, "A Source for 'Gulliver's Travels,'" Modern Language Notes, XXXVI (November, 1931), 420.

\textsuperscript{17}McCracken, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 539.
Swift also seems to have a passage of Rabelais in mind when he makes Gulliver comment on the shabby ancestry of the world's aristocracy that passes in review before his eyes in Glubbdubdrib. The satire in both accounts is the same, namely that popes and princes are, in reality, bred from a long line of pick-pockets and gamblers. 18

Struldruggland

Gulliver's visit to the land of the Struldruggs is the most interesting and most inspired part of the third voyage. The idea of undesirable immortality is not original with Swift, but no race exactly like the Struldruggs is to be found in all literature.

Probably the oldest expression of the hatefulness of eternal life is found in the myth of Tithonus related in the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite.

So too did Dawn of the Golden Throne carry off Tithonus . . . one like unto the immortals. She went to pray to Cronion . . . that her lover might be immortal and exempt from death forever. There-to Zeus consented and granted her desire, but foolish of heart was the lady Dawn, nor did she deem it good to ask for eternal youth for her lover, and to keep him unwrinkled by grievous old age . . . So soon as grey hairs began to flow from his fair head and goodly chin, the lady Dawn held aloof from his bed . . . But when hateful old age had utterly overcome him, and he could not move or lift his limbs . . . she laid him in a chamber and shut the shining doors, and his voice flows on endlessly, and no strength now is his such as once was in his limbs. 19

18 William A. Eddy, "Rabelais, A Source for 'Gulliver's Travels,'" Modern Language Notes, XXXVII (November, 1922), 417.

The medieval legend of the Wandering Jew is a much more popular story of the miseries of immortality. This tale was surely known to Swift, for the so-called Jew is said to have appeared in Munich in 1721 and in England a few years before. During Swift's lifetime a chapbook was sold in London, entitled The Wandering Jew, or the Shoemaker of Jerusalem. The editor of this book, John Ashton, gives the following account of the legend:

This famous myth seems to have had its origin in the gospel of St. John which, although it does not refer to him, evidently was the source of the idea of his tarrying on earth till the second coming of our Saviour... His name is generally received as Cartaphilus, but he was known, in different countries and ages, also as Ahasuerus, Josephus, and Isaac Lakedion. The usual legend is that he was Pontius Pilate's porter, and when they were dragging Jesus out of the door of the judgment-hall, he struck him on the back with his fist, saying, "Go faster, Jesus, go faster; why dost thou linger?" Upon which Jesus looked at him with a frown, and said, "I, indeed, am going; but thou shalt tarry till I come." He was afterwards converted... He is believed every hundred years to have an illness, ending in a trance, from which he awakes restored to the age he was at our Saviour's Crucifixion.20

Two of Lucian's satires anticipate the sentiments of the Struldbruggs concerning death. In one of these, On Mourning for the Dead, a deceased son remonstrates with his father for his unreasonable grief.

O wretched man, why dost thou create so much trouble for me? Forbear to pull off thy hair,

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and tear the skin from thy face ... Dost thou think it a misfortune for me that I did not live to become such an old man as thyself, with a bald pate, a wrinkled face, stooping in the back, feeble knees, and almost wholly rotten with age, having lived many Olympias, and at length brought to dotage before so many witnesses?21

In the Sixth Dialogue of the Dead, Lucian makes Terpsio say,

In my opinion the oldest ought to die first, and the rest successively in their turn, without permitting an old gouty dotard to live, after he has lost the use of his senses, and is at best but an animated tomb ... The grievance would be somewhat alleviated, if one could but know how long they were to live, that one might avoid a tedious and fruitless courtship.22

Holberg’s Journey of Klimius to the World Underground contains an account of a race that is very similar to Swift’s Struldbruggs. These people are not immortal, but they live long enough to suffer the horrid of old age.

The distinction between the Cambarrans and the Speleikans is that those in the first province never become more than, at the highest, four years old, while those in the second ... live to above four hundred years ... Those persons who, through unfortunate events, lose their property, receive hurts in their limbs, or fall into incurable sickness, are accustomed to curse intolerably their existence, and at last to commit suicide ... The shortness of life is the most efficacious consolation to all wretched people.23

It has already been mentioned that a strong parallel exists between Struldbruggland and the anonymous Japanese work, Wasobiyoce. Swift might have seen this work or heard the story from Dutch traders.

Wasobiyoce visits the Land of Perennial Life, whose inhabitants are described as follows:

One death might indeed occur in every thousand years, and would be compensated by one birth, but this was only a rare exception... These inhabitants were filled with quite a desperate admiration for death, and a distaste for their own never-ending existence... Wasobiyoce at first laughed this mania to scorn, but at last found that the prospect of never-ending life, year after year, and century after century, began to pall on him. 24

Gulliver's experience is very similar.

I cried out, as in rapture, "Happy nation where every child hath at least a chance for being immortal." Happiest beyond all comparison are those excellent Struldruggs, who being born exempt from that universal calamity of human nature, have their minds free and disengaged, without the weight and depression of spirits caused by the continual apprehension of death... Whenever they see a funeral, they lament and repine that others have gone to a harbour of rest, to which they themselves can never hope to arrive... The reader will easily believe, that from what I had heard and seen, my keen appetite for perpetuity of life was much abated. 25

The two stories are not perfect parallels by any means, but the underlying philosophy involved is much the same. Life is not to be desired, and death is hailed as the great blessing.


Summary

The third part of Swift's narrative appeared to his friends to be the least interesting and original part of *Gulliver's Travels*, and posterity has echoed this opinion. With one exception, Struldbruggland, it is dull and prosaic. The satire is only of contemporary interest.

Swift secured hints for the third voyage from many nooks and corners of reading. Lucian's *True History* was undoubtedly the source for the flying island, although Swift has described his creation with such mathematical precision that it appears to be a scientific reality.

Burlesque accounts of academies of impractical projectors have always been popular with satirists. Many of Swift's projects are seemingly adapted from Rabelais and Tom Brown. It is possible that Swift was satirizing some of his own contemporaries, but it seems more reasonable to suppose that he merely used these sources and tortured his fancy to find examples of scientific pedantry.

The idea of conversation with departed spirits was certainly not a new creation, nor was the underlying satire on historians an original Swiftian thought. Both Lucian and Homer might be listed as possible sources for Gulliver's adventures in Glubbdubdrib. One must admit, nevertheless, that Swift's satire is much more amusing and effective than the efforts of the ancient writers.
The chapter on Struldbruggland is by far the most inspired part of the third voyage. The presentation of undesirable immortality is in itself not original with the author, but no race resembling the Struldbruggs can be found in any preceding works. The Japanese story, Wasobiyoe, contains a few resemblances to Struldbruggland. Swift might have heard this tale or have read it, but, as mentioned in the last chapter, this agreement might very well be a mere coincidence. In this chapter Swift's philosophy is sound. Life is pictured in its darkest colors, and the dread of death is exposed as folly. There is no denying that the author has done his work well.
CHAPTER V

THE VOYAGE TO HOUYNHNMLAND

The voyages to Lilliput and Brobdingnag are closely related in theme and story; Laputa is a miscellany of situations paralleled in earlier satire; the voyage to the land of the Houyhnhnms is a distinct unit, differing very radically from the earlier voyages, and complete in itself.¹ It is daring in criticism and unreal in method.

The voyage to Houyhnhnmland is the most original part of Gulliver's Travels. The general idea of beast commonwealths goes back thousands of years, but Swift seems the first to have drawn little from the ancients. Individual parallels to the early works of the classical writers and to later literary efforts will be noted; but first a review of the animal myth, whereby human traits are illustrated in the commonwealth of beasts, must be given.

The Animal Fable

The animal myth goes back to the earliest days of civilization and story-telling. The essence of the fable is an argument by analogy; the characteristics of animals in the anecdotes representing human traits.²

²Ibid., pp. 172-173.
The fables of Aesop are of very ancient origin and are known to almost everyone. Eddy says:

The fables of Aesop, undoubtedly the best-known, may be predicted as the common source of most of the subsequent collections known to the Western world. They are laconic tales, each containing a single event, and pointing a single moral. This element of clarity and simplicity made for permanent popularity; the epigrammatic moral became a proverb, as in the case of the fable of *The Fox and the Grapes*, which gave rise to the colloquial "Sour Grapes." Aesop's fables were versified by the witty La Fontaine, and copied by a host of imitators. They appeared in prose form in London, accompanied by illustrations, in eighteenth century chapbooks. 3

The fables of Bidpai also had great popularity, and a translation into English was made by Thomas North under the title *The Morall Philosophie of Doni*. Since this volume was published in 1570, Swift had access to it. Bidpai's myths were similar to those of Aesop.

These fables of Aesop and Bidpai are of ancient origin, but in these, and other collections of similar character, the inferiority of man to animals is not the ruling motive. Their influence on Swift is not so great.

The connexion between the story of the Houyhnhnms and the beast-fable literature is not so significant as it appears, perhaps, at first glance.... It rests its case upon the underlying bond which binds man to his fellow-brutes, and its expression is to make man behave, think, and feel like his unregenerate cousins. It presents a picture of man on a lower plane than the one on which he presumes to stand, but on a plane on which it is admitted he once stood. The actors in the play,
without exception, stand for types of men. The effect, therefore, is satirical allegory, never a utopian contrast to man. Now it is obvious that in Gulliver's fourth voyage, Swift does not conceive of any underlying blood relationship between the Houyhnhnms and man. The horses are intended to represent horses, and nothing else. The reader and Gulliver as well have no reason at any time to suspect that the Houyhnhnms mirror human character, for the very opposite is expressly stated. It is the Yahoos who here fill the role of man's detractors, taken by animals in the fable, and they do not have the bodies of beasts. Certainly the Houyhnhnms are careful to disclaim any relationship here. In short, the Houyhnhnms recall the beast-fable only on the superficial grounds that they are talkative animals. Their life is not a human allegory, and their civilization, unlike that of the animals in the fable, is infinitely superior to anything evolved by man. The fabulists would drag man down to the level of the beasts; Swift would have man sit at the feet of the Houyhnhnms to learn perfect wisdom. 4

Animal Idealization

For the contrast between man and beast, resulting in the humiliation of the former, we must turn to other sources for Gulliver's Travels. In Plutarch's Morals, a work with which Swift was familiar, there is a dialogue between Ulysses and Gryllus. This section is entitled That Brute Beasts Make Use of Reason, and the substance is as follows:

Ulysses demands that Circe restore the Greeks to human form. Circe assures him that this would be a misfortune for them; to which Ulysses replies that she is talking nonsense. Circe agrees to let him make the offer, and even to argue with the beasts, but insists that she will not disenchant them without their own consent.

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4Ibid., pp. 174-175.
She endows a hog, formerly Gryllus, with the power of speech and leaves Ulysses to converse with him. ... Gryllus adduces the following arguments to prove that his company are better off as beasts than they were before as men:

1. Men win distinction through trickery, artifice, war, faith-breaking, and coney-catching. Beasts are free from craft and deceit, defending their rights by open courage.

2. Men make slaves of each other, while beasts prefer death to loss of independence. Constancy in man has to be required by law, it represents only reluctant subservience to edict. Beasts are naturally and voluntarily loyal and trustworthy.

3. The ado made about Penelope's ten year chastity proves how rare the virtue is among men. ... Man's intemperance in eating and drinking, as well, makes physicians and diseases necessary; from which misfortunes beasts are exempt.

4. Beasts instruct their young in the necessary arts: Self-preservation, nest-building, physical culture, etc., omitting the vain sophistries in which men waste their time.5

Plutarch's dialogue greatly resembles the spirit of Swift in the fourth voyage. The points made by the governor of Houyhnhnmiland include all of those made by Gryllus and many more besides.6

Giovanni Battista Gelli's Circe and James Howell's The Parly of Beasts, both deriving indirectly from Plutarch, contain much the same thought. The former is, like Gulliver's fourth voyage, aimed directly at human nature without reference to races or nations. The preference for animal life is very emphatic. Both Gelli and Swift satirize court affairs,

5Ibid., pp. 175-176.
6Ibid., p. 176.
and both agree on the evils of military establishment and the spirit of conquest among princes. General accusations of human covetousness are made by both authors.

In Howell's work, Ulysses converses with eleven different beasts. In Gelli's Circe, Ulysses carries on dialogues with a horse, a dog, an elephant, a hind, a steer, an oyster, a serpent, a hare, a goat, and a lion. Both Gulliver and Ulysses converse with animals whom they have been accustomed to regard as inferior to man. The beasts are represented as less subtle and crafty than man; the faults of man are not faults of civilization but of natural depravity.

There is still a great deal in the fourth voyage that finds no place in the Ulysses story, but the general trend of thought in the last part of Gulliver's Travels seems to indicate that Swift was familiar with the early works of Gelli and Howell.

Satire on Humanity

Satires on humanity are not very common in imaginary voyages. An animal commonwealth figures in Jean de Segrais' Isle Imaginaire, but the author does not maintain that his dog republic is either better or worse than a human one. In the fifth book of Rabelais, Pantagruel and his companions visit the Ringing Island, inhabited by birds, but no element of human satire is included.

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7Ibid., p. 183.
On the other hand, d'Ablancourt's edition of Lucian's *True History* contains an account of a republic of animals and a satire on humanity similar to Gulliver's last voyage. As mentioned in the first chapter, d'Ablancourt's edition contains a sequel to Lucian's work written by the Frenchman himself, and it is in this part that the parallels occur. Like Gulliver, d'Ablancourt's traveller becomes convinced of the superior virtues of this animal commonwealth. The beasts live under their own rule, with no contact at all with the so-called civilized man. There are, however, certain fundamental differences in the two accounts.

d'Ablancourt's *Isle des animaux* is filled with animals of all sorts, whereas the Houyhnhms are all horses. There is a similar lack of unity in d'Ablancourt's picture of the animal life; it is one long continuous riot of fun and antics, each animal expressing his own self, with no real agreement of thought and conduct among the various species. It is hard to see just who keeps the peace in this jungle. In contrast to this the Houyhnhms have a well-ordered state, homogeneous in all respects, (though I suppose we should say "equusgeneous") with all distracting passions properly curbed. d'Ablancourt does little more than assemble the animals and endow them with speech; he does not stamp upon them a super-bestial character. He keeps within the domains of the true fable, in which beasts are beasts and nothing more. It is only in respect to the attitude of the animals toward the injustice imposed upon their domesticated cousins that d'Ablancourt approximates the theme of Swift.

We have noticed that Cyrano de Bergerac's *Histoire Comique de la Lune* must have served as one of Swift's

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8Ibid., pp. 184-185.
sources for Gulliver's adventures in Brobdingnag. The importance of Cyrano's other fantastic voyage, *Histoire Comique du Soleil*, is mentioned by Eddy as a source for Gulliver's adventures in the land of the Houyhnhnms. He says:

In this work is to be found the source for the withering satire heaped upon Gulliver by the Houyhnhnms; a satire so exceptionally brutal that it has been regarded as the unique product of Swift's unique misanthropy. This is true enough, but we are not therefore excused from noticing that a similar situation, in which the human race is treated with even worse humiliation, is to be found in a work which we know Swift depended upon for other hints in the composition of *Gulliver's Travels*.

In the *Travels*, a general assembly of Houyhnhnms is held to debate the traveller's fate. He is convicted of the unpardonable sin of being a Man. Man is said to be the worst of all creatures, first of all because as a Yahoo he is by nature, malicious, treacherous, libidinous, cowardly and insolent; and second, because he has presumed to tyrannize over his fellow-animals and make them his slaves who are his superiors. The verdict of his judges is that the sentence of death be commuted to banishment.

In like manner Cyrano is tried by a tribunal of animals in the Empire des Oiseaux, in the sun. The charges against him are the same as those preferred against Gulliver. The feeling of the natives is much stronger than that of the Houyhnhnms, so much so that Cyrano hastens to claim that he is not at all what he appears to be, a base human monster, but that he is in reality a perfectly respectable monkey.

When we remember that nowhere in the imaginary voyages before the *Travels* is there such scathing satire directed against the human race, the significance of this source for the voyage to the Houyhnhnms is greatly increased.9

Cyrano might well have been the source for Swift's satire on humanity, but there are very few individual parallels.

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Satire on Law, Courts, and War

Few sources have been found for Swift's vicious satire on law and court procedure. It seems probable that the author drew largely from his own imagination and his vast personal experience in conceiving this section of the fourth voyage of Gulliver.

The comedies in *Le Theatre Italien* were fully discussed in the first chapter. It is possible that Swift was familiar with several of these plays. One of these, *Arlequin Sauvage*, resembles Gulliver's last voyage inasmuch as law and legal procedure are satirized. Eddy believes that the French play served as a partial source.

It seems quite clear... that suggestions for the satire on law and court procedure, and on the love of money, which follow one another in the pages of Gulliver's fourth voyage, were borrowed from *Arlequin Sauvage*. ... In the French play, Arlequin, an untutored savage, journeys to an island, ironically named 'Isle Sauvage, whose inhabitants boast of a complex civilization and are wholly subject to intricate law. Thus the roles are the reverse of the Voyage to the Houyhnhms, where Gulliver is civilized man and his hosts are nature's unspoiled children. But in both cases the civilization is exposed as an illusion, and just as Gulliver finally recognizes his identity with the Yahooos, so the inhabitants who entreated Arlequin learn at last that their island, in spite of its legal machinery, is really savage.

Not the least significant of the many points of resemblance between this scene and the corresponding one in the *Travels* is the way both discussions end with a financial bias of justice, while the nature of money itself is a perplexity to the uncivilized parties.10

John Robert Moore has noticed that Patot's *Voyages et aventures de Jacques Masse* is similar to the last part of Gulliver's *Travels* in that each contains a lecture on the futility of warfare. The king of Patot's imaginary country lectures against the use of firearms and against the horror of European war in a fashion strikingly like that of Gulliver's master among the Houyhnhnms. Lectures against warfare, however, are certainly not original with any author, and this similarity might well be a coincidence.

The Yahooos

Students of Swift have sought for many years to throw light upon the origin of the Yahooos. A number of interesting theories have been advanced, but there is not one shred of evidence to prove that Swift borrowed either fact or fiction from any other author in the creation of his repulsive and nasty creatures.

Churton Collins' belief, pronounced in the last decade of the nineteenth century, that Swift had found "several strokes for the Yahooos in the *Travels* of Sir Thomas Herbert," is a mere assertion. It is not supported by argument nor by citations from Herbert. Few parallels are to be found between Herbert and Swift, and the only resemblance seems to be in the suggestive remarks on savages made by the former. Collins' opinion seems very unconvincing.

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11 Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
William A. Eddy, one of the most noted scholars of Swiftian literature, has this to say of the Yahooos:

The Yahooos are Swift's own creation. A hint for them may have been derived from the *Isle des ânimaux* of d'Ablancourt, in which the animals conquer and enslave the men in the antipodes; or again, from the *Voyage of Gonzalès*, in which Gonzalès discovers that on the moon, men of his own stature are despised, and assigned to servile tasks, but the Yahoo has no real ancestor in literature. 13

In recent years critics have suggested that the Yahooos were meant by Swift to typify the wretched old Irish. As he toured Ireland on horseback in 1722-1723, riding one thousand miles from north to south, he undoubtedly saw the filth engendered by poverty. Perhaps this journey influenced the composition of the Yahooos. Sketches of the old Irish are given in other works of Swift, and it is possible that the misery and filth of the Irish peasants served as the source for the horrible creatures of Houyhnhnmland. Obviously, the Yahooos are to be thought of as men who are degraded to the lowest conceivable brutish condition.

R. M. Frantz mentions that voyagers' tales of monkeys and of African Hottentots might have influenced Swift's Yahooos.

The voyagers of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries had set down in many a page of vivid, homespun prose precisely the characteristics of monkeys and of undeveloped men stressed by Swift in his descriptions of

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Yahoos. Lionel Wafer, for example, told of monkeys in much the same style and manner as Swift described the Yahoos.

There is, of course, little in these excerpts that can be considered as a "source" for the Yahoo. We need not suppose that Swift ransacked travel-books for data of this kind; and we certainly need not think of him as writing with Wafer's and Dampier's voyages spread before him. . . . Monkeys may have lurked in Swift's mind, but his Yahoo is, after all, not monkey but man - man at his conceivable worst. And man at his worst, according to the voyagers, sat naked and filthy in southernmost Africa or roamed the fly-infested sands of Australia. Nauseating descriptions of the depraved Hottentots, whose faces, like those of the Yahoos, were flat and broad . . . appeared in print with striking frequency throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The Hottentots, moreover, had minds that sort well with their beastly appearance and habits. Like the Yahoos, they appeared to be the most stupid of all manlike creatures.

No student of Swift can afford to overlook such descriptions of monkeys and savages as those given by authors of travel-books in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There is no sure evidence, so far as I know, that Swift actually used these books as source material, but the probabilities are very great. The remarkable similarity between the Yahoos, the monkeys, and the Hottentots is too close to be accidental.14

The Yahoo seems to be a creature born of Swift's lively and original imagination working on materials of the most various kinds gleaned from his reading in books and from his experiences among men over a period of many years.15 Any attempt to trace the Yahoo to a definite source would be futile.


15 Ibid., p. 57.
Summary

The voyage to the land of the Houyhnhms is by far the most original part of Gulliver's Travels. All sources which have been suggested for this section of the book are vague and remote.

The animal myth may be traced to earliest literature, but Swift drew nothing more than a few hints from these ancient stories. The works of Gelli and Howell both illustrate the same thought as Gulliver's last voyage, but few parallels are evident.

The narratives of Cyrano de Bergerac and d'Ablancourt may be said to imply much the same philosophy as that of the last voyage. Parallels between these and other possible literary sources and the journey to Houyhnhnmland might be adduced, but the resemblances are, on the whole, slight and inconclusive. Swift might easily compare the temperance of his horses with the intemperate habits of man without resorting to literary originals.

The Yahoo is Swift's creation, and no ancestor of this creature can be found in all literature. The most remarkable characteristic of this part of the Travels is the striking originality and ingenuity of the author.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

A great deal has been written on the indebtedness of Swift to other authors, and attempts have been made to prove that practically every incident within Gulliver's Travels was borrowed from previous writers. The result of these researches is very unconvincing. Though we may discover many points of resemblance between the Travels and earlier writings, this fact does not detract in the least from Swift's claim to originality. If he has borrowed ideas and incidents from others, it is none the less true that his Gulliver's Travels is among the most original works of fiction, as well as one of the most witty of satires.

Gulliver's Travels might be said to possess two fundamental roots: one in the tradition of satiric and imaginary voyages, and one in the everyday experiences of the author. These two roots fuse to form the central idea of the book. Swift's extensive reading undoubtedly furnished a number of apt suggestions for his publication, but the best footnotes for his Travels are to be found in his own experiences, sermons, and letters.

Evidently, Swift's first thought was to ridicule imaginary voyages by a very matter-of-fact account of the impossible. With this idea in mind he read a quantity of
imaginary travels, and then saw, by these examples, what a good opportunity he had for introducing a satire into his narrative. His *Travels* in this way became a satire of accounts of voyages with, running through them, a satiric political and philosophical meaning.

Imaginary voyages had been used previously for satiric purposes, as well as for entertainment of the fancy. It is true that Swift had assimilated the writings of certain authors, and it is not difficult to show resemblances to these works in particular passages of *Gulliver's Travels*. Many ideas were gathered from such works as Philostratus' *Imagines*, Cyrano de Bergerac's two romances, d'Ablancourt's edition of Lucian's *True History*, Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, and Tom Brown's *Amusements Serious and Comical*. No other writer, however, has succeeded in giving such verisimilitude to an altogether impossible narrative, and these ideas gleaned from other pens do not detract from Swift's creative genius. Churton Collins effectively expressed the same thought more than forty years ago.

To suppose that these appropriations and reminiscences detract in any way from the essential originality of the work would be as absurd as to tax Shakespeare with stealing *Antony and Cleopatra* from Plutarch, or *Macbeth* from Holinshed. What Swift borrowed was what Shakespeare borrowed, and what the creative artists of all ages have never scrupled to borrow — incidents and hints. The description from Sturmy is to the *Voyage to Brocken* precisely what the progress of Cleopatra in North's *Plutarch* is to the drama of *Antony and Cleopatra*. Indeed, the sum of Swift's obligations
to the writers who have been mentioned would, though considerable, be found on examination to be infinitely less than the obligations of the most original of poets to the novelists of Italy and to the works of contemporaries. 1

Swift makes Gulliver travel and discover new types of beings and new lands because the human race, as we know it, could not answer to his requirements. He imitated Lucian, de Bergerac, and many others in discovering these new beings and virgin territories, and the reason was that he could not otherwise express fully what he wanted to say.

Whatever Swift took from his sources he transformed by completely merging it into a story which was modelled on a realistic narrative, and which has a wonderful power to suspend our disbelief. This realism with which Swift constructed Gulliver's Travels distinguishes it from all other imaginary voyages before and since. Bertram Newman decisively presents this same conclusion when he says:

Though he had no ancestors, Gulliver - the real Gulliver that is - has had many descendants; but he remains unsurpassed for his purpose. Modern research has been concerned for many years with the sources from which Swift may have derived some of his ideas. He had certainly read widely in the field of travel, real and imaginary; and he does appear to have borrowed, consciously and no doubt unconsciously, details from Lucian and Cyrano de Bergerac. It is possible, again, that Swift may have been indebted for the first idea of the work to Arbuthnot, or to the Scriblerus Club. But the quest for sources or "influences" is, in his case, not a very profitable occupation, so essentially independent is his mind, and so absolutely does he make whatever he borrows his own. His boast that he was never known "to steal

1 Collins, op. cit., pp. 207-208.
a hint," if not literally true, is as true as such a boast ever need be. No one before him ever thought of such travels or such a traveller; no one ever planned things so exactly to scale, or ever put so much hard thinking into details; no one, for example, ever devised such appropriately sounding languages as those of which Swift puts specimens into the mouth of his Lilliputians, Brobdingnagians, and Houyhnhnms respectively. No one thought of anything resembling the Yahoos. No imaginary traveller ever invented his narrative with such satiric power or so profound an irony; in all that matters, in all that gives the work its character, Swift's originality stands beyond possibility of challenge.

The study of the literary sources of Gulliver's Travels is not a waste of time because it reveals the favorite authors of Swift. The modern reader is rewarded with volumes of wit and satire which are never dull. The research, however, which reveals so many parallels in incident only emphasizes the originality of Swift's general scheme.

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