THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO GULLIVER: SWIFT'S UNORTHODOX CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

Submitted as a Master's Thesis

by

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For my husband and my sons
For reasons too deep for telling

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INTRODUCTION

In the Book of Revelations, John records his vision of being given a small book which was sweet to the taste but bitter in the digestion. In much the same way, GULLIVER'S TRAVELS INTO SEVERAL REMOTE NATIONS OF THE WORLD by Jonathan Swift are a true satura lanx, a delight to read but ultimately difficult to stomach. Readers of all ages have feasted on these stories of little people and giants, of a flying island and of talking horses, only to discover with time and subsequent re-readings, that the sense of transparent satire gives way to "a darke conceit," a disturbing allegory which resists easy interpretation. Even as readers are dazzled by Swift's wizardry with language, they are repelled by his vision.

That the story has engendered such controversy would probably have delighted Swift were it not such a tragic demonstration of the very point he was making in "The Argument Against Abolishing Christianity." The failure of readers in understanding this ironic parable shows the extent to which readers of his own time, not to mention our own, had forgotten the central tenets of Christianity.

This thesis proposes a Christian reading of the fourth book, in an attempt to provide that orthodox foundation that gives Swift, the ironist behind Gulliver, that air of unassailable confidence. It proposes to discover the implicit assumptions that allowed Swift as satirist and ironist to

transcend the impasse, to avoid the deadlock of being forced to choose between Yahoos and Houyhnhnms. For, readers can sense that Swift has not fallen into the same trap as the hapless Gulliver--even those readers and critics who condemn Swift for his misanthropy see that it is of a different order than Gulliver's. What then is Swift's vantage point? What distance from the text is he able to assume that his perspective can remain unclouded by the sight of Yahoos and Houhyhnhnms? What "moly" has he taken that seems to keep him untroubled by the contradictions and vexations the rest of us face in trying to make the pernicious choice between a vision of a rational and well- ordered society achieved by a race of horses as opposed to the depravity of creatures all too recognisably human?

As in Plato, the philosophical and metaphysical problem about the nature of man is formulated in the vivid and unforgettable images of myth. However, Swift has reversed the PHAEDRUS myth of the tripartite soul in which reason is pictured as a charioteer trying to control the well-shaped horse of the will and its mis-shapen partner, the appetite. In the Fourth Voyage, the horse has kicked over the traces, taken over the reins and turned the charioteer into the beast of burden. It is not only that things are in the saddle and ride mankind, but that we have become burdened by, enslaved by our notions of rationality. However, the either-or of the Fourth Voyage remains. The fourth book, since it juxtaposes images of

rational Houyhnhnms and depraved Yahoos, poses the key question: What is the rational basis for human self-esteem? Is there, in fact, a rational basis for human self-esteem, or are we merely deluding ourselves? Is the pride we take in our species merely unreflective human chauvinism?

Gulliver's TRAVELS is a gospel because it is the record of one man writing to reform the manners of the human race. But unlike the Christian gospel, it is not an evangelium; it is not good news for man; it is bad news, a dysangel, as in Nietzsche's "God is dead" parable. However, the news which Gulliver brings back from his conversion among the Houyhmhnms is even more extreme because it is news not of the death of God but of the death of the human person. In GULLIVER'S TRAVELS, the Personhood of God fades into the background and seems a remote consideration as the reader struggles to preserve the idea of the human as person. The rejection of human worth is so extreme as to produce a resistance in the reader who in the very act of finding fault with Gulliver's impeccable reasoning, but all too peccable conclusions, is forced to re-discover the truths of Christianity or to invent a reasonable facsimile. The TRAVELS thus become a form of Christian apologetics, unorthodox not in their content but in their form.

Traditionally, Christian apologetics provides a defense of the truths of the faith by reasoned argument. We

can assume that Swift rejected this form because traditional apologetics can become so quickly outdated as later and more ingenious arguments are devised to refute what seemed the unassailable logic of an earlier and less sophisticated age. Indeed, Swift frequently advised friends not to engage in debate to refute atheistic argument. In both the "Letter to a Young Gentleman" and also in "Thoughts on Religion" he expresses his disapproval of such controversies. This aversion to supplying the enemy camp with fuel for the fire, undoubtedly led Swift to a subversive approach. Instead of constructing a traditional defense, Swift chose, in every sense of the word, an offensive strategy of attack.

Swift's apologetics is unorthodox because it does not set out to rescue Christianity from unbelievers, to defend it against attack. In this sense, the absence of a spirited defense of Christianity is Swift's admission that the battle had already been lost. It would appear that he has conceded the end of Christendom, the end of the Christian consensus on the unique nature and the unique value of the human. The TRAVELS then argue from a <u>fait accompli</u>, showing the consequences for the individual once this Christian paradigm is lost.

What is it that Swift was railing against? What was the great danger that he foresaw? After the perspective of two hundred years, it should certainly be easier for us than for any previous age to understand the depth of his concern and

accuracy of his prediction. Modern readers misunderstand Swift by persisting in seeing him as anti-intellectual, as someone who by temperament was impatient both with scientific research and with metaphysical speculation. The prestige of science and technology of our time makes Swift seem rather a spoilsport, something of a reactionary who could not foresee the brilliant acheivements which would emerge from the early beginnings of the Royal Society. But in the twentieth century we must not underestimate Swift's critique. As heirs of the Enlightenment, we should be able to recognise that the price Western civilisation has paid for scientific achievement, in both the natural sciences as well as the social sciences, has been the progressive desacralization of nature and the dehumanisation of the individual. Indeed, by the nineteenth century, the enchantment with science had resulted in what Schiller called the progressive disenchantment of the world (Harrington 115). When GULLIVER'S TRAVELS was published in 1726, the hopes for the Enlightenment project, in Alasdair MacIntyre's suggestive phrase, had never been brighter. Yet, before the century drew to its close, the young Jean-Jacques Rousseau had become a public figure with the publication of his prize-winning essay for the French Academy in which he rejected the thesis that science and technology had benefited human society. In the figure of Gulliver, Swift prophetically anticipated the movement from enlightened optimism to skepticism about human civilisation. However, Swift's vision of the Yahoo made it

impossible to adopt Rousseau's solution, in which the heroic and romantic vision of Reason gives way to nostalgia for the greater dignity and moral stature of the Noble Savage.

The irony of the TRAVELS produces a deliberate distortion in the way we see things in order to make visible our habits of perception--our perceptive habits--which are invisible to us. This technique has been dubbed "ophtalmia" for it allows us not only to see, but also to see the theory of perception we are in fact using (Kroker 109). We do not see the norms by which we are judging unless they have been exposed in dramatic fashion either by being used in inappropriate contexts or with inappropriate results. One example from many in the TRAVELS will illustrate the point. On returning both from Lilliput and also from Brobdingnag, Gulliver has some comical experiences in re-adjusting to normal human scale. Having been a giant among miniature humans, he recounts how he offended everyone by his habit of treating them as if they were small. The reverse happens when he returns from Brobdingnag. On the surface, the detail seems plausible, until of course one realizes that the human eye simply does not make mistakes of this kind. Looking at someone at eye level, it is impossible to assume that one can in fact step on top of them. But Gulliver's theory of optics, oblivious or "blind" as to how intricate and sensitive the eye actually is, predicts this kind of behaviour, with the result

that experience is then made to fit the expectation. Thus, there is considerable irony in Gulliver's recounting this to show how "Habit and Prejudice" affect the human mind. Swift's irony inverts the observation so that we see that in fact, his habits and prejudices about the way the eye should perceive and should react, make him quite literally discount the evidence of his eyes.

This notion of a theory being made to fit pre-conceived ideas is now a commonplace in philosophy of science. The bias, rather than the objectivity, of the researcher is now increasingly taken for granted. Swift's unconventional view has become the conventional wisdom. Stephen Jay Gould's valuable study, aptly titled THE MIS-MEASURE OF MAN, is one relevant example, but so also are the seminal works of Michael Polyani, Thomas Kuhn, Gregory Bateson and others.[1]

The emerging empirical method of the seventeenth century sought to produce clear and distinct ideas about the world, but in fact had to presuppose clear and distinct ideas about reality in order to do this, as Blake's well-known example of the five-guinea sun makes clear. The richness and complexity of experience had to be ignored in order for the enterprise to succeed. But this reductionism was not done provisionally; the abstraction was taken to be the accurate representation of reality, rather than a highly stylized one for the limited purpose of empirical investigation. Although the distinction beween the observer and the observed allowed

for factual observation, too often it turned what was being observed into dead and lifeless matter. Not only do we murder to dissect, but we then mistake the corpse for the living organism. Living organisms become "merely" animated cadavers, lacking only the single missing ingredient of life. Thus, in Book Three, Swift gives us a prototype of the mad scientist trying to animate dead matter. In the Academy at Lagado, one of the projectors, having tortured a dog to death as part of an experiment, thinks he can resurrect it simply by reversing the procedure.

What the TRAVELS as apologetics set out to do then is not so much to put up a fight for the truth of Christianity so much as to fight for the nature of man, for the value of the human as seen by Christianity. The irony of the TRAVELS uses the corrosive satire as a <u>via negativa</u>, immunizing readers to the rationalism of the age by giving them the germ of the disease in a virulent form. Gulliver's categorisation of the human as in fact the sub-human, or sub-rational, seems derived from unassailable logical reasoning. Yet in Gulliver's rejection of the human and in his own subsequent self-loathing, Swift takes rationalism and skepticism further than anyone else had dared to do. Cartesian rationalism assumes the value of the human but doubts the existence of the self. Swift, more malicious than Descartes' malicious demon, asks, "why stop at doubting human existence, why not doubt human value?" The result is that Swift has managed to create a

situation to which we, as readers, remain permanently allergic, instinctively rejecting as alien and absurd this bleak and pessimistic view of human nature and the human condition. While the text initiates us into the disease, exactly in the manner of a vaccination, (albeit with strain of horse rather than cow), at the same time it also seems to contain its own antigens, in that they do not fight the disease but instead allow the body to create its own antibodies. Similarly, with the TRAVELS, it is the reader who must complete the process which Swift's irony has begun. Paradoxically, this partnership with the reader thus testifies to Swift's implicit faith in human nature with its instinctive sense of self-preservation, as well as inherent common sense.

The ingenious irony of the TRAVELS has struck generations of readers as a game, as a trap and as a riddle. Indeed, Swift admitted as much when he wrote to Pope that his aim was to vex rather than to divert his readers. "To vex" perhaps alludes to Bacon's concept of Natura vexata, nature annoyed, in which the experimenter will "vex" Nature so as to create a situation in which only a 'yes' or 'no' could be given in response. Swift's ironic parable seeks to subject his readers to similar duresss, forcing them to bring all their beliefs to the fore in order to choose between Yahoo and Houyhnhnhm. Swift has devised a clever new organon of reasoning, which repeatedly reduces the conventional wisdom of the enlightenment to a reductio ad absurdum. The irony of the

TRAVELS is thus a kind of ingenious machine in which laughter is the beginning of theology, in Reinhold Niebuhr's phrase. While laughter (or outrage) allows every reader to escape, only the password "Christ" allows the reader to know why.

Since the Fourth Book has received many Christian readings and because they have caused general dissatisfaction, it is these readings we must first examine.

NOTES

1. Thomas Kuhn's STRUCTURE OF SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTIONS is well known, but also Michael Polyani, PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE, corrected ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); Gregory Bateson's work in STEPS TO AN ECOLOGY OF MIND, (London: Paladin, 1973; New York Ballantine, 1972). Morris Berman provides an excellent discussion of the issues created by the Cartesian paradigm on scientific and metaphysical thought in THE REENCHANTMENT OF THE WORLD (New York: Bantam Books, 1984; orig. pub. Cornell University Press, 1981).

CHAPTER ONE

Criticism of Swift generally founders on the problem of the interpretation of the fourth book of GULLIVER'S TRAVELS. The central problem of how to infer the satiric norms Swift expected the reader to discover is succinctly described by Wayne Booth:

> Unless there has been some permanent loss of clues to meanings which were clear to Swift's contemporaries, we must conclude that either Swift's norms are too complex or that their relations with Gulliver's opinions are too complicated.
>
> Even if we conclude that the fourth book has been left to some degree indecipherable, we may, of course, go along with the current fashion and praise Swift for his ambiguities rather than condemn him for his inconclusiveness. But whichever side we fall on, we should be quite clear that the ambiguity we accept will be paid for by a loss of satiric force. Unless we are quite sure that Swift valued subtleties and ambiguities more than effectiveness in delivering a simpler message, we must entertain the possibility that somebody--whether author or reader--has gone astray (Booth 320-1).

The difficulty of discovering the satiric norms is compounded by the unusual circumstance that they may not have been any more accessible to Swift's contemporaries than to generations of readers since. While the TRAVELS enjoyed considerable success, the satire vexed as much as it diverted. Swift of course was not bothered by this but in fact declared that to be his aim, that he wrote for "the amendment not the approbation of readers." But this only increases the mystery. For Swift's moral purpose, whatever it may have been, seems outweighed by the unleashing of an unparalleled pessimism, which is difficult to reconcile with either common sense or with Christian faith.

The TRAVELS have frequently prompted a religious indignation in readers who suspected that Swift under the veil of satire on the dignity of the human was guilty of what Thackeray significantly called its "blasphemy." This view of Swift's satire is apparent very early in the history of Swift criticism. John Boyle, Earl of Orrery (1752) reluctantly discusses the Fourth Voyage in order "to assert the vindication of human nature, and thereby in some measure to pay my duty to the great author of our species, who has created us in a very fearful and a very wonderful manner" (Foster 71). Orrery feels that "Swift deduces his observations from wrong principles" in the land of the Houyhnhnms because he has chosen to describe "the soul and the body in their most degenerate and uncultivated state" (72). "The true source of [evil] is often owing to the want of education, the indulgence of parents or to some other bad causes, which are constantly prevalent in every nation" (73).

Deane Swifte (1755), on the other hand, defends "all the sarcasms of the Doctor" who as a "preacher of righteousness, a watchman of the Christian faith . . . accountable for his talents and obliged to warn the innocent as well as terrify the wicked . . . can hardly be expected to keep silent in the face of sins" (Foster 74-75). Indeed, the torrential catalogue of sins listed by Deane Swifte rivals similar lists in Swift's own writings.

By the twentieth century, Swift's satire was no longer

seen as being necessarily at odds with Christian values. However, readings which found the TRAVELS consonant with Christian values did so by placing them within the history of ideas. The first such study, T.O. Wedel's "On the Philosophical Background of GULLIVER'S TRAVELS" (1926), found "Swift's view of man . . . is essentially the view of the classical and the Christian tradition . . . any fair definition of that tradition absolve[s] GULLIVER'S TRAVELS from the charge of being an isolated example of misanthropy" (Wedel 94).

Paradoxically, while Wedel does not believe that Swift holds a Christian view of man, he nevertheless feels that the best comment on the TRAVELS is Sainte-Beuve's description of Christianity: "the unhoped-for way of escape to safety" in the face of "the feeling of sadness" caused by "seeing human nature as a fallen human nature, exactly as do Hobbes, La Rochefoucauld and Machiavelli" (Wedel 94). Wedel's conclusion, however, confuses Swift with the Hobbesian materialism he consisitently attacked rather than with the Christian longing to escape from the Hobbesian view. This confusion itself illustrates an important problem posed by the text since Sainte-Beuve seems to be suggesting that while the desire for the Christian escape route is understandable, it nevertheless represents an irrational hope rather than a rational belief. Presumbably, if Christianity represented a rational belief, Sainte-Beuve himself would surely have adopted it. Thus, an

implicit assumption behind such criticial readings is the equation of Christianity with unreflective optimism and the equation of rationality with pessimism. We thus find in this innocuous quotation, brought in to support an orthodox Christianity, the very dualism which undermines it. According to this view, Swift and other tough-minded rationalists have the courage of their pessimism; they are capable of "hard" readings of the facts of nature, while others seek a "softer" interpretation. Indeed, this is the implicit philosophical assumption underlying the use of the "hard/soft" readings in Swift criticism (Clifford 33, 50). While Wedel's discussion is helpful in providing the philosophical context for the TRAVELS, his argument does not make clear on what grounds Swift can be defending the Christian position while holding an essentially disillusioned view of human nature. Indeed, George Orwell finds Swift's dark satire to be objectionable because it adheres to the Christian moral scheme without offering Christian hope. The TRAVELS were "Christianity minus an afterlife" (Orwell 184).

Critical studies after 1950, by Kathleen Williams, Ernest Tuveson, and Samuel Holt Monk variously stress the limitations Swift seems to be placing on reason by exposing the Houyhnhnms to comic absurdity. Kathleen Williams finds that "in Gulliver's Travels there is not only a traditional Christian pessimism; there may well be a positive Christian ideal in the behaviour of the good humans, though it is

presented with Swift's habitual obliquity and restraint" (Williams 203).

It was, however, Irving Ehrenpreis's reading of the TRAVELS as a satire against deism which initiated the lengthy critical controversy as to whether it was appropriate to read Swift's satire in terms of religious allegory at all. Drawing on the evidence of Swift's sermons, and reminding readers of Swift's faithful execution of his responsibilities as pastor for more than fifty years, Ehrenpreis finds that both the writings and the life "confirm [his] devotion to his faith and his calling" (Ehrenpreis 248). Ehrenpreis then concludes that while the Houyhnhnms "embody traits which Swift admired, they do not represent his moral ideal for mankind . . . the houyhnhnms combine stoic and deistic views of human nature --views against which, [Swift] as a devout Anglican, fought" (Ehrenpreis 246).

This reading of the TRAVELS prompted strong disagreement by Louis Landa, Ricardo Quintana, George Sherburn and R.S. Crane. Louis Landa as early as 1946 had in fact suggested that the fourth book of the TRAVELS is "in its implictions Christian apologetics, though of course in non-theological terms" (Voight 134). Nevertheless, in commenting on Ehrenpresis's argument, he felt that to regard the Houyhnhnms as representative of deism was to fall into a "semantic trap" in which "the language of rationalism" is identified with "the substance of deism" (Landa 269). While

Landa agreed that the sermons throw light on the TRAVELS, he felt that Part IV was concerned with "more limited issues, in which man is considered in terms of his private and public virtues, an appraisal of him as a mundane domestic, political and social creature. The two orders cannot be fused so neatly without subtly transforming Swift's intention" (Landa 269).

George Sherburn's influential article, "Errors Concerning the Houyhnhnms" (1958), also took exception to Ehrenpreis's reading: "At stake here are moral and psychological concepts: there is no hint of an interest in the Christian revelation, as Ehrenpreis seems to assume" (Sherburn 261).

Ricardo Quintana also rejects Ehrenpreis's interpretation of the TRAVELS as a satire against deism: "In Part IV Swift was not expounding the grounds of Christian belief; he was writing great satire, the chief theme of which is the moral dualism of man, a being not rationale, only rationis capax." (Quintana 257). R.S. Crane's "The Rationale of the Fourth Voyage" (1955) rejects the notion that Swift "meant his story to be a contribution to Christian apologetics" (Crane 149). Indeed, he goes on to make the strong assertion that if the Fourth Voyage were an anonymous work, it would be "nearly impossible . . . for a good scholar to prove, by internal evidence, that its writer was a clergyman with strong orthodox convictions, or even a Christian at all." (Crane 149). Instead the meaning of the

satire is self-evidently "suggested by the text itself . . . the basic terms of reference in the Voyage are psychological and moral in a broadly human and non-sectarian sense" (Crane 148).

Calhoun Winton's reading of the TRAVELS as the story of "Conversion on the Road to Houyhnhnmland" (1960) sees the work as "a satiric presentation of the what Swift regarded as the new "enlightened" religion (often referred to loosely then as now as "deism") and a defense, couched in Swiftian irony, of Augustinian Christianity" (Winton 271). Winton, assumes "as proved . . . that Swift was a practicing believer in institutional Christianity . . . and that Gulliver is not Swift" (271). Winton's assumptions allow him to notice the parody of religious conversion, especially in Gulliver's leaving of his Houyhnhnm Master as "a ludicrously comic parody of the catholic Christian kissing the ring of a bishop or pope." (278). However, Winton is puzzled as to why Swift, out of respect for his readers, did not "raise signposts as Bunyan did?" (280) In this, he echoes Crane's stronger objection that had Swift wished to write theological allegory, "the material for a satirical defense of religion were certainly in his possession" and would have been made more obvious to readers (Crane 149). As to Swift's motive for concealing the true subject of his satire, Winton offers three explanations: "literary tact, Swift's ingrained love for a hoax, his changing literary audience (i.e. one in which Swift's

religious views were decreasingly acceptable)" (281).

Despite the objections voiced by Sherburn, Crane and others to reading the TPAVELS as religious satire or theological allegory, recent criticism has seen an increasing number of readings in which the theme of religion is seen to be a part of the satire. Dennis Todd's reading of Book Three in "Laputa, the Whore of Babylon and the Idols of Science," (1978) uncovers a pervasive pattern of Biblical allusion (Todd). Robert Folkenflik's "'Homo Alludens' in the Eighteenth Century," (1982) proposes an explanation for the obliqueness of religious issues in the TRAVELS. "It has frequently been objected to religious interpretations of the Fourth Voyage that there are no explicit references to religion of the sort we might expect to find if Swift's intention were to inculcate Christian doctrine. Yet Gulliver's lack of religious concerns means that Swift cannot have his speaker explictly deal with religion and he must make his own views known through irony . . . and other forms of implicit meaning, including allusion" (231). In an article in MILTON STUDIES (1985), James Falzanaro argues that allusions to and echoes of PARADISE LOST in the TRAVELS offer readers "a normative context" enabling them "to compare Gulliver's actions and attitudes with those of Satan in his rebellion and fall, as well as to contrast Gulliver's travails among the Houyhnhnms with the central Christian paradigm of Adam's sin, fall, repentence, and redemption" (Falzanaro 179). More recently, Anne McWhirr has argued that

"Gulliver is not animale rationale, and not even merely animal rationis capax. He is also. . .animal religiosum" (McWhirr 384). For McWhirr, Gulliver constructs a false religion: "The treatise he writes is no Bible, but it evokes the Bible and related contexts more than critics have recognised" (McWhirr 384).

The difficulty critics have had with Christianity as a solution to the puzzle posed by the TRAVELS has stemmed from a lack of consensus as to what constitutes Christianity. All too often in discussions of Swift, Christianity is taken to mean merely assertion of the doctrine of original sin. On the other hand, the introduction of concepts such as grace and redemption seems too abstract and remote both from the text and from poor Gulliver's isolation in the stable with his stone-horses. Moreover, valuable discussions such as Monk's "Pride of Lemuel Gulliver," or R.M. Frye's essay on the Yahoo as a traditional symbol of sin, presuppose religious categories which are not specific to Christianity but are common to both Judaism and Islam. In any case, the text would still seem to lack any specifically Christian consolation. Furthermore, such readings do not answer the objection that Swift could have been masking his misanthropy with the language of traditional Christian invective. Thus, such Christian readings do not put to rest the suspicion that in the TRAVELS, Swift felt free to give his agnosticism the unusual latitude afforded by imaginary geography, that

latitude which Hawthorne claimed as the peculiar freedom offered by the romance genre. Critics skeptical of Christian or "soft" readings of the TRAVELS, thus imagine Swift the fiction-maker agnostic where Swift, the Christian thinker and writer, followed the more orthodox line. Interestingly, this would be to see Swift, rather as Blake saw Milton, as of the devil's party. The angry reactions of readers such as Thackeray , Scott or Gosse, that the satire was blasphemous and obscene seem, however, preferable to the modern acceptance of such imagined bad faith on the part of Swift.

But if we can grant provisionally that Swift was writing in good faith, how are we to define the Christian doctrine he was defending? Here what we need to remember is that it is not the doctrine of original sin which defines Christianity, but rather the key doctrine of the Incarnation. It is this which is the distinctive and the defining characteristic of Christianity and central to all Christian creeds, the common denominator which C.S. Lewis labelled "mere Christianity." Seen from the perspective of God's incarnation as man, the doctrine of original sin then takes on a different significance. The figure of Christ supplies the missing standard which the text requires. Surprisingly, Tuveson, despite his sensitive reading of the TRAVELS within the context of the issue of the "abandonment of the whole great Christian tradition," can nevertheless assert that "We see then there can be no true 'satiric norm,' no pattern of human

perfection against which defects are set" (Tuveson 109). However, this overlooks the concept of Christ as the New Adam which does precisely this; this not only asserts a new norm but promises it as attainable by human beings. Accordingly, the figure of Christ provides the implicit norm by which Gulliver's all too easy acceptance of the inflated claims of Lilliputian monarchs and Houyhnhnm masters of being "The Monarch of Monarchs" and "the perfection of nature," can be seen within their true satiric perspective.

Accordingly, without the perspective of the Incarnation of Christ, we are forever trapped in the endless and unresolvable debate between the Pelagianism of the Houyhnhnms who can do no wrong and the Augustinianism of the Yahoos who can do no right. What the Incarnation allows us to assert is that if God did not disdain taking on human flesh, then man need not disdain it either. If the word could become flesh and dwell among us full of grace and truth, then human nature is something infinitly more than mere Yahoo flesh. Indeed, salvation by the Christ allows the shedding of the old guilt-ridden nature to be "born again" as "a new creature in Christ." The reader must thus supply the missing Christian context in order for Swift's satire to come into proper focus. This does not involve the searching out of some obscure dogma, but merely recalling the Christian story itself, in which as Dorthey Sayers has aptly remarked, the drama is the dogma.

Interestingly enough, but not so surprisingly, the idea

of incarnation suggests itself quite naturally and occurs frequently in discussions of the Fourth Voyage, not, however, as Christian doctrine but rather as metaphor. Thus, A.E. Dyson finds the Houyhnhnms "to be the incarnation of Swift's actual positives, and the very standard against which the Yahoos are tried and found wanting" (Dyson 163). Similarly, Charles Peake finds the Yahoo "is an incarnation of the Ideal Absence of Reason as the Houyhnhnm is the incarnation of Ideal Reason" (Peake 296). Indeed, David Nokes in a discussion of Swift's puns finds that Swift's method "transubstantiates words into 'things'." Nokes points out that while this stylistic device resembles Joyce, more accurately these "are not so much epiphanies as incarnations, a constant process of words becoming flesh" (Nokes 46).

It is important to note, however, that it is only in the Christian doctrinal sense that the metaphor of words or abstract concepts becoming flesh acquires its explanatory force. Thus, to speak of the Houyhnhnms as "the embodiment of reason" does not explain their function in the way that the more allusive "incarnation" seems to do. However, the very explanatory power of the metaphor creates difficulty. Having made the Houyhnhnms incarnations of something allows them the divine status of Man's final Judge, a status which endows the Houyhnhnm with all the righteous sternness of a God, without however the loving understanding of a Creator for his creatures.

But granted that the metaphor can be used meaningfully apart from a Christian context, to assert that the Houyhnhnms are incarnations of reason is merely to assert that they are sound minds in sound bodies. A more remarkable manifestation of the metaphor would be the willingness on the part of the Houyhnhnms or Gulliver to become incarnated as Yahoo. The true significance of the Incarnation is not just the combination of mind and body, but the willingness to take on the burden of being human. Divorced from the Christian doctrine of Incarnation, in which both Love and Law become flesh, the doctrine of the Houyhnhnm as the incarnation of an ideal ultimately can only lead to despair. Unlike the figure of Jesus who as the new Adam represents both an attainable ideal and the means by which it might be attained, the Houyhnhnm can only represent an unattainable ideal. Moreover, while the new Covenant through Christ allowed for the salvation of all people, the gospel according to Gulliver's Houyhnhnm Master means the Yahoo, no matter how virtuous, will forever be an outsider. Gulliver, the "gentle Yahoo," will forever be the Gentile Yahoo.

For Gulliver, however, this Christian context has been obscured or forgotten so that the word 'Christian' is merely another way of saying a civilised European. Thus, in Book Three, when Gulliver appeals to the Christianity which he and the pirates hold in common, he is appealing to the sense of fair play, to a common understanding of the rules of civilized

behaviour. Although Gulliver is far from home, he would nevertheless like to maintain those rules in the isolation of the high seas. Faced with mutiny, he has no recourse but to appeal to a universal standard. This conflict between the immediate local ethical situation and an ethic with binding universal norms in all times and all places is a major theme of the TRAVELS. When Sherburn says that the satire of the TRAVELS is involved with the state but not with religion, he is interpreting the issue too narrowly. For the ultimate political question is the problem of authority and obedience. Isaiah Berlin has called this "the central political question--the question of obedience and coercion. Why should I obey anyone else?'" (Harrington 3). Yet this very question of obedience and authority is also at the heart of the story of the Fall, with "Man's first disobedience." The genesis of political power as well as its moral authority invariably involves issues which transcend the immediate and visible power of the state. Determining from what source the state derives its power or what that source should be takes us to the heart of ontological questions about the nature of human existence. Is it free or is it determined? What is or should be the relationship between the order and harmony of the cosmos, of nature and the human community? In the First Voyage, Gulliver starts his narrative with his own birth, but in Lilliput, the narrative necessarily begins <u>in medias res</u>. The doctrinal disputes of the Big Endians and the Little

Endians are of long historical standing. but if we were to depart from the Horatian dictum and begin ab ovo, we would find ourselves confronting the very cosmic egg. Accordingly, to consider how we have arrived in the historical present at our ideas of power, justice and the nature and value of the human is to find ourselves considering the origins and the originals of things. In one form or another, these questions are posed by the TRAVELS; they take us to the heart of darkness, to stories, theories, and myths about the genesis of the human.

The review of the criticism the satire has received has shown that even when explicitly Christian readings of the TRAVELS are denied, a Christian vocabulary stripped of its theological content nevertheless enters into the discussion of the satire. This in itself is highly significant, suggesting not so much a lack of philosophical rigour as an intuitive response to suggestions inspired by the text. Nevertheless, given the various ways in which the incarnation metaphor is employed, if one is willing to admit the Incarnation as an explanation at one level of the text, may it be extended to the others? To limit the concept to metaphor rather than doctrine seems arbitrary since the doctrine must be presupposed in order for the metaphor to make sense. Once a concept is introduced, the entire context is implied if only to make grammatical sense. Swift may not seem to be speaking of Christianity, but as my quotations show, if Christian terms must be employed to make sense of the satire, we may well ask

what there is about the text or the linguistic context that consistently provokes this kind of critical vocabulary. Once again we are caught in the problem which Swift has created: we can speak of Yahoos and Houyhnhnms grammatically and can construct a number of seemingly meaningful statements about them. But trying to speak of them logically requires introducing a logos, a philosophy. Indeed, whether we are conscious of holding such philosophical assumptions, every utterance we make about these fictional entities implies a theology or a metaphysics which is, nevertheless, a response to theological issues.

The TRAVELS as a whole, and the Fourth Voyage in particular, make us aware that the problem of logical identity cannot be divorced from the problem of grammatical identity which in turn cannot be divorced from the problem of existential identity. When logic becomes divorced from Christian values, we become embroiled in the very problems between rhetoric and truth which bothered Socrates and which Christianity managed to keep at bay until the advent of Cartesian dualism. Exposing this dilemma, by allowing the reader to discover the conflict and the confusion posed by a non-Christian logos, becomes one of the tasks of Swift's apologetics.

But if it is Swift's purpose to write a kind of Christian apologetics why does he go about it this way? His is the difficulty of writing a persuasive argument for a

Christian philosophy of human nature in an age which is, however, ostensibly Christian. Faced with this paradoxical problem of defending something no one thought was being attacked, he chose to parody the modern mind set, to show the inevitable consequences of unbelief, by showing what happens when Gulliver, an ordinary good man, accepts the emerging modern paradigm with unquestioning faith. It is instructive to compare Swift's solution with that of Kierkegaard writing at a later time but in a comparable situation. Like Swift, Kierkegaard also chose to propound the philosophical and religious dilemmas confronting the Christian through irony, adopting an ironic mask and attributing the putative authorship of his texts to various fictional personae. Reading Kierkegaard's explication of the way irony works with Swift in mind is extremely illuminating. In A CONCLUDING UNSCIENTIFIC POSTCRIPT, Kierkegaard contrasts the usual method of the orthodox champion of Christianity with that of the ironist. Thinking of Swift provides the concrete example which clarifies Kierkegaard's point. The passage is lengthy but deserves quotation in full:

> An orthodox champion fights in defense of Christianity with the most frightful passion, he protests with the sweat of his brow and with the most concerned demeanor that he accepts Christianity pure and simple, he will live and die in it--and he forgets that such acceptance is an all too general expression for the relation to Christianity. He does everything in Jesus' name and uses Christ's name on every occasion as a sure sign that he is a Christian and is called to fight in defense of Christendom in our age--and he has no inkling of the little ironical secret that a man merely by describing the "how" of his inwardness can show indirectly that he is a Christian without ever mentioning God's name. A

> man becomes converted New Year's Eve precisely at six o'clock. With that he is fully prepared. Fantastically decked out with the fact of conversion, he now must run out and proclaim Christianity . . . in a Christian land. Well, of course, even though we are all baptized, every man may well need to become a Christian in another sense. But here is the distinction: there is no lack of information in a Christian land, something else is lacking, and this is something which the one man cannot directly communicate to the other. And in such fantastic categories would the man work for Christianity; and yet he proves (just in proportion as he is the more busy in spreading and spreading) that he himself is not a Christian. For to be a Christian is something so deeply reflected that it does not admit of the aesthetical dialectic which allows one man to be for others what he is not for himself. On the other hand, a scoffer attacks Christianity and at the same time expounds it so reliably it is a pleasure to read him, and one who is in perplexity about finding it distinctly set forth may almost have recourse to him (Kierkegaard 542-3).

Swift then is in the position of the would-be orthodox champion of Christianity who must preach to an age which does not lack information about Christianity but lacks something else. The ironist defending Christianity, however, is obliged to vex his reader with absurd dogmas and irrational creeds, hoping the reader will re-discover the true doctrine and also discover why it needs to be asserted. Accordingly, Swift employs the stratagem of using Gulliver not so much as a "scoffer" of Christian faith but as the promoter of a new creed, the Houyhnhnm gospel. This new gospel according to Gulliver, parodies Christian renunciation in requiring the renunciation of human superiority as a rational animal. And yet, this new creed, this new humility of the self as no more than corrupt Yahoo, in its ironic parallels with Christianity, becomes, as with Kierkegaard's scoffer, almost a "distinctly set forth" exposition of the Christian creed. Swift as teacher

is not so much expounding truth, as providing both Gulliver and the reader with the situations in which the truth might be learned. Needless to say, Gulliver draws one set of inferences from his experiences, the reader, however, must draw another.

Thus far however, I have been assuming my hypothesis about Swift's apologetics to be true. But can it be proved? R.S. Crane's skepticism about the TRAVELS not providing such internal evidence still remains. How we can track down the real meaning of the ironist, if in fact such real meanings exist, thus becomes crucial. How are we to adduce our evidence for Christianity in the TRAVELS? There are two kinds of evidence which we must consider: the macro structures of genre and the micro structures of language. Genre includes the TRAVELS as parody of various Christian texts, not only gospel narrative but also as confession; the micro structures of language, will entail consideration of Swift's style and his characteristic insertion of the telling detail.

Since this predilection for detail is one shared by Kierkegaard, it will be useful to start with these micro-linguistic clues. Here, the distinctions Kierkegaard makes between the details which concern the ironist as opposed to those which are dearest to the earnest expounder of doctrine become relevant. The distinction applies not only between the ironist and any speaker, but between the ironist and the persona created. Kierkegaard repeatedly emphasises that penetrating the meaning of irony depends on "how"

something is said rather than merely "what" is being said:

> All ironical observation depends on paying attention to the "how" whereas the gentleman with whom the ironist has the honour to converse is attentive only to the "what". . . The ironist is then on the watch, he is of course not looking out for what is printed in large letters or for that which by the speaker's diction betrays itself as a formula (our speaker's "what"), but he is looking out for a little subordinate clause which escapes the gentleman's haughty attention, a little beckoning predicate, etc., and now beholds with astonishment (glad of the variation--in variatione voluptas) that the gentleman has not that opinion which with all his vital force he persuades himself that he has, he may do everything for it in the quality of talebearer, he may risk his life for it, in very much troubled times he may carry the thing so far as to lose his life for this opinion--with that how the deuce can I doubt that the man had this opinion; and yet there may have been living contemporaneously with him an ironist who even in the hour when the unfortunate gentleman is executed cannot resist laughing, because he knows by the circumstantial evidence he has gathered that the man has never been clear about the thing himself (Kierkegaard 543).

There are two possibilities in this double-edged irony. First, that Swift is writing fully conscious of the ironies surrounding Gulliver, in which case Gulliver, in keeping with Kierkegaard's opinionated gentleman, unconsciously betrays, at every turn, values which are the very opposite of those he professes. Thus, for all Gulliver's literal protests that human beings are Yahoos and beyond redemption, the text in fact deconstructs the very beliefs the narrative promotes. This dichotomy between intention and belief is built into the text and is crucial to understanding the irony since Gulliver, the misanthrope, in writing the TRAVELS is hoping to reform the Yahoos. In this reading of the TRAVELS, the reader need only follow the clues scattered throughout the text by Swift, the obliging ironist. The second possibility is that Swift has

adopted a thoroughgoing philosophical pessimism devoid of any theological trappings, thereby resembling Kierkegaard's "unfortunate gentleman" who has so convinced the world of his beliefs in the matter that "how the deuce can [anyone] doubt that the man had this opinion." But given this situation, it is the reader who becomes the skeptical ironist. Swift may be granted his ironies, but ultimately it is the reader who is the ironist and who can be ironical at Swift's expense, because the reader "knows by the circumstantial evidence he has gathered that the man [Swift] has never been clear about the thing himself." Stated in this fashion, however, Kierkegaard's two possibilities make it obvious that it is highly unlikely that, Swift, a pioneer and a master of irony, would have been unaware of the central irony posed by his text.

But the strong and paradoxical assertions which Kierkegaard makes regarding the way irony works remain valid and indispensable in understanding the irony of the TRAVELS. Furthermore, Kierkegaard's concept of irony posits a special relationship between the ironist and the expounder of Christian doctrine. Accordingly, one of the implications of Kierkegaard's analysis is that strong language which puts forth belief "in" something or belief "that" something is true, conforms, almost in spite of the speaker, to the characteristics of religious language whose primary function is to assert that certain propositions about God, the universe

and the human situation are true. Ironically, then, Gulliver in trying to write a convincing and credible narrative about non-existent fictional beings, whether Lilliputians or Houyhnhnms, whether Brobdingnagians or Struldbruggs is engaged in an enterprise which recapitulates the problems posed by Biblical narrative. In so far as he also expects his book to convince readers of the errors of their ways as Yahoos, and to lead to a universal reformation of human nature, he also finds himself in the situation of the evangelist. Moreover, his very expectations in this regard are an ironic affirmation of the Judeo-Christian tradition the TRAVELS seem to exclude. Gulliver, in expecting his book to change the world, shares in the Judeo-Christian conception of the importance of the written word and its power to change human behaviour. His naivete that the change could be effected in six months indicates his blissful ignorance of the fact that although the Bible has been successful in changing the world over the course of thousands of years, it has been singularly lacking in universal success.

Thus, both Gulliver's expectation of the power of the written word, as well as his subsequent disappointment, point to the larger realm of matters about religious belief and unbelief, and imply the very religious text and tradition they ignore. Not only does Gulliver, as author, unwittingly recapitulate the task of writing Biblical narrative, but the unwary reader is subtly drawn into formulating a

hermeneutics. The ironic use of genres in the TRAVELS thus points up the problem of truth-claims posed by language which is divorced from outside referents. Gulliver, as splendide mendax, has thus written a text which exhibits all the properties of the Liar's Paradox writ large. If it is true that human beings are irrational, immoral and unteachable brutes, then how can one use moral language to convince them of this truth? If one can use their own moral language to convince them of their immorality, then it cannot be true that human beings are irrational and unteachable. Built into the text of the TRAVELS, then, is the conundrum at the heart of A TALE OF A TUB: how is literature as an endless order of words related to the order of the Word?

If strong language about beliefs betrays an unconscious similarity to religious language, the genre of storytelling in the TRAVELS bears a further ironic resemblance to Biblical narrative as well. The TRAVELS belong of course to the genre of the traveller's tale. Ostensibly, like these other accounts of travels to remote regions, it is intended as "improving" literature. Travel literature, by means of describing what is to be admired in the customs, the habits, the foods, and social arrangements of other cultures, is intended to improve the life of European society by urging their adoption. At the same time, the traveller's tale tends to subvert the authority of Christianity, by treating it as one religion among many. As such, Christianity is seen as no more than the native European

culture. Travel literature, by showing that religious worship is universal and at the same time so diverse, tended to present religious ritual as merely a matter of arbitrary human custom and preference rather than based on any ultimate truth. Thus, travel literature has a hidden religious sub-text. Since the claim such literature makes on the reader is a truth-claim based on an eye-witness account of otherwise incredible experiences, they have an ironic resemblance to Biblical narrative, and particularly to New Testament narrative. Swift's parody of the genre will make this covert aspect of travel literature overt. The irony cuts both ways, since both the writer and the reader of travel literature are gullible and credulous. The writer has not been sufficiently attentive to the philosophical presuppositions of non-Christian societies, and the reader is all too often easily misled into making "scientific" generalizations about human nature based on these accounts.

But the TRAVELS are also a form of autobiography, and given the nature of the fourth Book, the account of life among the Houyhnhnms, the TRAVELS are also a spiritual autobiography. As such, they bear an ironic resemblance to Augustine's CONFESSIONS, the archetypal example of the genre. Like the CONFESSIONS, the TRAVELS recount the process of a conversion, although ironically, instead of being a pilgrim's progress, they are a pilgrim's regress. Augustine recounts how in becoming a Christian he was delivered from the endless

debate of Manicheism. Gulliver, on the other hand, begins as a nominal Christian only to move into Manicheism, into the pernicious dualism between Yahoo and Houyhnhnm. M.H. Abrams has pointed out that Augustine's CONFESSIONS provides the providential plot for "Romantic philosophy" which retains "traditional Christian concepts. . . but demythologized" (Abrams 91). Unlike, the Romantics, however, what Gulliver retains are the traditional Christian concepts of sin but a blindness to the providential design. Hence, one of the major ironies of the TRAVELS is Gulliver's obliviousness to the fairy-tale quality of his life in which adventure after adventure is followed by happy and incredible rescues. This demythologized Christianity in the TRAVELS accounts for the difficulty readers have had in deducing Swift's Christianity in as obvious a fashion as we can in a work which takes religion as an overt theme. However, Gulliver's language unconsciously echoes Biblical language so that Christian myth is reintroduced unexpectedly into Swift's text, as the discussion in Chapter Two will show.

Swift has thus created a parable demythologized of its Christian content, yet one which unknown to the narrator still conveys a strong Christian element through association at the level of language. To Kierkegaard, language retains orthodox notions no matter how unorthodox the speaker. And although Kierkegaard in this work, does not mention Hegel as an arch example, Abrams specifically discusses Hegel in this context

of how Christianity becomes transformed into philosophy. In the case of Hegel, providential design is transformed into a non-Christian dialectic or logic. In the case of Gulliver, divine judgement of human sin and corruption is translated into an anthropology which leads inevitably into misanthropy. Until the fourth book, Gulliver had the secular optimism of his age derived from Christianity. Since the tendency after Swift is all the other way, that is, Christianity stripped of its theology but retaining nevertheless an optimistic philosophy of history and of human progress, Swift's method is to create a supreme counter-example in Gulliver. After encountering the Yahoo, Gulliver cannot maintain such faith in the progressive enlightenment possible for the human race.

The irony of the TRAVELS then posits both a certain situation and at the same time initiates a counter-argument which allows us to see two parallel points of view--Gulliver's gospel and Swift's Christian apologetic. As such, this side-by-side comparison resembles the parabolic structure of the New Testament parables. It is the listener of the parable who must complete the open-ended design, who must grasp in just what way an old familiar story is being given a new interpretion, a new twist. The surprise of discovery, the pleasure of realizing that the storyteller is counting on one's own native intelligence gives the parables their enduring power. The structure of the TRAVELS then has the structure of ironic parable. This is particularly true of the

Fourth Voyage: New Testament parables frequently conform to a certain pattern, as in the Kingdom of Heaven parables for example, in which finding the treasure in the field, or the pearl of great price forms the basis of the comparison. Thus, the formula would read "If the joy of finding a treasure is great, how much greater then is the joy of finding the Kingdom of Heaven." The entire fourth voyage could be read as an extended and elaborate variation of another parable, the pattern found in the saying "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him" (Luke 11:13). In the Fourth Voyage this pattern is used to create an awareness that if the Houyhnhnms, who have not received the benefits of Christian revelation can yet manage to love one another, to control appetites, to face death with equanimity and with no hope of further reward, then how much more should this be true of Christians who have been forgiven, redeemed and promised the help of a Saviour to reach the Kingdom of God.

Gulliver's encounters with non-Christian civilisations throughout the TRAVELS thus carry this ironic resonance. When the King of Brobdingnag is horrified by Gulliver's offer to teach him how to make gunpowder and to create a military arsenal, he rejects the proposal as if it were being proposed by Satan. What the passage suggests is that the Brobdingnagians do not have a religious ideology which

includes a Satanic figure; hence the King can only hypothesize about this unnamed "evil genius." Nevertheless, that the King can make such a giant leap attests to a remarkable power of inference, all the more ironic since readers can immediately grasp the suppressed allusion to Milton's Satan. Gulliver, meanwhile, remains oblivious to the picture of cosmic evil which has just occurred to the King. Furthermore, the King, ignorant of Christian myth but perceptive about human nature, does not see the use of gunpowder as an inevitable development in the arts of war. Its invention is therefore not typical of human nature, but is instead so unnatural as to be demonic. The efficiency of powder and cannon which kill in greater numbers is thus a cruel parody of the creativity which seeks to grow two blades of grass where only one grew before. Swift's irony thus allows us to see how it is possible to make accurate inferences about evil without, however, having to pass through the experience of evil. Gulliver's response further shows that we are so inured to a certain way of looking at the world, in terms of power and mastery and threats of enslavement or death, that the spontaneous and immediate reflexes of the King's reaction have been lost.

But the episode reveals an important aspect of Swift's method, in that the episode poses a moral paradox reminiscent of the Liar's paradox which characterises the logical problem posed by Swift's text as a whole. The paradox is created by the horrifying descriptions of the devasting power of

gunpowder. In order to convince a king who has never seen modern warfare of the effectiveness of such weapons, Gulliver has to create vivid images of holocaust and devastation. Paradoxically, however, the more remarkable Gulliver's sales pitch, the more remarkable that a sale should ever be made. The more convincing his proofs of the effectiveness of this invention, the more convincing that it should never have been invented. Thus, Gulliver's knowledge of the destructive power of such weapons should in fact have deterred him from urging their adoption.

The TRAVELS are prophetic in illustrating the moral problem posed by technological inventions with so much compression. It is not only that the offer of the gunpowder as a military weapon is satanic, but also that the convoluted moral reasoning involved is most truly diabolical.

Swift's powerful description of gunpowder ironically makes us see it as if for the first time. It manages to horrify us depite our familiarity with it and despite our knowledge that much more powerful weapons have been created. But Swift is interested in making us see the logical trap the quest for ultimate power invariably creates. The fictional situation created by Swift with regard to gunpowder precisely anticipates the logical and moral dilemma posed for the twentieth century by the doctrine of nuclear deterrence. Thus, in Book Three, although the King of Laputa has the power to crush an entire population, he is deterred from excercising

such power; he is not deterred, however, as we might expect by superior technology. Instead, there is the quite comical portrait of the supreme and unchallenged technology of the Flying Island being held at bay by the hazard posed to its adamantine base by the sticks and stones of ordinary chimneys.

In Kierkegaard's analysis of irony, the ironist deciphers the true beliefs of the speaker by paying attention to the stray beckoning predicate. In the TRAVELS, language acquires a sense of cross purpose which creates a kind of parabolic intensity endowing certain episodes, certain fragments, too fleeting to even be labelled as events with a resonance which seems quite out of porportion to their ostensible function in the narrative. F.R. Leavis describes this "peculiar emotional intensity" in Swift's style as "the disturbing characteristic of his genius" (Leavis 16). There is for example, the curious, off-hand observation of Gulliver that living among the Houyhnhnms he has learned to eliminate salt from his diet, realizing the need for salt is a decadent acquired taste and not at all necessary for survival. The observation has elicted its share of puzzled commentary. Could Swift have made a mistake or was he satirizing Gulliver's gullibility, more outrageous because Gulliver as a medical man should supposedly know better. But even if the observation is inserted for purely local satiric effect, it points to some larger meaning derived from Biblical allusion. "You are the salt of the earth," and its corollary, "but what if salt

should lose its flavour?" Salt not only adds flavour to food, but also preserves meat from decay. Denying the human need for salt denies in fact the necessary means for preventing corruption. At the same time, Christ's metaphor ironically points up the fact that the saving action of salt requires only a small amount to perform an otherwise overwhelming function. Swift's bland insertion of this detail serves as a corrective, reminding the reader that Gulliver's despair at the overwhelming corruption of human society and his pessimism about its cure needs to be taken, after all, with a grain of salt.

But the notion of parable is relevant to THE TRAVELS in another sense as well. For the New Testament is not only an account of the parables of Christ but also an account of symbolic actions which acquire the status of parables. The Biblical scholar Joachim Jeremias, concludes his discussion of the parables of Jesus, with the observation that "Jesus did not confine himself to spoken parables but also performed parabolic actions" (Jeremias 227).

Extending the notion of parable to include parabolic actions casts an interesting light on the ironic reversals of the TRAVELS. If we can see Gulliver as proclaiming a new Gospel, we have Gulliver, in Lilliput the eventual saviour of the kingdom, making his ignominious entry into the city, bound and fettered. Gulliver's actions parody the salvific acts of Christ. Instead of turning water into wine, he turns wine into

water in putting out the palace fire; instead of feeding the multitudes, he is fed by them. Instead of the symbolic cleansing of the Temple, Gulliver pollutes the Lilliputian temple. By contrast with Christ, the Good Shepherd who shows tender regard for his flock, Culliver is not the least bit sentimental, not even about the tiny Lilliputian sheep which, his own breeding schemes notwithstanding, can have no value apart from their charm. Gulliver is a physician, but he is a healer who cannot or does not heal. Among the Struldbruggs, Gulliver, caught up in the possibilities offered by immortality, imagines himself as a type of Christ, an immortal teacher surrounded by "a dozen" disciples [3.x,210].

Furthermore, there is considerable irony in Gulliver's relationship to the concept of "the child in their midst." Throughout the TRAVELS, Gulliver is often in the position of being cared for as a helpless infant, even when he is the giant in Lilliput. In Book Two, Gulliver is both child and lamb, replacing Glumdaclitch's slaughtered pet. In Book Four, Gulliver is outraged when the Yahoo child he has picked up voids urine in fright; however, the episode ironically recalls Gulliver's own action in Lilliput. Quite literally, Gulliver was "the greatest in their midst" and yet during the fire he did what a little boy might have done and with the same innocent vigour, with the result, however, that he was nearly "crucified." The most significant reversal of all, however,is that Gulliver does not choose the humble ass, the symbol of

Christ's peaceful mission, but chooses instead the horse, the symbol of the militarism of a ruling class, the arrogant, "governing rational animal" of Book Four.

Swift then is in the position of one who realized that the language of morality and the whole conceptual structure on which it was based was in grave danger. For this reason, Gulliver is the first modern man, who is oblivious of the epistemological and philsophical and moral premises of his worldview. By the very nature of the problem, as well as by the ironic strategy Swift has adopted, the reader may miss the religious argument being worked out in the structure and the texture of the satire. As in Kierkegaard's example, we are too busy being attentive to the "what," rather than the "how." There is in fact such an ungodly plenty in this inventive satire about strange people, places and customs as to distract us from the ironist's deeper concerns.

CHAPTER TWO

Since the Christian reading of the TRAVELS is in dispute, it is well to remember that the problem of unbelief which characterises Gulliver is not defiant atheism or the skepticism of the seventeenth century or eighteenth century. It is completely modern in its indifference to religion. In his sermon, "On Brotherly Love," Swift characterises the modern person as the "Moderate Man, in the new meaning of the Word," as "one to whom all Religion is Indifferent, who although he denominateth himself of the Church, regardeth it as no more than a Conventicle" (Swift b 178). Gulliver then is not religious as that term might have been understood in earlier ages; for him, Christianity is a matter of custom rather than of conviction. Thus, in the Third Voyage, when Gulliver appeals to the Dutch pirate in consideration of their both "being Christians and Protestants, of neighboring Countries, in strict Alliance," he is really appealing to a shared European heritage, rather than a shared communion. Furthermore, Gulliver is not only indifferent to religion, he is irreligious in lacking sensitivity to the noumenal in existence, what Max Weber has aptly called being "religiously musical" even though lacking belief in God (quoted Harrington 10). Gulliver, however, is oblivious to the tonalities of his experience. Neverthless, when readers sense the resonance or more accurately, perhaps, the dissonance, Gulliver's individual voyages become ironic versions of the pattern of

Christian pilgrimage. Gulliver's unbelief, then, is not only characterised by an indifference to religious symbolism and to religious concerns, but also exhibits a further characteristic of unbelief, labelled by Joseph Pieper as "inveterate inattentiveness" (Marty 26). This phrase perfectly captures Gulliver's quality of mind and makes Swift's anticipation of this modern type all the more remarkable.

Just as classical mythology provided the supernatural element as a background in Renaissance epic, so in the TRAVELS, Christianity as a distant and familiar "mythology" provides the supernatural and the transcendent values by which the action in the voyages can be understood. Swift, however, does not charge these elements of Christian language and myth in the positive manner of Renaissance writers who consciously borrowed Greek and Roman mythology to heighten the values of the text. Nor does he draw attention to them in the manner of Romantic and post-Romantic writers to help the reader "place" the new myth of the text with reference to the central Christian myth it has displaced. Instead, these fragments, these wisps of shared common knowledge about Christianity and the culture, are used quite unconsciously by Gulliver, who is oblivious to their allusive power. There is a tension between Swift's awareness of these older meanings and Gulliver's lack of awareness. While these familiar words are alive with meaning for Swift, they have lost their primary meaning for Gulliver. The reader seems to be invited to regard Gulliver's

usage as normative. However, if we try to read as Gulliver writes and treat these allusions as dead metaphor, we are beset with a disruptive sense of anachronism. The tensions, the discordant notes which occur when these words and symbols are used this way, create an ironic dissonance which forces the reader to adjust, to re-interpret the values. The technique is one which demonstrates at the level of the single word or name Swift's thesis that modern usage has fallen away from the original meaning and practice. This awareness is heightened by Swift's portrayal of Gulliver as translator and linguist.

For Gulliver, as he sets about to master the languages of the countries he visits, all languages convey much the same information about eating and drinking and statecraft and religion. Like the philosophers who want to substitute things for words in Book Three, Gulliver believes that the meanings of words are simple, rather like pointing to things. Indeed, when we speak about ostensible meanings of words we are in fact quite literally speaking about the finger-pointing basis of speech. However, as Gulliver sets about finding these correspondences, drawing up lists of synonynms in his little books, we find that these correspondences are not as straightforward as they may at first appear. Thus, in Book Two, Gulliver tells us twice that in Brobdingnag, "Wednesday is their sabbath":

> So that for some time I Had but little Ease every day of the week, (except Wednesday, which is their sabbath) although I were not carried to the town (2.ii 98).

And then again several pages later:

> It is the Custom, that every Wednesday, (which as I have before observed, was their Sabbath), the King and Queen, with the Royal issue of both sexes dine together . . . . (2.iii 106).

These sentences seem merely informative, yet another way in which we must allow for specific difference in the cultures Gulliver vists while acknowledging how they conform to the universality of customs. As such, the adjustment involved seems no more difficult than allowing for the difference in scale in both Lilliput and Brobdingnag, while human anatomy nevertheless remains a constant despite the difference in size. But the analogy does not quite hold. Once this innocuous bit of information is examined, it is not quite clear what Gulliver means by the "sabbath." Does he mean that Wednesdays are a day of public worship? Or does he mean that this is a day for recreation and leisure? Does the Brobdingnagian culture with its temples of gods and deified rulers correspond to polytheistic Rome except in this one particular in which it seems to correspond to the monotheism of Judaism? In any case, did the Brobdingnagian sabbath start out as a holy day and over time degenerate into a holiday? Was it divinely ordained and therefore obligatory? As the questions proliferate, a whole theology (not to mention a whole history of theological controversies) is seen to lie

behind the simple word "sabbath." The word implies its history, implies the creation story of Genesis, implies the ten commandments; the changeover from the Saturday sabbath of Judaism to the Sunday worship of Christianity, and ultimately recognition of the Lordship of Christ: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

The notion of the sabbath thus embraces both Creation and the new creation through Christ, so that Sunday worship serves as a weekly reminder of the most important matters of faith. Indeed, Swift's sermon, "Upon Sleeping in Church," reviews all the reasons people stay away from Church on Sundays yet finds that these are the very ones who "stand in most need of a physician" (Swift b 212).

Gulliver's usage of 'sabbath', however, involves even more complex meanings. For the sentence "Wednesday is their sabbath" implies not only the original meaning of the "sabbath" and its significance but also the modern loss of such significance. For to understand Gulliver's usage, means we also accept the modern notion of the relativity of religious customs and the attendant loss of the exclusive claims of Christianity. Thus, Swift, but not Gulliver, draws our attention to both the purpose for which the sabbath was originally instituted as well as the falling away which such a casual statement by Gulliver implies. The sentence thus contains both the claims of orthodoxy as well as the modern heresy. Swift repeatedly achieves such irony, not as the

metaphysical poets do through a violent yoking of heterogenous ideas, but through the all too casual coupling of apparently similar ones.

A definitive starting point which will allow us to start with some sense of the positive and the non-ironic is Gulliver's own name. For the name that Swift has chosen to give his hero links Gulliver, though he is unaware of it, to a whole religious tradition and captures the dual nature of Gulliver's role. On the one hand, Lemuel, means 'devoted to God'; on the other hand, Gulliver, indicates the peculiar modern genus to which Gulliver belongs, the gullibility and credulity of the enlightened and educated man.

It is Gulliver's first name which gives us our true orientation in the TRAVELS. The name 'Lemuel' occurs only once in the Bible, in Proverbs, the very last chapter of which is called The Book of Lemuel. The name of this chapter is usually overlooked although it is frequently quoted for its magnificent verses about the ideal wife: "A worthy wife who can find? Her value is far above pearls" (Prov 31.9). Needless to say, given Mistress Gulliver's trials and tribulations, there is considerable irony in linking Lemuel Gulliver to his Biblical namesake's praise of the ideal wife.

Swift's choice of name is particularly pointed in that the name of the Biblical king is given to this short book within Proverbs for apparently no other purpose than to have him echo a mother's advice; King Lemuel has no further

identity or history in the book which bears his name. The opening verse of the Book of Lemuel begins:

> These are the words of Lemuel, King of Massa.
> The advice which his mother gave him (Prov:31:1-2).

With that we hear no more of Lemuel, King of Massa. While this strikes the reader of Swift as a rather comical touch, nevertheless, this sole reference to Lemuel as son and king has an important bearing on the relationship of this Biblical chapter to the theme of wisdom in the Book of Proverbs and therefore to the related theme of rationality and discernment in the TRAVELS. Bearing in mind Gulliver's approbation of the Houyhnhnm preference for exhortation, it is important to note that the proverbs exhort but do not command. Accordingly, a recurrent theme in the Book of Proverbs is the refrain:

> Hear my son, your father's instruction
> and reject not your mother's teaching (Prov 1:8;6:20).

As well as: "A wise son makes his father glad, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother" (Prov 10:6).

The words of Lemuel then in the final chapter of Proverbs, are the culmination of this theme. Appropriately, Lemuel is the wise son, who though a king, is yet not too proud to echo his mother's advice as the ultimate wisdom. Ironically, however, with the exception of having married well, Gulliver obeys the advice of his Biblical namesake in

ironic fashion. Undoubtedly, due as much to his apprenticeship under the eminent surgeon, Master Bates, as well as to lack of opportunity, Gulliver does in fact manage to heed the admonition not "to give [his] vigour to women." And had he heeded the advice to avoid wine "lest in drinking [he] forget what the law decrees", events in Lilliput would have taken an entirely different turn.

While Swift undoubtedly enjoyed playing with these incidental ironies, what is more significant is that through the name of his Biblical namesake, the TRAVELS become linked to the theme of Biblical wisdom. Moreover, while the Biblical text urges the heeding of the wise advise of mothers, throughout the TRAVELS, Gulliver discounts the various moral and religious beliefs in the countries he visits dismissing them because such views are held only by women and children. Even the Houyhnhnms participate in this affirmation of the feminine, referring to death as the act of "returning to one's first mother."

At the surface level of narration, this strand of feminine wisdom is reported by Gulliver as merely another element in the manners and mores of these societies. But this is yet another instance in which Gulliver betrays his "inveterate inattentiveness" as to how his own name links him, quite unwittingly to a religious tradition, passed on from mothers to their sons, the cornerstone of which is "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7).

Starting with this as a first principle, human beings can develop discernment, "advance in learning . . . gain sound guidance . . . comprehend proverb and parable . . . the words of the wise and their riddles" (Prov 1:5-6). The stated purpose of this Biblical book then is to teach the inexperienced how to reason and how to choose.

The Book of Lemuel is thus extremely relevant to a reading of the TRAVELS, since it validates the feminine perspective discounted by Gulliver as social observer even as he benefits from the ministrations of Glumdaclitch or like the husband of the ideal wife in Proverbs, entrusts all his affairs to his wife's capable hands. As in the episode with Don Pedro, Gulliver is oblivious to both the true value and the larger significance of such love, charity and common sense. The portrait of the feminine given in the Book of Lemuel provides a standard which Swift offers as a corrective to the distorted vision of Gulliver, the world traveller, the absent father and husband, and the despairing Yahoo.

The ironic method of Swift in the TRAVELS is to scatter such clues throughout the text, each one of which is like the golden string in Blake's JERUSALEM: "I give you the end of a golden string, and you wind it into a ball. It will lead you in at heaven's gate, built into Jerusalem's wall." Each time we follow up this golden thread of irony, we wind up straight against orthodox Christian doctrine, and particularly the figure of Christ. Since it is the contention of this reading

that the Incarnation is the key to the TRAVELS, it is important to examine the text to see whether it can in fact support such a reading. In the text we find a number of oblique references to Christ and to his life, each one of which is an important element of Christology. Thus, the pattern of allusion in the text includes references to the birth, the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ. At the same time, the text echoes his teachings in a subtle fashion. Thus, we could not understand Gulliver's devotion to his Houyhnhm Master without some subliminal sense of this as the reverence of a disciple. The pagan world did not produce such examples of student-teacher devotion. Plato revered Socrates but both, one imagines, would have been embarrassed by the language of self-abasement common to the tradition of Christian discipleship. It is Christianity which has introduced this element into civilisation, not because it is a slave morality, but because reverence seems the only rational and appropriate behaviour if one believes oneself before God. Out of respect for the value of what he has been taught, Gulliver willingly abases himself before the Houyhnhnms, which, while ridiculous, has its precedent in the Christian model. Thus, while Gulliver's behaviour strikes us as inherently absurd, it is, nevertheless, understandable because the Christian tradition gives this reaction to Absolute Truth a certain respectability. However, as soon as one remembers that the reason Gulliver's language seems reasonable and

familiar is because we have encountered it before, in the pages of the New Testament, then of course it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to accept the Houyhnhnm judgement of the Yahoo, as the correct standard, even while we can acknowledge the justice of many of the Houyhnhnm observations.

The references to Christ in the text then, are such as might escape the reader's attention, with the exception of the episode of the trampling of the crucifix. But once one gets hold of the clue, one discovers others that have been hidden in the text in plain sight all along. The first such example occurs in the opening sentences of the TRAVELS, in the second sentence in fact. It would seem that Swift has played fair with the reader after all in placing the all-important clue of Christ as Messiah, the Immanuel, in Gulliver's passing reference to his college at Cambridge: Emanuel College. Ostensibly, the reference is offered merely as a piece of Gulliver's personal history. [1] However, the reference accomplishes several things at once. First of all, the name of the college serves as a reminder of both the Old Testament prophesy of the Messiah as well as its New Testament fulfillment. Significantly, the name Immanuel occurs only twice in the Bible: once in Isaiah 7:14 and once in Matthew 1:23. Isaiah encapsulates the story in the prophesy: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call him Immanuel." The words of the prophecy are echoed again in

Matthew. The name, which means God is with us, is appropriate for the Messiah whose arrival will make the name literally true. But the name asserts as well an important attribute of God at all times. The reference to Emanuel College thus establishes the Old Testament prophecy, its fulfillment in the New Testament and also the doctrinal assertion of God's nearness to the believer. At the same time, its very obliqueness, its near invisibility as a clue, testifies to the fact that we have forgotten how and why the great universities of Europe were founded. Colleges with such names as Trinity, Christ College, Magdalene and so on were founded on the belief that theology was the queen of the sciences and that the pursuit of truth had meaning only when it was allied to the truth of Christ. Thus, the single reference to Emanuel College, reminds us of the original of the institution, that favorite device of Swift's, while seemingly using the name only in its weaker modern sense as the name of a college. The narrative thus seems only to be using the limited denotation of name but nevertheless opens up the text to a whole host of connotations, rich in doctrinal and historical implications. In the weaker sense, the name is only a part of speech, just another proper noun. In its other sense, it is the noun before all nouns, the Word, the logos, which makes all learning possible. As such it is absolutely necessary for the name Emanuel to occur at the very beginning of Gulliver's history as he tells us about his relationship to teachers and to

family even as he himself is unaware of the genesis of his most important notions of himself and his relationship to the world.

It is the episode with the trampling of the crucifix, however, which captures one's attention most immediately in reading the TRAVELS. The episode is underlined by Swift in a manner unusual in the TRAVELS by keeping the idea of the bizarre ritual before the reader in a number of ways: through Gulliver's anxiety about having to perform this ritual, through his wish to be excused from performing it, through his repeated evasions once on board the Dutch ship, as well as through the various incongruous speculations about his beliefs by the Japanese Emperor as well as the Dutch sailors. The episode has a curious resonance which has called forth its share of commentary [2]. The episode seems to contain an additional ironic or satiric meaning. Once one has enjoyed the satire against Gulliver, who despite his reluctance in performing the ritual nevertheless does not object to people thinking he has in fact performed it; and once one has enjoyed the the Japanese Emperor's surprise at Gulliver's scruples, there still seems to be an additional level of irony.

The episode is supremely significant in the text. First of all, the trampling of the crucifix has been devised by the Japanese as a test to separate the Christian from the non-Christian. The theory behind such a test is that no believer would willingly trample on an important icon, an

important symbol in his religion. But as such this theory harkens to an earlier era of human consciousness, when the modern breakdown in the symbolic order had not yet occurred. Swift would have us believe that given the modern climate of thought, the reason that some Christians might have no qualms about participating in such a bizarre ritual, is that the crucifix had lost its symbolic value. The satire thus has considerable piquancy. The Japanese think they have devised a foolproof method of detecting Christians, not realizing however, how much moderns have moved away from such primitive and simplistic identifications between the symbol and what it represents.

This breakdown in the meaning of the symbol had occurred in the Reformation during which time a great deal of blood was shed on precisely what meaning such an icon should have. While the crucifix had traditionally been revered by the Church, this practice was now rejected by the Protestants who felt that Christianity was not the veneration of the crucifixion but rather the celebration of the resurrection. Accordingly, the Protestant denominations preferred the simple, unadorned, cross to the older crucifix. The Reformation victory in this regard, however, was part of the breakdown of the symbol, part of that movement that refused to make a distinction between the worship of stone and wood and the use of objects made of stone and wood as symbols of what one worshipped. Thus, Gulliver's impatience in Book Four

with what seem to be petty differences in opinion is part of a modern reductionism which is unable to make distinctions between "whether it be better to kiss a post or throw it into the fire." In the same way, the debate about the Eucharist and transubstantiation is reduced to the simple matter of "whether Flesh be Bread, or Bread be Flesh; Whether the Juice of a certain Berry be Blood or Wine" (4.v 246).

It should be added, however, that the disputes to which Gulliver alludes are not merely the stuff of satire. One such episode is recounted by C.V. Wedgewood in her study of the Thirty Years War:

> The Elector Palatine in particular demonstrated his disbelief in transubstantiation in the crudest manner. Loudly jeering, he tore the Host in pieces, 'What a fine God you are! You think you are stronger than I? We shall see!' In his austerely whitewashed conventicles a tin basin served for a font and each communicant was provided with his own wooden mug. The Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel took the additional precaution of having the toughest possible bread provided for the sacrament so that his people should have no possible doubt whatever of the material nature of what they were eating.
>
> The Lutherans were doubly shocked. Although they no longer revered the symbols of the ancient faith, they had preserved them respectfully as the outward signs of their worship . . . (Wedgewood 45).

The ceremony of trampling on the crucifix seems to be yet another in the series of bizarre rituals we have encountered in the TRAVELS, such as the Lilliputians requiring ministers to prove their aptitude for office in the ceremonies of dancing on a rope and also "leaping and creeping" before the Emperor; or again, in Luggnagg the ritual of "licking the dust of [the King's] Footstool", in which the

dust is sometimes poisoned, in a literal but ironic inversion of Henry V's definition of ceremony as "poisoned flattery." Throughout, Gulliver has adapted to these strange customs as best he could, but he draws the line at trampling on the crucifix. Apparently, this is one time when even this most flexible of travellers must reject Ambrose's advice to Augustine, when in Rome do as the Romans do.

Gulliver's behaviour in this episode would seem to imply that he holds some things as sacred. However, this is hardly a bold affirmation of Christian faith; at best it neatly sidesteps the issue. But through Gulliver's unclear motives, combined with the incongruous mixture of curiosity and suspicion by both the Japanese Emperor as well as the Dutch crew, the crucifix as image and symbol has been introduced into the text, once again opening up the text to a different perspective. The crucifix has not been trampled upon and yet the reader retains both the shock of the averted disaster and an impression of carelessness and disregard of the sacred. The crucifix arouses strong emotions; not, however, the expected ones of reverence, but the unexpected ones of aversion, dislike and hostility. Yet even this has a certain familiar quality, reminding us that the hatred of Christianity is itself an historical reality since from its inception it has challenged the authority of the state over the lives of its citizens. In order to understand the Japanese aversion we have to remember the freedom promised by the

Gospel; in order to understand Gulliver's reluctance, we have to remember why the cross is sacred to Christianity.

Even Gulliver's anxiety that the ceremony of the trampling of the crucifix might prove a stumbling block to his obtaining passage on the Dutch ship inverts the meaning of the cross. Ironically enough, it is precisely the doctrine of the crucifixion which has traditionally proved a stumbling block to the acceptance of Christianity by people of other faiths. Thus, Paul writes: For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Cor.1:22-24).

The entire episode is retained by the reader, however, not as the episode of the crucifix but rather as the episode of the "trampling of the crucifix." Interestingly then, Swift conveys two ideas. On the one hand, the phrase conjures up quite vividly the image of feet literally stamping on a wooden crucifix. But at the same time, the phrase takes on a metaphorical association as well. Thus, while Gulliver refuses to stamp on the crucifix in Book Three, nevertheless, by the end of Book Four, in his rejection of all human beings as corrupt Yahoo, he is trampling on Christ's salvific act, the death which promised new life to the human race. Thus, the text captures the historical dialectic in which the Reformation quarrel over the meaning of symbols had led to the

rejection of the wooden crucifix on the quite 'rational' rejection of the need for superstitious and unnecessary symbol. While this was theoretically sound, in practice it had meant the gradual forgetting of what the icon had symbolized. It was to fight this amnesia which characterises the human race both individually and collectively that the Eucharist was instituted: do this in remembrance of me.

The interesting feature of this use of symbolism in the text is that once one begins to examine the symbol it proves unassimilable. While the episode fits into the TRAVELS, seeming to stick in the mind because of its satirical force, once one begins to examine it, it cannot quite be assimilated into the satire unless one allows it to provide a standard by which the satire in Book Four can be resolved.

The episode with the crucifix introduces the icon of the suffering Christ into the text of GULLIVER'S TRAVELS. However, another episode in Book Three, while not mentioning Christ by name, nevertheless bears on this discussion. It is the striking passage in which Gulliver describes the episode on the island of the sorcerers in which he conversed with the spirits of the dead:

> I was struck with profound Veneration at the sight of Brutus, and could easily discover the most consummate Virtue, the greatest Intrepidity and Firmness of Mind, the truest Love of his Country, and general Benevolence for Mankind, in every Lineament of his Countenance . . . I had the Honour to have much conversation with Brutus; and was told that his Ancestor Junius, Socrates, Epamonides, Cato the Younger, Sir Thomas More and himself, were perpetually together: A Sextumvirate,

to which all the Ages of the World cannot add a Seventh." (3,vii).

Gulliver's tribute to this "sextumvirate" has also provoked some commentary. It seems to provide that rare moment in the TRAVELS where for once Gulliver, Swift and the reader may be in agreement about values. Thus, for Martin Kelsall, this is "one ideal picture in the TRAVELS which even the most sophisticated critic would find difficult to read ironically" (Kelsall 212). Kelsall finds that the category of the six heroes is not arbitrary, that what they have in common is "their public virtue, leading them either to tyrranicide or heroic martyrdom" (214). Kelsall reads the catalogue of heroes as positive emblems of virtue for Swift as well as for Gulliver. However, the very heroism of the sextumvirate attests to their rarity; thus, to expect this as a human norm is to expect the impossibly ideal world of Plato's REPUBLIC: "Hence the society of horses. There should be no mistake. The thing is utterly ridiculous. The more ridiculous it becomes, the blacker the pessimism" (222).

For George Orwell, because only one member of the sextumvirate is a Christian, the passage betrays Swift's true prejudices. It is proof that despite a superficial commitment to Christianity, Swift is really a "religious reactionary" committed to the virtues of pagan Rome with "an almost unreasoning admiration for some of the leading figures of the ancient world" (Orwell 173). A more recent reading of this

passage sees its function in the text as one of underlining the non-heroic status of Gulliver and the reader. For Mezciems, "the passage is particularly striking because Swift and Gulliver are here in rare agreement in a positive value judgement . . . and it brings us up short because we are used to ironic reversals, oblique thrusts, sudden sidesteps, or simple blank refusals at the fence of open commitment" (Mezciems 194).

But does this passage indeed affirm such positive values as Kelsall and Meczciems seem to think? Or is it distasteful and unbecoming as Orwell seems to think? It is a perfect illustration of the way Swift's personae, through their very hyperbole, undermine whatever credibility they have established with the reader. This is the beckoning subordinate clause which fascinates Kierkegaard's ironical gentleman. What catches the reader's attention is that fatal additional assertion: a Sextumvirate to which All the Ages of the World cannot add a Seventh. This overconfident assertion provokes the reader to wonder, is there in fact not another person throughout history? The list seems unexceptionable, but surely the pagan world could provide one more example. Or, once the list has included one Christian martyr, surely another, equally worthy can be found. But even as the reader is trying to come up with a seventh name, that there are even six such worthies seems too many. The awkward hyperbole of a "sextumvirate" itself seems suspect, as if Gulliver naively

assumes that if an ancient triumvirate is worthy of admiration, a sextumvirate would be twice as worthy. But then with that realization, however, even the idea of a triumvirate becomes suspect; after all, historically, it was merely the uneasy and unstable political compromise between three rivals for supreme rule in Rome. If one man had been able to triumph, the triumvirate would have been unnecessary. The reader, reflecting on this process of tripling and then doubling examples of virtue is provoked into the startling realization that the glaring omission from this catalogue of heroes is Christ himself. Indeed, the subliminal association with the triumvirates of ancient Rome is seen to be in fact a parody of the Trinity.

But once the reader has thought of Christ, it is obvious that his inclusion in such a catalogue cannot be simply as one member among others; instead he provides the point of reference by which these others can be judged. Indeed, Sir Thomas More's name draws our attention not only because he is the sole Christian martyr in the group, but because of the truism that the adjective "Christian" as well as the noun "martyr" have no meaning apart from Christ, the founder of the faith, and the supreme example to the believer. Thus, Thomas More died a martyr: "The King's good servant, but God's first."

The virtues which Gulliver admires in Brutus seem a shadow of the virtues found in Christ, and indeed such

admiration, in its own way, is as disproportionate as the awe and reverence Gulliver feels on other occasions, as with the Emperor in Lilliput, as well as the reverence he is to feel for the Houyhnhnm Master. Thus, we must substitute a different order of words for Brutus' "Intrepidity and Firmness of Mind" for Christ's "Forgive them Father they know not what they do" uttered during the agony of crucifixion. Similarly, Christian charity which commands not only that we love our neighbor but also love our enemies, is so radical in its nature that it far outstrips such moral platitudes as "general Benevolence for Mankind."

The point need not be laboured, but once the missing referent to Christ is supplied by the reader, many other details come into focus. New light is shed for example, on the role played by Homer and Aristotle in this episode in Book Three. Both writers seem to be included by Swift primarily to enable him to take a few thrusts at the overconfidence of their commentators and on such commentaries in general. But if we remember that Homeric epic and its mythology were the sacred texts of the ancient world, sacred not as the Old Testament was sacred to the Jews, but as privileged literary texts, it becomes plain that Homeric epic is the rival of the Bible, not only as an ancient and superb literary text but also as a rival mythology and cosmology. At the same time, Aristotle's physics and metaphysics also provided a rival explanation to Biblical explanation about the origin of the

cosmos. Indeed, the relationship of Aristotle to two of those commentators, Averroes and Aquinas is itself central to Christianity. Aquinas' SUMMA CONTRA GENTILES was written to combat the Aristotelianism of Averroes with its disquieting thesis that since Aristotle could not be refuted, dualism was inescapable. The only solution was to accept that there were two kinds of truth: the truth of philosophy and the truth of revelation. This of course, is the central issue posed by the TRAVELS as well.

The allusions to Christ and to his attributes are scattered throughout the first three voyages. In the Fourth Voyage, however, the reader is made aware of Christ's role through Gulliver's arrogation of the role of master and teacher to the Houyhnhnm Master. However, in choosing the horse, Gulliver is also reversing Christ's own choice of the humble ass on which to make his entry into Jerusalem. It is worth noting that the horse does not play a prominent role in the Bible, neither literally in the historical narrative nor metaphorically in the imagery where it occurs primarily in images of war and warfare. It is the ox and the ass who provide metaphors and instances of patience and submission as in the suppressed metaphor of Jesus' saying "my yoke is easy and my burden light" (Matt 11:30, 1 John 5:3). Given the Houyhnhnm debate in Book Four between the relative merits of the Yahoo and the more docile ass, the reasons for the horse's lack of prominence in biblical narrative throws an interesting

light on how Swift uses the Houyhnhnms in the TRAVELS. Northrop Frye provides an interesting explanation in THE GREAT CODE:

> The horse is a central image of a warrior aristocracy and as such remains in the background among Biblical animals. The ass, the beast of burden, often stupid and obstinate but often patient and humble as well, carries a much higher symbolic rating. As the symbol for the protesting but usually acquiescent physical body--the "Brother Ass of St. Francis of Assisi--it is associated with the physical side of the Incarnation, and as such it was the appropriate animal to carry Jesus in triumph into Jerusalem" (Frye 150).

In paintings of the Nativity, the presence of the ass along with that of the ox symbolizes the fulfillment of Isaiah 1:3, where both animals recognize Christ as the Son of God: "the ox knoweth its owner, and the ass his master's crib" (Ferguson 11).

These associations come into play in the Fourth Voyage when Gulliver is first admitted into the presence of the Houyhnhnm Master and describes the eating arrangements of the household as consisting of a circular arrangement of "mangers." The word is not a common Biblical word; its currency as a familiar term for a feeding trough for cows and horses stems entirely from the story of Jesus' birth in Luke (2:7,12,16). Of course, the word manger does double duty here. It serves as a euphemism for trough which conveys much too vividly the image of animal feeding. In Brobdingnag, Gulliver sails his ship in a wooden "trough." But in this first scene in the Houyhnhnm Master's house, Swift needed a word which would remind the reader of troughs but not so forcefully that it would undermine acceptance of the Houyhnhnms as a polite

society, a race of rational creatures, rather than as talking animals. The choice of this particular word by Gulliver, unconsciously borrowed from the context of the story of the Nativity reveals his subconscious awareness of the need for reverence--or at least a reverent vocabulary--in the presence of these animals. Ironically, however, once one notices Gulliver's polite euphemism, our attention is drawn to his reversal of the situation of the shepherds and animals in awe of the Infant Jesus; instead we have the human in awe of the animal Master.

Given the resonance of the word "Master" in the TRAVELS, we have perhaps the most powerful and ironic affirmation of Christ's presence. Throughout the TRAVELS, the image and the idea of the Master is held before the reader: in the "epistle" of the converted Gulliver with its praise for "the Instruction and Example of my illustrious Master," in the opening paragraph of the First Voyage with the Gulliver's apprenticeship to the eminent surgeon Master Bates, throughout the Fourth Voyage and even beyond the text, through critical discussion with its inevitable yoking of Gulliver with "his Houyhnhnm Master." However, the pun on "Master Bates" seems gratuitous; the phrase "Houyhnhnm Master" is highly charged and at once both natural in the context of Gulliver's own narration and even in critical discussion, although always with a certain jarring quality. The sexual innuendos seem gratuitous yet they too reveal an important aspect of the

theme of the Master. First of all, Gulliver's obliviousness to the pun on "Master Bates" in his straightforward narration of how he went about picking up useful occupations "for long voyages" is itself an index to his character. But ironically, this particular occupation is self-taught, requiring apprenticeship only to the self. Accordingly, the pun reveals the metaphor as the ultimate expression for the human as an autonomous, self-sufficent, self-reliant being. It preserves the illusion of faithfulness and chastity within marriage and at the same denies the need for such intimacy. Autoeroticism becomes the metaphor for the human with no need for God or for human companionship. In Eden, marriage was instituted, because the animal world could not provide suitable companionship for the human: it is not good for man to be alone. Ultimately, both forms of apprenticeship and discipleship end in sterility. Thus, when Gulliver returns home he swoons at the thought that "by copulating with one of the yahoo-Species I had become a Parent of more; it struck me with the utmost Confusion, Shame and Horror" [4.xi,288].

The figure of Christ--Immanuel, Master, Crucified Saviour--functions like a magnet in this text, repelling and attracting these allusive fragments of Christian myth like so many tiny iron filings. However, in order for the significance of these details to come together, the context of the Incarnation must be brought to the text. Once supplied, however, inevitably, these apparently insignificant details,

which Kierkegaard's ironist is so adept at spotting, sort themselves out, polarizing other such fragments of meaning in the process. This relationship of the insignificant detail to the satire as a whole provides a way of resolving the central critical difficulty posed by the text. These have been summarised by Frank Brady as follows: The reading must explain the allegorical significance of Yahoos and Houyhnhnms; it must explain how we are to weight random allusions in the satire and on what basis we are to assign them significance; additionally, the reading must also explain the purpose of such gratuitous satire as the pun on Master Bates (Brady 346-367).

Language and image in these fragments convey the centrality of Christ in providing a standard by which we can judge the myths and the language of the societies Gulliver visits. But it is in the Fourth Voyage with its debate between the merits of the Houyhnhnm versus Yahoo that we most need the doctrine of Christ's Incarnation as an answer to the problem posed by fallen human nature.

NOTES

1. Calhoun Winton notes the name of the college in his discussion "Conversion on the Road to Houynhnmland." in A CASEBOOK ON GULLIVER AMONG THE HOUYHNHNMS, ed. Milton P. Foster,ed.,(Boston: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1961). However, he seems to assign it two contractictory values. On the one hand as evidence for Pelagian tendencies: "So-called deists and free thinkers Toland and Wollaston, latiudinarian preachers within the establishemnt, the Cambridge Platonists of Emmanuel College--Lemuel Gulliver's alma mater--all tended to emphasize the reasonable, virtuous qualities of mankind and to avoid that line of the Christian tradition generally called Augustinian" [273]. On the other hand, he quotes from a 1659 sermon delivered by Anthony Burgess, a "Dissenting minister and fellow of Emmanuel College" which is very much in the Augustinian tradition and which specifically denounces Pelagianism [276]. Winton makes no attempt to explain how or why Emmanuel College can be associated with both views, and in what way this discrepancy impinges on our understanding of Gulliver's background. That the College was a place where the Christian definition of human nature was being debated seems to support the point of Gulliver's inveterate inattentiveness to the debate.

Yet another reason why Swift might have chosen Emmanuel College as the appropriate alma mater for Gulliver may be found in the title of a text William A. Eddy cites as a source for the Voyage to Lilliput. Although Eddy does not comment, the complete title cited is suggestive: Gerania, a New Discovery of a Little People, anciently discoursed of, called Pygmies, with a lively description of their stature, habit, manners, buildings, knowledge, and government, being very delightful and profitable. By Joshua Barnes, of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Eddy finds that this work published in 1675 is the only such account comparable in length to the Voyage to Lilliput. GULLIVER'S TRAVELS: A Critical Study, (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1963, orig. pub. 1923), 87.

2. Chambers, Karl D. "Swift and the Trampling Dutch," CSR, 3 (1973) 51-54. Also 8 (Autumn 1975), 21. Elizabeth R. Napier, "Swift's 'Trampling upon the Crucifix': a Parallel," N&Q, 26 (December 1979), 544-548. Also 14 (Autumn 1981, 16. Napier's "Swift Kaemper, and Psalmanzaar: Further Remarks on 'Trampling upon the Crucifix,'" N&Q 28(June 1981), 226. Also 14 (Spring 1982) 91-2.

CHAPTER THREE

The gospel according to Gulliver slyly adopts the structure of the New Testament with the first three voyages functioning as a synoptic satire while the Fourth Voyage, through an ironic analogy with the Gospel of John, reverses the Joannine Christology of the Word made flesh, offering instead a race of horses who regard horse flesh as synonymous with "the perfection of nature." The nature of allusion in the Fourth Voyage is far more subtle than the pattern found in the other voyages. Yet, as was shown in the discussion of the criticism the TRAVELS have received, this voyage has consistently provoked and evoked religious language in critical discussion. Swift's rhetorical strategy in fact provokes the reader's disagreement so that, as in Kierkegaard's example of the "scoffer" of Christian doctrine, the satire, along with the reader's counter-assertions, combine to produce a complete Christian catechism.

In our discussion of the episode of the sextumvirate, Aristotle was seen as offering a rival metaphysics to Biblical accounts of the creation. But the presence of Aristotle in the TRAVELS is also important because the Houyhnhnms represent an Aristotelian logic and an Aristotelian conception of truth. Swift would agree with Bacon's complaint in the NOVUM ORGANON that "such logic is no match for the subtlety of nature . . . it gains assent for the proposition but does not take hold of

the thing" (Bk.I, Aph. 31). Swift, however, has not satirized Aristotle in the Fourth Voyage in the way he satirized the unworkable schemes of the Academy at Lagado. One of the reasons we have difficulty in believing that Swift is mocking the Houyhnhnms is that he has allowed the horses the compelling power of Aristotelian thinking. Nevertheless, the two most striking characteristics attributes of the Houyhnhnms--that they are "the perfection of nature" and also that they are incapable of falsehood--simultaneously establish the grounds on which they are to be admired and at the same time undermine their credibility. As in the case of the sextumvirate, Swift's hyperbole draws attention to itself and to its claim, thereby initiating once again that skepticism which proves fatal to the ideal which is seemingly being endorsed.

The probable source for the Houyhnhnms' "perfection of nature" casts an interesting light on the problem of interpretation the phrase poses in the text. The hyperbole derives from Averroes' tribute to Aristotle as "the perfection of nature." Averroes' compliment seems to have made its way into the European lore about Aristotle through the writings of Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac (1594-1654), a writer sufficiently well known to allow Fielding to refer rather casually in JOSEPH ANDREWS to "what Balzac says of Aristotle . . . ."[1]

One can well imagine Swift's relish at exposing this kind of hyperbole, repeated with endless approbation, to ridicule. The hyperbole is questionable even attributed to the

remarkable genius of Aristotle, but in attributing this praise to the horses, Swift has seized on the ease with which humans deify reason, worshipping the gifts found in the creature rather than worshipping the creator who has given them. However, the themes of logic, perfection and self-love combining in the contemplation of the horse has a long history. In the Book of Job, the high spirited warhorse is one of the wonders of nature which like the leviathan is offered as proof of God's mysterious power. But contemplating the wonders of nature can easily seduce the observer thereby distorting the personality. Thus, in HENRY V, the Dauphin's praise of his horse for whom he has written a sonnet addressing him as "Wonder of nature" reveals a fatuous self-love. This interrelationship between logic and self-love in the contemplation of a noble animal, is specifically acknowledged in the anecdote with which Sydney begins his "Defence of Poesie." Sydney, recounting the story of the horse trainer's grandiloquent praise for "the peerless beast of horse" wryly remarks "that if I had not been a piece of a logician before I came to him, I think he would have persuaded me to have wished myself a horse." He then goes on to add that he learned an important truth from the horse trainer's rhetoric: "that self love is better than any gilding to make that seem gorgeous wherein we ourselves are parties." But if Swift had Sydney's story in mind, he has given an ironic twist to Sydney's claim for the literary artist to make "a second nature." For the

world of GULLIVER'S TRAVELS is decidedly inferior, and made deliberately so, to the natural order created by God.

Thus, the hyperbole, "the perfection of nature"--whatever its source--is used by Swift to challenge the absolutism of Aristotelian logic. The name and the character of the Houyhnhnms allude to two aspects of Aristotelian philosophy: teleology and the logical criterion for truth. First, the very name the Houyhnhnms attribute to their race, "the perfection of nature" ushers into the text all the philosophical paradoxes posed by teleology. Secondly, their periphrasis for lying, "saying the thing which is not," echoes Aristotle's formulation of truth in the METAPHYSICS: To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, or of what is not that it is not, is true.

There is more here however, than a sly thrust at Aristotle and the claims of Aristotelianism. If the two are combined, we have the Houyhnhnm as a perfect being who not only cannot lie, but whose very perfection must lead us to expect that he is incapable of making false inferences and erroneous judgements. Here it is the Houyhnhnm who is trapped by a new twist in the Liar's paradox. For throughout the fourth book, the perfect truth teller makes a number of assertions about the human which are simply erroneous.

But to return to the matter of the phrase "the perfection of nature". For the phrase to be true in the context of the Fourth Voyage, it must apply not only to a truly perfect individual but to an entire species. But the teleological picture suggested by "the perfection of nature" in which nature has laboured and succeeded in bringing forth the perfect being is in itself fraught with contradictions. Aristotelian teleology sees every object in nature as having a specific end or goal in its development. But then what is the final end towards which the Yahoo is tending? If Nature has a purpose, then what purpose does the Yahoo serve? Moreover, if the Yahoo's present form is the final form, with no further development possible, then Nature has erred and cannot be a reliable guide. The periphrasis for Houyhnhnm thus calls into question a whole host of matters which the Houyhnhnms seem never to have considered.

However, the Houyhnhnms in arrogating perfection to themselves may only be indulging in a harmless chauvinism about their species, in which case their language is exhibiting the same inflated rhetoric of ceremonial court language used in the other voyages. This frivolous use of language however, is not in keeping with the Houyhnhnm character since it is too much like lying. But whether the Houyhnhnms take the meaning literally or metaphorically, Gulliver in his acquiescence is accepting the description as valid for the species as a whole. On the basis of what he has

observed, Gulliver feels that the claim "perfection of nature" is an accurate synonym for horse. Thus, what was analytically true for the Houyhnhnms becomes, through Gulliver's assent, also verifiably true.

However, if the phrase "perfection of nature" can be applied with any truth at all, it can hardly correspond to anything in nature, since perfection, in order to remain perfect, must not change with time, must not decay or die. As such, the phrase "perfection of nature" cannot truthfully be applied to the Houyhnhnm at all. Logically, perfection could only properly be attributed to deity. Indeed, George Sherburn, while denying the Houyhnhnms are deists, nevertheless falls into the semantic trap of confusing their perfection with deity. Accordingly, for Sherburn, encounters with perfection become synonymous for encounters with the divine. Among the examples he cites are those of Paul with Christ, Aeneas with Venus and Semele with Jupiter:

> We have on record very few cases of direct contact between a man and Perfection. The most celebrated case is that of St. Paul, who was struck blind by the light of heaven and remained so for three days. Paul, however, was under explicit divine commands for action; Gulliver had seen no sudden light, but he had seen an ideal way of life and yet had no explicit commands to follow thereafter. As a character in a static narrative, Gulliver was the victim of a misanthropic author (Sherburn 265).

The Fourth Voyage thus poses logical problems having to do with matters of identity and attributes, not only for the Houyhnhnm but also for the Yahoo. Swift's storytelling

strategy calls into question every single term in the seemingly straightforward assertion: man is a rational animal. In the Fourth Voyage "man" will become Yahoo; and even the meaning of the verb is called into question. 'To be' implies existence but in what sense does it imply attributes? Traditionally, in Aristotelian logic, the definition 'Man is a rational animal,' has been taken as an analytic statement, that is, something which is essentially true. Accordingly, the words on either side of the verb "is" are taken as synonymous and therefore interchangeable. Thus, the statement, 'Man is rational animal,' is of the same type as: all brothers are male siblings or every vixen is a fox. Such statements would be necessarily true in all times and places. Appropriately enough in a discussion of the Fourth Voyage, if we can indeed say that man is rational in the same way that a vixen is a fox, the statement is necessarily true, in all times and places. But can we in fact make such an assertion? Judging human beings by what they do rather than by what they say, they are the animals who seem to be walking contradictions, of whom it would be equally true to say they were both rational and irrational. Contradictory as the two assertions are, both could in fact be true by definition. Thus, for the statement 'Man is a rational animal' to be true, we have to restrict the notion of rationality to mean no more than an animal who is able to use language and to reason. But this must be further amended since not all human beings reason with equal skill or

can articulate their reasons in a logical fashion. Moreover, in this restricted and narrow usage, the madman with irrational fears and beliefs is thus also "rational" since he can use language and give reasons for his beliefs. Thus, one could truthfully say of the madman, this irrational man is a rational animal.

In the Fourth Voyage, the logical problem of the essential nature of the subject of the sentence becomes the metaphysical and religious question of the essential nature of the human. Outside Houyhnhnmland, the statement man is a rational animal is essentially true; it is an essential part of the predicate. But in the country of the horses, Gulliver may have marks of rationality, but these are only accidentally true. Thus, in Houyhnhnmland, it is the statement "man is the irrational animal" which is essentially true. Moreover, since the word Yahoo is synonymous with evil as well as with irrationality, then the human is essentially evil, essentially irrational rather than only accidentally so.

The Houyhnhnm definition of rationality is thus one that is based on behaviour. For the human to be re-defined as rational would thus take more than one counter-instance in Gulliver. It would in fact require nothing less than the universal reformation of the human race. Thus, the rigorous definition of rationality adhered to by the Houyhnhnms will allow for nothing less than perfection; it will not allow human beings the indulgence of professing one thing and

practicing another. Thus, for example, Swift in satirizing the ill-contrived clothing made by the mathematical enthusiasts in Laputa, is not being intolerant at some minor fault. Rather, he is drawing attention to the irrationality which claims to love order and perfection but which is too lazy to achieve it, even when the perfection involved relates merely to clothing. No matter what religion man professes, he will fall short in the practice of its precepts.

Thus, while human beings might be comfortable living with such inconsistencies, the Houyhnhnms would reject with horror the bizarre formulation that Man is the rational animal and Man is the irrational animal. The problem is difficult to resolve no matter how we might try to resolve it. Is man the rational animal based on the fact that Socrates, Aristotle, Plato etc. were rational men? How many instances of induction would we need? On the other hand, given one example of the human, what could we deduce? Some possible ways of resolving the contradiction might be:

Man is sometimes rational.
Man is the rational animal who chooses to act irrationally.
Man is both rational and irrational relative to situation S.

But the problem with each of these formulations is their acceptance of human inconsistency. One can hear the Houyhnhnm responding, quite reasonably, given that human beings are unable to behave consistently--for whatever

reason--they might as well be defined, for all intents and purposes, as the irrational animal.

However, many different episodes throughout the four voyages illustrate that what is really unsatisfactory about these definitions is that even when human beings behave irrationally, they persist in giving "good" reasons for their actions. Human beings may be irrational but they persist in loving rationality and in priding themselves on their ability to reason. Gulliver and the Brobdinagian King talking about gunpowder are two rational creatures. Yet to say the King regarded Gulliver's suggestion as irrational is to put it mildly; as for Gulliver he is quite astonished that the King cannot see the rationality in his scheme. The Lilliputians debate how to kill, blind or starve Gulliver; their proposals and deliberations are eminently rational and take into account with considerable foresight many of the problems attendant on the various solutions offered. In Book Three, we have the reasons of mad men, who, however, form the prevailing majority. Accordingly, Lord Munodi will have to tear down useful structures on his property in order to be thought rational in an irrational society.

In the Fourth Voyage, Gulliver cannot refute the Houyhnhnm Master's arguments because even if he were to offer many counterexamples of good and rational men and women, they would still not be the statistical norm. Why does all this matter? Can we not dismiss all this and simply argue that

Aristotle's definition is merely a sentence intended to illustrate a point about logic rather than about human nature? Can we not let the sentence 'Man is a rational animal' simply remain as a textbook syllogism having nothing whatever to do with reality? But that will not do. First of all, Aristotle's assertion is meant to have the force of a universal truth. Secondly, without confidence in the possibility of human rationality, it would not be possible to formulate an ethics with human beings as moral agents who can be held responsible and accountable for their actions. Accordingly, for the Houyhnhnm, not only is the Yahoo the irrational animal, he is also the irresponsible animal. The choice between Yahoo irrationality and Houyhnhnm rationality thus takes on the added dimension of having to choose between two kinds of assertions: the assertion of human whim versus the assertions of Houyhnhnms.

The question of teleology in the TRAVELS, the problem of imperfect human versus "the perfection of nature," thus links the Fourth Voyage to the phenomenon of man, Teilhard de Chardin's positive formulation of the problem posed by the presence of the human, at once part of the natural order and yet also its great exception. It is not only the Houyhnhnms who are perplexed by the human; the difficulty of explaining, of valuing and even of identifying the human is prefigured in the other three books as well.

In the first voyage, Gulliver for all his strength and

size is not mistaken for one moment as anything but man--a mountain of flesh, but still a man. And Gulliver, seeing the Lilliputians, sees them as men as well. Ironically, however, Gulliver is taken aback at this matter of fact acceptance of his size. He is surprised by "the intrepidity of these diminutive mortals" who do not seem to be the least troubled that he might use his prodigious powers at any moment and dash a few of them to the ground. Gulliver's surprise at their lack of awe strikes a responsive chord in the reader who recognizes the subconscious fantasy that in a society of miniature humans, one might be worshipped as a god. Simultaneously, of course, comes Swift's ironic point: since when have human beings been in awe of deity? Accordingly, when the Lilliputians take Gulliver's measure, they never mistake him for deity despite his size and strength.

Indeed, not only do they not mistake him for a deity on the basis of his size, they infer from their inventory of his possessions that his watch is "either some unknown Animal or the God that he worships" (1.ii,35). The monumental self-assurance of that either-or is absurdly comic, and typically human in its intellectual arrogance. Their conclusion seems an absurd and comical mistake; we think they are gullible and credulous. Gulliver, having a little fun at their expense, has solemnly told them that the watch is his oracle, which is true enough in that he consults it. The Lilliputians take him at his word, seemingly not finding it

incongruous that Gulliver would worship a deity smaller than himself. Yet while the Lilliputian assumption is not literally true it nonetheless accurately captures an important pychological truth. The Lilliputians, observing Gulliver, somehow intuit that the watch, that wonderful "engine" is indeed what Gulliver worships. Accordingly, the comic misunderstanding is the satiric affirmation of modern Europe's tendency to see the universe as a giant clockwork mechanism. In Lilliput, however, the argument from design is shown to be a metaphor which reveals more about the metaphorist than about Nature. The wonder of the Lilliputians at this "Globe" suspended from its silver chain recalls Milton's description in PARADISE LOST of the universe "hanging in a golden chain/this pendant world." In seeing the watch, the Lilliputians are struck by the wonder of its strange appearance and its sound, "a wonderful kind of engine . . . which made an incessant noise like that a watermill" (1.ii 35). But seeing this, they do not then do what they are "supposed to do" which is to infer the existence of its designer. Instead, they infer something about the relationship of the watch to Gulliver, seeing it in terms of a god and its worshipper, rather than a mechanical contrivance and its owner. The clock metaphor of the argument of design thus makes the clock the tyrannical god who dictates or "points the Time for every Action of his Life" (1.ii 35). At the same time, the human sees himself as made in the image of machine he himself

has invented, and enslaved by a metaphor of his own devising, a clockwork mechanism rather than a living spirit. Significantly, in Lilliput, Gulliver is bound by chains the size of those of "a Lady's Watch" (1.i.28). The watch chains, for all their delicacy, are nevertheless effective, and like the metaphor itself, are mind-forged manacles. In using the Lilliputians as "innocent" observers, without a bias for the watch or the metaphor, Swift points up a central difficulty with this argument which claims to be able to infer the existence of deity without the benefit of revelation. Ironically, the Lilliputians, on the basis of logical inference alone, manage to narrow the possibilities to an either-or: either animal or machine. However, Swift's satire makes us realize that they, too, are dependent on Gulliver's "revelation" to decide the true facts of the matter.

In Book Two, the argument from design takes a new turn with the problem of determining Gulliver's identity. First, Gulliver is mistaken for an animal and must convince the giant farmer who finds him in the field that he is instead a "rational Creature." Then, when Gulliver is taken to court to meet the Queen, she is "surprised at finding so much Wit and good Sense in so diminutive an Animal" (2.iii,102). On the other hand, the King thinks that Gulliver must be "a piece of Clock-work (which is in that Country arrived to a very great Perfection) contrived by some ingenious Artist" (2.iii 103). Yet again, whereas the King had thought Gulliver so well made

as to be clockwork, rather than a live creature, the King's three wise men can only conclude that Gulliver is so badly made for survival in nature that he "could not have been produced according to the regular Laws of Nature."

> After much Debate, they concluded unanimously that I was only a Relplum Scalcath, which is interpreted literally as Lusus naturae; a determination exactly agreeable to the Modern Philosophy of Europe: whose Professors, disdaining the old Evasion of occult Causes, whereby the Followers of Aristotle endeavour in vain to disguise their ignorance; have invented this wonderful Solution of all Difficulties, to the unspeakable Advancement of human Knowledge (2.iii 104).

Ironically, having dismissed all the natural explanations which might account for Gulliver's existence, only the impossible explanation by "occult causes" remains. Disdaining the supernatural explanation in favor of the Aristotelian non-explanation ironically affirms the King's original reaction that, Gulliver, fearfully and wonderfully made, must indeed have been contrived by some "ingenious artist."

Much of what happens in this episode in Book Two foreshadows what will come later in Book Four; it also re-works the argument from design first introduced in Lilliput. Thus, Gulliver, who as a modern European sees nature in mechanical terms, can't help but compare the Brobdingnagian farmer's voice to the sound of a watermill, echoing the image of the Lilliputians for his watch. The difficulty the Brobdingnagians have in deciding whether Gulliver is an animal or a piece of clockwork is yet another variation of the

Lilliputian either-or with regard to Gulliver's watch. Moreover, the contemptuous disdain with which the Brobdingnagian scholars dismiss Gulliver's claim that he is a rational creature prefigures the similar inferences made by the Houyhnhnms. Significantly, however, the argument from design takes an additional form in this voyage. The three scholars dismiss Gulliver's existence as a freak of nature because of his impossibly small size; however, the "little old Treatise," the Brobdingnagian text on morality, takes as its theme the frailty of the human body, all the more ironic since even a race of giants is maladapted for survival in nature. The irony is not lost on Gulliver who, however, assumes that it is merely another instance of the universal human trait, the result of the "Quarrels we raise with Nature" (137). Gulliver dismisses the moral inferences drawn from this as vain speculation since in fact human beings do manage to survive. The tragic isolation of the human in the natural world is lost on him as is the Brobdingnagian parallel with the Fall, the longing for a lost mythic age when human beings must have been more "robust."

The argument from design was originally intended to prove the existence of God from the fact of design in nature. Swift's ironic uses of the argument in Books One and Two point up the fact that despite careful logic, inference alone can nevertheless lead to absurd, and more importantly false, conclusions. In each case, some additional information is

needed and significantly, such information provided by Gulliver can only be accepted by the skeptical Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians on faith. To the skepticial observer, it is as difficult to prove the existence of the human as it is to prove the existence of God. In Book Four, however, the Houyhnhnms accept the existence of the human as Yahoo as proved. What remains in doubt is his value. The two arguments join here--the argument from design as well as the argument about man's irrational nature. For the Houyhnhnms accept the Yahoo as an animal; the problem is that the Yahoo is a "bad" animal--bad in the sense of being badly designed, bad in the sense of being irrational and bad in the sense of being malicious.

In the Fourth Voyage, then, the argument from design is used to criticize bad design and becomes an indictment against humanity. Gulliver accepts the Houyhnhnm indictment of human irrationality as well as the Houyhnhnm judgement that the yahoo is a "bad" animal. If the God of the Bible exists, to accept such criticism is blasphemy on Gulliver's part, although the Houyhnhnm Master, unaware of Biblical revelation, cannot be indicted for blasphemy. Gulliver, on the other hand, can be indicted for accepting these half-truths as constituting the full truth about the human. Given Biblical revelation, these half-truths in effect become become false assertions.

But if an impersonal God exists, the unmoved mover of

the deists, then the Houyhnhnm criticism of the human is not blasphemy. It is the sober recognition that the designer, though a deity, had badly managed the matter. Indeed, this is precisely the tack Hume takes in his critique of the argument from design. For Hume, the mere fact of a design does not imply a good designer. He offers a number of hypotheses each of which could be validly inferred from the perception of design: the world could have been designed as an experiment that failed; as an exercise by an infant deity or by a senile deity; created and then neglected or forgotten so that it has deteriorated from its original state, and many other such variations. Thus, the Houyhnhnms do not have to be taken as deists--what is important however, is that their arguments about the sheer animal inadequacy of the human cannot be refuted by deistic proofs. The only possible refutation of the Houyhnhnm critique would be a series of assertions about the personality of God as revealed through scripture: a perfect God who has created the human in the divine image; a loving God whose involvement in creation did not stop with the creation but is an ongoing providential care for the created order.

Christianity and the Christian answer are thus offered implicitly by Swift so that the reader will discover them as providing the only answer, the only solution to the logical and metaphysical problems posed by the skepticism of the

Houyhnhnms. Thus, Swift's irony reveals the seriousness of the metaphysical problem posed by the human in the natural order. Christianity is not offered as a religion among other religions. It is not that it would be "nice" if Christianity were true but rather that if Christianity is not true there is no way to escape the pessimistic misanthropic conclusions of such reasoning. Moreover, these doctrinal assertions are absolutely essential in order to assert the value of the human.

This is an extremely important point and one that is easily missed. The central problem for the philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was how to validate human knowledge through sense experience. But the flaw in such philosophical systems is that they leave unquestioned the problem of human value. Thus Descartes' cogito proof proves the existence of the thinking self, but does not prove its value.

Thus, if we placed Descartes before the Horse in the Fourth Voyage, the great philosopher and mathematician would be just as subject to the horse laughs of the Houyhnhnms as ever Gulliver was. The problem is that mere existence does not confer value. In all such philosophical discussions, human value is taken as axiomatic, as a given, but what the logic of the Fourth Voyage shows is that this assumption is unwarranted. Human value is not a datum which can be verified by experience. Thus apart from a loving God who has conferred

value on the human, first through the gift of creation, and then again through the gift of redemption, value is not a given nor can it be taken for granted as a human attribute. Accordingly, in a society which has lost its sense of a personal God, value can no longer be seen as conferred on every individual merely by being born; instead it can only be inferred or conferred by others on other grounds.

When value is not a human birthright, then it must be "earned"--making the struggle to assert one's value yet another way the individual must negotiate with the moral economy of the culture, which inevitably equates value with wealth, status, power and privilege. When value must be earned, moral judgements become part of a transaction, in which those in power have the the right to decide individual worth. Naturally, they will maintain that their judgements have been arrived at by using rational, universal standards dictated by Reason or Nature, rather than arbitrary preference or whim. But it is always a buyer's market. For if we are judged on such "rational" grounds, on the basis of our behaviour, who of us would survive?

However, once we accept the right of others to judge us and to confer our value, even if we could conform to standards of virtue and seem to have earned our place in society, our lives would still be subject to the inferences others could make. We would always be on trial, living in a Kafkaesque world, at the mercy of the state's merciless "rationality."

This is how Swift sees the realm of the third voyage, in which governments look for reliable ways to prevent political disruption by various methods of "scientific" inferences and "cures." Ultimately, all four voyages show that rationality is either subject to definitions by human whim or by the Houyhnhnm.

It is only in the Fourth Voyage that Swift shows that the creed in which one believes can become a matter of life and death. Our psychic wholeness, our sanity, our self-esteem, depend on how we define the human and more importantly how we participate in the human. Gulliver survives all the traumas of his other voyages through his ingenuity, his resourcefulness and his infinite adaptability. But the Gulliver who survives the Fourth Voyage, survives only bodily. His mind and his spirit have been permanently altered. If he were a horse, we would say his spirit had been broken; but in the case of Gulliver this process has not served a useful purpose. Gulliver has not been "domesticated"; he has not been broken in order to render him more useful. Instead, he is filled with self-loathing, unable to bear human society and living in lonely isolation and despair.

These rather abstract philosophical matters would remain mere speculation if Swift were not so gifted in the matter of transforming argument into vivid and unforgettable images. The problem of human value and the nature of the human assume sinister proportions in the Fourth Voyage through

Swift's treatment of the recurrent theme of clothing and shipbuilding. In the Fourth Voyage these become the culmination of images and themes which had seemed to provide merely incidental satire in the earlier voyages.

Throughout the voyages for example, Gulliver is obsessed by the problem of his clothing--an inevitable subject in such long voyages. After all, whether one is stranded in foreign courts or in remote regions, survival, social, as well as physical, depends on one's clothing. By the Fourth Voyage, readers are accustomed to finding Gulliver coping with this perennial occupational hazard. In the Fourth Voyage, however, matters take a different turn. At first, it seems to be no more than the fact that Gulliver is no longer relying on the competence or incompetence of tailors and seamstresses but has instead become resourceful and self-reliant. This becomes apparent as Gulliver recounts how happily he managed to live in the country of the Houyhnhnms. Far from society, far from civilisation, he discovered that he could live quite simply making do with what was at hand to "settl[e] my little Oeconomy to my Heart's content" (4.x 276). Elaborating on this theme, he goes on to explain how he managed to contrive clothing from animal furs and used wood to replace the worn out soles of his shoes. All well and good. But then comes the shocking information: once the upper leather on his shoes wore out, he replaced it with "the Skins of Yahoos dried in the Sun" (276). The enormity of the action is out of all

proportion to its placement as a detail in the sentence: "I soaled my Shoes with Wood which I cut from a Tree, and fitted to the upper Leather, and when this wore out, I supplied it with the Skins of Yahoos, dried in the Sun." This is a prime example of Swift's bitter remark to Steele that "There are solecisms in morals as well as in language" (Price 58). The reader grasps the grammatical sense of Gulliver's sentence but realizes with horror that for Gulliver there is no moral dimension in this way of using language because, after all, once something has been defined as an animal, its skin may just as well be used as a kind of leather.

For the modern reader, Gulliver's practice in this regard inevitably conjures up the horrifying practices of the Nazi concentration camps where household objects were fashioned from human skin, not so much for their utility as objects but rather as proof that the Nazis did not shrink from the logical consequences of denying humanity to their victims. In Gulliver's case, however, what is chilling is that there is no sense of crime, nor a defiant sense of glee in performing the unthinkable. Instead, there is a nonchalance amounting to moral obtuseness, that characteristic which Martin Price has found typical of Swift's personae and the true subject of Swift's satiric attacks (Price 58). Once the Yahoo has been defined as cattle, no moral scruple is involved. Gulliver experiences neither the pangs of conscience nor a perverse pleasure of sin in his abiIity to carry out dehumanisation to

its logical conclusion. In fact, he reports ths episode in order "to verify the Truth of these two Maxims: That Nature is easily satisfied and That Necessity is the Mother of Invention" (4.x 276). But does necessity require such invention? It seems rather the case of Milton's "necessity/ the tyrant's plea excused his devilsh deeds." For in the country of the Houyhnhnms where neither horses nor Yahoos are shod, Gulliver will stop at nothing to maintain the vestiges of clothing as a remnant of his civilised and exceptional nature. And to do that he becomes willing to do that which the horses have never done. The Houyhnhnms, for all their contempt for Yahoos as irrational and evil beings, have never turned the Yahoo into this kind of object.

But as evil as Gulliver's action is, it is also absurd. For what are to say of his desperate attempt to hang on to the outer evidence of his humanity when the upper leather of his shoe is merely another layer of human skin? In what sense is this still a shoe? In the sense that it is an outer covering for the human foot, it fulfills the dictionary definition of a shoe, but in the sense that the protection is provided by human skin rather than a tougher animal leather, it defies common sense and horrifies the mind with its mad logic. Were Yahoos killed merely to provide Gulliver with shoes? The horror is made more obvious, were Gulliver's practice in this matter applied to horses, to a scheme for shoeing a horse with hooves taken from another horse. Would one need to kill horses

in order to effect this convenience? But then even this illogic has been foreshadowed in Book Three, in the Academy's scheme for petrifying the hooves of living horses in order to spare the trouble and expense of shoeing them. In her discussion of Laputa, Kathleen Williams cites this scheme as an example of how "In Book three, the useful is turned into the unusable and the vital into the atrophied" [Williams, 65]. But the full moral horror of an animal being used in this way does not strike the reader until one imagines substituting a Houyhnhnm for the experiment in Lagado. Similarly, the moral implications of Gulliver's actions do not become fully clear until we have substituted human for Yahoo in Gulliver's project. Since the moral equations of the Fourth Voyage require us to see the Houyhnhnms as rational horses and the Yahoos as irrational humans, learning to make such substitutions is in fact central to the moral calculus Swift is expecting the reader to master.

It is important to note the inherent absurdity of Gulliver's enterprise in this matter because it alters the meaning of his righteous indignation in condemning the bloodshed in wars fought over clerical vestments: "What is the best colour for a Coat, whether Black, White, Red or Grey; and whether it should be long or short , narrow or wide, dirty or clean; with many more" [V.246]. This connection is important because Gulliver's anger derives from a sense of moral outrage that such "Difference in Opinions hath cost many Millions of

Lives" for nothing more than disagreement about symbols (4.v 246). Such disproportionate behaviour indicts human beings as brutes. Yet in the matter of Gulliver's own vestments, his dignity seems to require bloodshed precisely to maintain such symbolic distinctions between Gulliver and the brutish Yahoos, even though they are literally only "skin deep". Ironically, the reader's quarrel with Gulliver perpetuates the difference in opinion: not so much whether Flesh be Bread or Bread be Flesh but whether flesh be flesh.

But there is still more in this matter of Yahoo skins. When Gulliver is told that he must leave the country of the horses, he decides to contrive some sort of ship although, as he tells his Houyhnhnm master, "many Materials necessary for making a small Vessel to carry me off, were wholly wanting in this Country, which, however, I would attempt in Obedience and Gratitude to his Honour, although I concluded it to be impossible, and therefore looked on myself as already devoted to Destruction" [4.x,28Ø]. Here, Gulliver's language and his reasoning parodies the Biblical faith and Biblical obedience to divine command of an Abraham or a Noah. In an ironic reversal, Gulliver obeys as if the Houyhnhnm Master's superior rationality is omniscient, but at the same time he does so clearly against his own better judgement. The reader caught up in the story telling does not quite take in the full significance of Gulliver's assertion that many necessary materials are lacking, until that is, we discover an Indian

canoe does not mean a canoe made from trees or tree bark--which is plentiful but one made out of Indians. Accordingly, he sets out to make a canoe out of Yahoo skins, a detail casually included by Gulliver as just one of many involved in the "mechanics" of such a project:

> But I shall not trouble the Reader with a particular Description of my own Mechanics; Let it suffice to say that in six Weeks' time, with the Help of the Sorrel Nag, who performed the Parts that required most labour, I finished a Sort of Indian Canoe, but much larger, covering it with the Skins of Yahoos well stitched together, with hempen Threads of my own making. My Sail was likewise composed of the Skins of the same Animal; but I made use of the youngest I could get, the older being too tough and thick, and I likewise provided myself with four Paddles. I laid in a Stock of boiled Flesh, of Rabbets and Fowls, and took with me two Vessels, one filled with Milk, and the other with Water. . . . stopping all the chinks with Yahoos' Tallow, till I found it staunch, and able to bear me and my Freight. And when it was as compleat as I could possibly make it, I had it drawn on a Carriage very gently by Yahoos to the Sea-side, under the Conduct of the Sorrel Nag and another Servant (4.x 281-2).

Once again, Swift's irony allows us to see the matter from Gulliver's point of view--the Yahoo is an animal, and therefore, the canoe and the sails are made from the skins of "the same animal." At the same time, Swift underlines Gulliver's moral insensitivity by showing him in the act of choosing and reasoning as to which of these "animals" would best serve his purpose. Here too, the reader is trapped by Gulliver's reasoning. Having accepted the premise that the Yahoo is merely animal, we are then forced to make a series of "rational" choices which follow from this premise, choices which force us to see the young snatched from the herd, killed in some way, skinned and ulimately boiled to render body fat

as "Yahoo tallow." As for those "chinks" surely they represent another slip in the logic; chinks are after all the gaps in wood not in leather stitching. The horrifying sequence culminates in the irony of these unteachable creatures being instructed to draw this monstrous contrivance "very gently" to the seaside.

With this image of Gulliver's canoe, we are confronted by the grisliest image of the mind-body problem ever devised. The mind is outraged by these images and yet once Gulliver's neutral language is "translated" by the reader in this way, what else could possibly be involved? Once the "Indian canoe" is seen in this way, we have the image of Gulliver, the rational soul piloting a ship encased in human skin, yet the living man is as much a shell of humanity as the ship he has made. Descartes had described the relation of the body to the soul as one which is more intimate than that of the pilot to his ship. Ironically, in using this metaphor, Descartes seems to be unaware of how often sailors are shipwrecked and separated from their ships. In the TRAVELS, of course, Gulliver as sailor spends more time separated from his ship than he ever spends at sea. This, however, seems merely the necessary excuse needed to allow Swift as author to launch Gulliver on his improbable adventures. However, with this episode of the canoe made of human skin, Gulliver's relationship with ships assumes symbolic proportions. As Gulliver sits in his canoe, he is supported on all sides by

human flesh sacrificed so that he might live.

Confronted by this image summoned to the mind by Swift's storytelling strategy, critical language breaks down as one tries to "translate" this new twist on a tale of a tub. Faced with the spectre of this ship, such translation is not the heresy of paraphrase; instead, it becomes morally incumbent on the reader to resist Gulliver's "orthodox" moral categories. Not to do so would constitute the heresy.

Gulliver in his canoe, becomes the personification of the mind-body metaphor, with Gulliver the living spirit encased in human flesh. Thus, Gulliver in the canoe is quite literally the incarnation of such a metaphor. Since traditional Christian interpretations see the ship as symbolic of the Church of Christ with the Cross as its mast, the sight of Gulliver surrounded by human flesh, with tattered human skin nailed to the mast, is, however, a demonic parody of the Incarnation, in which One died to save the many. Instead, Gulliver sits in his canoe made of the skins of countless corrupt Yahoos, so that the life of one "perfect Yahoo" might be saved. (Ferguson 181).

Gulliver's ship is most truly a human vessel, but having said that what is one to say of the captain who "mans" this ship? Gulliver's rescue by Don Pedro de Mendez symbolically juxtaposes the two captains, opening the text to the generation of further ironies.

In his relationship to Gulliver, Don Pedro is a

Conradian alter ego. But having said that, we can see that if the Yahoo is a valid description for the human, it is surely as the dark side of the human, as the shadow but not the whole self. Gulliver may be the guilty secret sharer in Don Pedro's cabin, but it is Don Pedro who is the norm, the ordinary good man, obeying the precepts of simple, common, Christian charity. In the very ordinariness of his virtues, we see their truly extradordinary importance. For Don Pedro's existence confounds the arguments which justify misanthropy on empirical grounds. The Houyhnhnms, after all, indict the Yahoo as evil on the basis of their observed behaviour. It is not that Don Pedro is not a Yahoo, he most certainly is; but as a Christian, he is also a "new creature" capable of virtue through mimesis, through the imitation of Christ's precept and example.

Don Pedro serves an even more important function in the text, appearing in the narrative at this point so as to reverse the process of truth by quantification which dominates the TRAVELS. Ironically, while it seems unlikely that one man can turn the tide of pessimism the Fourth Voyage has released, nevertheless, his impact seems to do just that. But if it is central to the moral vison of the tale that the existence of one good man is enough to overturn the theory about the many, we are not asked to take this platitude on faith. Instead, the reader experiences its truth in the reading. The reader's pleasure in encountering Don Pedro is like the joy of finding

the lost coin, or remembering one small thing one has forgotten but which once remembered opens up endless vistas of possibility. For the miracle of Don Pedro is that he is ordinary; he may be a simple Portuguese sea captain, but every country and every town, every village and every hamlet can boast his like, ordinary men and women who are the salt of the earth, loving, kind, helpful. Indeed, when we re-read the TRAVELS we encounter many such "brother officers."

But Don Pedro, through his name, becomes part of the elaborate semantic problem created by the Houyhnhnms and by Gulliver's narrow definition of truth. For Don Pedro for all his unexceptionable virtues is given a rather questionable name: Don Pedro de Mendez. Why has Swift chosen to undercut the solid virtues of St. Peter's namesake by giving him a name which suggests his mendacity? If he had wished to signal Christian virtues, why not have given his rescuer a far less ambiguous name such as that of Robert Purefoy, for example, Gulliver's surgeon on the voyage to the Houyhnhnms? The name becomes important because its ambivalence suggests that Swift may be undercutting the moral status the reader might be tempted to grant Don Pedro. However, Pedro de Mendez's full name, like Lemuel Gulliver's own, contains within it a whole theology. For Don Pedro's name opens up the text to the Christian story. The Portugese sea captain is named after the apostle Peter, named by Christ as the rock on which he would build his Church. But Peter, the faithful disciple, is also

the disciple who denied Christ, a denial Christ had foreseen and foretold. Since Christ was fully aware of this even as he selected Peter as the foundation for the church, he might easily have said, on this "splendide mendax" will I build my church. Thus, Don Pedro's full name captures the paradoxical foundation of Christianity in which imperfect man is chosen by perfect Truth to achieve divine ends. Don Pedro's name thus conveys both the devotion which has sustained the Church as well as the weakness which can always threaten it. Given the paradoxes of truthtelling and lies in the TRAVELS, Christ breaks the deadlock, not by compromising truth with falsehood, but by accepting and forgiving the fraility and transforming it to strength. Swift's satire does not effect what Kathleen Williams has called the Augustan compromise, but rather reminds us of the historical fact of the reconciliation between the divine and the human which makes ongoing instances of charity between individuals possible.

The vignette alluded to in Don Pedro's name illustrates an important truth about the relationship between the two orders, the supernatural and the natural world, which Landa believes cannot be fused without subtly transforming Swift's intention" (Landa 269). But the story of Peter's denial of Christ does not show how these orders "fuse" so much as how they intersect, like the Cross itself, in the loving condescension of the divine, which chooses to reach down and pull up the conscience-stricken Peter, prostrate with grief at

betraying all that he had pledged to serve. What is highly significant is that this meeting of the vertical and the horizontal, in the condescension of the divine for the human could not have been predicted. All rational ethical syllogisms would have had to conclude that Peter was now morally unfit for his great task and had forfeited Christ's friendship. The condescension of the divine to the "unforgivable," the irrational, in Peter's saying "the thing which was not," is remarkable in that it is splendidly illogical and divinely irrational by all the standards the Houyhnhnms hold sacred. The story of Peter's denial and its happy outcome thus turns on ironic reversal--a pattern which Swift has made the hallmark of his style. To grasp the cosmic irony is to grasp the theology. This point must be stressed since Louis Landa rejects a Christian reading of the TRAVELS on the ground that what is at issue is not "the context of a divine scheme of things" found in Swift's sermons, but rather "a different order of ideas or level of reality, with more limited issues, in which man is considered [as] . . . a mundane, domestic, political and social creature. The two orders cannot be fused so neatly without subtly transforming Swift's intention" (Landa 269). What this view overlooks, however, is that the God of the Judeo-Christian tradition is preeminently concerned with the "mundane" details of the human creature who needs instruction in every minute detail of existence, from how to eat to how to bathe, how to marry and how to pray. Landa is

is right only if we read in a linear fashion, as Gulliver writes. If we pay attention to the historical dimension of the discourse, Swift's language reminds us that we must supply the Christian story, whether as history or as histoire, which in turn automatically alludes to "the context of a divine scheme of things." Accordingly, in Gulliver's encounter with Don Pedro we have the symbolic juxtaposition of the gospel according to Gulliver and the gospel according to Christ.

Given the fact that Gulliver has accepted the logical categories of the Houyhnhnms, it is logical that he should react with dismay at the encounter with the kindly Don Pedro. For the encounter defies all the articles of Gulliver's new faith; Don Pedro contradicts everything Gulliver "knows." On arriving in Lisbon, Gulliver obtains Don Pedro's assurance of secrecy in all he has revealed, fearing that "the least Hint of such a story would probably . . . put me in Danger of being imprisoned, or burnt by the Inquisition" (288). Gulliver's anxiety in the matter, as his similar anxiety in the matter of the trampling of the crucifix, is understandable on one level but provokes puzzling problems. Just what role is it that Gulliver is imagining for himself? Has he cast himself as a Jew or as a Galileo, as a heretic Christian, or as a true believer of a new faith? Is Gulliver aware that his views reject the Christian solution to the problem of fallen human nature? The Inquistion's tortures aside, could Gulliver's beliefs withstand rigorous interrogation in which he would

have to affirm or deny human value by affirming or denying a Christian creed? What truth or falsehood is Gulliver terrified of betraying yet unwilling to die for? In trying to imagine what assertion, what proposition Gulliver is terrified of denying or being forced to affirm, we find ourselves back in the realm of language and logic.

It is also the realm of the Fourth Voyage in which Gulliver, heretofore the articulate representative of the human race, cannot justify the ways of man in the face of Houyhnhnm inquisitions either. Although Gulliver is not struck dumb, his assent to the fact of human irrationality robs his words of any value. Even his assent is absurd. The Liar's paradox surfaces once more: A Yahoo says, All Yahoos are liars. But can he be believed? Indeed, do his words mean anything?

NOTES

1. In his edition of JOSEPH ANDREWS, Martin C. Battestin identifies the source of Fielding's allusion in an extensive footnote to "the second of Deux discours envoyez à Rome, à Monseigneur le Cardinal Bentivoglio (1627) by Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac (1594-1654). Averroes had praised Aristotle as the perfection of nature; a later philosopher, Balzac remarks, extended the hyperbole, calling him 'UNE SECONDE NATURE.' " Henry Fielding, JOSEPH ANDREWS, Martin C. Battestin, ed. (Boston: Riverside Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 158, 314n.

2. Irvin Ehrenpreis explores the relationship to the logical definitions of "man," and "rationality" in the endless debates about how animal rational should be defined. His discussion of Locke is particularly useful: "The Meaning of Gulliver's Last Voyage," in SWIFT: TWENTIETH CENTURY VIEWS, Ernest Tuveson, ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall,

His discussion of Locke is particularly useful: "The Meaning of Gulliver's Last Voyage," in SWIFT: TWENTIETH CENTURY VIEWS, Ernest Tuveson, ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1976). Also R.S. Crane, "The Houyhnhnms, the Yahoos and the History of Ideas," in TWENTIETH CENTURY INTERPRETATIONS OF GULLIVER'S TRAVELS, Frank Brady, ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 80-88. Also, Clive Probyn provides an excellent discussion of the eighteenth century background to the ongoing debate about logic as well as the story of Swift's steadfast refusal to study logic during his university studies, in "Swift and the Human Predicament," in a collection of essays he has edited: THE ART OF JOHNATHAN SWIFT, (London: Vision Press, 1978), 57-80. Morton G. White discusses the problem posed by considering statements such as "Man is a rational animal" as an analytic statement in his article, "The Analytic and the Synthetic: An Untenable Dualism," in SEMANTICS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE, ed. Leonard Linsky, (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1963, orig. pub. 1952), 272-286. The vixens and the siblings are his examples.

CONCLUSION

Quite neatly, Swift has constructed a story which documents, in the very act of the telling, the problem generally known as the loss of the philosophical subject. The human race does not vanish, nor does genocide prove to be necessary. It is the idea of the human that is abolished. The Yahoo continues to copulate and defecate in the landscape both in the land of the horses as well as in the surrounding human civilisation. But somehow, the human/Yahoo slips through a hole in the argument, disappearing through the semantic web of language. When Gulliver first arrives in Houyhnhnmland, he is baffled by the behaviour of the horses, and imagines that their seeming to possess a rational intelligence must be the result of necromancy or witchcraft, the result of some sort of magic or illusion. Ironically, this in fact turns out to be closer to the truth than first appears to be the case. For the human person is defined out of existence through the abracadabra of words and discourse. The philosophical subject, the thinking subject who articulates the discourse, becomes instead the object of the discourse. Yet the Houyhnhnms, having logically disposed of the claims of the human, are nevertheless still baffled by the Yahoo--whether Gulliver or all those others--who remain stubbornly there. Although the existence of Yahoos defies all rational explanation, violates all natural law, yet they persist as a phenonmenon, the fascinating subject matter of endless debate and discussion in

the Houyhnhnm councils. The Yahoo remains an anomaly, that lusus naturae which exists but whose existence cannot be explained. Accordingly, Gulliver's presence among the Houyhnhnms precipitates a crisis, for his existence compounds the anomaly. When anomalies start to accumulate in this fashion, they generate the crisis Thomas Kuhn has noticed as the event which leads to a shift in paradigm. The Houyhnhnms are faced with just such a crisis. They must change their paradigm, or get rid of Gulliver.

Accordingly, Gulliver is banished by the Houyhnhnms because he defies their logic in his very acceptance of it, contradicting all they know about Yahoos and Houyhnhnms. Although Gulliver's behaviour conforms to the dictates of Reason, it is nevertheless illogical precisely because it deviates from the established "norms" of Yahoo behaviour. Thus, Gulliver is banished in a parody of the expulsion from Eden, not because of his disobedience but because of his perfect obedience. The Yahoo is damned either way. On the one hand, the Yahoo is damned for irrationality, and yet on other, he is also damned for rationality. Thus, Gulliver is trapped by the Houyhnhnm logic which damns the unteachable Yahoo for his unnatural behaviour as well as the "gentle Yahoo" for his unnatural obedience to Nature and Reason. The perfect system of the Houyhnhnms cannot brook such a contradiction, and so Reason must banish that which it cannot explain in order to maintain its power. Accordingly, Gulliver's obedience is every

bit as threatening to the established order of things as the rebellious disobedience of the Yahoos. Again, the ironies echo the expulsion from Eden: If Gulliver stays, "he may become as one of us."

In the figure of Gulliver, we have the man who has been disillusioned by the demonstration of human irrationality. He does not however abandon the paradigm of what constitutes perfect rationality. His love for and his faith in this "pet" theory, are so strong that rather than admit the paradigm may be insufficient, he would rather see it manifested in a society of horses than have to abandon the vision. Gulliver's faith then is a version of the claim that the operation was successful, but the patient died. As such, it is the perennial triumph of hope over experience seen in the Academy of Lagado. The fact that the schemes were unworkable is only part of the satire; the other is that even if some version of the mad hope were made workable, no one troubles to wonder whether what 'works' is necessarily what is 'good.' There is thus a disjunction between mechanical operation and moral works. The perfect rationality which Gulliverian man dreams of may not work for humans; but then that is only because we have used the wrong "material." If we substitute Houyhnhnms for humans, the experiment works perfectly. Thus, it is not that perfect rationality is impossible, it is just that it is only possible for another, more fortunate species. This conclusion, while perfectly logical, at best forgets and at worst completely

negates, the paradoxical value of the human in fortunate fall. In Gulliver's vision of the ideal, the entire human race is damned in a parody of the Calvinist theory of the elect. But the irony also reveals that the idea of a utopia is itself a parody of the Kingdom of Heaven. Meanwhile, the Houyhnhnms--denominated as the perfection of nature--are ironically indifferent to their blessings, having no religion or theory which promises them such glory.

Accordingly, Gulliver's despair is born of the impossibility of mimesis, itself a parody of the imitation of Christ. For no matter how hard he may try to imitate the Master, he is doomed to fail. No matter how he may trot or whinny, in faithful tribute to his Master Houyhnhnm, he cannot be re-born as a Houyhnhnm but remains a hopeless Yahoo. What does not bother Gulliver is where his new theory leaves the human race. The word damnation is out place in talking about Gulliver, since he is only struggling to complete a life sentence. He is not troubled by the loss of futurity, by the loss of any meaningful future for the human race. In this, he is even more lost to human concern than the inhabitants of Laputa, who worry that the sun may cool at any moment, thus bringing life to an end.

Parable and parody join hands here. If the imperfect is a parody of the perfect then the human is condemned to perpetual parody. The featherless biped is perpetually "aping" those "excellent Quadrupeds." With the loss of the sacramental

vision of the human in nature, we are left with the grotesque parody of the excremental vision. In this parodic context, to discuss the human is merely to choose whether we shall speak of the Big End or the Little End, whether we shall speak of brains or of assholes. By contrast, in the sacramental vision, human desire is seen as something more than animal appetite. Thus the bread of the Eucharist identifies the hunger for food with the hunger for God as a single appetite; the sacraments of marriage and baptism mean that human sexual needs and the propagation of offspring are more than animal mating and breeding. Divorced from this vision, however, human life loses meaning and purpose. The facts of life and life itself seem to be no more than a collosal dirty joke which polite well-bred people are trained to ignore. Living becomes a series of endless acts of consumption and endless production of waste. It is not that the world has become a wasteland, but that human beings pollute it since all that is produced is merely "end product". Merdle, says Dickens, was the name of the age.

Even moral beliefs take on the quality of parody. Optimism and pessimism are after all superficially similar to hope and despair. We reason ourselves into one or the other on the quasi-moral grounds that pessimism is "true" or that optimism is "good." But we are involved in a series of mere counter-assertions with one another as Alasdair MacIntyre's analysis has shown because "there seems to be no rational way of securing agreement in our culture" (6). Our assertions are

thus robbed of their moral force which leaves them as mere assertion of ethical preference. The optimist persists in his whim; the pessimist snorts derisively at this lack of horse sense. There is a world of difference, however, between optimism and Christian hope, between pessimism and despair. Red Cross Knight in the Cave of Despair recovers simply on hearing Una's serene reminder of the fact of his salvation. Even Marlowe's Faust, in despair at the thought of damnation, thinks that perhaps all he need do is assert the fact of Christ's salvific grace. Christian hope is thus the consequence of accepting as truth Christ's historical Incarnation. It is logical granted belief in that truth; but it is not rational in the sense that one could have inferred it from one's observation of the natural world.

Thus far our discussion has sought to rescue Swift's satire by providing it with a satiric norm, an ideal standard by which the claims of the human and the counter-claims of the Houyhnhnm can be judged. I have argued that the figure of Christ, Incarnate God, provides such an implicit standard. But the problems posed by the implicit versus the explicit in Swift's narrative have far-reaching implications.

Trapped by the language of logic we need a metalanguage to resolve the paradoxes which are created by language. In Swift's satires this metalanguage is provide for the reader by the language of values and the world of values behind and beyond that used by the morally obtuse personae who is the

ostensible writer. Accordingly, in Swift's other satires, this shared knowledge of the metalanguage allows Swift and the reader to form a private communion, to share "a little language," as in Swift's JOURNAL TO STELLA. Thus, Swift and the reader retain their rights as the philosophical subject even though the narrator, as in "The Modest Proposal" or in the Fourth Voyage, is reducing the human to object.

In the TRAVELS, however, this metalanguage is found in the traces of an older language whose historical referents have been lost as we saw earlier in the discussion of Swift's use of Emmanuel College and in the discussion of the allusions contained within Lemuel Gulliver's name. This disjunction between an older language whose meanings have been lost, and the primary language which is used unconsciously by a speaker or writer in the language is the distinction Saussure makes between the synchronic and the diachronic dimensions of language. Accordingly, Gulliver writes his gospel as a present-day witness oblivious to the historical process which gave rise to the Christian witness and its written scripture.

Gulliver, however, is trapped by his ignorance of this older language. Gulliver, the linguist and etymologist of other cultures, has forgotten the doctrinal etymologies of this language whose vocabulary points to the Author of creation, whose Word guarantees the meaning of what we see and what we say--validating both sense experience and epistemology.

The logical and semantic traps into which his discussion falls are ones in which language makes no distinction with reference to time; Aristotle is always our contemporary along with the Christian metaphysics which rejects the world-view his logic presupposed. As a result, words acquire a certain interchangeability. Accordingly in the TRAVELS, the words 'animal' and 'creature' are simply interchangeable variants thus allowing Gulliver to write that the Houyhnhnms "looked upon it as a Prodigy, that a brute Animal should discover such Marks of a rational Creature" [4.iii,234]. However, this interchangeability of terms violates the special logic and decorum of this older language. Accordingly, it would be strange indeed to say in this language that 'Man is the animal created in God's image.' Although the sentence is a grammatically correct sentence in the English language, it clearly violates the sense of two of its key terms, if the words 'created' and 'God' are to be understood as meaningful terms. Divorced from their Judeo-Christian context, however, they become merely linguistic fragments of a lost and forgotten Mosaic edifice. The apparent synonymity of these words can only be maintained at the expense of falsifying their meanings or reducing the metaphysics which spawned them to non-sense, the solution proposed by logical positivists.

However, if the meanings of this older context are retained, the semantic traps Gulliver falls into when trying

to defend restricted versus universal senses of the meaning of 'rational animal' can be amended. If we use the Christian metalanguage available within the text and also to Gulliver we can formulate a true statement about human beings which is an accurate representation of both the actual and the potential in the human condition. Thus, we can say, Man is the creature created in God's image. In this formulation, we retain the notion that the human is a creature like all other creatures God has made. But we also retain the uniqueness of the human in the hierarchy of nature. The statement still affirms the human to be part of the natural order, a creature, but not a mere animal; further, it preserves the uniqueness of the human, its special status in nature, not, however, on the dubious basis of rationality, although that is implied, but on the unique relationship to the Creator.

Moreover, this formulation is also of the type 'Man is a rational creature relative to situation S,' in that human rationality is time-bound, relative to the Creation and the Fall. (This sense of being time bound gives the true sense in which human beings must relate to the universe, rather than in its parody, in the clockwork universe imaged by the argument from design.) Accordingly, the statement, Man is an irrational creature and also a rational creature, may be a matter of shame but does not violate absolute rationality as understood by the Houyhnhnms with their horror of contradiction. Though, sadly perhaps, that horror itself is part of their unfallen

condition. So might we feel, had Adam and Eve made the right inferences in Eden. But this failure of inference remains as one of the symptoms of the Fall and it is the one Swift as Christian teacher and preacher perpetually attacked, through his elaborate constructions of false and fictional arguments just veering on the edge of sense, drawing our attention to the ease with which we can rationalize our evil.

The problems created for Gulliver through Houyhnhnm logic remain, however, if the metalanguage of Christianity is not available to the discussion. Thus, Aristotle could be styled as the Yahoo another Yahoo called the "perfection of nature."The great philosopher, though a better logician, would have been equally discomfited by the Houyhnhnm Master, and would have fared no better than the hapless Gulliver.

Since the problems posed for Gulliver and for the reader are posed by language bound to the natural order, and by the human failure to live in obedience to this order, any changes in man and in language about man require a "metonymic agent" to effect the transformation. The phrase is used by Kroker and Cook in their discussion of the failures of postmodernism to provide such an agent which will restore meaning to modern discourse (Kroker 109). Ironically, their analysis overlooks the fact that Christianity has in fact just such a metonymic agent in the figure of Christ. Moreover, it overlooks the fact that Christianity acknowledges the need for just such a contingency. Thus, Christ on the cross is the

metonymic agent who "stands for" all fallen men and women. The substitution allows for a change in the inexorable logic regarding human rationality. Before Christ's crucifixion, human reasoning could not help but conclude that in order to be considered rational and good, one must be perfect and have been perfect from one's birth. With the crucifixion and the resurrection, the logic is transformed, allowing human beings literally and metaphorically to change their minds. The metanoia produced by Christ allows each individual to re-define the self.

The metanoia of Christianity, its concept of "new birth", is rich in its meany meanings. But one aspect of its meaning is applicable to the problem presented by the Houyhnhnm condemnation of the human. In Christianity, the contradictory nature of the human is accepted, but not as unalterable. Hence, Peter can deny Christ and yet grow in self-knowledge from the failure to serve Christ. The metaphor of new birth allows for mistakes, for spiritual infancy eventually leading to greater spiritual maturity. The organic metaphor, unlike the logical either-or, allows one to separate the sin from the sinner, as an accidental attribute; one can choose to change rather than accept as an essential and ineradicable part of human nature.

The energy of Swift's writing, however, comes from his love of logic and rationality; it is the driving force of an inner dialectic of reasoning with all its moral force and

logical power, straining against the imaginary limits human beings place on their minds. One of the many meanings of the First Voyage, is that all human beings are too large for the petty strictures placed on our words and actions by human society. No matter what we substitute, no matter how great its value, how large its size it is still less than God. Appropriately, the religion of Laputa is mathematics with its systematic method of assigning and substituting values. This, however, is a parody of the substititionary atonement of Christ, a parody of the metonomy in which One stands for Many. Significantly, one of the meanings evoked by the name, Laputa, is putare, 'to think' but with the further implication of the prostitution of the intellect, in which, despite careful computation, one has underestimated the true value and purpose of one's gifts. This notion of miscalculation at the heart of the prostitution metaphor deepens the satirical point about the Laputans who despite their devotion to the idea of calculus, nevertheless, persistent in miscalculation. The metaphor of mathematics draws to our attention that the assignment of value and the positing of identity is arbitrary; the metaphor of prostitution shows that something of lesser value has been substituted for something of great value. The wealth, power and glamour of Babylon is still less than God.

If Gulliver is the first modern man--godless and in despair--then Swift is the first postmodern artist, very much aware he is writing for a world which has lost its sense of a

personal God, the personal Saviour of Christianity. Although Swift is still writing within the Christian tradition, he is aware that his readers are no longer reading with a sense of what constitutes the tradition. The difficulties are perhaps better understood if we consider the case of PARADISE LOST. Milton's poem is a unique work of art and stands alone, but in so far as it is a Christian poem it may be the last great Christian work in the sense that its author was still writing within a living Christian tradition, rather than using it for mythic and literary purposes. After Milton, it will be PARADISE LOST which will serve as primary literary inspiration rather than Biblical narrative. The poem will become, like Ovid's METAMORPHOSES, a compendium for "the Christian myth."

The comparison with PARADISE LOST is useful because even the Christianity of Milton's poem is problematic and partakes of the same problem of ironic context as do the TRAVELS. PARADISE LOST can only be understood as a Christian work, if it is read with a full theological awareness of the importance of Christ to the human situation, but not necessarily to the poem. Thus, Milton and his readers are fully aware of ironies which are lost to both Adam and Satan within the poem. Accordingly, the reader's awareness of Christ's significance is taken as a given. However, if the poem is read the way an actor might hastily scan a script to gauge the importance of his role, it is clear that the snake has all the lines. Read literally, one notices the absence of

Christ rather than a presence charged with myriad unspoken implications. Consequently, attention shifts to Satan as the major initiator of events and therefore the central character of the poem and therefore its hero. That literate readers, over a century later and yet within an ostensibly Christian culture, could lose the key to the most obviously Christian poem in the language is instructive. Blake's reading or misreading is well known. Shelley, forgetting the triadic structure of Christianity which sees Christ as mediator, sees only the pernicious dualism engendered by the opposition of God and Satan.

In Swift's text, Christianity has retreated into the background as myth, but its values and expectations persist for both Gulliver and for the reader. The reader's efforts to grapple with terms wrenched out of their context, or the effort to restore the lost context--creates the situation conducive to learning what Swift's apologetic wants to teach. In this sense, Swift's text is postmodern in his awareness of the significance of the context in which language and learning take place. Modern discussions of paradigms and double bind paradoxes now realize that unless the unspoken context is made explicit, what is being formulated may lapse into error. Thus such discussions define context as "the stated or unstated set of rules in which an event or relationship takes place" (Berman 352). The text is thus postmodern in its linguistic and games-playing sophistication. However, it is also

postmodern because Swift does not participate at all in the optimism of the Romantics or of the Victorians who believed in the prophetic power of literature to change hearts and minds and effect social reform. Gulliver is the ironic prophet, the dysangel crying in the wilderness of the post-Christian culture to come. In the figure of Gulliver, Swift anticipates the despair of Kierkegaard and of Nietzche, and his analysis of alienation anticipates Hegel's Master/slave analysis. Moreover, he grasps far better than Marx the philosophical and moral implications of the labor theory of value in which human beings turn themselves and others into commodities. In the country of the horses, Gulliver's clothing and his canoe made from Yahoo skins are the result of "settling my little Oeconomy to my Heart's content." The optimism of the Enlightenment as well as the Prometheanism of Marx are completely bypassed as Swift moves on to anticipate the actual outcome of such theories rather than the glamorous hoped-for outcome.

But Swift is also prophetic in seeing the problem posed for literature with the loss of the Christian paradigm. In this he shares the concern of Pope who saw the loss of literary meaning in the victory of dullness, in a progressive stultification of the intellect which would threaten civilisation. Although Gulliver anticipates the lonely stance of the romantic and Satanic hero, Swift denies Gulliver the glamour. The pride of Lemuel Gulliver can blind us to the

tragic humility of Gulliver. For Gulliver, humbly accepting himself as "a miserable Yahoo" is far humbler than God wants him to be. In this sense, the miserable sinner kneeling in repentence has a stature and dignity denied the miserable yahoo despite the apparent similarity. This is not to say that Gulliver lacks the vice of pride, but rather that he mistakes his vice for the virtue of humility. His pride in his own definition and his own standard of the rational is so important that he is willing to abolish himself and the whole human race rather than change this exalted conception of what should constitute the human. Failing to find it among humans, he would rather abdicate his sovereignty rather than change his premises. There is a certain grandeur in so doing, rather similar to the predicament of Milton's Satan. Swift, however, denies Gulliver a tragic and romantic despair. Nevertheless, Gulliver's self-imposed exile is the situation consciously adopted by a host of misanthropic Byronic heros. Like Gulliver, they, too, see mankind in terms of an unthinking animal herd and think of themselves as set apart, as outcast, lone wolf, or maverick. Byron's Manfred, like Gulliver, had started out wanting to serve mankind but becomes disillusioned at having to "serve" and "soothe and sue," to be "a living lie" in order to become:

> A mighty thing amongst the mean, and such
> the mass are; I disdain'd to mingle with
> the herd though to be a leader--and of wolves.
> The lion is alone and so am I. (Manfred, III,i, 120-3)

Byron's images of animals and herd are "merely" metaphor; they are preeminently a literary conceit. The herd metaphor is used to dismiss humanity and to valorise the lonely stance adopted toward community. Once the point has been made, the misanthropy becomes submerged in a cosmic, but essentially literary, pessimism. For Swift, however, the image of man as animal is more than metaphor; it is the new metonymy, in which man will be no more than animal. Nevertheless, the differences in the comparison with the seemingly positive Romantic hero should not obscure the essential insight on Swift's part that this would be the emerging paradigm. Unlike subsequent poets and philosophers who will attempt to invest this stance toward God, man and the universe with a mythic status, Swift sees the pose as unnatural and perverse and emphasizes its the absurdity while exposing its essential nihilism. Significantly, the Byronic hero is an ironist, consciously adopting a sardonic pose, knowing he is doomed to fail but too proud to compromise. Accordingly, this Satanic pose acquires a glamour, derived from the very perversity of the attempt. Interestingly enough, this irony is very different from that of Swift and Kierkegaard who see that the Byronic hero, for all his apparent unorthodoxy, nevertheless remains wrapped in the mantle of the orthodox Christian paradigm. Such ironic poses are adopted as a defense, as a mask. Swift, however, uses irony as a way of exposing the problem rather than as a way of

living with it.

Accordingly, the problem is left in its most acute form in Swift, who despite considerable mythopoeic powers as literary artist, nevertheless rejects the compromise (and also the temptation) afforded by literature to create a new myth for reconciling man and nature. In this, Swift stands apart from the solution offered by Blake and the Romantics. It is Gulliver, the literary pilgrim, who gives us his unromantic version of the secular scripture in all its terrifying realism. Swift is hoping that the bleak landscape, the desacralized cosmos of the Fourth Voyage, will force readers to rediscover the reconciliation offered by Christ. As a result the TRAVELS remain an anomaly in the literary mainstream, despite their stringent irony. While the modern temper has become acclimatised to irony, and has adopted it as the prevailing mode, this is accompanied by an easy acceptance of pluralism. The severe either-or of Swift's argument, seems alien and also excessive, because it is perceived as belonging to the scholastic temper and to a Christian metaphysics.

Modern irony then is irreverent; it is a bravado which is a method of self-salvation, a way of salvaging something from the wreckage of human hopes. Irony acknowledges the loss but shrugs off the pain as part of the given of the human condition. The salvation of Christ is too good to be true and therefore must be resisted, must be discarded as an outworn myth, part of the childhood and adolescence of civilisation.

To this conception of "adult", stoical, long-suffering is opposed the childish fairy tale, the miraculous salvation by Christ, an opposition replete with its own ironies. In his essay on the genre of fantasy, Tolkein identifies this "eucatastrophe" as the peculiar pleasure of fairy tale, and calls Christianity the fairy tale all men hope is true (Tolkien, 207).

Swiftian irony then is irreverent of worldly values, irreverent of the claims of rationalism as the highest good, but this irreeverance performs an essentially restorative function. This is irony not as nihilism but as initiation, what Kierkegaard calls the baptism of irony in the closing pages of his CONCEPT OF IRONY. Significantly, that discussion shows the dialectic between two kinds of ironist, the ancient and the modern: between Socrates and Christ, between the dialectic of the Platonic dialogue and Christian parable. For Fredrich Schlegel, "novels are the Socratic dialogues of our time" (Carroll 210n6). But in the fictional narrative of GULLIVER'S TRAVELS, the struggle between philosophy and a would-be gospel result in a mis-begotten hybrid which defies fictional and also satiric norms, and the expectations of genre. Thus, F.R. Leavis has criticised Swift for his negative irony which destroys but which does not offer any positives. What Leavis is noticing is that having first set up one utopia after another only to show they are dystopias, Swift seems to have left the reader with very little after all. But this

ignores one of the effects of the TRAVELS which is that it restores a sense of wonder once we have returned home. Chesterton has remarked that in fairy tales rivers run with wine in order to remind us of the miraculous fact of water; that trees abound with gold and silver apples to startle us into noticing the wonder of real apples. And so in his travels, Gulliver needs to see horses threading needles as well as the wonder of Lilliputians sewing with invisible needles and invisible thread, in order to appreciate the extraordinary sight of little Betty plying her needle. We need to see miniature furniture and giant furniture to see the miracle of ordinary chairs and tables. Throughout the voyages, the unobtrusive presence of a whole host of anonymous carpenters and joiners and cabinet makers cumulatively forces on the reader the dawning realization of the divine status of the craft. There is humour and humility in the fact that while only God can make a tree, only a human carpenter could teach the Son to make a table. In the TRAVELS, it is not the exotic and the strange which is marvellous but rather the wonder of the human, the craftsmanship, the poesis possible when creatures have hands with opposable thumbs instead of hooves. Tables, chairs, the embrace of a wife, the sharing of fellowship in communion and community--seem a paradise in a fallen world. It is a homely truth which Gulliver cannot see, tied up as he is in "visionary schemes." If the satire is virulent, it is also restorative. Ultimately, Swift's irony

having turned the world upside down shows that it was our vision which had originally inverted it--irony has made those who can see, see. The world has not changed, but the perception has changed and therefore everything has changed. The lines from Eliot's "Little Gidding" put it best:

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And to know the place for the first time.

Samuel Johnson said of GULLIVER'S TRAVELS that once one had thought of big men and little men it was easy to do all the rest. It is entirely appropriate that the key to Swift's unorthodox apologetics should also be as dazzlingly simple. Once the reader has thought of the One greater Man, it is easy to do all the rest.

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