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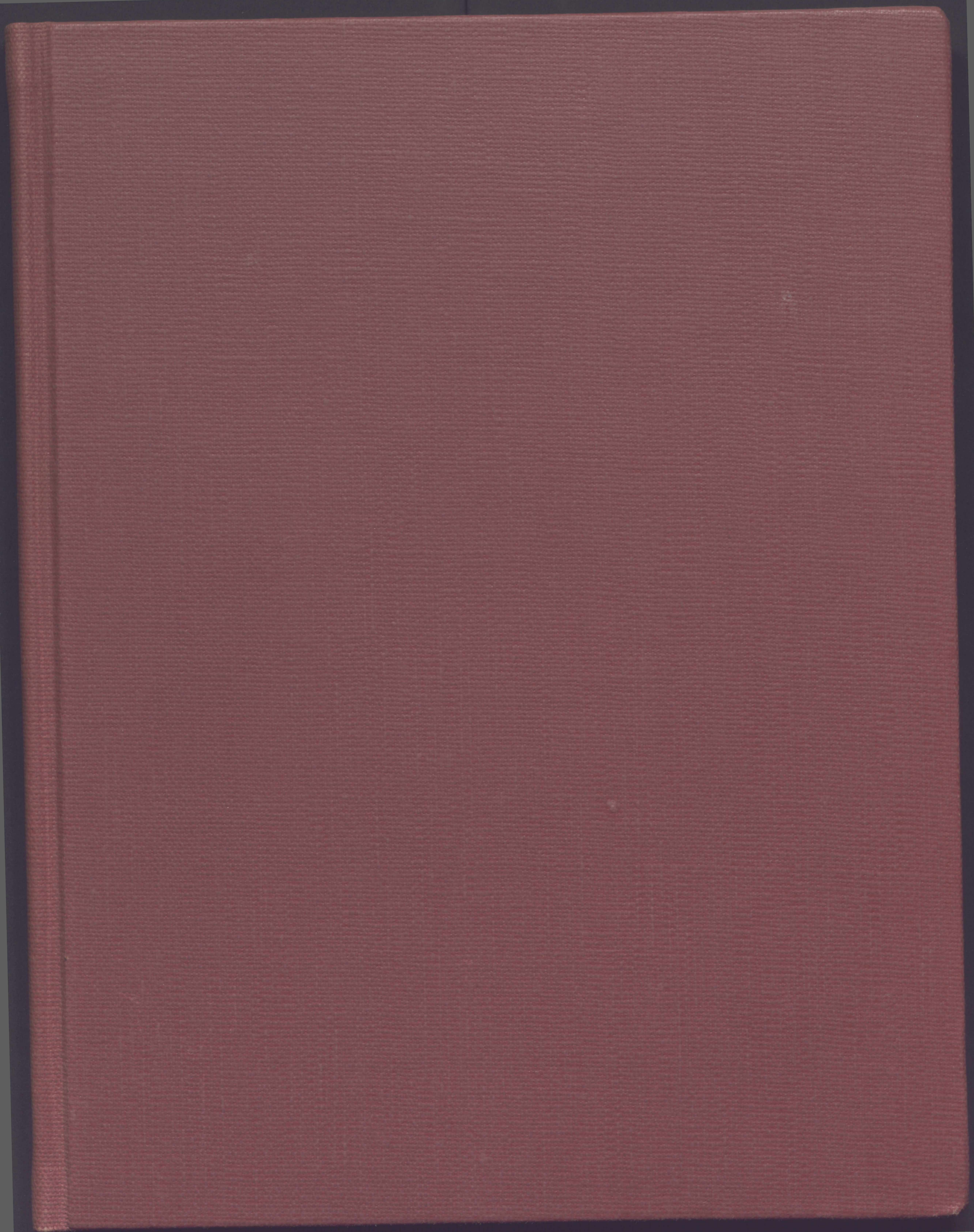
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SWIFT AND LEMUEL GULLIVER: A CRITICAL STUDY
OF GULLIVER'S SIGNIFICANCE TO THE SATIRE
IN GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

By

Virginia Lee Sipe

A Thesis presented to the General Faculty of
The Claremont Graduate School in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Approved by:

John F. Ross
Visiting Examiner

Franklin Bracher
Faculty Advisor

Paul H. Kocher
Faculty Examiner

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Lemuel Gulliver is more than a conventional narrator of Gulliver's Travels. He is an individual whose experiences remain in the readers' minds long after the last page has been read and the book closed. Moreover, he is not Jonathan Swift. Rather he is a dramatically conceived figure whom Swift manipulated to achieve effectiveness in his satire. Despite short-sighted critics who have stereotyped Gulliver's role, we find that his reactions typify an individual. We sympathize with Gulliver, but at times we laugh at him and see a reflection of human folly. Thus, it was through the portrayal of his dramatic narrator that Swift achieved complex, yet perspicuous, satire.

At the beginning of the Travels, Gulliver gives the following account of himself and his family. He had studied at Emanuel College, Cambridge, for three years, followed by a four year apprenticeship under a London surgeon. In order to prepare himself for travel, Gulliver used his spare time to study navigation and mathematics. Then he spent two years and seven months studying physics at Leyden. After several voyages, Gulliver married and settled down to practice medicine in London. But his practice was unsuccessful, and he decided to return to the sea.

Gulliver is not a brilliant man, nor does he ever seem to be engrossed in complex, psychological problems. Yet,

lying beneath this simplicity is an eagerness to discover the thoughts and manners of all peoples, an attitude which reveals a curious, searching mind. As he admits at the beginning of the Voyage to Laputa, even past misfortunes do not remove his urge for seeing the world; this urge is not that of a mere sight-seer, for Gulliver is interested in societies, in their ideals and actions. Gulliver, in short, is an amateur critic of society; throughout the first three voyages, he describes and interprets his observations and experiences in Lilliput, Brobdingnag, and Laputa. Although Gulliver has some prejudices, especially in the form of patriotism for England, he maintains an open, inquiring mind until his association with the Houyhnhnms. Among the rational horses, he loses this questioning quality of mind, for he binds his mind with Houyhnhnm perfection to such an extent that he completely rejects a life based upon any other principles.

This preview of Gulliver suggests that his role in the satire is entirely logical in development. It implies a gradual, but coherent, evolution of his mind and character. Such an interpretation would demand from the reader a consistent attitude toward Gulliver. But we find that our basic feelings toward him change as we read the book. We do not always follow his actions and opinions with admiration or even with sympathy or understanding. For example, we must laugh at his unawareness of the size relationship between Lilliputians and himself when he very conscientiously defends the pigmy woman's reputation against the scandal surrounding

her relations with him. We must also smile at Gulliver's patriotic defense of his debauched countrymen and his complete rejection of the superior ideals of the Brobdingnagians. If the inconsistencies in his character are not too glaring and if his thoughts and actions do not deviate too much from the average or universal, he may be regarded as a representative of mankind. And there is the possibility that he is conveying the beliefs of the author and could then be identified with Jonathan Swift. Such an identification would mean that Swift projected the epitome of his own thoughts into the speech and reactions of Gulliver. When attempting to define the role of Swift's character, one faces this question: just what is Gulliver meant to represent and what is his relation to the satire of the Travels? Let us consider the opinions of the more prominent critics concerning Gulliver's role in the satire.

Earlier interpretations of Gulliver's Travels reveal that the critics tended to identify Gulliver with Swift. This assumption has affected especially the interpretation of "A Voyage to the Houyhnhnms," the section of the Travels which has received most critical attention, and some of the fiercest indictments ever directed against a piece of literature. Identifying the author with his misanthropic character, these earlier critics have damned Swift as an embittered misanthrope.

One of the early nineteenth century critics, William Hazlitt, has shown insight into the general method of satire when he suggested that Swift, by looking at life objectively,

was able to strip from it all pretense and reveal human nature as it really is. But he identified Gulliver with his creator and concluded that Swift found human nature to be utterly worthless and in the last voyage rejected mankind as hopeless. Thus, in Hazlitt's words,

He has taken a new view of human nature, such as a being of a higher sphere might take of it; he has torn the scales from off his moral vision; he has tried an experiment upon human life, and sifted its pretensions from the alloy of circumstances; he has measured it with a rule, has weighed it in a balance, and found it, for the most part, wanting and worthless---in substance and in show. Nothing solid, nothing valuable is left in his system but virtue and wisdom. What a libel is this upon mankind! What a convincing proof of misanthropy!

Writing later in the century, William Makepeace Thackeray, on the basis of the supposed misanthropy of the last voyage, attacked Swift in a violent manner unparalleled in Swiftian criticism. When Thackeray wrote the lashing condemnation which follows, he did not consider the relative positions of Swift and Gulliver.

As for the humor and conduct of this famous fable, I suppose there is no person who reads but must admire; as for the moral, I think it horrible, shameful, unmanly, blasphemous; and giant and great as this Dean is, I say we should hoot him. Some of this audience mayn't have read the last part of Gulliver, and to such I would recall the advice of the venerable Mr. Punch to persons about to marry, and say "Don't."...That last part of "Gulliver" is only a consequence of what has gone before; and the worthlessness of all mankind, the pettiness, cruelty, pride, imbecility, the general vanity, the foolish pretension, the mock greatness, the pompous dullness, the mean aims, the base successes---all these were

1 William Hazlitt, Lectures on the English Poets (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 171

present to him; it was with the din of these curses of the world, blasphemies against Heaven, shrieking in his ears, that he began to write this dreadful allegory---of which the meaning is that man is utterly wicked, desperate, and imbecile, and his passions are so monstrous, and his boasted powers so mean, that he is and deserves to be the slave of brutes, and ignorance is better than his vaunted reason...A frightful self-consciousness it must have been, which looked on mankind so darkly through those keen eyes of Swift.²

Though not so extreme as was Thackeray in his attack upon Swift, Leslie Stephen unconsciously regarded Swift as corresponding to Gulliver and concluded, "Swift's view of human nature is too black to admit of any hopes of their millennium."³ Stephen is referring here to the misanthropy in the last voyage and has laid the blame entirely upon Swift.

The identification of Swift with his fictional character does not fade entirely in the views of twentieth century critics, for Basil Willey has linked Swift's personal life with the misanthropic actions of Gulliver in Houyhnhnm Land. He suggested that Swift carried his criticism of men to the point of labelling them Yahoos and rejecting them in favor of horses, the symbols of reason. Willey has not directly acknowledged his identification of Swift and Gulliver, but his statement below implies such an assumption.

But Swift fell more and more out of love with man, and the result---his final tragedy---was the total dissociation of Houyhnhnm from Yahoo. So remote

² William M. Thackeray, The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century (New York: Ginn and Company, 1911), pp. 31-2

³ Leslie Stephen, Swift (New York: Harper and Brothers, n.d.), p. 180

became his ideal that he could not symbolize his disembodied rationalists as men at all, but only as horses. Man delighted him not, nor woman neither, so he escaped into his satiric fairyland....⁴

Thus, critics of the past and of the present have assumed that Gulliver, as Swift's puppet, is a convenient and effective medium for conveying the author's ideas to the world. The critic who accepts this point of view naturally concludes Gulliver's aversion to mankind in the last voyage to be Swift's belief, and condemns Swift as a misanthrope. Thus, the basic assumption which defines Gulliver's role limits and directs the interpretation of the Travels.

Another assumption, which has been commonly held by twentieth century critics of Swift, is that Gulliver is intended to represent mankind. In certain portions of the Travels, he does seem to be such an "Everyman." But beneath such stereotyping of Gulliver's role is false reasoning akin to assigning the properties of parts to the whole. Herbert Davis has called Gulliver an "Everyman,"⁵ and William Eddy lent support to this view when he offered this conclusion:

The first representative of the race is Gulliver himself, a typical human being, in no way extraordinary, who learns many things, in the course of his travels, to the shame and humiliation of his race....Gulliver is the allegorical representative of man, as truly as Christian is in Pilgrim's Progress.⁶

4 Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background (London: Chatto and Windus, 1940), p. 108

5 Herbert Davis, The Satire of Jonathan Swift (New York: Macmillan Company, 1947), p. 83

6 William Eddy, Gulliver's Travels: A Critical Study (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1923), pp. 99-100

Evidently failing to notice Swift's clever handling of Gulliver in relation to the Houyhnhnms in order to intensify the satire, Eddy has unjustly concluded, "Someone has blundered, and I fear me it is Swift."⁷ Mr. Eddy based this conclusion upon what he regarded as the defect of the fourth voyage: the stupidity of the Houyhnhnms who fail to recognize the superior adaptive qualities of man's physical structure in comparison to their own. But it is Gulliver's mind which is so bound by the excellent qualities of these "paragons of reason" that he overlooks such obvious defects in their natures. Thus, even the ideal, when untempered, will lead the mind into folly. Jonathan Swift did not blunder, nor is there any evidence of such error when Gulliver's development is analyzed in relation to the author's satiric purpose and method.

John F. Ross has refuted Eddy's interpretation, and in his re-evaluation of the fourth voyage, Mr. Ross has offered a most cogent argument in support of the theory that Swift is not to be identified with the misanthropic Gulliver.⁸ Ross begins by distinguishing two types of satire: the light, comic satire of Horace and the lashing, corrosive satire typical of Juvenal, both of which are skilfully used by Swift. The comic satire is more prominent in "A Voyage to Lilliput," but it gradually gives way to the corrosive type which dominates the

⁷ Ibid., p. 189

⁸ John F. Ross, "The Final Comedy of Lemuel Gulliver," University of California Publications in English, V. 8, #2(1941), p. 175-96

last voyage. This gradual increase in corrosive satire parallels Gulliver's mental preparation to accept misanthropy. In the first voyage the reader feels effects of comic satire when confronted with the conflicts between High-Heels and Low-Heels and between Big-Endians and Little-Endians. In only one episode is the impact of corrosive satire evident: the episode of Gulliver's impeachment, especially the court debate, which vividly reveals the inhumanity and cruelty of the ministers, of the Emperor who deems himself lenient, and of Gulliver's friend, Reldresal, who has suggested the blinding and gradual starvation of Gulliver. A comic episode follows which clearly reveals not only that Swift is not to be identified with Gulliver but offers an example of the inconsistency in character development: Gulliver vindicates the reputation of a Lilliputian lady. The absurdity of the situation is emphasized by the preceding details, which so very pointedly have established the size relationship between him and the Lilliputians. Clearly, Swift's character is unaware of the actual situation and becomes a comic foil at the hand of Swift. However, Mr. Ross is not bothered by Gulliver's stupidity; he finds it right in character:

...Swift is achieving his effects by means of a created character; and we see that it is not deliberate understatement for Gulliver, it is simply a result of his character. It is all he finds worth saying. He has definite limitations of mind, which in spite of his development he never outgrows, even in the last voyage.⁹

9 Ibid., p. 181

Mr. Ross emphasizes that Swift increased both comic and corrosive satire in the second voyage. The comedy, he explains, is achieved at the expense of Gulliver, who retains pride despite his reduced status in Brobdingnag. Likewise, it is this patriotic pride that underlies the corrosive satire: Gulliver is indignant that the King receives his descriptions of Europe unfavorably and concludes the King to be provincial because he is horrified when offered the gunpowder formula by which he might maintain absolute dominion over his people.

Mr. Ross describes the change in satiric method and purpose which distinguishes the voyage to Houyhnhnm Land from the rest of the book: Swift predominantly used corrosive satire in attacking the fundamental causes behind the defects and follies in man's actions. Swift added the comic element which concerns the absurd Houyhnhnm conviction that the anatomy of a horse is superior to that of man. In the effort to show that Gulliver's worship for the horses was not shared by him, the author made Gulliver an object of comedy. In support of the view that Swift intended parts of the last voyage to be comical is a letter to his publisher, Motte, in which he specifically suggested various parts of the last voyage as being suitable for illustration. However, it is Gulliver's worship of the Houyhnhnms which foreshadows what Ross terms "the final comedy of Lemuel Gulliver." Gulliver's sentimental departure from Houyhnhnm Land has been considered by many to be the end of the Travels, but a lack of attention to the

remaining chapters leads to the misrepresentation of the entire voyage as being the revelation of Swift's misanthropic view of humanity. In the last chapters Swift provided Gulliver with a friend, the completely virtuous Portuguese sea captain, whose physical resemblances to the abhorrent beasts in Houyhnhnm Land prompt Gulliver to disregard his virtues and to label him a Yahoo. Swift was in full control of his corrosive satire at this point. And it is by making the misanthropic Gulliver the object of final comic satire that Swift transcended this hatred of mankind. Mr. Ross' reinterpretation based upon the use of character development to evolve and intensify satire becomes a landmark in the criticism of Gulliver's Travels. But as indicated earlier, a more detailed analysis of the relations between Gulliver's character and Swift's satire will support the theory that Swift often sacrificed consistency of characterization to achieve satiric effect.

Since critics began to consider Gulliver as an individual, they have been prone to build a logically consistent role for him. John B. Moore perfectly exemplifies this tendency. He refutes the older assumptions which identify character with author and which consider Gulliver to be a representative of mankind, and then constructs an ideal character evolution which he calls the "sophistication of Gulliver." Moore points to the revelations of Gulliver's kindness and patriotism in the early voyages as preparation for the readers' acceptance of the misanthropic ideas; thus, Moore feels that through

skilful characterization, Swift attempted to gain acceptance of his own misanthropy. In essence the following are Moore's convictions:

In certain ways, he surpasses the average man and, in certain other ways, he is peculiar or just different from the average without being superior or inferior. He is, to be sure, an example of a man getting knowledge or wisdom. But Swift is able for his purposes to create a human being much more perfectly appropriate and more real than a mere average or representative figure. So quietly natural is the process of creation in Swift's hands that it has scarcely been appreciated as a marvel of artistry. Gulliver is an entirely credible and probable person at the same time that he is precisely the person to enforce Swift's demonstration....To infect others with his own ardent misanthropy, Swift could not have chosen a more effective human instrument than Lemuel Gulliver, it would seem.¹⁰

Mr. Moore's last sentence in the above quotation indicates that he has fallen into the error of identifying Swift with Gulliver which he refuted earlier in the article. He has failed to recognize that Swift rose above the misanthropy of Gulliver. Although Mr. Moore's analysis of Gulliver as an individual is admirable, his failure to regard inconsistencies in characterization has led to his distorted view of Gulliver's role.

Viewing in perspective past criticism of Gulliver's Travels, we shall find that there has been a general shift in point of view: theory has abruptly swung from the stereotyped interpretation of Gulliver's role to individualized characterization. There is need for partial reconciliation

¹⁰ John B. Moore, "The Role of Gulliver," Modern Philology, XXV(1928), p. 470

of these extreme points of view. Contemporary critics should use the theory of individual characterization as a basis for developing the role of Gulliver, but here the modern critics have been so intent upon proving the stereotyped theories to be obsolete that this subordinate aim has overshadowed the goal of determining Gulliver's role. Inconsistencies must not be overlooked in the effort to build a perfect picture of character development. Satirical purpose guided the character development of Gulliver toward the achievement of the satiric effects which Swift desired. One must remember that satirical effect was paramount in Swift's purpose and that Gulliver actually became part of that effect. But if Swift saw an opportunity to strike at the vices and follies of mankind, he would not reject the opportunity even though Gulliver's character development were impaired. Such is then our purpose in this analysis of Swift's Travels: to see how Gulliver contributes to the satiric effect.

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF GULLIVER' ROLE IN LILLIPUT

Before Gulliver starts on the first voyage of his travels, he outlines the important events in his life. This brief history serves as a character sketch, outlining the traits, abilities, and habits which explain Gulliver's later reactions. In fact, we shall see that these traits form the nucleus around which Swift centered much of his satire. Gulliver tells us that his father's small estate was inadequate to provide for the futures of the five sons in the Gulliver family. And Gulliver, being the third of the five sons, was not in a position to receive much financial aid from his family. Thus, he could not complete his Cambridge education, and was apprenticed to an eminent London surgeon. His family background and education lead us to regard Gulliver as a typical Englishman belonging to middle class society.

Although Gulliver is a representative of a particular class of English society, he is also an individual with characteristics of his own. We notice, for example, that he has an inquiring mind. His leisure time aboard ship is profitably spent in reading the best authors, ancient and modern. And more important, he is anxious to learn how other peoples live; thus, on foreign shores our voyager closely observes the manners of the people. He is interested in people's thoughts and actions in relation to their societies;

Gulliver is a practical sociologist in this respect. But Gulliver has another trait which marks him an individual. He is honest and kind, even humanitarian in spirit. For, we learn that his medical practice in London began to fail, not because he was incompetent, but because "my Conscience would not suffer me to imitate the bad Practice of too many among my Brethren."¹¹ Such an attitude denotes a desire to do right by his fellow men, to treat them with respect. Our first general impression of Gulliver is, then, of an Englishman belonging to middle class society, a man whose education is undoubtedly superior to that of an average Englishman, and who possesses an inquiring mind, kindness, and humanitarian ideals. Likewise, we shall find that Gulliver's reactions in each voyage are peculiar to his own make-up.

In Lilliput Gulliver finds himself among a strange race of pigmies whose customs interest his inquiring mind. He demonstrates the intellect which we felt sure that he had, and he tries, with good common sense, to adjust to Lilliputian society. From Gulliver's endeavor to reconcile the Lilliputian tongue with his knowledge of linguistics, we learn that he has some knowledge of such languages as High and Low Dutch, Latin, French, Spanish, Italian, and Lingua Franca. He is anxious to learn the Lilliputian language and makes considerable headway in three weeks time. From his detailed account of these people, Gulliver has demonstrated the

¹¹ Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1941), p. 4

achievements of a skilful observer. The reader receives from this detailed description a clear perception of the size relationship between the pigmies and Gulliver. Thus, Swift did not present the resume of Gulliver's past life merely as an incidental addition to his book, but he was offering a brief sketch of Gulliver's character. Some of the traits in this portrayal contribute to the effectiveness of the satire, and their influence is most clearly seen in two parts: that portion directed against government and that against laws and customs. But we must analyze these developments in order to discover just how Gulliver has influenced the satire.

That kindness of which we felt a trace in Gulliver's reactions to the corruption in the medical profession becomes even more apparent after the voyager's arrival in Lilliput. Several times Gulliver has the opportunity to seize forty or fifty pigmies and dash them to the ground. But, having submitted to these little people and received their hospitality, he feels obligated to respect them. Fear may be the motivation behind his submission to the pigmies. After awaking in Lilliput and finding himself the captive of a race of pigmies, he tried to escape. But as he did so, he felt pain from the volley of arrows released from their bows. And he does not forget the smarting sensation which he mentions several times. Thus, we cannot attribute his humane treatment of these little people entirely to a gentle nature but partially to fear for his personal security. However, by the

very nature of Gulliver's enormous size in comparison with pigmy stature, his reactions must necessarily reveal gentleness or its opposite. Moreover, Swift confronted his character with another situation in which his temperament is necessarily revealed. A number of the rabble discharged arrows at Gulliver's face as he was sitting in the entrance to his dwelling; an officer turns six of the culprits over to Gulliver for punishment. He succeeds in thoroughly frightening them, but then gently sets them on the ground. Still another reaction which confirms Gulliver's gentle nature is his concern for the welfare of the pigmies as he wanders through the metropolis of Mildendo: he is careful to avoid damaging houses or injuring any citizens who have not adhered to the proclamation which warned the people to remain under shelter during his visit. When considered together, these episodes do establish a pattern of gentleness in Gulliver's character. We shall see that this quality becomes important later in the satire, for Swift purposely emphasized it here in preparation for future developments.

Gulliver's friend Reldresal informs him of the party conflict in Lilliput and the condition of war existing between Lilliput and its neighboring country, Blefuscu. As a foreigner, Gulliver flatly declines interference in domestic conflicts, but asks Reldresal to inform the Emperor that he will "defend his Person and State against all Invaders" even if his own life be endangered. However, the Emperor has greater aspirations than peace; after Gulliver has captured the Blefuscan Navy, the Imperial Majesty reveals

his ardent designs to conquer Blefuscu and to reduce it to a province under his dominion. Gulliver's answer is indicative of his own moral standards:

But I endeavoured to divert him from this Design, by many Arguments drawn from the Topicks of Policy as well as Justice: And I plainly protested, that I would never be an Instrument of bringing a free and brave People into Slavery: And when the Matter was debated in Council, the wisest Part of the Ministry were of my Opinion.¹²

Again appears that element of justice in Gulliver, the desire to do right by all beings. Gulliver's attitude has repercussions which lead to the episode involving the court decision, the episode which embodies the most lashing bit of satire in the first voyage. Although Gulliver shows due respect for the righteous ministers in this passage, he continues by saying that those ministers who were secretly his enemies joined with the Emperor to conspire against him. Gulliver follows this avowal with words which express his feelings toward the Emperor's attitude but which, at the same time, foreshadow future events. Notice that these words serve two purposes: first, they preview the court debate, and, second, they epitomize Gulliver's attitude toward rulers after he has become aware of the Emperor's part in the malicious intrigue.

Of so little Weight are the greatest Services to Princes, when put into the Balance with a Refusal to gratify their Passions.¹³

It is interesting to notice that Gulliver has universalized

12 Ibid, p. 37

13 Ibid, p. 38

this conclusion; that is, he has formed a conclusion based upon his experience with the Emperor and perhaps experiences in the past, and then has applied it to all rulers. Gulliver's tendency to universalize is not evident in the earlier part of the voyage but becomes one of the methods by which Swift later intensified his satire.

Compare this tendency with the very different and much more complex method of achieving satiric effect in the following passage:

I had indeed heard and read enough of the Dispositions of great Princes and Ministers; but never expected to have found such terrible Effects of them in so remote a Country, governed, as I thought, by very different Maxims from those in Europe.¹⁴

This passage reveals satire at its best. Swift achieved the universal, but his indirect approach to it opened additional avenues of attack as tributaries to the main stream. Thus, Gulliver's astonishment at finding such inhumane practices even in so provincial a country implies that rulers must be everywhere corrupt. But with this general attack upon corrupt rule is the additional one upon European rulers, for Gulliver, in essence, is implying that the laws of Europe are unjust and lead to poor government. But he is astonished when he finds corruption in the application of Lilliputian laws which he felt to be totally different from those of Europe, and therefore uncorrupted. Thus, European government is implied to be more evil than that of Lilliput, for poor governmental

14 Ibid., p. 51

management and corrupt administration of just laws constitute the Lilliputian difficulty; but unprincipled maxims and their unjust execution underlie European government. Such are the complex satirical implications lying beneath Gulliver's statement. Swift very cleverly put just the right words into Gulliver's philosophic observation, and only through Gulliver could he have achieved this complex, yet perspicuous, satirical effect.

Gulliver likewise plays an all-important part in the development of caustic satire, for he is the object of unjust treatment. One of the Lilliputian courtiers reveals to Gulliver details of the council debate and the final decision not only to put out Gulliver's eyes but to gradually starve him to death. These resolutions had been suggested not by the ungrateful Emperor or Gulliver's enemies, the jealous and malicious ministers Flimnap and Bolgolam, but by Gulliver's friend Reldresal. How very bitter the satire is at this point.

Gulliver captured the fleet of Blefuscu for the Emperor; but because he refused to be the means of subjecting the people of Blefuscu to Lilliputian tyranny, the Emperor disregarded Gulliver's past service to him. He even thought himself lenient in sanctioning the council decision. How much in contrast to the merciless Emperor and his ministers is the gentle Gulliver who realizes that he could easily stone the metropolis, and thereby destroy Lilliput and save himself. But he remembers the favors that the Emperor had granted him and the title of Nardac confirmed upon him after he

captured the enemy navy. Gulliver, in spite of the vile treatment he has received, retains gentleness and honor. Although he recognizes the Lilliputian practices to be unjust, he will not sacrifice his own moral standards to avenge Lilliputian injustice. Remember that Gulliver once before clung to such moral integrity despite the failure of his London medical practice. Thus, Gulliver seems to be a man of high principles.

Gulliver is the medium through which Swift added a bit of irony to the already corrosive satire in the following resolution:

At last I fixed upon a Resolution, for which it is probable I may incur some Censure, and not unjustly; for I confess I owe the preserving my Eyes, and consequently my Liberty, to my own great Rashness and Want of Experience: Because if I had then known the Nature of Princes and Ministers, which I have since observed in many other Courts, and their Methods of treating Criminals less obnoxious than myself; I should with great Alacrity and Readiness have submitted to so easy a Punishment.¹⁵

After we have felt the impact of the extreme cruelty and lack of mercy behind the council decision, Swift shocks man's pride even further when Gulliver naively implies here that this punishment is less severe than that inflicted upon innocent persons by governing bodies in other parts of the world. Gulliver has never before become so completely naive. Swift provided Gulliver with this characteristic in order to add irony to his already corrosive satire. Thus,

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 57

in the development of satire against government, Swift manipulated Gulliver to achieve the effects he desired. And frequently we find that he provided a contrast between Gulliver's character traits and those standards which he was attacking.

Now let us analyze another important part of the satire in Lilliput: the attack on laws and customs of Europe as well as of Lilliput. Swift achieved the effectiveness of the satire in this section through two distinct approaches. He pictured some of the Lilliputian laws and customs as models of utopian perfection, and relied upon the intellect of his readers to compare them with the principles of their own country. Thus, the attack is not explicitly expressed but becomes apparent to the thoughtful reader. The second approach provides satire which tends to be more explicitly stated. Through this method, Swift reveals the degeneration of the pigmy institutions into a state of corruption parallel, in general, to that of human practices. At times he extended the attack beyond the reflection that European institutions are decadent and cleverly implied man's practices to be worse than the Lilliputian delineation.

The very evident effects of this latter approach are perceptible in Gulliver's description of the petty diversions at the Lilliputian court. He pictures the tight rope antics of the ministers and their dexterity in leaping over and crawling under a stick manipulated by the Emperor. Those giving the best performance and proving themselves to be the

most agile receive court appointments and other favors. The relatively minute size of the Lilliputians which Gulliver has so precisely built up in the minds of the readers makes this performance very absurd. Swift did rely upon the readers to transfer the importance of the episode to their own society and to realize the absurdity of man's corrupt practices.

However, Gulliver seems altogether impervious to the true meaning of the situation, for he is pleasantly diverted with the "dexterity and magnificence" of the performance. We have previously noted Gulliver's high moral standards. Such morals together with his reasonably high degree of intelligence lead us to believe that he should instantly grasp the significance of this situation. We, the readers, immediately realize the corruption of the ministers and understand Swift's satirical implications, but we can only wonder at Gulliver's unawareness. There is only one explanation to this inconsistency: Swift was anticipating a satirical effect when he sacrificed Gulliver's awareness of this obvious situation. And Swift had to pay the price: Gulliver's character does suffer. But this inconsistency in his characterization Swift was willing to allow in order to achieve a satiric effect.

The first approach involves the representation of Lilliputian institutions as an ideal standard with which to compare corrupt conditions in other parts of the world. The effects of this approach may be seen in Gulliver's descriptions of the Lilliputian educational system. The parents finance their children's education, for the Lilliputians

believe it unjust for society to assume the burden of supporting the offspring of every man's lust. Since parents should not be trusted with the education of their children, infants are placed in institutions in order to prepare them to take the place in society that birth has decreed. Notice that the class system is stringently maintained. According to their laws, a false accuser is put to death and the accused recompensed for his humiliation. Fraud, from which the honest man has no protection, is considered a worse crime than theft. In filling government offices, the officials consider men's morals to be more important than their abilities. This latter point of view seems to be paradoxical when we compare it with Gulliver's earlier description of the antics of the Lilliputians who are competing for offices. Here is Gulliver's answer to the paradox:

In relating these and the following Laws, I would only be understood to mean the original Institutions, and not the most scandalous Corruptions into which these People are fallen by the degenerate Nature of Man.¹⁶

Thus, we are to understand that the original institutions were ideal, but the fantastic stunts illustrate the decadence which has occurred since they were formulated. Notice how cleverly Swift has linked the Lilliputians with mankind, at the same time attacking humanity, when Gulliver says that the pigmies have fallen into such corruptions "by the degenerate Nature of Man."

In describing Lilliputian institutions, Swift intention-

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 44

ally inverted the order that one would expect; that is, we expect the description of the original ideals to be followed by an explanation of the present corrupt practices. But this normally expected sequence is not followed, and we find first that Gulliver describes the corrupt practices but is absolutely unaware of the significance of the situation. Then, there follows the description of the ideal nature of the institutions, and then the above quoted explanation of the paradox. This inverted order necessitates the explanation given by Gulliver, and, thus, Swift created an effective means to strike directly at the very nature of humanity.

I have analyzed the two main satirical developments in the first voyage, and have indicated Swift's use of Gulliver in the development of satire. Gulliver does not always react in the manner that we expect; that is, his actions are not consistent, and such diversity weakens his characterization. The inconsistency which I have discussed involves his intellectual capability: his failure to grasp the significance of the competitive performance of the ministers. But Gulliver becomes the object of comedy in several episodes, and as a result, Swift allowed further inconsistencies in Gulliver's portrayal. The comedy in all of these episodes ultimately depends upon the clearly defined disparity in size between Gulliver and the Lilliputians and upon the former's complete disregard of Lilliputian minutia. Thus, Gulliver vindicates the reputation of Flimnap's wife as well as his own against scandal: he denies that she ever privately came to his lodgings and appeals to his servants for their confirmation

of this avowal. Gulliver's naive sincerity is evident in this statement:

I should not have dwelt so long upon this Particular, if it had not been a Point wherein the Reputation of a great Lady is so nearly concerned; to say nothing of my own;¹⁷

Gulliver is reacting to Lilliputian situations as if he were among people who are his physical equals, and his explanation seems utterly absurd in this land of minutiae. The reader must again chuckle at Gulliver, who in a prostrate position before the six inch Imperial Majesty of Blefuscu, kisses his hand as a farewell gesture. Gulliver previously went through much the same procedure when the Emperor of Lilliput granted him liberty. Swift has again sacrificed characterization because he gave no explanation for those reactions which the readers are unable to reconcile with the English attitude toward royalty. ?

Despite these inconsistencies, the role of Gulliver is being steadily developed; the progression is especially evident in his increased display of reasoning ability. Gulliver profits intellectually by his experiences: as the voyage progresses, he weighs his observations much more and adds his own interpretations to them. But his earlier tendency was to merely describe details and events. For example, Gulliver described the agile stunts of the Lilliputian ministers, but made no attempt to interpret their actions. Of course, the omission of interpretation here forms a part of

17 Ibid., p. 49

Swift's satiric purpose: he used Gulliver to establish for the reader the relationship of size between Gulliver and the pigmies. Likewise, much of the early part of the voyage is devoted to details and contrasts which make this size ratio clear. For example, the descriptive inventory of Gulliver's possessions, which was made by the pigmies, helps to establish relationships in an incidental but very effective manner. More specifically, the Lilliputians describe Gulliver's pistol as "a hollow pillar of iron, about the length of a man." Gulliver illustrates the precision of Lilliputian calculations which are based upon a ratio of twelve to one. The pigmies very carefully determine that one hundred and fifty of their beds arranged in proper order are needed to make a bed for Gulliver. Likewise, they calculate that Gulliver's body is equivalent to 1728 of them, and, thus, he must receive food in this proportion, twelve times by volume the quantity of food eaten by a pigmy. Such descriptions give the readers a clear conception of this size relationship. After he achieved this purpose, Swift increased Gulliver's ability to interpret and associate experiences and to draw philosophical conclusions. The effects of this change met the needs of his satire and, at the same time, were consistent with what the reader would expect of Gulliver. Typical of Gulliver's newly developed ability is this observation concerning the ambition of rulers:

His Majesty desired I would take some other Opportunity of bringing all the rest of his Enemy's Ships into his Ports. And so unmeasurable is the Ambition of Princes, that he seemed to think of nothing less than

reducing the whole Empire of Blefuscu into a Province, and governing it by a Viceroy; of destroying the Big-Indian Exiles, and compelling that People to break the smaller End of their Eggs; by which he would remain sole Monarch of the whole World.¹⁸

We find this change in Gulliver is both contributive to satirical effect and consistent with characterization.

Let us attempt to reconcile our original impression of Gulliver with his character development during the voyage in order to see just what kind of Gulliver left Lilliput and what sort of individual we might expect to arrive in Brobdingnag. He has given us no reason to doubt his gentleness, and we may still regard him to be extremely kind and fair-minded and to possess high moral standards. He also retains that inquiring, open mind which we witnessed in early descriptions, but he has matured, and is now able to interpret events and to generalize from them. As Gulliver sees the English colors on the approaching boat which will carry him back to his native country, we witness a bit of patriotism which marks him as an Englishman. We have seen evidences of naivete in Gulliver's actions and must recognize it to be part of his nature. When thinking back at Gulliver's failure to recognize the very obvious size relationships, I think that we are justified in rejecting dullness as the cause of his unawareness of the situation, for there is ample evidence to show that he is no dullard. Rejecting this theory, we find the solution in Swift's satiric purpose, for the author disregarded Gulliver's characterization when using him to

18 Ibid, p. 37

achieve the ends of his satire. We may expect to see evidence of gentleness, moral integrity, naivete, and patriotism in the Gulliver who goes to Broodingnag, and we shall expect philosophic utterances from him. However, we must not be surprised if, occasionally, Swift heightened his satire at the expense of consistency of characterization.

The effects of his satirical humor are apparent even in the description of the land of Broodingnag. The description is written in a naive and patriotic style, but it is not without a certain amount of irony. The description of the land of Broodingnag is written in a naive and patriotic style, but it is not without a certain amount of irony. The description of the land of Broodingnag is written in a naive and patriotic style, but it is not without a certain amount of irony.

Swift, Gulliver's Travels, Part I, Chapter 11.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF GULLIVER'S ROLE IN BROBDINGNAG

Gulliver matured mentally in Lilliput, for, as we have seen in his later reflections, he associated present with past experiences, and then drew generalizations from these associations. The effects of his reasoning become most apparent after he reaches Brobdingnag. Here he finds his position in reverse to that in Lilliput, for he is no longer Man-Mountain of Lilliput, but little Grildrig, a pigmy in the land of giants. He remembers actions, like his capture of the entire Blefuscan fleet, which the Lilliputians considered prodigious feats. But he, the very same man, now fearfully expects "but to be a Morsel in the Mouth of the first among these enormous Barbarians,"¹⁹ who might discover him. Previous observations in which men seem "more savage and cruel in proportion to their bulk" underlie his fear. Then Gulliver compares the fear and insignificance which he now feels with his former importance in Lilliput where he was the concern of the Emperor and his ministers. Through the mental contrast between his status in Lilliput and that in Brobdingnag, Gulliver concludes that "nothing is great or little otherwise than by Comparison."²⁰ This emphasis on the relativity of Gulliver's status unifies the

19 Swift, op. cit., p. 71

20 Loc. cit.

first two voyages. But Gulliver is still the unifying factor since it is through his experiences that the relativity is made clear to the reader: Gulliver in outward appearance is the same man in both countries, but the importance of his actions and of his position in society shift with his change from Lilliput to Brobdingnag. His importance is, then, measured in terms of his environment.

Gulliver's immediate fear of the giants proves to be groundless. As he lies exhausted in a corn field, Gulliver expects an enormous foot to come down upon him or a reaping-hook to cleave him in two. But then, a giant workman discovers him, and Gulliver, in a state of nervous apprehension, thinks "that he would dash me against the Ground, as we usually do any little hateful Animal which we have a Mind to destroy."²¹ The sixty foot Brobdingnagian does not justify these fears; in fact, he is very considerate of this curious little creature: he immediately releases his grip upon Gulliver when he realizes that the pressure is painful. Swift has shaped Gulliver's experience to show that cruelty is not necessarily proportionate to bulk. But Swift had more to say about the reactions of these giants, and he again spoke through the experiences of Gulliver.

He proceeded to epitomize humanity through the portrayal of the Brobdingnagian farmer and his treatment of Gulliver. The farmer is fundamentally kind and considerate: he sees that Gulliver is well cared for and protects him from his

21 Ibid., p. 72

mischievous son. But the prospect of wealth changes the farmer from a kindly, understanding person into an inconsiderate, unprincipled individual. At the suggestion of a mercenary friend whom Gulliver describes as having eyes resembling "the full moon shining into a chamber at two windows," the farmer trains Gulliver for public performances. Gulliver's master was so desirous of money that after he observed the poor, over-worked little Grildrig to be in grave danger of dying, he was very happy to sell him to the Queen of Brobdingnag. Through this farmer's treatment of Gulliver, Swift illustrated the stimulative effect of money upon the passions: desire for wealth can lead to the subduing of reason and the perversion of the naturally good impulses of man. Thus, Swift has lifted his relativity into the moral realm, into the very essence of mankind: the course of man's actions depends upon the impulses he receives from his environment. Swift is saying that perhaps men are basically good, but the extent that they remain so is relative to the environmental stimuli received by the passions.

With regard to Swift's method of conveying this message, the role of Gulliver is important, though Gulliver is merely passive. It is the Brobdingnagian farmer who assumes the major part and Gulliver who is acted upon. Gulliver makes no philosophical generalizations, for Swift intended this little episode to speak for itself and therefore subordinated Gulliver to it. Thus, Gulliver, through his earlier reflections, established the relativity on the physical level, and then assumed a minor, passive role in order that Swift

might carry the theme into the moral realm.

The theme of the episode embodying the farmer's treatment of Gulliver serves as a prologue to the main body of the satire in this voyage. The heart of the satire is developed through Gulliver's conversations with the King of Brobdingnag, and embodies a dissection of human actions and a probing of human motives. Let us analyze the significant elements in their conversations, especially noting Gulliver's reactions.

We notice a change in Gulliver after he has become established in the Brobdingnagian court: he has resumed his former active role in the story, and ultimately in the satire. Gulliver gradually gains the preference of the King, who notices the display of intelligence in so small a creature. The King enjoys conversing with Gulliver and is especially interested in Gulliver's account of the manners, laws, and government of Europe. Gulliver admits that he has given the best possible account of his people, for he is proud of the country to which he belongs. We begin to see patriotism again flaring up in him, but must grant that an human being among strangers would act much the same. But after the copious oration, the huge King looks down on little Grildrig and reflects:

...how contemptible a Thing was human Grandeur,
which could be mimicked by such diminutive
Insects...and yet, said he, I dare engage, those
Creatures have their Titles and Distinctions of
Honour; they contrive little Nests and Burrows,
that they call Houses and Cities; they make a
Figure in Dress and Equipage; they love, they

fight, they dispute, they cheat, they betray.²²

Here we feel that Swift is speaking through the King and is directly attacking man's vain pretense at grandeur. Gulliver is decidedly indignant at this utter disrespect for his beloved country. Admitting that his face changed color several times as the King berated his people, he reveals the naivete that we have seen before in his nature. But upon reflection, Gulliver admits his reaction to be rash. He has relied upon his theory of relativity that nothing is great or insignificant except by comparison, and believes the King's attitude to be based upon disparity of size. Having become acclimated to Brobdingnagian size, he thinks he too would laugh at the pomp of English manners. Gulliver is now aware of size relativity which he completely ignored in Lilliput. However, he has not realized that the King in his condemnation of human grandeur judged European manners from the standpoint of an individual observing a pigmy society, much the same position Gulliver held in Lilliput. That is, the King's conception of human minutiae tended to magnify human pomp and corruption in his mind. Poor Gulliver is proud of his country and overlooks its corruptions at this time. But notice that Swift is never speaking through Gulliver in these episodes. In fact, he manipulated Gulliver to achieve a very definite purpose. Gulliver's indignation at the King's justified condemnation of European society shows that pride has overshadowed Gulliver's power of reason.

22 Ibid, p. 91

It is toward Gulliver, representing human actions, that we turn our attention. Swift made Gulliver, not his spokesman here, but the object of his attack against human nature.

After his dangerous escapade with a monkey as large as elephants in Europe, Gulliver pompously tells how he should have combated it. The King heartily laughs, and Gulliver again is much aware of the inequality of size and his own feeling of inferiority as a result. He makes no pretense to hide English vanity when reflecting:

And yet I have seen the Moral of my own Behavior very frequent in England since my Return; where a little contemptible Varlet, without the least Title to Birth, Person, Wit, or common Sense, shall presume to look with Importance, and put himself upon a Foot with the greatest Persons of the Kingdom.²³

Thus, Gulliver has admitted his own display of vanity before the King. However, I think that we shall see that this is but another inconsistency in his development in order that Swift might include this concrete example of English vanity. I make this statement because Gulliver's following commitments do not show evidence of any basic change in thought which such reflection should entail. In fact, at their next conference, Gulliver verbally avenges himself against the King's ridicule when he tells him

...that the Contempt he discovered towards Europe, and the rest of the World, did not seem answerable to those excellent Qualities of Mind, that he was Master of. That, Reason did not extend itself with the Bulk of the Body: On the contrary, we observed in our Country, that the tallest Persons were usually

23 Ibid, p. 108

least provided with it.²⁴

Gulliver has reverted to the defensive attitude in these statements. Now the previous quotation in which he reveals the corrupted moral behavior of Europeans is an abrupt interruption in his patriotic attitude: the defensive attitude is apparent before this revelation of English corruption and is resumed immediately afterwards as evidenced in this last quotation. There is no apparent reason for the change, and it is not permanent. By its very nature, then, Gulliver's shift from the defensive attitude is an inconsistency, not in basic character traits, but in thought development. As in those inconsistencies involving character traits, Swift sacrificed Gulliver's development, this time his logical thought sequence in order to get in an extra slap at mankind. As before, satirical effect is paramount, and Gulliver, as a means to this end, is flexible, sometimes to the point of inconsistency.

Continuing our analysis, we see that the King rather admires Gulliver for his spunk and is desirous that he give him a detailed account of England. Poor Gulliver is so filled with pride and patriotism for England that he cannot imagine her having any faults. His complete belief in her perfection is evident when he laments not having the ability of Demosthenes or Cicero in order, he says, "to celebrate the Praise of my own dear native Country in a Style equal to

24 Ibid., p. 111

its Merits and Felicity."²⁵ When Gulliver has given a very complete account of English government, law, and education, the King asks questions which by their very nature suggest some of the main corruptions of Europe. For example, he was interested to know whether religious and political parties influence the degree of justice, and was astounded to learn that a free and peaceful country would maintain a mercenary standing army. The King of Brobdingnag, through questions and commentaries, achieves a dual purpose in the satire at this point: he is illustrating in an incidental way, the principles of an ideal, yet practical, government; that is, the principles are as ideal as can be allowed in a functioning government. And, of course, he is making obvious to the readers the corruptions of the English government.

After all questions and commentary are over, the King, stroking Gulliver, concludes:

My little Friend Grildrig; you have made a most admirable Panegyrick upon your Country. You have clearly proved that Ignorance, Idleness, and Vice are the proper Ingredients for qualifying a Legislator. That Laws are best explained, interpreted, and applied by those whose Interest and Abilities lie in perverting, confounding, and eluding them. I observe among you some Lines of an Institution, which in its Original might have been tolerable; but these half erased, and the rest wholly blurred and blotted by Corruptions.²⁶

With these words, Swift epitomized his views on English society and implied that man, along with his own degeneracy, has carried the perhaps once tolerable institutions into

25 Loc. cit.

26 Ibid, p. 116

decadence.

One would think that Swift had achieved his ultimate purpose through the King's conclusions. But once again Gulliver is made a tool to carry the satire a step further. Gulliver was quite naive in his sincere desire to glorify European society. Recall that before he began his oration, he says, "...how often I then wished for the Tongue of Demosthenes or Cicero, that might have enabled me to celebrate the Praise of my own dear native Country in a Style equal to its Merits and Felicity."²⁷ His account of Europe clearly reveals the corrupt conditions to the King, however. Realizing that he has not favorably impressed the King with his country, Gulliver attempts to vindicate his failure when he says that he "artfully eluded many of his Questions; and gave to every Point a more favourable turn by many Degrees than the strictness of Truth would allow."²⁸ This admission implies Gulliver's awareness of English corruptions. Moreover, he openly admits them in this statement: "I would hide the Frailties and Deformities of my Political Mother, and place her Virtues and Beauties in the most advantageous Light."²⁹ This development might be fitted into the pattern of satire in two different ways. First, if we are considering it in relation to Gulliver's pride and patriotism, we can see by

27 Ibid. p. 111

28 Ibid., p. 117

29 Loc. cit.

these admissions how strongly the passions can subdue obvious truths and pervert reason. Gulliver, by the fact that he is the sole man in Brobdingnag, is representative of his country and of mankind in general. Thus, he must receive all of the ridicule which Swift, through the King of Brobdingnag, inflicted upon mankind. His passions, not his reason, come to his defense. Pride leading to patriotism reigns over his thought, and he cannot view society, his fellow men, or himself objectively. By showing how the environment of Brobdingnag stimulated the rise to dominance of pride in Gulliver, Swift developed the theme I mentioned earlier as embodied in the prologue. Swift portrayed Gulliver, here symbolic of man, as unstable, a slave to passions and ultimately to the environment which stimulates the passions.

Second, the above mentioned development becomes a part of the overall pattern of Swift's satirical effect. If this portion had been omitted, the King's conclusions in themselves would have afforded brilliant satire, but Gulliver's statements strengthen the credibility of the King's conclusions. Gulliver admits that he tried to hide the corruption of his country, and the reader becomes aware that the King did not really know how bad Europe was when he made his bitter remarks on it. Thus, his vindication enabled Swift to strengthen the satire and illustrate to what ends pride and patriotism have driven Gulliver.

After these revelations, Gulliver resumes his active role of patriotism and claims the King's conclusions to be results of provincialism which he says will "produce many

Prejudices, and a certain Narrowness of Thinking; from which we and the politer Countries of Europe are wholly exempt."³⁰ Poor deluded Gulliver. He displayed prejudices through his ardent defense of his own corrupted country, and now he claims the King to have many prejudices from which he and his countrymen are exempt. We cannot help but laugh at Gulliver, who vainly attempts to rationalize here. Once again Swift has made Gulliver the object of satire by revealing the false beliefs to which men will resort in order to justify their own convictions.

Gulliver once again condemns the King for his provincialism and narrow principles. The King refused Gulliver's offer of the gunpowder formula and was horrified that Gulliver would even suggest that he maintain absolute dominion over his people by using explosives in the European manner. Swift was augmenting Gulliver's rationalistic attempt to justify English folly. But at the same time, he purposely shaped the words between Gulliver and the King to imply that man has perverted his social tendencies. Let us see how Swift has effected this implication. Now the King has displayed his own humane nature, for he is not only horrified at Gulliver's habituation to the inhumanity of war but says that he would rather lose half of his kingdom than possess the secret of explosives. But Gulliver claims provincialism responsible for the King's attitude. In contrast to Brobdingnagians, the Europeans are

³⁰ Loc. cit.

a naturally cosmopolitan race. But to what does this cosmopolitanism lead? Recall Gulliver's description of the dreadful effects of the use of explosives in Europe, and remember his manner, so casual that he seemed totally unmoved by the cruelty of these reminiscences. If we combine man's cosmopolitan nature with this portrayal of inhumanity in Gulliver's descriptions and in his attitude, we see Swift's implication: man has perverted his natural social tendencies to the extent that socialization breeds not humanitarianism but inhumanity; man is not capable of social, cosmopolitan living, for only the provincial, narrow-minded individuals remain humane, Swift is saying.

Gulliver's condemnatory remarks about the King serve a third purpose in the satire. They provide a transition from the part in which human folly is exposed to that part which reveals the ideal, though practical, qualities of Brobdingnagian society. Still governed by pride, Gulliver diabolically refutes the obviously fine qualities of their customs, those which are lacking in European manners. For example, he remarks on their laws:

They are expressed in the most plain and simple Terms, wherein these People are not Mercurial enough to discover above one Interpretation. And, to write a Comment upon any Law, is a capital Crime. As to the Decision of civil Causes, or Proceedings against Criminals, their Precedents are so few, that they have little Reason to boast of any extraordinary Skill in either.³¹

³¹ Ibid, p. 120

The many interpretations of man's laws afford much of the legal corruption as do the past decisions which have become authoritative. Swift then attacked such folly in a most ingenious way: by having Gulliver ridicule these virtuous qualities of Brobdingnagian society, he exposed and attacked the follies in human government.

Let us turn back for a moment to Gulliver's discourse on gunpowder. We must not disregard his indifferent manner of describing the destructible potentialities of gunpowder. Notice how totally unmoved he is by the inhumanity of the scenes which he depicts in this exposition:

That, the largest Balls thus discharged, would not only Destroy whole Ranks or an Army at once; but batter the strongest Walls to the Ground; sink down Ships with a thousand Men in each, to the Bottom of the Sea; and when linked together by a Chain, would cut through Masts and Rigging; divide Hundreds of Bodies in the Middle, and lay all Waste before them. That we often put this Powder into large hollow Balls of Iron, and discharged them by an Engine into some City we were besieging; which would rip up the Pavements, tear the Houses to Pieces, burst and throw Splinters on every Side, dashing out the Brains of all who came near.³²

Gulliver is proud that his people are capable of inventing a powder that effects such cruelties. Is this the same man who would not inflict revenge upon the inhumane Lilliputians and who earlier would not engage in the vices typical of medical men in order to save his London practice? We can understand Gulliver's patriotic effort to hide the vices of his countrymen and even his indignation toward the King. But

³² Ibid, p. 118

this description, delivered in pride and with total disregard for human suffering, embodies an attitude which we cannot reconcile with Gulliver's character. We must conclude that this character inconsistency has enabled Swift to display the extreme inhumanity to which man can become habituated.

But Jonathan Swift had not yet exhausted the means of manipulating versatile Gulliver to achieve the effects he desired. Gulliver condemns giant and European alike in his commentary on a Brobdingnagian book of morals:

This Writer went through all the usual Topicks of European Moralists; shewing how diminutive, contemptible, and helpless an Animal was Man in his own Nature;...He added, that Nature was degenerated in these latter declining Ages of the World, and could now produce only small abortive Births in Comparison of those in ancient Times.³³

We notice that Gulliver has broken the barrier between Brobdingnagians and Europeans, and unites them through similarity in their moral beliefs. And he condemns all moralists in this observation:

For my own Part, I could not avoid reflecting, how universally this Talent was spread of drawing Lectures in Morality, or indeed rather Matter of Discontent and repining, from the Quarrels we raise with Nature. And, I believe, upon a strict Enquiry, those Quarrels might be shewn as ill-grounded among us, as they are among that People.³⁴

Gulliver's condemnation of all moralists for their tendency to quarrel with nature enabled Swift to assure his readers that the favorable impression he has given of the Brobdingnagian

33 Ibid, p. 121

34 Ibid, pp. 121-2

society is not meant to imply the perfection of that society. This point of view is substantiated when Gulliver remarks that the Brobdingnagians "have been troubled with the same Disease, to which the whole Race of Mankind is Subject; the Nobility often contending for Power, the People for Liberty, and the King for absolute Dominion."³⁵ Swift is saying, then, that no society is perfect by virtue of the fallibility of the men comprising it.

Swift ends this voyage in a comic vein. Gulliver had become so thoroughly acclimated to the scale or size in Brobdingnag that he actually makes a fool of himself when among his fellow humans again. For example, he asks the sailors who had rescued him to bring into the cabin the twelve foot square box which had been his home in Brobdingnag. Ordinary men look like pigmies to Gulliver, and he calls to travelers to get out of his way in order that he will not trample them. Gulliver, in mind, is again in Lilliput. After arriving home, he stoops below his wife's knees in order to kiss her, and being used to looking up at the giants, he cannot even see his daughter who kneels to receive his blessing. Gulliver, himself, calls these actions "an instance of the great power of habit and prejudice." Swift intended Gulliver's return to human society to be more than a comic scene. He intended it to culminate his theme: the subordination of reason to the prejudices initially stimulated by environment.

We can conclude without any doubt that Gulliver is a

³⁵ Ibid, p. 122

more versatile character in this voyage than in the previous one. Simultaneous with this greater flexibility is an increase of inconsistencies in his portrayal. Gulliver's failure to recognize English corruptions in light of both the King's commentaries and the superior example of Brobdingnagian manners does not seem consistent with our judgment of his intellectual ability. Likewise, his inhumane description of the use of gunpowder does not bear out our conception of his moral integrity. His philosophic conclusions on relativity at the beginning of the voyage support our judgment of his intellect, but Swift subordinated his character stability during the main body of the voyage in order to attack his satiric objectives in just the manner he desired.

Swift's satire is more corrosive in this voyage than previously. He was probing into the motives behind human action, but did not hold them up for ridicule. Thus, the theme which underlies the satire in this voyage displays the domination of passion over reason; Swift was working with human essence and was preparing for the scorn and misanthropic elements in the voyage to Houyhnhnm Land. We have seen that the more corrosive satire in the second voyage embodies many manners of attack or approaches at satire. And, of utmost importance, these attacks, with few exceptions, depend for development upon the thought and actions of Gulliver. Gulliver often reveals human folly in his descriptions of Europe. In many cases, Gulliver, himself, is the butt of the satire; for example, he epitomizes human vanity when demonstrating how he should have fought the huge monkey. And after a laugh

from the King, he carries on the attack by reflecting upon human vanity: "...how vain an Attempt it is for a Man to endeavor doing himself Honour among those who are out of all Degree of Equality or Comparison with him."³⁶ Thus, sometimes Gulliver reveals human folly and sometimes he exemplifies it.

In spite of his extreme flexibility and inconsistent development at times, Gulliver has not lost his individuality. His patriotism, closely connected with pride, has been his most dominant characteristic in the voyage. And it was about this trait that Swift built much of the satire. Naivete has again appeared in his nature, this time in company of patriotism. By virtue of his small stature relative to Brobdingnagian proportions, Gulliver is not in a position to display gentleness toward the giants. However, he is considerate of the mischievous farmer's son as well as of the Queen's dwarf in spite of the intolerable pranks he played upon Gulliver. Gulliver's quality of open-mindedness has been partially obscured by patriotism: it prevents him from objectively judging his own country and fosters contempt for Brobdingnagian manners because they are superior to those of Europe. But his first reactions to his fellow men after leaving Brobdingnag show that he has become adjusted to that totally different environment. Gulliver's inquiring mind has not been inhibited, for he was anxious to learn the Brobdingnagians' language and was interested in their manners and

³⁶ Ibid., p. 108

customs. Thus, Gulliver is still a student of the world.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF GULLIVER'S ROLE IN LAPUTA

The role of Gulliver in "A Voyage to Laputa" differs from his portrayal in the rest of the book. Gulliver has completely lost his extreme patriotism for European society. In losing this pride, he has become a more objective critic of European as well as Laputian manners; actually he has become a critic of human society. Arthur Case³⁷ very rightly said that Gulliver assumes the role of narrator and interpreter, not an actor, in Laputa. Solely as an observer, Gulliver is not out of character. On the contrary, he more closely portrays those characteristics that we first attributed to him: intelligence, consistent judgment, inquiring mind. Nowhere in this voyage do we feel that he is foolish or ignorant. In fact, we accept his observations with confidence that they are accurate and just. Never in any other part of the book are author, character, and reader more nearly on a plane with one another; that is, all criticize society by analyzing Laputian manners and comparing them with their own. As well as favorably displaying his intellect, Gulliver gives full license to his inquiring mind. Before starting on his third adventure, he remarks that his thirst for seeing the world is still violent despite past misfortune. Throughout the voyage, Gulliver is desirous to observe and learn about

³⁷ Arthur Case, Four Essays on Gulliver's Travels (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1945), p. 117

everything new: the Laputian language and manners, the mainland of Balnibarbi and the Academy of Projectors at Lagado, the magicians at Glubbudrib, and the Struldbrugs of Luggnag. Thus, if we can justly draw conclusions from this resume of Gulliver's conduct, we would say that the role of Gulliver seems to be consistent in this voyage. But let us analyze Gulliver's role.

Through his comments, Gulliver becomes the mouthpiece for Swift---more noticeably so than in any other part of the book. His critical observations of Laputian society embody Swift's views, for we never feel Gulliver to be the object of Swift's attack, as in other voyages. In his reflections, Gulliver calls to mind European customs and objectively criticizes them along with Laputian manners. But let us observe some of Gulliver's important commentaries and see how Swift developed his attack on human life.

Gulliver attributes the narrow thinking and poor reasoning of the inhabitants of the Flying Island to their obsession with abstract mathematics and music. He mentions that mathematicians seem prone to engage in political affairs, a tendency which he has observed in Europeans. But, he cannot see why mathematicians should be adept in politics unless, as he says, "those People suppose, that because the smallest Circle hath as many Degrees as the largest, therefore the Regulation and Management of the World require no more Abilities than the handling and turning of a Globe."³⁸ The words and concepts

³⁸ Swift, *op. cit.*, p. 148

in this analogy suggest that mathematics is a mechanical and inflexible science. But we know politics to demand versatile management. Thus, Swift worded the analogy to show how unqualified is the scientist to govern a nation. Then Gulliver says that such an inclination to interpret and even manage affairs in terms of one science is not unique to mathematicians but seems "to spring from a very common Infirmary of human Nature, inclining us to be more curious and conceited in Matters where we have least Concern, and for which we are least adapted either by Study or Nature."³⁹ Beneath this satire is Swift's fear that such natural tendencies in man would be perpetuated, for he has noted that English specialists, more specifically scientists, have shown interest in European politics. Gulliver's descriptions of Laputian manners reflect, then, the conditions which Swift felt might develop in European society if science were allowed free reign.

Gulliver's rather comical experience with the Laputian tailor illustrates the undesirable effects that have arisen after science was imposed upon tailoring. Gulliver describes the procedure in this manner:

He first took my Altitude by a Quadrant, and then with a Rule and Compasses, described the Dimensions and Out-Lines of my whole Body; all which he entred upon Paper, and in six Days brought my Cloths very ill made, and quite out of Shape, by happening to mistake a Figure in the Calculation. But my Comfort was, that I observed such Accidents very frequent, and little regarded.⁴⁰

³⁹ Loc. cit.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 146

But previous to this description, Gulliver remarked that this tailor used different methods from those in Europe. This statement and his description of Laputian tailoring converge to attack human nature if we consider Swift's commentary on human tendencies. His commentary was, you remember, that humans are naturally prone to judge and govern affairs in terms of the one science with which they are most familiar. The theme is then evident: European tailoring might degenerate into such an impractical trade if science be allowed to develop such natural tendencies of man. But this incident does not terminate Swift's attack upon science in connection with human endeavors.

When Gulliver visits the mainland of Balnibarbi, he observes the devastation of the country. He learns from Lord Munodi that such decadence occurred when a group of the citizens returned from the Flying Island "with a very little Smattering in Mathematicks, but full of Volatile Spirits acquired in that Airy Region."⁴¹ And all arts and sciences were then put upon a new footing, a very unstable, speculative foundation, however. Munodi's estate, still managed in the traditional manner, appears most prosperous and provides contrast with the devastation which has resulted from the new system. It is Munodi who furnishes the information about the effects of Laputian speculation upon his country. Gulliver's role is merely to relay this account

41 Ibid, p. 160

to the readers.

Likewise, Swift achieved the satire of the Lagado Academy of Projectors through Gulliver's descriptions as an observer, not an actor. Since Gulliver does not color the descriptions with his own opinions, Swift depended, then, upon vivid description to effect the satire here. Gulliver's observations do continue the attack on abstract knowledge: science, when allowed to become the basis and end of all endeavors, can lead to useless and fantastic accomplishments. Gulliver describes one of the projector's absurd objectives, that is, to develop and propagate sheep without wool. But the cobweb artist, whose aim seems legitimate, employs a fantastic method: he proposes to eliminate the process of dyeing silk by feeding colored flies to spiders which would in turn spin webs of the desired hues. And, the flies must be fed the proper diet in order that the spiders which eat them will spin strong webs. Another professor has spent all of his life perfecting a frame which he hopes will "improve speculative knowledge by mechanical operations." Judging by the attack upon abstract knowledge, we must feel that Swift considered the continuation and improvement of speculative learning to be detrimental to the welfare of society, and certainly the improvement of knowledge solely by mechanical means is absurd. Thus, the frame is an example of poor aims and faulty method. Swift is saying in the section on the projectors that speculation can lead to absurd objectives, to fantastic methods, and sometimes to both pointless aims and ineffectual methods

of achieving those aims.

After Gulliver arrives at the school of political projectors, Swift alters his role a trifle. Gulliver is allowed to add his own opinions. For example, he explains that the professors were advocating schemes such as persuading rulers to choose advisers on the basis of wisdom, ability, and virtue; rewarding virtue as well as punishing vice; and teaching ministers to consider the welfare of the people. Then he condemns these ideas as "wild impossible Chimaeras, that never entered before into the Heart of Man to conceive."⁴² He feels that man is not only incapable of administering these proposals but does not possess the righteous instincts to recognize their merits. He ends this discussion with this attack upon philosophers who propose such schemes: "...there is nothing so extravagant and irrational which some Philosophers have not maintained for Truth."⁴³ Swift has then effected a two-fold attack: satire against philosophers for suggesting such impossible schemes and against the very moral essence of man which renders him incapable of recognizing virtue and propagating it. We see that Gulliver approves of such less visionary philosophers who advocate that doctors administer cathartics to senators at the beginning of their sessions. The attack against law makers is amplified when Gulliver adds his own opinions with regard to

42 Ibid, p. 171

43 Loc. cit.

the advantages of the scheme; he says that it will increase unanimity, shorten debates, curb petulance of the younger members, and correct positiveness of the older senators. This proposal which Gulliver regards as less visionary may seem fantastic, and Swift intended that it be so. He implied that men resort to such measures in order to develop man's naturally unethical tendencies. Gulliver's opinions enabled Swift to attack several objectives at the same time, making the satire more complex and more effective.

In Glubbudrib, the Island of Magicians, Gulliver discovers many errors in history by observing and questioning famous men of the past whom the magicians conjure up for his benefit. Gulliver has brought before him the senate of Rome and an assembly belonging to a later age. He contrasts them in this manner: "The first seemed to be an Assembly of Heroes and Demy-Gods; the other a Knot of Pedlars, Pick-pockets, Highwaymen, and Bullies."⁴⁴ This reflection suggests that later generations produce inferior leaders compared to those of ancient times. Later, after he has observed many more men of both ancient and modern ages, he concludes:

As every Person called up made exactly the same Appearance he had done in the World, it gave me melancholy Reflections to observe how much the Race of human Kind was degenerate among us, within these Hundred Years past.⁴⁵

Thus, Swift intended that Gulliver's comparison of the Roman

44 Ibid, p. 180

45 Ibid, p. 185

and modern assemblies prepare for this later conclusion. Gulliver even desires to observe English yeomen of the "old stamp" who were known for simplicity of manners, justice, and love for their country. The yeomen he has seen in England, says Gulliver, are not worthy of such praise. We can see that Swift carefully guided the satire toward this view of the degeneration of man; he did not allow the theme to grow tiresome by weary repetition but used Gulliver's reflections to gradually evolve the theme.

But, for our purposes, the next satirical development, surrounding the Struldbrugs, is important for character portrayal. Gulliver's attitude toward the immortal Struldbrugs in Luggnag reveals his sentiments toward life. Despite his critical attitude toward humanity that we have just witnessed, he still enjoys life and desires to remain among men; for, when he first learns about the immortals living in Luggnag, he cries in rapture, "Happy nation, where every Child hath at least a Chance for being immortal!"⁴⁶ But after he learns that the minds of the Struldbrugs decay after they pass eighty years of age, he perfectly understands why they desire death. Gulliver would like to send several Struldbrugs back to England in order to free his countrymen from their fear of death, but a Luggnagian law prohibits such practices. He is sympathetic, then, toward his countrymen and would like to remove a fear embedded in the entire nation. In short,

46 Ibid., p. 192

Gulliver is philanthropic here.

Now that we have observed Gulliver's role in the important satiric developments, let us generalize his reactions. As I mentioned earlier, Gulliver is not an actor in this voyage, and hence his own character is not particularly important. His role is confined to narration and reflection, which necessarily limits flexibility in the satire. We found in Gulliver's voyage to Brobdingnag that his versatility enabled Swift to complicate, intensify, but at the same time to clarify, the satire, thereby rendering it more effective. Without such flexibility of Gulliver, Swift was not able to develop satire here that is comparable to that in the second voyage.

However, even though Gulliver's role in this voyage is limited to that of an observer, the satire revolves about Gulliver: he watches the projectors at Lagado and relates his observations; he experiences the results of scientific speculation in tailoring; he adds his own opinions to the proposals of the political projectors; he gives his own interpretation of the display of history which he observes at Glubbudrib. So, in this voyage, Gulliver contributes to the satire through his observations, experiences, and comments.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF GULLIVER'S ROLE IN HOUYHNNHM LAND

After his adventures in Laputa, Gulliver remains with his family for five months---the longest period that he has ever stayed at home between voyages. This vacation with his family leads us to believe him to be still a lover of mankind. Shortly after his acquaintance with the Houyhnhnms and the contemptible Yahoos, he makes this comment:

And indeed, I now apprehended, that I must absolutely starve, if I did not get to some of my own Species: For as to those filthy Yahoos, although there were few greater Lovers of Mankind, at that time, than myself; yet I confess I never saw any sensitive Being so detestable on all Accounts; and the more I came near them, the more hateful they grew, while I stayed in that Country.⁴⁷

Here Gulliver confesses that he does love mankind. And he has never given us reason to believe that he felt otherwise. It is true that despite his patriotic attempt to hide her flaws, Gulliver revealed the corruption of Europe to the King of Brobdingnag. But Swift wove patriotism so well into Gulliver's actions that we never question the latter's philanthropy; never do we think that he is deliberately being cynical of European society. But Gulliver is destined to change his entire conception of humanity, for there becomes rooted in his mind a dislike of men and an aversion to society. Swift manipulated two factors in order to change Gulliver's

47 Ibid, p. 214

philanthropic view of life: the similarities between man and Yahoo, and the contrast between the virtuous effects of Houyhnhnm reason and the vices of men who also possess the faculty of reason. Let us first trace the Yahoo-human contrast in order to see how it influences Gulliver's outlook on life and what effect his change has upon the satire.

When Gulliver first sees the Yahoos after his arrival in Houyhnhnm Land, he describes them in detail; the delineation clearly suggests a likeness to human beings. And perhaps this likeness underlies the natural antipathy which he feels toward them. It is not until he sees them a second time that he makes explicit the physical resemblances between human being and Yahoo:

The Beast and I were brought close together; and our Countenances diligently compared, both by Master and Servant, who thereupon repeated several Times the Word Yahoo. My Horror and Astonishment are not to be described, when I observed, in this abominable Animal, a perfect human Figure....⁴⁸

Such a resemblance increases Gulliver's natural antipathy toward the Yahoos. But the reader, unlike Gulliver, is not shocked at this discovery, for Swift prepared for it through Gulliver's previous description of the beasts. Thus, Swift did not allow Gulliver to recognize this resemblance until after it was apparent to the readers in order that his astonishment would make the resemblance vivid to the readers. Swift manipulated Gulliver carefully to attain this effect.

Now that the physical resemblance is clearly defined,

48 Ibid., p. 213-14

Swift sought to establish parallel effects of reason and morals between man and Yahoo. His approach is indirect; that is, he established the few differences between Gulliver and the Yahoos, and thus implied that they were alike in all other ways. Gulliver's clothes puzzle the Houyhnhnms, and they finally discover that without them he is much like their Yahoos. However, the horses marvel that a creature so resembling their uncivil and irrational Yahoos could be intelligent, and they notice that he seems to possess the ability to reason. The main difference between Yahoo and man, then, involves rationality. Before we continue with Swift's treatment of human reason in the satire, we must determine the significance of the Houyhnhnm role in the development to this point.

Gulliver always praises the horses most highly. Notice the very favorable impression that he gives of their reactions to him in this description:

They were under great Perplexity about my Shoes and Stockings, which they felt very often, neighing to each other, and using various Gestures, not unlike those of a Philosopher, when he would attempt to solve some new and difficult Phaenomenon.... the Behavior of these Animals was so orderly and rational, so acute and judicious, that I at last concluded, they must needs be Magicians....⁴⁹

Gulliver is early aware that the Houyhnhnms are rational creatures. Likewise, they are astonished to discover his inclinations toward reason. The Master Houyhnhnm is most anxious for Gulliver to become proficient enough in the

49 Ibid, p. 210

Houyhnhnm language to describe his country, his fellow men and their manners.

But in his ensuing account of humanity, Gulliver reveals the most deplorable effects of man's power of reason. He enumerates the following causes of war among men: the ambition of princes, corruption of ministers, differences in opinion. He pictures men in the worst possible light by emphasizing the aggressive side of war. But notice the inhumanity of this definition: "a Soldier," Gulliver says, "is a Yahoo hired to kill in cold Blood as many of his own Species, who have never offended him, as possible he can."⁵⁰ Certainly patriotism has entirely disappeared from Gulliver's reactions, and we can hardly think this attitude typical of the middle class Englishman. Swift has necessarily made Gulliver emphasize the horrid actions of men without even acknowledging the existence of humane individuals, much less their admirable traits. The Master Houyhnhnm says that he is glad that nature has rendered human beings physically incapable of harming each other in war. This statement enables Gulliver to describe the implements which man has devised to destroy his fellow men. After Gulliver's expose of the dreadful effects of armaments, his Master desires to hear no more, and can only say:

That, although he hated the Yahoos of this Country, yet he no more blamed them for their odious Qualities, than he did a Gnnayh (a Bird of Prey) for its Cruelty, or a sharp Stone for cutting his Hoof.

50 Ibid, p. 230-31

But, when a Creature pretending to Reason, could be capable of such Enormities, he dreaded lest the Corruption of that Faculty might be worse than Brutality itself.⁵¹

And Gulliver interprets his Master's reflections in this manner:

He seemed therefore confident, that instead of Reason, we were only possessed of some Quality fitted to increase our natural Vices; as the Reflection from a troubled Stream returns the Image of an ill-shapen Body, not only larger, but more distorted.⁵²

Here the Houyhnhnm Master and Gulliver have epitomized the message which Swift wished to convey to his readers, that is, that man has perverted his reason to increase his natural vices. But notice that the author was preparing for this conclusion through Gulliver's descriptions of human conduct; as we have seen, Gulliver's presentation is void of all humanitarianism, and does lead naturally toward this conclusion. But Gulliver has not shown any signs of worship for the Houyhnhnms up to this time, nor has Swift given an acceptable reason for this attitude toward man; certainly Gulliver is not a lover of mankind here. We can only conclude that Swift's purpose was to present human conduct in the worst possible light in order to justify the Houyhnhnm conclusion, and he permitted character inconsistency in order to achieve his purpose. On the other hand, perhaps Swift meant to show by Gulliver's attitude that his character was

51 Ibid. p. 232

52 Loc. cit.

so habituated to the human cruelties that he regarded such inhumane acts to be marks of courage; in fact, Gulliver refers to the following scene as a display of valor:

And, to set forth the Valour of my own dear Countrymen, I assured him, that I had seen them blow up a Hundred Enemies at once in a Siege, and as many in a Ship; and beheld the dead Bodies drop down in Pieces from the Clouds, to the Diversion of all the Spectators.⁵³

If Swift intended Gulliver's descriptions to intimate that he regarded inhumane deeds to be valorous, then Swift sacrificed characterization to achieve satiric effect. For recall Gulliver's response to the Emperor of Lilliput who desired him to conquer Blefuscu: "...I plainly protested, that I would never be an Instrument of bringing a free and brave People into Slavery."⁵⁴ Such an avowal is proof that Gulliver was not only capable of recognizing evil but that he was actually a humanitarian at one time. And Swift has not since shown Gulliver to be incapable of recognizing vice. However, the critic will point to the fact that Gulliver's expositions of human conduct in front of the Brobdingnagian King seem to suggest that he was habituated to human vice. But we saw that his vindication reveals that he was aware of human corruption. And in Laputa, Gulliver specifically mentions many European corruptions, thereby showing that he is capable of recognizing evil. Swift disregarded Gulliver's earlier reactions in order to make his satire effective here, and thus

53 Ibid, p. 231

54 Ibid, p. 37

permitted such character inconsistencies.

Gulliver's later retraction for his biased representation of humanity does not succeed in erasing these inconsistencies in characterization. But let us consider the argument:

But I must freely confess, that the many Virtues of those excellent Quadrupeds placed in opposite View to human Corruptions, had so far opened my Eyes, and enlarged my Understanding, that I began to view the Actions and Passions of Man in a very different Light; and to think the Honour of my own Kind not worth managing....⁵⁵

Thus, Gulliver's explanation of his biased representation of mankind is that the contrast between Houyhnhnm perfection and human corruption has led him to reject humanity and to embrace this life of reason and virtue. If Gulliver had shown some sign of veneration for his fellow men early in the voyage, this retraction might satisfactorily explain his disregard for human virtue. But his only inclination toward philanthropy is the statement which I mentioned earlier in which he calls himself a lover of humanity. Then Swift carried this explanation completely beyond credibility when he provided Gulliver with this vindication:

However, it is now some Comfort to reflect, that in what I said of my Countrymen, I extenuated their Faults as much as I durst before so strict an Examiner, and upon every Article, gave as favourable a Turn as the Matter would bear. For, indeed, who is there alive that will not be swayed by his Byass and Partiality to the Place of his Birth?⁵⁶

These words are reminiscent of Gulliver's vindication in

55 Ibid., p. 242

56 Ibid., pp. 242-43

Brobdingnag, but, I must add, not as effective. Gulliver's patriotism was evident in his conduct prior to the Brobdingnagian vindication. But in Houyhnhnm Land, he shows no form of patriotism; in fact, his conduct evidences quite the opposite. We must consider, then, Swift's explanation of Gulliver's previous attitude to be unsatisfactory, and the inconsistencies that we have noted must stand.

However, Gulliver's explanation of his conduct may be considered indicative of the change that is taking place in his moral nature and to be revelatory of his later conduct in the presence of human beings. You remember that Gulliver says that the conduct of the Houyhnhnms has widened his own understanding and therefore has enabled him to analyze human conduct more objectively. The Houyhnhnms are governed by reason and are almost without passion; their love and friendships are not confined to individuals but encompass the entire race. Thus, Houyhnhnm Land is an Utopia of reason. It is only when Gulliver observes the Houyhnhnms as representative of pure reason and the Yahoos as pure beast that he attempts to separate the reason from the beast in his own nature.⁵⁷ In repulsion to his passions, he tries to aspire to pure reason, completely closing his mind about this ideal. But we shall follow this theme again when Gulliver leaves

⁵⁷ Cf. T. O. Wedel, "On the Philosophical Background of Gulliver's Travels," Studies in Philology, XXIII (Oct. 1926), p. 443. Mr. Wedel suggests that Swift intended Gulliver to represent here the allegorical delineation of the dual nature of man: beast and reason.

Houyhnhnm Land, and here must follow Swift's development of the attack upon human reason.

Swift employed several methods to solidify the Houyhnhnm conclusion that men use the faculty or reason to increase their vice. Gulliver reiterates the theme by giving concrete examples of corruptive practices in the law profession. It is his Master who asks questions which enable Gulliver to reveal the motives behind this perverse human conduct; actually, the Houyhnhnm provides the transitions in the satire. For example, after Gulliver's exposition of the unjust practices of lawyers, the horse questions what he means by saying that lawyers practice corruption for hire. In answering this question, Gulliver explains that men resort to any means to obtain money which will buy everything they consider pleasurable. The horse now wants to know what these costly items are that men so much desire and why they should want them. This inquiry leads Gulliver to reveal the vain desires of men and women and then the diseases which they contract from such vain living. By answering the Houyhnhnm's questions, Gulliver is able to concretely exemplify the corrupt nature of man.

Swift projected man's state of debauchery in another way, by the contrast of human society with that of the virtuous Houyhnhnms. Gulliver's Master tells him that the horses adhere to an hereditary class system, that those which are bay, dapple-gray, and black are superior in intellect and physical form to the white, sorrel, and iron-gray who always remain servants. Gulliver proceeds to denote the characteristics of the nobility, the highest class among his people.

He says that they may be singled out from the rest of his people by their physical infirmities and such mental imperfections as dullness, ignorance, caprice, sensuality, and pride. And Gulliver adds that such are the men who govern his country. Again Gulliver has projected the defects of humanity before the reader.

The theme of man's perversion of reason is exemplified in a third way, by the comparison of Yahoo and man. The Yahoos epitomize the passionate side of man without the faculty of reason to govern. Gulliver describes some of their characteristics as follows:

...they are cunning, malicious, treacherous and revengeful. They are strong and hardy, but of a cowardly Spirit, and by Consequence insolent, abject, and cruel. It is observed, that the Red-haired of both Sexes are more libidinous and mischievous than the rest, whom yet they much exceed in Strength and Activity.⁵⁸

Such are many of man's characteristics, again the least desirable ones. Gulliver could no longer deny himself to be a Yahoo after one of the females embraced him as he was bathing in a stream. This incident implies a natural basis for the identification of Yahoo with man, who is represented by Gulliver. The Master Houyhnhnm also draws many parallels between man and Yahoo conduct with regard to such vices as greed, lechery, and vanity; he says that there is even a ruling Yahoo who has a favorite corresponding in corruption to the English minister of state. At this point Swift had

58 Swirt, op. cit., p. 250

provided enough concrete examples to warrant the repetition of the Houyhnhnm's former reflection upon man's use of his reason. And it is Gulliver who reiterates the Houyhnhnm conclusion. Notice how very specific and personal is the meaning of Gulliver's words:

When I thought of my Family, my Friends, my Countrymen, or human Race in general, I considered them as they really were, Yahoos in Shape and Disposition, perhaps a little more civilized, and qualified with the Gift of Speech; but making no other Use of Reason, than to improve and multiply those Vices, whereof their Brethren in this Country had only the Share that Nature allotted them.²⁹

Men are Yahoos who have used their reason to increase their vices, says Gulliver. In fact, they are worse than these beasts that have only the vices given them by nature. Thus, concrete examples of man's corrupted nature are presented through contrasts between Houyhnhnm and human society, and through the Yahoo-human contrast. Then these examples culminate in Gulliver's restatement of this attack upon mankind.

The above quotation is more than a restatement of the theme of the voyage, however. It epitomizes Gulliver's new attitude toward human nature after he has aspired to the perfection of his own reason. Thus, when the general assembly asks that he leave this Utopia, Gulliver swoons, for he must part from the rational Houyhnhnms whom he worships. From his worship of Houyhnhnm perfection and through his aspirations to acquire perfect reason himself, Gulliver has imitated Houyhnhnm characteristics, their speech, their gait,

59 Ibid., p. 262

and their virtue. In addition he has accepted the absurd statement made by his Master that the anatomy of a horse is superior to that of man. Here Swift showed how man is by necessity governed by his passions: though Gulliver was aspiring to subject his passions to reason, he was actually being guided by them. For worship is an emotional reaction, by its very nature involving the passions, and it is worship for the Houyhnhnms that inspires Gulliver to seek perfection of his own reason. Thus, Gulliver becomes the foil of the passions which he was striving to exclude.

Before leaving the land of reason, Gulliver tells his Master that if he should return to England, he will try to help his "own Species, by celebrating the Praises of the renowned Houyhnhnms, and proposing their Virtues to the Imitation of Mankind."⁶⁰ However, in the light of Gulliver's complete denunciation of human nature and his worship for the virtuous horses, it seems likely that Gulliver is not so much interested in attempting to reform humanity as in praising Houyhnhnm perfection in the world.

When he leaves the Houyhnhnms, Gulliver intends to find a deserted island where he might live a solitary life and contemplate their virtue, for he feels that life with men, whom he refers to as Yahoos, would cause him to degenerate into vice and corruption. He even expresses his preference to remain among the savage barbarians who have wounded him

60 Ibid., p. 265

with an arrow than to be discovered by "European Yahoos" in a ship which he sees approaching.

Even after Gulliver meets the virtuous Portuguese Captain, Pedro de Mendez, his mind is bound by worship for the Houyhnhnms, and he regards the Captain as a Yahoo on the basis of physical resemblances. The fact that Swift portrayed the Captain as kind, generous, and understanding and that Gulliver fails to respect his virtues shows that Gulliver does not represent Swift's beliefs at this point in the satire.⁶¹ Thus, we can say that Swift guided Gulliver into misanthropy, but judging by these latter developments, we see that Swift did not share the beliefs of his narrow-minded, misanthropic character. Poor Gulliver actually becomes a comic figure. He detests wearing the Captain's clothes because they have been on the back of a Yahoo; but needing clothes very badly, he condescends to put them on after they have been aired for twenty-four hours. Gulliver even shows repugnance toward his family, and looking at his children, he shudders to think that he has perpetuated the Yahoo species. Again this display of misanthropy by Gulliver cannot be attributed to Jonathan Swift, for he with his readers shares the comedy of the character which he created.

Swift not only manipulated Gulliver to achieve the effectiveness in the main body of his satire and for this comic effect as well, but he molded him in order to exemplify

⁶¹ Cf. Ross, op. cit., pp. 193-95; also, Case, op. cit., pp. 120-21

man's futile attempt to defy nature. That is, man is naturally part beast and part reason, and he cannot succeed in perfecting reason to the exclusion of the passions. Thus, Gulliver's attempt to perfect himself contradicts nature. And by virtue of an unrealistic worship of the ideal to which he aspired, Gulliver not only failed to eliminate his passions but was ruled by them.

Arthur Case referred to "The Letter to Sympson" as "Swift's attempt to do the almost impossible---to write a second climax to his book more powerful than the first."⁶² Gulliver had begun to tolerate human society again in the last part of the book, but his idealism is fully revived in this letter. It seems that he had been persuaded to publish the account of his travels with the assurance that they would reform corrupt humanity. Since Gulliver can see no evidence of such reform in his countrymen, he rejects this attempt at reform as a visionary scheme and concludes: "And, it must be owned, that seven Months were a sufficient Time to correct every Vice and Folly to which Yahoos are subject; if their Natures had been capable of the least Disposition to Virtue or Wisdom...."⁶³ Thus, in this second climax, Swift stirred Gulliver back into misanthropy in order to attack man who is content to remain in such a state of debauchery. Here as we have seen in previous developments, Gulliver acts ultimately for satiric effect.

62 Case, op. cit., p. 121

63 Swift, op. cit., p. xxxv

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Swift created a realistic character as narrator of his Travels, an individual whose actions never seem incredible. First he provided the readers with a brief delineation which portrayed Gulliver as a middle class Englishman with characteristics of his own. It is most difficult to determine which was basically more important to Swift, his satire or Gulliver, because they are so closely connected, almost inseparable. Some portions of the book, those revealing inconsistencies in Gulliver's characterization, suggest that Swift sacrificed Gulliver's portrayal for satiric effect. But on the other hand, much of the satire depends, not upon inconsistency in Gulliver, but rather the consistency of his established traits and his moral development as a human being. Thus the main development of satire against humanity depends upon Gulliver, that is, upon his experiences, opinions, and of utmost importance, the effect of environment upon his mental and moral development. Especially in Houyhnhnm Land is the environmental influence important, for it provides the ideal of reason around which Gulliver built a new, but an absolute, philosophy of life; and in rejecting deviations from his new standards, he developed antipathy toward man.

Gulliver's important development in the last voyage concerns a basic change of attitude toward life. Gulliver's

misanthropic view of life has profound influence upon his character which in turn molds the satire. In comparing Gulliver's general reaction previous to the change with his later attitude which stems from misanthropy, we may determine the extent to which Gulliver's character traits have changed. I think that his definition of a soldier which I quoted earlier is a typical reflection of his aversion to humanity. We find no such cynicism in the other voyages: in Lilliput Gulliver implies human institutions to be originally corrupt; in Brobdingnag he reveals the inhumane practices of Europeans, but his frequent flares of patriotism preserve his philanthropy here; and in Laputa Gulliver objectively criticizes society. But notice that these epitomized statements of Gulliver's functions in the previous voyages reveal a steady progression toward his aversion to mankind which we find in the Houyhnhnm voyage. In spite of this progression from voyage to voyage, Gulliver's misanthropy puzzles the reader until Gulliver explains that he has adopted Houyhnhnm perfection and has rejected humanity which embodies principles unreconcilable with ideal reason. The reader does not understand the change of attitude up to this time because Swift did not make explicit Gulliver's inner thoughts---his outer actions merely implying inner conflict.

Since we see only the end effects of his mental conflict, we may regard Gulliver to be less complex than he actually is. Thus, Gulliver's acceptance of misanthropy was not of an abrupt nature, for he was mentally ready for it by the time that he arrived in Houyhnhnm Land. We can look back at his

attitude in previous voyages and perceive the mental preparation for his acceptance of misanthropy. Through implication in Lilliput, he shows that he is aware of human corruption. However, he is too proud of his country to accept the just condemnation of society given by the King of Brobdingnag. Despite his patriotism, he several times admits the existence of European corruption. In Laputa he loses this pride in his fellow men and is able to objectively criticize human manners and motives and to reveal them without the least hesitancy. As a result of accepting the existence of human folly, Gulliver has become a critic of humanity, but we have not witnessed his mental struggle during the change from patriot to critic.

Only the outward manifestations of his change to misanthropy are revealed because they only are relevant to the impact of the satire. It is the Houyhnhnm environment which offers Gulliver a substitute for the corrupt human society which he was criticizing. And in Houyhnhnm Land the dual nature of man is separated in the Yahoos who represent the beast side of mankind and the Houyhnhnms who represent reason. Now Gulliver realizes that the passions symbolized in the Yahoos are responsible for human corruption, and he seeks the perfection of his reason, and obliteration of the passions. In order to maintain the Houyhnhnm ideals, he must avoid association with the beast nature in man. He completely closes his mind with this idea; this same mind was once inquiring, rendering Gulliver eager to observe and associate with any peoples. Such is the misanthropic consummation of Gulliver's

mental struggle for the ideal life.

On the basis of the foregoing, we may conclude that Swift built up a character and showed it developing and changing. It is true that occasionally consistency in Gulliver's character is not maintained. But after all Gulliver's Travels is not a novel but a satire which is meant to "vex the world," and Swift used Gulliver in every way which would harden the blows, thereby strengthening his attack against human folly.

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