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GULLIVER'S TRAVELS: EPIC SATIRE

by

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GULLIVER'S TRAVELS: EPIC SATIRE

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In this study, I frequently draw upon work of Swift scholars that has tacitly become part of the common understanding of Swift's works. Since my indebtedness to these scholars passes almost unnoticed in my documentation, I wish to acknowledge it here. Most of the critical works I have consulted and found helpful are included in the Bibliography, Section III.

I wish to thank several of my colleagues--especially David Lampe--who have patiently and kindly listened to my arguments, made suggestions, and sent me to helpful sources.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND WHAT IT INVOLVES

Gulliver's Travels is a complex work, one of the most complex in English literature. Its satire hits unevenly upon a wide range of objects--contemporary political life, the Royal Society and science, the Dutch, writers of travel books, the pride of mankind, the use of gunpowder, as well as a multitude of assorted historians, philosophers, and literary critics. This potpourri of satiric objects, however, suggests only one kind of complexity. In the same work there are four different fictions, which seem to operate at various levels. Some episodes are apparently "realistic" and non-allegorical; others apparently involve political and historical allegory; still others seem to involve a more universal kind of allegory or symbolism. This complexity is further increased by Swift's persona, Gulliver, who functions as both narrator and protagonist. His is no simple function. His behavior seems at various times heroic, pathetic, comic, stupid, wise, proud, prudent, condescending, perhaps even tragic, and combinations of these. There is no apparent consistency in his character. There is, for instance, no gradual or sudden degeneration from sage to fool, no gradual or rapid development from fool to sage. At times he apparently speaks for Swift; at others he certainly does not. Moreover, the fiction of Gulliver as author is confusing. Swift creates the character of

a misanthropic seaman reporting and commenting on his various adventures; yet his misanthropy is only occasionally evident in the first three Voyages.

Out of this complexity, three problems of the craft of fiction emerge: First, there is no apparent singleness of satiric purpose; the attacks seem to be suggested ad hoc. Second, Swift does not preserve a well-knit fiction throughout the work; the work seems to be four autonomous works bound together in a most tenuous and mechanical manner. Third, Gulliver, the one element that seems to provide some semblance of unity in the work, renders the work confusing; his relationship to the controlling intelligence behind the work is unclear. At several points in the story, the reader does not know for sure how he ought to regard Gulliver. Though this problem emerges in all the Parts, it becomes most acute in the "Voyage to the Houyhnhnms." Wayne Booth summarizes the problem this way: "Unless there has been some permanent loss of clues to meanings which were clear to Swift's contemporaries, we must conclude either that Swift's norms are too complex or that their relations with Gulliver's opinions are too complicated."<sup>1</sup> All these problems--the apparent lack of singleness of satiric purpose, the failure to preserve a well-knit fiction, and Gulliver's relationship to Swift--point to and contribute to a larger problem, a problem in the basic view the artist must have of his task: the apparent absence of a principle of organization, the apparent lack of artistic unity in Gulliver's Travels.

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<sup>1</sup>The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago, 1961), p. 321.

This problem--the apparent lack of artistic wholeness--is faced by every reader of Gulliver's Travels, and it is the problem which he must solve or attempt to solve before he can render an intelligent judgment about it. Yet as I have read the criticism Gulliver's Travels has evoked, I have been astonished at and disturbed by the proportion of attention devoted to Part IV of the work, the "Voyage to the Houyhnhnms." In article after article, the focus is on this Part, and even in most of those studies which treat the entire work, the emphasis almost inevitably falls on this Part.<sup>2</sup> I suppose that I should not be astonished that this is the case. For of the four Parts, the last undoubtedly evokes both the strongest responses and the greatest variety of responses. But if I should not be astonished, I am, I think, rightfully disturbed. For the tendency to focus so intently upon Part IV--or upon any of the other Parts in isolation from the others--seems to involve a tacit admission that the work is artistically flawed, that it is essentially four separate works bound together in a less-than-satisfactory manner. Even if this admission is not implicit, concentrating on any one Part--whether or not it is Part IV--precludes, I think, the discovery of any principle that may organize the entire work.

But this is to anticipate. The tendency among critics to focus on the "Voyage to the Houyhnhnms" has its source in an attempt to find unity. And in this attempt, the Fourth Voyage receives most attention because of the assumption that it contains, in a way that the other Voyages do not, the terms upon which we are to read the

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<sup>2</sup>For articles devoted primarily to Part IV, see below, Bibliography, Section III.



work. Thus, there is general agreement that the Fourth Voyage has to do with Swift's conception of man and that it sets forth universal propositions of some sort which are implicit in the preceding Voyages. Consequently, the first three Voyages come to be regarded as providing the particulars or data that give rise to the conclusions or propositions in Part IV. Martin Price, for example, puts into express language what is merely implicit in much of the criticism of Gulliver's Travels: "Most of the controversy about the meaning of Gulliver's Travels centers upon the Fourth Voyage. It is here that we have to face all the issues of the book, and our understanding of that section will make sense of all that goes before."<sup>3</sup>

This way of reading Gulliver's Travels occasions the use of some curious language in the criticism--language common to at least three critics though they disagree about the "meaning" of the work. I wish to call attention to that language. In his essay, "The Houyhnhnms, the Yahoos, and the History of Ideas," R.S. Crane argues that "'the great foundation of misanthropy' on which 'the whole building' of his Travels rested was his proof . . . of the 'falsity of that definition animal rationale.'"<sup>4</sup> Crane, so far as I can tell, invites us to take Gulliver's conclusions as Swift's own. Earlier in this essay, he writes:

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<sup>3</sup>Gulliver's Travels, ed. Martin Price (New York, 1963), p. xviii.

<sup>4</sup>In The Idea of the Humanities and Other Essays Critical and Historical, II (Chicago, 1967), p. 282. This essay first appeared in Reason and the Imagination: Essays in the History of Ideas, 1600-1800, ed. J.A. Mazzeo (New York, 1962), pp. 231-253.

Whatever else may be true of the Voyage, it will doubtless be agreed that one question is kept uppermost in it from the beginning, for both Gulliver and the reader. This is the question of what sort of animal man, as a species, really is; and the point of departure in the argument is the answer to this question which Gulliver brings with him into Houyhnhnmland. . . . The central issue, in other words, is primarily one of definition: is man, or is he not, correctly defined as a "rational creature"?<sup>5</sup>

And Crane accounts for Gulliver's misanthropy at the end of the Fourth Voyage in this way: "The thing that changes his love into antipathy is the recognition that is now forced upon him that these facts are wholly incompatible with the formula for man's nature which he has hitherto taken for granted. . . ."<sup>6</sup>

Edward Rosenheim, Jr., according to Crane, takes a similar view of Part IV.<sup>7</sup> It is therefore not surprising that we find Rosenheim using this kind of language as he writes about Gulliver (and apparently Swift) in the Fourth Voyage:

The final terrifying disclosure [in Part IV] of man's bestiality, irrationality, and pride supplies a fundamental charge which can be leveled against the specific objects of Swift's satire, for what he learns among the Houyhnhnms formulates, in gross and relatively direct terms, the vices which have been displayed by the Walpolites, the pedants, the projectors, the statesmen, the Maids of Honor, the Dutch, and the other particular evidence in his voyaging which negates, in any way, the conclusion to which his Houyhnhnm adventures remorselessly lead him.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Crane, p. 272; my italics.

<sup>6</sup>Crane, p. 273; my italics.

<sup>7</sup>See Crane, p. 278. I find Rosenheim's discussion of the relationship between Gulliver and Swift somewhat confusing; he apparently allows a distinction between Swift and Gulliver but does not insist on one; for his discussion of this problem, see pp. 218-226.

<sup>8</sup>Swift and the Satirist's Art (Chicago, 1963), pp. 210-211; my italics.

Rosenheim continues:

Gulliver's critical discoveries in the Fourth Voyage are adumbrated throughout the earlier books. The "truths" which he learns, and which move him radically to alter his previous attitudes, are concerned not with the particulars under assault, but with 'that animal called man' in that universal aspect which is the province of the moral philosopher. In its violence and idiosyncrasy, the myth of the Fourth Book may come as a shocking surprise. . . . Yet whatever Gulliver seems to have learned--what he has been able to formulate in propositions about mankind as a species--as a result of his previous experiences, tends, with clear relevance, toward the damning assessment of man which his final discoveries produce.<sup>9</sup>

The final critic from whom I wish to quote a passage is Kathleen Williams, who, unlike Professors Crane and Rosenheim, sharply distinguishes between Swift and Gulliver and who therefore finds a different "meaning" in the work. Yet her language is strikingly similar to theirs. She writes about Part IV:

Of course it is partly dependent on the earlier books for its success, but Swift takes full advantage of the meanings established, and the psychological effect made, in them, and in the 'Voyage to the Houyhnhnms' he sums up, with the utmost economy of means, the suggestions made in Laputa, Lilliput, and Brobdingnag.<sup>10</sup> In a way, it is a summing up of all his work. . . .

When one pays close attention to the language of these passages one discovers that the discussions are couched in the terms of rhetoric, more particularly of argument. Indeed, there is a disturbing implicit analogy: the organization of Gulliver's Travels is like that of an inductive argument. But this work, unlike most of Swift's other satires, is a narrative, an exemplum, if you will, not an argumentative piece; and it is as a narrative, not as a

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<sup>9</sup>Rosenheim, p. 211; my italics.

<sup>10</sup>Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise (Lawrence, Kansas, 1958), p. 177; my italics.

philosophical argument, that the work must be read.

Moreover, the proposition which leads to using this analogy is unacceptable: the "Voyage to the Houyhnhnms" is in some way the key to understanding the entire work. This proposition implies that one must first understand Part IV and then the other Parts. Yet the context provided by the first three Parts may well contribute to the "meaning" of the fourth. Moreover, this proposition invites one to read Gulliver's Travels with two pairs of glasses, the first three Parts with one set, the fourth with another. Consequently, one may overlook the complexity of the first three Parts, and doing so may, in turn, lead to a misreading of the fourth Part.

These objections to one assumption about the organization of Gulliver's Travels are not to be construed as meaning that Part IV is unimportant; or that the first three Parts can be fully understood without the fourth; or that Part IV is not the climax. An assessment of Gulliver's Travels as a whole must, of course, take into consideration all four Voyages. And that is my point. It is one thing to say that a reader cannot understand all the ramifications of the work until he has read the entire work. But it is quite another thing to say that the first three Voyages do not make sense until he reads the last one; or that he must postpone judging the significance of characters' actions and comments until the fourth Voyage; or that the first three Voyages are of lesser artistic quality and of lesser importance than the last Voyage.

In the chapters that follow, an attempt is made to solve the most crucial problem raised by Gulliver's Travels--the apparent lack of artistic unity. But this study does not address this entire

problem at once. Rather it focuses on one aspect of it: the role of Gulliver, or the relationship between Gulliver and the controlling intelligence behind the work. Working at the solution to this latter problem will—if my hope at this stage turns out to be justified—simultaneously lead to the discovery of the principle that organizes Gulliver's Travels and makes it an artistic whole. This study does not attempt to read the work in the context of Swift's biography, of his other works, or of the "temper" of the age in which it was produced. Nor does it undertake a "new critical" treatment—a detailed explication of the text with primary emphasis on irony, ambiguity, and paradox. Nor does this study investigate sources; I do not attempt to discover the raw materials with which Swift began and then to reconstruct the creative processes that turned those materials into Gulliver's Travels.

But this study does begin with assumptions. First it assumes the entire work; it does not separate out one Part only for attention. Second, it assumes the sufficiency of the terms established by the work itself. Third, it assumes a context for the language of which we modern readers are generally unaware, a context which we must recapture if we would establish relevance to Gulliver's Travels. That is, this study does not assume that the work is "self-explanatory." A knowledge of certain conventions may be necessary to understand it. Therefore certain materials may be pertinent to my discussion; they may help to clarify the meaning of the language and to assess the significance of character and action.

Though this study treats Gulliver's Travels in its entirety, it does, at the same time, focus on each of the Parts in isolation

from one another. In the next four chapters--those devoted to the separate Parts--the discussion is initiated by a consideration of some of the problems that each Part presents: problems Swift apparently faces as an artist, ones that other readers and I have encountered, or ones that are of a personal sort and perhaps originate in my peculiar response. There are two reasons for adopting this method. First, beginning with problems that each Part raises will more likely lead to a reading that assumes the terms of that Part, rather than those of some preconceived thesis. Second, since each Part employs a different fiction, it may be that the way in which the language operates and the way in which we are to read differ from Part to Part. A final chapter will assess the results of these inquiries. Should it fall out that those results suggest a hypothesis about the entire work, this chapter will test that hypothesis. The direction of this study, then, will be from the specific to the general, from the particulars to the whole, from the simpler to the more complex. It begins with the conviction that in a great work of art the principle of order will become clear, its pattern and design will emerge, if sufficient attention is given to the particles that make up the work.

## CHAPTER II

### GULLIVER IN LILLIPUT: HERCULES OR POLYPHEMUS?

In the "Voyage to Lilliput" Swift must walk this tight rope: portraying Gulliver neither as a wooden representative of virtue and wisdom nor as any kind of representative of their opposites. Swift must win the reader's sympathy for Gulliver here so that subsequently the reader will feel all the teeth of the satiric bite of the later voyages. He must lull the reader into an early acceptance of Gulliver's erroneous judgments and frequent lapses into unreliability. Swift's problem is somewhat analogous to that of Jane Austen's in Emma. Just as Jane Austen must manage the story of Emma so that the reader can see the heroine's faults and simultaneously remain sympathetic toward her, so Swift must, if his satire is to generate its greatest force, avoid a Gulliver who is either a paragon of virtue and wisdom or the butt of satire. In the first Voyage, then, as preparation for later complexity, a series of oppositions in Gulliver's character should become manifest. If my hypothesis is correct, he should appear an inconsistent character, but a character whose inconsistency we tend to overlook or consider unimportant.

There are, in Part I, a number of inconsistencies in Gulliver's actions and comments that support this hypothesis. Gulliver, for instance, is torn between subduing the Lilliputians,

if he must do that to gain his liberty, and submitting to them. He considers stoning the metropolis, but because of his oath of obedience to the Emperor he does not do so. He subscribes to the articles defining his duties "with great Chearfulness and Content, although some of them were not so honourable"<sup>1</sup> as he could have wished. He takes "all possible Methods to cultivate . . . [a] favourable Disposition" toward the emperor and his court (p. 38), only to refuse obedience to the emperor's command that he reduce Blefuscu into a province. He often is gentle and kind--perhaps more accurately, tolerant--toward the Lilliputians, though he perceives the "scandalous Corruptions" that pervade Lilliputian society (p. 60).

In this chapter, I will focus on these inconsistencies that Gulliver displays, inconsistencies which Swift perhaps invites us to overlook and ignore. More particularly, I will investigate the significance of classical associations that Swift draws upon in portraying Gulliver as inconsistent--associations that suggest comparison of Gulliver with both Hercules and Polyphemus.<sup>2</sup> There are two reasons for this investigation: First, they may, in spite of their apparent unimportance, enable the reader to assess accurately, in this first Part, the significance of Gulliver's comments and actions; second, these implicit comparisons may indicate two possible ways in which Gulliver's character may develop in the subsequent Parts.

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<sup>1</sup>Gulliver's Travels, ed. Herbert Davis, rev. ed. (Oxford, 1963), p. 44. All subsequent citations to the Travels are to this edition, Vol. XI of The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford, 1939- ); page references appear in my text.

<sup>2</sup>George McCracken, in his "Homerica in Gulliver's Travels" [Classical Journal, XXIX (1934), 535-538], points out some rather striking similarities between the Odyssey and the Travels, one of which is Gulliver's imitation of Polyphemus in Part I. I am indebted to this article throughout this study.



In the initial episode of this Part, Gulliver is cast in a role analogous to that of Hercules. Soon after he arrives in Lilliput, he falls into the soundest sleep of his life; when he awakens, he finds himself bound to the ground and unable to move; his attempts to free himself bring a barrage of arrows from the Lilliputians. As Professor Eddy observes, this episode is an adaptation of a story recorded by Philostratus.<sup>3</sup> The story goes as follows: Hercules, fatigued by his struggle with Antaeus, falls asleep in Libya, the land of the pygmies. They claim to be the brothers of Antaeus for they like him are born of Earth. Therefore they set out to avenge the death of Antaeus by killing Hercules. They maneuver their armies into position and attack Hercules who thereupon awakes, laughs at their attempt, sweeps them up, and carries them off.

Swift perhaps chooses to adapt this story of Hercules and the pygmies because it provides ready-made a contrast in physical size. But he also suggests an analogy between Hercules and Gulliver and invites his readers to view Gulliver as they would Hercules. For Swift and the eighteenth-century reader, as Nathaniel Bailey says, Hercules was "the most illustrious and glorious of all the Heroes of Antiquity."<sup>4</sup> And comparisons between Hercules and Christ are not uncommon.<sup>5</sup> This initial episode suggests that Gulliver's

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<sup>3</sup>W.A. Eddy, "Gulliver's Travels": A Critical Study (Princeton, 1923), p. 53. The story is in Philostratus's Imagines, II, 22.

<sup>4</sup>The Universal Etymological English Dictionary . . . (London, 1727), II, entry for Hercules. For a more detailed discussion of attitudes toward Hercules, see Eugene M. Waith, The Herculean Hero in Marlowe, Chapman, Shakespeare, and Dryden (New York, 1962), especially Chapter II.

<sup>5</sup>For typical comparisons of Christ and Hercules, see Alexander Ross, Mystagogus Poeticus, or, The Muses Interpreter, 3rd ed. (London, 1653), p. 171; and Milton, Paradise Regained, II, 560ff.

Travels may be a Herculiad, an epic re-telling of the labors of Hercules.

But if the style of Gulliver's Travels does not indicate that it is not a Herculiad, then Gulliver's divergence from Hercules's pattern of behavior certainly does. When he falls asleep in Lilliput, Gulliver is not, like Hercules, fatigued from killing an earth-giant. More significantly, Gulliver does not conquer or even attempt to conquer the pygmies, let alone crush them "like gnattes" as Hercules does in one version of this story.<sup>6</sup> Gulliver instead allows them to treat him in a most unheroic fashion and make him their slave.

To the modern reader, it may not appear that Swift implies that Gulliver should act like Hercules. Yet the eighteenth-century reader may well wonder at Gulliver's failure to do so. A survey of notions regarding pygmies suggests why. St. Augustine in The City of God (XVI, 8) raises the question whether the descendants of Adam or of the sons of Noah produced the monstrous races of men; for him, physical oddity does not rule out the pygmies being men if they are mortal and possess reason. Albertus Magnus, however, places the pygmies one level lower on the chain of being than men and calls them brutum et irrationabile animal; for him, pygmies do not possess the rationality that distinguishes men from brute beasts although they have the passions men share with all animals.<sup>7</sup> Joshua Barnes

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<sup>6</sup>See Geoffrey Whitney, Whitney's "Choice of Emblemes," ed. Henry Greene (London, 1866), p. 19; the Choice first appeared in 1586.

<sup>7</sup>See H.W. Janson's summary of Albertus's De animalia in Apes and Ape Lore (London, 1952), pp. 83-84. See also his summary of a tale concerning the origin of pygmies as related by Etienne Pasquier, p. 136; an edition of Pasquier's works appeared in 1723.

in his Gerania suggests that the pygmies are something less than man when he says about them that "nothing seem'd absent, which might make them compleat Men, but the Gentleman-Usher or all Knowledge, Sermonization."<sup>8</sup> And in another passage he perhaps alludes to the relationships between pygmies, fairies, and demons in the popular imagination: "Some [of his companions] thought it was the Land of the Faries, and implored me to lead them back; others supposing them Devils, exhorted me to recal my foot-steps, and hast back again, while there was opportunity."<sup>9</sup> And, finally, Edward Tyson, in his Philological Essay Concerning Pygmies, argues as a result of his dissection of a purported pygmy that pygmies "were only a Creature of the Brain, produced by a warm and wanton Imagination, and that they never had any Existence or Habitation elsewhere." Accounting for them euhemeristically, Tyson argues that the ancient historians and mythographers based their accounts concerning pygmies on "Apes like Men," not "real Men."<sup>10</sup> Whatever Swift expects his readers to make of the pygmies, these opinions concerning them suggest that the reader ought not lightly dismiss Gulliver's submission to them. His submission may be more than a device of plot; it may reveal serious flaws in his character.

More important in connection with Swift's adaptation of the Hercules-pygmy story is its appearance in emblem literature and its treatment there. While this story does not appear frequently in literature, it becomes a part of emblem literature in Alciati's

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<sup>8</sup>Gerania: A New Discovery of a Little Sort of People Anciently Discoursed of, called Pygmies (London, 1675), p. 5.

<sup>9</sup>Barnes, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup>(London, 1699), pp. 4, 94.

collection of emblems and is reproduced in Whitney's Choice of Emblemes.<sup>11</sup> The popularity of emblem books in the seventeenth century is well established.<sup>12</sup> Swift himself indicates that familiarity with them continues into the eighteenth century when he writes in "A Letter of Advice to a Young Poet;" " . . . I would recommend to you the witty Play of Pictures and Motto's, which will furnish your Imagination with great store of Images and suitable Devices. We of these Kingdomes have found our account in this Diversion, as little as we Consider or Acknowledge it. . . ."<sup>13</sup> Swift, in the initial episode of the first Voyage, adapts a story that had widespread distribution among his readers; we need not assume that an eighteenth-century reader need be acquainted with Philostratus to know it.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>The Hercules-pygmey story appears in at least the 1573, 1578, 1584, 1613, and 1715 editions of Alciati's collection of emblems; it also appears in Whitney's Choice of Emblemes (see note 6 above). The story was the subject of paintings by Dosso Dossi [see E. Tietze-Conrat, Dwarfs and Jesters in Art (London, 1957)]; and by Giulio Romano [see Philostratus, Imagines . . . , trans. Arthur Fairbanks (London, 1931), p. xxx]. According to Georg Buchmann in his Geflügelte Worte (Berlin, 1903), p. 95, "Frans de Vriendt, called Floris . . . drew this scene" and H. Cock engraved it. I was led to Buchmann by W.H. Roscher, Ausführliches Lexicon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie (Leipzig, 1902-1909), entry for Hercules.

<sup>12</sup>See Rosemary Freeman, English Emblem Books (London, 1948); Mario Praz, Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery, 2nd ed. (Rome, 1964).

<sup>13</sup>The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, ed. Herbert Davis, IX (Oxford, 1963), p. 335. All subsequent citations to Swift's prose works are to this edition and will be hereinafter cited as Works; I will give volume and page numbers. The possibility that this piece has been erroneously attributed to Swift does not mitigate my argument that emblem books were well-known in the early eighteenth century. On the authorship of this piece, see Herbert Davis's comments in Works, IX, xxiv-xxvii.

<sup>14</sup>Swift himself owned an edition of Philostratus done by Fed. Morellus (Paris, 1608); in A Catalogue of Books, the Library of the late Rev. Dr. Swift (Dublin, 1745), p. 3, entry 83, it is marked as containing Swift's annotations.

But I wish to call attention not only to the currency of this story but also to the common understanding of it. In Philostratus's version of the story, which is repeated in some commentaries on Alciati's emblems, the Hercules-pygmy incident follows the struggle with Antæus, and the pygmies claim to be Antæus's brothers. These relationships, taken together with the prevailing notions about pygmies, would undoubtedly have significance for the eighteenth-century reader. Since Antæus is regarded as an emblem for the libido or the "earthly affections," one would expect that his alleged brothers would come to represent the concupiscible passion.<sup>15</sup> A commentator in a 1715 edition of Alciati's emblems understands the pygmies to represent men whose discontent with their fortunes and natural abilities drives them to attack the more powerful and the more learned, but who sustain injury and shame when they do so.<sup>16</sup> This reading of the story suggests that the pygmies are emblems for concupiscence; they represent envy of and desire for honor, power, and higher estate. Since Swift apparently models his Lilliputians on the pygmies of this story, they become, as one critic has put it, "prideful, envious, rapacious, treacherous, cruel, vengeful, jealous,

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<sup>15</sup>For Antæus as an emblem for the libido see Ross, p. 171; Coluccio Salutati, *De Laboribus Herculis*, ed. B.L. Ullman (Turici, 1951), III, xxvii, 8; and Boccaccio, *De genealogie deorum*, I, 13. For the reference to Salutati and other materials about Hercules I am indebted to Anthony Wolk, "Hercules and *The Faerie Queene*," unpubl. diss. (University of Nebraska, 1965).

<sup>16</sup>V.C. Andreae Alciati Mediolanensis juris consulti *emblemata cum facili, & compendiosa explicatione, qua obscura illustrantur, dubia que omnia solvuntur*, Claudium Minonem (Antverpiæ, 1715), pp. 123-124. The Latin is as follows: "Apologus hic in eos flectitur, qui licet tenois fortunæ sint, aut ingenio non perinde valeant, cuidem tamen potentiores, vel etiam doctiores incessere: quo conflictu nihil referunt præter noxam & dedecus."

and hypocritical;" and "their vices, their appetites, their ambitions, their passions, are not commensurate with their tiny stature."<sup>17</sup>

There is in one of Donne's sermons an even more helpful allusion to the Hercules-pygmy story, an allusion that uses the pygmies as emblems for concupiscence. Donne says:

It is therefore but an imperfect comfort for any man to say I have overcome tentations to great sins, and my sins have been but of infirmity, not of malice. For herein, more than in any other contemplation appears the greatness, both of thy danger, and of thy transgression. For consider what a dangerous and slippery station thou are in, if after a victory over Giants, thou mayest be overcome by Pigmies.<sup>18</sup>

It appears, then, that Swift and his contemporaries may well expect Gulliver to act like Hercules and refuse to submit to the Lilliputians. Indeed, Swift has Gulliver contemplate acting like Hercules. It is in thinking about crushing the pygmies and then not doing so that the divergence between Gulliver and Hercules becomes most apparent. After he has been shot with arrows, Gulliver "thought it the most prudent Method to lie still," his design being "to continue so till Night" when he could "easily free" himself and if necessary subdue the Lilliputians. He believes that he "might be a Match for the greatest Armies they could bring against" him. But, he says, "Fortune disposed otherwise" (p. 22).

But he again considers acting like Hercules. He reports that when the pygmies crawl over his body he was "tempted . . . to seize Forty or Fifty of the first that came in . . . Reach, and dash them

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<sup>17</sup>Samuel Holt Monk, "The Pride of Lemuel Gulliver," SR LXIII (1955), 58.

<sup>18</sup>Sermon No. 15; The Sermons of John Donne, ed. George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson, V (Berkeley, 1959), 300. The text of this undated sermon is Psalms 51:7.

against the Ground" (p. 24). But he rejects this "temptation" for three reasons: First, "the Remembrance of what I had felt, which probably might not be the worst they could do;" second, "the Promise of Honour I made them, for so I interpreted my submissive Behaviour";<sup>19</sup> and third, "I now considered my self as bound by the Laws of Hospitality to a People who had treated me with so much Expence and Magnificence" (p. 24). Obviously, the first and third reasons are inconsistent if not contradictory; the second is at best tenuous. Taken together these reasons reveal Gulliver's failure to perceive what his role as Hercules is.

Even after this series of excuses he once more considers playing Hercules. He will seek his liberty and, if necessary, subdue the pygmies. But again he offers a reason for not doing so, a reason suggesting that he lacks courage: " . . . I once more thought of attempting to break my Bonds; but again, when I felt the Smart of their Arrows upon my Face and Hands . . . I gave Tokens to let them know that they might do with me what they pleased" (p. 25). Here he mentions no implicit promise of honor nor any obedience to the laws of hospitality. He fails as Hercules because he fears bodily pain and lacks courage. When he gives tokens of complete submission, he temporarily abdicates his role as a Herculean hero. He implicitly confesses that he is no Hercules, no representative of the strength of virtue and wisdom. And perhaps one could argue that allegorically he allows his strength to be placed at the disposal of concupiscence rather than reason. Whatever the validity of this latter argument,

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<sup>19</sup>My italics.

he does allow himself to be treated most unheroically when he is loaded on a carriage, hauled to the metropolis, and kept chained like an animal in the profaned temple, where, in an inversion of the Orgoglio episode in the Faerie Queene, the giant takes on "as melancholly a Disposition as ever" he had in life (p. 28).

At precisely the moment Gulliver submits totally to the Lilliputians, there appears an analogy not between Gulliver and Hercules, but between Gulliver and Polyphemus. The implicit comparison begins when the "Physicians, by the Emperor's Order" mingle "a sleeping Potion in the Hogheads of Wine" that he drinks (p. 26). It continues when, allowed to punish the ringleaders of a group that shoots arrows at him against the order of the emperor, he pretends to eat one alive. And finally, the comparison becomes unmistakable when the Lilliputians decide to punish him for his alleged treason by putting out his eyes.<sup>20</sup>

Swift's changing the analogy so that Gulliver is no longer compared to the heroic Hercules but to Polyphemus is significant. For if Hercules is regarded as an emblem for strength in the service of reason and virtue, as embodying fortitudo et sapientia, Polyphemus is an emblem for strength in the service of passion and self-interest. Pope, in his translation of the Odyssey, uses these words to describe

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<sup>20</sup>I have entertained the possibility that Swift here alludes not to Polyphemus, but to Samson. Samson, however, does not seem to be relevant. An allusion to Samson at this point is superfluous, for it would have essentially the same implications as the allusion to Hercules. Just as Hercules suffered the intolerable pain of Nessus's garment and then gained immortality, so Samson was blinded but became an instrument of divine justice. Moreover, the previous allusions to Polyphemus suggest that Swift continues here to draw on Polyphemus. No one, so far as I know, has suggested that Swift compares Gulliver to Samson.