The Politics of Travel in *Gulliver's Travels*

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ABSTRACT

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When, in Book II, Chapter VII, the King of Brobdingnag says to Gulliver "As for yourself […] who have spent the greatest part of your life travelling; I am well disposed to hope you may hitherto have escaped many vices of your country" (Book II, Ch. VII: 121), he raises an important question—that of the value of travel as a means to correct the individual. The primary original contribution of this dissertation is to take *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift (1726) seriously as a work of political theory, specifically on the question of the value of travel as a means of individual edification. This dissertation extracts from the text a political argument concerning the pitfalls of the assumption that travel is of benefit to individuals in all circumstances. In doing so, it places Swift in dialogue with Locke, Shaftesbury, the proponents of the Baconian scientific project, and Montaigne, as well as extracting an overarching criticism of liberal and enlightenment values through the critique of travel. Through a close reading of *Gulliver's Travels*, alongside key political and religious contextual analysis, the dissertation assesses the text's treatment of the relationship between travel, education, science, and politics. This dissertation extracts from Swift's text an argument that travel can only be edifying if pursued in a disciplined manner as part of an organic hierarchical society, opening up a wider criticism of Modernist and Enlightenment ideas of education.

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1. Swift's Political and Religious Views Surveyed: Literature Review and Methodology

1.1. Introduction

Published in 1726, *Gulliver's Travels* predates the era in which European intellectual life self-consciously understood itself to be participating in the Enlightenment. Yet, Swift's most famous text was forged in the fires of emergent political, scientific, and cultural change that provided the foundation for the Enlightenment thought as it gathered steam from the 1740s onward. *Gulliver's Travels* prefigures many of the debates and currents to come, and Swift emerges as an early counter-Enlightenment counter-puncher, opposing Latitudinarianism and Anglican rationalism, accurately predicting the more developed Enlightenment guises that these movements would lead to. If James Simpson is correct in arguing that "Protestantism is a powerfully and necessarily self-conflicted tradition, precisely because its anti-formalism repudiates tradition," then we can identify Swift in the corner of High Church Anglicanism that understood this trait and sought to defend against it (Simpson 2019: xi). Swift, however, saw the germs of Dissenting Protestantism spreading into political and scientific affairs, also. The fulcrum for his over-arching critique of modernist threats to tradition is the central narrative device of travel.

On the topic of travel, Swift's text has more practically relevant insight than has typically been acknowledged by scholars and commentators. Most profoundly, *Gulliver's Travels* offers a critical examination of travel that is especially relevant in age where assumptions of the positive value of individual travel remain broadly unquestioned. Melinda A. Cro opened a recently published paper on Montaigne's travel journals with a quintessential expression of contemporary liberal norms concerning travel, the likes of which *Gulliver's Travels* contests. "The impetus for travel is hardwired into humanity", Cro asserts, expressing a central liberal assumption that "experience is the best teacher—there is no better way to know another land and people (and even oneself) than to travel and explore" (Cro 2013: 150). This is a fully developed iteration of the narrative concerning travel that was gaining traction in Swift's time and was soon to be allied to significant projects in individualist politics and experimental science.

Gulliver's Travels rejects both the argument that the need to travel is innate in all humanity, and that experiential learning is a pathway to edification. Throughout the text it is clear that the intersection of the revolutionary tendencies in science, politics, and religion are at the forefront of Swift's concern and travels operates as useful and instructive point of convergence to highlight what he sees as problematic in these intellectual currents. While this may seem like a conservative argument destined for defeat in its own time and doomed to reside in the scrapheap of history evermore, the brilliance of Swift's satirical writing secured the vitality of his work over the centuries and one can review his political argumentation anew in the present political and intellectual climate.

In 2020, in the face of the international public health crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic, borders have been shut all around the world, bringing several decades of increasingly free movement to a temporary standstill in much of the world. Time will tell if this harrowing experience will sharpen minds against the universal merits of travel, as I argue Swift strongly intimates in *Gulliver's Travels*. The goal of this dissertation is to draw out an argument concerning the political importance of travel through a close

reading of *Gulliver's Travels*. At times, in order to state and develop the argument that I believe can be derived from the text, it is necessary to express criticisms of central liberal values (such as, for example, natural equality) through the conservative lens appropriate to Swift. To do otherwise would be to treat the text on terms other than its own, artificially facilitating a straw man engagement with Swift's arguments and insights, even when extending their implications beyond the text alone. However, this does not necessarily render the author as entirely in agreement with this ontological perspective in general, nor Swift's particular set of political values. The dissertation seeks to amplify an underappreciated aspect of the political implications of the text not as ideological nor political advocacy but rather as an appreciative student of Swift's undeniable intellectual significance. The central argument of this dissertation operates as a conduit through which the politics inherent to Swift's presentation of travel can be expressed and understood, highlighting how and why it is an argument worthy of serious consideration by advocates and detractors of liberalism alike.

1.2. Swift on Religion and Politics: Contexts and Conflicts

Parsing out what in *Gulliver's Travels* may be stylistic indulgence in popular writing that amused Swift from more directly politically purposeful content is no easy task. Swift's legacy remains both celebrated yet not easily co-opted by any one political camp, as "his work alienates left- and right-wingers, agnostics and dogmatists" alike (Stubbs 2017: 628.) As such, the interpretive battle to claim Swift includes those who see him as a Lockean liberal determined to defend political authority grounded in individual consent (Ehrenpreis 1952) and a Tory authoritarian who vindicated the idea of society as an organic hierarchy in direct opposition to the materialism of commercial society (Montag 1994). The complexity of Swift's work means that there are elements available to textually support aspects of each of these interpretations, even if claiming either as an authoritative portrait is caricature at best. Swift also published political writings over a long period of time, much of which was politically turbulent, and warranted a certain degree of unavoidable nuancing of his contemporary political opinions. F.P. Lock notes that this has made him an easy target for the charge of "political inconsistency" or even being "a political turncoat" for his shift from Whig to Tory pamphleteer (Lock 1983: 134). Warren Montag makes the point that chasms in political interpretation are the result of the contradictory and confused views held by Swift himself across his writings and explicit political interjections, in particular. Montag's general argument is that Swift did not have a guiding set of ideas, but rather ought to be understood as deriving his principles from his position in the weakest point of the Anglican Church, the Church of Ireland (Montag 1994: 17).

Whilst I strongly disagree with Montag's contention that Swift's writings were not particularly shaped by a set of guiding ideas, it is accurate in my estimation to place his core political values as chiefly tied to a defence of the established Church and its role as custodian of traditional order. Montag astutely recognises that Anglicanism remained riven with divisions in Swift's time and that was, even from its Reformation origins, "confused, radically disarticulated and riven with contradictions" (Montag 1994: 17). However, despite the excellent insights into Swift's writing drawn from dense historical and religious contextualisation, Montag overplays the significance of Swift's defense of Anglicanism as the sole purpose of his writings. This is derived from a materialist

reading that views all political interjection as advocacy in an ideological struggle. He also, like Harth (1961) sees Swift as sympathetic to the toleration and Rationalism of the Anglican Latitudinarians, a view that cannot stand up in light of the blitz unleashed upon scientific projection in Book III of *Gulliver's Travels*. John Stubbs also points out that even after 1714 when Swift was effectively locked out of overt participation in political pamphleteering and interjection, "the Church, as ever, presented a rather fearsome battleground" (Stubbs 2017: 414) and debates on these issues formed an ever-present permeating filter on his thought and writing.

I discuss the particularities of the siege mentality of members of the Church of Ireland in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and the impact that this has on Swift's political philosophy in more detail in my extended analysis of Book II. Nonetheless, it is worthwhile here to briefly elaborate on the context and importance of how the core political principles that can be inferred from *Gulliver's Travels* clearly relate to a combination of High Church Anglicanism and Old Whig political philosophy. The historian of eighteenth-century Ireland Ian Higgins (1994) argues against this interpretation, pointing to clear consonances between Swift's political and literary writings and the Jacobite Tory position on Church, state, and politics. Higgins instead characterises Swift as "a disaffected High Church Anglican extremist with Jacobite inclinations" (Higgins 1994: 1). Whether or not Swift was in fact a Jacobite supporter of a restoration of the Stuart monarchy or not is primarily a matter of historical debate and generally falls outside of the purview of the present work. However, I will say here that *Gulliver's Travels* conveys a respect for a more hardline authoritarian monarchy which is in keeping with Jacobite thinking. However, this is presented as desirable due to the public veneration and societal continuity that hereditary monarchy engenders and the intractable link between the crown and hereditary church. Divine right formed a cornerstone of Jacobite thought but *Gulliver's Travels* presents the necessity of both monarchy and religion through the prism of their conferring of social and political order, rather than any cosmological or spiritual argument. Nonetheless, it is fair to identify that Swift was far more authoritarian and less liberal than any branch of Whig politics, Old or New, but was nonetheless firmly committed to the Glorious Revolution of 1688 as he saw it, especially from his vantage point in Ireland.

Swift wrote in a time where the sustaining national myth of the newly fashioned British nation following the 1707 Act of Union identified Britain as a modern-day Israel, divinely selected for prosperity and glory. The religious character of this vision, however, coalesced with the secular trends in science and politics to form the identity of the newly United Kingdom. The idea that Britain was uniquely fruitful as a chosen land had strong purchase across rich and poor and north and south, and was not merely propaganda pushed by an intellectual, political, or affluent elite (Colley 2005: 33). This generated a narrative current that linked developments in politics, religion, and science to a teleological realisation of the country's destiny of divinely ordained liberty. Travel could be utilised to make favourable comparisons between Britain and elsewhere.

Comparison could also bring negative facets of the country to light, however. Even a passionate publicist for the image of Britain as a modern-day Israel such as Daniel Defoe could not help but to notice that "notwithstanding we are a nation of liberty", London contained more prisons than "any city in Europe, perhaps as many as in all the capital cities of Europe put together" (Defoe 1991: 157). Notably, Defoe jotted down this

observation as part of his popular travelogue *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, published in three volumes from 1724 and 1727. There was tension, thus, in early eighteenth-century Britain's developing confidence in itself as an emergent prosperous commercial and liberal society divinely rewarded for its upstanding Protestant character.

Swift did not share in the Irenicist view of a pluralist but unified Protestant nation. Rather, for Swift the intolerance and zealousness of the Puritans was to blame for the bloodshed and instability of the seventeenth-century English Civil War. They could thus not be trusted in public office nor offered a general *rapprochement*. Latitudinarian Anglicans eager to extend the umbrella of the Church to cover more than just its base, on the other hand, represented opportunist hacks, far too willing to compromise with the materialism of scientific Rationalists—equally singular in their enthusiasm—in order to sail with the prevailing winds of power. Much as he despised religious fanatics who claimed they spoke to God, the claims of modernist science to have unlocked the universal key to human potential struck Swift as dangerous (Damrosch 2013: 149). Thus, while Britain was indeed blessed with the genius of the mixed constitution from the settlement of 1689, the inevitable march toward the fulfilment of science and progress was by no means assured and should even be seen as suspect. In this regard, Swift's political values were firmly rooted in the late seventeenth century, prioritising stability and order over innovation and commercial prosperity, distrustful of pluralist toleration, and inherently defensive of the virtue embedded in the landed aristocracy through property ownership (Ehrenpreis 1952: 146). The ascent of the *nouveau-riche* in the guises of financial speculators, tradesmen, and merchants represented not just a threat to this settlement, but also a slipping into degeneration.

The influence of Swift's position as an ordained priest in the Church of Ireland on his writings has received comparatively little attention from scholars. It was 1954 before Louis Landa produced the first sustained monograph on Swift's religious views from the perspective of the complex politico-religious context of eighteenth-century Ireland. The most insightful work published in recent years on the topic is Christopher J. Fauske's *Jonathan Swift and the Church of Ireland* (2002), which primarily focuses on Swift's religious writings and provides robust historical context for Swift's beliefs and activities as a churchman. Most significantly, Fauske argues persuasively that doctrine was entirely secondary to the social functions of the church in Swift's mind, a point echoed by Todd C. Parker, editor of the excellent recent collection of essays entitled *Swift as Priest and Satirist* (Parker 2009).

These works reinforce the centrality of Swift's position as a clergyman and the realities of the established church's vulnerabilities in an Ireland chiefly populated by Catholics in the south and Presbyterians in Ulster who were "deliberately difficult" in their relationships with the Church of Ireland (Foster 1989: 123). In Martin's words, "Swift's theology thus becomes less an affirmation of divine principle and more an expression of the realpolitik of the Church of Ireland" (Martin 2009: 13). Indeed, while Swift sincerely saw Anglicanism as both the true form of Christianity and most pleasing to God, he also appreciated that this remained "a question of holding ground, maintaining numbers, calculating religious and political arithmetic" (Boyce 2001: 83). This highlights how Swift's pragmatic theological approach was conditioned by the nominally Established Church lacking the same political or economic favour enjoyed by its counterparts on the island of Britain.

Though nominally a state church, the Church of Ireland's precedence in Swift's time was mostly of the *de jure* variety rather than *de facto*, as overall numerical superiority favoured the Catholic population and the parishioners of dissenting churches in Ulster enjoyed significant economic advantage (Parker 2009: 19). Even in the predominantly Catholic areas in the south of the island, nonconforming Protestant sects could carve out spheres of economic might, such as the Quaker merchants of Cork City. The Church of Ireland did receive the *regium donum*, a state subsidy from 1672 onwards. These payments, however, could be irregular and unreliable, and Presbyterians in Ireland received this also, despite not receiving official protections under a Toleration Act until 1719 (Foster 1989: 123; 156). Financial hardships and unequal distributions of parishioners and resources both material and human made it so that "the contrast between episcopal grandeur and local churches falling into disuse, manned by underpaid clergy who needed to be pluralists in order to survive" was all too vivid (Foster 1989: 123).

Marcus Walsh goes so far as to describe the Church of Ireland at the turn of the century as "an embattled institution, under severe economic strain, politically dominated by England and the English church hierarchy, struggling to maintain its devotional and pastoral position as a minority group of believers (Walsh 2003: 162). Compounding this further was the Church of England's practice of appointing English clergy to episcopal positions in Ireland, rendering the tasks of community outreach and the forging of social solidarity with local parishioners even more challenging. Swift was wholly on the side of the Church of Ireland gentry against their English counterparts on this issue (Parker 2009: 21–22). In this regard, he represented the beginnings of a distinctly Irish Protestant intellectual tradition.

A formative experience in shaping Swift's devotion to the Church of Ireland came in 1707 when he was appointed by Archbishop William King to negotiate a remission of the taxes called the First Fruits levied by London upon the established church in Ireland. The Whig government offered a *quid pro quo* deal that would exchange the removal of the tax for the church's endorsement of the repeal of the Test Act that excluded dissenting Protestants from state appointment. Such an arrangement was unacceptable to the Anglican hierarchy in Ireland and the tedium and humiliation of the negotiations "confirmed Swift's unconditional loyalty to his church, and his lifelong sense of the fatal difference in religious culture between England and Ireland" (McMinn 2003: 20). The difference in self-understanding between the Established Church in England and Ireland is a vital context here, not least on the issue of travel as developed in the dissertation, but also on the question of religious and political toleration.

The perception of encirclement by Catholics and Dissenters on the island of Ireland rendered Irish Anglicans—with Swift a particularly vociferous voice in sermon and tract in this regard—wholly opposed to the broad measures of toleration that were forming the spine of Anglican Latitudinarianism in his lifetime. Swift was not alone in voicing such concerns. Irish Bishops and landlords alike feared that the uncompromising religious and political culture of Presbyterianism was a serious threat to their authority (Foster 1989: 158). Whilst Swift's nominal religious concerns could often be traced on a topical commitment to the present needs of his Church amidst a perceived hostile climate, one can also identify a consistent over-arching abstract argument for High Church Anglicanism on the basis of its civil duty and, crucially, capacity to reinforce the structures of authority necessary to societal order. Thus, the argument that an Established

Church protected by but also operating to check monarchical power is indispensable. Todd Parker summarises this view succinctly: "whether or not the Church here is Christ's body or God's agency on Earth is irrelevant; it functions, vis-à-vis the king, as an institutional counterbalance" (Parker 2009: 15).

This is a highly pragmatic view of religion, rooted in the communitarian governing processes made possible by an Established Church working hand in glove with government power—the sword and the word united for the purposes of enforcing the norms and values of organic hierarchy and politico-religious authority. This proto-liberal-minded measure of using an Established Church to counterbalance political power sits neatly alongside a more conservative communitarian vision of government as custodian of order through tradition and hierarchy. Swift's theological grounding in the Established Church provided him with a strong preference for seeing humans' natural sociability is best served by a hierarchical organic society wherein society is viewed not as an artifice but rather exists by nature and prior to the individual. This, he believed, facilitated a communitarian social solidarity in which all members of society have a clear role to play in a context of mutual appreciation and certainty. This rests on a commitment to natural inequality and the ordering of society in line with those who fit to rule wielding political power over those who are fit to be ruled. I will argue in this dissertation that Swift's quarrel with ideas associated with modernist thought, though immense, is not without recognition of the benefits of certain facets of political liberalization—he did of course declare himself "*Libertatis Vindicatorem*" (champion/avenger of liberty) in his self-penned epitaph—but only if they remained nested among and limited by custom, tradition, and the tenets of the faith.

If the latter half of Fauske's pronouncement that "theology and political philosophy Swift left to others" (Fauske 2002: 39-40) were accurate, the entire premise of this dissertation would be upended. However, whilst it is unquestionably true that Swift appears to have had minimal interest in the deeper questions of theological concern, his repeated defense of the social functions of religion—explicitly in sermons and pamphlets and, I argue, implicitly throughout *Gulliver's Travels*—are of huge political significance. David Nokes' analysis of Swift's sermons concludes that they are predominantly:

> homilies on social rather than spiritual topics. They seek to encourage dutiful behaviour and orthodox opinions by eschewing theological problems and recommending instead a simple, deferential and conservative code of conduct to his parishioners (Nokes 1976: 219).

It may be tempting to side with the likes of Phillip Harth who view Swift's sermons as indicative of his minimal to weak skills as a theologian (Harth 1961: 46–51). But, again, Swift's view of religion is drawn upon social and civic, rather than theological concerns; rooted more strongly in the relationship between God and the state than individual experiences of the divine or individual relationships to the Church (Parker 2009: 29). As such, Swift's politics and religion were largely interchangeable and each pronouncement in one sphere can be taken to apply equally to the other.

Swift's politico-religious interjections occurred amidst two hallmark characteristics of post-Restoration Anglicanism: the "internal contradictions" referred to above and "a vigorous external Protestant critique" unseen anywhere else in Europe other than the Netherlands (MacCulloch 2016: 360). On the issue of divisions within

Anglicanism, Swift was a High Church Anglican who highly valued the Church of England's *via media* or middle way between the Magisterial Reformers and the Roman Catholic Church. His religious positions almost always defaulted to the social and civic benefits of avoiding what he perceived to be the excesses of Puritan enthusiasm and Catholic superstition and idolatry. The historian of the Reformation Diarmuid MacCulloch describes the *via media* as a "double helix, intertwining two mutually antagonistic strands of Christianity, which elsewhere bitterly clashed in the Reformation (MacCulloch 2016: 360). No doubt, it is because of this precise balancing act that Swift and his ilk would celebrate the genius of Anglicanism as uniquely capable to ensure political stability and resolve religious disputes through its association with the crown.

Harth claims that Swift's religious sympathies lay with what have been called the Anglican Rationalists, many of whom were active in the intellectual circle of Cambridge Platonists, who can be summarised as falling "between the English millennialist tradition and the deist emphasis on rationalism and historical argumentation" (Olson 1982: 203). These included Henry More, Ralph Cudworth, George Rust, and Henry Hallywell, amongst others (Harth 1961). It's important to distinguish between what Harth refers to as Rationalists in the Anglican Church at this time and scientific Rationalists of the Enlightenment tradition, whom Swift squarely takes aim at in the Voyage to Laputa. It is fair to say that Swift's religious and political views dovetailed with the Cambridge Platonists' advocacy of a reasonable religion in opposition to atheists, deists, Puritans, and Catholics. However, the thinkers Harth calls Anglican Rationalists are just as easily referred to as Latitudinarians, a disposition markedly at odds with Swift's core values as a defensive, conservative Church of Ireland clergyman.

Swift agreed with the Latitudinarian belief that reason was a product of common sense, custom, and tradition, all of which could work in tandem and even harmony with faith and revelation (Paulson 1962: 408). However, as developed in detail elsewhere in this dissertation, he was highly disagreeable to notions of reason as an independent or speculative force. This was far too permissive to elements outside of the finely struck *via media* balance, be they the creeping materialism of scientific rationalism or the potential moral relativism of broad toleration. In the perpetual intellectual clashes for the heart and soul of Anglicanism, Swift represented a more conservative and oppositional strain than ascendant Latitudinarianism. Ronald Paulson correctly concludes, contra Harth:

> If his enemies were the extremes of Puritanism-Catholicism, the chief danger he (Swift) saw from 1690 on was the unfastening of the gates to these disruptive elements that was advocated by the Latitudinarians in religion and the "New Whigs" in politics (Paulson 1962: 408).

In the battleground of Anglicanism from the mid-1710s onward, "the pendulum had by now swung right away from the High Church faction; indeed it seemed to have risen beyond its acme on the other side, and frozen in mid-air" (Stubbs 2017: 414). Latitudinarians were thus largely able to set the agenda in the sphere of religion and their advocated positions such as moderation toward purportedly reasonable dissent were not seen as acceptable at all by the encircled clergy of the Church of Ireland or High Church Tories and Old Whigs in Britain. All told, many of Swift's contemporaries defended their positions with sluggishness in contrast to the aggressive embrace of modernity by Latitudinarians. Only the writing talent and genius of Swift allowed him to vividly

animate arguments that were running on borrowed time such that they retain their potency and significance even today.

Gulliver's Travels was written in an age of theological speculation and flutters of deistic tendencies all across intellectual life. The rise of advocations of natural (rather than revealed) religion such as John Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious* (1697) fuelled polemical division and intensified Tory cries that "The Church is in danger!" (Langford 2000: 9–10). Events such as the "Bangorian Crisis" further sharpened these minds to the forces against them. The crisis erupted when the Bishop of Bangor, Benjamin Hoadly, published a sermon in which he argued for the divestment of the ecclesiastical realm from the temporal affairs of legal, political and social life. This envisaged the path toward the wholly secular state of modern liberal democracies, the likes of which conservative Anglicans viewed as a wholly unacceptable worst-case scenario. John Stubbs astutely notes that this type of permissive Latitudinarianism arguably drew more from Locke's writings on government than it from the gospels (Stubbs 2017: 414-415) and serves as but one example of the contemporary events that shaped the rear-guard mentality of Swift's politico-religious views.

It is vital to restate that these religious controversies and battles were particularly keenly felt in a Church of Ireland anxious of its stability and status as the Established Church. High Church Anglicans in Britain also criticized the Latitudinarian submission to the social function of religion and the retreat of spiritualism as the chief mission of the Church but were unequivocally on the backfoot in such public controversies. Swift's prioritisation of the social functions of religion in the context of a financially and demographically weak Church of Ireland cannot be considered equivalent to this view of the Church as a form of moral conscience to a society *en route* to intractable secularism. Indeed, these incremental moves toward acquiescence to a tolerant pluralist society could only be seen as directly counter to the privileges and authority of the Established Church (Langford 2000: 9). Thus, Swift's writings are certainly fiercely individual in style but profoundly Classical or Ancient in temperament—countering modernist tendencies—and always "conditioned by the difficulties of an age in which the tradition to which he owed allegiance was under steady attack from all sides" (Williams 1967: ii).

All this being said, it is unquestionably noteworthy that religion is only passingly referred to throughout *Gulliver's Travels*. However, Fauske argues that, to paraphrase James Joyce, the absence of direct references to religion in *Gulliver's Travels* is the highest form of presence. Implicit evocations of the universal depravity of mankind are found throughout Gulliver's voyages in the form of political misgovernment, subjugation, domination, and prideful intellectual folly, all pointing to the stained soul of original sin. Beyond this, I make the case that the spectre of toleration and the licentious Latitudinarianism that it breeds is to be felt in many key sections of the text, especially in the arguments concerning the pitfalls of travel and the ironic similarities between dissenting Protestantism and the New Science. Fauske argues, correctly in my estimation, that the absence of established churches and the authority and stability that they provide in the lands visited by Gulliver is a demonstration of how these places have fallen from their ordained condition as civic institutions and arbitrary power cannot be held in check by established religion (Fauske 2002: 107–110).

1.3. *Gulliver's Travels* and Intellectual History

Although challenging, it is not impossible to distil and articulate Swift's central values, or to distinguish them from those of his church. The generally agreed upon biographical consensus is that Swift can be classified as a Tory on religious questions: upholding soft authoritarian views in support of the Established Church with political exclusion for Catholics and dissenting Protestants, yearning for a return to a national church, but an Old Whig in politics: supportive of the mixed constitution that promotes liberty in the context of personal responsibility and robust traditional institutions conferring moral limitations on individual license and fiercely opposed to the toleration and political compromises of the New Whigs.

The claims required to support the over-arching argument made throughout this dissertation concerning Swift's politico-religious views will be mostly derived those that find textual expression and support in *Gulliver's Travels*. Other texts from Swift's corpus are occasionally referenced and engaged, as well as illuminating historical context, but the predominant goal of this work is to extract and analyse the political arguments concerning travel as found in *Gulliver's Travels*, rather than fashion a biographically accurate portrayal of the thoughts of Jonathan Swift the man. When relevant or insightful, I have juxtaposed ideas from *Gulliver's Travels* with those of sympathetic or unsympathetic interlocutors for the purposes of sharpening the analysis of a specific point by contrast or comparison.

In order to further situate Swift in his intellectual context, several thinkers from the history of political thought both before and after the Augustan age in which the Irishman wrote are drawn upon throughout the dissertation. Montaigne, Hobbes, Locke, and Shaftesbury all make for important interlocutors with Swift, as their writings established core facets of the political and intellectual currents to which he contributed. For the purposes of my argument, the significance to *Gulliver's Travels* of Locke on travel and education and Shaftesbury on politeness and travel writing are especially important. Scholars have also long understood the important influence of both Montaigne and Hobbes on Swift's thought as expressed across his corpus (Rawson 1992; Ward 2011) and here I draw out some important links between *Gulliver's Travels*' presentation of otherness in travel and the individual in modern society that represent these influences. The liberal political tradition to which some ideas referenced throughout *Gulliver's Travels* might be read to overlap are found in the vital later eighteenth century thinkers Montesquieu, Smith, and Burke. Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* offers an interesting companion piece to *Gulliver's Travels* in that the two texts are satirical novels published immediately prior to the onset of the Enlightenment proper yet both reflect an awareness of coming intellectual trends in their embryonic form. Burke expresses political ideals hinted at through the layers of Swift's irony and satire in a form more familiar to texts typically studied as part of the history of political thought. Thus, the two Irish thinkers complement one another's writings in highly instructive ways; Swift thrills and vexes in the poetics of the sublime and the more direct incision of Burke's writing shines some light through the fog to help gain understanding and appreciation of the political significance of Swift. Tocqueville offers us a lens through which to present comparisons with aspects of modernity that Swift distrusted in the mid 1720s and their realization as seen by the French writer a century later in the first mass democracy of the United States. Such connections are made judiciously and always with an eye to further unlocking the broader intellectual contributions of *Gulliver's Travels* to the history of political thought.

The argument that will be put forward in this dissertation draws upon several key themes that have been addressed in the secondary literature on Swift's writing and on *Gulliver's Travels* in particular: travel, education, and the broader Enlightenment project with particular emphasis on the New Science. Here I seek to demonstrate some of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing literature, building upon it to highlight the interpretative space for my original argument. I argue that the political implication of *Gulliver's Travels* is that global travel, enabled by assumptions of either individual edification or contribution to scientific knowledge, is not likely to be an edifying experience unless the individual has pursued an ordered education that respects the moral limits proper to humanity. This critique of the assumed universal edifying effects of travels connects to a broader critical engagement with characteristically liberal ideas of individual self-education through the use of instrumental reason (adopting means suitable to achieving one's desired ends) outside and the denial of an organic hierarchy where some are fit to rule and others to be ruled. This is contrasted with the idea of a more holistic reason through which individuals can use their own judgment and capacity to think, rather than custom or received wisdom, to decide for themselves what is right, what is true, and what should be done.

Claude Rawson notes that "Swift's works are a meeting place for some of the most troubling moral nightmares of European intellectual history in the last five hundred years: war, imperial conquest, the impulse to exterminate" (Rawson 2001: 1). To this list I would add the moral ambiguities of cross-cultural engagement, the effects of travel on the individual, the extension of polite society, and the political and cultural currents of the early Enlightenment and Modernist projects. As such, *Gulliver's Travels* offers almost as many avenues of inquiry as there are scholars who have studied it. More broadly still, one could break down critical responses to *Gulliver's Travels* in three general categories: author-centred approaches, formal and rhetorical approaches, and historical and contextual approaches (Tippett 1989: 12–15). These approaches are primarily distinguished methodologically. However, the forthcoming survey of secondary literature will primarily focus on travel literature and the role of travel in the text, as this is the most relevant for situating and distinguishing the present study. There is an abundance of excellent scholarly work on both Swift in general and *Gulliver's Travels* in particular, but in the interest of brevity and feasibility secondary literature directly relevant to this particular topic will be engaged here.

1.4. *Gulliver's Travels* and Travel Literature

Travel literature provides a vital context in which to place and understand the satirical and political content in *Gulliver's Travels*. Indeed, as Carole Fabricant notes, "*Gulliver's Travels* is in many ways the quintessential travel book, alternately reproducing and parodying the conventions of the genre, and forcefully demonstrating both its capabilities and limitations as an instrument for disseminating knowledge (Fabricant 2005: 744). Importantly, the knowledge Fabricant refers to here is multi-faceted. *Gulliver's Travels* uses travel as a means to engage questions of self-knowledge, and the epistemology of empire as both a disseminating and information-gathering practice. Too few studies of *Gulliver's Travels* link these issues, either intentionally disaggregating travel, empire, and epistemology, or overemphasising one at the expense of others. Rather than focusing on the genre of travel writing, the primary original contribution of this dissertation is to

take the coverage of travel in *Gulliver's Travels* seriously and to seek to elucidate what we can take away from Swift's treatment of the topic as it relates to political matters. In particular, the seriousness of travel as an endeavour that can have very real and even grave consequences for those who partake in it.

Much commentary on the historical significance and evolution of the genre of travel writing has tended to prioritise analysis of style over the arguments being made concerning the substance of travel itself. Elizabeth A. Bohls rightly points out that "travel fulfils obligations and enhances status, but it also feeds dangerous desires. A traveller might come back transformed—for better or worse—or might not come back at all" (Bohls 2005: xiv). Thus, the form of travel writing is in an important stylistic component of *Gulliver's Travels*, but it also a book that proffers an argument about what ought to worry us about the effects we might expect from encouraging open travel for all.

As has been long established, Swift greatly enjoyed books of travel and possessed well-loved anthologies of influential Elizabethan travel writing from the likes of Purchas and Hakluyt (Damrosch 2013: 358). Indeed, both fictional and historical accounts of travel made up a significant portion of Swift's library (Le Fanu 1896). The extent of Swift's reading on the topic is reflected in many passages that directly mimic and/or obliquely reference travel writing and its tropes of ethnographic, cartographic, and nautical discourse (Rawson 2001: 1–3). Mastering such stylings was more than a simple exercise of flexing his writing muscles; Swift loved a good hoax. Indeed, many of his most famous works were written under pseudonyms for such purposes (and also when it was prudent to do so given political circumstances). The supposed factuality of travel writing draped a veneer of authenticity over the fantastic for the amusement of the author and savvy readers. It would appear that one of the defining characteristics of Swift's writing was a determination to poke, prod, and provoke narrow-minded factional interests whilst vexing more careful readers (Stubbs 2017). Written pseudonymously in a style or styles typified by supposed factuality, *Gulliver's Travels* and several other key works in Swift's oeuvre intentionally couch their meaning and significance in many rhetorical exercises and deliberate red herrings. Travel writing offers such a frame for *Gulliver's Travels*, but it is also the case that there is a distinct argument concerning the validity of travel as a means to individual edification and how it might be disciplined in order to do so.

Since Swift 's corpus is full of intentionally obscurantist writing, designed to operate at multiple levels for multiple audiences that satirically and politically engage the writings in different ways to different purposes it becomes all the more important to establish a solidly situated understanding of how and why *Gulliver's Travels* makes use of genre conventions and tropes. Travel writing and travel itself occupies a more important functional context to the political significance of the text. The genre of travel writing provides Swift with a means to engage two important themes: 1) the edifying or corrupting effects of travel on the traveller, and 2) authenticity of experience at the individual and collective levels. This section will engage scholarship on this these and other related questions in order to situate the argument presented in this dissertation within the field of studies related to *Gulliver's Travels*, travel literature, and eighteenth-century political ideas.

Interestingly, Swift by and large eschews debates around contemporary economic and religious justifications for the colonial enterprise, indeed outside from the famous

fleeting yet scathing portrayal of imperialism right at the book's conclusion (Book IV, Ch. XII: 275), it is more of a backdrop than an actively engaged facet of the text. He instead uses the facade of factuality afforded by the genre of travel writing as a means to dig into how individuals stand up to the rigours of global travel. The ostensible veracity that comes with the style of travel writing provides the perfect medium through which to convey a veneer of earnestness to satirical critiques of contemporary political and academic matters. Furthermore, Swift satirizes the idea that the verisimilitude seemingly possessed by travel writing could yield any significant analysis into human nature along lines that we would now consider empirical sociology or anthropology. The documentarian chronicling employed by Gulliver demonstrates an understanding of the style of evidence gathering in travel preferred by the Royal Society and other innovators of the new Science (Shanahan 2009: 193–194). This element of the satire is directed at the folly of ordering travel for the purposes of science amidst the trickery of travellers seeking to make their name with fictitious tales. In this regard, form combines with content to generate the substance of the political commentary on travel and science.

In general, *Gulliver's Travels* draws upon and contributes to two sub-genres of travel writing. The first is that of the castaway narrative, typified by Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* in fiction and its supposed real-life inspiration Alexander Selkirk, a Scottish sailor who survived four years on an uninhabited island in the South Pacific Ocean. Defoe, like Swift, drew upon a wide range of travel sources beyond Selkirk's tale, and *Crusoe* is rather a complex compound of buccaneer survival stories than a singular homage to any one base. Core themes in castaway narratives are that of survival against the odds in an unfamiliar setting, and the use of ingenuity and cunning by protagonists to best terrifying dangers proffered by the elements (Rawson 2012). Rebecca Weaver-Hightower also notes that the character tropes of the genre such as pirates, cannibals, and savages often fell into one of two Manichaean characterisations; either wholly reformed or irredeemable; entirely noble or ignoble (Weaver-Hightower 2007: 146–47). Swift plays with these conventions, particularly in Book IV in ways that render a straightforward diagnosis of the character of Gulliver disconcertingly tricky. Gulliver combines a certain savvy in the arts of improvisation and survival with an undiscerning consumption of the cultures he encounters (Deane 1986) in a fashion that directly employs and parodies the tropes of castaway literature.

The second sub-genre of travel writing is exotic voyage literature—real life tales of so-called oriental exploration in which "the traveller possesses a relative degree of immunity from danger and thus can dedicate himself, as a detached observer, to the task of capturing the prodigious wealth and diversity of the habits, beliefs, and customs he has noted" (Hinnant 1987: 8). Swift plays with the conventions and tensions that the established tropes of these literary genres offer as material for political commentary on the mental pressures placed on travellers who find themselves required to be both a survivalist castaway and an objective explorer and documenter of foreign lands. This tension between being changed by one's experiences and yet documenting them in an ordered and disciplined fashion for the sake of veracity and scientific coherence is a key anchor of Swift's criticism of travel in general.

As Damrosch notes, "in an age that valued factuality, voyagers were encouraged to describe wonders in a matter-of-fact way" (Damrosch 2013: 358) and Swift directly plays with this expectation having Gulliver explicitly say that his goal in recounting his

travels is "to inform and not to amuse thee" (Book IV, Ch. 12: 272). Needless to say, despite the consistency of his removed and objective narrative voice, Gulliver is unable to maintain such objective distance in the face of his experiences. This highlighting of the problematic relationship between form and content of travel writing provides the groundwork for the political significance of the changeability of the traveller as an intractable facet of travel.

In surveying the field of scholarship on eighteenth-century travel writing, Morgan Vanek (2015) establishes an interesting contradiction that strikes at the heart of how and why *Gulliver's Travels* remains a puzzling and stimulating read. Vanek summarises that English travel writing of the Eighteenth Century typically oscillates around one of two central assumptions about the traveller's experience. Vanek's summary of the contradiction at the centre of travel and documentation for scientific purposes strikes at the heart of the key gap in the literature on *Gulliver's Travels*: both sets of thinking regarding travel are engaged throughout in generating the text's argument and notably operate at both textual and contextual levels in *Gulliver's Travels*.

The first assumption is that the traveller is a neutral, objective and resolute observer/information-gatherer in the name of either British imperial authority or the more general scientific project of "enlarging the bounds of human empire" in the form of knowledge (Bacon 2008: 177). In this viewpoint, travel writing is a necessary means to establish, legitimize and aggrandize the British imperial project (Rawson 2012: 7–10) through the extension of the rigorous norms of scientific data collection to the act of travel. This is the context in which travel is recontextualized and repurposed by scientific projectors, the likes of whom are satirized as dangerous crackpots in Laputa and Balnibarbi in Book III. This analysis is furthered in the dissertation chapter on Swift's argument against science's proposed disciplining of travel for its purposes. The second is far more conscious of the traveller's vulnerability to change from external influence. This second approach can be divided further based on whether or not such changeability is positive or negative. Seen positively, travel is a meaningful and necessary portal to personal edification. Seen negatively, contact with debased peoples/places could result in problematic degradation of values (Vanek 2015: 555–558). The expectation that travel is a primarily edifying form of experiential learning that can root out prejudice will form key Enlightenment assumptions about autonomous individuality and human perfectability through education. This is analysed in the dissertation chapter on Book II of *Gulliver's Travels*, in which the most profound presentation of the argument against the universal benefits of travel are established.

Bauer (2003) and Neil (2002) both establish the desire for the traveller in colonial situations to be resistant to change from external stimulus. The traveller should ideally be able to safely export European systems of knowledge whilst neutrally encountering and, if required, absorbing commercial and scientific information from the colonial territory. However, within such assumptions, they argue, are serious concerns regarding the potential degradation of the travelling subject as a result of unfiltered exposure to external influence (Vanek 2015: 558). Not only would travellers be physically far from the order and stability of their originating society, but their task demanded an intellectual distance also. Michael McKeon notes the importance of the emergence of scientific objectivity as a means to untether the observer from tradition: "equipped only with the basic physical accessories of universal, unheroic humanity, he is distinguished by those

private virtues of honesty, sincerity, naturalness, and integrity that guarantee the perspicuous observation and documentation of truth" (McKeon 2002: 104). Contemporary critics of liberalism such as Mark T. Mitchell (2019) and Patrick J. Deneen (2018) have made more holistic claims concerning the importance of communitarian traditions and the dangers of fully embracing such a rationalist perspective. Investigating the ways in which these twenty-first century anti-liberal perspectives overlap with Swift's portrayal of the risks involved in travel might offer fruitful analysis but to fully do so would extend beyond the scope of the present inquiry.

It will be argued here that *Gulliver's Travels* offers an instructive example of exactly the types of misadventure and ruin that can befall an individual whom so fluidly seeks such untethering from the boundaries of society. Martin Price writes that for Swift, "the art of politics is the art of moderating moral heroism, of making it unnecessary for the man who can never achieve it" (Price 1964: 182). Price makes such a comment in the context of Swift's views regarding the necessity of an Established Church as the spine of political society, but it is equally applicable to the power of organic society to morally orient and ground individuals in ways that freeform travel would wholly undo.

Contemporary travel writing and secondary documentation on the topic display a deep concern for the ability (and necessity) of travellers to uphold the required qualities under the strains of their voyages (Vanek 2015). Such thinking primarily applied to travellers in the service of the scientific and commercial exploits of empire, travellers of leisure and of experience, but was arguably at its most heightened in reference to those who were to settle new lands. The questionable character of settlers was raised in contemporary thought as particularly problematic when matters of degeneration arose. Indeed, as Jack P. Greene, has argued, eighteenth-century discourse around colonial settlers centred on their lowly social origins and religious and social deviancy (Greene 2013: 50–55). They were deemed to have left England to share far-flung wilderness territories with any number of savage peoples, terminally disconnected from the ordering cultural and religious amenities of English life. As a result of the lowly character of those founding them, formative colonial societies could emerge only as crude pastiches of metropolitan norms and would inevitably degenerate from there. They would debase further through the adoption of local savage practices, the continued influx of unsavoury characters from the metropole, and the unbridled pursuit of narrow material economic gain (Greene 2013: 51).

Gulliver describes his reason for travel as born of an "insatiable desire of seeing foreign countries" (Book I, Ch. VIII: 71), undoubtedly a dig at the shallow appetite for the new over the tried and true. The threat of travel as a character-altering phenomenon, as likely to unhinge as to edify (Fabricant 2005: 744), is an important theme with which to frame the interaction of *Gulliver's Travels* with travel literature. The origins and reason for travel of those who venture into the unknown can—and perhaps should—be causes of concern, especially when we know that they face the pressure of maintaining civility and objectivity in the face of base cultures as time away from home goes by. The tension is a hitherto underexplored dimension of the political argument of the *Travels*.

However, the idea of the change brought about by travel being positive and desirable has a long history. Writers such as Fabricant and Bohls have identified the importance of 'the grand tour' and writing on the topic to the development of modern British notions of personhood and conscience in transit. Such writing is presented as

indicative of positive affirmations of character changing over time through experience (Fabricant 2005; Bohls 2005). Both authors also present travel narratives as anchored by the political functions provided by documentations of personal transformations helping to define national identity in an age of growing empire (Vanek 2015: 560–561). *Gulliver's Travels* certainly references such an idea, presenting Gulliver's famous anti-imperial speech in Book IV right at the base of the summit of his madness. Rather than affirming identity following personal transformation voyaging for empire, Gulliver is changed for the worse by his experiences, and the extent of his mounting madness has all been meticulously chronicled.

Locke argued in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* that the potential of travel to affect positive change was entirely contingent on the character of the traveller to begin with and, crucially, when in life they embarked on the trip. There is a sweet spot, according to Locke, between being too young and impressionable to be positively affected by the experience of travel, and being too old and set in one's ways to have one's pride in place lowered enough to see what is of value in other places and cultures. As will be fully articulated in a later chapter, Locke's argument recognises the traveller's capacity for change as a liability when done under less than ideal circumstances (Locke 1996: 158–161). A weak person that is poorly educated or not yet sufficiently educated is likely to degrade under the pressures of travel, it seems. The project of the New Science professed the desire to extend the "bounds of human empire" across the globe (Bacon 2008: 177). Thus, the problem of ordering travel for the betterment of science does not resolve Swift's antipathy toward travel in general as this forms an absolutist project that not only seeks to undermine his commitments of religious faith and tradition, but also allies to political absolutism through innovations in technological capacity that make terrifying tyrannies such as Laputa a reality.

Building upon this, I claim that *Gulliver's Travels* essentially argues that the wrong person, travelling at the wrong time, encouraged to disassociate from their originating context in order to better document their new encounters and surroundings, results in negative consequences. This is further exacerbated by the fact that global expansionism in the context of imperialism is an ongoing phenomenon, thus allowing Gulliver multiple chances to travel after returning home from differing levels of transformative experiences.

Interestingly, the documentation of this changeability, according to Fabricant & Bohls, provided much of the groundwork for the thematic anchor of personal development (and/or transformation in the face of conflict) that was to become the foundation of the modern novel (Fabricant 2005; Bohls 2005). Furthermore, Percy G. Adams, also exploring the significance of travel writing to the development of the modern novel, points out the interesting juxtaposition to the reader of the perceived authority of travel reports with cognizance of the potential for the traveller's own changeability affecting the account of what happened. He then goes further by noting the litany of fictitious travel books feigning veracity that were available at the time, adding yet another layer of possible illegitimacy to the reader's experience. (Adams 1962: 186). *Gulliver's Travels* undoubtedly plays with these multi-faceted expectations and suspicions, adding an evolving unreliable narrator as the book unfolds.

In this regard, one intriguing contribution of *Gulliver's Travels* to intellectual history is its anticipation and pre-emptive subversion of conventions that would shortly

become established as hallmarks of the English novel. Michael Seidel argues as much, adding that the germination of the novel in the literary experimentation of the 1720s featured many of Swift's chief dislikes and subsequent targets (individually as concepts and collectively as a critique of form) in his writing *Gulliver's Travels:* "from Swift's satiric viewpoint, the novel was exactly the narrative form his age deserved, one that removed the time-tested values of cultural inheritance and substituted the subjective experience of a serviceably dim and limited commercial intelligence" (Seidel 1979: 73). This subjective experience is liable to create change, a change documented with fanfare alongside an aggrandizement of a degradation of societal values that *Gulliver's Travels* seeks to castigate. Seidel utilizes this to generate the contribution of Swift to the emergence of modern subjectivity and personhood in the genre of the novel. This is certainly a salient point, but Seidel does so without engaging the importance of travel as a destabilizing element to the potential of meaningful personhood in a well-situated society.

1.5. Travel and the Body

The notable documentation of bodily functions and of the viscerality of the human body in *Gulliver's Travels* notably links to Jonathan Lamb's documentation the obsession of British travellers to the South Seas with illness, physical degradation and the potential for concurrent debilitation of the mind (Lamb 2001). Lamb discusses the infatuation of travellers with the idea that nutritional deficiencies away from home would weaken their physical and eventually mental resolve to meet the topographical and scientific challenges asked of them. The vulnerability of body and mind to crack under the pressure of travel and illness is clear: "with scurvy rampant, discipline, cartography, measurement—and the dreams of commercial and scientific progress depending on them—all suffer because the eye, and the 'I', can no longer be trusted" (Lamb 2001: 128). Gulliver's obsessive documentation of bodily functions operates alongside a log of his increasingly failing mind. Travel wreaks havoc on Gulliver's mind and his existence as a foreign body in a foreign land overwhelms him by the time of his encounter with Houyhnhmns and Yahoos of Book IV.

Gulliver's Travels grabs hold of the tensions identified in this literature on the demands and effects of travel, presenting a central character who oscillates between foolish national pride and a willingness to forego all affinities and beg acceptance of a new society. The medium of travel literature is an ideal literary means to satirise and politically comment upon the potential damage done by the scope for individualistic indulgence that travel affords. While there are shadows of Anglican theology in the treatment of other themes in the text (see below), in my view the text offers a refutation of Puritan or dissenting Protestant conscience as a source of moral authority. Indeed, as I outline in my analytical chapter on Book III, Swift saw strong parallels in the projects of the New Science and freethinking dissent, most clearly represented by the references to the religious toleration and scientific modernism of the Dutch (Palomo 1977: 28). Lotte Mulligan (1973) and Barbara Shapiro (1968; 1975) have demonstrated the heterogeneity of political and religious views within the membership of the Royal Society, but *Gulliver's Travels* refers to an idealized version of the society that serves Swift's satirical and political aims, rather than a portrait that is strictly accurate at the specific time of writing. Thus, while the actual Royal Society of the 1720s was neither as Puritan nor as

single-mindedly committed to so-called Baconianism as Swift's allusions may summon, the parallel between these two intellectual strains made throughout the text is assisted by their intentional conflation into a recurring reference point.

Gulliver's Travels is unquestionably vehement and brutal in its rejection of individual authenticity as something established by knowledge of oneself through meeting other cultures. The idea of the authentic self (insofar as it can be realised at all) as uncovered and perfected by travel experience is presented as an indulgent and prideful myth. The idea of foreign lands as housing more pure and honest ways of life is also conveyed as misguided optimism or foolish hubris. Swift utilises the fantastic voyaging of *Gulliver's Travels* to critique the nascent 'grass-is-greener'-style thinking of the politics of authenticity that was emergent in a nascent pre-Rousseauvian form with the advent of the discovery and documentation of pre-civilisation cultures in the New World (Lindholm 2008:1–10). Following Marshall Berman, the politics of authenticity are defined as the attribution of high political importance to the idea of "an ideal community in which individuality will not be subsumed and sacrificed, but fully developed and expressed" (Berman 1970: xvii).

Swift's view of such matters—like his disposition more generally—was decidedly unromantic, most likely because from his vantage point he lived on the frontlines of the ongoing "war between barbarity and civilisation" (McMinn 1994: 82). Swift satirically prefigures much of the more calculated political implications of the noble savage thesis by parodying traveller's tales of encountering non-European peoples. The perspective on such thinking referenced in *Gulliver's Travels* culminates in a defence of the institutions of hierarchically ordered English society as stabilizing, rather than corrupting influences. The litany of satirical criticisms of contemporary England and Europe are cast in the attempt to salvage what Swift sees as vitally necessary for lives of responsible freedom to be possible. The modern innovations of licentious individualism, materialism, crass commercialism and even religious toleration represent hubris and folly that lead to moral and political degeneration, as they have done in the likes of Holland, for example.

Living in Ireland, where much of the 'native Irish' population lived in abject poverty and whom Swift and his Anglo-Irish class had been conditioned by literally centuries of anthropological writing to see as a morally barren, idle, base, and degenerate race (Stubbs 15–17), the prospect of voyaging to faraway lands to see how the other side lived held little appeal. Strange and deviant lifestyles, somewhat sublime and somewhat loathsome were available on the island where Swift was born and forced to call home. And, as documented by Joseph McMinn, Swift was a sufficiently storied traveller of the Emerald Isle to be genuinely acquainted with a people and way of life he generally found "loathsome and incomprehensible" (McMinn 1994: 102). *Gulliver's Travels* brings together Swift's joy at playfully jibing the naïve realism of travel writing and his lived experience of how patently unromantic supposedly lower societies really lived.

1.6. Individual, Society, Tradition

Travel is also a means to engage questions of universality in human affairs. This is certainly a theme that readers and critics of *Gulliver's Travels* have long debated. As Warren Montag (2001: 17) notes, Gulliver never encounters the *terra nulla* envisioned by Hobbes and Locke as an essential characteristic of the state of nature in the New World. Gulliver instead encounters a range of societies that each demonstrates some version or

another of organic hierarchy. Montag reads this as a direct theoretical refutation of the state of nature. Montag's argument is that Swift favoured a particular brand of Anglican authoritarianism, and that the absence of any true 'natural society' across the globe is designed as a vindication of the sanctity and security of order (Montag 2001). Swift's writing certainly approvingly conveys authoritarian ideas in certain important ways, not least his support for the Test Act that excluded non-Anglicans from political power and his chauvinistic attitudes toward the native Irish population. However, it is extremely important to note that *Gulliver's Travels* clearly criticizes political absolutism and the aspiration toward universal control and understanding of the material world possessed by the scientific project. Although Swift is certainly authoritarian by the standards of modern Liberal Democratic norms, he can nonetheless be seen to stand for a particular strain of limited individual liberty as freedom from the state within the confines of a strong established church. This is predicated on a strong communitarian ethos that rejects perceived licentious individualism.

Montag is certainly astute in making this point, although Swift actually takes this further, presenting the reader with the very real dangers of what happens when an individual as prideful and of a questionable education as Gulliver leaves their originating society for the open space of travel. Montag does correctly, in my view, note that *Gulliver's Travels* is an argument in favour of a viewpoint that accepts the irreducible sociability of mankind (Montag 1994: 129–130; 2001: 11). However, in "Gulliver's Solitude: the Paradoxes of Swift's Anti-Individualism," Montag deduces a degree of self-contradiction in the argument against individualism presented in the *Travels*. He argues that the recognition of the falsehood of individualist philosophies is juxtaposed with the singular failure of the institutions of societal sociability, most notably the family, to comfort or stabilise Gulliver (Montag 2001: 11–14). This, according to Montag, is most notably the case at the culmination of the book in that Gulliver's isolating madness occurs amidst his wife and children. Thus, the family—that basic unit of human sociability, per Aristotle—is of no consolation in the face of his antipathy to the sympathetic world around him (Montag 2001: 11–14). For Montag this is a curious self-contradiction and a problem for the strength of Swift's anti-individualist argument.

While I agree that Swift's anti-individualism is nuanced and complex, the key factor omitted by Montag is the changeability of the traveller—Gulliver returns to his organic society transformed in ways that prevent the efficacy of its natural sociability to take root and reorient him. Gulliver has been negatively affected by radical individualism and unscrupulous consumption of foreign cultures to an extent that renders him beyond repair by the positive influence of traditional institutions.

1.7. The Body and the Body Politic

The body represents a classic venue for the micro and macro struggles of politics to play out, literally in the case of the individual body and metaphorically for the body politic. In very broad terms, the Christian and Humanist traditions upheld the body as a mere vessel for the soul whereas emergent modern thinking increasingly rendered it a strictly empirical, corporeal entity (Hillman & Maude 2015: 1–6). In typically Swiftian fashion, *Gulliver's Travels* makes the case for the former whilst indulging the most gross and exaggerated iterations of the latter. What Knowles and other scholars (notably Houlihan Flynn 1990) omit, however, is the centrality of travel and empire as the engine behind

Swift's depiction of these corrupting influences and its primacy in sending men far away from society where conservative, intellectual, and anti-scientific values can preserve their body and mind.

Several commentators have noted that Swift's treatment of the body in *Gulliver's Travel's* is fixated most notably on the potential and actual infirmities that human physicality suffers. Carol Houlihan Flynn argues that the work of Swift and Defoe represents a crystallization of the breakdown of the idealised body in a more materialistic age and a move toward a more physically intrusive and corrupting presence. The body is seen as primarily a consuming entity that collides with others, taking up space and draining scarce resources as it simultaneously pumps waste out into the world (Houlihan Flynn 1990). *Gulliver's Travels* certainly focuses on the gross physicality of the human condition, in order to express its sometimes crass and uncomfortable functional necessities in starkly literal terms. However, this is done with typically Swiftian double-handedness; the goal is to undermine those who advocate seeing the world in purely materialist terms by indulging in the full extent of how observing humanity through such a prism would look. The *Travels* shows us that humans are irreducibly physical, but that doesn't mean we should reduce ourselves to the merely physical.

The fascination with disease and defilement in the text is extremely noteworthy and makes up for a significant amount of the coverage of the body across the four voyages. A key interpretive battleground has been in making sense of the connection between expressions of the nauseous and putrid capacities of the human body in both everyday actions and in decay, and Swift's portrayal of human nature more generally. Is the gross detail with which the human body is presented an indication of the stained soul of original sin expressing its capacity for horror laid bare when separated from the façade of society? Or, is it more of a critique of a materialistic view of humanity, emergent within contemporary modern scientific thinking?

Annette Leddy argues that the treatment of the body in *Gulliver's Travels* is a reaction to the social manipulation of the body perpetrated by a solidifying capitalist society freed of the demands of objective reason (Leddy 1990: 114). While this reads to me as an anachronistic, it is true that elsewhere in his corpus Swift demonstrates a dislike for emergent modern economical thinking. *The Modest Proposal* of 1729 unquestionably directs a significant portion of its satirical force toward practitioners of *political arithmetik*. This satirical pamphlet essentially argues that those who ideationally reduce humans to mere numbers are sufficiently down the path of mass dehumanisation to be open to a project where children are a food source. Such ideas are referenced in the critique of scientific projection found in Book II, wherein technological mastery provides the physical capacity for tyranny and a culture of "intense speculation" of abstract matters quashes the any humane inclination to refrain from destructive use of power. *Gulliver's Travels* is, in my view, politically situated as a defence of organic society and the stability and assuredness that it can provide to the role of individuals in community. Swift offers a criticism of several aspects of modern society and a defence of a version of ancient virtue (Knowles 1996: 29).

It is undoubtedly clear that Swift was ambivalent at best about many aspects of the modern project, with financial speculation and the unrestricted potential of the bourgeoisie to reshape society in its interests providing considerable pause for concern. However, to argue that *Gulliver's Travels* utilises the manipulation of the body as an

argument against contemporary capitalism is anachronistic and also disregards the net positive light in which British society (despite indulging in displaying its faults) is presented in comparison to the chaos and horror of venturing into the unknown. Even the most desirable society Gulliver comes across, The Land of the Houhynhnms, is ultimately led by unflinching reason toward a genocidal impulse toward its Yahoo population (Rawson 2001). Gulliver is utilised as a representative of modern attitudes and impulses—commercial, urban, mercantile—to satiric effect (Knowles 1996: 30). This is because Swift is a nuanced writer who has multiple targets across the text. However, to argue, as Ronald Knowles does, that the synthesised argument of the *Travels* is Swift's declaration in favour of an "ancient" humanism in favour of modernity in a battle between progress and development is to miss out somewhat on how much *Gulliver's Travels* actually defends the institutions of modern Britain, despite some heavy criticism of them. If anything, the greatest scepticism is directed toward attempts to "progress" beyond the peace and order established in 1688 through the constitution of church and state.

Claude Rawson (2005) argues that Swift's presentation of the bleakly low ceiling of human improvability means that we should be wary of investing optimism in the capacity of any institutions and laws to dull the corruption of the human condition. The role of institutions mediating the potential for human depravity is an important theme in the history of political thought and *Gulliver's Travels* engages it interestingly. I argue that while Swift is certainly worried and grim with regards to human nature he certainly has a preference for how it can be best housed and organised and England offers much of this, flawed as it may be. Human nature being what it is, from Swift's perspective social and political institutions are prone to corruption and degradation and thus the mixed government of crown, parliament, and nobility, kept in check by an established church must be defended.

Indeed, *Gulliver's Travels* conveys certain aspects of how the post-revolutionary era tended to see the cyclical degeneration or decline of society as inevitable—an idea that has its origins in the most formative political studies of the ancient world (Fink 1947: 160; Minogue 1995). However, *Gulliver's Travels* still demonstrates that we are best when housed in societies that are preserved and protected through time-honoured traditional institutions, curbing the potential for radical excess and baseness. The monarchy operated in such a fashion, drawing out a veneration from the public through the legitimacy of its long unbroken line of succession, quelling revolt and inspiring political obligation.

Original sin definitely casts a shadow upon Swift's depiction of human nature, but it is at best a partial explanation for the ways in which human physicality is presented in the book. Original sin as a generalized radical, universal, and incurable phenomenon is an undercurrent for the human depravity dreamt up across the four voyages. It is noteworthy that the book doesn't include any direct Biblical allegory, nor any heavy-handed religious messaging or subtext, as is the case in *Robinson Crusoe*. However, the treatment of the body is in keeping with wariness of squalor, bodily complacence and misplaced pride in the body that we can take the sense of inherent human depravity to be "a secular analogue to original sin", in the words of Claude Rawson (2005: xxxii).

In this regard, Houlihan Flynn's work comparing Swift and Defoe on the body fails to acknowledge the significance of Gulliver being a surgeon, trained to witness and

tackle human physicality at its worst. Houlihan Flynn does note that both Swift and Defoe wrote in response to the increased materiality of their world. Swift, in particular, dwells on the problems of sensation as a means to attain reliable perception, questioning the information about the world that our bodies give our minds (Houlihan Flynn 1990: 1–2). This is an important aspect of Swift's engagement with the body, but it is notably treated as such, I will argue, because of the removal of the body from its original society through travel. The satiric irony at the culmination of the book, of course, is that the true casualty of *Gulliver's Travels* is less Gulliver's body than his mind—the non-material entity that (allegedly or potentially) houses the definitively human characteristic of reason. Perception, reliability and the loosening of mind and body occurs as a result of travel and the indulgence of individuality that the imperial endeavour affords Gulliver.

James Ward argues that Swift's writing uses comparisons between the natural and political bodies as a means to insist that "sovereignty and integrity are problematic guarantors of personal, as much as political identity" (Ward 2011: 40). The animating fiction of the universal resemblance between the individual human body and the body politic is used as a critique of the strains placed on individuality by political and economic modernity. The analogue is established in order to demonstrate that the aberrations or faults of individual bodies throughout the text (primarily through degeneration and decay) reflect the faults of the wider body politic. The primary culprit for this twofold decay is the innovation wrought by modernity (Ward 2011: 40–42). It's worth noting that Ward cites Richard Braveman's 1993 study of the literary use of the body politic from 1660–1730, in which it is claimed that the trope of the body politic was unfashionable or outdated by the time Swift was writing *Gulliver's Travels* (Ward 2011; Braverman 1993). Thus, Ward claims that this constitutes intentional anachronism on Swift's part, harking back to an earlier model of political metaphor to subvert modernist discourse. The goal, according to Ward, is to present an anti-modern discourse that presents political bodies as battered, bruised, inherently ugly, and prone to infirmity as a direct consequence of the onslaught of modernity (Ward 2011).

As such, Swift intensifies the depiction of natural degeneration in order to further impress the violent harms of modern utilitarian, mercantile, and individualistic life on body and soul alike. This also further reinforces Swift as an Old Whig in political matters, despondent at the individualism, materialism, and rationalist currents gathering momentum in the 1720s ahead of their more developed articulation in the decades to come (Lock 1983: 134).

Ward argues that Swift builds upon Hobbes's discussion of personations in the modern state in generating such an argument. Personation, for Hobbes, is the necessary set of fictitious disguising persona or roles played by individuals when interacting with each other and government in the context of the early modern state. Evidence for this claim is drawn from the list of supposedly odious roles and professions that Gulliver declares himself happy to be away from when in Houyhnhmnland (Ward 2011: 45–50). Such roles are all seen as examples of how modern society is built upon the established and understood fiction of personation rather than full personhood, which Ward then sees as an argument against how modernity detracts from individuality. Ward does not necessarily comment on Hobbes's intention in depicting personation positively or negatively, but he argues that *Gulliver's Travels* presents the link between degradation and decay of the individual body and of the body politic as a criticism of the denial of full

personhood that is perpetrated by modern society. Such less-than-full persons constitute wasteful excess in the body politic, represented in images of tumours and bile, reminiscent of Milton's *Of Reformation Touching Church Discipline in England* from 1641 (Forsyth 2008: 70).

While Ward has many useful insights into the character and context of Swift's engagement with individual and political bodies, to claim that *Gulliver's Travels* reads Hobbes on personation as an attack on full personhood and individuality cannot be substantiated by the text. *Gulliver's Travels* is at its most basic level a blistering attack on individual pride (Damrosch 2013). The multi-faceted nature of this attack, the chaotic and imaginative imagery used throughout, and the multiple layers involved in generating the argument render the text a head-scratching bone of contention for readers across the centuries. But the central message in its most simple and direct form is not so much under debate. In my reading *Gulliver's Travels* is not a critique of modern politics' inability to preserve/protect personal and political identity. It is rather a scathing criticism of how modernist ideas of self-directed travel as a means to scientific discovery encourage and facilitate the loss of the societal context in which human improvement can be fruitfully directed. In this regard, the political body is certainly challenged by some of the travails of modernity but the natural sociability of man, conditioned by moral limitations and barriers to improvement, nonetheless necessarily demands a solid base rooted in the organic hierarchy of society.

Gulliver's Travels is far less concerned with the potential reduction of full personhood that comes with personation in modern society than it is with the unleashing of radical individualism and the potential for degeneration both physical and mental when travellers untether from society and unscrupulously consume culture and experience. Swift's degraded bodies are not, as Ward claims, "material signifiers of modernity's damaging innovations (…) informed by Hobbes's notion of personation," but are rather representations of excess of individualism and its susceptibility to transformation (physical, mental, and perceptive) when radically separated from society. In Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* there is a strong focus on the contempt for the self-interested indulgence of appetite that is hypocritically concealed behind the rectitude of moral reform. I argue that a similar conservative ethical argument, fuelled by distaste for hypocrisy, is waged in *Gulliver's Travels*, but levelled at those who would indulge the appetite of the self-indulgent fiction of full-personhood rather than the political fiction of personation. Per Hobbes, personation is what makes modern societal order possible. Rather than condemning this fiction, Swift demonstrates contempt for those who wish to recklessly travel in order to indulge their appetites under the guise of seeking personal transformation and regaining a fictive full personhood or selfishly enriching themselves under the pretence of extending the imperium of Britain. Furthermore, the satiric target is romantic notions of the supposed authenticity of full personhood to be found in travel.

Many of the authoritative biographical accounts of Swift suggest that he had a personal dislike of hypocrisy and penchant for cleanliness to an extent altogether outside the realms of normalcy for his age (Ehrenpreis 1952; Nokes 1985; Damrosch 2013; Stubbs 2017). This is said to account for the particular revulsion with which the body and its capacity for filth is treated in *Gulliver's Travels*. This is, at absolute best, a shallow explanation of how the body contributes to the over-arching argument(s) that we can take out of the book. More importantly, however, methodologically this study seeks to extract

textual meaning in ways that may exceed or surpass initial authorial intention (if that may even be identified with any degree of certainty) and thus even if this was definitively the case, the text demonstrates meaning and significance beyond this regardless.

Leo Damrosch suggests that the treatment of the physicality of the human body and its functions in *Gulliver's Travels* and elsewhere in Swift's oeuvre is the result of the modern maxim of 'write what you know.' Damrosch describes Swift's Dublin as quite simply a place where material decay and defilement was commonplace and difficult to avoid. Thus, Swift simply observed and recreated this in his writing, partially because this is the world he knew and partially to stir the pot amongst those who believed that polite society should not comment on such aspects of human life (Damrosch 2013). James Ward also comments on this, suggesting that the body horror and scrupulous attention paid to public displays of decay and degradation is not necessarily as peculiarly Swiftian as is often thought to be the case, but rather a more true-to-life representation of the brutality and strangeness of the omnipresence of death in the 18th Century (Ward 2014). However, as most biographers of Swift note, the man cherished "cleanliness, rationality, benevolence, decency, and restraint" (Nokes 1985: 328) despite littering his writings with the most outrageous depictions of filth, impulsiveness, wickedness, chaos, and indulgence. Ward correctly points out that in doing so to the extent that he did, Swift was taken for highly unusual by his contemporaries. Indeed, despite a high public profile as a popular political figure in Ireland and as a bestselling and beloved author in Britain and elsewhere, his critical reputation was primarily that of an excessive misanthrope for much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

1.8. Empire and Utopia

Another key literary theme is the idea of empire as a metaphor for the extension of absolute sovereignty across the globe. This involves more than just political power following the tradition of the Roman understanding of *imperium*. Thus, empire does not always strictly apply as the growth of dominion of conquered territory and peoples. It also has the important association of "an aspiration toward universality" (Howe 2002: 13). We see this universal aspiration demonstrated in explicit Christian usage of the term beginning in the Middle Ages and in scientific discourse from the early modern period onward. Swift knowingly plays with the problems of such a universalization as *Gulliver's Travels* presents contrasts of natural universal truths with the hubris of man in seeking to impose unnatural universalizations upon the world.

*Gulliver's Travel*s' engagement with the perils of travel and empire tackles both in a synthesised argument that is built throughout the four voyages. Frances D. Louis makes the case that the overarching argument of the *Travels*, above all else, is an epistemological one, suggesting that as the text unfurls we witness "a man fumbling his way toward knowledge" (Louis 1981: 123). Whilst this is true, it is also the case that the text highlights the problems of experiential learning through travel and ordering this process to serve the ends of the scientific project Swift engages epistemological problems of the universalising impulse by demonstrating "how easily human judgment could be distorted: his satire illustrates just how men can mistake all motion for progress, all seeing for knowing, all division for knowledge, and any individual as the measure of all men" (Louis 1981: 35). It will be argued here that Book III of *Gulliver's Travels* makes a strong case that the aspiration of science toward a universal method and unified language

through which a rational world can be fully comprehended and mastered (Mitchell 2019: 94) is not just hubris, but also a corollary to political absolutism, opposition to which all biographers of Swift agree was his primary and unflappable political commitment (Lock 1980; 1983; Downie 1984; Higgins 1994; Oakleaf 2008).

The idea of Christianity—High Church Anglicanism in particular—as a universal truth is unequivocally found elsewhere in Swift's writings but exactly how it should be understood in *Gulliver's Travels* in relation to the metaphor of empire more generally is interestingly opaque and warrants investigation. This is an important facet of how Swift engages the idea of empire as the metaphorical stretching of human agency across the world. On one hand, he arguably presents human nature as unified by inherent corruption across a wide range of fantastic worlds, depicting organically hierarchical societies in the process (Carey 2002); on the other hand, there is also a critique of the universalising desires of empire as both the physical and political control of territory and the notion of bringing the innumerable intangibles that make up the world under the control and discipline of science. Yet again, this is a tension or contradiction that is too often taken as an either/or equation in secondary literature evaluating the politics of the *Travels*. I argue that Swift sees human nature as universally fallen, but that the answer is not then to universalise our approach or attempts to know or control the world.

Such thinking notably intersects with another key literary genre that Swift pivots off of in *Gulliver's Travels*: Utopian literature. A relevant example of this is found in Bacon's *New Atlantis*, where human knowledge and human power are presented as unified in an imperial endeavour of sorts: "the enlarging of the bounds of human empire, to the effecting of all things possible" (Bacon 2008: 177). Swift directly dialogues with such an understanding of both Utopian fiction and the purpose/meaning of empire when conflating the extension of political power and scientific knowledge in the flying island and experimentation of the Laputa episode of Book III (Higgitt 2013). Book III is also a contemporary criticism of the scientific program of the Royal Society "that threatened to reduce all of life to materialist explanation" (Damrosch 2013: 135). It is important to fully comprehend the integrated nature of the universalising tendencies and desires of the scientific and imperial projects. As we have seen in surveying travel literature, they are one and the same in many ways and at the very least importantly intertwined endeavours. As discussed in more depth in the analysis chapter of Book III, the scientific project sought to reorder travel in order to better serve its purposes, something I argue Swift opposes vehemently as antithetical to the prudence of traditional morality.

Anthony Pagden's *Lord of All the World* argued that all three major colonial powers saw imperialism as a "universal project" of Christianisation and civilisation, in return for which economic and political control over occupied territories would be granted. Whilst some contemporary British theorists, notably James Harrington, saw the English empire as "a protectorate of several interests rather than a universal state", *Gulliver's Travels* clearly engages the problem of the lure and seemingly inevitable endpoint of universalization that comes with the imperial project (Pagden 1995: 126–127). From a biographical standpoint, Swift looked with distaste upon the Union of the English and Scottish crowns as something that would devalue the practical and symbolic independence of the Irish crown (Stubbs 2016). This demonstrates the problem of straying from the Harringtonian concept of multiple interests under one umbrella and the drive toward universalization. *Gulliver's Travels* carries such a critique of the aspirations

toward universalism in politics, rationality, and science.

The primary original contribution of this dissertation is to highlight how Swift uses travel as a point of instructive convergence for these intellectual currents, fashioning a critique of the assumptions that rest at the heart of Enlightenment ideas of education and modernist developments in scientific rationalism. In working carefully through the critique of travel as a necessarily edifying endeavour, a broader criticism of modernity emerges. This relates to Swift's presentation of human nature and science, both of which have been discussed extensively in the secondary literature referenced above and in the substantive chapters on these topics. However, whilst other scholars have situated *Gulliver's Travels* within relevant theoretical and historical contexts, it has seldom been analysed as a text that offers a political criticism of travel itself. In particular, this dissertation tracks travel as a means to bring together the currents of travel writing, the relevant religious context of Irish Anglicanism, as well as developments in modernist science as vital concerns featured throughout the text. Focusing on the possibility of individual experiential edification through travel allows Swift to crack open questions of individualism, organic hierarchy, and freedom. This culminates in an argument that sheds light on some of the problems that ideas concerning the human capacity for self-directed individual experiential edification have outside of the communitarian norms provided by tradition. Travel can provide individuals with vital edification under the optimal circumstances—i.e. when pursued as part of an orderly and appropriate education—but Swift is unwilling to generalize from this best-case scenario Ultimately, I conclude that Swift's skepticism of travel as a guaranteed means of individual improvement opens up a wider argument concerning the deceptions of instrumental reason (which he sees as purely goal-oriented cleverness devoid of moral character) as evidence for the inevitability of progress, pointing instead to the vitality of tradition and prudence to rein in the march of modernism.

1.9. Methodological Approach

The primary methodological aim of this dissertation is to assess and elucidate the meaning and significance of the text on its own terms: synthesising the timely and timeless components of its political content in order to generate an over-arching argument. Peter J. Ahrensdorf (1994) has noted the importance of distinguishing between the historically contingent and broader theoretical qualities of a text, making the case that studying the former can draw out the profundity of the latter, rather than the two being incompatible as the famous argument made by Quentin Skinner (1969) goes. This distinction is particularly important when reading a work by an author such as Swift who published prolifically as a topical satirist, political polemicist, and who packed all of his writings with a rich cast of references drawn from his library of classics, hotly debated current publications, and the news of the day. In seeking to draw insight from *Gulliver's Travels*, I have followed Ahrensdorf's mandate, using historical context where appropriate in the attempt to draw out the enduring significance of Swift's work. Irvin Ehrenpreis' three volume biography of Swift entitled *Swift: The Man, His Works, and the Age*, reigned supreme as the definitive account of the Dean's life for much of the latter half of the 20th Century. Alongside this extremely influential work, more recently published biographies of Swift by Leo Damrosch (2013) and John Stubbs (2017) are the key texts used for biographical information relating to Swift history and personality in the

writing of this dissertation. Ehrenpreis made the case that locating and locking *Gulliver's Travellers* into an explanatory scheme of pure topical allusions and satire undercuts the complexity of argument that Swift achieves in the work. We ought not, he argues to simply connect "his attacks with their objects in the life of his time" so as to "infer the doctrines he is advocating," even if this is a satisfactory method of interrogating other works in Swift's corpus (Ehrenpreis 1983: 452–453).

The purpose of this dissertation is to extract and examine the facets of *Gulliver's Travels* that generate an overarching commentary and argument concerning the merits of travel and its place in political and scientific innovations of the early eighteenth century. As such, certain topical satirical allusions and references that are in the text will not be identified or highlighted. The fact is that *Gulliver's Travels* is a deceptively dense text and the task of drawing the specific targets and allegories throughout the work is best pursued as an endeavour of pure editorial contextualization.

Above all else, this study has been conducted seeking to avoid methodological dogmatism and the arrogance of allowing a pre-understood 'correct' means of reading and understanding a text to eliminate potentially valuable routes of scholarly investigation. Thus, whilst careful examination of the primary textual source, *Gulliver's Travels*, forms the central backbone of the research method, secondary sources that elucidate relevant historical and cultural contexts, as well as kindle avenues of analytic import have also been consulted. Following Ian Shapiro's (2002) recommendation of "problem-oriented political science," the method chosen here is not professed to be the catchall approach to deciphering the significance of an argument contained within a text. Rather, the goal is to utilise the most appropriate method to achieve the goal at hand—in this case surveying Swift's argument concerning the value of travel and its relationship to education and science.

Quentin Skinner's (1969) famous articulation of the contextualist or historicist methodological approach contended that the arbitrary juxtaposition of statements by thinkers across the gamut of time resulted in both a distortion of the individual thinkers and the creation of a false pantheon of "perennial questions." Such concerns were and remain valid at face value at the very least. The arbitrary linking of Swift or any other author to thinkers past and present may well warp one's reading of the text and might be best avoided. However, fruitful analytic connections across great political and literary texts can also assist in clarifying or further illustrating an insight that is still evidentially predicated on textual analysis of the primary source material, in this case *Gulliver's Travels*. Equally so, to entirely eschew knowledge of the political and cultural context in which Swift wrote would largely remove the humour from the satirical portions of the text as these require context to be understood. Reading in a vacuum, then, is also likely to strip any text—but especially a satire—of much of its (decipherable) authorial intent. David Armitage (2000) argues that situating Swift or his contemporaries outside of debates concerning the specificities of British party politics in the early 18th century is to entirely betray and lose the significance of what Pocock (1989) called their "political language." A focus on the intellectual historic conditions of the production of the text is a fruitful means through which to understand the contingent sources of meaning in historical circumstance, and also how these change over time. Such an understanding is an excellent means of "thickening" the descriptive capacities of one's engagement with the text.

However, to arbitrarily restrict the potential significance of ideas and arguments that a text raises to a given historical moment or discussion serves primarily to assert an authoritative critical interpretative hegemony to scholars utilising such a method, rather than "protect" the sanctity or integrity of the text. Of course, an engaged understanding of relevant biographical information and historical contextualisation can kindle interesting and exciting avenues of inquiry. However, to isolate and restrict the resonance of potential findings to within these contexts damages our ability to draw out the arguments that offer resonant theoretical value contained within a given text (Ahrensdorf 1994). To exclusively domicile any inferences or critically significant interpretation of ideas present in the text to a historically isolated moment or language seems to me to strip the text of much of its value as a living document in the present day and serves, ultimately, to defy the text itself.

A close cousin of the contextualist method discussed above is the biographical approach, perhaps best exemplified by the work of David Dunn. Again, whilst a deep knowledge of the biographical information of a given author will never necessarily hurt one's reading of their work, to present biographical findings as evidence for textual interpretation/argument is very problematic. The unifying conflation of authorial intent, textual product and sentiments expressed in public or private correspondence raised by the biographical approach to political/literary studies will thus be avoided.

Conversely, of course, it is vitally important to be wary of anachronistic arguments. To this end, the historicist methodological toolkit of thick contextualisation remains relevant and useful for this study. A key downfall of contemporary postcolonial readings of *Gulliver's Travels* and Swift more generally is that the seeming goal is to reclaim Swift as a firebrand anticolonial thinker when such a worldview simply did not exist in his lifetime. Postcolonial arguments such as Zach (2000) who claim that *Gulliver's Travels* resolves tensions from Swift's Irish Protestant identity into a spirit of liberty and anti-colonialism exemplify such distorting methods. This is because they insert ideas and arguments into the text that exist outside of Swift's political and conceptual vocabulary.

Gulliver's Travels does explicitly present a pejorative position concerning indigenous peoples and at the very least a degree of certitude of European superiority over them and of them, though this is tempered somewhat by its positioning within a wider berth of seeming misanthropy for the most scandalous corruptions into which people are fallen by the degenerate nature of man" in general (Book I, Ch.VI: 54). Beyond this, it is clear that Swift's vast array of prejudices and preferences concerning matters of caste, class, and religion are to be found throughout the text. These are absolutely of importance because although they can be related to contingent political and social circumstances relevant to Swift's position in the Church of Ireland, they also explicitly and implicitly draw upon and fashion standalone arguments and insights. I also assert that there are philosophical insights that can be extracted from the work that can be decoupled both morally and in argumentative content and character from the prejudices that contemporary liberal democratic norms find objectionable (however justified such objections may be)—for example, religious exclusion—without sacrificing what is valuable and insightful about Swift's writing. Simplifying such a complex text to fit to a pre-existing mould of a contemporary political position—such as liberal universalism, cultural relativism, a commitment to reclaiming subaltern voices etc.—far beyond the

horizon of Swift's thought is to pursue ideology, rather than literary or political theory (Minogue 2000: 118).

Another problematic anachronism that I seek to avoid is to attribute Swift's criticisms of materialism, rationalism, and individualism to a wider and more holistic critique of political liberalism. Swift cannot be understood to have anticipated the fully formed political ideology of liberalism. One can meaningfully assert that *Gulliver's Travels* consciously interacts with modernist and early Enlightenment intellectual currents, and even suggests some of the ways in which these apply to political matters in ways that resonate with the later development of political liberalism. However, to grant the Irish writer such powers of prescience cannot stand up to historical scrutiny. It also reifies an intellectual tradition that was not available to Swift in his own life and times for the purposes of generating a theoretical argument.

Historical context can certainly draw out such anticipatory notes in a text, but as Carey and Festa argue, the surplus of meaning in the rhetorical construction of a given text "complicates the task of treating (it) straightforwardly as representative of historical truths external to the text" (Carey and Festa 2009: 105). As a result, it is often more productive to stay closer to the text itself (without necessarily remaining exclusive to it) and to address the core issues at hand as they manifest themselves thematically on the pages themselves.

It would also be problematically anachronistic to expect from *Gulliver's Travels* the kinds of unity, character arcs or development and finite thematic presentation that became standard tropes of the novel later in the 18th Century. The text was written and published in the period where Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) (amongst others) were laying the foundation for a literary genre but its crystallisation was far from complete and the majority of scholars are in agreement that *Gulliver's Travels* is not a novel proper. John Richetti argues that the characteristics that we now recognise as specific and intrinsic to the novel—"a long prose narrative about largely fictional if usually realistic and plausible events—did not solidify in the minds of readers and writers as a literary type or a set of expectations for narrative in the English-speaking world until the beginning of the Nineteenth Century" (Richetti 2003: 1). As such, it is most important is to bear in mind that the somewhat scattered and episodic nature of *Gulliver's Travels* is a factor of its construction as a full-length fiction in the generative pre-novel era, and that the imposition of unifying frames upon this is likely to result in distorted conclusions.

Whilst I am seeking to draw out an over-arching argument from the presentation of key themes and ideas in the text, I have avoided utilising the structure of the text or its lack of qualities/characteristics traditionally associated with the novel as evidence for claims made in the dissertation. To this end, assumptions associated with the genre, structure and formatting of the novel, in particular, cannot form the basis of a credible critical approach to rendering arguments about *Gulliver's Travels*. For example, most critics point to the fractured nature of Gulliver's perspective and psychology as crafted almost entirely by the needs of the satire rather than any holistic or credible attempt at genuine characterisation. However, while I don't entirely disagree with Claude Rawson's assertion that "though Gulliver has a wife, family, home address, and elements of a biographical record, he does not come over as a fully human personality" (Rawson 2008: xxii), the information provided about Gulliver's educational and travel history does form

a vital component of the central argument mobilised in this dissertation.

I have pursued a thematic, rather than chronological analysis of the text, pursuing an argumentative thread that begins with travel before moving along to education, human nature, and science. Thus, the order of Books of the text under discussion moves from the voyage to Brobdingnag, to Houyhnhmnland, to Laputa, before concluding with a discussion of the contemporary relevance of the over-arching argument. References to Lilliput are made throughout, but given the particularly topical and allegorical nature of that voyage, it receives less analysis than do the other three voyages as they engage the questions of a broader nature under investigation in this dissertation in a more direct and sustained manner.

Again, per Ahrensdorf (1994: 113–135), every text presents a timely (contextually contingent) and timeless argument. As such, the integration of contextual information to a primarily textual analysis can draw out significant arguments into a wider context of ideas and debates that cross historically contingent barriers. Thus, information about the debates concerning the dangers of imperialism to its participants that were present in Swift's time are vitally useful but cannot be allowed to supplant what ended up on the pages themselves as evidence for the significance of what Swift presents. Pairing textual analysis with historical context facilitates a reading of *Gulliver's Travels* that can establish both enduring and contextually contingent facets of the text. It also allows for a defensible means of distinguishing between authorial intent in speaking to contemporary debates and surpluses of meaning that extend beyond these historical confines. This dissertation project seeks to bridge divides between a strictly literary, historicist, and political reading of Swift.

The method most directly used throughout this dissertation is that of textual analysis of primary sources, in this case the 1735 edition of *Gulliver's Travels*. In this regard, I follow Claude Rawson (2012) in viewing this edition as the best combination of the originally published 1726 text and some of the later revisions that most closely represent Swift's final thoughts and ideas for the book. Direct and careful textual analysis (without strict adherence to any particular school of textual interpretation) is pursued in order to draw out the meaning and significance of the text on its own terms. Another significant primary source under analysis for the purpose of the argument presented in the dissertation is Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. Unlike a straightforward historicist reading, the meaning and interpretation proffered in this dissertation is not assumed to be hermetically sealed into the relevant historical context. Rather, I have sought to draw it out into the wider base of meaning that the presentation of ideas in the text generates. When relevant, key ideas are thickened up through contextualisation in the history of political thought on relevant issues as they arise in the text—notably travel, education, Enlightenment and Modernist thought, and the New Scientific movements of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth Centuries. The broader context of the history of political and intellectual thought is important in justifying the study of Swift in the realm of political science, especially to situate him amidst the standard canon both chronologically and ideationally. The over-arching argument is, however, primarily predicated on a close reading of the primary source material of *Gulliver's Travels* in occasional dialogue with other relevant texts, thickened with historical context when appropriate.

2. Travel as Education: Necessary for polite society or a hazard to the individual and collective alike?

> *Frustra vitium viaveris illud, sit e alio pravus detorseris.*
> (In vain do you avoid one fault if you perversely turn aside into another.)
> —Horace, *A Discourse on Plain Living*

> I would say, then, that to study human nature to purpose, a traveller must enlarge his circuit beyond the bounds of Europe. (…) It is from a wider and more extensive view of mankind that a just estimate is to be made of human nature.
> —Richard Hurd, *Dialogues on the Uses of Foreign Travel; Considered as a Part of an English gentleman's Education: Between Lord Shaftesbury and Mr Locke*, 1775.

2.1. Introduction

This chapter establishes the central argument of the dissertation concerning the value of travel and its effects on the traveller by carefully analysing Gulliver's interactions with the King of Brobdingnag in Book II of *Gulliver's Travels*. In establishing these questions, the chapter draws upon early eighteenth-century ideas concerning the value of travel as educational tool in a polite society. Travel might be seen as likely to result in the edification of the traveller as they learn and improve themselves through a wider base of experience—assessed relatively—than that available to them in their homeland. However, assuming this variance (partially or entirely) falls universally under the criteria of an objective moral hierarchy, then travel necessarily involves risk to the traveller, as one could encounter vicious habits and may end up adopting them to their detriment. This chapter argues that *Gulliver's Travels* draws upon the insights of Locke and Shaftesbury into travel as an educational endeavour in the context of a polite society to present a case against the universal benefit of travel, whilst also acknowledging that the possibility of travel to edify still exists. However, ultimately the text offers a grim prognostication for the likelihood of the existence of the type of traveller who would be improved rather than corrupted by their experience.

When, in Book II, Chapter VII, the King of Brobdingnag says to Gulliver "As for yourself […] who have spent the greatest part of your life travelling; I am well disposed to hope you may hitherto have escaped many vices of your country" (Book II, Ch. VII: 121), he raises an important question—that of the value of travel as a means to correct the corruptive forces committed upon the individual by a fallen society. The implication here is that following a scathing rebuke of all the virtues Gulliver portrays in English society to in fact be vices, the King wonders whether Gulliver's time away from England may well reduce the corruption placed in him by his originating society. However, equally present throughout *Gulliver's Travels* is a pervasive sense of the seemingly unlimited scope for degeneration brought about by travel and cross-cultural contact. Indeed, by the end of his travels Gulliver is a mental wreck, pathetically imitating a horse in attempt of virtue and left with a misanthropic view of humanity as "a lump of deformity" (Book IV, Ch. XII: 121). Thus, travel can be both a means of improving oneself as an escape from the vices of home, but also a path to corruption

through the adoption of even more deviant practices found abroad. Swift offers a fascinating satirical and literary presentation of some of the issues raised by the idea of travel for the purpose of cleansing oneself of a problematic originating society.

Here I will address how Swift's early counter-Enlightenment satire tackles questions of universality across the variance of human experience to be found when one travels. Is travel always a means to edify and educate oneself? Or should we always be wary of the corruptions raised by travel? I argue that Swift's satire draws upon the warnings of Locke on the subject of travelling from questionable educational/cultural backgrounds at the inappropriate time, and also Shaftesbury's understanding of how interaction with others of varying quality can both polish or sully an individual in the context of a polite society. This culminates in the argument that Swift ultimately offers a sceptical conservative criticism of the notion that travel is inherently edifying, buttressing a natural law idea of organic hierarchical society in the process wherein those who are corrupted by less than ideal societies are likely the worst candidates for travel, and should not do so for their own sake.

2.2. Locke on Travel

In assessing the significance of travel writing on Locke's work, the historian Anne Talbot has shown that Locke's vast library of travel books was chosen carefully with the study of human social behaviour in mind (Talbot 2010: 9–14). Talbot believes that "Locke was using his travel books to explore some quite specific questions and that he was doing so as a natural philosopher working in the Baconian tradition" (Talbot 2020: 15). It is clear that Locke saw travel as a key activity through which to gain an understanding of humanity. He concludes his *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) with a discussion of the merits and pitfalls of travel. Notably, the philosopher describes travel as "the last part in education," and is best used "to finish the work and complete the gentleman" (Locke 1996: 158). As the bulk of *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* offers advice on the education of children prior to engaging the issue of travel, it is to be considered but the final stage of a long process. As such, there is considerable work to be done in developing good character prior to one embarking upon a trip abroad. On the other hand, there is an implicit acknowledgment by Locke here that a gentleman's education cannot be completed without seeing other countries and, by implication, that a full education requires travel. Whilst travel is not necessarily edifying outside of the context of considerable education attained prior to the fact, it is also the case that without it a gentleman's education would be incomplete. In his retirement speech from Yale, Donald Kagan captured Locke's general point here rather nicely when summarising attitudes to education and freedom in Ancient Rome: "servants were ignorant and parochial, so free men must be educated and cosmopolitan" (Kagan 2013: 2).

The core difference, of course, is that Locke does not seem to acknowledge a necessary distinction between education and cosmopolitanism; in a sense to be educated is to be cosmopolitan. As the value of politeness took deeper root as a core component of how eighteenth-century Britain saw itself, this distinction between cosmopolitanism as a necessary characteristic of a polite and educated gentleman further established the necessity of worldliness achieved through experience of travel as vital to one's education. Those who do not travel cannot be entirely cultivated as polite individuals who can both fulfil their own potential for moral development and participate in mutual improvement

through social interactions with other polite individuals. Indeed, as Jonathan Belcher, an influential politician in eighteenth-century America who served as Governor of both Massachusetts and New Jersey, reflected following travel from England to Germany as a young man: "A man without travelling is not unlike a rough diamond", a raw specimen that is "unpolisht [*sic*] and without beauty" (quoted in Bullock 2017: 2). This view is typical of the general enlightenment ideal regarding the edifying effect that travel can—and most likely will—have upon an individual.

Locke clearly establishes that there are important conditions upon if, how, and when, travel is edifying rather than corrupting to the individual. Ultimately, then, it can be inferred that travel is necessary in the best cases but might be damaging in the average and certainly in the worst cases. Someone raised and educated toward vice, or at least far outside the realms of virtue, would thus not be a good candidate for travel. This individual is unlikely to benefit from the experience of travel and will likely not return home with the worldliness or cosmopolitanism desired of the polite gentleman.

This is especially relevant in the context of imperial expansion. The historian Jack P. Greene has argued that as the English effort to establish a viable presence in the New World gathered steam, the contemporary discourse around colonial settlers centred on their lowly social origins and religious and social deviancy (Greene 2013: 50–55). The settlers were deemed to be of questionable stock and were popularly perceived to have left England to share far-flung wilderness territories with any number of savage peoples, terminally disconnected from the ordering cultural and religious amenities of English life. Whilst Locke was in fact friendly to the imperial project—notably drawing up the constitution of the Carolinas—under the terms of the *Thoughts Concerning Education*, if the popular perception of English settlers abroad was true, these were not souls likely to be edified by their endeavours.

Indeed, Locke clearly acknowledges that travel in and of itself is by no means necessarily beneficial, with the age of the traveller being the primary caveat: "I confess *travel* into foreign countries has great advantages, but the time usually chosen to send young men abroad is, I think, of all other, that which renders them least capable of reaping those advantages" (Locke 1996: 158, emphasis in original). The typical tendency in late seventeenth-century England to send young gentlemen to the continent in their early teens, Locke argues, denies them the opportunity to truly benefit from what may be of value in the experience. Locke sees benefit in the traveller being of a younger age and accompanied by a linguistically and culturally adept guardian. However, he recommends that the more apt time for the perfecting of the educational process through travel is when the young man is old enough to go alone yet not entirely or unduly wedded to the conventions and customs of their home. This is so that they would recognise genuine value in other societies and use it in a process of self-edification that would return them home with an improvement in education and character. Thus, one should travel:

> When he is of age to govern himself and make observations of what he finds in other countries worthy of his notice and that might be of use to him after his return; and when too, being thoroughly acquainted with the laws and fashions, the natural and moral advantages and defects of his own country, he has something to exchange with those abroad from whose conversation he hoped to reap any knowledge (Locke 1996: 159).

Again, what we can take from this is that while travel is indeed recommended as part of a broader educational curriculum, it is not inherently of value unless certain preconditions are met. A core component of this education prior to travelling must be a thorough and frank adjudication of the vices and virtues of the moral, political, and religious status of the country of origin. It is worth noting that Locke scrupulously identifies that the traveller be aware of "the natural and moral advantages *and defects* of his own country" (emphasis my own). Without adequate perspective as to how one's society ranks in comparison to others, one could fall afoul of either novelty bias—cheerily adopting all new customs one experiences—or prejudice against every new idea encountered abroad. Thus, neither 'going native' nor closed-minded jingoism are desirable for the traveller, as both would deny them the possible benefits of the enterprise. The potential to leave behind the vices of one's homeland is not of much benefit if it results in simply swapping one vice for another. The character of Gulliver intermittently displays both problems of being too open and too closed to foreign cultures in demonstrating the issues that arise as a result of travel.

Roger Caillois describes Montesquieu's *The Persian Letters* (an early Enlightenment satire that shares notable themes with *Gulliver's Travels*) as operating through a doubly relativistic optic—i.e. Montesquieu using an outside voice to satirically criticize his country of origin and the host nation in a bidirectional manner. Caillois interestingly identifies a necessary wider perceptual change for this literary approach to resonate with the reader: the existing bias of blindly preferring one's own culture to all others needs to wither away. On this account, for the satire of both the *Letters* and *Gulliver's Travels* to function on literary or political terms, it is required that the unconsciously resolute preference for the known be already broken down. In this regard, "those institutions, those habits, those *moeurs*, to which one has been accustomed since birth, and which are so powerful, so spontaneously respected that in most situations no alternative to them can be imagined" must be now be available for somewhat open competition with genuine alternatives, for both literary characters and readers alike (quoted in Richter 1990:15). Caillois is absolutely correct to identify this as a crucial facet of what makes both *The Persian Letters* and *Gulliver's Travels* so compelling from a literary perspective. However, the breaking down of the unconscious preference for the known is problematic because it opens up the possibility for both edification *and* degeneration in engaging the unknown. From the perspective of a conservative skeptic such as Swift, one ought to expect the latter as the more likely outcome a great majority of the time.

This kind of open competition is arguably undesirable and is a threat to those who travel, especially when it comes to adopting practices in a more permanent fashion and returning home with potentially deviant tendencies in tow. Locke is unequivocal in expressing the serious danger to those who would travel when overly open-minded and thus ill-prepared to engage what they encounter abroad:

> If they do bring home with them any knowledge of the places and people they have seen, it is often an admiration of the worst and vainest practices they met with abroad, retaining a relish and memory of those things wherein their liberty took its first swing rather than of what should make them better and wiser in their return (Locke 1996: 159).

The issue of the traveller indulging in vain and poor practices that are happily associated with the indulgence of a newly felt liberty applies primarily to travellers of a young age. However, the liberty that comes with breaking from the established practices, institutions, and hierarchies of the originating society might also have an intoxicating effect on many adult travellers, especially those who are not appropriately educated prior to setting sail. The principle that the traveller will not necessarily be able to ascertain distinctions between the wheat and the chaff in what they come across applies even more broadly. It is arguably the capacity to form appropriate judgment on such matters that forms the bulk of the educational process. Thus, opportunities for edification may well be passed up amidst a potentially well-intentioned but ultimately wide of the mark indulgence of some or all of the lower quality customs or habits found in the host country. In essence, the wrong traveller, travelling at the wrong time, can come home corrupted by practices they are insufficiently experienced and educated to understand as vicious. As a result, the right age and appropriate education are vital preconditions for any traveller.

Locke continues, warning that such a problematic traveller will not take the care to "examine the designs, observe the address, and consider the arts, tempers, and inclinations of men they meet with that so they may know how to comport themselves toward them" (Locke 1996: 160). The worry here is that a certain type of traveller will not show sufficient deference to the mores of the society in which they find themselves and will behave inappropriately as a result. In order to realise the potentially beneficial aspects of travel, a certain decorum or politeness (more on this later) is necessary. Interaction with people of the host culture is required and in order to facilitate this, a degree of adoption of local mores will be mandatory. It would thus be difficult for poorly educated travellers to navigate such cultural adoption and interactions without willingly or unwillingly adopting practices that are corrupting rather than edifying.

The upshot of this, of course, is that negative or poor habits and characteristics adopted by the traveller when abroad will then be brought back to their home country. Richard Bourke has recently identified a similar fear of deviant behaviour in the colonies boomeranging back to the metropole in Edmund Burke's condemnation of what he saw as the despotism of Warren Hasting's running of the East India Company (Bourke 2015: 524–5). Amidst these necessary interactions, Locke is clear in identifying the need for the traveller to maintain a wall against the possibility of their corruption. Although he must have "open eyes" (and, one presumes, some degree of an open mind), these open eyes are as much needed to "make him cautious and wary, and to […] keep himself free and safe in his conversation with strangers and all sorts of people without forefeiting [*sic*] their good opinion" (Locke 1996: 160). According to such thinking, it is required that the traveller combine a certain degree of humility and wariness of corruption with context-appropriate behaviour that does not alienate those around him, thus denying opportunities to learn from the better practices of his surroundings. The difficulty of walking this tightrope for the well-educated gentleman—let alone a naïve young person or a boorish type—should be clear.

Ultimately, Locke's macro view of education is optimistic, starting from the premise of each child possessing a mind as a blank slate open to experience and necessarily capable of independent judgement and reasonable conduct so long as it is correctly cultivated. This vision proffers that a thorough and proper education can foster a truly self-governing individual guided by reason. This path to reason (or reasonableness)

is chiefly obstructed by the common moral failings of selfish self-interestedness (or narrow advantage), passion, and prejudice, identified by Locke (Grant & Tarcov 1996: xii). However, since humans are by nature moral and free beings, we have the capacity to overcome these obstructions to our full flourishing. Notably, as we shall see later in both the thinking of Shaftesbury and others, ignorance is deemed to be the primary driver of prejudice. Thus, if prejudice is one of the primary obstacles to one's full development as a reasonable individual, ignorance must be conquered. Travel thus becomes essential in the execution of a conception of edification and education as the remedy to ignorance and by extension prejudice.

Locke's position, again, is essentially overwhelmingly optimistic in that the broad failings of morality and politics that one observes in society, caused as they are by prejudice, are largely failings of *understanding* rather than of *character* in any meaningful sense (Grant & Tarcov 1996: xii–xii). Improvements in education could thus substantially overcome the preponderance of ignorance that causes prejudice and most likely other related failings of humans to live up to our capacities as free and moral beings. However, travel as a necessary element of this vital project of mass edification through education is by no means something to be taken lightly, as his recommendations establish. Here I argue that Swift in *Gulliver's Travels* acknowledges an understanding and appreciation of Locke's position on this matter but seeks to nonetheless detract from the largely optimistic outlook that Locke presents. The chief point of divergence is the likelihood of extending the conditions under which individuals will be genuinely capable of meeting the standards required by travel to cover a significant number of individuals.

Swift both adheres to and subverts Locke's ideas regarding travel as part of an educational process through Gulliver's actions across his four voyages. As Seamus Deane notes, unlike many readings of Defoe's Robinson Crusoe as *homo economicus*, Gulliver is a "persona whose most conspicuous consumptions will be the customs and habits of others" (Deane 1985: 18). Gulliver takes Locke's advice on being open and facilitating engagement, but he goes too far with it and runs into Locke's warning on the other end of the spectrum. Gulliver sees the need to comport himself around his hosts in the required manner as part of his mission of anthropological documentation, somewhat discarding his critical filter in the process. This, of course, comes hand in hand with Gulliver's overly enthusiastic and deluded praise of English society featured throughout all but the final voyage to the Land of the Houhynhnms. Indeed, Gulliver is guilty of several potential faults of the traveller identified by Locke, even in adopting some of his advice. Gulliver embodies the tensions that Locke's recommendations for travel establish: he is at once deluded, prideful and arrogant about the supposed virtues of his originating society, yet also overly deferential and keen to imbibe all that pertains to the cultures he encounters. He is certainly a traveller beyond Locke's endorsement, enacting much of precisely why Locke might counsel on the question of education to begin with.

2.3. Shaftesbury on Politeness and Travel

The notion of improving oneself through travel predates but also fed into the emergent sense of politeness as a core value of the Enlightenment. The idea of politeness became a central component of how eighteenth-century British men of influence saw themselves and their culture. By the midway point of century, the preface to Anglo-Irish writer Thomas Nugent's *The Grand Tour* encapsulated the view of travel as a path to

completing a polite gentleman. Nugent writes that the "noble and ancient custom" of travelling can improve one's manners, increase knowledge, and sharpen judgment (Thomas 2020: 73). The idea of politeness was largely (though not exclusively) popularised and made a cultural staple by Anthony Ashley-Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, in his *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711). A student of Locke, Shaftesbury argues that the natural sociability of man requires regular interactions with others (preferably in commercial society) aimed toward mutual improvement. As he wrote in "Sensus Commensus, An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour":

> We polish one another and rub off our corners and rough sides by a sort of amicable collision. To restrain this is inevitably to bring rust upon men's understandings. It is a destroying of civility, good breeding and even charity itself, under pretence of maintaining it (Shaftesbury 2000: 31).

We need to take the edge off our natural harshness through regular interaction in order to improve both fellow citizens and ourselves. To deny this would be tantamount to retarding societal progress toward ever more civilised developments in line with our naturally benevolent character. Indeed, sociability, generosity, and a concern with the common good were all necessary in our quest to fulfil our moral potential as human beings. Together, these attributes—vital for our moral flourishing and capacity for mutual improvement—were called politeness and Britain should aim to define itself as a polite society. It is important to note that *Gulliver's Travels* was published in a time and place where the barbarism and scandal contained in the text intentionally contrasts with this notion of England as among the "politer countries of Europe" (Book II, Ch. VII: 122).

Steven C. Bullock, author of a recent work on the influence of the culture of politeness on the nascent American revolutionary generation in the early eighteenth century, argues that proponents of politeness "were not simply encouraging cultivated social interaction for its own sake" (Bullock 2017: 10). Manners were closely tied with political matters in the mind of right-thinking influential eighteenth-century minds: the self-discipline that politeness demands was a necessary corollary of the discipline of others established through just political power (Bullock 2017: 2.) Indeed, Locke's approach to education, motivated as it was as a refutation of Sir Robert Filmer's defence of patriarchal monarchy through divine right, sought to establish the proper role of parents as rendering children capable of becoming independent adults, rather than merely obedient to power (Grant & Tarcov 1996: xiii; (Bullock 2017: 207).

As it is developed and expanded in significance, politeness forms an important societal agenda as it engages individual flourishing, meaningful social interactions directed toward mutual improvement, and a style of rule befitting a free people. Free men cannot be slavish or beholden to tyrants and their education must grant them the tools appropriate for a life of independence and self-reliance (Tarcov 1984: 5). Politeness and education go hand in hand, and it is clear that travel and the worldliness that it can establish in an individual play a vital part in both. The cultivation of polite individuals was designed to establish a base population who could polish one another and improve the nation in a general sense. The extension of politeness ought to be a social and national goal, not merely a means of improving the individual. As Klein summarizes: "Politeness was, after all an outcome of polishing, a process that enhanced persons but also

collectives. In this capacity, politeness helped to situate eighteenth-century Britain in time, as a 'polite age', and in place, as a 'polite nation'" (Klein 2002: 875).

Swift undoubtedly agreed with the central tenets of politeness, not least social refinement and the smoothing out of one's basic manners. Indeed, decency, cleanliness, and restraint were all ideals that Swift valued highly.[1] For Swift the goal of garnering widespread politeness was a noble one, and certainly desirable. However, in the words of Swift biographer David Nokes, "in a post-lapsarian world, the belief that such ideals might be realised was at best a paradoxical folly, at worst a criminal cheat" (Nokes 1985: 328). Refinement is certainly an optimal goal for all, but the macro political facets of politeness—i.e. the cultivation of a genuinely polite society, perfected and sustained through mutual improvement through social interaction—is perhaps out of our reach, given what we know and observe about "that animal called man" (Swift to Pope, Sept. 25th, 1725). One gets the sense from *Gulliver's Travels* that the cumulative edifying effects of social interactions hoped for by Shaftesbury is by no means a given, considering the often wretched nature of those with whom we would be seeking to rub off our corners. In short: quality matters. Like Locke's qualifications upon the potential edification derived from travel, Swift takes Shaftesbury's ideal for polishing one another and suggests that we may be improved in such a manner when interacting with those of virtue, but we may also be soiled by engaging with the vicious.

Shaftesbury recognises more or less as much in his section on advice to authors in the *Characteristics*. Discussing the reading habits of the day, he decries the popularity of travel literature, particularly for its tendency to indulge the bizarre and unruly that one might find abroad in order to excite the reader. This may provide a shallow sense of worldliness in that readers will have their minds directed toward previously unknown parts of the world. However, it nonetheless does not offer any genuine improvement likely to resonate in the extension of politeness to individuals or collectives. Rather, it is mere titillation at best. As Locke before him, Shaftesbury displays an understanding that people affected by the cultural norms they engage. Locke worried for travellers, but in the "Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author", Shaftesbury worries for those who read the outlandish travellers' tales found in print:

> We care not how Gothic or barbarous our models are, what ill-designed or monstrous figures we view or what false proportions we trace or see described in history, romance, or fiction. And thus our eye and ear is lost. Our relish or taste must of necessity grow barbarous while barbarian customs, savage manners, Indian wars and wonders of the *terra incognita* employ our leisure hours and are the chief materials to furnish out a library (Shaftesbury 2000: 153).

Gulliver's Travels, of course, features both "monstrous figures" and "false proportions" in abundance. It is thus a threat to politeness on Shaftesbury's terms. Seamus Deane identifies that Shaftesbury is further concerned by the tendency in travel literature to portray vice and corruption in foreign places as natural (Deane 1985: 10). Nature is invoked here in the modern sense of the word—i.e. outside of the deformations that society imposes upon individuals, as opposed to the classical sense of nature as the

[1] See Swift's poem *When I come to be Old* ((1699): "Not to neglect decency, or cleanliness, for fear of all falling into nastiness" (Swift 1984: 23.)

perfected state of man (Berman 2009: 3–5). Nature on these terms establishes the basis for a cultural and moral relativism wherein politeness does not play into what Shaftesbury saw as the "universal benevolence" of man, but rather merely one practice of many cultures found around the world (Shaftesbury 2000: 153). Thus, for Shaftesbury, understanding foreign customs as "natural" denies the crucial moral distinction between virtue and vice that allows for the latter to be categorically condemned.

Travel is a necessary part of forming a polite society and was typically understood as "worldliness" by eighteenth-century thinkers (Klein 2002:876). In order to provide value in social interactions that are likely to generate bidirectional polishing, one must have a broad base of experience to draw upon and offer to one's interlocutor. Expertise is desirable, but it also ran the risk of narrow bookishness, thus worldliness—achieved through travel and a general knowledge of the wider world—is necessary to combat this potential path to narrowness. When one considers the ever increasingly specialised disciplines, subjects, and types of expertise seen in the academy today, this has certainly borne itself out to be a highly valid concern. Notably, Lawrence Klein's excellent survey of the range of semantic associations that politeness had for eighteenth century intellectuals establishes that this undesirable narrowness of thinking was also deemed incompatible with the cosmopolitan values of politeness and, crucially, the pursuit of a general culture (Klein 2002:876). This juxtaposition of a universalizable set of values amidst knowledge of a highly varied world (different mores in different places etc.) strikes at the heart of a core tension between cultural relativism and moral universalism arise in *Gulliver's Travels*. I argue that Swift's acknowledgment of the empirical fact of relativism across the globe in fact marked a stark argument in favour of clinging ever more tightly to the aspects of the defensibly general culture that we have thus far.

Gulliver's Travels engages this idea by highlighting the relativity of people, society and experience that can be found across the world—tiny people and giants; power hungry expansionists and absent minded scientific speculators; abominable animals and perfectly rational beings who live in harmony with nature—and yet the satire plays upon those who would see all this variance as equally natural and therefore relative. Rather, like Shaftesbury, Swift demands that the moral distinctions between these varying societies be maintained, refusing to allow the fact that different perspectives exist and that what one sees and understands of the world is relative to this perspective—i.e. things look different when you are a giant and when you are tiny—to affect moral judgments. Swift indulges relativity across the globe in outlandish terms in order to argue that the mere fact of relativity is not a justification for a relativist perspective. One can indeed be corrupted by deviant practices found abroad and, regardless of the vices found in one's originating society, travel is by no means a guaranteed portal to edification through doing as the Romans do when in Rome. For Swift it is clear that an absolute standard of virtue and vice exists; the fact of variance across the world from the best to the worst of both is not a call toward value-free subjectivity, but rather an appeal to fall back upon the known. As such, the satire cations that one should be wary of travel, not in all circumstances, but perhaps in most.

The complex intellectual history of the idea of nature ranges from classical ideals of human perfectibility to early-modern contractarian notions of the human outside of society and into Romantic ideals of nature as "the radiant presence of a transcendent moral order, of an absolute ready to guide humanity to illumination" (Herman 2013:

411). All feature to varying extents across *Gulliver's Travels*, with each perspective coming in for severe criticism. In this case, Shaftesbury's concern with the emergent romantic ideal is indeed echoed by Swift in his portrayal of the dangers of travel. This is reflected in the traveller (as travel writer) being inclined toward both a detached and objective portrayal of the habits and customs he encounters, but also a tendency to amplify the scandalous and fantastic elements of travel in order to hook wondrous readers excitedly seeking "materials to furnish out a library" (Shaftesbury 2000: 153). Gulliver, then, commits both errors of too little and too much in the way of cultural engagement in his role as traveller, yet his dutiful claims not to embellish the tale ring hollow in light of the fantastic character of the events described.

2.4. Travel in Context: The Church of Ireland and the Tenuousness of Civilization

It appears clear, then, that travel can be a portal to edification, corruption or degeneration. Following the Act of Union in 1707, travel of goods and people throughout England, Scotland, and Wales increased massively, as urban centres began to grow in the march toward the industrial revolution. Many of these new travellers were of course not tourists but economic migrants of a sort, shifted from isolated country areas by the allure of trade, work, and "new networks of economic self-interest, credit, and human contact" (Colley 2005: 40). Whilst these are not necessarily the types of travellers most relevant or applicable to the broader political theory under discussion, these higher levels of interaction between peoples of all social levels highlighted the need for standards of politeness in the hopes of mass edification. Intellectual elites in Britain, however, did not see such encounters as necessarily likely to finish the education of young gentlemen.

Typical foreign travellers in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries include merchants and traders, explorers, scientists, diplomats, and tourists. The historian James Clifford describes the traveller as "someone who has the security and privilege to move about in relatively unconstrained ways" (Clifford 1997: 34). For the aristocratic class of eighteenth-century Britain to whom this could be thought to apply, the 'Grand Tour' of sites of antiquity in Europe (France and Italy in particular) was a prominent means for the finishing of the cultural education of noble gentlemen. This is of course the context in which Locke wrote his advice on the topic of travel and he had even worked as a tutor to young men on their Grand Tours, something also done by Thomas Hobbes, George Berkeley, and Adam Smith (Thomas 2020: 71). Incidentally, Swift himself never embarked on the Grand Tour. Swift biographer Victoria Glendinning wrote that the great writer "was not a traveller. Abroad was a closed book. He went from Ireland to England and back again, repeatedly. He never travelled widely even in his own island, apart from a solitary tour to the south and west after the death of Vanessa" (in the Summer of 1723) (Glendinning 1999:177).

The Grand Tour was an exercise in education through worldliness and polishing through which the children of the nobility could realise "the glory of a perfect breeding and the perfection of that which we call civility." Travel to Italy and France was seen as a means to "teach us fine and fair carriage of our body, good and discreet delivery of our mind, civil and modest behaviour to others". The Grand Tour was as an essential component in the finishing of a gentleman's education as one could learn "the best manners of every country" in carving personal mastery of the ideals of politeness and civility common to all proper elites of Western Europe (quoted in Thomas 2018: 33–34).

However, in an age of religious strife between Protestants and Catholics, some of stern Protestant stock would question or entirely deny the value of engaging the relics of the ancient world if they are in the custody of Catholic countries. Charles L. Batten notes the influence that Joseph Addison's *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705) had as guide to several generations of Englishmen on the wonders of the Roman world to be found in Italy, describing the text as "a standard *vade mecum* for the Englishman on his Grand Tour (Batten 1978: 10). Notably, Addison embarked on his Grand Tour at the age of twenty-seven, and thus could optimise the educational possibilities of his experience, supporting Locke's standards for the appropriate traveller (Batten 1978: 9). Again, the inherent value of travel in order to engage these wonders is presented as an almost indispensable dimension of an appropriate and complete cultural education. However, Addison himself cautions travellers against the corruptions inherent in visiting a country in which the Catholic Church, identified resolutely as the "Whore of Babylon," is the dominant cultural influence. The potential positives for Englishmen traveling the continent, namely "to cultivate his historical consciousness and artistic tastes", must be held in delicate balance with the dangers of engaging the corruptive context(s) in which much of this value is to be found (Buzard 2002: 40). For example, given that imitation is both natural and pleasurable to man (Aristotle *The Poetics*: 4.1), a Protestant encountering the treasures of the ancient world in the midst of the superstition and idolatry of Popery should give cause for concern to his fellow confessor.

A popular London periodical called *The Gentleman's Magazine* criticized the Grand Tour, not least that young men ought not to be "sent abroad before he has made any progress in learning, or knows the constitution of his own country" (Cave 2005: 13). In this regard, the journal certainly echoes Locke's concerns for the traveller. It goes further, however, arguing that naïve and mentally weak travellers will wither in the face of immersion:

> in all manner of lewdness and debauchery, and their principles, both religious and political, are corrupted by the intrigue of Irish Romish Priests, and other emissaries, who swarm the Roman Catholic countries; and if they once pervert them from the religion of their education, will likewise beget in them an aversion to a Protestant prince, and the form of government in their own country (Cave 2005: 13).

However, as Kenneth Churchill notes, the seriousness of this threat could depend on the relative health of the society in question. As the Eighteenth Century progressed and the horrors of religious conflict widespread in the Reformation and Civil War eras receded into further memory, British Protestant visitors to Italy thought it acceptable to reduce their suspicions of Papist corruption. Addison certainly delighted in linking the poverty he observed in Italy to the country's control by "an avaricious Pope", describing the desolation he encountered as "chiefly to be ascribed to the very genius of the Roman catholic religion" (Addison 1705: 6–7). In such conditions, English visitors could travel with a lowered guard, rather adopting a triumphalist position as they compared the grandeur of Britain to the relative decline of Rome and Italy, marking their country and culture out as the true inheritors of the Roman legacy (Churchill 1980: 1). In general, Britons who identified Protestantism as a cause of their nation's wealth contrasted their fortunes with what they perceived to be the misguided slothful ways of Catholics. Lord Hervey, on tour in Italy in 1729, summarised as much in this poem:

> Throughout all Italy beside,
> What does one find, but want and pride?
> Farces of superstitious folly,
> Decay, distress and melancholy:
> The havoc of despotic power,
> A country rich, its owners poor;
> Unpeopled towns, and lands untilled,
> Bodies unclothed, and mouths unfilled.
> (quoted in Colley 2005: 35).

Catholicism is invariably associated in early eighteenth-century British minds as intractably poor, wasteful, indolent and oppositional to liberty. Linda Colley summarises the extreme Protestant "superstructure of prejudice throughout eighteenth-century Britain" to be made up of a view of Catholics as "people who were so ignorant and credulous, so poor and so lacking in a sense of the real worth of things" (Colley 2005: 36). Thus, it cannot be understated the level of religious sectarianism and partisanship that coloured the approach of early eighteenth-century British minds to instructions for travel to France or Italy, etc. However, a corrupt culture in decline may not produce the same risk to the traveller as a flourishing culture.

Whilst *Gulliver's Travels* notably lacks explicit discussion of such topical religious matters, as previously established Swift was typical of his era in viewing all questions of culture, custom, habit, value, virtue and vice as inextricably linked to one's religious orientation (Montag 1994: 12). The religious facet of the perils of travel and cross-cultural encounter are implicit throughout the text, not least in Gulliver's own background and extensive previous travels identifying him as a dissenting Protestant. And whilst Swift's strong disagreements with Puritans and Latitudinarians within the Protestant landscape of Britain are very significant, the post-1688 world was nonetheless en route to a broad-based toleration for all sects of Protestantism. The worry associated with encounters with religious deviance, both Catholic and Dissenting, near and far, did not necessarily reduce in intensity with the passage of time in the context of the Church of Ireland as Churchill claims they might have in England.

Swift never lost his resolute suspicion of what he perceived to be the terrible corruptions of both Popery and its antithesis, freethinking Protestant dissent (Carey 1997: 89–99). As a self-identified Church of England man, Swift followed many orthodox positions of the established Church, in particular a political theology that fashioned a civil religion out of political loyalty and respect for social hierarchy (Montag 1994: 12–15). However, it is worth noting that Swift's position as Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin made for a very different experience than that of a clergyman of the Established Church in England. As a minority (no more than one-tenth of the overall population of Ireland confessed Anglicanism in the early 1700s) (Eccleshall 1993:30), Irish Anglicans often professed in sermon and tract what can only be described as a siege mentality. They perceived themselves to be surrounded by both an indolent, superstitious, and ignorant Catholic population prone to sedition at any given moment upon Rome's call, and also a small but fanatical batch of dissenting Presbyterians in the north of the island.[2] From the

[2] For a good overview of the history of such divisions in the specific context of Irish history see Claude Rawson's *Swift's Angers* (2014: 41–3).

pulpit, Irish Anglicans preached of the profound danger of the imminent return to savagery of the surrounding native Irish. As Robert Eccleshall demonstrates in his survey of Anglican political thought in Eighteenth Century Ireland, the island is presented as a Kingdom on the tenuous precipice of relapsing into a state of natural barbarism should the resolve of those who hold the genius of English civilisation in their hands weaken (Eccleshall 1993: 36–39).

Travel outside the pale of settlement, the small area of total British control centred around Dublin on the central east of the country was perceived as a dangerous gamble into a land of wild deviance, poverty, Papist superstition, and dissenting quackery.[3] Despite some biographers arguing otherwise, Joseph McMinn has shown that in fact Swift travelled extensively throughout Ireland on horseback, even in ill health and advanced age (McMinn 1991: 102) and thus had significant first-hand experience of the horrifying living conditions of the rural poor. McMinn describes Swift's vantage point in Ireland as on the frontier of the ongoing "war between barbarity and civilisation" (1994: 82). Equally so, the demographic and economic growth of dissenting Protestants, including increasing Presbyterian immigration from Scotland into Ulster, made the embattled minority status of Irish Anglicans even more severe.

Swift, then, was all too aware of what cross-cultural engagement and travels amongst those unfamiliar to oneself was like, and the perceived dangers associated with this resonate in *Gulliver's Travels* where engaging deviant peoples and customs are not to be taken lightly. Swift's "counter-enlightenment distrust of rationality, as much as his dim confidence in human nature" (Carey 1997: 89) led him to see Locke's warning relating to travel as relevant to the wider context of human affairs. In fact, as both Stubbs and McBride have recently pointed out, the creeping extension of poverty to the point of subsistence living to Irish Protestant parishioners in the 1720s constituted an enormous shock to Swift's generation (Stubbs 2016: 490–1; McBride 2009: 131–5). The worry of corruption and degeneration that may come from close encounters with those of lower stock and debased habits is summed up by Stubbs: "The picture was muddying; it was not always possible to say who the barbarians were any more" (Stubbs 2016: 491).

Rawson argues that while this was a popular point of view for Protestants in Ireland in the 1700s, it does not necessarily stand up to historical scrutiny (2014: 42), although Stubbs pulls no punches in describing the misery and hardship of the poor in Ireland at this time (Stubbs 2016: 489). Either way, there is no doubt that the link between poverty and barbarism was clearly set in the minds of Swift's Anglo-Irish class. Thus, it was perceptually true if not factually true. As a result, the progress of commercial society would likely not be the only casualty should Shaftesbury's appeal to maintain the quality of those with whom you interact in the name of the general extension of politeness lapse. Indeed, *Gulliver's Travels* presents an argument that individuals and perhaps even collectives are capable of lapsing back into the barbarism from whence they likely came, and that travel can instigate this process. Thus, the dangers associated with travel and the capacity for engagement with deviant peoples loomed large in Swift's imagination.

2.5. Gulliver the Traveller

[3] This is the origin of the popular phrase "beyond the pale."

Gulliver's Travels has long been correctly held to be a satire of travel writing (Vanek 2015), drawing upon both the genre's claim to represent the truth being stranger than fiction and its wider "dubious attempt to establish the veracity of improbable observations" (Carey 2013: 139). Indeed, as Carole Fabricant notes, "*Gulliver's Travels* is in many ways the quintessential travel book, alternately reproducing and parodying the conventions of the genre, and forcefully demonstrating both its capabilities and limitations as an instrument for disseminating knowledge" (Fabricant 2005: 744). However, it is less common to assess the book's commentary on the issue of travel itself rather than simply as a satire and parody of the literary genre of travel writing. Gulliver is not just a vehicle through which Swift could amuse himself by parodying travel writing; Gulliver himself *is a traveller*, and it is worth investigating how he and his experiences matches up to Locke and Shaftesbury's advice for travellers examined in the previous section.

I argue that Swift draws upon these, using the arrogance and delusion of Gulliver to demonstrate what he wants the reader to see as what can happen when the wrong traveller engages foreign cultures. However, in a typically Swiftian manner, Locke's arguments are simultaneously invoked and subverted throughout the text and the *Travels* is always just shy of endorsing Locke (or any other overt political or philosophical platform or principle, for that matter.) The apparently studious objectivity of Gulliver as he engages each people and place on his travels, almost hyperbolic in its claims of anthropological documentation, recalls Locke's steady advice for the traveller who might run afoul of those who host him. Indeed, as he first begins to describe Milendo, the metropolis of Lilliput Gulliver tells the reader that he is withholding a larger number of facts for inclusion in a soon to be published "greater work (…) containing a general description of this empire, from its first erection, through a long series of Princes, with a particular account of their wars and politics, laws, learning and religion; their plants and animals, their peculiar manners and customs, with other matters very curious useful" (Book I, Ch. IV: 41). But, as we shall see, this doesn't necessarily serve Gulliver all that well, perhaps because he is a good example of Locke's bad traveller, coming from a questionable background and with passion for the unknown as a chief impulse for his travels.

The question of motivation for travel, especially in a context where political, cultural, and religious difference will be so significant as the fantastic variance in experience unleashed upon Gulliver across his four voyages is an interesting one. In *A Sentimental Journey* (1768), Swift's fellow Anglo-Irish writer Lawrence Sterne recounts three reasons for travel: "infirmity of body, imbecility of mind or inevitable necessity." Among the ten types of traveller listed by Sterne are the "idle", "inquisitive", "splenetic", "sentimental", and the "delinquent and felonious" (Sterne 2002: 9). Gulliver fits the category of naïve inquisition, describing his reason for travel as born of an "insatiable desire of seeing foreign countries" (Book I, Ch. VIII: 71). Also, when explaining why he opts to embark upon the seas once more after a mere two months at home following his adventures in Lilliput, Gulliver describes himself as "having been condemned by nature and fortune to an active and a restless life" (Book II, Ch. II: 75). It is interesting that he is doubly condemned by nature and fortune to both a restless and an active life, not least because both deny Gulliver agency (or create conditions where he denies his own agency). His need to traverse the world is beyond his own rational control, or at least he

presents it as such. This suggests that those who are most attracted to travel may well be those who for whom it is most dangerous.

Later in the narrative, Gulliver intellectualises this previously non-rational desire as valid because travel is an invaluable source of education, as Locke had suggested. This desire, seemingly justified by Gulliver for its own sake, combined with a pathological understanding of himself as destined for travel does not align with Locke's criteria for a suitable traveller. This is further demonstrated when Gulliver later arrogantly misrepresents Locke's idea that travel can be edifying by claiming that all those who do not travel are ignorant and prejudiced (Book II, Ch.VI–VII). Again, it is clear here how the text functions as more than a stylistic satire of the genre of travel writing, but also a wider argument about how travel might contribute to an individual's edification or corruption in the right or wrong cases.

An interesting (albeit anachronistic) comparison can be found in the first chapter of Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851), in which Ishmael explains that his own need to hit the high seas in the strange world of whalemen is caused by his torment at the hands of "an everlasting itch for things remote." He continues, "I love to sail forbidden seas, and land on barbarous coasts" (Melville, 2009, 8). Both Gulliver and Ishmael are motivated by some deeper need that despite being understandable to them at level of passion or sentiment, is not presented as a rationalized attempt to gain knowledge or to edification—at least at first. The lust for new and strange experiences expressed by both characters are entirely fulfilled as both books go on, with dreadful consequences for both. Travel, then, is not seen as the final component of a carefully curated education, but rather as something to satisfy one's curiosity and appetite for wanderlust. Any edification that may come about is treated as a happy by-product of the endeavour but not the central originating goal. It seems to me that the innate attractiveness of travel discussed here is particularly applicable to the kind of self-interested, problem-solving and, crucially, proud individual such as Gulliver—the kind of person who can use their canny guile to overcome the hurdles of living outside of society or community.

This type of individual possessing what Aristotle called "cleverness" (Nicomachean Ethics: 1144a22–29), or instrumental reason (the difference between practical wisdom and cleverness was a favourite target of Swift's satire throughout his writings), seems drawn to travel partially as a means to assert their individuality and independence from society (Dahl 1984: 63). But, rather than be necessarily improved by the experiences of leaving the structures of society behind to exercise and develop one's cleverness, Ishmael is subjected to physical harm and Gulliver is markedly corrupted mentally by his travels. The opportunity that travel provides to indulge this possible zeal for radical individual self-development is a risky proposition given the instability inherent in leaving one's place in hierarchical organic society wherein society is not an artifice but rather exists by nature and prior to the individual. I am inclined to agree with Montag's reading of Swift as primarily Aristotelian on this question (Montag 2001: 7). Fanaticism of all stripes is a persistence target of Swift's ire throughout his corpus. Per Swift, one's potential for excessive self-love—conceived in the Christian mould of Pride or as more worldly conceptions of vanity or narcissism—can be taken up with an enthusiasm akin to religious devotion. The argument that one's conscience demands that one pursue travel likely struck Swift as pernicious in the same manner that religious

freethinkers demanded their endless permeations of Biblical interpretation and practices be indulged regardless of their consequences for the collective at large.

Importantly, Gulliver has arguably already been shaped by travel by the time he embarks upon his first of the four voyages covered in the *Travels*. We learn in short order that he has never been meaningfully embedded in English society. The quick biographical information contained in the first two pages of *Gulliver's Travels* briskly outlines that Gulliver is the third of five sons and is sent away to be educated at "Emanuel-College in Cambridge, at fourteen years old" (Book I; Ch. I: 15). Emanuel College is a noted college of Puritan character, thus marking Gulliver out as a solidly dissenting Protestant. Embarking on his young career as a surgeon at twenty one Gulliver travels to *Leyden* (Leiden) in the Netherlands, another university known as much for its stern Puritanism as its educational excellence. Beyond the Netherlands' status as a resolutely Protestant country at the time, the city of "*Leyden"* also conjures the association of the notorious Anabaptist prophet and leader John of Leiden who contributed to the city of Münzter briefly becoming a bloody Puritan theocracy in the mid 1530s. More generally, Rawson notes the similarity here of Gulliver's origins and that of the eponymous hero of the dissenter Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, a text rich in Puritan moralization.[4] Dolores J. Palomo also notes how seventeenth century Holland had a reputation as a safe haven for English dissenters, but also that the University of Leiden had a policy of religious toleration since 1575, something that would render it fit for Swift's condemnation. While there Gulliver studies "Physick (…) knowing it would be useful in long Voyages" (Book I; Ch. I: 15), demonstrating both his supposedly deviant education but also his instrumental approach to education with an eye toward facilitating further travel.

Later in Book III, Gulliver reminds the reader of his connection to the Dutch: "I had lived long in Holland, pursuing my studies in Leyden, and I spoke Dutch well" (Book III; Ch. XI: 203). Thus, we see that as a young man who has already travelled, Gulliver consciously seeks to develop the skillset he believes to be required for a career of even further travel. Additionally, whilst Locke would certainly not have seen it in such terms, the clear references to Gulliver's Puritan background and education significantly summons Locke's argument regarding the necessity of appropriate education for the traveller prior to travelling lest his experiences be less than edifying, and perhaps even corrupting. As Swift would write elsewhere, education forged in the fires of dissent generated dangerous enthusiasm and fanaticism that could not be relied upon to produce a morally upstanding character (Walsh 2003: 171–172).[5] The implication here is a warning that those who have a deviant or debased education will make for bad travellers, such as the Dutch merchants willing to trample on the crucifix in order to trade with Japan (Book III; Ch. XI: 203).

Gulliver then takes up the position of surgeon on the ship 'The Swallow' on which he travels to the Levant "and some other Parts" over a three-year period. After settling in London long enough to marry, he is quickly compelled by his conscience and the failure of several of his contemporaries' businesses to return to sea once more. He sets sail as a surgeon again on two separate ships, travelling for the subsequent six years.

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[4] See James Egan's "Crusoe's Monarchy and the Puritan Concept of the Self" (1973) for more on this.

[5] Section VIII and the "Digression on Madness" in *A Tale of A Tub* contain Swift's most scathing satirical presentations of this idea.

During this time, he travels to "the *East* and *West Indies*" where his leisure time "when I was ashore" was taken up "in observing the manners and dispositions of the people, as well as learning their language; wherein I had a great facility by the strength of my memory" (Book I; Ch. I: 15–6). Again, we see Swift have Gulliver skirt the line of the advice provided by Locke and Shaftesbury: while Gulliver does dutifully take time and effort to appreciate the cultures he meets, he may well be ill-equipped to properly understand how to distinguish the wheat from the chaff in these experiences, therefore consuming and engaging good and bad alike in both habit and personage. As his travels progresses, Gulliver's behaviour certainly continues in this vein.

Following this, Gulliver spends three years at home with his family before then leaving on the *Antelope* for the South Seas in what becomes his Voyage to Lilliput. Thus, in total Gulliver spends two years and seven months studying in Leiden, three years traveling aboard the *Swallow*, and six years aboard two other ships travelling in the East and the West-Indies before our tale commences proper. As such, prior to start of the first substantial voyage of the *Travels*, Gulliver has already spent extensive amounts of time at sea and engaging a range of foreign customs and languages. We are left to wonder how responsibly, on Locke and Shaftesbury's terms, he may have done so. We might even wonder whether or not some of the flaws in character that emerge over the course of the text may have been set in place by his Puritan education and by the extensive travel he pursued at a young age amidst time spent around peoples and customs of potentially less than polite character.

2.6. Escaping Vice or Engaging Corruption?

The issue of travel and edification plays out most notably in Book II of the *Travels*. The second of Gulliver's voyages features his interactions with the giants of Brobdingnag, a society resembling a more virtuous version of Britain. The twelvefold size differential between the Brobdingnagians and humans is equalled, seemingly, by the gulf in morality and virtue between the two peoples. Notably, Gulliver is not polished by his interactions with this morally upstanding people. Perhaps this is as a result an existing degeneration from all his time spent traveling up to this point.

In chapters six and seven of Book II Gulliver recounts some important interactions with the King of Brobdingnag, informing him of the politics and culture of England. The broad outline for the character of the virtuous Brobdinagian King was seemingly inspired by Swift's mentor, William Temple (Ehrenpreis 1952: 91–98). The King of Brobdingnag stands in firm contrast with expansionist and imperialistic Emperor of Lilliput who maintains a standing army and seeks to weaponize Gulliver's massive size, demonstrating Swift's distaste for the corruption inherent to arbitrary monarchical power divorced from the requirement of prudence. The King is well educated, "as learned a person as any in his dominions" and who knows better than his supposed "learned men" in court who pedantically speculate about what Gulliver is in empty jargon (Book II, Ch. III: 93; 94). Brobdingnag is arguably fortunate to be a secluded territory, cut off from the rest of the world, and can thus operate as a limited monarchy without the corrupting temptations of foreign adventure and luxuries exported from abroad (Lock: 1983: 170–171).

Gulliver proudly proffers an account of what he believes to be the chief virtues of England, only to have the King recoil at what appear to him to plainly be vices rather

than virtues. The King's arguments refer back to writings of Temple on similar topics (Ehrenpreis 1969: 96–97). The King projects the risks inherent to a licentious indulgence of individual conscience by asking if in England "advocates and orators had liberty to plead in causes manifestly known to be unjust, vexatious, or oppressive" (Book II, Ch. VI: 119). We have seen that Swift himself saw that deviant religious and political opinion were likely to be fuelled by dangerous enthusiasm that it was the remit of prudent religious, social, and political traditions to limit. The dangers of faction are made apparent by Gulliver's breakdown of England's population through counting the various religious and political sects. The vital distinction between public and private views in invoked by King's saying that

> He knew no reason, why those who entertain opinions prejudicial to the public, should be obliged to change, or should not be obliged to conceal them. And, as it was tyranny in any government to require the first, so it was weakness not to enforce the second: for a man may be allowed to keep poisons in his closet, but not to vend them about as cordials (Book II, Ch. VI: 120).

Such a view affords a degree of sovereignty to individual conscience, but it prioritises objective public morality in name of protecting the individual and the collective alike from the obvious negative ramifications of encouraging unmitigated pluralism. It is certainly a hyperbolic metaphor to compare the spreading of dissenting opinion to the dissemination of poison, but Swift's writings consistently press the highly illiberal assumption that bad ideas will lead to bad actions. The satire here impresses that while it is not possible to police the minds of free individuals, licentious encouragement of supposedly conscientious heterodoxy counter to the collective good is irresponsible and ultimately untenable as it will erode collective norms. Pluralism absent the toxicity of faction or extreme polarization is one of the great and admirable goals of liberal democracy, of course, but here we can read Swift as highly pessimistic of the long-term sustainability of such a proposition.

The King also notably questions "what business we (England) had out of our own islands, unless upon the score of trade or treaty," questioning the validity of travel in general terms (Book II, Ch. VI: 119). Of course, later he will express a hope that Gulliver individually may be bettered by his travels, but at a national level, he doubts that England has any business engaging other nations, especially in a context of imperial expansion. Earlier, in the voyage to Lilliput, the Emperor admitted to Gulliver that he might not have been granted his liberty from bondage had it not been for Lilliput labouring "under two mighty evils; a violent faction at home, and the danger of an invasion by a most potent enemy from abroad" (Book I, Ch. IV: 42). This links the problems of faction to overseas expansion and the opportunism of the Emperor's weaponization of Gulliver's enormous size.

Following the summary of all he sees wrong in what Gulliver tells him about England, the Brobdingnagian King castigates the human race in one of the book's most memorable lines: "I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives, to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth (Book II, Ch. VI: 121). Scrambling to understand the depth of the King's disgust at Gulliver's account of England's "ignorance, idleness and vice", Gulliver reasons that:

> Great allowances should be given to a King who lives wholly secluded from the rest of the world, and must therefore altogether be unacquainted with the manners and customs that most prevail in other nations: The want of which knowledge will ever produce many prejudices, and a certain narrowness of thinking, from which we and the politer countries of Europe are so wholly exempted. And it would be hard indeed, if so remote a Prince's notions of virtue and vice were to be offered as a standard for mankind (Book II, Ch. VII: 122).

There are multiple notable aspects to what Gulliver says here; for one, as noted earlier, he draws upon Shaftesbury in identifying England as among the "politer countries of Europe", in doing so he also invokes the potential for a universal standard of virtue and vice for mankind[6], despite seemingly also acknowledging a relativism of sorts by establishing that the conditions that King find himself in—i.e. being so remote—should insulate him from the kind of critical judgement that one would level at someone else who made the same points as the King.

As the King has not travelled, Gulliver reasons, his education is necessarily incomplete and cannot thoroughly be held accountable for his deficiencies in knowledge and, as a consequence, virtue. Rawson reads this as Swift satirising the contemporary Whig position that ignorance was the sole cause of prejudice and that if one were to pursue travel, one would eradicate first ignorance and then prejudice as part of the same broad process. Swift sought to highlight an objective morality wherein many prejudices are inherently justified, rather than merely the consequence of ignorance (Rawson 2008: 314.) The idea that prejudice is caused by ignorance would later find eloquent expression in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847): "Prejudices, it is well known, are most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilised by education: they grow there, firm as weeds among stones" (Bronte 2001: 290). As Locke has shown, a key dimension of the education that Brontë's text assumes to be pivotal in eradicating prejudice is travel. Swift's engagement with this idea is rather more conservative and sceptical. Swift also intimates in *Gulliver's Travels* that the true fool is he who thinks that all prejudices will disappear when one has travelled and is therefore no longer ignorant.

Here I read the text as imploring the reader to see that ignorance may be universally bad, but many prejudices are worthwhile, valid, and necessary. For Swift, the hard-won wisdom of communitarian custom may well provide a means to understand the distinctions between valid and invalid prejudices. Thinking that the achievement of worldly appreciation and understanding through travel will necessarily wash an individual clean of all prejudice only makes sense in a truly relativistic world where no hierarchy of moral, ethical, or political concerns exists.[7] Swift's insight here is that utilizing travel as a means to rid oneself of harmful prejudices is only likely if one's experiential education occurs in a context of genuine (rather than shallow or surface-level) worldliness made possible by an orderly education. This understanding of the educational potential of travel is valuable even for those of us who oppose the more rigid and reactionary dimension of Swift's misanthropic inclinations, as it points toward a

[6] As noted elsewhere in the paper, this identification and extension of a general culture was a stated goal of politeness, as part of its cosmopolitan outlook (Klein 2002: 876).

[7] And that society acts as a repository of the necessary prejudices that accompany knowledge of these political and moral hierarchies.

realistic evaluation of the circumstances under which meaningful edification is likely to actually occur through travel.

Gulliver's Travels satirically attacks claims that those who don't travel are necessarily insular and prone to closed-minded prejudices that could not possibly be valid, and that those who do travel are necessarily better off than those who don't. This is why Gulliver is quick to arrogantly shrug off the King's strong refutations of his claims of the greatness of England; since the King hasn't travelled he can't possibly know what he's talking about and, furthermore, Gulliver patronisingly adds that we shouldn't hold these intellectual limitations against him because it's not his fault. All the while, of course, the satirical implications are that for all his travels, Gulliver remains childishly proud of his country to his own detriment, and his assumptions regarding the edifying effects of travel render him unable to objectively assess criticism of his country and culture by someone wiser than he. As the King can rationally assess England based on Gulliver's account despite not having travelled, his reasonableness is not withheld by this lack of worldliness—even if it may not be complete to Locke's standard. Gulliver, on the other hand, has a shallow form of worldliness but it does not add to his reasonableness and most likely even detracts from it, since his education prior to travelling was deficient or incomplete.

The satire is directed at both those who would think (or expect) that Gulliver's prejudices should have melted away as a result of travel, but also at the idea that the prejudices one possesses in the first place are necessarily bad and require exorcism. In some ways, such a notion eradicates the possibility of any judgment at all, since discriminatory choice (prudent or otherwise) necessarily falls back on opting for one thing over another, often without genuine reason or experience to assist us in rendering the decision. Since we cannot possibly make all decisions in conditions of perfect knowledge, some degree of preconceived notions based on potentially rationally or empirically indefensible principles are a natural facet of life. If one is educated in an orderly manner, travel is probably an excellent way to assist in developing the capacity to identify morally beneficial prejudices and not to be beholden to the customs familiar to oneself exclusively. Beyond this, however, the aforementioned section of the text also engages Locke's idea of the limitations of education when one doesn't travel. Here, Gulliver's inability to give credence to the wisdom of the King derives from his misguided application of the importance of travel to education and the attainment of virtue. In short, he distorts the relative importance of travel to education.

Gulliver himself has travelled the world for much of his life and is nonetheless shown to be a fool in this interaction with the King. We might even wonder if the King's lack of travel and his solid embedment in his own society is the source of his wisdom, rather than ignorance. One does not need to travel in order to be wise and in many cases one's potential for wisdom could be upended by travelling. No doubt that Locke would recommend that given his existing education and wisdom, the King—"whose largeness of vision has the generosity of a Renaissance humanist" (Price 1964: 202) is an entirely appropriate candidate for travel. Perhaps so, but it is nonetheless apparent that Gulliver has plainly not been edified by his travels thus far, and in the face of just and virtuous criticisms of his homeland, he uses the King's lack of travel as a basis to dismiss them. On the other hand, the text also suggests that lack of travel is no excuse for genuine lack of virtue or possession of ignorance. The character of Gulliver demonstrates in this

section that travel in and of itself is not an indicator of education or virtue, even though it can contribute to edification in the right circumstances.

The key tension here resides in the idea that Gulliver, stemming from a society that the Brobdingnagian King expertly identifies as perfectly vicious—"the very worst Effects that Avarice, faction, Hypocrisy, Perfidiousness, Cruelty, Rage, madness, hatred, Envy, Lust, Malice, and Ambition could produce" (Book II, Ch. VII: 121)—might be improved by spending time away from it. Can one be improved from a state of vice derived from a corrupted background through travelling to other places and engaging other cultures? The King hopes that Gulliver's travels will wash him clean of "the many vices of your country" (Book II, Ch. VII: 121) but the progression of the text shows a degeneration of Gulliver's sanity to the point where he is delusional and mad at the conclusion of the narrative. I think that Swift wants to show that whilst the commentary on the follies of contemporary Britain espoused by the King is largely his own, simply leaving this society to gaily traverse the world is unlikely to provide the edification—or at least escape from corruption—that the King hopes for Gulliver.

Simply trading the known vices of one's homeland for unknown—and possibly even worse—vices found elsewhere demonstrates that travel is no guaranteed path to bettering oneself. This is especially the case for travellers ill-equipped or poorly educated to judge the value of their new surroundings and customs. In Lilliput, despite his mammoth size serving as a constant reminder of his inappropriate fit for the society, Gulliver embraces the Emperor to such a degree that he is willing "with the hazard of my [*sic*] life, to defend his person and the state against all invaders" (Book I, Ch. IV: 44). Such uncritical yet highly spirited adoption of local norms and loyalty ought to provide pause, not least when Gulliver uses his enormous size to destroy the Blefuscudian fleet, shouting "long live the most puissant Emperor of Lilliput!" (Book I, Ch. V: 47). Gulliver delights in the acclaim this brings upon him, including the title of Nardac, the highest title of honour among Lilliputians. Overall, given that the vices of home are understood in relation to the broader society, perhaps they are always better for the average potential traveller than what they might encounter when venturing abroad. We hope that well-educated minds can distinguish worthy judgment from capricious prejudice when assessing virtue and vice in a well-understood context. Swift, however, is encouraging us to see the average traveller as unlikely to be able to do so in unfamiliar surroundings and will likely fall afoul of embracing or abandoning the wrong prejudices.

Not only does Gulliver fail to escape the vices built into him by his country in general (and perhaps his Puritan background more specifically) but these vices—perhaps most notably his pride—are accentuated as his travels progress. Gulliver demonstrates the dangers that can befall those unsuitable to travel, inappropriately educated and with a mind both overly open to embrace new ideas in a relativistic manner yet pridefully deluded as to the merits of his own society. Swift establishes this tension between the relativism of experience found in the world and an objective universalist approach to virtue, vice, edification, and corruption. It seems, then, that uncritically swapping the habits of one bad society for another is not a path to redemption, as the Brobdingnagian King hopes will be the case for Gulliver. I would suggest that it is not insignificant that this is a hope rather than a belief or conviction on behalf of the King. As arguably the single wisest character in the text we can reasonably assume that the King is sceptical of

the likelihood of Gulliver escaping vice through travel, expressing this hope good-naturedly rather than realistically expecting it to be realised.

2.7. Conclusion

Locke suggests that education is a careful step-by-step process, and that travel is among the finishing stages of the endeavour. My analysis of *Gulliver's Travels* shows that Swift believed there to be better and worse educations, and that even in an otherwise solid but unfinished education, travel is likely to detract from, rather than further, someone's moral calibre. It's also the case that the text summons the idea that the likelihood of a pure education completed by purely edifying travel are also unlikely. If that were possible, however, we are cautioned from believing that that traveller would emerge home entirely devoid of prejudice, nor would this be desirable in the first place. Given the likelihood that most individuals will be travelling with incomplete or imperfect education, Swift is clearly wary of the consequences of such disorderly licentiousness, as it is not probable that the results will be spontaneously positive rather than detrimental.

The central divergence between Locke and Swift on this matter is that Locke seems to see treat the prospect of the autonomous, rational, and self-interested individual *as if* it is both universal and oriented toward the good prior to corruption potentially setting in. Therefore, whilst travel is the final part of a linear educational process, this process is nonetheless broadly available to everyone in the abstract. Given Locke's direction of his educational advice exclusively toward children of the gentry, we might reasonably assume that he may not believe in the empirical realisation of these traits in the vast majority of the world's population. Nonetheless, it is quite notable that the abstract orientation of his educational advice does cover all children and young people in that their innate human nature as moral and political beings renders them capable of education toward fulfilling their potential of a life of independence, self-reliance, and reasonable judgement. This is a presentation of the role of travel in education that is both realistic in facing the limited circumstances under which travel can operate as meaningful correction to ignorance and source of individual improvement yet can also function as part of a broader political philosophy conducive to an open and inclusive society.

I argue that Swift, on the other hand, draws upon this insight but is more pessimistic and hence reactionary in his political impulses on the issue of travel. He doesn't necessarily object entirely to the possibility of educational development entirely, but intimates that the *a priori* assumption of its availability to all desperately jars with everything we know and see regarding human behaviour. Swift thus draws on both the contextual or circumstantial limitations upon the likelihood of the broad extension educational development that Locke acknowledges, but also proffers a dim view of the innate capacity of many humans themselves. We are left to grapple with a grim projection that many people are thus seemingly naturally incapable of ever participating in polite society to the level truly desirable and the generation of conditions of improved understanding will not in fact surmount these limitations. In the broader political outlook being painted in *Gulliver's Travels*, such limitations are best recognised and embraced by the firm commitment to the natural sociability inherent in organic hierarchical society rather than encouraging individuals to traverse the world in the misguided quest for self-improvement only to further their corruption. Thus, we see an iteration of the classic liberal-conservative divide on the realm of possibility for education open to human

beings and the implications for questions of equality in the divergence Swift takes from his initial agreement and endorsement of Locke's advice to the traveller.

Swift's infamously misanthropic view of human nature is most clearly elaborated in the portrait of the Yahoos and their relation to the Houyhnhmns in Book IV. The implications for travel and education of the beastly portrait of the Yahoos and Gulliver's torment in realising his status as a Yahoo will be treated in the following chapter.

3. The Teachable Brute? Questions of Human Nature, Education and Travel

> "It's a universal law—intolerance is the first sign of an inadequate education. An ill-educated person behaves with arrogant impatience, whereas truly profound education breeds humility."
> —Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *August 1914*

> "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe."
> —H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History*

3. 1. Introduction

In *Pleasurable Instruction*, Charles L. Batten identifies travel writing as one of the characteristic literary and even artistic forms of the eighteenth century. Batten makes the case that the mimetic entertainment of imaginative voyaging through the reading of travel writing provided a form of what might today be called infotainment to a population "anxious to learn about the world in which it lived" (Batten 1978: 8). But we might ask ourselves just how educational reading about, or even pursuing, travel is in the first place. When considering questions of edification and improvement of oneself created by travel, it is worth assessing Swift's portrayal of human nature in Book IV of *Gulliver's Travels* and what this suggests about the possibility of education to edify beyond a lowly or even brutish condition. Just how teachable are humans, and is this capacity (if it exists) sufficient to mark us out from the beasts of this world? Need all education be hierarchically imposed or can individuals pursue self-improvement through autonomous experiential learning? Enlightenment thinkers such as those of the University of Leiden asserted that education is universally available as a remedy for ignorance and prejudice on the path to societal progress (Palomo 1977: 27–35). Conversely, Swift's complex satire of emergent Enlightenment and Modernist ideas concerning human nature in Gulliver's Voyage to the Land of the Houyhnhmns offers a challenge to both the extent to which human nature does contain such inherent teachability and brutishness, and to what end (or limitations) the former may be pursued.

Here I engage Swift in order to question if the capacity to learn—i.e. the quality of "teachableness", the term that Gulliver uses throughout Book IV—is universal to all humans and, if so, does that include those who are brutish in ways that might deny them the status of a fully moral being if they remain in this state? Furthermore, the question of travel as education raised in the previous chapter forms a core site of critical inquiry to this end as, if travel cures ignorance (of places, cultures, modes of being, etc.) and is thus a vital aspect of education, can travel cure the brutish of their lowly state? Can human beings be redeemed from ignorance through education and, if so, can travel provide a viable path to such an outcome? The ultimate issues here are whether or not the human capacity for education—"teachableness", in Gulliver's words—creates a moral imperative for travel so that humans may be improved through the benefits that can arise from expanding our horizons, and whether or not such an education ought to be structured in accordance with the values of an organically hierarchical society or not. A later chapter will then engage the question of Swift's response to ideas of ordering travel

for the purposes of benefiting the scientific project. In this chapter I will argue that *Gulliver's Travels* provides some hope for the human capacity to be educated, but perhaps significantly less so for our capacity for education through individualised experiential learning and thus Swift encourages us to view those in search of redemption are better off pursuing it at home rather than abroad.

3.2. Locke and Enlightenment Ideals of Education

By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, travel was viewed as an essential part of education because of the polishing effects it has on gentlemen seeking to curate a worldly consciousness and mastery of the universal ideals of civility. This reflected a broader emphasis in English elite thinking on the merits of experiential learning that coincided with "the gentry's diminishing faith in the universities as schools of politeness." The predilection of academics to remain cloistered in libraries with their heads buried in dusty books made it so that they could not be counted on to behave in worldly and urbane ways befitting the instruction of youth in the ways of polite society. Thus, it was necessary to send young gentlemen away from academics' "pedantic way of disputing and wrangling, which makes them ungrateful to all well-bred company" (Thomas 2018: 34). University education was no guarantee of a completed gentleman; one must learn by doing and so the experiential learning of travel was an indispensable component of a completed gentleman.

Given the argument of the previous chapter that Swift's critique of travel develops an insight of Locke's thinking on the matter, the philosopher's position regarding human nature warrants some brief attention. We know from Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* that it was his position that "of all the men we meet with nine parts are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education (Locke 1996:10). This iteration of Locke's conceptualisation of human nature as essentially nine-tenths malleable by nurture and environment to one-part fixed nature forms the basis of Locke's empiricism and educational philosophy. Temperaments vary significantly within the remaining one tenth of human nature, but it is nonetheless broadly common to all people as the laws of nature apply to all equally. Interpreting Locke's intention in this fashion assumes that he is referring to the division of nature and nurture as found within the individual.

Another interpretation, however, would be that he is referring to one part in ten of the larger collective of people one encounters in life being as they are due to their education whilst the remaining nine-tenths of people encountered are pure products of their environments and learning. The latter interpretation is significantly less optimistic concerning the plasticity of human nature, seeing but one part in ten of the populace as capable of being educated above or beyond their social circumstances. The remaining majority, on the other hand, are prisoners of their social surroundings and mores. Whilst Locke's meaning here was interpreted both in contemporary criticism and in subsequent canonical readings in the former fashion—i.e., a generous conceptualisation of education as available to all as a core facet of their one-tenth shared nature—the tension between the more optimistic individualist reading and the more pessimistic (and, perhaps, elitist) collective reading is exploited in Swift's narrative treatment of the human capacity for education in *Gulliver's Travels*. Whilst both readings are defensible and perhaps Locke was deliberately opaque in his phrasing so as to suggest this tension, I read Swift to be predominantly responding to the individualist conception of the argument, arguably in a

less than charitable manner in order to invoke the problems with prioritising individual over community.

It is in Locke's writings on education, as well as in *the Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) and *On the Conduct of the Understanding* (first published posthumously in 1706) in which the modern iteration of the idea of the mind as 'tabula rasa', or blank slate, emerges. Locke was the inheritor of an intellectual tradition of humanist educational philosophy that was prominent from the Renaissance onwards, but his influence in spreading such ideas was considerable, with his *Thoughts Concerning Education* going through twenty-five printings in England and Scotland before 1780 (Spadafora 1990: 168). Locke saw travel as an important part of developing a theory of human understanding, interviewing returning travellers and corresponding with people abroad as part of his research (Thomas 2020: 55). The blank slate argument denies the existence of any innate moral ideas as the fundamental basis of human nature. Rather, humans are seen as primarily motivated and prompted by feelings of pleasure and pain and thus we alter our moral language to describe these experiences accordingly (Carey 2002: 139–140). It seems that Swift sought to invoke Locke's thinking but to also caution against the possibility of the ramifications of untethering the ideal of individualistic experiential learning from the kind of stout and orderly curriculum informed by Ancient and Renaissance Humanist values advocated by Locke.

Arguing that there are no "innate principles", Locke suggests that close observation of young children provides us with "little reason to think that they bring many ideas into the world with them" (Locke 1996:10). Humans are thus seen as malleable within a general set of preconditions natural to the species. Travel plays an important role in this conception of human understanding as our knowledge can only come from perceiving our direct experiences and reflecting upon them. As a result, we cannot know things we have not experienced, such as far off lands, peoples, cultures, animals and fauna Thomas (2020: 62). This presentation of the malleability of human nature suggests that through disciplining the mind from a young age, children can be moulded toward a disposition wherein their rational faculties may be enhanced and they can then be expected to live lives of responsible freedom (Porter 2000: 340–341). In Locke's view, wickedness is thus not baked into the human soul intractably, as hardline Puritan and other reform theologians believe (Montag 1994, 103–104). This belief in "the pliability of man" provides a central plank of the progress of narrative so central to Enlightenment and Modernist thought (Spadafora 1990: 149). Proper rearing and discipline through "awe and respect" and "esteem and disgrace" could take the infant mind and raise it to be a rational and responsible Christian (Locke 1996: 32); (Porter 2000: 340).

As experiences (including habits and behaviour, as distinct from principles) accumulate throughout an individual's development "by degrees afterward, ideas come into their minds" (Locke 1996:10). Thus, ideas, habits and behaviours are the result of experiential learning, whereas a capacity for morality, liberty, and virtue are innate (but by no means a guaranteed outcome in one or all cases). The most uncharitable interpretation of this position might accuse Locke of denying any innate moral content to human nature, resulting in an inevitable relativism *ad infinitum*. However, as Grant and Tarcov convincingly argue, Locke consistently tethers this empiricist perspective on human experience and understanding (best exemplified in the context of studying Swift

by travel and education, respectively) to that one tenth of humanity that is innate and within which our capacity for both independent judgment and reasonable action is contained (Grant and Tarcov 1996: xii). This capacity for judgment and reasonableness is what renders individuals capable of living both free and moral lives (Grant and Tarcov 1996: xii). Consequently, all individuals are capable of fulfilling an inherent potential to a life of liberty through self-governance, guided by reason toward moral action. The key to unlocking this potential is one's experiences: hence the vital importance of directing education so that experiential learning occurs in the order most suitable and likely to produce this most desirable outcome.

In an overarching survey of the idea of progress in eighteenth-century Britain, David Spadafora notes that the immense success of Locke's pedagogical ideas played into broader societal shifts concerning human psychology and the potential limits (or lack thereof) to societal change (Spadafora 1990: 168). Education was now a (if not *the*) key to unlock rational progress at both individual and collective levels. Indeed, if, as Locke suggests, humans are mostly the products of nurture and inherently pliable, society might be reordered entirely to reflect the most noble goals (Porter 2000: 342). A wide array of pedagogical writings emerged in the wake of Locke's educational tract, many heavily influenced by the English philosopher in seeing failures of virtue and decay in society as failures of education (Spadafora 1990: 169). These problems, dire though they may be, are solvable through education. This assumption forms a cornerstone of Enlightenment thought, crystalizing in embryonic form throughout Swift's lifetime that receives a firm counter-Enlightenment counter punch from the Irishman. I argue that this critique of the extension of Locke's basic ideas on education as representative of a much broader belief in the possibility of individual self-directed experiential education is a key target for both satirical treatment and earnest political criticism in *Gulliver's Travels.*

Again, Locke's is a broadly optimistic interpretation of human nature, arguing as it does that under achievable circumstances all people can be educated to bring forth the universally desirable characteristics of reasonableness and morality. The key here is that, per Locke, the raw material of humanity is generally (albeit not exclusively nor necessarily) favourable toward liberty and morality, and whilst circumstances may lead to negative outcomes, human nature is capable of achieving the former ends and can be led to the fulfilment of responsibly free lives through correct education. This stands in stark contrast to Augustinian and Puritan notions of the fallen soul, condemned to instinctual sin in all scenarios outside of intervention by God's grace (Collinson 1991: 100–2; Gonsález 2010: 85–7). Augustine was indeed a profound believer in the enrichment education can provide, but his conception of education was entirely directed toward Biblical exegesis and questions of faith. For Augustine, studying the liberal arts was valuable only insofar as they could enhance one's ability to understand God's will and to stand up to tests of faith in a Fallen world (Herman 2013: 191). Education beyond or without reference to these goals will likely be corrupting to one's already Fallen character. As perhaps the preeminent influence upon key theological reformers such as Luther, Calvin, and Knox, it is unsurprising that similar ideas regarding the value and role of education abound in Puritan and other dissenting Protestant thought.

In this regard, the portrait of human nature provided by Locke's educational philosophy deviates profoundly from the Christian political tradition (or at least the Augustinian and Reform variants thereof). Indeed, Locke seemingly adopts more of a

Classical approach to human perfectibility that energises individual experience in the name of self-betterment, thus assuming a *telos* or end purpose for human flourishing in this life, rather than salvation as survival of a wicked world *en route* to an eternal reward in heaven. Whilst not all individuals can necessarily achieve the optimal life of moral and virtuous flourishing, they can nonetheless play a role in fulfilling the collective *telos* of human flourishing in political society.

For the purposes of this discussion, a Classical approach—in contrast to nascent modernist ideals and mores emerging in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries—refers to very general positions that were (and often still are) expressed as deriving broadly from the virtue ethics of the Socratic tradition in Plato and Aristotle's political writings and their inheritors. Whilst this will necessarily caricature the complexity and diversity of Hellenic and Roman political thought, reductionism was the order of the day in an intellectual context where an ongoing debate between proponents and critics of so-called ancients and moderns. As Montag notes, Swift's fiercely partisan attitudes to political matters followed him into philosophical questions, and in this regard he was typical of many late seventeenth century thinkers in seeing intellectual history as a "*combat des livres*" (Montag 1994:42). The perceived necessity of a rigid High Church Anglican political theology of this period, especially in the Irish context, was discussed in the previous chapter, but suffice to say again here that the innovation in economic and technological matters that sought to liberate individuals through the orderly progress of reason was met with stern scepticism at best and iron resistance at worst. Thus, a caricature of Classical or Ancient thought was necessary, operating as a widely understood shorthand among intellectual elites for the positions oppositional to nascent liberal and Enlightenment doctrines. This was the case in both the contemporary debate into which Swift intervened specifically with the *Battle of the Books*, but also formed part of a broader worldview in which the history of philosophy is presented as perpetual war (Montag 1994: 42–43). An important point here is that a primary implication of identifying Swift's satire of travel is the broader critique of what he saw as the overlap in approach—characterised primarily by zealous enthusiasm and naïve optimism in the inevitability of progress—between dissenting Protestantism, Modernist scientific rationalism, and Enlightenment ideals regarding self-directed experiential education.

It is from this basis that Locke makes his recommendations concerning travel as the final part of a gentleman's education. The character of Gulliver serves as a reminder that the prior education and experiences of a traveller are of serious concern, lest the traveller pursue a fateful combination of pig-headed pride regarding their home culture and adoption of the wrong lessons from newly encountered peoples. Thus, if Swift is, as I contend, working from Locke's basic premises on travel but worried about some of the implications of a licentious approach to experiential education, it is thus also necessary to investigate the portrait of human nature in the text, especially as it concerns the issue of education as a means to progress the rational ordering of society (Spadafora 1990: 168). If, per the individualist reading of Locke, nine tenths of the finished article of a person is made up through experience, what, then, does *Gulliver's Travels* tell us about the remaining natural or innate characteristics of humanity and how does this play into the likelihood of travel composing a beneficial component of one's education? Are there some for whom education is impossible? The opposing Enlightenment and Puritan

depictions of human nature and the consequent understanding of education both find expression in *Gulliver's Travels*, with Swift satirizing the totalizing tendency of both.

Ultimately, this has significant bearing on an emergent critique of the Enlightenment assumptions regarding the individual's capacity for education and the prospect of this being achieved through an unrestricted freedom to traverse through life as they see fit, exemplified in particular by travel. Travel, then is a sort of litmus test for the kind of individual freedom that can be found advocated in embryonic (though heavily qualified) form in Locke's political writings. Even more radically optimistic ideas in this guise later went on to become a hallmark value of Enlightenment thought in general and formed an important part of the liberal political philosophy that emerged in the fifty years after Swift's death in 1745. In *Gulliver's Travels*, I think it is important to amplify Swift's highlighting of the qualifications to such ideas present in Locke's discussion of travel. His is ultimately a far more pessimistic depiction of the freedom befitting humans, given what he presents as our real but limited capacity for education.

3.3. Yahoos, Houyhnhmns, and Human Nature

Debates concerning Book IV of the *Travels* are invariably coloured by the individual readings of how Swift characterised the Houyhnhnms and Yahoos. For several decades the central debate concerning interpretation of Book IV have coalesced around what James L. Clifford described as two predominant approaches: the "hard" and "soft" schools of criticism. The "hard" school sees the ultra-rational Houhynhmns as Swift's ideal society and the crude and brutish Yahoo as mankind at its most deplorable. The "soft" school, in turn, see the Houyhnhmn as the true object of Swift's satire, representing passionless and unattainable rationalism, with the Yahoo as a sub-rational beast whose distasteful nature is not necessarily to be held against him (Sullivan 1984: 497–498). There is ample evidence in the text to support these and seemingly several other viewpoints on this issue. Such is the nature of a multidirectional satire that focuses on both contemporary and perennial targets. Indeed, Swift's prose and narrative style crams in a veritable bonanza of intentional satirical references both timely and timeless (Ahrensdorf 1994: 114).

The most significant treatment of human nature in *Gulliver's Travel's* occurs in the book's infamous fourth voyage to the Land of the Houyhhnhnms. Whilst the primary object of satiric intent in Book IV remains hotly contested, the depiction of human nature retains its biting character, regardless of one's interpretation of its wider satirical significance. George Orwell described the voyage to the Houyhhnhnms as constituting an attack on humanity in three parts, speculating that Swift did so in order to vent "his private grievance against contemporary society" (Orwell 2000: 988). Sir Walter Scott, for his part, in the 1824 introduction to an edited volume of Swift, iterated what he considered to be the depravity of Book IV of the *Travels* in no uncertain terms*:*

> It holds mankind forth in a light too degrading for contemplation, and which, if admitted, would justify or palliate the worst vices, by exhibiting them as natural attributes, and rendering reformation from a state of such base depravity a task too desperate to be attempted. As no good could possibly be attained by the exhibition of so loathsome a picture of humanity, as it may even tend to great evil, by removing every motive for philanthropy, the publication has been justly considered as a stain upon the character of the ingenious author (Scott 2002: 312).

The portrait of human nature painted by Swift, as Orwell and Scott testify, is almost unanimously understood as grim. In Erin Mackie's estimation, Swift's evisceration of human nature amidst the corruptions of modernity leaves us with nowhere to turn but to call the great writer a nihilist (Mackie 2014: 109). Such an interpretation may say more about the interpreter's prejudices than it does about Swift's text. While some ideas and materials presented by the voyage to Houyhnhmnland are certainly troubling, my analysis is that Swift himself, insofar as we might extract meaningful authorial intent at all, is no nihilist. Daniel Carey offers the arguably more hopeful (although perhaps that is not saying much) interpretation that Swift's picture of human nature leaves us "in a shadowy middle ground, uncertain of what, if anything, we should identify ourselves with (Carey 2002: 156). For many years from the mid twentieth century onwards the two opposing schools of interpretation mentioned above dominated critical studies of Book IV. The hard and soft schools disagreed as to the primary focus of the satirical blade wielded in the portrait of human nature. The former takes the ugly portrait of human nature, English and European politics and morality more or less at face value; the latter reading a more reflexive satire against Gulliver himself, rather than humanity or European society, focusing instead on the deficiencies in Houyhnhmn society (such as, for example, the absence of humour and lying).

In many ways the Yahoos are a challenge to then emergent assumptions underlining Enlightenment ideals concerning the transcendence of human reason. Swift's text presents a profound challenge to the emerging ideal of the enlightened man, described by historian Roy Porter as educated, affluent, and independent (Porter 2000: 339). A central ideal of what we can characterise as Enlightenment thought is that education forged the path to progress. The optimistic perspective extracted from Locke's pedagogical philosophy infused thinkers with renewed hope for the prospect of fashioning the young into rational and responsible adults (Porter 2000: 553). In the guise of the "brute animal" Yahoo, Swift satirically confronts this optimism concerning human nature, most interestingly raising the complexity of the type of instrumental reason available to man amidst the wider idea of education as a path to edification.

Gulliver's Travels satirically juxtaposes two competing totalising conceptualisations of reason with the intent, I believe, of highlighting the limitations inherent in assuming reason as entirely transcendent or purely instrumental. The Houyhnhmns supposedly represent a society in total harmony with reason, living exactly as nature intended. Gulliver, on the other hand, represents the cynical problem-solving faculties of human society wherein instrumental reason is used to further nefarious ends—what the King of Brobdignag describes as "the very worst Effects that Avarice, faction, Hypocrisy, Perfidiousness, Cruelty, Rage, madness, hatred, Envy, Lust, Malice, and Ambition could produce" (Book II, Ch. VII: 121). In this regard, Swift's presentation reflects his scepticism of seeing reason as either a Platonic sun that illuminates the world entirely or as a simple tool through which humans can solve problems in the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Although their presuppositions and wider goals diverge widely, Swift's understanding of instrumental reason in particular, is summarised neatly by the twentieth century Frankfurt school thinker Max Horkheimer. In 1974, Horkheimer wrote that the Enlightenment ideal of reason "meant the activity of understanding and assimilating the eternal ideas which were to function as goals for

men." The contemporary conceptualisation of reason, emerging in Swift's time through the new science and reductionist readings of Lockean autonomous individualism, is merely "to find means for the goals one adopts at any time (…) Reason is considered to come into its own when it rejects any status as absolute (…) and accepts itself simply as a tool" (Horkheimer 2012: vii). As referenced in the previous chapter, for Aristotle this is cleverness, rather than reason, whereby individuals possess the necessary skills required to achieve their ends, but the ends they seek may be of little to no value (*Ethics*: 1144a23–28). References throughout this chapter to instrumental reason as a focus of Swift's satire and criticism should be understood in this fashion.

Brutishness is perhaps most significantly treated in Book VII of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. It is described as one of the three major character traits that are to be avoided by someone seriously seeking moral improvement (Ward 2016). Brutishness as defined by Aristotle is a serious deviation from virtue to the point of transcending even vice. To this end, he describes brutish people as "beyond the limits of vice" (1148b34–1149a1). It is imperative to note that true viciousness is something people adopt or commit by choice, whereas brutishness, as Howard J. Curzer notes, "results from trauma, disease, birth defect, or socialization into a corrupt society" (1148b17–31) (Curzer 2012: 44–45). Whilst Curzer links Aristotle's depiction of brutishness here to what contemporary society identifies as mental illness[8], the key for understanding how Swift uses the term is the brute as the product of a deadly combination of lowly nature and the corruption of socialisation in a wicked society. The examples of brutishness offered by Aristotle largely centre around cannibalism, invoking myths of the non-Hellenic, barbaric world. Essentially, some of the examples bring forward nightmarishly hyperbolic images of the terrifying depths of depravity that humanity might sink too if it were to indulge its animalistic side entirely.

Conspicuously, Aristotle states in Chapter 6 that while vice is more evil than brutishness, we should be more alarmed at the latter (1150a1). As Curzer notes, this has significant ramifications for questions of voluntary and non-voluntary actions and the praise or blame that they warrant (Thorp 2003: 698). This is important because the idea of the brute throughout Western intellectual history largely continues from this premise: whilst brutes may be depraved and sub-rational it is not necessarily their fault and thus should not be held accountable as such. This is in contrast to the voluntarily vicious person who fails to reach the height of human rational (and thus moral) potential available to them. Lying—a most pernicious and widespread malady attributed to humanity in *Gulliver's Travels*—generally falls under voluntary action, and it thus combines viciousness with brutishness to further darken the portrait of the human animal offered by Swift.

This raises the question of whether or not the focus ought to be on the individual or the community, a key tension identified earlier in Locke's phrasing "of all the men we meet with nine parts are what they are good or evil, useful or not, by their education" (Locke 1996: 10). Praise or blame might only be relevant for the individual *if* they are capable (in their nature) of overcoming corrupting education/socialisation—thus, those who could but do not live virtuous lives deserve blame. In the same fashion, those born into perfected societies raised accordingly may not deserve any praise, since they did not

[8] Aristotle does distinguish "diseased" people, or "madness" as distinct from bestial men, however (1148b25–36).

voluntarily do anything especially virtuous beyond follow through on the general habituations offered by their society. This is only the case, however, if the individual is the primary focus of politics. If one were to assess community as the focal point of political analysis, perhaps the significance of awarding praise and blame on matters such as the difference between involuntary brutishness and voluntary viciousness is misguided. This involves a significant reorientation away from political individualism (or even the idea that the individual soul is a useful mirror for the city/society at large) and toward a more resolutely communitarian ethos wherein individualism is discarded, even as a helpful or meaningful fiction.

Swift's use of brutishness is in line with the connotations recognised by John Thorp as "savage behaviour from semi-imaginary tribes" and "violent psychopathic behaviour." In sum: "*par excellence* the irrational in human behaviour (Thorp 2003: 677). In this regard, the Yahoo's allegorical power as a stand-in for humanity's folly in conceiving itself to be rational is indeed a sharp satirical blade. Brutishness is seemingly beyond the pale in its depravity, perhaps irredeemable in ways that even the vicious could be salvaged. In the brutish, as opposed to the vicious, "it is not that the better part has been perverted […]—they *have no* better part" (1150a2–3) (Thorp 2003: 677). The possibility of redemption is seemingly hopeless in the brutish, characterised as the fullest flourishing of the irrational in humanity. Gulliver, then, as a seemingly teachable brute, capable of learning (or at least imitating learning) and displaying some glimmers of reason, manifests a fascinating puzzle as a stand-in for human nature.

Locke's educational philosophy established that children were inherently malleable like wax paper and could be developed toward a life of rational, responsible freedom. Enlightenment thought heartily engaged and (crucially for the purposes of understanding Swift's critique) extended this idea, as both projectors and cultural figures sowed the seeds for the later Romantic fantasy of childhood as a portrait of the unspoiled innocence of humanity at its most natural. The potential of a child's mind to be improved spurred enlightened minds to see this model as applicable to other classes of people in need of reform and correction (Porter 2000: 353). Such groups included the downtrodden poor, beggars, and criminals, with a new focus on the circumstances that create such people rather than attributing blame to the individual themselves. Thus, benevolence and philanthropic guidance were the keys to deliverance and redemption, previously the exclusive domain of religious confession, devotion, or divine intervention (Bell 1991). Among these newly sympathetic groups were erstwhile "freaks" and "monsters," previously shunned or denied any hope of redemption (Porter 2000: 353). The scientific need to explain and incorporate all new knowledge into a universal framework, typified by Bacon, combined with a newly unleashed optimism for human perfectibility to make such figures sympathetic as well as good fodder for both experimentation and voyeurism (Todd: 1995). As Roy Porter explains: "in enlightened thinking, erstwhile villains might be transformed into victims" (Porter 2000: 353). In this case, the brute, the freak, and the monster might have been considered villains against nature in the past but were now available for potential reform.

In some ways the idea of progress so central to enlightenment thinking rests on this incorporation of the previously damned into the sphere of the redeemable. What were once monsters worthy of revulsion were now marvels worthy of wonder and, before too long, understanding. Such is the force of human reason and the projects and institutions

of its design that figures that were formerly shunned or cast aside could now be rehabilitated. Crucially, the extension of commercial society and freedom from censure in a robust print culture marked England out as an increasingly secular society as the eighteenth century progressed. As J.G.A. Pocock writes, “the Augustan journalists and critics were the first intellectuals on record to express an entirely secular awareness of social and economic changes going on in their society” (Pocock 1975: 451). Such a commitment to the universalization of the prospect of reform meets a heady challenge in the form of Gulliver, who mirrors many on the margins in possessing twin characteristics of both teachableness and brutishness. The capacity for the brutish (and other such figures on the margins) to be reformed or redeemed marked the ultimate challenge to the enlightenment project’s desire to understand and change humanity empirically through social projects and programs informed by reason.

3.4. Educating Brutes and Beasts

We might think of the brute as the sub- or non-human, a purely instinctual being devoid or deprived of that which makes humanity divine—reason. An instructive (albeit anachronistic) example of the religious connotation to the difference between human and brute is the memorable scene in Melville’s *Moby-Dick* when Starbuck chastises Ahab for his quest for revenge against the white whale: “Vengeance on a dumb brute!" cried Starbuck, "that simply smote thee from blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous” (Melville 2009: 178). The blasphemy committed here is, as Isaac Rooks notes, that Ahab projects his own human agency upon the whale, rendering it an opponent capable of strategic thought and action, rather than a being that acts entirely on the basis of instinct (Rooks 2018). Ahab’s insistence on granting such qualities to Moby Dick is the fundamental tragic underpinning of the entire narrative. This tragedy is not just the ultimate futility of the dangerous and doomed hunt for the whale, but also that Ahab has lost his understanding of what it is to be human, rather than brute. This is somewhat like the pointlessness of conducting an argument with someone who is mad, but from a religious perspective it is even worse. The brute, in this instance the whale, cannot reason and to project the human quality of rationality onto it is to subvert and betray one’s own humanity. Gulliver is enraged with a dumb thing, in the form of the Yahoo, perhaps because he—and in many ways centuries of readership—cannot come to terms with our (humanity’s) exact relationship to this particular dumb brute. Ahab’s folly is clear; whale and man are by no means alike. Gulliver’s inability to reconcile himself with the Yahoo speaks to a more troubling iteration of the fuzzy boundary between man and beast.

Joep Leerssen describes this fundamental dichotomy “as the standard by which humans stand higher than animals in the great chain of being” (Leerssen 1995: 26). To this end Leerssen, a historian of ideas, explains that when one falls short of these standards it “means that either one must be educated and socialized (this is what is done to young children) or else segregated or outcast (witness the exclusion or confinement of madmen and criminals)” (Leerssen 1995: 26–27). Gulliver displays the teachableness that hints at a capacity of being educated or socialized, though the Houyhnhmns ultimately conclude that beings physically resembling Yahoos, teachable or otherwise, are unworthy of such a project of reform. Ultimately, Gulliver is forced to exile himself under the threat of execution. This steadfast dichotomy between animal and human, and between

those who might be redeemed and the irredeemable is certainly a point of satirical traction for Swift. Perhaps the author seeks to draw our critical attention here to the fallacy of a purely materialist worldview that ignores the age-old Platonic problem of differentiating between seeming and being. The Houyhnhmns cannot see (or are unwilling to engage the implications of) the distinction between Gulliver's purely Yahoo body and a soul that contains the complex relationship to reason as both instrumental and transcendent.

Those who may be educated or socialized out of their brutishness[9] are in an entirely other world to the pure brute summoned in the form of the Yahoo. Again, however, tensions between classical and modern conceptualisations of "nature" and its connotations for Swift abound. On this question, the ancient perspective (generally speaking) would understand de-naturing one's behaviour in exactly the reverse fashion—i.e. to de-nature would be to debase rather than to improve from a wild first principle.

As Weaver-Hightower reminds us, Gulliver repeatedly emphasises that the key character trait of the Yahoo beyond its animalistic appearance, is the sheer incorrigibility of its nature (Weaver-Hightower 2007: 147). This is a species that is, almost by definition, irredeemable. We are denied any meaningful window into Yahoo psychology, but Gulliver's descriptions of their appearance and behaviour displays little beyond truly debased and animalistic instincts. As "the most unteachable of all brutes," the typical path to redemption offered through education is not an option for Yahoos. The text suggests that the illumination of progress is not universally available, and it is the Yahoo's very nature that denies them this possibility.

If Locke is correct in saying that "of all the men we meet with nine parts are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education (Locke 1996: 10), then the Yahoo is indeed, as Gulliver declares, "cursed" and condemned by its very nature, for being brutish as well appearing so. It is important to reiterate that there is a tension at play here between modern and classical connotations of the word nature. The Yahoos are presented as a somewhat satiric iteration of the modern conception of pure nature understood as man without civilisation, outside of the deformations that society imposes upon individuals (Berman 2009: 3–5). On the other hand, the Houyhnhmns, whose very name means "the perfection nature" (Book IV, Ch. II: 220) invokes the classical sense of nature as the perfected state of man. The tension here rests on whether or not nature is something that we require saving from, or whether its perfection can save us from corrupting social conditions. At the heart of this is that Swift's undoubted devotion to ancient over modern learning remained nested in a broader satirical ambivalence over the very nature of such quarrels. Even in taking a side in popular intellectual controversies such as that of the debate between the Ancients and Moderns into which his mentor Sir William Temple offered his essay *Upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (1690), Swift could not help but to lampoon both sides of the aisle. Swift's offering in support of Temple, *The Battle of the Books* (1704) clearly reads as advocacy in favour of Ancient learning. However, it does so in a fashion, much like his *Tale of A Tub* (1704) that (amongst other things) promoted the Established Anglican Church over Catholicism and Dissenting Protestantism, whereby his understanding of the potentially farcical nature of the entire argument is rendered opaque by the sheer wit of the satire.

[9] Elsewhere Leerssen describes this idea as "de-naturing our behaviour" and links it to the very ideals of refinement and polishing that Shaftesbury would no doubt endorse (Leerssen 1995: 27.

3.5. Human Nature laid bare in Houyhnhmnland

The challenging portrayal of human nature commences at the outset of Book IV, when Gulliver sets sail once more after a mere five months at home with his family following his previous travels to Laputa and elsewhere. It is noteworthy, given the previous chapter's discussion of the reasons for travel and its causes, that this five-month spell is actually the longest gap Gulliver takes between voyages. Gulliver remarks that this time at home with his family was spent "in a very happy condition, if I could have learned the lesson of knowing when I was well" (Book IV, Ch. I: 207). Erin Mackie reads this sentiment as "retrospective regret at happiness lost before it was realised", drawing a parallel with Defoe's Crusoe echoing similar thoughts following his return to sea after a disastrous first voyage (Mackie 2014: 110). However, it is worth thinking here about Gulliver self-admission of a failure to learn his lesson that his travels have been dangerous, unpredictable, and his presence in faraway lands has not been a net positive for either the societies he visits or for himself. The capacity to learn and improve, later described throughout his experiences with the Houyhnhmns as the "teachableness" that marks him out as distinct from other Yahoos, notably fails Gulliver here and it is this that thrusts him into his most perilous voyage yet. Thus far, his travels have overwhelmingly not been to his benefit but he opts to leave a scene that he recognises as positive, at least after the fact, without even offering a reason.

Gulliver blithely mentions that his "poor wife" was "big with child" before continuing to document his adventures without iterating any explicit reasoning to go back out to sea, beyond the extension of an "advantageous offer" to captain a new ship (Book IV, Ch. I: 207). It is as though Swift invokes, through this careful omission, the idea that travel is its own reward and does not need any justification in and of itself. Gulliver does mention the financial incentive to go to sea, but only in passing, and does not dwell on it. Regardless of the positive familial circumstances in which Gulliver finds himself nested, he falls back upon the assumption that more travel is always a good idea as it is always beneficial, especially in a society that values worldliness as a component of education and a key to progress.

Thus, despite this claim to an enjoyable home life, Gulliver captains the ship—aptly named the *Adventure*, as this is seemingly Gulliver's calling, consequences be damned—and sets sail yet again. After several months at sea, a significant number of the crewmen perish as a result of tropical fevers and the vessel is forced to "get recruits out of Barbadoes, and the Leeward Islands" (Book IV, Ch. I: 207). In short order these new recruits reveal themselves to be "buccaneers" and they end up capturing the ship and imprisoning Gulliver in his quarters. Some months later, Gulliver is allowed to dress in his "best suit of clothes, which were as good as new, and a small bundle of linen," and to bring his hanger, what money he had, and "some other little necessaries" before being taken by boat and dropped off at an unknown land (Book IV, Ch. I: 207–8). The mutiny of these buccaneers further suggests that those who opt to travel may not necessarily be of good stock to begin with, and they may degrade further through an intransigent life untethered to society in pursuit of plunder.

After stumbling through this newfound territory, noticing a trail with both human and horse tracks, Gulliver wanders into a field whereupon he spies some strange animals in trees and in the grass whose "singular" and "deformed" shape immediately strike him

and leave him "discomposed" (Book IV, Ch. 209). Immediately upon their introduction, the Yahoos are depicted as resolutely bestial; a foul, monstrous, sub-savage being that lead Gulliver to conclude that he had never seen "so disagreeable an Animal, or one against which I naturally conceived so strong an antipathy" (Book IV, Ch. 209). The immediate revulsion with which Gulliver greets the Yahoo marks the species out as particularly rancorous. The "natural antipathy" Gulliver feels signals that his reaction is visceral, instinctive, and predicated on the Yahoo's visual appearance. Gulliver's understanding of himself as a rational being inherently possessed of moral judgment makes it so that we can read his guttural reaction to the sight of what he perceives to be natural brutishness not as a mere knee-jerk reaction, but indicative of a condemnation befitting the offense against nature that Yahoos represent.

This instant and unmitigated negative recording that Gulliver makes of his first sighting of the Yahoo is worth noting, especially as it contrasts to his reaction to his first sighting of the Houyhnhmns. This near-farcically normative condemnation upon sight stands also in contrast with the more conspicuously measured and documentarian tone that Gulliver adopts, for the most part, throughout the voyages up to this point. While Gulliver never hides his disgust in scenes such as his close up view of Brobdignagian bodies in Book II, this is nonetheless a unilateral and unequivocal condemnation that overwhelms the staid narrative voice that the reader has come to expect from Gulliver. This is the first hint that the Voyage to the Houyhnhmns will stand aside from the previous voyages in both tone and content. Whilst there is some horror in Gulliver's depiction and assessment of the immortal Struldbruggs' endless aging and ailment in Book III, it is nonetheless laced with pity and sadness at their awful fate. No such sentiments are afforded the Yahoos.

In short order having seen enough and "full of contempt and aversion," he tries to exit away from the group. He bumps into a Yahoo on the trail and documents how this "ugly monster, when he saw me, distorted several ways every feature of his visage" (Book IV, Ch. I: 209). Does this particular Yahoo's facial contortions suggest that despite Gulliver's (perhaps wilful) ignorance of the similarities of himself and the Yahoo, the beast instinctively understands them to be of common stock? In response, Gulliver quickly draws his hanger and hits the Yahoo. Before long a loud roar summons a hoard of a further forty Yahoos who howl and make faces at Gulliver. This "cursed brood" then horribly live up to Gulliver's initial gut reaction with aplomb by climbing the tree next to him and attempt to defecate atop his person while he narrowly avoids being hit by "the filth, which fell about me on every side" (Book IV, Ch. I: 209). Gulliver is rescued from this nasty scene by horses, soon identified as the Houyhnhmns whom, after an initial depiction as physically animal-like, shock and awe Gulliver by behaviour that was "orderly and rational, so acute and judicious" rendering him immediately taken with them. Again, the initial presentation of the Yahoo as the embodiment of a lowly life form is brought into further relief by their contrast with Gulliver's presentation of the Houyhnhmns as a picture of perfect rationality, even in such a minor action.

The language Gulliver uses regarding the Yahoos ironically fixates on the animalism of the species, labelling them as "beasts," "monsters," "animals," before using descriptive terms far more befitting an animal to describe their bodies: "claws," "fore feet," "forepaws," and "dugs" (Book IV, Ch. I: 210). Rebecca Weaver-Hightower aptly notes that the satiric function here is to reverse the literary trope of the animalistic

indigene/native as Gulliver scolds the human Yahoos and admires the literally animal horses, the Houyhnhmns, whom are cast as gentle, gracious, and rational (Weaver-Hightower 2007: 146–47). Weaver-Hightower, in her book on island fiction of this period, points out that the character tropes of the genre such as pirates, cannibals, and savages often fell into one of two Manichaean characterisations; either wholly reformed or irredeemable; entirely noble or ignoble (Weaver-Hightower 2007: 146–47).

I argue that Swift's choice to outline the Yahoos as so utterly ignoble and irredeemable, playing upon humanity's worst fears of its own capacity for debasement, savagery, and animalism, is significant when considering the possibility of a figure in this image being redeemed through education. Gulliver's folly, to some degree, is to submit entirely to such a totalising understanding of brutality, allowing his gut reaction to these incontrovertibly foul beings to colour his entire understanding of both them and himself. The capacity for brutishness or a purely appetitive beastly life appears to be part of the ten per cent of innate human characteristics. Whilst there are some for whom redemption from such a state through education is possible, the reader is forced to grapple with the possibility that there are many others whose submission to their natural capacity for brutishness has simply gone too far for them to be salvaged. Education is indeed a possible path to redemption, but perhaps not for all, and Swift seems to think not even for most.

We are initially presented with the Yahoo as the embodiment of a lowly life form, and this is brought into further relief by their contrast with the Houyhnhmns, which almost instantly upon Gulliver encountering them as his saviours are judged to be beings of an altogether higher wisdom and grace (Book IV, Ch. I: 211). His astonishment is derived as much (if not more) from encountering what he determines to be a perfectly rational being as it is from happening upon intelligent horses. The hyperbolically instant positive and negative reactions that Gulliver has to the Houyhnhmns and Yahoo respectively, is worth noting here. With minimal orientation in this latest bizarre world, Gulliver is already marking these new creatures out as polar opposites of savagery and civility. The disorientation of the reader contrasts with the immediacy and assuredness of Gulliver's understanding of the Yahoos and Houyhnhmns as pillars of savagery and civility, respectively. The question is whether or not such a firm dichotomy is accurate, both in this case and more generally. It is clear, then, right upon their introduction, that both these species will be utilised for full allegorical value, with human nature as the broad satiric and political focus.

In his first discussion with the Houyhnhmns, wherein he presents himself as a hapless shipwrecked Englishman in need of help, Gulliver notes that the Houyhnhm response in their language demonstrated that it "expressed the passions very well" (Book IV, Ch. I: 212). Thus, within minutes of encountering and interacting with the Houyhnhmns, Gulliver has praised them for both their rationality and passion, signalling the totality of their nature. Thus, while the dominant portrait of Houyhnhmns, especially in contrast to the Yahoos, is that of cool—even austere—rationality, they are nonetheless not without passion. Critics of the soft school of interpretation view the austerity of Houyhnhmn nature and society to reflect Swift's intention to satirise those who viewed pure reason alone as an acceptable basis of a truly humane society (Montag 1994). I am in agreement with Leo Damrosch, who argues that "it is not true, however, as is sometimes claimed, that they (the Houyhnhmns) have no emotions. They just don't have

destructive ones" (Damrosch 2013: 970). These would include the general set of sins all too familiar to Swift such as jealously, avarice, vindictiveness, resentfulness, bitterness, etc. The contrary interpretation is proffered by Nokes who argues "the Houyhnhmns lack passions, but not virtues" (Nokes 1985: 324).

Gulliver is taken to a gathering of several Houyhnhmns a few miles away from this initial encounter and is taken outside for comparison with a Yahoo. The scene that Gulliver encounters upon being taken to the Yahoos is painted vividly and with horror:

> Here we entered, and I saw three of those detestable creatures, which I first met after my landing, feeding upon roots, and the flesh of some animals, which I afterwards found to be that of asses and dogs, and now and then a cow dead by accident or disease. They were all tied by the neck with strong wyths, fastened to a beam: they held their food between the claws of their fore feet and tore it with their teeth (Book IV, Ch.II: 214).

This description further accentuates just how awful and disgusting the Yahoos are, again by highlighting their animalistic and beastly characteristics. The fact that the Yahoos are consuming the flesh of other animals hints at some degree of organic hierarchy within Houyhnhmnland in that, whilst the Yahoos are brutish beasts, they are nonetheless higher up the (literal) food chain than other animals. Later, Gulliver's Master will tell him of some order even found amongst the Yahoos, wherein a particularly deformed and mischievous ruling Yahoo would have a "favourite" act as a lackey, ruling until the herd overturns him by discharging "their excrements upon him from head to foot" (Book IV, Ch. VII: 244). This again shows that organic hierarchy—even as vile and repugnant as that found amongst the Yahoos—is a universal condition that Gulliver has absconded from through his traversing the world via travel. In this scene, it is not just Gulliver's narrative perception but also the Houyhnhmns' treatment of the Yahoos as mere beasts that accentuates their animalistic qualities. We might speculate as to whether nature or nurture has rendered the Yahoos in their lowly position. It's most likely that the miserable condition of the Yahoo is derived from a debased nature combined with such brutalising treatment at the hands of the Houyhnhmns. Without question, the portrayal here is designed to convey the harsh treatment of the Yahoos—"tied by the neck"—by the Houyhnhmns, as well as Gulliver's revulsion at these brutes. Both of these serve to draw a negative response from the reader; there is little in this scene to suggest or to encourage sympathy, or the possibility for redemption for the Yahoos. Through Gulliver's lens we are encouraged to see such punitive treatment as rational and befitting these loathsome beasts. This is a singularly debased creature that is designed to conjure our collective worst fears and insecurities concerning the potential beastliness of humans as a species.

Crucially, the most repeated word by Gulliver concerning the Yahoo here is "brute", as this summons the connotations of the animal in man: the depths of sub-rational depravity that humans fear in ourselves. The thrust of this scene is quickly accelerated further when Gulliver is compared to one of these beasts and is forced to recognise that what he had previously reacted to with instinctive horror was in fact one of his own kind:

> 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 (Book IV, Ch.II: 214–15).

We are thus confronted with the prospect that Gulliver, as the stand-in for all of humanity, is just as loathsome and detestable as the "filthy Yahoos" (Book IV, Ch.II: 214–15). Gulliver goes on to clarify that there were some distinctions of features between the two, with the Yahoos possessing features more "common to all savage nations," but the similarity between human and Yahoo is now clear. Gulliver's pride and bloated sense of his own rationality hitherto denied him the willingness or ability to see that the Yahoos have been human all along. Dennis Todd, in an incisive book on tales of monsters and monstrosities in eighteenth-century England, argues that Swift presents Gulliver as subject to the same sense of disassociation with the objects before him as befell voyeurs at freak shows and readers titillated by stories of mothers birthing rabbits (Todd 1995). He has now been shaken from such a disassociation and must face the monster within.

The key to this section of the text is that whilst Gulliver is confirmed as a Yahoo, the Houyhnhmns nonetheless identify him as markedly distinct from the local variant. Later, Gulliver will be described a Yahoo with a "tincture of reason", a status to which he can never truly reconcile himself to. This is because Gulliver sees his endowment of reason in line with Enlightenment optimism concerning the prospect of reason as a singular and total, transcendent quality capable of reordering the world in its image. Here Swift's satirical target is a degraded Lockeanism that is naively optimistic on the matter of humanity's capacity for improvement through our access to reason and experiential education. Thus, he cannot comprehend being in possession of only a modicum of reason. The metaphor of the "tincture" is significant as while it openly refers to a small or trace amount of something, it can also refer to a medicine made by dissolving a drug in alcohol. It is notable that reason be tied to a medicinal metaphor, especially in the context of education as a panacea for the maladies of ignorance and prejudice. Prior to this, Swift invokes the material and practical trappings of civility as the initial identifiers of Gulliver's supposed elevated status over the indigenous Yahoo population.

The Houyhnhmns take scrupulous note of Gulliver's clothes as these render him different from the Yahoos indigenous to the land. Indeed, he goes to great lengths to conceal the artificiality of his wearing of clothes from the Houyhnhmns, dressing and undressing only when assured of his secrecy. This is done in order to maintain the appearance of the essential character difference between the unclothed and clothed variants of what the Houyhnhmns see as the same species. Gulliver's use of clothes to cover his body signifies his shame at sharing a brutish human nature with the Yahoos. Gulliver knows that every difference between he and "that cursed race of Yahoos" must be maintained and maximised, both for the sake of Houyhnhmn perception and, one feels, his own sense of self. No doubt this is a clear invocation of the well-worn paradigm of civility and savagery conjured by images of naked 'natives'—be they noble or ignoble—established in the European consciousness from Columbus onward.

Swift is careful to establish that the dominant presentation of the Yahoo from Gulliver's perspective is resolutely beastly yet worryingly human somehow but Gulliver possesses core characteristics that mark him out as different. The particular characteristics that do so, I argue, are notable, as this continues Swift's satire—firmly established throughout the text as well in much of his other writing—on practical reason or cleverness masquerading as genuine reason. For example, his wearing of clothes offers

no necessarily meaningful testimony to his possession of reason, beyond establishing a desire to maintain modesty. This may be an important prerogative, but it is one typically divined through revelation in the Abrahamic tradition rather than reason. Gulliver performs the act of milking a cow to provide himself with some refreshment, rather than eating the rotten meat provided to him alongside the other Yahoos. Here he shows some discerning taste and proficiency in a mechanical operation of sorts. But this also serves to demonstrate Gulliver's participation in an organic hierarchy wherein cows provide their milk as sustenance to those of higher value in the food chain. Later, when he takes up a Houyhnhmn who is positively disposed to him, Gulliver takes raw oats given to him to eat and refines them into a bread-like paste. Again, this is emblematic of Gulliver's ingenuity and cleverness (Dahl 1984: 63), but it is nonetheless a demonstration of the instrumental reason of an interest-maximising problem-solver, rather than the illumination of pure reason. Instrumental reason, of course, is an indispensable resource for humanity's survival in a harsh world, but it is but one facet of the broader holistic reason that marks humans out as distinct from other animals who can utilise craft and cunning to survive. The satirical focus is directed toward a broad caricature of proponents of experiential education whom, in Swift's view, lack either the ability or willingness to discern between instrumental reason and practical wisdom.

The crux of this depiction as it pertains to our purposes in this chapter, however, is to assess Gulliver's capacity for reason beyond the "means for the goals one adopts at a given time" (Horkheimer 2012: vii) and, in particular, how/if he might be authentically educated to use it. In particular, the repeated use of the term "brute" and its derivatives warrant our attention, as we assess the extent to which Gulliver represents the teachable brute that I argue is the hallmark of Swift's depiction of human nature in Book IV.

Gulliver's "great facility in learning languages"—exhibited throughout his voyages but by now truly testing what could be believed even as preternatural—is put to use within his first discussion meeting with his new hosts. His ability to discern and repeat the word "Yahoo" garners surprise from the Houyhnhmns (Book IV, Ch.II: 212–16). Gulliver's linguistic and cultural capabilities flourish and within ten weeks Gulliver can understand the Houyhnhmn language and after three months can provide adequate answers to lines of questioning. This all occurs while Gulliver is under the wing of his Master, a kind Houyhnhmn who is fascinated by the potential Gulliver displays as a Yahoo outside the mould of those found in his land. In particular, the Master is captivated by Gulliver's "Teachableness, Civility and Cleanliness […] qualities altogether so opposite" to what he has hitherto considered Yahoos (Book IV, Ch.II: 218). He is nonetheless convinced that Gulliver is a Yahoo. This linguistic proficiency is thus far the core characteristic that renders Gulliver teachable in the eyes of the Houyhnhmn Master.

The capacity for teachableness and what this may tell us about the broader portrait of human nature being sketched here is what is most significant about this passage. There is of course an important relationship between language and reason (*logos* being the Greek word for both), but again the text cautions us to uncritically assume that the possession of language renders someone inherently rational. Language is the facilitator of both lies and truth. In particular, it's significant that being identified as "teachable" is not the same as the capacity to imitate something. This distinction is central in distinguishing genuinely reasoning beings such as humans from animals who can perform actions upon command devoid of any meaningful understanding of the ideas or values behind these

performances. This distinction between genuine learning and imitation is important because while Gulliver can be taught the words and ideas of Houyhnhmnland (indeed, he learns them prodigiously and is recognised as such), his attempts to be virtuous and rational like the Houyhnhmns fall short of anything other than imitation and mimicry. This is especially pointed in Gulliver's adoption of horse-like mannerisms upon his return to England. This episode is played for both comedic and tragic value, highlighting the difference between regionally distinct manners and universal rationality and morality. Alas, Gulliver can only summon the former in a cheap attempt at the latter.

Whilst the Master and his servants all assist Gulliver in learning the language and culture of Houyhnhmnland, Houyhnhmn society at large is not keen to embrace the prospect of a mould-breaking Yahoo such as Gulliver, however. Gulliver's Master is rebuked for allowing Gulliver to live with "his family more like a fellow Houyhnhmn than a brute animal." Ann Cline Kelly makes the point that Gulliver is *clearly* more than a brute animal as his linguistic abilities and teachable nature demonstrate (Cline Kelly 1976: 848). In Cline Kelly's estimation, the Master is censured primarily because Gulliver's presence "destroys the absoluteness of the categories that make up Houhynhnm reason because he forces them to re-evaluate their long-assumed clichés about Yahoos" (Cline Kelly 1976: 848). Whilst I agree that Swift is certainly seeking to problematize the monolithic categorisation of civility and savagery through placing Gulliver between these pure ideal types, the idea that Gulliver's apparent possession of characteristics that render him above brutes warrant investigation. It would be a scholar's folly, not unlike the Houyhnhmns to some degree, to assume that reason (or civility) and brutishness (or savagery) exist in an either/or equation. The Houyhnhmn society's difficulty in understanding how a teachable Yahoo can exist and how they ought to relate to Gulliver seems to indicate that perfection of nature as they may be, Houyhnhmns themselves might not be teachable. The subtly of Swift's engagement of human nature does nonetheless make it clear that, as Cline Kelly correctly points out, Gulliver's teachableness is genuine, but that in and of itself does not absolve him of a broader nature that might well be corrupt. Indeed, instrumental reason—understood as problem-solving in the name of self-interest—is only as good or bad as the ends to which it is applied. This, ultimately, is what spurs the greatest fear of the Houyhnhnms concerning Gulliver's presence in their land.

When the Master tells the gathering of a Houyhnhnm general assembly of his pleasures in conversing with Gulliver, the response from the assembly asserted that "such a practice was not agreeable to reason or nature" (Book IV, Ch. X: 261). This is because whilst Gulliver's teachabless and conversational skills cannot be denied, these "rudiments of reason, added to the natural depravity of those animals (…) was to be feared" (Book IV, Ch. X: 261). The worst fear of Houyhnhmns is that Gulliver might lead a Yahoo attack on the Houyhnhmn castle, plundering and destroying their society. Without a leader endowed with reason, the Yahoos, foul and despicable though they may be, could not constitute a threat of this sort. Gulliver possessed just enough reason, limited though it may be, to organise and command Yahoos so that their terrible nature might be enacted. This is a threat that cannot be tolerated.

The Master keeps referring to Gulliver as a Yahoo, albeit a special one, and this irks Gulliver. Despite the key differences in ability and character that Gulliver possesses, he is nonetheless resoundingly identified as a Yahoo and is even asked "how I was taught

to imitate a rational creature" (Book IV, Ch.II: 219). That Gulliver's apparent rationality (a mere "tincture" though it may be) is perceived of as mere imitation, rather than genuine apprehension, is important. It is even more interesting, however, that he might have been "*taught* to imitate." The Yahoos of Houyhnhnmland are described as "the most unteachable of all brutes" so Gulliver represents a genuine puzzle for the dichotomy of civility and savagery—expressed consistently as brutishness or brutality—dominant amongst the Houyhnhnms (Book IV, Ch.II: 219–21). Gulliver is identified as a "prodigy", but only insofar as it is incredible that "a brute animal should discover such marks of a rational creature" (Book IV, Ch. III: 219).

It is notable here that rationality apparently has an edifice of sorts, in that Gulliver can display the outward tropes of possessing the holistic reason that allows humanity to transcend the moral character of other animals without it ever being so. It is very interesting to ponder whether Gulliver's approximation or mimicry of reason and enlightened virtue means that there is an outward façade to reason that can be mimicked devoid of any substantial content, or if reason itself is more complex and multifaceted than even the Houyhnhmns can comprehend. It seems, at least, that Gulliver is possessed of more reason than he is credited with in that he can understand, explain, and defend to Houyhnhmn lines of questioning how he is how he is. This stands in contrast, say, to a parrot who can repeat phrases on command but certainly could not tell a Houyhnhmn who taught it the phrase it utters. Again, this breaks down and challenges the monolithic understanding of reason as a singularly illuminating force. Even as Gulliver's Master commends him for having cured himself "of some bad habits and dispositions", he cannot but lament the limitations of Gulliver's nature and such endeavours could ultimately only result in imitation of genuine Houyhnhmn virtue (Book IV, Ch. X: 261).

The challenge of distinguishing between seeming and being is raised by this presentation of reason. The Houyhnhmns can only comprehend reason as total, unified, and transcendent in its expression of a being's higher nature. This is laudable, but it hinders their capacity to comprehend Gulliver, who represents the human capacity to outwardly display facets of reason that are sufficiently complex so as to be capable of self-understanding (or self-misunderstanding as the case seems to be) as such a higher form as reason when in fact it is but instrumental reason. Gulliver is rational enough to both know that the lofty form of reason represented by the Houyhnhmns exists, and he is even capable of assuming that he himself either can or does possess this, even though he does not actually understand this higher form of reason fully or appropriately. In this regard, there is a fundamental mismatch between the type of reason possessed by the Houyhnhmns and Gulliver because although humans aim toward the former, our reason is fragmented rather than unified, with many people only ever grasping problem-solving in the name of interest maximization and fleeting flashes of the façade of reason as a transcendent path toward Platonic truth.

Visitors flock to see Gulliver as word spreads of a Yahoo who "seemed in his words and actions to discover some glimmerings of reason" (Book IV, Ch.II: 219). Noteworthy in this sentence is that Gulliver *seems* to possess some degree of reason, but appearances in this regard can be deceptive. That Gulliver has "*discovered* some *glimmerings* of reason" is also instructive as his reasoning is still clearly beneath the level or standard or expected from Houyhnhmns, who live in complete harmony with reason and nature. These "glimmerings" again suggest that the outward edifice of reason need

not be accompanied by reason itself. This further establishes *Gulliver's Travels*' decimation of the ideal of reason as a totalising characteristic. Swift satirises the arrogance of those who believe humans' access to reason offers a guaranteed path to experiential edification, as early Enlightenment thinkers enthused by the possibilities opened up by Locke's educational writings in particular, proffered. The local Yahoos, from the Houyhnhnm vantage point, offer little more than the "appearance of cunning, and the strongest disposition to mischief" (Book IV, Ch. III: 219), again highlighting that any calculation they may display (in this case cunning) is in appearance alone, and that there is nothing of substance deeper than a general predilection toward mischief.

The Houyhnhnm worldview, perfectly in harmony with nature as it is, has no concept of "lying or false representation" and that, for them, being led to believe "a thing black when it is white, and short when it is long" leaves one "worse than in ignorance" (Book IV, Ch. IV, 223). This illustrates that the Houyhnhnms live in a world of certainty (or perhaps dogma) that is disrupted by Gulliver's presence as a teachable Yahoo. The primary line of discussion and debate between the Master and other Houyhnhnms who encounter Gulliver is that his mental "capacity for speech and reason" are out of line with his physical appearance, even if Gulliver does "conceal what nature had given" by wearing clothes (Book III, Ch. 220; 221). A unilateral, objective, and universal notion of truth is in keeping with both the Classical and Enlightenment ideas of reason utilised by Swift in the presentation of Houyhnhnm society. The fact that lying and false representation is the avenue through which the Houyhnhnms explore Gulliver's challenge to their certainty of category is particularly relevant to this point. It is especially so when considering that the Master claims that being lied to denies the purpose of speech, which he determines to be understanding one another, and thus in receiving incorrect information through a falsehood, one is left "worse than in ignorance" (Book IV, Ch. IV: 223).

Since Gulliver's Master cannot comprehend falsehoods he's also left baffled by related maladies such as war, money, and lawsuits that malign human nature as a result, not least because they stem from beings he has erstwhile known as mere brutes. This is because, as Leo Damrosch explains, for the Houyhnhmns "reason is a simple apprehension of reality, not the pretentious cleverness that humans call reason" (Damrosch 2013 966). This mental disconnect arises, Gulliver recalls, in "frequent discourses with my Master concerning the nature of manhood in other parts of the world" (Book IV, Ch. IV: 223). Thus, lying is firmly established as part of the universal human character, and in such a fashion where it has the capacity to entirely supplant the enlightenment equation that education is a remedy for ignorance. In this regard, lying is so corrupting that even someone seemingly educated out of ignorance can be rendered potentially even worse than where they started through the extension of falsehood(s). Swift's insight here is that ignorance is lamentable, and it may be desirable to use education as a means to overcome it, but a broader culture of falsehood will surmount any gains made and, if the Master is correct it reverses the course entirely.

Two caveats to this potential analysis are worth exploring here. Firstly, it might be significant that Gulliver describes lying as part of "the Nature of manhood *in other parts of the world*"[10] (Book IV, Ch. IV: 223). Does this refer to humans outside of Houyhnhnmland, or humans outside of England—i.e. is the satire here still seeking to

[10] Italics my own.

lampoon Gulliver's swollen pride for England in ways that cloud his understanding of the universality of human corruption? This, I argue, might have been the case earlier in the text, say in Gulliver's interactions with the King of Brobdingnag in Chapters six and seven of Book II, given that Gulliver is reasonably close to admitting the vices and failures of England just a few chapters later, without any profound alterations in his character in the meantime. Secondly, given that the Houyhnhnms do lack a sense of humour and have no religion—both of which we know were of paramount concern for Swift the satirist and clergyman (Damrosch 2013: 970)—their societal lack of lying may not necessarily be a positive thing as such measures are apparently necessary given humanity's corrupt nature.

On this front, it seems to me that whilst lying is a necessary evil in a world of men, a society such as the Houyhnhnms may not have cause for such behaviour. Thus, on these questions, I read Swift as incriminating humanity for being sufficiently corrupt that lying is a universal condition of our nature, and even if such behaviour is a practical necessity given what we know about how people are, this renders the Houyhnhnms far superior morally to humanity as a collectivity. Houyhnhmn society (rather than as individuals) can be understood as praiseworthy for not needing lies whereas human society is perhaps beholden to lying precisely because of facets of our nature and culture such as humour and religion, held dear by Swift personally.

A repeated instance of this confusion is the Master's inability to comprehend Gulliver's explanation of how he finds himself in this foreign land. In particular, the Houyhnhmns appear to have no conception of either "a country beyond the sea" nor "a wooden vessel whither they pleased upon water" incredulously managed by "a parcel of brutes" (Book IV, Ch. II: 219–220). Swift has Gulliver repeat this tale, accentuating the level of disbelief that the Houyhnhmns have regarding the fashioning of a ship and "how it was possible that the Houyhnhmns of my country would leave it to the management of brutes?" (Book IV, Ch. II: 219) This repetition is required because since Houyhnhmns have no concept of lying, the disbelief that Gulliver's story fosters in his master is entirely unfamiliar to his kind. Interestingly, like the King of Brobdingnag, the Houyhnhmn Master is depicted as at best a wise and at worst a moderate and gentle individual, who has not travelled and, indeed, cannot even conceive of doing so. Neither the means (ship) nor the actuality of travel exist in the Master's imagination and that brutes may be behind such a thing renders the thought(s) all the more incredulous.

The depiction of human nature here, thus, does allow for the ingenuity and innovation of the human race, in contrast to the staid Houyhnhms, whose perfect harmony with nature implies a static existence (Book IV, Ch. II: 220). However, Swift conveys our innovation as often little more than the blending of the "cunning" and "disposition to mischief" identified in the Yahoos of Houyhnhnmland (Book IV, Ch. III, 219). We can extrapolate from the text here that the human use of instrumental reason to creatively pursue such ends as global travel is by no means something to commend, and may even constitute part of the evidence for the prosecution, not least in Gulliver's famous diatribe against the imperial project at the end of the book (Book IV, Ch. XII: 275). Readers are asked to confront the possibility that brutishness is an intractable facet of the human condition, regardless of our appearance of outward facing aspects of reason and capacity for education.

3.6. "A Tincture of Reason"

So, if the Yahoo is an irredeemable brute and Gulliver is a Yahoo, how, then, are we to understand Gulliver's capacity to learn? This is not a question of Gulliver's Master benevolently but misguidedly casting hopes of teachableness upon Gulliver like Ahab projects agency upon the whale. Gulliver's faculty with language is demonstrated to the community at large and he proves himself capable of learning and understanding aspects of Houyhnhmn culture. Gulliver even undergoes a conversion of sorts, retracting the vain, narrow-minded and pompous avocation of English society offered to the King of Brobdingnag in Book II and repudiates "his previous allegiance with the vehemence of an apostate" (Nokes 1985: 327–328). Margaret Olofson Thickstun (1997) reads this conversion as a satirical attack on Puritanism. Certainly, the fervour of Puritan conversion is something that Swift offered as a problematic model of behaviour in all facets of life and this forms a central tenet of his critique of much of the modernist project in political and scientific affairs.

Gulliver in Houyhnhmnland is a contradiction of sorts—the teachable brute. But this is only a contradiction in the world of the Houyhnhnms as the interrelationship between teachableness and brutishness is, for Swift, the central characteristic of human nature. Drawing upon the text, my analysis suggests that insofar as we can be free and moral beings, education is key, but the one tenth of human nature that makes the man prior to nurture contains a capacity for violence and malevolence that should worry us all in perpetuity. The totalising character of brutishness as inherently beyond redemption, and reason through education as the guaranteed and universal path to progress are both challenged here. In a meaningful sense this is an attack on what Swift saw as the thinning out of reason conducted by modernist movements in politics, religion, culture, philosophy, and, most importantly, the New Science so lampooned in the Voyage to Laputa in Book III. Instrumental reason, understood only as the capacity to decipher and carry out actions determined as means to one's desired ends, cannot alone be harnessed to quell the brutishness within humanity. My reading is that Swift is seeking to undermine an emerging Enlightenment dichotomy between the innately brutish and self-improvement predicated on the teachableness that accompanies the possession of reason. This reflects a concern for a degraded Lockeanism that is overly permissive and optimistic on the matter of experiential education. Gulliver is both teachable and capable of improvement (insofar as he is dynamic and can change through experience) and yet this does not necessarily generate proof that he is a fully rational being (in the moral sense) in practice.

Interestingly, Gulliver's Master, in seeking to explain how Gulliver is how he is, invokes the natural hierarchy of organic society, assuming that Gulliver must be of noble birth since he "far exceeded in shape, colour, and cleanliness, all the Yahoos of his nation" (Book IV, Ch. VI: 238). Such a hierarchy is reinforced by the Master's explanation to Gulliver of the hierarchy of colour within Houyhnhmn society, wherein different coloured Houyhnhmns differ in regards to shape and "talents of mind, or the capacity to improve them" (Book IV, Ch. VI: 239). This establishes Swift's firm presentation of hierarchy as intractable, natural, and befitting an organic society, where the lower castes do not aspire to "match out of their own race" as this "would be reckoned monstrous and unnatural" (Book IV, Ch. VI: 239).

Given that Houyhnhmnland is presented as a society entirely in harmony with nature through reason, this conveys Swift's belief that capacity and reason are not unlimited, even for those who live perfectly rational lives. The conservative implication here is that human folly is in rejecting limitations, seeing rationality as total, and thus instrumentally extending what reason we have beyond the natural limitations proper to organic society. The modernist assumptions concerning human individuality that underlie the idea that travel is of universal benefit are dramatically challenged by Swift's presentation of organic society here. The text cautions that individuals should be wary of breaking free from the ties that bind in organic community to traverse the globe in search of their subjective preferences and desires as this is a breach of the natural limitations befitting a political animal—i.e. a social being that ought to live solidly embedded within a community.

To this end, Gulliver's Master, when informed of the vanity, luxury, vice, and zeal of English politics and culture, tells Gulliver in disgust that he looks upon human beings as "a sort of animals to whose share, by what accident he could not conjecture, some small pittance of reason had fallen, whereof we made no other use than by its assistance to aggravate our natural corruptions, and to acquire new ones which nature had not given us" (Book IV, Ch. VII: 241). There is much at play in this short sentence. The use of the phrase "reason had fallen" ironically juxtaposes the hallmark enlightenment value of reason as the characteristically human quality with "fallen," invoking our Biblical origins as fallen beings. This suggests that whatever reason we may possess is subordinate to our broader nature as children of the Fall. Gulliver himself, of course, will be ejected by the Houyhnhmns from their Eden. The irony of the Houyhnhmns as paragons of reason capable of living in total harmony with nature being situated within the Eden of revealed wisdom is Swift's reminder to those who (wilfully or otherwise) seek to untether reason from its divine origins or to deny the value of revelation as a source of societal knowledge. While Olofson Thickstun reads Swift's presentation of "Houyhnhmnland not as a Stoic or Enlightenment utopia, but as an Edenic place" (Olofson Thickstun 1997: 517), it is not an either/or dichotomy; Swift is seeking to demonstrate that all manifestations of an idealised place stem from our intractably Biblical roots. For him, even the transcendent value of reason to provide secular empirical answers to worldly questions of humanity (be they Stoic or enlightened in character) is nested within the wider context of a human nature that is inherently corrupt. The grim conclusion appears to be that neither reason nor education is a panacea for the human capacity for corruption; the problems of the human animal run deeper than what our limited rational capacity can solve.

In fact, Book IV indicates that humanity's faculty with reason is seemingly part of the problem, rather than the master key to unlock all solutions. Furthering his critique, the Master continues that in his estimation, English "institutions of government and law were plainly owing to our gross defects in reason, and by consequence in virtue, because reason alone is sufficient to govern a rational creature, which was therefore a character we had no pretence to challenge" (Book IV, Ch. VII: 241). Here Swift has the Master offer a somewhat Classical view of reason as inextricably linked to virtue and morality, rejecting individual liberty as an end in itself, rather than a mere enabling device for responsible freedom. Although it was emergent in Swift's epoch, this viewpoint is more typical of later liberal thought, as influential liberals from Locke to Shaftesbury to Adam

Smith were all keenly aware that individual liberty and commercial society offered profound opportunities for vice as well as for human improvement. Like several other scholars, I agree with Ann Cline Kelly's reading of Swift's "uncanny prescience" in successfully anticipating how the germs of cultural moment in his time would later develop (Cline Kelly 2002: 181). Swift's positive presentation of the Houyhnhmn Master articulates a political argument wherein the defects in human reason produce defects in virtue in a fashion that renders it entirely proper to acknowledge and embrace limitations upon the freedoms (license) permitted to individuals.

The phrase "reason alone is sufficient to govern a rational creature" highlights how Swift identifies what he sees as humans' problematic and incomplete relationship with reason. The implication being that we require societal boundaries and limitations to harness the aspects of reason that we do possess toward the common good. Gulliver's teachableness does not necessarily render him entirely unbrutish, but rather makes him able to apply his instrumental reason or cunning to projects that are in line with his corrupt nature. The reader is left to wonder if societal norms dictated by tradition can potentially cultivate this teachableness, directing it toward positive outcomes. Swift's valuable insight here is that the simple possession of the aspect of reason conducive to teachableness does not automatically render someone entirely in harmony with reason and therefore capable of free and self-directed experiential self-improvement.

The general optimism (though not naively so) of the Lockean approach to education is severely challenged here by a more austere and pessimistic projection of human potential. In particular, we can assert that Swift is anticipating a more permissive and naïve iteration of Lockeanism that is far too bullish on the possibility of human reason to flourish through autonomous individual experience. Given Gulliver's clear faculties with language and understanding, the Master cannot deny that humanity (or the Yahoo?) does indeed have some degree of reason. Yahoos must use it in accordance with their nature (natural corruption, that is) whereas humans do so against our nature, in that we seemingly creatively pursue new and unnatural forms of corruption through our reason. A crucial dimension to the satire is to highlight how instrumental reason is but one facet of human soul and to subvert all other aspects of our nature to this creative and innovative form of appetite fulfilment is ultimately unnatural for what is proper to humanity. Again, this is Swift's critique of instrumental reason, the conception of which formed the backbone of the empiricist project that provided the scientific thrust that propelled the enlightenment project which would aggrandize reason as a far more transcendental force. For Swift, reason—thinly understood and utilised in a purely instrumental fashion—can be used as part of a corrupt nature in the name of transgressing nature. An example of this comes later when Gulliver uses Yahoo hides to fashion a canoe and sails to facilitate his escape from Houyhnhmnland, demonstrating how instrumental reason allowed Gulliver to dehumanise and desecrate the bodies of Yahoos in the name of creative problem-solving (Book IV, Ch. X: 263). Swift's combination of classical and counter-Enlightenment instincts come to the fore here as the Master's critique objects to both the narrow and thin conception of reason as little more than problem-solving in the name of interest maximisation and also reason as transcendent or divine quality that surmounts and overcomes all of the deficiencies in human character that we know to be both true and pervasive.

We might note that Gulliver's base of information gathered throughout his travels is not achieved through experiential learning made possible by the individual exercise of reason. As Montag and others observe, Gulliver's "teachable" nature extends primarily to "the customs, practices, morals and religions of the nations he encounters; in short, he is concerned with the reality of human society" (Montag 1994: 136–37). Gulliver's capacity to educate himself is not predicated on inner harmony with his better nature, as classical virtue ethics would have it, but rather the uncritical consumption and adoption of local customs and language encountered on his travels (Bloom 1991). This is not the capacity for moral and rational development outlined by Locke in his considerations of the innate versus the experiential in human development much more satisfactorily exemplified by the character of Robinson Crusoe. Crusoe, unlike Gulliver, never learns any languages and forces others to communicate with him in English. Crusoe's is a far more straightforwardly Lockean triumph of individual reason surmounting adversity through hard-won wisdom achieved by sense-experiential learning (Montag 1994: 137). Again this serves to convey Swift's concerns for a degraded version of Locke's ideas on education and experiential learning contributing to a wider confusion of what he sees as the marked distinction between instrumental reason and practical wisdom.

This highlights the crucial difference between teachableness as education through individually directed self-improvement and teachableness as the capacity to learn from wise and informed (or vicious/deviant) instruction. The satire here seeks to target the empiricist fixation with purely experiential learning, showing that Gulliver's individual experiential learning furthers rather than rectifies the natural corruption inherent to his person. This ties back to the argument of the previous chapter concerning the likelihood of travel to edify an individual. The overwhelming documentation of Gulliver's sensory perception throughout his travels is undoubtedly reflective of Swift's dislike of the modernist tendency, exemplified by the new science of the Royal Society, to reduce the complexities of life to materialist explanations (Damrosch 2013: 135).

Gulliver oscillates in his ability to accept the 'fact' of his resemblance to the Yahoo. His greatest shame is in being identified as a Yahoo and so he takes a bizarre pride in the attribution of a modicum of rationality to him by his Master and graciously embraces their master-pupil relationship. Again, we see Gulliver's eagerness to consume and digest culture and he demonstrates that he is not just an autodidact, but also a diligent student. He tells the Master that he wishes to improve as fast as he can (Book IV, Ch.III: 219) and desires as deeply as possible to no longer resemble a Yahoo. As the Master grows closer to him, Gulliver pleads not to be called a Yahoo by him any more as he cannot stand being linked to a creature that he holds in absolute contempt (Book IV, Ch.III: 221). This represents an attempt to disavow the previously accepted undeniable physical similarities between himself and the Yahoo almost as though Gulliver commits an act of self-betrayal. Here Swift draws upon humanity's innate knowledge of itself as at least partly animalistic—as well as the modernist tendency to rely on what is observable as the sole source of what is considered of importance—reminding us of the instinctual and appetitive aspects of our nature. In the words of John Stubbs, "Gulliver is fighting […] (because) the idea that he has something of the Yahoo in his constitution is abhorrent to him" (Stubbs 2017: 633). This abhorrence is not Gulliver's alone, however, as outside of the Master and those curious to see a "teachable brute," Houyhnhmn society is not impressed with Gulliver.

The idea that the truly irredeemable brute must be banished from a right-thinking society is raised in chilling fashion at an assembly of the Houyhnhmns. As their society lives in perfect harmony with nature, the only question up for debate was the perennial conundrum as to "whether the Yahoos should be exterminated from the face of the Earth" (Book IV, Ch. 9: 253). Gulliver notes that the arguments in favour of exterminating the Yahoos primarily rest upon the generally odious and filthy character of the species, rendering their removal as both rational and in-line with nature. In particular, they are presented yet again as "the most filthy, noisome and deformed animal which nature has ever produced, so they were the most restive and inducible, mischievous and malicious" (Book IV, Ch. 9: 253). The debate recognises that there are other brutes, such as asses, who can perform menial physical labour yet do not fight back against authority, smell terrible and howl awfully as do the Yahoos. This interestingly establishes that there are good (or at least useful) brutes as well as the deplorable brute that the Yahoo represents. This summons dark ideas concerning the need for docile acceptance by subordinates of appropriate societal hierarchies that apply to racist and other discriminatory ideologies.

It is unclear if Swift is necessarily endorsing such a loathsome worldview, but it is apparent that a preference for organic hierarchical society of some form permeates *Gulliver's Travels*. The more charitable interpretation of Swift on this point is to highlight how an organic hierarchy could facilitate a communitarian social solidarity in which all members of society have a clear role to play in a context of mutual appreciation and certainty. However, the darker possibility of a stratified social order based on arbitrary group characteristics such as race lurks dangerously in Swift's writing here. The initial Houyhnhmn contribution to the debate acknowledges nature as the author of the Yahoo, further locking in the idea that the brutishness of the species is incorrigible if it is built into them, perhaps even by design. Given their natural brutishness, there are no social or political policymaking tools available to Houyhnhm society to raise the Yahoo up from its lowly status, and indeed, given their disposition to mischief, levers of education might render them worse still. The possession of a tincture of reason, rendering a Yahoo such as Gulliver teachable, might make projects of mass education a real danger, as this instrumental reason could be put to malpractice once enhanced through education and combined with a natural tendency toward malice. This raises the question of whether the raw material of human nature can be changed, rather than simply corrupted or cultivated, as this presentation of the Yahoo assumes.

One speaker raises the point of the Yahoos' lack of indigenous status in Houyhnhmnland as grounds for their removal:

> He took notice of a general Tradition, that Yahoos had not been always in their Country: But, that many Ages ago, two of these Brutes appeared together upon a Mountain, whether produced by the Heat of the Sun upon corrupted Mud and Slime, or from the Ooze and froth of the Sea, was never known. That these Yahoos engendered, and their Brood, in a short time grew as numerous as to overrun and infest the whole nation (Book IV, Ch. 9: 253).

The Houyhnhmn tradition constitutes a means to assert their community's specific legitimacy to the territory and a firm denial of any form of primordial relationship between the Yahoo and the land in question. By denying the Yahoos this legitimacy, their candidacy for extermination is rendered acceptable. Indeed, the tradition presents a logic

wherein a certain synergetic relationship with the land is required in order to be truly indigenous to a territory. The lack of such a relationship, again, presents a ground upon which removal from this territory was justified, and in accordance with natural law:

> Those creatures could not be Ylnhniamshy (or Aborigines of the land) because of the violent hatred the Houyhnhmns as well as other animals bore them; which although their evil disposition sufficiently deserved, could never have arrived at so high a degree if they had been Aborigines, or else they would have long since been rooted out (Book IV, Ch. 9: 253–54).

Swift characterises Gulliver as having lost his sense of internal legitimacy as a result of his own break from the tangible markers of his originating society and his inability to derive legitimacy in Houyhnhmnland from his position between the two groups there. The fact that other animals of the land display a hatred for the Yahoos again summons the idea of some form of hierarchy as both natural and proper to the land. Swift's own nascent Anglo-Irish identity was developed on such a tenuous basis as he both reviled the native Irish and yet also defiantly and effectively pamphleteered on behalf of Irish rights—albeit within an Ireland dominated by the Anglo-Irish ruling class (Zach 2000: 23). These two conflicting points converge, however, in the contribution of Gulliver's Master to this debate at the general assembly. Gulliver's Master approved of the Tradition and adds to the debate that the original Yahoos in Houyhnhmnland were not of such a debased nature but that the species degenerated over time:

> the two Yahoos said to be first seen among them, had to be driven thither over the sea; that coming to land, and being forsaken by their companions, they retired to the mountains, and degenerating by degrees, became in the process of time, much more savage than those of their species in the country from whence these two originals came (Book IV, Ch. 9: 254).

It appears, then, if Gulliver's Master is to be believed that the original Yahoo presence in Houyhnhmnland was not of an entirely brutish disposition but emerged as such over time. The parallels to Genesis here are clear, signalling that the Land of the Houyhnhmns is a prelapsarian place and that the Yahoos origin is separate from this divine realm: "like Adam and Eve kicked out of Eden, they descend into the innocent world, bringing evil with them" (Olofson Thickstun 1997: 528). Here Swift indulges in the nightmare of degeneration common across the imagination of European intellectual history. As established in the previous chapter, however, this notion had particularly potency in Ireland where the Anglican ruling minority saw the miserable poverty and lifestyle of the native Catholic population as a terrifying glimpse of the animal in man writ large. It is also notable that these original Yahoos had travelled across the sea and been forsaken by their companions, just as Gulliver had, further segmenting Gulliver's role as a stand-in for humanity-as-Yahoo more generally. We are left, then, with a strong suspicion that the Yahoos are of European origin. It is interesting that Swift inserts a particularly colonialist tinge to the Houyhnhmn discourse here when it appears as though the Yahoos might be natural in and of themselves, yet unnatural to Houyhnhmnland after-all. This, of course, summons images of colonization and what could happen to colonists' over time. Contemporary fears regarding the potential degradation of colonists is discussed in the previous chapter. Although Gulliver's "teachableness" and "tincture of reason" render

him in a class above the Yahoos, he is nonetheless forced to recognise that he possesses several physical failings when compared to them. In conversation with his Master, Gulliver must humiliatingly accept these failings in comparison to the local Yahoos:

> I had neither the strength or agility of a common Yahoo; that I walked infirmly on my hinder feet; had found a contrivance to make my claws of no use or defence, and to remove the hair from my chin, which was intended as a shelter from the sun and the weather. Lastly, that I could neither run with speed, nor climb trees like my brethren (as he called them) the Yahoos in this country (Book IV, Ch. IV: 225).

It is as though Gulliver is now somehow insufficiently animalistic, as though he would be better suited to life in Houyhnhmnland should he become even more brutish. The overlap in similarities between himself and the Yahoos are already painful to acknowledge but now Gulliver is taking stock of how in certain ways these brutish beasts are objectively better than he.

This admission forces Gulliver to perform his differentiation to the Houyhnhmns through whatever means necessary. Gulliver does so by using body parts (skin, hair etc.) of Yahoos in the construction of his new shoes and clothes when his wear away, and also in the making of the raft that facilitates his escape from Houyhnhmnland. Gulliver stoops to such wretchedly dehumanizing measures to maintain his position above the indigenous Yahoos as a result of the cognitive dissonance created by his pained admission of his fraternity with them. It is necessary for him to display to the master race Houyhnhmn that facile physical similarities will not prevent him from treating Yahoos as they do. This might however, from an Enlightened point of view, render him even worse, as he is now willing to reduce his erstwhile fellow Yahoos to mere tools.

On the other side of this relationship, Gulliver's awe of the Houyhnhmns and his frank recognition of his (and his people's) failure to meet their level of rationality results in a classic example of what the influential postcolonial thinker Albert Memmi called "colonial mimicry." This mimicry is an admission and endorsement on behalf of the colonised of the coloniser's superior strength and character (Memmi 1965: 119–124). Gulliver's self-loathing in the face of Houyhnhmn perfection leads him to attempt the pyrrhic mimicry of their character:

> By conversing with the Houyhnhmns, and looking upon them with delight, I fell to imitate their gait and gesture, which is now grown into a habit; and my friends often tell me in a blunt way, that I trot like a horse; which however, I take for a great compliment: neither shall I disown, that in speaking I am apt to fall into the voice and manner of Houyhnhmns, and hear myself ridiculed on that account without the least mortification (Book IV, Ch. X: 260).

Swift thus presents man's hubris as encapsulated by Gulliver's pathetic affection of the most trivial and surface-level facets of the rational Houyhnhnm. Just as his rationality could only manifest itself at surface level, his learning of Houyhnhnm ways is, ultimately, not only imitation rather than genuine learning, but pitiful in their signalling of Gulliver's mental degeneration. Forced to attempt to escape extermination in Houyhnhmnland on a raft made of Yahoo hides, Gulliver sees Portuguese sailors and is horrified at the prospect at dealing with "European Yahoos." When he is forced to deal

with the Portuguese, he introduces himself to seamen as "a poor Yahoo, banished from the Houyhnhmns" (Book IV, Ch. XIII: 267). Gulliver's mindset has changed entirely now to see both himself and all Europeans as Yahoos.

Once at home, he clings desperately to whatever sense of superiority he might derive from having glimpsed the rationality and natural harmony of the Houyhnhnms, but it is ultimately as a loathsome and pathetic caricature, talking to horses for four hours a day, sleeping in his stable and stricken with "shame, confusion, and horror" that he furthered the Yahoo race by having a family (Book IV, Ch. XI: 271). Gulliver's time with Houyhnhnms provided an education to a state potentially less brutish and certainly less prideful than his starting point, but we are left to ponder if madness the cost of such a process? Ultimately, then, despite his teachableness, a deeper incorrigibility of character renders Gulliver—and, disturbingly, perhaps us all—irredeemable. It is highly possible that through the negative example outlined in Book IV Swift sought to instruct that humans ought to neither strive to a measure of reason beyond what he saw as our limited capacity nor to aggrandize what access to reason we do have, degrading ourselves like Yahoos in the process.

We can find interesting resonances of Swift's concerns regarding education and human nature in some notes on the topic written by his fellow Irishman Edmund Burke in the 1750s. Writing on the topic of *Philosophy and Education*, Burke noted: "To study for its own end is fruitless labour; to learn only to be learned is moving in a strange circle. The end of learning is not knowledge but virtue; as the end of all speculation should be practice of one sort or another" (quoted in Weiner 2018: 53). We can extrapolate that Burke is suggesting that learning for learning's sake is only worth the end goal of practicing a virtue that arises from said education. There are significant qualitative distinctions to be made between information, knowledge, and virtue. In this regard, Swift's criticism of emergent Enlightenment assumptions of the inherent educational and beneficial properties of travel constitutes this type of "fruitless labour" in a great many cases. This is an insight that is valuable in a general humanist fashion, even if one finds the implications of Swift's characterization of human nature abhorrent. Equally so, the presentation of reason in and of itself—deracinated from virtue—as likely to produce vice as it spirals out of control, enamoured with its own potential points toward a politics of profoundly illiberal and perhaps even authoritarian tendencies. The potentialities of reason are abstract—unbounded and intangible—as is what it means to be human. However, for Swift, rendering these concepts as tangible concrete practices necessarily involves virtue. Book IV of *Gulliver's Travels* suggests that the human capacity for reason can be as much a threat to the fulfillment of this practice as it is a vital component for it to be possible in the first place. For Swift, the degradation of virtue by its subjugation to an abstract concept of reason is arguably most profoundly seen in the Modernist fetishization of experimental philosophy. This is the subject of Book III of *Gulliver's Travels* wherein Swift satirically presents the disastrous outcomes of a society hell-bent on pursuing science above all else. Through this he furthers the critique of travel as necessarily educational, but also rejects the worldview that travel can—and ought to—be disciplined in line with the prerogatives of the scientific method.

4. Disciplining Travel for Scientific Purposes

> "The universal disposition of this age is bent upon a rational religion."
> —Thomas Sprat, *The History of the Royal Society of London* (1667)
> quoted in Porter (2000: 96)

4.1. Introduction

The Voyage to Laputa in Book III contains a pivotal facet of Swift's attack on the emergent modernist project as he saw it: the New Science characterized by the experimental philosophy of the Royal Society of London and the University of Leiden. The aim of this chapter is to connect the underlining goals and ambitions of the New Science to other relevant tracts in the emergent Enlightenment thinking on societal progress featured in Swift's counter-Enlightenment critique of travel. As the ideas of modernity crystallised in the early eighteenth century, the assumptions of modernity concerning travel again coalesced around a vital spoke of the emergent Enlightenment, that of the experimental science.

Science, travel, and politics are conceptually linked by the idea of discovery and the frenzy for the new that often accompanies it. The scientific project sought to discipline travel for the purposes of its quest for endless discovery *en route* to a purported end goal of total knowledge of the natural world. *Gulliver's Travels* offers a stern warning as to the risks that accompany free-form travel that assumes beneficial experiential edification in all circumstances. Science offers a form of order or discipline upon travel, but travel moulded to the demands of empirical observation for the purposes of scientific discovery is equally undesirable. This is because, as Swift shows in the Voyage to Laputa, the scientific worldview possesses the capacity to be inhuman in its singular obsession with speculation and abstraction, hubristically viewing all its exploits under the banner of the triumphant march of so-called progress. From the vantage point offered by Book III, this self-styled narrative of progress inoculates all scientific endeavours from criticism and is cast as inevitable, necessary, and inherently good. Swift presents a forceful critique that science carries an absolutist tendency which can easily bleed into politics, hastily rationalising a drastic overhaul of society in accordance with its aims. Like education, travel also forms a key fulcrum for the methods and goals of science as data collection from a myriad of travellers across the world fuel the discoveries of laboratories back home.

Book III of *Gulliver's Travels* is largely the tale of Gulliver's two months spent in and around the Flying Island of Laputa and the territory it hovers over. The Laputans are a singular people, interested only in speculative knowledge, especially mathematics, music, and astronomy. Their king, who also rules tyrannically over Balnibarbi, the land below, is consumed by the abstractions of intellectual life. Gulliver visits Balnibarbi and is shown an Academy of Projectors in the city of Lagado, a topical allusion to the contemporary Royal Society in the age of Newton. Gulliver tells us that the Academy's founders drew influence from a visit to Laputa decades prior and their degenerated attempts at scientific productivity are shown as a study in wastefulness and folly. Gulliver observes a host of bizarre, ludicrous, and even distasteful experiments during his tour of the Academy. All of this serves to critique the assumptions and arrogance of the

materialism and universal aspirations of the modernist project, broadly understood to contain the threads of rationalism, materialism, and individualism.

Gulliver's Travels certainly does not endorse travel as a pathway to autonomous experiential learning. As this dissertation has argued, the text rather serves as a warning through a dramatic worst-case scenario that travel is not of universal benefit and ought to be pursued in a rigorous fashion if it is to edify at all. The proponents of the New Science sought to pursue what Daniel Carey has called "the elusive goal of disciplining travel, making it useful and coherent in order to advance the cause of knowledge and the exploitation of nature" (Carey 2012: 26). Gulliver's calamitous travels and his inauspicious end suggest that Swift agreed with the necessity of disciplining travel. However, I argue that *Gulliver's Travels* cannot be read to endorse the type of disciplined requirements of impartial observation and documentation placed on travel advocated by the proponents and practitioners of the New Science. Indeed, the repurposing of travel as a means to support the ongoing push toward a unified rationalist and materialist worldview represented for Swift a turn toward foolishness, hubris, and even tyranny, all of which combine to exploit not just the natural world but perhaps even humanity itself, too.

4.2. Reading Swift's Critique of Science

Secondary literature throughout the twentieth century frequently condemned Swift's critique of science in Laputa for its apparent lack of foresight or apt judgment concerning soon-to-be-realized and immensely practical scientific progress. Characteristic of this is J.V. Crewe, who wrote in 1967 that "Swift's prophetic powers partly deserted him" in the Voyage to Laputa as the great satirist "failed to foresee the advance of scientific technology that lay just ahead" (Crewe 1967: 61). In a similar vein, Herbert Davis wrote that "Swift did not realize that he was living in the bright dawn of the scientific era; he did not realize that some of his contemporaries were leading mankind across the threshold of the modern world (Davis 1964: 207). It is fair to say that Swift's depiction of experimental science as wholly impractical and self-indulgent overstates the case. For example, the projectors' ongoing attempt to make it so that "all the fruits of the Earth shall come to maturity at season we think to choose" is of course not the laughable folly today that it would have been to Swift's contemporary readers (Book III, Ch. IV: 164). That is not to say, however, that Swift failed to realize the significance of the types of broad-based societal changes on the horizon as a result of innovations in the field of scientific understanding. On the contrary, he lucidly presents some of implications of a degraded version of science being granted a monopoly on universal truth.

The simplistic retroactive view of Swift's critique of science could easily be that as a pseudo-noble member of the emergent Protestant ascendancy in Ireland, he instinctually lurched to defend the entrenched privileges and power of a dominant aristocratic class. On this reading, Swift merely opposed change in general but perhaps in particular feared the democratic possibilities opened by the expansion of opportunities for individual liberty, commercial gain, and toleration that scientific progress broadly gestured toward. The celebrated conservative thinker Edmund Burke is a useful interlocutor with Swift on this issue. Burke—who like Swift is best described politically as an "Old Whig"—in his *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, identified the difference between caution as genuine prudence and "a false, reptile prudence" born of fear (quoted in

Weiner 2019: 2). It is not the case that Swift's doubts as to the scientific project were rooted in purely survivalist instinctual fear of a threatened elite. His doubts were born of a prudent understanding of the relationship between the New Science and the wider project of modernism that necessarily sought to undermine and replace traditional hierarchies and communitarian norms.

Swift's caution is also closely linked to the moral character of humility that conservative counter-Enlightenment thinkers saw as desperately lacking in modernist projectors such as those in Lagado who refuse to accept their repeated failures as indictments of their endeavour. The New Science, on the other hand, seems to deny that prudence regarding the quest for and use of new knowledge is even a virtue at all. Swift's presentation of the matter operates as a reminder that in a contingent world, we ought to restore "prudence as the political virtue *par excellence*" (Weiner 2019: 3). In its naïvely fanatical form, the scientific perspective, on the other hand, possessed with an unflappable faith in human reason, proffers that if something can be conceived it can—and should—be achieved. Such attitudes deny the validity of any and all cautioning to hasten the progression of scientific projects of all stripes. Burke noted that a statesman must combine "a disposition to preserve, and an ability to improve" (Burke 2003: 113). Douglas Lane Patey has also acknowledged that Swift's critique of modern science comes from the perspective that seeks to assert a distinction between the arts and sciences familiar in intellectual life since Aristotle:

> Swift's science is still what centuries of thinkers would have recognised as the realm of certainty, whose instrument is logical demonstration; his arts are not the fine arts or humanities but the older arts of prudence—those fields in which, because of the limitations of the human mind, demonstrative certainty is not to be had (Lane Patey quoted in Shanahan 2009: 201).

Swift's critique of science notes that the projectorial mindset is incapable of acknowledging what ought to be best left alone, and that many changes offer not improvement but degeneration or destruction. Under such a worldview, the skill of prudence as a virtue of hard-won wisdom runs the risk of being cast aside as a relic or anachronism fit only for those who bitterly oppose progressive developments in science and politics out of fear for their own power. This is certainly a shallow and fallacious criticism directed at Burkean Conservatism by adherents of the narrative of progress. Book III of *Gulliver's Travels* demonstrates the slanderous nature of this critique from proponents of a project incapable of acknowledging some of the dangerous implications for human society brought about by their ascendancy. The scientific method as a means to acquire information about the natural world is not necessarily under attack here, rather those who seek to utilize it as a master key to unlock a perpetual justification for their hold on power.

John Spurr identifies Swift as part of a disparate group in early eighteenth-century English intellectual life, encompassing both Old Whigs and Tories, who spoke a political language of virtue rather than rights (Spurr 1998: 19–20). Unlike rights theorists who sought to emphasise the threats posed by intrusive governments encroaching on individual rights, Swift focused more on the virtuous responsibilities bestowed by custom and tradition upon landowners, MPs, Parliament, and the Crown to maintain the moral health of the polity. Spurr emphasises that the central premise of this deferential

conservative "Country" tradition, tied to the landed gentry, "was that civic virtue was constantly in danger of corruption" (Spurr 1998: 19). The degeneration of institutions over time is referenced throughout *Gulliver's Travels*, most explicitly when Gulliver tells the reader that his account of Lilliputian laws covers "the original institutions, and not the most scandalous corruptions into which these people are fallen by the degenerate nature of man" (Book, Ch. VI: 53–54). This clearly presents an idea of human nature fated toward corruption by the Fall. Most institutions crafted by man are therefore intractably condemned to similar corruption. Institutions capable of reigning in and remaining vigilant in the face of the natural degenerative tendencies of human beings ought to be cherished and protected from speculative attempts at improvement.

Brobdingnag offers an example of such a mixed state: a wise King, "a Prince of excellent understanding" (Book IV, Ch. VI: 116) and an educated nobility tempered by property under laws "expressed in the most plain and simple terms, wherein those people are not mercurial enough to discover above one interpretation" (Book IV, Ch. VII: 125). The Brobdingnagian King's concerns for the lack of educational measures taken to ensure the continuing quality of the English nobility reflects Swift's concerns for the degeneration of the aristocracy. This is further developed in the depiction of the fallen nature of the Laputan elite's obsession with speculation over the practical matters of governance. That the nobility ought to "never be compliers with the times" also indicates the dangers inherent to the allure of slavishly following innovation and fashion, rather than respecting the custodial and protective role proper to an aristocracy (Book II, Ch. VI: 118). Again, the Laputan elite succumb to this failing, exemplified by their insistence on forcing Lord Munodi to move his perfectly operational mill to the side of a mountain in the misguided speculation that "the wind and air upon a height agitated the water, and thereby made it fitter for motion." The project, of course, is a miserable failure (Book III, Ch. IV: 165). Brobdingnag's insistence upon simple laws made up of no more than twenty-two words that are barred from interpretation signals the deception and confusion that can be unleashed by the written word as skilful writers and rhetoricians may spin deceptive webs of confusion, a theme pursued fully in Swift's early career masterpiece *A Tale of a Tub* (Hammond 1983). One might easily finger Swift for hypocrisy on this point, given his tendency to vex readers old and new, but as a general point it chimes with the common feature of Utopian literature for ideal commonwealths to be made up of few or no laws with minimal barriers to comprehension.

The satirical thrust of the projectors of Laputa's submission to intense speculations demonstrates a characteristic counter-Enlightenment scepticism of the promises of Rationalism. This scepticism derives from a moral commitment to both the limits of human reason and also the natural limits proper to human capacity (Weiner 2019: 2). J. Paul Hunter described Swift as having a "persistent distrust of human knowledge and judgment" and this provides the basis of his satiric deconstruction of what he saw as the hubris endemic to the scientific project (Hunter 2003: 229). This hubris is undoubtedly a central point of attack, but it is wedded to a genuine fear of the extension of technological capacity as a means to dehumanise us by allowing the overcoming of natural limits better left untested. Hunter is incorrect to claim that Swift "had little respect for intellectual ambition" (Hunter 2003: 230) as doubt and scepticism concerning the nature and depth of scientific projects is by no mean equivalent to disrespect of the intellect in general. Victoria Glendinning is more accurate in saying that Book III is

indicative of "Swift's exasperated contempt for scientific research and experiment" (Glendinning 1999: 183). I will make the case here that the narrative of progress attached to such innovations in science were not, for Swift, limited to purely experimental matters and involved reforming the role and purpose of travel in ways Swift saw as dangerous to the nested traditions of organic society.

For Swift, materialism, individualism, and the attempt to impose methodical rational explanation upon Christian mysteries threatened the uneasy peace hard won through an Anglican ecclesiastic order that had balanced reason and revealed religion to the appropriate degree (Carey 1997: 89–90). Swift's politics flowed from his religious views and, for him, politics was not and should not be a secular matter. In fact, as recent Swift biographer Brean Hammond has argued, Swift "was particularly sensitive to the relationship between political and religious issues; indeed, he did not see them as separable" (Hammond 2010: 94). The imagery of the island flying and falling has clear connotations of the Fall, which evokes the theme of maintaining moral limits lest uncontrollable forces be unleashed to the detriment of all (Glendinning 1999: 184). The view that Swift's critique of the New Science either missed the great accomplishments in science and technology to come or was purely derived from a reactionary distrust of an emergent middle class of traders and technocrats fails to acknowledge the over-arching argumentative thrust of *Gulliver's Travels*. The critique of travel is a focal point for individualistic and licentious developments that formed of what Stephen Toulmin described as a general "politico-theological" agenda of reform that cannot be conceptually divorced from changes in approach to the understanding of Natural Philosophy (Toulmin 1990: 132). This included repurposing and disciplining travel in order to function as an orderly source of information for the data hungry projectors of the new paradigm.

4.3. The New Science in Context

Frank Boyle has argued that "(a)lthough Swift attacked modern thinking in politics, religion, social mores, poetry and art, he located the foundations of modernity in philosophy, and he identified its most formidable cultural representation as the New Science that began its move to the centre of Western thought in the seventeenth century" (Boyle 2000: xi–xii). Boyle correctly identifies Swift's use of travel as an apt metaphor through which he could lance the myriad of cultural facets of Enlightenment and modernist values. However, as I have already argued, Swift's use of travel as a metaphor is buttressed by a stern warning as to the role that the very real phenomenon of the growth and extension of travel plays in the harmful effects that he believes this project will have on society. The character of Gulliver represents the democratizing possibilities of travel as a means of gathering natural knowledge for the scientific project. As travel increased in frequency in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries amidst the desire for new data to fuel the scientific project, aristocrats became sidelined from the role of documenters-in-chief. In the words of Julia Schleck, "common tradesmen trafficked in truth alongside gentlemen" (Schleck 2012: 69). Thus, Swift is accusing the aristocracy of failing to fulfill its natural mandate to both control the progress and direction of innovation and societal change. The nobility ought to act to safeguard society from "unregulated witness testimony" (Schleck 2012: 69) by inappropriate travellers in order to control narratives concerning key issues in science, politics, economics, and social

affairs. The intersection between travel, knowledge gathering, and the modernist project of the New Science is clear. It is entirely appropriate that Swift insert a sustained and significant satire of contemporary experimental science in a book that cautions of the universal benefits of travel, especially when advocates of the New Science were seeking to order and discipline travel so it might better suit their needs.

Boyle interestingly argues that **"**in the England of the New Philosophy, the accounts of travel informed the radical rethinking activity that explains the move from an 'Age of Discovery' to an 'Age of Reason'" (Boyle 2000: 54–55). However, the holistic critique offered by Swift's multifaceted satirical and ironic narrative suggests that a simple transition from one age to another—from 'discovery' to 'reason'—does not adequately explain the relevant phenomena. While Boyle astutely acknowledges the role the former plays in fashioning the latter, the critique proffered by Swift makes a convincing case that they were/are thoroughly enmeshed from the onset. Gregory Lynall is apt to acknowledge that across his corpus, "Swift was responding not to a single discipline of 'science', but to a range of social and cultural practices and epistemological practices" (Lynall 2012: 4). However, within the heterogeneity of this broad array of epistemological, social, cultural, and political innovations, a core set of common assumptions underlined discovery, rationality, and much in between. Travel and the assumption of an autonomous, rational, and self-interested traveller who is edified by new experiences provides the central enabling context through which the boarder project of modernity and the Enlightenment presuppositions and expectations contained therein flowed.

In an overarching history of the phenomena, Stephen Toulmin identifies the modernist project as deriving from three dreams he attributes to the proponents and projectors of Rationalism in human affairs. These dreams of "a rational method, a unified science, and an exact language" unite, for him, into a single project "designed to purify the operations of human reason" (Toulmin 1990: 104). Toulmin refers to the sixteenth century Baconian roots of this project as borne out of a "Quest for Certainty" (Toulmin 1990: 117). In many ways, the counter-Enlightenment can be characterized as a recognition of the folly and hubris of such a goal in and of itself, let alone any meaningful attempt to achieve it. The possibility of a universal reason as the pathway to certainty requires a rejection and renunciation of the moral foundations of religious and cultural traditions (Mitchell 2019). Swift's critique of the scientific project features a prominent focus on the haplessly speculative and fruitless character of contemporary experiments, but also of the broader implications for society of a universal method of knowledge acquisition that is both delinked from and in denial of the moral character of tradition (Mitchell 2019: 94) as is shown by the pathetic figures of the Laputan aristocracy.

The desire for a universal explanatory scientific mapping of knowledge generated a focus on fact-finding and data collection. The grounding of all inquiry in empirical observation fashioned a new and important function for travel. No longer could or should travel be pursued for religious or even personal reasons. The Royal Society set out to reorient the scientific nature of the role of the traveller in the early modern period "as a collector of data from remote parts" (Vanek 2015: 558). Instructions for travellers disseminated by the Royal Society in several tracts published in *The Philosophical Transactions* sought to standardize conventions of documentation found in travel writing, "calling for only simple, perceptible facts shorn of their experiential origin" as a means to

"safeguard against charges of romantic embellishment" (Pearl 2012: 71). Of course, one of the hallmarks of Gullliver's narrative voice is the calm and detached tone with which he documents his extraordinary sights and experiences, frequently in a quantitative fashion. Dennis Todd's *Imagining Monsters* argues that Gulliver's fascination with monstrosity throughout his travels is a satirical dramatization of typical eighteenth century attempts to follow Bacon's urge to collect documentation "of all monsters and prodigious births of nature," because "he that knows [Nature's] deviations will more accurately describe her ways" (quoted in Todd 1995: 154–155). In the political realm, the clergyman and man of letters Richard Hurd's dialogue imagining a debate between Locke and Shaftesbury on the merits of the Grand Tour has Locke argue that human nature can only be understood in entirety by direct observation and experience of "all its disguises and distortions, arising from absurd governments and monstrous religions, in every distant region and quarter of the globe" (quoted in Bohls 2005: 18).

Bacon's awareness of the fanciful and false ways in which tales of monstrosities had been told in the past made him advise strict guidelines regarding such reportage, insisting on "grave and credible history and trustworthy reports" in order to render reports creditable as part of the scientific enterprise (Todd 1995: 155). Neutral observation and quantifiable measurement thus became of paramount importance. Bacon and his inheritors understood the power of travel to dictate narratives concerning newly discovered phenomena and hence demanded a rigorous and solidly empirical observational process that could facilitate and assist scientific progress. Julia Schleck points out that contemporary debates concerning what type(s) of statement ought to be considered "reliable assertions of experiential knowledge" linked travel and claims travellers made about foreign lands to order and structure scientific knowledge, but also impacted economic affairs and civil society more broadly (Schleck 2012: 68). Swift, too, worried for the wider societal effects of disorderly travel, but certainly did not agree with its subjugation to a wider project based on individualism, materialism, and rationalism.

Morgan Vanek's survey of eighteenth-century travel writing makes a strong argument for the "changeability" of the traveller as a crucial theme in this genre of writing. This is especially important given the necessity of the traveller's capacity to document all manner of experiences in the suitably detached, neutral, and quantifiable manner demanded by science. As previously established, Locke's recognition of the traveller's potential weakness in falling prey to external influences abroad serves as a stern warning that travel is no guarantee of personal edification. When allied to the mission of fact-finding and data collection, as mandated by the Royal Society and the project of the New Science more generally, the impartiality and consistency of the observer is vital if travel is to have positive implications for broader civic improvement (Vanek 2015: 555). Locke understood that people are almost invariably changed through their experiences of travel and I have argued that Swift saw the likelihood of this change being positive as rather slim. Thus, for Locke and Swift, the ideal scientific traveller can hardly be trusted to reflect information neutrally let alone consistently as the effects of their experiences take hold.

Whilst the Royal Society of London certainly formed Swift's chief topical satirical target in his presentation of the Academy of Lagado, the materialist science of the University of Leiden—where Gulliver tells us he attended at the start of the text (Book I, Ch. I: 15)—is also a focal point of the satire. Dolores J. Palomo convincingly

makes the case as such, demonstrating that across all of Europe it was in Leiden where modern scientific techniques found their earliest and most comprehensive incorporation into the traditional curriculum of higher learning. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the curriculum at Leiden had already started to move away from traditional Aristotelianism and toward Cartesian and then Newtonian science (Palomo 1977: 27–35). Leiden also profoundly represented, as noted earlier, both dissenting Protestantism and religious toleration. Swift no doubt sought to further establish the connection between the materialistic New Science and untethered dissent in the readers' minds. Palomo summarises: "the institution at Leiden most completely represented the attitudes, both scientific and religious, which Swift considered misguided and dangerous (Palomo 1977: 28).

The connection between travel and science is furthered here by the implication of dangerous ideas migrating from Leiden to England, both by the specific figure of Gulliver and the more general cross-cultural transmission that brings quintessentially Dutch (and therefore modern) ideas to a country that, in Swift's view, ought—through its resolution of political and religious divisions in the settlement of 1688—to know better. And indeed, the mainstream New Whig regime in place in Britain at this time harboured a "tolerant and inclusive religious policy that tried to embrace as many Protestants as possible." Swift saw the potential extension of state power to dissenting sects as likely to result in sedition and attempts to abuse their newfound authority for mass conversions (Hammond 2010: 94). Hence, the association of Holland with pathways best avoided.

Gulliver's role in Book III is less engaged than in the other three voyages, operating more as a social commentator than an immersed participant. This is explained narratively by the inability of the Laputans to engage in conversation to any great degree, with Gulliver lamenting that he can only really converse "with women, tradesmen, flappers, and court-pages" in his initial two months in Laputa (Book III, Ch. IV: 161). This is partially a sexist and classist joke but is also part of the broader critique of the abdication of an aristocratic class to partake in the appropriate discourses of polite society. However, much as Gulliver's behaviour evokes some of Locke's considerations regarding travel, the conspicuously documentarian tone that Gulliver adopts throughout the text is arguably even more pronounced in his recording of his time in Laputa. In this regard, his writing style is that of a diarist, as proposed for general use by Francis Bacon in his "Of Travel" (1625). Bacon's program of experimental philosophy formed a core inspiration for the Royal Society and others who sought to follow what they conceived to be the Baconian project. In this regard, the wider satirical focus here is how travel instructively operates as a problematic test case for what Swift sees as the naïve optimism of overly permissive Lockeanism on the matter of experiential education and the singular faith in progress of the Baconians.

Thomas Sprat, in his famous history of the Royal Society in 1667, praised Bacon for his "defense of experimental philosophy and the best, directions, that are needed, to promote it" (Sprat 1667: 35). Indeed, Sprat summarized the sentiment of the Society being an inherently Baconian institution when he described him as "one great man, who had the true imagination of the whole extent of this enterprise, as it is now set on foot" (Sprat 1667: 437). To this end, the Royal Society viewed travel very much through a Baconian lens and drafted its recommendations for travellers as such. However, the style of science pursued by the Laputans arguably betrays even Bacon's own scientific project

as the English philosopher's iconoclastic attacks on bibliolatry and tradition were rooted in a far more rigorous empiricism than the absurdly abstract speculations of Laputan mathematicians.

Most significantly, the Royal society shared Bacon's view that the methodical collection of knowledge ought to be the purpose of travel (Bruce 2008: xxviii). Thus, travel can be utilised for the greater gain of societal progress, rather than as part of a project of individualized edification. Bacon describes the educational character of travel to be a factor only "in the younger sort", whereas "in the elder (it is) a part of experience" (Bacon 1996: 374). Interestingly, by the time Swift has Gulliver operating under a combination of Baconian and Lockean assumptions concerning travel, the distinction between the education of the young and the experience of the elder might not represent such a rigid dichotomy. As discussed elsewhere in this work, a central argument made here is that Swift's critique of travel as a core facet of the Rationalist project revolves around scepticism of sense-experiential learning through travel as a guaranteed source of edification, rather than corruption.

The belief that travel is of universal benefit is based on a narrative of progressive betterment through experience, especially educational experience as a panacea for ignorance and prejudice. The doctrine of progress, in which human history is the story of continuous improvement over time, also formed a central narrative pillar of the New Science, allied with theories of materialistic explanations for rational phenomena. The doctrine of progress, of course, also formed a key facet of what would later be called the Whig interpretation of history wherein England, in particular, moves continuously toward increased freedom along a historical arc bent singularly toward justice (Burrow, Collini, and Winch 1983). Such optimism concerning the fate of individual travellers, large-scale scientific endeavour, and even entire nations is, for Swift, tragically misplaced.

It might also be the case that whatever positive effects of travel there may be, dependent on the prior education of the traveller as they are, enforcing the methods appropriate to science on travellers' experiences and writings is likely to eliminate any net benefits. Given that the speculators of Laputa are so entirely dedicated to abstract speculation, leading even to their inability to see or recognise others, the application of such a mindset to travel would strip away the possibility of experiencing and recognising the otherness encountered abroad. This might be desirable if a traveller was visiting a land of utmost vice but in, say, the Grand Tour, would ultimately result in the traveller losing out on the actual human experiences necessary for the treasures of the ancient world to positively affect them in an educational manner.

Whilst the likes of Shaftesbury have noted the importance in disciplining how travel writing conveys information to a public "anxious to learn about the world in which it lived" (Batten 1978: 7), it is clear that reducing all coverage of foreign countries to purely scientific facts devoid of sentiment or pleasure would deny both the traveller and readers alike of any potential benefit. Indeed, in an age prior to the rigorous delineation and separation of disciplines, the aspiration toward universal education meant that travel and pleasant, artistic, and informative travel writing were all seen as necessary components of the completed gentleman. The methods appropriate to science, be they overly abstract, speculative, or rigorous in nature, may very well constitute threats to any edifying possibilities of travel. Thus, although science proposes to discipline travel, which I argue *Gulliver's Travels* certainly makes a case for, this would nonetheless be

undesirable for the purposes of individual education as it would deny even those capable of reaping the benefits of their travels their due edification.

4.4. An Aristocracy Degraded

Gulliver's time in Laputa amongst the rule of science and technology highlights the dangers of the ascent of intellectualism for its own sake, firmly connecting contemporary movements in science to politics. The necessity of polite interaction as a means to polish and improve one another through mutually beneficial contact is disregarded in a community obsessed with supposedly intellectual concerns. As Shaftesbury argued, removing this is treacherous to individual and collective virtue and civility (Shaftesbury 2000: 31). This is precisely the scenario Gulliver encounters, as he is socially neglected by those whom he meets in Laputa since he cannot meet their standards of discourse on their sole topics of interest—mathematics and music—and is thus treated "not without some degree of contempt" (Book III, Ch. IV: 161). The Laputans are not just socially ignorant due to their submission to "intense speculation" but they are also impolite to such a degree that the mutual improvement of interaction with others is rendered impossible by the severely limited range of acceptable discourse.

This singular focus on abstract matters of speculative science runs counter to natural human sociability, as represented by Gulliver who, despite all his faults, is a curious and engaged gentleman. As such, he is moved to describe the people of Laputa as "so abstracted and involved in speculation, that I never met with such disagreeable companions" (Book III, Ch. IV: 161). Gulliver declares himself to be "not unversed" nor unappreciative of matters scientific, but the Laputan dedication to abstract speculation renders them essentially impossible to communicate with. This highlights the dangers that a self-indulgent intellectualism poses to polite sociability. It also conveys Swift's concerns of the scientific project's disinterest in grappling with methods or approaches other than its own and that this inevitably leads to a problematic incorporation of phenomena properly left outside the remit of experimental science. This includes both travel and political power.

The contemporary scientific projectors of the Royal Society and its ilk are satirised by Swift through the presentation of the Academy of Lagado. They are shown to be crackpot experimenters whose harebrained schemes fashion a counter-intuitive anti-Utopia of inventors that achieves nothing but economic and ecological ruin, technological tyranny, and social disengagement. The process and means of modern knowledge acquisition are shown to warp human intellect into a fetishization of abstractions such as mathematics and music to the detriment of the nation's prosperity and even the most basic human functioning such as communication, ruining the possibility for human alertness and polite interaction. It would be facile to think that Swift's quarrel here is with all scientific projection or the extension of human knowledge through any and all modernist means. It is more so the case that the particular biases and tendencies that the modernist project prioritises—innovation in all matters at all costs, denial of the validity of traditional knowledge or customs, unyielding faith in the narrative of progress, etc.—are universalised and applied to all facets of life in ways that strip the aristocracy of its sober tempering influence upon society as they are swept up in the bonanza of change. Science has its uses but when its use becomes an end onto itself that is deemed universally praiseworthy it comes at the expense of human intellect, properly understood.

Throughout Gulliver's time in Laputa there are consistent references to there being both groups of the vulgar and persons of higher or "prime quality", whom Gulliver can clearly and easily distinguish from one another. This further affirms the organic hierarchy that Swift seems to offer as a universal standard of sociability proper to man, yet again demonstrating that despite all the fantastic images conjured up by Swift, Gulliver never encounters a society with an egalitarian form (Montag 1994: 138). The supposed intellectual elites, who are "so taken up with intense speculations, that they neither can speak, nor attend to the discourses of others, without being roused by some external taction upon the organs of speech and hearing" are pathetically absent-minded figures (Book III: Ch. II: 146). It is worth noting that Gulliver immediately identifies those who are afflicted by this powerful distraction to "be of better quality" and that their heads are hit by a bladder full of pebbles or dried peas by flappers comprised of "the vulgar, whose thoughts and minds were more disengaged" (Book III, Ch. II: 146–147). The inversion of expectation whereby the vulgar are capable of attentiveness and those of quality are practically catatonic highlights how the luxury of supposedly indulging one's intellect does not always produce results befitting an erstwhile noble class. In Laputa, the supposed life of the mind brings about both economic and societal disaster on a macro scale and the people of quality in Laputa "have been rendered unfit to care for themselves or others" as they are dependent on the vulgar flappers to keep them even slightly alert. Ultimately, they have degenerated into "a nobility that has abdicated its natural place in the world" (Montag 1994: 139).

The connection between travel, science, and Swift's view of the role proper to aristocracy in an organic hierarchical society is important here. It is notable that Gulliver makes particular effort to describe the Laputan elites as "altogether unmoved by the sight of my foreign habit and countenance" (Book III: Ch. II: 146). At one level this is a simple comedic image of the absurd extent to which the "intense speculations" remove the elites' capacity to even notice their surroundings. However, it also points to the potential significance of not being able to identify or recognise someone whose habits manners, or customs are different from one's own, and how this is both unnatural and perhaps even dangerous. The implication is that absolute submission to purely speculative thought degrades one's capacity to engage, understand, or in this extreme case even notice culture and cultural differences.

For Swift, who held clear and profound political and religious prejudices (Damrosch 2013), such a mindset was clearly a path to relativist toleration *ad infinitum*, if not outright societal ruin. On the other hand, it could also point to how such an utterly narrow elitism predicated entirely on one's speculative abilities renders the Laputans incapable of even comprehending the humanity of a supposed inferior such as Gulliver. This, too, points toward societal ruin as a singular fetishization of merely one facet of human existence to the detriment of all others is sure to distort society beyond repair. The second reading of Swift's critique of scientific reasoning and his implied fear that such a form of thinking will necessarily corrupt politics arguably finds it most profound expression in Burke's rejection of Jacobin abstract reasoning. Unlike abstraction, practice draws upon social knowledge embedded in custom and tradition. In this regard, Swift foreshadows what Francis Canavan has described as Edmund's Burke's *Political Reason* as a force against the dogmatism of abstract, speculative theory that is divorced from political practice (Canavan 1960). Much as disciplining travel for the purposes of science

is undesirable, the reduction of politics to subservience to the scientific project is also disastrous. Both of these possible interpretations of the disconnected nature of the Laputans point toward Swift's ire at the fanatical submission to a singular type of knowledge and how a degraded aristocracy may be particularly vulnerable to such temptations as an economy of prestige emerges surrounding scientific and/or speculative knowledge.

When Gulliver is in Laputa long enough to master the language to the point of being able to converse with the King, the line of questioning pursued is dedicated solely to the state of mathematics. Gulliver is shocked that the King has "not the least curiosity to inquire into the laws, government, history, religion, or manners of countries where I had been" (Book III, Ch. II: 153). Of course, this is precisely what the reader has witnessed Gulliver do throughout his travels thus far as he seeks to be a good documentarian and to be edified through experiential learning. Such incuriosity is surely a sign of a weak intellect, but it also signals that the Laputans have strayed from the information gathering and documentation proper to the scientific project. As a demonstration of the dulling effects of the purely speculative life, the King's responses to Gulliver are largely characterised by "contempt and indifference, though often roused by his flapper on each side" and thus barely able to mount any natural interest in his guest (Book III, Ch. II: 153). The character of the King is characteristic of how the New Science is presented as a naval-gazing, antisocial subversion of the intellect rather than its champion, ultimately serving to threaten organic social hierarchy and order.

Aristocracies of the intellect and of genuine nobility are not one and the same, Swift implies, and Laputa and Balnibarbi serve to show that the former leads to ludicrous and even disastrous results. That scientific thinking appears to degrade norms of polite society is particularly ironic considering the important role that the Royal Society saw for "the importation of codes of gentlemanly conduct into scientific debate" if knowledge generated by the methods of the New Science were to be secured as general knowledge in a peaceful fashion (Schleck 2012: 54). We might extrapolate, then, that if scientific progress were to be pursued to profitable and moral ends, it surely ought to be stewarded by the aristocracy so that it may work toward the good of the community and avoid any destructive pitfalls. The text encourages us to see that a strong aristocracy that promotes the ideals of politeness and gentlemanly conduct is required if science is to be fruitfully pursued. Travel and travel writing could easily have been seen as lacking in sufficiently gentlemanly stock as several influential writers of the era, including the "famously bourgeois journalist, novelist, entrepreneur, and sometime spy Daniel Defoe" held sway in communicating popular images and ideas of travel to the public (Bohls 2005: xv). This demonstrates that the potentially democratising currents in science and travel could combine to undermine the aristocracy.

What Swift shows us in Book III is the degradation of both the intellect and the aristocracy who ought to stay above the petty fashions of innovation, especially those that claim universal scope and the prospect of certainty, as these will run roughshod over tradition. The radical levelling effect of the democratic possibilities opened up by the scientific project risks fashioning a priesthood of all believers that erodes the social and political custodial responsibilities of the aristocracy. The universal priesthood advocated by Luther was, for Swift, a dangerous idea, as demonstrated in the centuries since the Reformation by radical dissenters' obsession with an individualistic religion. As James

Simpson has recently argued, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, although born of profoundly illiberal origin, generated an argument concerning human equality that allowed for a gradual and inevitable extension of individual rights from religious toleration to private judgment on a wide array of matters, all of which we now take as hallmarks of political liberalism (Simpson 2019). This, from Swift's perspective, is clearly an unacceptable usurpation of the aristocracy. Permitting a rational religion in the form of experimental science to flatten social hierarchy would be no better, but Tocqueville shows us that even in societies governed by an egalitarian ethos, hierarchy seemingly inevitably reasserts itself (a fact demonstrated by Swift's depiction of exclusively hierarchical societies across the four books of *Gulliver's Travels*). In such a reordering of society, the scientists become firsts among equals, emerging as a pseudo-aristocratic elite that bears no genuine aristocratic characteristics nor fulfilling the custodial duties proper to the position.

The critique of the scientific project in Laputa further contributes to Swift's over-arching counter-Enlightenment thesis, with a repurposed travel as the fulcrum of the absolutist aspirations of the New Science. Tradition was no longer sacrosanct and those who could undermine old ways soared in a new economy of prestige under emergent modernist norms. Baconian science shared the anti-idolatry of reformed Christianity, seeking instead to control the illusions or distortions to human sense perception through "a controlled ascent from fact to theory, then moving on to the acid test of practice, in the generation of discoveries and inventions beneficial to mankind" (Porter 2000: 57). Swift, however, worriedly identified the emergence of the idol worship of science itself—what would later come to be called scientism.[11] He then sought to attack this as vehemently as the Protestant iconoclasts he hated so much might ransack a statue-laden church (Hunter 2003: 229). Indeed, just as the scientific project sought to constantly update and improve itself through further experimentation, James Simpson has argued that radical Protestantism is "an anti-tradition tradition of permanent revolution" (Simpson 2019: xi). Across the text, the radical enthusiasm and simplistic optimism of dissenting Protestantism, Lockean empiricism, and Baconian science are juxtaposed in such a fashion as to encourage the reader to see all three as inflicted by the same core maladies.

The front-facing satire of Gulliver's voyage to Laputa is a refutation of the claims by the early fellows of the Royal Society that it was not merely curiosity but also a concern for real-world application that motivated their experimentations (Pearl 2012: 72). The projectors and inventors of the Academy of Lagado are shown to conduct wasteful, pointless, and patently absurd projects. This satirical thrust is not divorced from the generalized context and critique of travel found in *Gulliver's Travels* as a whole. Indeed, it is significant that the projectors of Lagado and other academies throughout Balnibarbi originate from a trip to Laputa some forty years previous, returning "with a very little smattering in mathematics, but full of volatile spirits acquired in that airy region" (Book

[11] *See, for example* von Hayek, Friedrich A. 1980. *The Counter Revolution of Science: Studies on the Abuse of Reason,* Carmel: Liberty Fund; von Hayek, Friedrich A. 1942. "Scientism and the Study of Society. Part I", *Economica* 9: no. 35 (August): 267–29; Popper, Karl. 1972. *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

III, Ch. IV: 164). This is another example of the theme of degeneration over time raised elsewhere in *Gulliver's Travels* most notably in Book IV's myth concerning the origins of the Yahoo's brutish demeanour and the Gulliver's declaration in Book I of the "corruptions into which these people are fallen by the degenerate nature of man." Most worryingly, the degeneration of Laputa through misguided scientific hubris is dogmatically approved and applauded. Despite miserable failures to bring their "projects to perfection", the projectors continue nonetheless, "fifty times more violently bent upon prosecuting their schemes, driven equally on by hope and despair" (Book III, Ch. IV: 165). This demonstrates not only the degeneration of Balnibarbi over time, described by Gulliver as lying "miserably waste, the houses in ruins, and the people without food or clothes" (Book III, Ch. IV: 165), but also that there is little hope of rectifying this tragic scenario anytime soon. As true believers, the projectors may well deem themselves as simply falsifying hypotheses *en route* to a profitable and successful conclusion of the project at hand. Swift shows us, however, that this can operate as an excuse for the continuance of disastrous schemes aimed far more at confirmation of admiration of one's own intellectualism, rather than any improvement of the country.

4.5. The follies of Modernism

When Gulliver plots his return home from Japan at the end of Book III he pretends to be a Dutchman in order to find passage on a Dutch ship. He must request to be excused from "performing the ceremony imposed on my countrymen, of trampling upon the crucifix."[12] The King of Japan notes that Gulliver would be "the first of my countryman who ever made any scruple in this point; and that he began to doubt whether I was a real Hollander or no; but rather suspected I must be a Christian" (Book III, Ch. XI: 202). The oppositional dichotomy that the Japanese King suggests between being Dutch and Christian represents Swift's ire toward dissenting Protestantism and toleration as hallmarks of contemporary Holland's degeneration from genuine Christianity to a mercenary shadow of the faith (Canfield 1973: 17). More generally, however, it also establishes the ruinous effects that pursuing travel for the purposes of commercial expansion has in eroding traditional morality and norms concerning sacred religious practices. The implication is that this Faustian bargain degrades moral and religious sensibilities and is clearly conveyed when, on the Dutch ship, "a malicious skipper" identifies Gulliver as not yet having trampled on the crucifix. The skipper has internalised and now even craves the desecration of the crucifix, rather than it being a barely palatable means to an end. This yet again establishes that the narrative of supposed progress peddled by the projectors of science, technology, and trade ought to be seen as false and that materialist modernism leads to degeneration and degradation.

Swift had earlier made the connection between Reform Christianity and New Science in both *A Tale of a Tub* and, especially *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit* (1704) by inverting the literal and figurative facets of spirit in a rebuke to the materialism of the rationalists. For the proponents of each, the projects of liberal politics and economics, dissenting Protestantism, and the New Science all sought to counter traditions they perceived as antiquated, stifling, and unjust. These various modernist movements

[12] This practice, called *Yefumi*, was a religious ceremony designed to detect Christians, who were forbidden in Japan. Dutch traders consented to the practice as a means to pursue commercial relations in Japan, the sole Europeans to do so.

were decentralised and encouraged a certain degree of freethinking and autonomy in ways that Swift saw as pernicious, licentious, and damaging to revealed religion and organic hierarchy as the basis of tradition (Carey 1997: 89). Palomo highlights how Holland represented for Swift a dangerous beacon of "materialism and the progressive spirit" (Palomo 1977: 35) applied to the realms of politics, trade, and science, and he feared the worst as a New Whig-dominated England moved in a similar direction. The scientific projectors of Book III are presented as not only laughable and misguided but also profoundly dangerous. The quintessentially modern tendencies exemplified by the Netherlands, including prioritising commercial gain over religion and the erosion of all but materialist explanatory schemes, represented a dangerous break from the stability of tradition and order.

Gulliver's role in Book III is far less engaged than in the other three voyages and his commentary on Laputa is arguably the most clear-eyed and sober of anything he offers throughout the entire text. Insofar as he has anything approximate to the typical arc of a novelistic protagonist, at this point the character of Gulliver has yet to fully turn on the rotten nature of English politics and culture as he does to full effect in Book IV, but the satire of currents in European science and philosophy continues apace in Laputa. For example, Gulliver makes the link between the degradation of politics at the hands of scientific hubris in Europe in general, but not necessarily England in particular, as his pride in his home country has not yet fully waned. The critique is widened when he expresses his doubts as to the validity of the link between science and politics. For him, the desire of those with expertise in the former to claim authority over the latter as derived from "a very common infirmity 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" (Book III, Ch. II: 151). This represents a clear objection to the modernist project of unlocking the universal method and unified language through which a rational world can be fully comprehended and mastered (Mitchell 2019: 94). It also establishes Swift's critique of the natural limits proper to man that science seeks to overcome. Science presents itself as having rightful dominion over all facets of life, as the Projectors of Lagado and elsewhere throughout Balnibarbi "contrive new rules and methods of agriculture and building, and new instruments and tools for all trades and manufacture (Book III, Ch. IV: 164). And the domain of science is seen as justly extended beyond the purely empirical world.

The connection between the New Science and Swift's characterization of the modern science of politics is most clearly expressed when Gulliver notes that the people of Laputa have a strong disposition toward "news and politics, perpetually enquiring into public affairs, giving their judgments in matters of state; and passionately disputing every inch of a party opinion" (Book III, Ch. II: 150). This comes immediately following a description of how every facet of Laputan life is shaped by and around the conventions of mathematics and music, resulting in the effective curtailing of the practical reason (as opposed to speculative reason and instrumental reason), imagination, fancy, and invention: "The whole compass of their thoughts and mind, being shut up within the two forementioned sciences" (Book III, Ch. II: 150). Thus, in a typical satirical flourish, Gulliver moves from describing the impossibility of any meaningful Laputan culture of political contemplation as it ought to be intractably characterised to immediately observing a generalised obsession with political intrigue, news, and opinion. Gulliver

claims to have seen a similarly damning tendency amongst the mathematicians of Europe. This is a strong criticism of the emergence of something approximating a technocratic elite or the conflation of knowledge of matters scientific and the broader science of politics properly understood.

In Book II, Gulliver's discussions with the King of Brobdingnag satirised the supposed ignorance of the Brobdingnagians for "not having hitherto reduced politics into a science, as the more acute wits of Europe have done (Book II, Ch. VII: 124). The choice of the word "wit" here to describe those who claim to have elevated (or, rather, reduced) politics to a science is no doubt an intentional swipe in the direction of those who were lauded in contemporary British and Irish intellectual circles (Deane 1985). Thus, we see a clear over-arching theme of the foolishness of either the outright conflation of science and politics—i.e. the denial that science and politics are two distinct phenomena—or the attempt to convert politics into the metrics and methods of science—i.e. to render politics comprehensible via scientific means. This eventually would form the dogmatic approach of scientism, in which all facets of life ought to be reduced to measurable and quantifiable indicators suitable for insertion into the pre-set methodology of science, regardless of the appropriateness of the fit. This degradation of science is emblematic of Swift's wider concern across the text of how decent or good ideas (such as Locke's advice concerning travel) get diluted, misinterpreted, and overextended, often to disastrous effect. Most importantly, Gulliver's recognition that we are badly fitted to approach problems of politics "either by study or nature" recognises the limitations that apply to humanity as a consequence of both inherent human nature, *and* how our capacities are blunted by the fallacious universal equivalences of the scientific project.

Equally troubling developments were to be found in the so-called Anglican Rationalism of the Latitudinarian faction who "chose to graft Christian understanding onto the mechanical but serviceable Newtonian worldview and to accommodate the needs and desires of a burgeoning market-society while enlightening its self-interest in order to preserve and promote the Church" (Atkins 2013: 16). Politics deferring to science is troubling enough, but the moulding revealed religion around the scientific worldview was, for thinkers such as Swift, essentially a terrible abdication of responsibility from political and religious elites. This Latitudinarian deference to science would render it morally equivalent to deism and freethinking in its willingness to break with custom and a mercenary acceptance of the inevitability of triumphs of science, commerce, and liberal individualism. Margaret C. Jacobs notes that the Latitudinarian adopted the new science "and promoted it from their pulpits because it served their interests" as they sought to reorient Church power around cohabitation around a Newtonian "model for a stable and prosperous polity, rued by the self-interest of men" (Jacobs 1976: 17–18).

4.6. Scientific Universalism and Political Absolutism

Robert P. Fitzgerald astutely points out that, for Swift, the certainty and universalism claimed by science found its parallel in the political realm in absolutism; the doctrine that "political sovereignty was indivisible, was not to be restrained by law, and was to be accepted without question" (Fitzgerald 1988: 214). The liberal tradition has also viewed absolutism as inherently arbitrary and corrupt through the usurpation of rule of law by personal prerogative (Tapsell 2007: 8). Such absolutist claims to power could (and

frequently did, historically) manifest devoid of any specifically scientific character. The modern tradition of absolutism advanced by the likes of Filmer and Hobbes was not defended on the basis of mastery of science. However, as has been previously established, *Gulliver's Travels* satirically evokes the conflation of scientific and political knowledge, especially the idea that the former ought to bestow its beholder with the latter.

Bacon's utopian travel narrative, the *New Atlantis*, makes this link clear when the purpose of Salomon's House is identified as "the knowledge of causes, and secret motions of things; and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire, to the effecting of all things possible" (Bacon 2008: 177). By empire here, Bacon can be interpreted as referring to the common cause of all humanity across the broad range of possible endeavours. Investigation in the natural sciences is valuable because it contributes to this common cause and as such, as Susan Bruce argues, for Bacon "scientific knowledge is indivisible from political power" (Bruce 2008: xxxv). The absolutism inherent in the desire for "a rational method, a unified science, and an exact language" (Toulmin 1990) and the quest to eliminate uncertainty and ambiguity reflected for Swift a misguided conflation of the capacity for material and technological manipulation with the art of rule responsibly embedded in the traditions that maintain order and make structured freedom possible.

Patrick J. Deneen, a contemporary philosopher whose heavy criticisms of liberalism can be read to echo several of Swift's concerns in *Gulliver's Travels*, has recently argued along similar lines, making the case that the infiltration and even supplanting of politics, properly understood, by technology is "a tradition-destroying and custom-undermining dynamic that replaces practices, memory, and beliefs" (Deneen 2018: 96). The Laputans' inability to even maintain basic conversation and norms of politeness is indicative of the point made by Deneen here that the radical presentism of scientific and technological speculation squeezes out the long-term and historically conscious perspective that custodial politicians ought to preserve. In a more literal sense Gulliver's potential in Lilliput to act as an instrument of destruction summons the Emperor's dream of using this power to achieve world domination. The natural destructive capacity of Gulliver the giant the Emperor suggests, could be harnessed to achieve the goal of becoming the "sole monarch of the whole world" (Book I, Ch. V: 47). This shows the destructive possibility of technology (in this case a weaponized giant) allied to the expansionist designs of a corrupt leader.

Swift's opposition to political absolutism, featured prominently across *Gulliver's Travels* as well as throughout his other writings, broadly followed the conventions of what will later be understood as "Old Whig" Lockean liberalism. Fitzgerald argues that Swift's criticisms of commercial society, individualism, religious toleration, and other aspects of what are commonly understood as cornerstones of Locke's thought were nonetheless nested in the crucial Whig bedrocks of natural rights to life, liberty, and property, government by consent, and the fragmentation of political power. On the core issues of political philosophy, Fitzgerald claims, "the only significant difference between Swift and Locke was one of degree" (Fitzgerald 1988: 214). This interpretation is intuitively in line with my reading of Swift's evocation of Locke's writing on the edifying possibilities of travel. *Gulliver's Travels* presents what can happen, however, when such potentially positive facets of liberal thinking are taken as abstract conceptual

truths rather than facets of a more holistic human nature that must reside fully within nested traditions. Swift carried the distaste typical of all brands of Whig toward absolutism and of arbitrary power. The Emperor of Lilliput backed by a standing army is an example of European-style despotism, whereas the King of Luggnag reflects the oriental despot, and both use their arbitrary power to extend their realm of control and enslave those who come under their control. Both are contrasted with the gracious and wise King of Brobdingnag who wields considerable power within a "general composition" between royal prerogative, the nobility, and the people so as to maintain order and stability (Lock 1983: 173).

The order of Brobdingnag is possible due to the lack of faction, malevolent political competition and religious nonconformity. This is made clear by the King's incredulousness at England's licentious allowance of people to freely speak plain falsehoods and his conception of justice as informed by religious and political conformity and knowledge of local customs (Book II, Ch.VI: 119). Thus, Swift's anti-absolutism is absolutist in its strong requirements of public conformity. Swift's conception of anti-absolutism does not fashion an equally absolutist vision of liberty in contrast to authoritarian coercion, making a state such as Brobdingnag, distasteful though it is to modern liberal democratic values, a site of responsible liberty as life under a King "possessed of every quality which procures veneration, love and esteem; of strong parts, great wisdom and profound learning; endued with admirable talents for government, and almost adored by his subjects" (Book II, Ch. VII: 124) provides a rich existence. Indeed, for Swift the King ought to be thought of as a servant of the nation and cannot be permitted to breach the reciprocal relations between subject and ruler, mediated through a representative parliament (Ehrenpreis 1935: 135). This applies to both the tyranny of arbitrary political rule, but also to the possibility of an abstract conceptualisation of truth, liberty, reason, or any other singular ideal that could supplant the concrete practice of political community in an absolutist fashion. All this to say that Swift's critique of the universal aspirations of science intersects with his firmly held principle of anti-absolutism, and that he saw the combination of the two as apparent and inevitable, but this does not mean that he conceives a free society to be defined in terms of state-guaranteed individual negative liberty.

For the projectors of modernism, the sectarian violence and political upheaval that befell seventeenth-century Europe, and England in particular, was caused by uncertainty and interpretive anarchy. As Stephen Toulmin states, "the time had come to discover some rational method for demonstrating the essential correctness or incorrectness of philosophical, scientific, or theological doctrines" (Toulmin 1990: 55). Scientific Rationalism emerges, then, as the criterion of conformity under a regime of tolerant pluralism. Swift's anti-absolutism finds the absolutism of science to be a pathway to tyranny whereas life under a benevolent, dignified and prudent king, power might be wielded in authoritarian forms but would never be arbitrary in nature.

The blending of scientific acumen and absolute political power culminate in the figure of the King of Laputa. Under the total control of the King the island of Laputa hovers menacingly over its subordinate territory, Balnibarbi. Through its advanced astrology and a load-stone located in its centre, the island can be manipulated to move about, rise and fall. Gulliver reports that the monarch can use the Laputans' technological know-how to raise the island so high that "he can prevent the falling of dews and rains

whenever he pleases" (Book III, Ch. III: 154). One might well fear this capability inherently as a terrifying subversion of nature, characteristic of modernism's disinclination to acknowledge boundaries moral or natural. Worse still, this manoeuvre is used in a targeted fashion to quash those in Balnibarbi who "engage in rebellion or mutiny, fall into violent factions, or refuse to pay the usual tribute" (Book III, Ch. III: 158). By hovering the island over a particular town or community in Balinbarbi, the King is able to "deprive them of the benefit of the sun and the rain, and consequently afflict the inhabitants with dearth and diseases" (Book III, Ch. III: 158). This illustrates the dangers of technological and scientific mastery, especially when wielded by those whose intellects have been warped in inhuman ways. Worse still, the King can use the island of Laputa itself to crush areas beneath "by letting the island drop directly upon their heads, which makes a universal destruction both of houses and men" (Book III, Ch. III: 158). The implication here is clear: the aspiration of science to a universal method and/or language comes with the potential for universal destruction. This highlights a profound tension between moral accounts for why science ought to be pursued and the moral consequences of its practical application. The abstract ethics of expanding the horizon of humanity's knowledge takes on a substantially different character when considering the types of uses we can expect from the technological proficiencies gained as a result. Universal power in science and politics generates the capacity for total destruction, both of humanity itself and the fruit of its labour and a key identifier of those of quality in the form of property.

4.7. The Stabilising Effects of Property

There are, however, two important remits to this technologically fuelled tyranny. One is natural, in that the bottom of the island, and even the crucial Load-stone can be damaged by the impact of the island crashing down upon Balnibarbi. The second is the fact that the nobles of Laputa hold property on Balnibarbi they do not wish to be damaged by plummeting the island onto insurrections below. Here Swift highlights the argument in favour of the sobering effects a propertied aristocratic class has upon a monarch. Property provides an anchoring effect that stabilises and checks the excesses of even an aristocracy corrupted by a degraded and misguided intellectualism of intense speculation. This further weakens the case for travel for those whose positive instincts are buttressed by their duties to protect their property.

Burke is again an instructive interlocutor here, given his advocacy of the Roman law of prescription under which long term possession provided the right to property ownership. Burke disagreed with the Lockean conception of property rights generated via the improvement of land erstwhile held in common ownership, arguing that this was insufficiently stable to provide the required basis for a landed aristocracy. In Greg Weiner's analysis: "in rejecting Locke, who sought to impose an abstract theory on property, Burke chose slow evolution over speculative politics" (Weiner 2019: 132–133). The dovetailing of speculation as a threat to politics and as a hallmark of the modernist project of scientific experimentation is not coincidental as both are purposefully destabilising forces in ways that both Swift and Burke identify. In the *Reflections*, Burke wrote that without prescription "no species of property is secure, when it once becomes an object large enough to tempt the cupidity of indigent power" (Burke 2003: 128). The security of property makes stability and thus prudence possible for the landed aristocracy

tied to the land. In *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift implicitly outlines an ideal political order as hierarchical, informed by the stability that property confers upon a hereditary nobility (Lock 1983: 1983).

Gulliver informs the reader that the King's failure to recruit a "ministry to join with him" is the only thing preventing the establishment of "the most absolute Prince in the universe" thereby mitigating the totality of the technological tyranny offered by the island's literally crushing power (Book III, Ch. III: 158). Another potentially positive facet of the nobility here is that Gulliver tells us that they are aware that "the office of a favourite hath a very uncertain tenure" and that they "would never consent to enslaving their own country" (Book III, Ch. III: 158). This shows that the elite are at least sufficiently engaged to avoid being lured by short-term petty advantage, recognising the favour of an absolutist leader to be fleeting at best and that any further acquiescence to an absolutist regime would represent an unconscionable enslavement of their country and people (Book III, Ch. III: 158). Thus, while Swift certainly wants us to see the "people of better quality" in Laputa to be victims of the degradation of the intellect that comes with a life of "intense speculations", they nonetheless maintain some ingrained sense of responsibility concerning the protection of property and the long-term health of the country proper to their position. The cabinet of ministers in Lilliput, also represent the dangers of a degraded aristocratic class, who acquire "great employments by dancing on the ropes, or badges of favour and distinction by leaping over sticks, and creeping under them," without a parliament (despite the rampant nature of party-based factionalism) in place to restrain their malign ascendancy (Book I, Ch. VI: 54). Yet, some of the wiser among the Lilliputian Ministry agree with Gulliver's protestation against the Emperor's desire to use him to "reduce the whole Empire of Belfuscu into a province" as part of a wider plan to make himself the "sole monarch of the whole world" (Book I, Ch. V: 47) showing the positive influence of a proper nobility, shrinking though it may be.

A century on from Swift's identification and possible anticipation of its effects, Alexis de Tocqueville articulated the special quality that land ownership has, binding it to political power, even beyond that produced by movable wealth. Summarizing Tocqueville's views on the stabilizing effects of property, Harvey Mansfield writes "in aristocracy, individuals are fixed in a hierarchy between those on whom they depend and those who depend on them" (Mansfield 2010: 21), and this co-dependence is predicated on land ownership by elites. Although writing well after liberalism had developed in ways Swift could not have anticipated, Tocqueville nonetheless asserts this position in terms I believe Swift would endorse:

> Great territorial properties localize, if we may so speak, the influence of wealth; and forcing it to exert itself always in the same place and over the same persons, give it by that means a more intense and a more permanent character (quoted in Spring 1980: 122–123).

Secure property ownership creates stability, and even an aristocracy in severe decline such as that of the Laputans have a tempering effect upon the disastrous tendencies of the scientifically obsessed society. This further establishes the organic hierarchy led by a landed gentry that *Gulliver's Travels* repeatedly demonstrates to be natural to human sociability, rather than what it presents as the "excessive freedom and individualism" characteristic of modernist innovations in politics and science (Paulson 2007: 8). This is

an aristocracy run amok on misguided intellectualism, no doubt, but Swift does not want to abandon us to abject dejection at the possibility of correcting course against the vainglorious errors of the modern project and if this is to be successfully pursued, the nobility must return to their time-honoured duties. The implication being that a properly functioning nobility ought to confer the benefits of a rich education and superior cultural awareness. Thus, elites ought to be more hardened against intellectual decay, protected by their heightened historical consciousness and the example of noble ancestors they should be seeking to emulate. Furthermore, property is a source of political virtue as it provides something to defend and cultivate as well as providing a baseline of wealth as a bulwark against bribery and further corruptions (Lock 1983: 175). The criticisms of the Laputan elites that Swift does include in Book III are laments for a degenerated ideal, rather than an attack on the idea of hereditary aristocracy.

In this vein, Gulliver is hosted in Lagado by Lord Munodi, an affable and comparatively grounded figure, described by the critic F.P. Lock as "a paradigm of the benevolent, conservative, country gentleman of Swift's Tory mythology" (Lock 1980: 121). Gulliver is afforded a letter of introduction to Munodi by a "great Lord" that he meets in Laputa who is decried as among "the most ignorant and stupid people" due to his lack of skill in mathematics (Book III, Ch. IV: 163). As he is guided around by Lord Munodi, Gulliver laments the uncultivated fields, decrepit homes, and a misery-laden, deprived people he sees round him despite "so many busy heads, hands, and faces, both in the streets and the fields" (Book III, Ch. IV: 163). Not all work is worthwhile, it seems, and the modernist fixation with so-called improvement is undoubtedly a target of the satire here. The reader is left to grapple with the idea that the modern scientific project, taken to its extreme in the form of abstract speculation and crackpot experimentation to the exclusion of all else, renders the land and its people sorely deprived of both the means of general prosperity and the communication and sociability that makes human life worth living.

Munodi's more reasoned perspective allows him to see the failures of the Laputan fixation on scientific abstractions and duly informs Gulliver of the disastrous effects that the work of the Academy has wrought upon a once prosperous land. Munodi, "a person of the first rank" and former Governor of Lagado, now finds himself out of the King's favour because of his failure to adopt the expected scientific innovations. Gulliver admires Munodi, commending him for his "prudence, quality and fortune" and exemption "from those defects which folly and beggary had produced in others" (Book III, Ch. IV: 163). Munodi represents a conservative traditionalist figure, indicated by his deference to the "rules of ancient architecture" and his being "content to go on in the old forms; to live in the houses his ancestors built" (Book III, Ch. IV: 164–165). In this regard, he is the quintessential pastoral gentleman, observant of the required norms and standards befitting his elevated position in the social hierarchy and resistant to the degeneration around him. However, given the devotion to projection, speculation and experimentation in Laputa and Balnibarbi, Munodi is under intense pressure from the King and other Lords to destroy his perfectly functional homes and fields, as well of those who live on his land, in order to conform to the projecting ways of his neighbours. Munodi, "being not of an enterprising spirit", and happy to act "in every part of life without innovation", clearly represents Swift's idea of the country gentleman punished by the relentless—and in this case feckless—march of so-called progress. However, yielding

to the pressure to adopt the untethered and damaging scientific projects would prevent him from fulfilling his rightful duty of acting as a steward of the land and custodian of culture. As a noble, properly understood, Munodi is attempting to look beyond the fickle fashions of innovation and protect the long-term health of his property first and foremost.

4.8. The Doomed Projects of Modernity

Only scientific projects are seen by the Laputan regime as contributing to "the general improvement of their country", and the benevolent paternalism of a pastoral Lord such as Munodi is treated as mere preference of one's own "ease and sloth" (Book III, Ch. IV: 165). Enterprise, innovation, and improvement under this regime all amount to buffoonery and ruin, showing that the positive connotations the words enjoy under modernism are by no means earned by anything other than blind faith in the narrative of progress. This uses the characteristic satirical strategy of inversion, where the attributes of Munodi's rightful but denied role as a compassionate aristocrat atop a traditional communitarian hierarchy are condemned as vice by the misguided wits of Laputa, rather than the virtues properly understood. Indeed, Munodi's failure to adopt "modern usage" of his land has left his reputation in tatters and the King believes that he must be beholden to "pride, singularity, affectation, ignorance, and caprice" if he will not manage his affairs in the modern style (Book III, Ch. IV: 164). This illustrates the intolerance of progress in the face of those who simply do not wish to be accelerated by its supposed blessings.

Under such a worldview, change is seen to be a net positive regardless of its character and contour. Swift is harshly presenting the march of progress as relentless, blind to its own failures, and demanding absolute uptake. Not only is Munodi slandered, but his career as a Governor was ended by "a cabal of ministers" who had him "discharged for insufficiency" on the grounds that he was not forward-thinking in his adoption of new technologies and projects (Book III, Ch. IV: 163). This is clearly a reference to the poisonous nature of faction in general—a theme thoroughly discussed in Gulliver's Voyage to Lilliput—but specifically refers to the dangers of using science as a measurement for political virtue or competency. The pressure exerted on Munodi takes its toll and he sees his conformity as inevitable in the near future. He is forlorn at the prospect as he tells Gulliver of a mill close by that although it was an efficiently providing for the area, was destroyed and replaced by a disastrous technological project that was abandoned after several years of miserable failure (Book III, Ch. IV: 165).

Gulliver breaks with Munodi as he moves along to the Academy of Lagado, the site of the most ludicrous of scientific experimentation in Book III. Munodi cannot continue to act as Gulliver's guide because he is held in low regard by the Academy but he passes along a representation of Gulliver "as a great admirer of projects, and a person of much curiosity and easy belief" (Book III, Ch. IV: 166) which is sufficient to grant Gulliver access to the Academy. Swift adds in a potential personal *mea culpa* here by having Gulliver admit that he had fallen prey to the temptation toward projection earlier in life (Book III, Ch. IV: 166). As Gulliver visits the various schemes and projects, each more absurd and outrageous than the last, Swift is clear to impress upon the reader the projectors' attitude to the persistent failures. The first man Gulliver encounters is haggard after eight years of failed attempt to extract sunbeams from cucumbers. Notably, he asks Gulliver for some financial assistance "as an encouragement to ingenuity" (Book III, Ch.

V: 167). The clever phrasing here reminds one of the centrality of ingenuity and innovation to the core narrative of progress that underlines the scientific project and yet threatens the stability made possible by tradition (Mitchell 2019).

Such behaviour is not uncommon, Gulliver tells us, as the projectors of Lagado are well known for begging from anyone who visits them. Victoria Glendinning cunningly describes this as simply a man "looking, as is the way of academics, for a further research grant" (Glendinning 1999: 183). The episode also highlights that the erstwhile quality of perseverance is not necessarily valuable in all cases. Rather, Gulliver instead sees the stubbornness of misplaced optimism characteristic of experimental philosophy, convinced by its own grandiosity that the great breakthrough is right around the corner even as destitution abounds. Another project to use pigs to plough fields has also yielded precious few positive results but "it is not doubted that this invention may be capable of great improvement" (Book III, Ch. V: 168). Again, this conveys Swift's ire at the lack of humility and misguided faith that "the advancers of speculative learning" have in themselves and their project (Book III, Ch. V: 168–169). This level of arrogance is further demonstrated by Gulliver's meeting with a professor at the academy who, in describing his latest project, states that "a more noble exalted thought never sprang in any other man's head" (Book III, Ch. V: 171). For a society obsessed with speculation, the certainty with which it continues to pursue disastrous schemes is a damning indictment of arrogance and hypocrisy.

Perhaps most indicative of Swift's perception of the damage that scientific research does to the human intellect is the description of a large wooden proto-computer designed to save time and study, making it possible for "the most ignorant person […] (to) write books in philosophy, poetry, politics, law, mathematics and theology, without the least assistance from genius or study" (Book III, Ch. V: 171). This illustrates Swift's exasperation with science's fixation with information at the expense of knowledge, wisdom, and prudence, and on this front, he appears to have been entirely prescient. This particular fixation with codifying complex human experience into deracinated information is also the impetus behind the disciplining of travel for scientific purposes.

Most tragicomically, Gulliver's greatest lament is for the misguided souls in the school of political projectors who have the best of intentions to redirect rulers away from the petty favouritism and cronyism of typical European court politics and toward rewarding ministers and officials by the genuine merit of prudence. Gulliver here is clearly a direct satirical mouthpiece for Swift's perception of the failures of the ruling class and also for his impatience for the projectors who waste time dreaming up theoretically perfect but unfeasible solutions, declaring these to be "wild impossible chimaeras, that never entered before into the heart of man to conceive" (Book III, Ch. XI: 175). I argue that the greatest irony of all is that even the right-thinking aspects of the political projectors' agenda is ultimately misguided because their entire approach is predicated upon a misreading or misunderstanding of human nature as entirely tethered to the scientific method. More significantly still, perhaps, they are doomed because the entire endeavour of projecting is hopeless in and of itself. Here we see the tendency of Swift to fall into a hopelessness of sorts which is often characterised as misanthropy but is probably more aptly viewed as disappointment. The doctrine of progress and the endless scientific, political, and economic scheming that it engenders is simply a terrible

fit for humans who are perhaps better served by the order and structure provided by tradition.

4.9. Conclusion

Travel must be pursued in an orderly fashion if it is to be of benefit. Laputa and Balnibarbi show that, in Swift's estimation, the scientific project is in no position to offer itself as a trustworthy ideological apparatus fit to discipline negative potentialities of travel. The use of travel for the over-arching set of concerns integral to modernism—commercial expansion and resource exploitation, scientific mastery over the natural world, political democracy, colonisation, and the emancipation of the individual from the shackles of an irrationally hierarchy—all coalesce together as a clear marker toward the Enlightenment ideals that would take dramatic shape in the later eighteenth century. This chapter has largely agreed with recent secondary literature's analysis of early counter-Enlightenment criticisms of experimental science, adding Swift's primary insights to this existing historiographic contribution. I have, however, sought to push back against interpretations that see Book III as either an episodic digression from the more important material found in Gulliver's other three voyages. It certainly is the case that for the purposes of this dissertation the more nuanced interpretation and argumentation concerning travel and education is predicated on my reading of Books II and IV, but there is much noteworthy evidence to support the argument made in the chapters covering Gulliver's time in Brobdingnag and Houyhnhmnland in Book III. The conceptual linking of travel and science through the idea of discovery makes the two processes inextricably linked, especially if the goals of the latter are to be achieved. The common theme of zealous enthusiasm and naïve faith in the ideal of progress overlaps prominently between permissive Lockean ideals of experiential education and Baconian scientific experimentation, also.

The Voyage to Laputa suggests that disciplining travel to serve the needs of the materialist and rational project of the New Science weakens the aristocracy, either by sweeping them up into its naval-gazing speculations, or by rewarding them with technocratic powers that may produce or enhance tyrannical absolutist rule or supplanting them with those who would wield those powers if they refuse to do so. This may result in a science-obsessed society where scientists assume the authoritative mantle vacated by priests and/or nobles, or it might fashion a radically decentralised flattened society where all pursue and contribute to the pursuit of knowledge acquisition through experimental science. In either case, Swift's critique of science as a project that is necessarily destructive of tradition conveys the fact that the universal aspirations of science toward a unified method to reduce the entire world to rational explanations of cause and effect relationships ought to stoke prudential caution from those whom he hopes should (or at least can) know better.

The disciplined ordering of travel is vital for the scientific project to spread its authority. *Gulliver's Travels* demonstrates that disorderly travel can have ruinous effects, but its acquiescence to the disciplining of travel for the exclusive purposes of science is also highly undesirable. The empiricism that underlines both experiential learning through travel proves to be a significant keystone of the modernist project in politics, education, and science. Swift's insight on these matters all coalesce around a satirical presentation of a quintessential traveller in Gulliver whose journeys show the folly of

assuming that a detached documentarian approach to travel insulates one from potentially deviant ideas and events one encounters. Thus, Gulliver stands as evidence that the scientific disciplining of travel is but facile stylistic indulgence, appropriate perhaps for travel writing (although not necessarily so) but not for the traveller him/herself, especially considering that it ultimately renders them subservient to the goals of an endeavour that can itself be led dramatically astray by a predilection toward zealous belief in its own teleology.

As Karen Armstrong has noted, the "emergence of reason as the sole criterion of truth in the West coincided with the eruption of religious irrationality" (Armstrong 2001: 75). The initial rise to prominence of the scientific worldview necessarily subdued the mysticism and mythology that governed much of humanity's dealings with a complex and multifaceted world. Custom and tradition, denied validity by the cult of rationality, frothed outward in deviant forms such as witch crazes (Armstrong 2001: 75). Reason is not without its role in the proper functioning of society, but it must be counterbalanced by the prudence that comes in its most readily available form via tradition and religion. Swift's criticism of science reflects a worldview that is respectful to tradition and custom, sceptical of grandiose claims of inevitable progress, and seeks to maintain what is solid and reliable over promises of improvement. The dangerous zealotry of Puritanism shows what happens when reason is sacrificed to supposed revelation, but the hare-brained schemes of Balnibarbi show what happens when a facile singular reason runs amok without the virtue of prudence to rein it in.

5. Travel, Travel Writing, and Magnificent Lies

> A traveller's chief aim should be to make men wiser and better, and to improve their minds by the bad, as well as good example of what they deliver concerning foreign places.
> —*Gulliver's Travels*, Book IV, Ch. XII: 272.

> Swift has sailed into his rest;
> Savage indignation there
> Cannot lacerate his Breast.
> Imitate him if you dare,
> World-Besotted Traveller; he
> Served human liberty.
> —W.B. Yeats, *Swift's Epitaph*[13]

5.1. Introduction

In an overview of the relationship between travel, disease, and medicine, Jonathan H. Cossar identified the importance of understanding "how the consequences of man's travels have shaped history" (Cossar 1994: 36). It is my contention here that Swift's critique of travel reveals that the assumption of individual experiential edification lies at the heart of tensions within what he saw as Modernity. Most crucially, the aspiration that travel is a portal to individual education undermines the centrality of community to political life and the necessity of a shared set of values upon which this rests. The traveller's untethering from society, overconfident in his or her own capacity for boundless self-edification serves as the apt allegory for a hubristic narrative of progress unable or unwilling to comprehend what Swift saw as the necessity for the prudent limits and natural sociability of organic society. Understanding the political implications of the presentation of travel in *Gulliver's Travels* allows for a reframing of a text as satirising moral and intellectual improvement outside of tightly constrained and orderly practices.

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[13] Yeats, W.B. 2011. "Swift's Epitaph." In *The Winding Stair and Other Poems*. London. Scribner.

The blurb on the inside dust jacket of the recently published *The Meaning of Travel* by Emily Thomas of Durham University claims that the work is the "first-ever philosophical study of travel" (Thomas 2020). Although generally written with a popular audience in mind, Thomas does include some solid insights into the important roles played by Montaigne, Bacon and Locke in the place travel has in modernist thought. She astutely recognises that for early modern minds, the urge to travel was borne of a deep desire to understand the world. As such, travel and philosophy are intertwined both then and now. Thomas is correct to lament that the "philosophy of travel is not a recognised field of enquiry. There are no books on the philosophy, no university lecture courses, no conferences" (Thomas 2020: 2). If such things existed, I contend that *Gulliver's Travels* ought to feature prominently. Thomas only references Swift's satirical masterpiece in passing but does cover More's *Utopia* and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* to some degree, both of which form important inspirations for *Gulliver's Travels.* Thomas grants space for deeper consideration of Swift by recognising that being a work of fiction does not preclude a text from constituting a valuable piece of travel writing. In fact, it may well heighten the philosophical import and impact of the work. In Thomas' words:

> a novel imitating a real travel report gains credibility and depth. This makes it attractive to philosophers. If you want to build a complex thought experiment, how better than to write a fictional travel book? (Thomas 2020: 92)

Gulliver's Travels, then, as I have already argued should be understood as a philosophical meditation on travel as well as a proto-novel and satirical work lampooning the contemporary appetite for travel writing and the conventions of the genre.

Published six years before Thomas' book, one recent long form meditation of the significance of travel to political theory that reflects some of the insights amplified by this dissertation is Susan McWilliams' *Travelling Back* (2014). In particular, McWilliams offers a sweeping overview of the ways in which travel has facilitated "an intellectual process that involved both comparing particular cultures and identifying patterns and possibilities across those cultures" (McWilliams 2014: 10). In this regard, McWilliams stakes out not just a vital role for travel within the toolkit of theorization, but also demonstrates that within the kinds of thoughts summoned by travel we find the antecedents of modern comparative social science. *Travelling Back* lucidly delineates the competing interests of travel as developed throughout this dissertation; new insights acquired during travel are fundamentally ambiguous and often clash with the settled ways of the originating society. McWilliams traces currents of thought that both warn against the detachment of the traveller from his or her home and of the potential destabilising knowledge and powers that could be accrued over the course of global travel. Again, in line with the central argument of the present work she concludes that travel is "neither necessary nor sufficient on its own for the development of wisdom" (McWilliams 2014: 121). *Gulliver's Travels* outlines exactly as much in its contrasting presentation of the King of Brobdingnag and Gulliver. Following Locke's advice to travellers, McWilliams is also broadly in line with the argumentative thread expressed here when arguing that "there are some travellers who are better than others" due to their possession of "practices and habits of mind that separate them from the travelling mass" (McWilliams 2014: 47).

5.2. Travel and Otherness

The Meaning of Travel seeks to comprehend the drive and significance of the human urge to see and visit foreign lands for its own sake. This is important as it precludes discussion of travel solely for the purposes of trade or conquest. Ultimately, Thomas seeks to organize our understanding of virtues available to those who travel: increased knowledge, humility in the face of a diverse and enormous world, and an affectionate wonder at the gravitas of nature (Thomas 2020). Gulliver gains information, to be sure, but it is highly suspect that he is improved by his travels. From Lilliput to Laputa, his pride in the institutions and culture of England remain unflinching in the face of considerable comparative experiences that ought to highlight their deviant nature, until he becomes entirely misanthropic in his rejection of Europe and attempted emulation of Houyhnhnm reason. In this regard, his self-interestedness and cultural chauvinism serve to indicate the problems inherent to allowing such an ill-suited individual to travel. This is represented starkly by the enduring image of Gulliver enormous presence in Lilliput, big enough to pose a literal existential threat to the entire population and requiring mountains of food just to be satiated. Gulliver's experiences of nature come in the forms of storms, the miserable pain of old age, urination, defecation and other unseemly natural acts, and interactions with scientific projectors seeking to defy and tame nature.

Thomas correctly notes that the experience of travel as a means toward an expansion of understanding has been a perennial concern of philosophy. However, her relatively uncritical engagement with assumption that immersion in unfamiliar contexts, cultures, and places is invariably rewarding seems remarkably naïve, not least in light of Gulliver's experiences fantastical though they may be. Had Thomas considered *Gulliver's Travels* in additional detail perhaps her enthusiasm for the universally edifying effects of travel would be moderated or complicated.

Bacon's assertion that travel and science "are not yoked together in any trivial way" signals the higher purpose of experiential learning as the focal point of the empiricist goal to overturn the sacred cows of conventional wisdom. Bacon continues: "distant voyages and travels have brought to light many things in nature, which may throw fresh light on human philosophy and science and correct by experience the opinions and conjectures of the ancients" (Bacon 1964: 131). The empiricist faith in the possibility of correcting by experience is the key idea here, as this would become prominently intertwined with later liberal notions of individual improvement and the wider narrative of human progress. *Gulliver's Travels* demonstrates, however, that it is highly possible for travellers to be corrupted rather than corrected by their experiences as voyagers and that progress is not inevitable, if it is even desirable in the first place.

Writing in 1606, Sir Thomas Palmer recognised as much, arguing in his *Essay of the Meanes how to make our Travailes into Forraine Countries the more Profitable and Honourable* that travel could be useful in training citizens to be good and loyal citizens but that travel ought to be pursued differently by nobles and commoners (Hadfield 2007: 4). Palmer's advice to travelling nobles features three key points: "1. To make diligent observation of all common and accidental things. 2. To be aswel [*sic*] expert as learned. 3. To be careful to transplant what may profit their country" (Palmer 1606: 31–34 quoted in Carey 2012: 39). Common folk could not be trusted to follow such advice and their observation and transplantation of that of value that they encounter abroad would be highly suspect given their lack of preparatory education prior to embarking on their

travels. In this regard, Palmer is representative of the early empiricist movement, but does not believe that the capacity for experiential learning applies to all equally, noting the importance of social hierarchy in the usefulness of travel.

As Andrew Hadfield notes, it was, in fact, quite difficult to travel prior to the beginning of the seventeenth century as travel was tightly restricted and controlled only to European travelers that could obtain a license (Hadfield 2007: 4). This was partially to avoid the possibility of espionage but also demonstrated contemporary tensions derived from the misinterpretation and confusion that could ensue when uncharted waters and experiences were recounted through travel writing. Many travellers, it seems, could not be trusted to be sober in their assessment and "the radical conclusions which some travellers drew from their experiences were vigorously opposed by other writers" (Hadfield 2007: 4). For example, Palmer wrote in retort to works such as Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594), which attacks the purpose of travel and travel writing, using the misadventures of the Englishman Jack Wilton in Europe to highlight the twin evils of Puritanism and Popery, an agenda highly agreeable to Swift, no doubt. Thus, while the connection between travel and the expansion of human knowledge is not trivial, it is highly contingent upon who the traveller is and whether or not they are capable of reaping the benefits of their experiences.

Thomas helpfully identifies the difference between everyday journeys and travel as not merely a matter of distance, but rather "in how much otherness the traveller experiences. Everyday journeys involve just a little, whereas travel journeys involve a lot" (Thomas 2020: 5). This differs, for example, from the definition of travel offered by Paul Fussell, editor of *The Norton Book of Travel*. For Fussell, for real travel "movement from one place to another should manifest some impulse of non-utilitarian pleasure" (Fussell 1987: 21). Thomas draws upon the sixteenth-century French philosopher Michel de Montaigne's *Essays* of 1580 to generate her definition as travel determined by contact with otherness. Indeed, Montaigne emphasises that genuine travel provides opportunities to see and engage with the diversity and variety found across the world, allowing observation and experience of "new and unknown things" (Montaigne 1993: 171; 278). Overall, Montaigne argues that travel is positive as encountering otherness expands our horizon of thought and we should aspire to pursue "the characteristics and customs of the different nations, and of rubbing and polishing our wits on those of others" (Montaigne 1993: 56). Montaigne possessed sufficient confidence in the merits of travels such that he:

> should like to see a boy to be sent abroad very young; and first, in order to kill two birds with one stone, to those neighbouring countries whose languages differ most from our own, and to which the tongue cannot adapt itself if it is not trained early (Montaigne 1993: 56).

Montaigne is more generally optimistic and positive concerning the benefits of travel than either Locke or Swift, seeing early youth as a suitable time for contact with the unfamiliar to expand one's mind. Locke, of course, sees travel as beneficial as the final component of an orderly gentlemanly education. I have already indicated that *Gulliver's Travels* forms a meaningful dialogue with Locke, but we can also say with some degree of certainty that Swift was also referring to Montaigne on travel. Claude Rawson writes that "Montaigne was a natural part of the reading of any educated person of Swift's time

and cultural disposition." Irvin Ehrenpreis also acknowledges the influence of the French philosopher on the composition and thought of Swift (Rawson 1992: 335). Rawson notes that Swift read Montaigne from as early as 1704 and definitely owned a copy of the *Essays* in French from at least 1715 to the end of his life. It is not unreasonable, then, to infer that Swift provokes Montaigne's positive depiction of travel as well as his qualification that genuine travel as that which engages with otherness, as Thomas identifies (Thomas 2020: 6–7).

Without ever embracing overt relativism, Montaigne repeatedly asserts that otherness is a matter of convention and familiarity and therefore the exoticization of one group or practice from the narrow vantage point of one's colloquial perspective ought to be avoided (Thomas 2020: 6). Across four voyages to sea, initially as surgeon then as captain, Gulliver encounters a fantastical array of otherness: miniature people, massive giants, deranged scientific projectors manning a flying island, and hyper-rational horses who dominate a brutish race of humanoids. Suffice to say that *Gulliver's Travels* is designed to hyperbolically meet (and exceed!) precisely such a definition of travel. In the process, Gulliver treats his family with appalling negligence, preferring instead to travel as he is "condemned by nature and fortune to an active and restless life" (Book I, Ch. I: 15), possessed by "an insatiable desire of seeing foreign countries" (Book II, Ch. VIII: 71). Gulliver represents the dark side of travel and the stubbornness associated with unflappable faith in experiential edification even as he suffers through storms, shipwrecks, encounters with fearsome pirates, and mutiny on the high seas.

At the outset of the Voyage to Laputa, Gulliver declares himself unable to reject the prospect of returning to sea, finding his thirst for "seeing the world, notwithstanding my past misfortunes, continuing as violent as ever" (Book III, Ch. I: 141). After a mere ten days at home, Gulliver's limited capacity for better judgment is overwhelmed by the individual appetite for the novel experiences that only travel can provide. Captain William Robinson lures Gulliver back to sea with a combination of flattery, double his usual salary, and a promise "to follow my advice, as much as if I had share in the command" (Book III, Ch. I: 141). Thus, contrary to the expectations of Montaigne and of broader ideas concerning experiential education through travel, Gulliver's perspective remains mired in individual fallibility and desire for novel experience. He secures the consent of his wife only by persuading her through "the prospect of advantage she proposed to her children" (Book III, Ch. I: 141). We can take this to mean that Gulliver has to essentially sign away the vast majority of the financial windfall from this voyage to his wife and children and is content to return to sea out of wanderlust rather than a direct concern for his individual economic self-interest. It also appears that he is sufficiently disconnected from his family for his self-interest to be divergent from that of the family unit.

5.3. *Splendide Mendax*

Jonathan Lamb's *Preserving the Self in the South Seas* argues that voyaging was attractive to prospective sailors particularly because of the opportunities it provides to dislocate from the social contract and pursue private pleasures outside the realms of common sense. Lamb's work summons thoughts of the kind of person likely to thrive under such circumstances, be they swashbuckling pirates, rugged frontiersmen, or any other number of individuals better off outside of society and away from family. The

geographical and psychological distance of travel brings a sort of liberation from the limitations of societal structures. Crucially, however, Lamb details how malnourishment, vitamin deficiencies, rampant scurvy outbreaks, and hallucinations all led to sailors severely doubting their own capacity to act as credible witnesses of their own experiences (Lamb 2001: 116). Under such pressures, Lamb chronicles how navigators in the South Seas in the eighteenth century carried themselves not with the precision and confidence of the scientific method but rather toiled in the dark, spreading "ignorance before they spread trade routes and disease" (Lamb 2001: 4; 5). This highlights the disparities between the promises and realities of travel. Lamb also notes that in documenting their trips, travellers to the South Seas tended to fall back upon tropes of romantic narratives designed to titillate and evoke sentimental reactions from their readership rather than advance the cause of science (Lamb 2001: 116).

The attempt of science to discipline and utilise travel for its ends was thus frequently unsuccessful. The gulf between theory and practice seemingly extended commensurate to the variance in geographical and psychological distance experienced by the traveller. As a result, the desire of experimental science in Bacon's words to "lay the foundation, not of any sect or doctrine, but human utility and power" to fulfil the goal to "conquer nature in action" is heavily compromised by the fallibility of those who voyage and observe in its name (Bacon 1989: 16; 21). This is not to say that cartography, botany, and a great number of other fields of human understanding were not enlarged as a result of data collected by travellers, but rather to push back against the assumption that all travel invariably can and will be a valuable part of this over-arching endeavour.

Gulliver goes to great pains at the conclusion of his narrative to ensure that the reader trusts his veracity: "I could perhaps have astonished thee with strange improbable tales; but I rather chose to relate plain matter of fact in the simplest manner and style; because my principle design was inform, and not to amuse thee" (Book IV, Ch. XII: 273). As noted earlier, Swift uses Gulliver's adoption of this scrupulously matter-of-fact tone to both establish the purported verisimilitude of his travelogue, but also to satirize the expectation that travellers can be trusted at all. Leo Damrosch is not wrong to point out that "the miraculous balance between fantasy and realism" (Damrosch 2013: 360) struck by Swift contributes a great deal to what has rendered the satire compelling to readers over the centuries. However, this balance also serves to underline that travel is rather bad at living up to the expected outcomes that various projectors seek from it, be they educational, scientific, or general enthusiasts of human improvement.

It is no coincidence that Swift has Gulliver start the final chapter of the work with an appeal for travel to be used toward the end of making "men wiser and better, and to improve their minds by the bad, as well as good example of what they deliver concerning foreign places" (Book IV, Ch. XII: 272). It is also notable that this comes alongside an ironic call for sanction against those who mislead the public in their travel writing:

> I could heartily wish a law was enacted, that every traveller before he were permitted to publish his voyages, should be obliged to make oath before the Lord High Chancellor, that all he intended to print was absolutely true to the best of his knowledge; for then the world would no longer be deceived as it usually is, while some writers, to make their works pass the better upon the public, impose the grossest falsities on the unwary reader (Book IV, Ch. XII: 272).

One must question just how trustworthy Gulliver is as he doth protest far too much. This is the classic backhanded satirical admission that everything the reader has just been told is totally false. But beyond this, it also serves as a reminder that travel writers have been charlatans for as long as voyages to places near and far have been documented. According to Percy G. Adams it was not necessarily out of a commitment to veracity or scientific documentation that the information coming out of travel writing gradually became more firmly rooted in empirical fact. Rather "as time went by travellers became more and more accurate as they could more easily expose each other or expect less gullible readers" (Adams 1983: 78). The historian Anne Talbot's claim that Locke sought to use travel literature as a bank of data with which to study human social behaviour in the Baconian tradition would mark the great philosopher as such a gullible reader (Talbot 2010). Indeed, some of the material he used to substantiate claims regarding the connection of tyrannical government to cannibalism, for example, were based on fraudulent reports by either outright fakers or travellers and intellectuals who simply misunderstood their experiences (Thomas 2020: 63).

Swift's sceptical presentation of travel is also deeply rooted in the tradition of scholastic natural philosophy to view firsthand experiences as epistemologically dubious (Swann 2001: 60). Locke was not unaware of the possibility of the latter outcome, detailing as much in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, but might not have been impervious to leaning on questionable tales in the composition of his own works. Locke might have utilised such tropes simply because they were familiar to his audience and thus made for good rhetorical substance for the purposes of the grander philosophical objective at hand. If the latter were the case, it would buttress the Swiftian portrayal of travel fantasy as useful only insofar as it can be used to nudge the reader toward a greater truth, rather than as a bank of scientific data.

One gets the sense that Swift seeks to critique the predatory nature of travel writers for duping a knavish public, but only because they do so without using the format to provide genuine insight and instruction into current and perennial matters. Gulliver himself is, in the words of Alan Chambers, "a slippery paradigm a authorial embodiment, comically adrift in fierce seas that bear on him against the odds" (Chambers 1995: 129). The 1735 edition of Swift's works by the Dublin publisher George Faulkner included a portrait of Gulliver that bears far more than a passing resemblance to Swift himself. Under the portrait is the quote from Horace, "*splendide mendax*," which Swift biographer Leo Damrosch loosely translates to nobly mendacious (Damrosch 2013: 359). Brilliant liar is perhaps a more directly accurate translation, but Damrosch's point is well made nonetheless. Swift nobly lies to the reader as to the factual nature of the text, and Gulliver spreads half-truths through prideful and deluded ideas of English politics and society. The spreading of these of half-truths or untruths for a good cause is valuable, whereas deceiving readership with fictitious travel tales is purely frivolous at best and outright damaging at worst. Platonic noble lies clearly factor into Swift's satiric calculus, insofar as we can take him as viewing people as open to improvement or correction through literature and/or experience.

Shaftesbury alludes to as much in his "Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author" from *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* of 1711 by identifying that the extension of politeness is threatened by individuals' manners and disposition being harshened by a steady diet of fantastical voyager's tales featuring monsters, barbarians

and wars (Shaftesbury 2000: 153). However, he also recognises that bald facts can be most problematic to the wellbeing of readers. The enduring phrase "lies, damn lies, and statistics", popularly but probably dubiously attributed to Mark Twain, expresses this sentiment exactly. Supposed facts do not operate as a singular radiating sun that improve all who are informed of them. Indeed, Shaftesbury reminds us that "facts, unably related, though with the greatest sincerity and good faith, may prove the worst sort of deceit. And mere lies, judiciously composed, can teach us the truth of things beyond any other manner" (Shaftesbury 2000: 153). This also points toward the problem with using documentation of travel as the basis of scientific instruction. Not only is the evidence gathered by travelers highly suspect, but the degree of truth imparted by an abstract presentation of facts could also be very low and even harmfully so.

Of significance here, also, is Gulliver's claim that "a traveller's chief aim should be to make men wiser and better, and to improve their minds by the bad, as well as good example of what they deliver concerning foreign places" (Book IV, Ch. XII: 272). Insofar as travel writing can be educational, it might well have to lie to do so, and if readers are to enhance their character by reading of Gulliver's misadventures it ought to be through questioning to what benefit these travels were to Gulliver himself. If travel writing might only be of benefit by highlighting bad examples of misadventure and folly, then travel itself is clearly not a particularly edifying experience in a great number of instances. The possibility of improvement and the extension of a positive example to readers is not precluded, but that the present narrative contains a litany of woe and foolishness, the intended message ought to be clear.

Throughout *Gulliver's Travels* it is clear that the intersection of the revolutionary tendencies in science, politics, and religion are at the forefront of Swift's concern. All turn on a faith in the human capacity of perception and experiential learning. All appeal to speculative first order values that push back against that what has come before. In the case of radical dissenting Protestantism, scripture provides a firm basis upon which to build. The ambiguity of human interpretation renders this inherently unstable and prone to endless permeation and mutation, however. This dynamic energy forges a logic of permanent revolution "that push Protestant movements to reject prior versions of themselves" (Simpson 2019: 345).

My reading of *Gulliver's Travels* is that Swift does not decry all travel in all circumstances, but rather highlights the incoherence of a worldview that assumes individuals are destined to achieve self-liberation outside the guiding and limiting structures of a rigorous educational process within organic society. Ideas of travel as an emancipatory self-directed path to edification can prey upon the prideful arrogance of individuals such as Gulliver who are too weak to resist the temptations of private pleasure and indulgence afforded by voyaging abroad. Furthermore, this is nested within a wider narrative of progress that sees such individual prerogative as both inherently beneficial and an important facet of the unfurling of the singularly emancipatory power of self-directed edification. This is not to say that travel cannot be a simple pleasurable affair or even operate as precisely the type of transformative educational experience. My estimation is that Swift is highly aware of these potentialities but is resolute in his skepticism that neither the innocuous nor the transcendent is the default or mean vantage point on travel from which we ought to generalize. The dogmatic insistence that the changeability of the traveller (recognised by all who ponder the effects of travel)

correlates perfectly and invariably with the teachability of the individual toward edification remains today essentially an article of faith. Insofar as travellers are educated by their experiences, it remains as likely for their instrumental reason to be further facilitated than it is that the singular sun of illuminating reason expands their consciousness toward righteousness and virtue. This dissertation originally argues that on the question of travel, Swift's text indicts the assumption that progress (as an edifying process of change) is inevitable or necessarily something that all individuals in all circumstances can autonomously partake in.

5.4 Conclusion

The major contribution of this dissertation is to consider *Gulliver's Travels* as a book about travel, and not just a book of travel or a pastiche on travel writing. In taking *Gulliver's Travels*' presentation of travel as a matter of serious political concern, aspects of Swift's contribution to the history of political thought are cast in a new light. Understanding, for example, that the critique of modernist science is also a criticism of the ordering of travel for the purposes of data collection and objective documentation is an angle of the text little explored up to now. Most importantly, this dissertation has sought to highlight how Swift uses travel as a lens through which to open a wider critique of the centrality of individual experiential learning as proof of the inevitable march of progress.

A brief note on some potential limitations of this dissertation. There are a great many references, allegories, and allusions throughout *Gulliver's Travels*. So much so that, for reasons of space and parsimony, a substantial number of these have not been engaged and addressed in the present work. It was necessary to use my judgment in considering what to pay closer attention to, and what was interesting but not especially relevant or required in order to generate the argument identified in this dissertation. No doubt some threads that could either contribute to or detract from the persuasiveness or incisiveness of my argument have been missed or insufficiently examined. This is most likely unavoidable when dealing with a text so substantially rich in references to other material and also the source of centuries of secondary literature and commentary of every standard and from an almost impossibly wide range of vantage points. It is for this reason that the voyage to Lilliput receives considerably less analysis than do the other three voyages. The satire in Lilliput is significantly more topical and allegorical than that found in the other books and is thus less concerned with the perennial questions discussed in this dissertation. I hope that the present work has judiciously navigated the trade-offs necessary in seeking to closely engage the text on its own terms, but also comprehend and explain relevant context and criticism without excluding vital material in the name of crafting a parsimonious argument.

It is also incumbent to recognise that Swift's criticism of political ideas associated with Enlightenment and Modernist thought in *Gulliver's Travels* is primarily found in the form of the presentation of ideas that at the time of his writing had yet to congeal into the set of principles that we recognise today as liberalism. Therefore, it is important to reiterate that Swift can never be taken as an overt critic of liberalism as a coherent and articulated political philosophy or ideology. Swift is never speaking directly either to liberals or about liberalism. To suggest otherwise would be anachronistic. However, important intellectual currents such as individualism, experiential edification, and

scientific and technological optimism are thoroughly engaged throughout *Gulliver's Travels* in a fashion that does shed fruitful light on how we might think of their later political application. It is not necessarily a direct comparison in every instance, but the analytical implications are worthy of consideration.

Tocqueville recognised that the capacity to allow individuals and collectives to make repairable mistakes is an incredible privilege, infrequently known in the long arc of history (Tocqueville 2000: 216). Swift's experience of religious and political tumult implanted a firm disbelief in the possibility of the luxury of granting such license. David Runciman, professor of politics at Cambridge University, has written of how modern democracies' capacity to muddle through crises tend to generate a false confidence that no problem or crisis is too big for their institutional capacity for conflict resolution etc. (Runciman 2018: 293). This "confidence trap", as Runciman dubs it, is endemic throughout what Swift saw in emerging Modernist thought. It is not at all the case that the idea of the rational, autonomous, and self-interested individual who edifies themselves and other through experiential learning is a complete and total myth, but it is also readily apparent that this is not the reality for many if not most people in most times and places. Ultimately, while Swift can be indisputably read as an anti-pluralist conservative, criticisms of modernist currents in science and politics from this perspective found in *Gulliver's Travels* highlights ways in which ignoring Locke's advocacy for education toward freedom requires an orderly process may have rather undesirable consequences.

Swift would undoubtedly be seen as an enemy of Karl Popper's "Open Society." But, Popper, as explained by his greatest interpreter Bryan Magee:

> Regards living first and foremost a process of problem-solving he wants societies which are conducive to problem-solving. And because problem solving calls for the bold propounding of trial solutions which are then subjected to criticism and error-elimination, he wants forms of society which permit of the untrammelled assertion of differing proposals, followed by criticism, followed by the genuine possibility of change in light of criticism (Magee 1973: 74).

It is clear that for Swift, life is not about the active and continuous solving of problems, and that even if it was, Popper's transposition of the scientific method to political life ought to be troubling regardless, given the scientific project's tendency toward absolutism. Outside of the careful and prudent stewardship of human leadership tethered to tangible values, the technological imperative can easily run amok.

Throughout this dissertation I have extracted and amplified the argument made in *Gulliver's Travels* that instrumental reason is chiefly a facilitator of vice, and that it ought not to be confused with the more holistic and transcendental reason of the ancient tradition to which Swift saw himself allied to. The text offers a humble reminder for modern thought not to confuse instrumental reason for practical wisdom. In this regard, Swift can be read to offer a timely reminder that what is sometimes presented as the transparent and falsifiable process of knowledge acquisition achieved by hypothesis testing is not spared the human preponderance to faction and polarization, as has been made abundantly clear by partisan discourse around most if not all pressing problems confronting modern democracies from climate change to pandemic response. The most lucid scientific projectors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries signalled their awareness that the transparent methodology, process of falsification, and open debate

facilitated and encouraged by science would only maintain its utility if it were accompanied by codes of gentlemanly behaviour (Schleck 2012: 54). An important insight offered by Swift here is that scientific methodology divorced from prudence is always at risk of degenerating into the disastrous combination of feckless dogmatism and political tyranny of Laputa.

Despite acknowledging Swift's insight and value as a political thinker, this dissertation understands ideas concerning the capacity and potential for each individual to live a meaningful and productive life in line with their own conception of the good to be of profound merit. Modern proponents of counter-Enlightenment thought such as Patrick J. Deneen are hyperbolic[14] at best in arguing that liberalism has failed, even Swift would recognise as much. As a second-order belief system that can facilitate conflict resolution and mediation between recalcitrant first-order belief systems liberal political ideals have furnished a platform for the most prosperous and peaceful societies humanity has ever known. From a Swiftian perspective, however, it is not entirely off base to highlight how crude versions of universalist Lockean principles can ring hollow when they stray further and further from the local experience which ought to be conceived as "bound to and ultimately an expression of the universal and eternal, the divine and the sublime" (Deneen 2018: 193). Montesquieu and Adam Smith, among other more fully formed liberal thinkers of the later eighteenth century, however, already anticipated and attempted to address these problems of reconciling political individualism with a concern for the vitality of community and associations to human flourishing. Thus, long before contemporary critics on both the left and right emphasized them, liberals after Swift would endeavour to identify and address the potential pitfalls of liberalism while in the process of articulating their theories. Ultimately, Swift's value here is to highlight through the foolish optimism of Gulliver the difference between Locke's understanding of the need to balance a spirit of liberty with an orderly education toward the development of moral character and a purely naïve faith in linear progress.

I have sought in this dissertation to demonstrate how *Gulliver's Travels* can be read to present the risk in assuming that one's desires are necessarily borne of conscientious origin and therefore beyond reproach. Swift's text also highlights the risk of uncritically universalizing what may well be inherently contingent and particular, such as an individual's potential for edification through experiential learning. Swift would have seen himself as broadly in line with a type of Lockean liberalism, but one in which individualism is embedded within a firm communitarian base. In contrast, a version of Lockeanism that is more radical in its individualism and totalizing in its presentation of the inevitability of scientific and technological progress is ultimately the most profound victim of the Irishman's satirical prowess.

In *Politics Vs. Literature* (1946), George Orwell pondered if his political disagreement with Swift was sufficiently strong so as to discount the literary value of *Gulliver's Travels*. Orwell concluded that despite the rancour he took from Swift's political ideas, the text was nonetheless a valuable contribution of a particular perspective in the long arc of the raging historical struggle "between progress and reaction" (Orwell 1946). It was Orwell's position that although Swift may have been on the wrong side of history as he saw it, the anarchic imagination of his reactionary politics was simply of too

[14] A didactic tone adopted as an editorial decision to match the so-called "culture wars" of our present moment, no doubt.

high a literary quality to be discarded. He also commends Swift's sincerity as a representative of counter-Enlightenment reaction against the forces of progress. In this regard, *Gulliver's Travels* remains a captivating political text because its arguments resonate far beyond the confines of its originating context. If the perpetual question of progress versus reaction is as real as Orwell suggests, *Gulliver's Travels* offers as nuanced and prescient iteration of his side of the debate as one is likely to find. In his own lifetime Swift did agitate in intellectual debates concerning the values of ancient versus modern modes of thinking that could potentially be mapped onto the struggle imagined by Orwell, but *Gulliver's Travels* seems to suggest that any assumption of progress is nearsighted folly. This call to humility retains its potency.

It is highly ironic that many public intellectuals whom today summon the spirit of Swift in agitating for a communitarian conservatism that he might endorse do so from an explicitly Catholic perspective. Regardless of substantive overlap in criticisms of elements of what would later congeal into political liberalism, an affiliation with Catholicism would instantly disqualify anyone from consideration for anything other than a good lambasting by the fiercely partisan temperament of the good Dean of St. Patrick's. Swift was not a bridge-building compromiser, and his political vision is generally conditioned by a rather grim and pessimistic opinion of humanity. The kind of political coalition-building between groups with a core issue or two in common would be anathema to Swift. Even if he agreed on the issue at hand, two broken clocks being right at the same time of day is no basis upon which to entrust anyone with political power. His critique of Enlightenment optimism on the matter of experiential education, the potential for progress through modernist science, and political individualism are all predicated on the low ceiling he identifies for the substantial majority of real people in the real world, abstract notions of potential be damned. We might applaud his firm commitment to principle, but this position is wholly incompatible with the pluralist and inclusive society that this writer sees as a moral absolute. Swift's insights, penetrating (and frequently troubling) though they are, would require serious dilution in order to be politically actionable outside of the context of authoritarianism and thus must be condemned on that basis.

Whereas Swift's criticism of travel may point toward deeply concerning authoritarian controls over who has the ability to move freely about the world, it is also incumbent to acknowledge that a significant amount of today's travel is much more than frivolous indulgence in the name of shallow cosmopolitanism. Eighteenth-century advocates of cosmopolitanism as a pivotal facet of polite society would likely not recognise any particular benefit accrued by modern tourism, for example. The work of the economist Paul Collier indicates that while mass migration has not produced adverse effects to local populations of receiving countries. Crucially, however, he points to the likelihood of significant negative consequences for those who would be left behind in the world's poorest countries, and substantial psychological suffering for those who make the move to pursue opportunities in new lands (Collier 2015: 245). Thus, while it is unquestionably highly undesirable to roll back the liberal democratic facets of governance that make freedom of movement possible (not least for the many commercial and cultural benefits that result), it is also the case that travel is not a universal, obvious, and singular good. It can exact a toll on all involved. This is not to equivocate migration

with the type of travel for the purposes of edification under analysis in this dissertation, but rather to reaffirm that travel in general is something that ought not to be taken lightly.

Swift's vision runs contrary to Emily Thomas' rosy presentation of *The Meaning of Travel* as a pursuit through which philosophers from early modernity onwards expanded human understanding in such a fashion that renders the benefit of travel to be universal. In the anarchic and fantastic world of *Gulliver's Travels* Swift might ironically actually offer a more realistic portrayal of the edifying possibilities of travel. If travel is to constitute individual edification via experiential learning Swift demands of us to take seriously the proposition that it will only do so as the final stage of an orderly education, and the conditions for this to occur are not easily met. Nonetheless, Locke's ideas for structuring the educational properties of travel toward the positive aspects of human potential for a life of a responsible freedom informed by our reason offers both a more palatable and pragmatic approach than does Swift's overwhelmingly pessimistic vision. The Irishman's satire is radically grim in its hope for human improvement such that it makes channeling anything other than a highly regressive, restrictive, and authoritarian political agenda from the text impossible. This is not to say that *Gulliver's Travels* does not have much to offer as a striking and profound explication of counter-Enlightenment reaction to nascent Modernism, Rather, it is incumbent to acknowledge that its political character is as disturbing as it is captivating. Swift's critical presentation of the inevitability of progress and development through autonomous experiential education does, however, offers a valuable counterweight to unchecked assumptions that expanding our experiential horizons necessarily accompanies an equal expansion of our moral faculties.

In musical terms, one must thoroughly learn how to play the melody before improvising an audacious jazz solo. Of course, the latter laudably aims toward the true height of the art form but without sufficient grounding in the fundamentals of melody and technique, it will be little better than meandering cacophony. Autodidacts do exist but both the moderate perspective offered by Locke and the extreme imagery of Swift caution that generalizing to all from that basis is foolish. It is far from impossible for experiential learning to lead to the development and honing of practical wisdom but assuming this applies to a population as a whole is representative of a more naïve degraded Lockeanism than the more measured advice proffered in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. The instructive value of *Gulliver's Travels* is that it forcefully embeds one possible disastrous consequence of such a facile optimistically permissive approach to the educational properties of travel in a captivating and imaginative satire. Insofar as one is seeking to induce and/or extend their capacity as a reasonable person, travel might assist this process by remedying the ignorance that a problematically parochial existence may inculcate. However, as the King of Brobdingnag shows us, it is not impossible to be a meaningfully reasonable person without having travelled, even if one's potential as a completed gentleman will not be met. We might do well to heed the warning of seeing the shallow remedying of facile ignorance in the experience of worldliness as the extension of genuine understanding and extension of humans' rational nature. Locke teaches us that not all travel is edifying, and the conditions necessary for it to be so require conscious ordering at societal level. Thus, in the worst-case scenario outlined by *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift forces us to confront the possibility that the ignorance incurred by a parochial existence may ultimately be more desirable that the

shallow worldliness masquerading as enlightenment found in a traveller who has seen the world but has taken all the wrong lessons from their experiences.

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