

SATIRE AND THE BRITISH TRAVEL NARRATIVE
IN *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS* AND *HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY*

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ABSTRACT:

This thesis project examines the works of British travel satirist Jonathon Swift and Douglas Adams and their respective works *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* with the aim of showing that travel satire is one of the few genres that allow the reader to examine their own culture with a fresh eye. In order to contextualize the significance of the fictional travel narrative, I will first turn to be Francis Bacon's utopia, *New Atlantis* in which he uses the fictional confines of a utopia to explore how a greater influence from the sciences could affect a society. I will then use this information to explore how Swift turned Bacons ideals on their head in the Laputa section of *Gulliver's Travels*. Second, I will look at the role of the Other in the works of Douglas Adams by examining the question, what if the Other is superior? Finally, I will look at the moment of return in *Gulliver's Travels* and the *Hitchhikers'* series as a whole to examine the effects of exposing characters to the Other in travel satire.

Satire and the British Travel Narrative

In Gulliver's Travels and Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy

From the moment Britton's established a national identity, they began traveling. And from the moment Britton's began traveling, they have been writing about it. So much so that travel has become an iconic part of an elite young Britton's education. Standing counter to this movement has been a literary movement advocating learning of the outside world through books. In *The Complete English Gentleman (1729)* Daniel Defoe explores this debate:

If he has not travell'd in his youth, has not made the grand tour of Italy and France he may make a tour of the world in books, he may make himself master of the geography of the universe in the maps, atlas and measurements of our mathematicians. He may travel by land with the historians, by sea with the navigators. He may go round the globe with Dampier and Rogers, and kno' a thousand times more doing it than all those illiterate sailors (225).

Here, Defoe presents a path to learnedness that requires neither passport nor the muss that accompanies real life travel. He presents a form of travel where one can explore the seas without any chance of interacting with illiterate pirates or getting sea sick. This is also a form of travel where one is only limited in learning about particularly far away cultures by their ability to access books.

In the above passage, Defoe does not, however, mention what there is to learn from *fictional* travel accounts that were starting to become popular around the time he was writing his advice on becoming a complete English gentleman. Fictional travel accounts examine how humanity may react to certain everyday challenges or dilemmas without having to use the social constructs and limitations of the home culture or even a real culture. And oftentimes these types of texts can lead to extremely potent revelations about the travelers' home culture. I will be focusing primarily on how this freedom affected two British travel satirist Jonathon Swift and

Douglas Adams and their respective works *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Each of these authors created fictional worlds that reflected contemporary problems in and affecting British society for their everyman character to journey through to attempt to get the reader to reflect critically on their place in the world.

In order to contextualize the significance of the fictional travel narrative, I will first turn to be Francis Bacon's utopia, *New Atlantis*. In this narrative Bacon uses the fictional confines of a utopia to explore how a greater influence from the sciences could affect a society. In addition, using Defoe's line of thinking, that armchair travel can be just as valuable a learning tool as actual travel, Bacon uses the conventions of a travel narrative to set the reader at ease with the radical changes he proposed. By putting the power to guide the narrative into the hands of the Spanish explorer, Bacon is able to create a character who can not only absorb the other society, but one who is invested enough in European ideals so that the utopia is never overly othered. Moreover, by further couching this travel narrative in a narrative of colonial exploration, Bacon encourages the reader to look at the New Atlantis not only as a model but as a pool of resources to be mined. This approach not only makes Bacon persuasive, but it set the stage for many of the elements of British society that Jonathan Swift satirizes in *Gulliver's Travels*. Similar to Bacon, Swift sets up *Gulliver's Travels* as a travel narrative. However instead of asking what could be, Swift seeks to critically look at what is wrong with society. This sentiment is especially potent in the Laputa section of the book. Laputa is a place where science has been allowed to rule, unchecked by the populace. Instead of working on experiments for the betterment of society, like in Bacon, experiments are conducted for science sake. Swift's criticism is all the more powerful because he uses the same conventions of the travel narrative and merely uses satire to turn them on their heads.

Swift's introduction of the absurdity of abstract scientific knowledge as a base of power set the stage for many of Douglas Adams's own critiques of the scientific community. In *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* and *Last Chance to See*, Douglas draws on the traditions of Swift to emphasize the question that Swift implies in book four of *Gulliver's Travels*: what if the Other is superior? By asking this question, Douglas takes a very critical look at what values and skill sets make a species superior. In *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*, there are two species that are superior to humanity: the dolphins and the mice. The dolphins represent a species only concerned with serendipity and making the most out of life. The mice, which are superior to both the dolphins and the humans, represent a species who has relentlessly pursued the greater truth of "life, the universe, and everything", but whose journey ultimately ends in failure. Thus through a clear power structure is clearly outlined, the reader is left to question whether the reasoning behind that structure is correct. Douglas explored this same theme later in his career in his nonfiction work, *Last Chance to See*. Douglas sets up a poignant comparison between the "superior" humans and the endangered mountain gorillas of Zaire. This nonfiction account underscores the arguments he makes through fiction. Douglas points out how patronizing it is to assume that our way of measuring intelligence is superior since our own method of giving power to the nation with the "best" technology and the most prolific language, is incredibly arbitrary.

Finally, I will look at the moment of return in *Gulliver's Travels* and the *Hitchhikers'* series as a whole to examine the effects of exposing characters to the Other in travel satire. Travel satire embraces this moment of return as an opportunity to bring to the forefront the effects of transculturation on the protagonist and to illuminate the significance those elements of satire in the rest of the book. To examine the effects of transculturation, I will first look at the conditions under each character departed from their home to examine the baseline of normality

watch character was working with. Then I will move to an account of Gulliver's identification as more Houyhnhnm than British human that occurs when he returns home for the final time. This self-misidentification leads Gulliver to become nothing short of a revolting character. By writing Gulliver this way, Swift is dissuading his readers away from attempting to become utopian human beings, and encouraging them to become the best humans they can be given the circumstances of their reality.

In Douglas's work, the moment of return acts less as an anti-utopian moment and more of an opportunity to discuss what exactly home is to the post-colonial British person. To examine this larger question I will first examine the role tea plays as a catalyst in the first two books of the series. Then I will examine how Douglas encounter with his ancestors on the prehistoric version of earth leads to the fracturing of Arthur Dent's British and human identity. By doing so Douglas is preparing the modern Britton, for the reactions that go with modern travel. Travel where home is no more normal than abroad because normal doesn't exist anymore. Travel where abroad is quickly becoming as homogenous as home. Travel where one owes no loyalty to the country whose passport the traveler bears. The effect being that when the traveler returns home they are finally able to discover their culture for what it is and not simply as a baseline of normality. By exploring these three themes through the works of Douglas Adams and Jonathan Swift I hope to show that travel satire is one of the few genres that allow the reader to examine their own culture with a fresh eye.

I. Knowledge Sold is Knowledge Perverted: The utopian *New Atlantis* meets the satirical Laputa.

Francis Bacon is often quoted as saying “Travel, in the younger sort, is a part of education; in the elder, a part of experience,” (*Essays, Civil and Moral*). The prudent reader might add on to this by stating, in the utopian, a part of rhetoric. Why? Unlike many of the other utopias, Bacon’s *New Atlantis* is a targeted and largely practical look at how England could be improved. For Bacon this improvement comes from a shift in the power dynamic from divinely endowed kings to rational scientific societies. Critical to this power dynamic was Bacon’s choice to frame it within the form of the travel narrative. By putting the power to guide the narrative into the hands of the Spanish explorer, Bacon is able to create a character who can not only absorb the other society, but one who is invested enough in European ideals so that the utopia is never overly othered. If the utopia becomes overly othered it can become an ineffective vessel for political change especially, as Bacon is prone to do, challenges integral aspects of the home society. Bacon clearly seeks to avoid this excessive othering from the moment the Spaniards encounter the New Atlantians for the first time. Not only do the New Atlantians speak to the Spaniards in their native tongue, but they also establish the Spaniards Christianity before allowing them to land (154). By maintaining important base aspects of the social status quo Bacon is freed up to seek specific changes to the British political structure in a less threatening manner later in the text.

Evidence of Bacon’s desired power shift comes early on in the *New Atlantis* when the newly landed explorers are told the story of the founding of New Atlantis:

But when the boats were come within (about) sixty yards of the pillar, they found themselves all bound, and could go no further...so as the boats stood all as in a theatre,

beholding this light as a heavenly sign. It so fell out, that there was in one of the boats one of the wise men, of the society of Salomon's House; which house, or college ... is the very eye of this kingdom ... raised himself upon his knees, and lifting up his hands to heaven, made his prayers in this manner(159).

Though New Atlantis is very explicitly made out to be a land of Christians it isn't the "pure" Christianity of Europe, which traditionally saw science as a threat. Bacon introduces a world where science and religion coexist. Take The Society of Salomon's House; it is a name which invokes secular wisdom as much as its Old Testament namesake. This equality is apparent from the way he makes his prayer:

"LORD God of heaven and earth, thou hast vouchsafed of thy grace to those of our order, to know thy works of Creation, and the secrets of them: and to discern ... between divine miracles, works of nature, works of art... I do here acknowledge ... that the thing which we now see before our eyes is ... a true Miracle. And forasmuch as we learn in our books that thou never workest miracles, but to divine and excellent end, (for the laws of nature are thine own laws...) (159-160).

This is a highly unusual prayer for Bacon's time. The remark that "for the laws of nature are thine own laws", seeks to take scientific study out of the realm of blasphemy and into the realm of accepted practice. A practice that is not merely accepted, but marked out as an important part of society, as Salomon's house is "The very eye of this kingdom." Not only that, but other earthly pursuits, like art and nature, are elevated to something akin to a miracle from G-d. By stating the founding of New Atlantis as such, Bacon has provided the groundwork for a society where power is held by the scientist and the learned but religion is equally welcome.

The science as power dynamic also leads to new justifications for exploration. As Denise Albanese argues: "Both expeditions to Americas and scientific programs propagandize themselves as voyages.... into uncharted territory, where the sense of excitement that attaches to new ventures covers over the work of domination that underwrites exploration of the globe and nature" (506). By using the trope of the travel utopia, Bacon creates an exciting adventure for

the traveler to buy into. Thus, colonization is no longer vilified but a necessary part of discovering our true nature as humans. Albanese also points out that “it is not until they [the Spaniard protagonists of *New Atlantis*] submit themselves to superior (because systemized) order of knowledge that they gain access to what the world... keeps to itself” (521). By putting knowledge in the hands of “the other” travel becomes an all the more necessary part of the educational process. For one must visit the other to gain knowledge. Nevertheless, Bacon clearly leaves the traveler in power. It is the traveler that initiates the exchange of information. It is the always the traveler that comes out ahead in the exchange for knowledge; in *New Atlantis* the travelers are simply asked to leave after the knowledge is gained. Finally, it is the traveler that at one point will return home and disseminate the knowledge to his peers, gaining power in the process. The traveler never loses power in this equation. Bacon only asks that this search for knowledge be focused on science first and religion second.

Bacon believed that by looking for knowledge in science first and religion second, a whole host of discovery could be made for the betterment of humanity. For example, in the process of describing New Atlantian society, Bacon examines the idea of using animals for the betterment of humanity:

We have also parks and enclosures of all sorts of beasts and birds which we use not only for view or rareness, but likewise for dissections and trials; that thereby we may take light what may be wrought upon the body of man. Wherein we find many strange effects; as continuing life in them, though divers parts, which you account vital, be perished and taken forth; resuscitating of some that seem dead in appearance; and the like. We try also all poisons and other medicines upon them, as well of chirurgery, as physic. By art likewise, we make them greater or taller than their kind is; and contrariwise dwarf them, and stay their growth: we make them more fruitful and bearing than their kind is; and contrariwise barren and not generative. Also we make them differ in colour, shape, activity, many ways. We find means to make commixtures and copulations of different kinds; which have produced many new kinds, and them not barren, as the general opinion is. We make a number of kinds of serpents, worms, flies, fishes, of putrefaction; whereof some are advanced (in effect) to be perfect creatures, like bests or birds; and have sexes,

and do propagate. Neither do we this by chance, but we know beforehand, of what matter and commixture what kind of those creatures will arise (179).

Instead of looking to demons as the cause of illness, New Atlantians conduct experiments on animals in hopes of discovering how organic bodies function. As part of this process the new Atlantians also seek to create perfect creatures by breeding a variety of creatures together. Bacon sees all of these methods as purely positive applications of science aimed at curbing illness and creating a more harmonious world. This works well within the context of a utopian society, whereby the very nature of it being a utopia, things must work out for the best and all hypotheses are proven true in the end. In such a society no power structure is needed since all participants believe in that their research will better society.

However, as Swift seeks to prove in the Laputa section of Gulliver's travels, this pristine scientific way of life is not necessarily realistic. In his portrayal of Laputa Swift presents the danger of self imposed otherness that comes from putting too much faith in science. Laputa is a place where science has been allowed to rule, unchecked by the populace. Instead of working on experiments for the betterment of society, like in Bacon, experiments are conducted for science sake. Under these conditions said experiments have become so obscure that they no longer serve any purpose whatsoever ; while Bacon's utopia thrives on this "throw everything at the wall and see what sticks" method, Swift points that is this approach is a waste of finite resources. Bacon's method also leaves the elite and learned distracted, allowing for a cruel monarchy to come into power.

One satirical technique that Swift uses to demonstrate this is his portrayal of the scientist of Laputa as the grotesque Other: "Their heads were all reclined to the right , or the left; one of their eyes turned inward, and the other turned directly up towards the Zenith" (132). With

one eye turned inward and the other turned towards the sky, the scientists are incapable of observing the world around them. In addition, with heads that were “all reclined to the right, or the left,” these scientists were singular in thought towards right brain or left brain pursuits. This left the scientists incapable of the necessary act of examining anything that isn’t either wholly scientific or wholly artful. In addition, this lack of the ability to observe leaves the scientists incapable of gathering the very empirical knowledge that is so critical to the practice of science. However Swift is not setting up a binary opposition between art and science. What Swift is actually trying to get at is that truth, if it exists, can only be found by considering a variety of diverse perspectives.

Allan Bloom elaborates on why Swift considered focusing solely on the abstract to be dangerous in his essay “An Outline of Gulliver’s Travels:”

The unifying theme of all of Swifts criticism of the new science is not its external absurdity of its propositions, or its impious character, or its newness, but its partialness and abstraction from what we know about human things. Modern science represented a complete break with classical principals and methods, and Swift believed that there was a whole range of phenomena it could not grasp but which it would distort. The commitment to it, if absolutized, would destroy the human orientation (654).

Without the right technical tools humanity could destroy itself with the very science that was supposed to save it. And in fact the damage the scientist of Laputa do is palpable. By ignoring their post they let an evil king rise to power and their scientific discoveries become the king’s weapons. Yet by placing this in the context of a travel narrative Swift manages to amplify his satirical point. By making the scientists into the grotesque other, Swift manages to avoid the immediate rejection of his criticism about the scientists. In fact, by making the scientist so grotesque, even a scientist of Swift’s time would be more inclined to reject the citizens of Lagado. By getting his scientists readers to reject his caricatures, Swift gets the scientists in essence to reject themselves and their own absurd scientific practices.

This satirical rejection of Swift's scientists is in many ways just the dystopian counterpart to Bacon's utopia. Continuing along that binary of utopia and dystopia, while utopia exacts the sympathetic a dystopia brings out the grotesque. Swift seems to be well aware of this binary and its dangers which he seeks to explore the utopia/sympathetic link in book four when discussing the Houyhnhnm. What makes the Houyhnhnm truly unique, other than the fact that they are talking horses, is that they are ultimately the most sympathetic race to Gulliver. They take him in, without seeking to treat him as a pet or a tool. Thus for the first time in the narrative, Gulliver is not fighting for his own survival. This frees Gulliver up to be a much more sympathetic observer. However the sympathetic Gulliver also seems to be less objective, than the Gulliver who is running for his life. This Gulliver is so entranced by the Houyhnhnm that he even endorses yahoo enslavement. Especially in his view that the Yahoos "the most unteachable of all animals," and believes this stupidly arises "chiefly from a perverse, restive Disposition. For they are cunning, malicious, treacherous and revengeful. They are strong and hardy, but of a cowardly Spirit, and by consequence, insolent, abject, and cruel," (232). Essentially, here Gulliver is not only critiquing and rejecting the animalistic Other Yahoo, but he is also rejecting his own humanity. Gulliver's rejection of his own humanity is even more ironic because, ultimately it's something he can't escape. Gulliver is voted off the island by the Houyhnhnms because Gulliver, a reformed Yahoo, is seen as a potential threat to the Houyhnhnms rational community (244-245).

Thus, by acting as a sponge, Gulliver reveals the real danger of the sympathetic utopian dynamic, the utter loss of one's original identity. Ultimately, this set of twin binaries between sympathetic utopia and grotesque dystopia that makes much of Swift's and Douglas's satire

possible because they are conducive to revealing greater truths about humanity than fiction, satire or travel narratives could do on their own.

II. Advances in twig technology: Progress, power, and identity.

Swift's introduction of the absurdity of abstract scientific knowledge as a base of power set the stage for many of Douglas Adam's own critiques of the scientific community. However, while Swift uses it to lampoon nearly everyone from the new American colonies and the new scientific movement to his own British compatriots; Douglas draws on the traditions of Swift to emphasize the question that Swift implies: what if the other is superior?

On planet Earth, man had always assumed that he was more intelligent than dolphins because he had achieved so much- the wheel, New York and so on- while all the dolphins had ever done was muck about in the water... conversely, the dolphins had always believed that they were more intelligent than man – for precisely the same reason (Hitchhikers 105).

In this passage, Douglas aptly compares the hard working human who has created great things at the expense of his personal enjoyment to the dolphin who has created nothing and spent its days “mucking about in the water” (105). This comparison draws into question the capitalist ideals of production. When the reader is forced to step back and consider things, it seems odd that humanity is superior because it can create a city of flashing lights and an astounding disparity in wealth while ignoring the natural world. However, it would be short sided to say Douglas was suggesting humanity tear down New York and “muck about in the water” all day ,especially considering, that in Douglas's world, dolphins were only the second most intelligent species on Earth (105).

The slot of most intelligent species on Earth belongs to the mice that Douglas describes as thus “They spent a lot of their time in behavioral research laboratories running round inside wheels and conducting frighteningly elegant and subtle experiments on man. The fact that once again man completely misinterpreted this relationship was entirely according to these creatures' plans” (105). The idea that mice could be anything other than mice, and the idea that humans

might only rank third on the intelligence scale of the planet is very humorous, but disturbing to the average reader. By “conducting frighteningly elegant and subtle experiments on man” the mice have completely thrown off the continuum of intelligent species with which the reader might govern his mind (105). More interestingly, however, is how the mice supplant humanity as the supreme master of science and philosophy at the same time. By experimenting on humans they come incredibly close to discovering the ultimate question to express the confusing nature of “life, the universe, and everything.” That the mice are ultimately unsuccessful¹ is beyond the point. Instead the existence of the mice provides a critique on the most integral aspect of humanity, humanity itself. By being forced to reevaluate a supposed “inferior” species as possibly superior, the reader is forced to examine every aspect of their own species. This effect is enhanced greatly by the structure of the travel narrative, because in each situation our human protagonists are lowly foreigners in a land of the superior beings. This foreignness forces each species to grapple with their own place in the intelligence and cultural spectrum, bringing points to the attention of the reader that they might not have normally thought about on their own, a bit of author induced transculturation.

¹ In the Restaurant at the End of the Universe, Arthur and Ford travel back in time two million years and land on an early version of Earth. They discover that the Earth’s original population of Neanderthal like creatures has been overrun by a spaceship full of hairdressers and marketing executives, essentially the useless third of the planet Golgafrinccham. It becomes clear to the duo that these service workers are Arthur’s actual decedents and not the Neanderthals.

When Arthur attempts to teach one of the Neanderthals scrabble, out of sheer boredom, the Neanderthal unexpectedly spells out “forty-two”. The pair then concludes that any living being born of the planet is actually an organic component of the computer designed by Deep Thought (Which they should have remembered from earlier in their journey when the mice wanted to lobotomize Arthur to get the ultimate question from his brain). Thus they determine that the very question to the answer of “forty-two” must lie in the subconscious of the organic components. To unlock the power of his subconscious Arthur devises the idea of drawing tiles out of a bag of scrabble at random. It works and the question produced is “What do you get if you multiply six by nine,” (302). The joke is of course that six times nine is actually 54, so a correct ultimate question is never actually discovered in the course of the book.

However, after the destruction of the Earth, the mice's request for an answer, any answer adds another layer of complexity to the situation:

“We have to have something that *sounds* good,” Said Benjy [one of the mice]

“Something that *sounds* good?” exclaimed Arthur. “A question to the ultimate answer that *sounds* good? From a couple of mice? ”

The mice bristled.

“Well, I mean, *yes* idealism, *yes* the dignity of pure research, *yes* the pursuit of truth in all its forms, but there comes a point I'm afraid where you begin to suspect that if there's any *real* truth, it's that the entire multidimensional infinity of the Universe is almost certainly being run by a bunch of maniacs. And if it comes to a choice between spending yet another ten million years finding that out, and on the other hand just taking the money and running, and I for one could do with the exercise,” said Frankie (132-3)

In this passage, Arthur has still not accepted the idea that there may be another species superior to the human race. His planet has been destroyed and he has been exposed to a bewildering number of species and technologies; yet, when presented with the familiar species of the mouse, he cannot accept their superiority. Partly because they are mice, but also partly because they are willing to settle on any old answer like the occasional human scientist has been known to do. If Arthur is to hold these beings superior to him, they should be held to higher standards of behavior, much like the Houyhnhnms are in Swift's work. Instead, these superior beings have given up on finding the ultimate question in favor of monetary gain. It's well known that Adams considered himself to be a Radical Atheist², so it's hardly a surprise that the species at the top of the food chain would, after extensive research, be led to the belief that “the Universe is almost certainly being run by a bunch of maniacs”. The “bunch of maniacs” being either the forces of nature or something that is distinctly not an all powerful G-d. In fact the search for the ultimate

²In his posthumous collection of works, *The Salmon of Doubt*, there is a reprint of an interview with American Atheists in which Douglas shares why he uses the term “radical atheist” to describe himself. “I think I use the term *radical* rather loosely, just for emphasis. If you describe yourself as ‘Atheists’, some people will say ‘Don't you mean ‘Agnostic’?’ I have to rely that I really do mean *Atheist*. I really do not believe that there is a G-d- In fact I'm convinced there is not one,”(93).

question is really just a chance for making money sullies the entire thing in Arthur's mind, even more so than the fact that the answer is coming from a species he considers to be inferior.

Douglas explores this power dynamic between species further in his non-fiction work *Last Chance to See*. In this literary companion to the 1989 BBC radio show of the same name, Douglas treks around the world with zoologist Mark Carwardine in order to seek out and record various species on the brink of extinction. Douglas takes on the role of the classical protagonist traveler of a work of satirical travel fiction, but sets himself against the backdrop of the real world. Instead of using the clever power dynamic between humans and dolphins used in *Hitchhikers*, Douglas sets up a poignant one between humans and the endangered mountain gorillas of Zaire. After days of looking, with sight of naught but dung, Douglas finally encounters one of the gorillas lounging in the trees and remarks, "I began to feel how patronizing it was of us to presume to judge their intelligence, as if our standard was any way to measure," (81). Here we see Douglas return essentially to the comparison of the dolphins from *Hitchhikers*. We are presented with two species. One has used its advances in twig technology to make Gorex windbreakers and Nikon cameras (81). The other species has stuck with the original twig technology. Unlike the dolphin/human comparison though, these two species share a genetic link making them distant familiars. The text sets the reader up to think that distant familiars would at least adopt a live and let live policy and not one of culture conquest.

However, this is clearly not the case after all the only reason these gorillas make an appearance in the book is because they have been hunted to the point of extinction. The larger point however harks back to the way human's judge intelligence. "And [I] wondered about this whole business of trying to teach apes ... Our Language. Why? There are many members of our own species who live in and with the forest and know and understand it. We don't listen to them.

What is there to suggest that we would listen to anything an ape could tell us? (82)”. Aside from some very interesting bits about the post colonial British psyche, which I’ll cover in the next section, Douglas makes the point that we only actually listen to humans that speak our own language that have made equal advances in twig technology. Thus power lies in the hands of the culture that has the greatest number of cultures that speak their own language and possess the most advanced twig technology.

III. Mostly Harmless? The Traveler's Return and National Identity.

In real life, when a traveler turns home they are immediately presented with the practicalities of their pre travel life. From finding their car in the long term stay parking lot to doing much needed laundry, the first few weeks are often a return to the mundane. In travel literature, these boring bits are usually skipped over because the story often ends before the return home. Travel satire, however, embraces this moment of return as an opportunity to bring to the forefront the effects of transculturation on the protagonist and to illuminate the significance those elements of satire in the rest of the book. This is especially true for the British traveler. The British traveler is unique because Britton has one of the strongest traditions of travel literature. Travel literature was not merely just a way to record interesting things that happened on the road, it was also an essential part of a complete education as Daniel Defoe pointed out in the *Complete English Gentleman*. Thus from very early in the empire, there was a recognized need for knowledge of the other because said knowledge would make The English empire stronger. Both Swift and Douglas, through their use of satire, seek to question the assertion that the other necessarily has the answer that will better society. However before moving on to the point of return let's look at the context under which Gulliver departed, both for the first time, in his voyage to Lilliput and for the second time in his journey to the land of the Houyhnhnm's.

Gulliver spent much of his early life sailing but eventually returned home to start a family, return to practicing surgery and later to start his own business (4). After three years time, with his business failing, Gulliver sets out once again to the sea to try and make his fortune (4). Likewise when Gulliver sets out again in book four he is tempted by increasing not only his wealth but his social stature by accepting the captainship of the Adventure. In this way Gulliver

represent the kind of grand explorer Defoe suggests in *The Complete English Gentleman* and strikes out on these journeys for profit and power, by doing so Swift helps to construct part of the larger narrative of prewar English travel. A large part of that heritage was the creation of the myth that English culture represented normality. Though Swift challenges the idea of this normality in the first three books he does not seek to destroy it entirely.

Only the fourth book represents a direct challenge to everything Gulliver knows, most notably the fourth book is the only book where the dominate species does not take the form of a humanoid but is instead represented by horses, whereas the humanoid figure is reduced to the savage yahoo. This power structure reversal leaves Gulliver extremely open to the effects of transculturation. These effects become evident when Gulliver returns home to England:

As soon as I entered the house, my wife took me in her arms and kissed me; at which, having not been used to the touch of that odious animal for so many years, I fell into a swoon for almost an hour. At the time I am writing it is five years since my last return to England ... To this hour they dare not presume to touch my bread or drink out of the same cup; neither was I ever able to let one of them take me by the hand (254).

Gulliver was so affected by his time among the utopian Houyhnhnms that he has come to identify with this utopian vision of what a species can be. Gulliver believes himself to be the next best thing to perfection. Thus when confronted with the lower order of species he once was one of, his wife, he cannot help but reject this Yahoo that he has learned to hate. Also by rejecting her and his own children by not allowing them to touch him, Gulliver removes himself from the family unit. By removing himself from the family unit he takes the first step in permanently disassociating himself from his own culture.

In order not to become totally isolated Gulliver buys a pair of horses to keep him company in his old but utterly unfamiliar home:

The first money I laid out was to buy two young horses, which I keep in a good stable, and next to them the groom is my greatest favorite, for I feel my spirit revived by the smell he contracts in the stable. My horses understand me tolerably well; I converse with them at least four hours every day. They are strangers to bridle or saddle; they live in great amity with me and friendship to each other (254).

These horses only understand him “tolerably well” which suggests that the horses are far removed from the language of their heritage. Gulliver acts as a teacher to these young horses and tries to raise them as if they were in their homeland. However, despite being “strangers to bridle or saddle” they live in a human dominated society. There only ideas of home are provided by Gulliver. Thus when the horses speak to Gulliver, they are engaging in a bizarre sort of autoethnographic expression, a term coined by Mary Louise Pratt in her book *Imperial Eyes*. Pratt describes autoethnographic expression as when “colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage* with the colonizers own terms” (7). In *Gulliver’s Travels* the horses are getting to express their heritage but only on Gulliver’s (the colonizers) terms. Though they do not know the “bridle or saddle” they also don’t know what independence is. The horses only live in “amity” with Gulliver, while they are capable of living in “friendship” with one and other. Which makes sense, as it’s seems nearly impossible to be truly friends with someone who forces you to talk to them for four hours every day. But because the horses express themselves autoethnographically, Gulliver seems utterly unaware that he is not having an authentic experience and is utterly content to settle for this lesser version of a similar species.

By including this return to the homeland scene in the narrative Swift is parodying the very nature of the utopian sensibility at the end of *Gulliver’s Travels*, especially in relation to *The New Atlantis*. In the utopia of Francis Bacon there is no return to home. After all it’s impossible to return home from a place that never existed. Swift seems to be hinting that despite the utopian and superior nature of the places visited in these books the protagonist figure is

merely a tourist in an unfamiliar land. The protagonist takes in information but never stays long enough to truly understand the culture and become acclimated to it. Perhaps that is why we never see Moore's protagonist return home in Utopia, because, presumably all that we would see would be the protagonist rejecting his home culture in favor of his misinterpretation of the utopian culture. This is exactly what Swift delivers in the final chapter of *Gulliver's Travels*:

My Reconciliation to the *Yahoo*-kind in general might not be so difficult if they would be content with those Vices and Follies only, which Nature has entitled them to...But when I behold a Lump of Deformity...smitten with *Pride*...it immediately breaks all the Measures of my Patience... The wise and virtuous *Houyhnhnms* ... who live under the Government of Reason, are no more proud of the good Qualities they possess, than I should be for not wanting a Leg or an Arm...I dwell the longer upon this Subject from the Desire I have to make the Society of an *English Yahoo* by any Means not insupportable, and therefore I here entreat those who have any Tincture of this absurd Vice, that they will not presume to come in my sight (260).

It's oddly appropriate that the last words of the book inherently reject and force the reader away from Gulliver. Not only because it seems safe to assume that every reader has experienced some amount of pride at some point in their lives, but also because the very text Gulliver rejects pride in reeks with that very vice. Is it not prideful for Gulliver to be annoyed that "the Yahoo-kind" that he is very much a part of, seems to be full of vice and pride only to annoy him. It is also prideful of Gulliver to reject any of his fellow yahoos that fall into the same trap of pride, that he falls into. In terms of satire, when the audience is forced to reject Gulliver as an acceptable protagonist it allows the audience to become entirely critical of Gulliver.

When Gulliver rejects the reader and his inner Yahoo, he rejects the very idea of the human spirit. It would be incredibly easy here to equate the actions of Gulliver towards humanity with Swift's intentions for this bit of satirical prose. Samuel Holt Monk, in his analysis of one Swift letter to the Pope, really hits at the larger point Swift was trying to satirize.

Swift Argues that the man really in danger of becoming a misanthrope is he who holds an unrealistic view of the potentialities of human nature and who expects that men can somehow transcend their limitations and become... angels... he will settle for a creature that is capable of reason and will do the best he can with him... As Swift makes plain in *Gulliver's Travels*, this task is large enough to occupy the whole attention of a man. It is... stupid to attribute to our race qualities that it can never possess (635).

Ultimately by mocking Gulliver's pride at being more than human, Swift is pointing out that being good at being human is a task "enough to occupy the whole attention of a man," just as it becomes clear to the reader that Gulliver will never become a Houyhnhnms and should focus on just being a good human (635). In addition, to writers of his age like Bacon, Swift seems to be skillfully suggesting that they abandon these utopian flights of fancy and call attention to the fact that the betterment of the human race, within its capacity, is all they should be encoring their readers to do in the first place.

In *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* this moment of return is somewhat more problematic as, technically speaking, Arthur's true home is destroyed by the Vogons in the early chapters of the book. At the end of the first book, Arthur goes to Magrathea and has the option of seeing the 2.0 version of the earth but refuses to saying that it wouldn't quite be the same. In the second book, *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*, Arthur finds himself stranded on a prehistoric version of the earth and finds himself face to face with his unlikely ancestors. The third book, *Life, the Universe and Everything*, opens with Arthur still stranded on prehistoric earth, but due to a highly improbable string of events ends up on the now peaceful planet of Krikkit. The vast majority of the fourth book, *So Long and Thanks for all the Fish*, takes place on the replacement earth provided by the dolphins and seems to act as a "home coming moment" for Arthur. This is of course, blown to bits in the last book of the series, *Mostly Harmless*, when earth is permanently removed from all points of probable existence. From this summary two things are

clear. First, those looking for some sort of continuity within the series will not find it, *ever*³. But more importantly is the fact that Douglas seems to be obsessed with the idea of what exactly home is. The fragments we are left with seem to suggest very interesting things about the Post-Colonial British travelers mind. For the sake of this exploration I'll be limiting the scope to the first two books in the series.

To get a better idea of what were supposed to get from Arthur's moment of return, it seems important to look at the moments surrounding his moment of departure. The first book in the series, *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, opens with Arthur lying in the mud in front of his home in front of a bulldozer trying to prevent his house from being destroyed to make way for a bypass. This event is rather nicely paralleled in the fact that by the end of the third chapter the macro version of Arthur's home, the earth, is destroyed by the Vogons in order to make way for a hyperspace bypass route. The events leading up to both homes being destroyed is also quite similar. For instance the plans to build the bypass in both cases were hidden from the residents. In Arthur's case that meant that the plans had been left in the basement of the display department "in the bottom of a locked filing cabinet stuck in a disused lavatory with a sign on the door

³ Those needing further proof of this point should really read "An Introduction to the Guide: Some Unhelpful Remarks from the Author" in *The More Than complete Hitchhikers Guide*. Douglas starts out by saying that "The history of *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* is now so complicated that every time I tell it I contradict myself, and whenever I do get it right I'm misquoted. So the publication of this omnibus edition seemed a good opportunity to set the record straight – or at least firmly crooked. Anything that is put down wrong here is, as far as I'm concerned, wrong for good," (VI). Douglas goes on to give a brief history of how he came up with the idea (drunk in a field while backpacking as a college student) and how it came into eventually came into being in a multitude of media forms. Douglas blames most of the inconsistencies in the various texts on the episodic writing form of radio. "Writing episodically meant that I had no idea about what the next episode would contain. When, in the twists and turns of the plot, some event seemed to illuminate things that had come before, I was as surprised as anything else," (viii). Douglas even admits that as the radio show grew to cover a variety of formats "each time with a different storyline that even its most acute followers have become baffled at times," (ix).

I also feel the need to note that Douglas includes a handy guide for leaving the planet. While amusing the phone numbers listed don't work. It seemed only fair to save anyone who's hung on through this hideously long footnote some very expensive long distance phone calls.

saying ‘beware of the leopard’” (10). In earth’s case the situation played out in the form of an announcement from the Vogon captain:

People of Earth, your attention please.... As you will no doubt be aware, the plans for developing the outlying regions of the Galaxy require the building of a hyperspatial express route through your star system, and regrettably your planet is one of those scheduled for demolition. The process will take slightly less than two of your earth minutes. Thank you.... There’s no point in acting all surprised about it. All the planning charts and demolition orders have been on display in your local planning department in Alpha Centauri for fifty of your Earth years, So you’ve had plenty of time to lodge any formal complaint and it’s far too late to start making a fuss about it now.... What do you mean you’ve never been to Alpha Centauri?I’m sorry but if you can’t be bothered to take an interest in local affairs that’s your own lookout’ (25-26).

In a pre-warp speed society earth had zero chance as opposed to Arthur’s tiny chance of actually being able to access the documents that would help to save home. To Arthur, home is something that has violently been ripped away from him with little warning. He is quite literally left to bounce around in the void of space. With this moment Arthur joins the ranks of what MacCannell in his book, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, calls the “other tourist” (xi).

The other tourist includes groups like refugees and other displaced peoples that started to emerge in mass after WWII. It at first seems curious that Douglas would seek to put Arthur who is very much the prototypical Britton in with this group. However in the context of post-colonial British literature it makes sense. After WWII when Britton lost most of her colonies there was a sense of loss not only of land but of the cultures Britton had adopted through nearly a century of transculturation. Also at the end of WWII there was a flood of immigrants to the UK from countries that had been utterly destroyed by the war. It was as if the very idea of British identity was lying in front of a bulldozer waiting to be crushed to make way for a more global sense of

identity. Thus the destruction of Arthur's home and planet represent a symbolic manifestation of those fears.

It would make sense then that the element of catalyst surrounding his return "home" would have to be something quintessentially British. Something that could appear several times in an innocuous form before being the catalyst for the Heart of Gold's failure. It would have to be something like tea. The first off world interaction with "tea" is when Arthur first encounters the Nutri-Matic machine. The machine is supposed to examine one's taste buds and produce an individualized drink perfectly suited to the tastes of the user. Like most of the technology in Arthur's new found universe it doesn't work. The machine produces a liquid that is "almost, but not quite, entirely unlike tea," (83). When Arthur drinks the result he merely "finds it reviving" and turns his attention back to the action. At this point he is simply too shell shocked to confront his past. In fact by the end of the book all the shell-shocked Arthur can do when confronted with the copy of his home planet is to reject it and keep moving. Very much like post war Britton just tried to move on and pick up the pieces.

However, once we reach the second book in the series Arthur is significantly less shell shocked and begins to long for home and more importantly, tea. After having grown impatient with the poor imitation of tea that the Nutri-Matic machine has been producing Arthur finally erupts at it:

"No," he said, "look, it's very, very simple ... all I want ... is a cup of tea. You are going to make one for me. Keep quiet and listen." And he sat.

He told the Nutri-Matic about India, he told it about China, he told it about Ceylon. He told it about broad leaves drying in the sun. He told it about silver teapots. He told it about summer afternoons on the lawn. He told it about putting in the milk before the tea

so it wouldn't get scalded. He even told it (briefly) about the history of the East India Company.

.....

"You want the taste of dried leaves in boiled water?"

"Er, yes. With milk."

....

"I'm going to need some help on this one"...

"Well anything I can do," Said Arthur.

"You've done quite enough"... it summoned the ships computer. (Adams, *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe* 155-156)

In describing tea to the Nutri-Matic machine Arthur evokes nearly every symbol associated with the colonialism that was largely fueled by England's need for tea. By telling the computer about "India and China" images of the good old days in the British colonies are evoked (155-6). "The East India Trading Co." refers to a time where Britton ruled not only land, but the sea (155-6). And "silver tea pots" could be an invocation of England's Middle Eastern colonies. Thus when the computer quips "You've done quite enough" it not only refers to the literal tying up of the ships resources to produce one cup of tea for Arthur, leaving the ship vulnerable to Vogon attack (156-158). The quip also refers to the damage Arthur's romanticized colonial past did to the rest of the earth. And as a result of the computers being tied up making tea, the rest of the events in *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe* are set off.

These events conclude, in Arthur and Ford's case, with their landing on a pre-historic earth as part of a Golgafrinccham Ark fleet ship. Arthur and Ford are of course entirely unaware of this at first. The only thing they know is that they've been trapped on a planet in an unfashionable backwater of the galaxy, and there's no one around to hitch a lift off of. So in their

attempts to find a signal they set off exploring this new planet. Within a short amount of time, however, it becomes apparent that the planet they are on is in fact a prehistoric version of the earth. Arthur has a bit of a hard time coping with this:

‘Can you imagine what a world would be like descended from those... Cretins we arrived with’ he [Arthur] said.

‘Imagine... we don’t have to imagine. We’ve seen it... there is no escape... Put that Scrabble away, Arthur... it won’t save the human race, because this lot aren’t going to be the human race. The human race is currently sitting around a rock... making documentaries about themselves.

‘There must be something we can do’... A terrible sense of desolation thrilled through his body that he should be here, on Earth, the Earth which had lost its future in a horrifying arbitrary catastrophe and which now seemed to lose its past as well (302-303).

Arthur is utterly dejected to find out that his ancestors are not the cavemen living in a virtual Eden but the group that’s “sitting around a rock... making documentaries about themselves” (302-303). It seems very much akin to the moment a teenager studying history must have when they realize that their ancestors helped to kill off the native peoples of their land instead of taking what was theirs by divine providence as they had been taught in primary school. Or the moment Gulliver had when he realized he was much more of Yahoo decent than of Houyhnhnms decent. Except in Arthur’s context not only has he lost this idealized vision of his past, but he has lost all sense of an “earth man” identity because in his place in the time-space continuum earth does not exist. In fact the fragmented modern identity of “Arthur” no longer exists because nearly every one of those fragments has been vaporized by the facts of his situation. Arthur does his best to reconcile this by first throwing *The Guide* into a river and then stating “I’m very ordinary... but, some very strange things have happened to me. You could say I’m more differed than differing.” (309). Like Gulliver, Arthur has been completely altered by his journey. So what is the audience supposed to gather from Arthur’s estrangement from his own identity?

In actuality it seems the critique Adams is offering us is not a critique of the British man's identity but of the identity of the modern British travel writer. Fussell states best what Douglas is reacting to in his book *Abroad: British Literary Travel Between the Wars*:

There seems to be something uniquely British here, in this ability to spot anomalies and make a travel book by accumulating a great number of them. There is a supreme confidence that one knows what is "normal" and can gauge an anomaly by its distance from the socially expected. Perhaps, as Hilton Kramer suggests, it's the long British imperialist tradition that supplies the British literary traveler with confidence. Perhaps it's the homogeneity of British culture.... Whatever the reason, it is an unquestioned understanding of the norm and an unapologetic loyalty to it that underlies the perceptual... techniques of the British travel book (170).

Douglas is inherently rejecting the brave; know it all travel writers who can only comment quaintly at the differences between cultures because that sort of travel writing cannot function in a post colonial society. Douglas is preparing the modern Britton, for the reactions that go with modern travel. Travel where home is no more normal than abroad because normal doesn't exist anymore. Travel where abroad is quickly becoming as homogenous as home. Travel where one owes no loyalty to the country whose passport the traveler bears. Essentially travel that is so topsy-turvy that all the traveler can do is hang onto their towel and enjoy the ride.

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