The Allegory of Luggnagg and the Struldbruggs in *Gulliver's Travels*

By Robert P. Fitzgerald

MUCH has been done in the last fifty years to identify the contemporary personages, events, and institutions that Swift presented in an allegorical way in *Gulliver's Travels*, particularly in Parts I and III. Because of the work of such scholars as Sir Charles Firth, Arthur Case, Marjorie Nicolson and Nora Mohler we have come to see how closely Lilliput resembles the England of Queen Anne; and how in Part III the Flying Island, Balnibarbi, and Lagado are satirical representations of the English court, Great Britain, and London in the reign of George I.[1] Specific parallels between such things as the peace that Gulliver brings about between Lilliput and Blefuscu and the peace brought to England and France by the Treaty of Utrecht, between the rebellion of Lindalino and the resistance of the Irish to Wood's half-pence, between the Academy of Lagado and the Royal Society are of considerable value in understanding Swift's method of composition and the objects of his satire.

The purpose of this paper is to show that the allegorical approach can also be rewarding when used to interpret the voyage to Luggnagg

[1] Sir Charles Firth, "The Political Significance of Gulliver's Travels," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, IX (1920), 237-59; Marjorie Nicolson and Nora M. Mohler, "The Scientific Background of Swift's 'Voyage to Laputa,'" *Annals of Science*, II (1937), 291-334 and "Swift's Flying Island in the 'Voyage to Laputa,'" *Annals of Science*, II (1937), 405-30; Arthur E. Case, "Personal and Political Satire in *Gulliver's Travels*" in *Four Essays on Gulliver's Travels* (Princeton, 1945). The chapter "Gulliver" in Irvin Ehrenpreis's *The Personality of Jonathan Swift* (London, 1958), is also valuable on allegory.

in Part III, especially the most famous episode in the voyage, Gulliver's discovery of the Struldbruggs, or Immortals. Gulliver is "struck with inexpressible Delight" when he learns that some of the natives of Luggnagg are born to eternal life.[2] He warmly speculates upon the course he would follow if he were a Struldbrugg—to the amusement of his interpreter, who explains that the Immortals have no perpetuity of youth, health, or vigor, that they forever have to endure the disabilities of extreme old age, that in Luggnagg they are pitied and despised rather than envied. Gulliver's disillusionment with the chimera of immortality has usually been taken to be the point of this episode. And Swift's own fear of old age, the homiletic tradition on earthly and heavenly immortality, the myth of Tithonus, and actual examples of "long livers"—these have variously been seen as the inspiration for the episode and some of its details.[3] But an unraveling of the allegory of the voyage to Luggnagg will show, I believe, that Swift had something much more concrete in mind than general satire on the desire for eternal life. Drawing upon his own experience and reading, and probably upon the experience of some of his friends in the Tory Brotherhood, he represented by Luggnagg the France of Louis XIV, and by the Struldbruggs the French Academy, that enduring institution whose members are still called "the Immortals."

We may begin with geography. Gulliver visits in Lagado, generally accepted as an allegorical representation of London. He intends to get back to Europe by going to Luggnagg and then to Japan, where he hopes to find passage on a Dutch trading ship. Leaving Lagado, he travels to a seaport on the coast of Balnibarbi (*i. e.*, Great Britain) called Maldonada, which "is about as large as *Portsmouth.*" (p. 193) No ship being ready to sail for Luggnagg, Gulliver takes an excursion to Glubbdubdrib, an outlying island "about one third as large as the

[2] *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford, 1959), p. 207. Further references in the text are to this edition.

[3] See, for example, the following: J. Leeds Barroll III, "Gulliver and the Struldbruggs," *PMLA*, LXXIII (1958), 43-50; R. G. Geering, "Swift's Struldbruggs: the Critics Considered," *AUMLA*, VII (1947), 5-15; S. Klima, "A Possible Source for Swift's Struldbruggs?" *PQ*, XLII (1963), 566-9; Leland D. Peterson, "On the Keen Appetite for Perpetuity of Life," *ELN*, I (1964), 265-7. Geering has a good review of previous scholarship.

Isle of Wight." The Isle of Wight is in fact off Portsmouth, which in Swift's time was an important naval base and harbor. After his return from Glubbdubdrib, Gulliver makes his voyage to Luggnagg, arriving "in the river of *Clumegnig*, which is a Seaport Town," the ship being piloted to a "large Basin" close to the walls of the city. The capital of Luggnagg, like Paris, is some distance inland. Gulliver's journey then could roughly correspond to a journey from London to Paris by way of Portsmouth and some French port, probably Le Havre, which like Clumegnig was on an estuary and which was famous for its *bassins à flot*, that is, its wet docks or inner harbors.[4]

What Gulliver tells us about the Luggnaggians could apply to the general reputation of the French and to the hospitality and support given by Louis to James II and his followers: "a polite and generous People, and although they are not without some Share of that Pride which is peculiar to all *Eastern Countries*, yet they show themselves courteous to Strangers, especially such who are countenanced by the Court." (p. 207) But more concrete evidence that we are in France is given by the manners of the Court of Luggnagg. Audiences are governed by a kind of servile and grotesque etiquette, the petitioner having to crawl on his belly and lick the floor as he approaches the throne. Sometimes dust is purposely strewn on the floor, thus rendering the suppliant speechless, it being "capital for those who receive an Audience to spit or wipe their Mouths in his Majesty's Presence." (p. 205) The Court is a dangerous place, for the dust is sometimes poisoned, this being "a gentle indulgent Manner" of putting a noble to death. But the King is "gracious," and forgave a page who had caused the poisoning of "a young Lord of great Hopes" by maliciously neglecting to wash the floor after one execution. The actual servility of the Court of Louis XIV and the elaborate codes that governed all aspects of behavior for the courtier are sufficiently documented in such works as the memoirs of Dangeau and Saint-

[4] For a map and description of the *bassins*, some of which go back to the seventeenth century, see the articles on "Le Havre" in Larousse's *Grand Dictionnaire Universel du XIX^e Siècle* and *La Grande Encyclopédie*. Le Havre was a common port of entry for English travellers (William E. Mead, *The Grand Tour in the Eighteenth-Century* [Boston, 1914], p. 214).

Simon. The theme of poisoning can also be related to affairs in France. In 1712 the sudden deaths of the Duc de Bourgogne, his wife, and son shocked the French aristocracy. Grandson and heir to Louis, Bourgogne was a popular and accomplished prince. Because of the mysterious nature of their illness (probably a form of scarlet fever), there was an almost universal belief that they were poisoned, the crime usually being attributed to the ambitions of Phillipe, Duc d'Orleans, nephew of the King and later Regent of France. Louis refused to believe in the guilt of Phillipe, who can in this way be seen as a possible model for the "page" who was treated graciously by the King of Luggnagg.[5]

Such parallels are perhaps not in themselves convincing, but their probability is greatly increased by one detail which very particularly points to Louis XIV. The seal on the letter that the King gives Gulliver has the impression "*A King lifting up a lame Beggar from the Earth.*" (p. 216) One of the consistent policies of Louis throughout his reign was to advance the fortune and status of his bastards. He had them declared legitimate and in 1714, in spite of the resistance of the nobility, had the Parliament of Paris ratify his wish that the Duc de Maine and the Comte de Toulouse be put in the line of succession to the throne. Maine was a favorite not only of Louis but also of his wife Madame de Maintenon, who was sometimes thought to be scheming to insure Maine's place after his father's death. And Maine had been lame from birth. He is surely "the lame Beggar" whom the King had lifted up from the earth, from illegitimacy to the point where he might become ruler of France.[6]

To turn now to the Academy. The chief source for its early history is Pellisson's *Histoire de l'Académie Françoise jusqu'en 1652* (1653). Pellisson tells us that in 1629 a group of prominent and learned Parisians began to meet to discuss topics of the day, literature, and their own compositions. Cardinal Richelieu suggested that they form an association under his protection, and in 1635 Louis XIII issued letters patent for the company, to be known as *l'Académie Françoise.*

[5] For the deaths and the reaction against Orleans, see *the Mémoires de Saint-Simon*, ed. A. de Boislisle (Paris, 1879), XXII, 272-9, 298-304, 367-71.

[6] An entertaining account of the life of Maine is given in W. H. Lewis's *The Sunset of the Splendid Century* (New York, 1955).

The Statutes and Regulations originally adopted by the Academy give an idea of its nature and purpose. Meeting weekly its forty members were to work to give exact rules to the French language and to make it capable of treating the arts and sciences. In particular they were to compose a Dictionary, a Grammar, a Rhetoric, and a Poetics, following the practice of the best authors, whose diction and phrases were to be noted as models. The impression on the Academy's counterseal, *A la Immortalité*, reflected the ambitions of its founder and inspired the epithet used to describe its members. From the beginning the Academy was subject to attack. Pellisson surveyed and discussed some of the early satires, noting that in general they presented the Academicians as working night and day to invent new words and suppress others, more by caprice than reason, and ignoring the dictates of usage.[7] In the reign of Louis the Academy became a more prestigious and productive institution than in its early years. It was given a meeting place at the Louvre, members were compensated, and the Dictionary, after long delays, was published in 1694. However, satires continued. The seventy-third of Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (1721) shows some of the common ways of ridiculing it: the Academy is the least respected tribunal in the world; no sooner does it make a ruling than the people break it and force the Academy to conform. Some time ago it issued "a code of its judgments [*i. e.*, the Dictionary] . . . almost old before it was born." The members have nothing to do but "chatter without end." Eulogy is the subject of their "eternal babel." It was said formerly that its hands were "greedy" (probably a reference to Chapelain, the guiding spirit of the early Academy, who had a reputation for extreme avarice). It is a "singular and bizarre institution."

A close reading of the description of the Struldbruggs suggest that Swift meant them to represent the Academy, that he was writing in

[7] Paul Pellisson-Fontanier and Pierre Joseph Thoulier, Abbé d'Olivet, *Histoire de l'Académie française*, ed. C. L. Livet (Paris, 1858), I, 52. D'Olivet brought the *Histoire* up to 1700 (but his continuation was published after *Gulliver's Travels*). The following are also useful for the Academy: Antonin Fabre, *Chapelain et Nos Deux Premières Académies* (Paris, 1890); Frederic Masson, *L'Académie Française 1629-1793*, 2nd edition (Paris, 1912); and D. Maclaren Robertson, *A History of the French Academy 1635-1910* (New York, 1910).

the tradition of satire and ridicule against it. The chief method of his satiric presentation was to take its motto literally, to give the Struldbruggs actual immortality. The nature of the Academy made this twist peculiarly applicable, for as a body it was in a sense immortal, always with forty members, and, at least to the satirist's eye, not particularly changing as the individual Academicians died and were replaced. The loss of youth and vigor is also apt: the Academy, without provision for retirement, becoming, as the years went on, a group of old men. Swift's other joke is to treat the letters patent and the Statutes and Regulations as laws designed by the state to deal with the inconvenient and potentially dangerous phenomenon of Immortality. Swift sometimes changes his ground—speaking at times of the lives of individual Academicians, at other times of the Academy as a body. But almost all of the details are very concretely taken from its history and customs.

The implications of the initial remarks of Gulliver's informant are easily interpreted: "He said these Births were so rare, that he did not believe there could be above Eleven Hundred *Struldbrugs* of both Sexes in the whole Kingdom, of which he computed about Fifty in the Metropolis, and among the rest a young Girl born about three Years ago. That, these Productions were not peculiar to any Family, but a mere Effect of Chance; and the Children of the *Struldbruggs* themselves, were equally mortal with the rest of the People." (p. 207) The Fifty are, of course, the Forty, and membership was elective, not hereditary. In the last half of the seventeenth century many provincial academies were founded in France, some of which sought letters patent comparable to those of the French Academy and active association with it.[8] Thus, the many *Struldbruggs* outside of the capital. Although no woman has ever been elected to the Academy, there were, in contemporary France, *académiciennes*. The Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture included a set number of female members. The poetess Madame Deshoulières was elected to the patented Academy at Arles. Also there were throughout the century "academies" or "societies" in which women played an important part, the *femmes savantes* or *précieuses* whom Molière, among others, satirized.

[8] Masson, pp. 211-23.

After Gulliver celebrates the theoretical virtues of Immortality, he is given a more particular account of the Struldbruggs: "He said they commonly acted like Mortals, till about Thirty Years old, after which by Degrees they grew melancholy and dejected, increasing in both till they came to Fourscore. This he learned from their own Confession." (pp. 211-12) In this and other passages Swift uses the age of eighty (the natural limit of mortal life in Luggnagg) to mark the time, 1635, when the informal group became the patented Academy, when its Immortality was licensed and sealed. The reference to dejection derives from Pellisson, from his "confession," which tells us that the first members looked back fondly to the period when they had met informally, seeing it as "a golden age," "with no laws other than those of friendship," all of this lost after Richelieu's official patronage.[9] The theme of gradualness may refer to the resistance of the Parliament of Paris to registering the letters patent, something it did only under great pressure two years after the patent was issued.

Like Montesquieu's Academicians, the Struldbruggs are "opinionative, peevish, covetous, morose, vain, talkative." They are "dead to all natural Affection, which never descended below their grandchildren." (p. 212) Swift may be punning here. In 1663 Louis' minister Colbert appointed a commission of four Academicians to work on medals and inscriptions, the small group being known as "la petite Académie." The Academy was resistant to the associations pressed upon it by the provincial academies.[10] The point is that it could get along with its own grandchild (*petite-enfante*), with the *petite Académie* made up of its own members, but not with other Academies.

"Envy and impotent Desires, are their prevailing Passions. But those Objects against which their Envy seems principally directed, are the Vices of the younger Sort, and the Deaths of the old. By reflecting on the former, they find themselves cut off from all Possibilities of Pleasure; and whenever they see a Funeral, they lament and repine that others are gone to an Harbour of Rest, to which they themselves never can hope to arrive." The early Academy spent most of its time listening to and criticizing discourses on such topics

[9] Pellisson, I, 9.

[10] Masson, pp. 212-20.

as "The differences and the similarities between love and friendship," "Against love," "Of spiritual love," and of "physical love";[11] also, the first important work it produced, *The Sentiments of the French Academy on the Tragi-comedy* THE CID (1637), involved discussion of the suitability of the passions and motivations of the lovers Chimène and Rodrigue. Thus, the concern with love, that vice of the younger sort—particularly apt in relation to *The Cid*, for the Academy was seen by some to be envious of Corneille, and it did not derive much "pleasure" from the play that had enjoyed such a popular success in France. The Academy was very prolific in the production of eulogies on great men and its own members. Richelieu's death was richly commemorated; and it became the custom not only to deliver an *oraison funèbre* at the funeral of a member but to have his replacement deliver a eulogy on the day of reception.

"If a Stuldbrugg happens to marry one of his own kind, the Marriage is dissolved of Course by the Courtesy of the Kingdom, as soon as the younger of the two comes to be Fourscore." The reference here probably concerns the famous *salon* at the Hôtel de Rambouillet presided over by the Marquise and her daughter Julie. Some of those men who were to become the first Academicians were prominent in attendance at the Hôtel.[12] The Academy was "the younger of the two" institutions, the *salon* having been opened in 1618. Swift's point is that after the foundation, "by the Courtesy of the Kingdom," the members, at least in their official meetings, no longer had the feminine companionship that they had formerly enjoyed.

Some of the details specifically derive from the Statutes and Regulations.[13] After the Struldbruggs become eighty, they are "held Incapable of any Employment of Trust or Profit." (p. 213). Articles 21 and 22 forbade any discussion of religion, or of morality and politics, except in conformance with the laws of the state and the authority of the Prince. "They cannot purchase Lands, or take

[11] Pellisson, I, 76.

[12] The many references to the Hôtel in Pellisson are noted in the Index, under "Hôtel de Rambouillet," "Marquise de Rambouillet," and "Duchesse de Montausier" (the Marquise's daughter).

[13] The Statutes and Regulations are in Pellisson, I, 489-97. Pellisson did not originally list them but discussed them at length (I, 55-71).

Leases." The theme is ownership. If a member did not submit a work to his fellows for approbation, he could not in the printed text identify himself as an Academician, could not, in this sense, "own" it; and even if he received an approbation, he could not print it with the work. "Neither are they allowed to be Witnesses in any Case, Civil or Criminal, not even for the Decision of Meers and Bounds." Article 46 stated that except under certain conditions no member should answer an attack on the Academy or write anything in its defence. Swift probably had a particular instance in mind. In 1684 the member Furetière received a license to publish an encyclopedia. Having the exclusive right to the Dictionary, the Academy came to believe that he had infringed upon their province, their "Meers and Bounds," and had stolen some of their work to use in his own. After being expelled, Furetière spent the rest of his life attacking the Academy and adjustifying his actions. The Academy, following the Statute, refused to reply.

The next section describes the labor on the Dictionary.

> At Ninety . . . they have . . . no Distinction of Taste, but eat and drink whatever they can get . . . .In talking they forget the common Appellation of Things, and the Names of Persons . . . . For the same Reason they never can amuse themselves with reading, because their Memory will not serve to carry them from the Beginning of a Sentence to the End . . . . The Language of this Country being always on the Flux, the Struldbruggs of one Age do not understand those of another; neither are they able after two Hundred Years to hold any conversation (farther than by a few general Words) with their Neighbours the Mortals.

Suffice it to say that according to the Statutes the Academicians were supposed to note the phrasing and diction of classic French authors (nothing was said about reading them), they reported on the difficulties of defining such words as *ami*, they excluded proper names from the Dictionary, and they were often satirized for not following contemporary usage. This is a particularly clever adaptation on Swift's part of the general ills of senility to represent the labors of the Academy.

Gulliver later meets some of the Immortals. "They had not the least Curiosity to ask me a Question; only desired I would give them *Slumskudask*, or a Token of Remembrance." When Colbert reformed the Academy, he instituted the custom of distributing tokens, *jetons*

de présence, to every Academician present at a meeting, the value of the *jeton* being shrewdly calculated to insure attendance but not so lucrative as to make membership attractive to courtiers. "When one of them is born, it is reckoned ominous, and their Birth is recorded very particularly; so that you may know their Age by consulting the Registry, which however hath not been kept above a Thousand Years past, or at Least hath been destroyed by Time or publick Disturbances." All this is very specific. By the end of the century, the reception of a new member was an elaborate affair, with guests, orations, and a public signing of the Registers. The early Registers, to which Pellisson had access, were in fact lost after his disgrace and imprisonment in 1661. For those whose records are lost, "the usual Way of computing how old they are, is, by asking them what Kings or great Persons they can remember, and then consulting History; for infallibly the last prince in their Mind did not begin his Reign after they were Fourscore Years old." (pp. 213-14) Article 2 of the Statutes described the seal of the Academy, the impression being the face of Richelieu—"of which seals the impression may never be changed for any reason whatsoever." That is, the only "great Person" the Academy remembers is the one who was ruling France in 1635.

One final parallel: when Gulliver considers taking a couple of Immortals back to his own country, he discovers that it "is forbidden by the fundamental Laws of the Kingdom." The custom of the Academy (not always followed) was that members should reside in or near Paris, so as to be able to take part in the deliberations. On these grounds Corneille, for example, was rejected on his first candidacy.

Only one detail in all of the description is difficult to explain. An Immortal is marked at birth by a red circular spot on his forehead, the spot as he grows older becoming larger and changing successively in color to green, blue, and black. The colors and their change (about which no one has ventured an explanation in print) can not be obviously related to the customs of the Academy, although here, in the light of the other evidence, we are probably victims of Swift's ingenuity.

Why did Swift so energetically and ingeniously work out the satire

on the Academy? And is there any point in his portrayal of Gulliver's enthusiasm and subsequent disillusion? Answers to these questions are to be found by following the implication of previous studies of the allegory of *Gulliver's Travels*, that in writing his great work Swift's imagination was primarily moved by the history of the last years of Queen Anne and the first years of George I, years in which his own career paralleled the rise and fall of the Tory party. In the days of Tory power Swift hoped that his services would be rewarded with a secure and prestigious post in England. Two of his attempts to achieve it are relevant: he aspired to be a member of an endowed English Academy; and he wanted to succeed Rymer as Historiographer Royal. As Henry W. Sams has shown, these two possibilities were linked in Swift's mind, particularly in his belief that an Academy would encourage the writing of an enduring history of the accomplishments of Harley, a history that Swift would presumably have written if he had been appointed Historiographer.[14] The significance of Gulliver's behavior with the Struldbruggs is to be found in Swift's experience with his proposed Academy.

In 1712 Swift printed, in the form of a letter to Harley, *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue.* The *Proposal* argued that any language tends to follow a cycle of change and decline because of the effects of war, conquest, degenerate courts, and affected manners. English suffered a particular kind of corruption because its speakers, reverting to the barbarity of their northern ancestors, had the habit of emphasizing and preserving harsh consonants rather than liquids and vowels. Half seriously, Swift suggested that to counter this the English might well follow the practice of women, who, more alert to "politeness" than men, discard consonants rather than vowels: "So that if the Choice had been left to me, I would rather have trusted the Refinement of our Language, as far as it relates to sound, to the Judgment of the Women, than of

[14] Henry W. Sams, "Jonathan Swift's Proposal Concerning the English Language: A Reconsideration," *Essays in English Literature of the Classical Period Presented to Dougald MacMillan* (*SP*, Extra Series, January 1967, No. 4), p. 83. Sams' article emphasizes the importance of the *Proposal* in terms of Swift's personal ambitions.

illiterate Court-Fops, half-witted Poets, and University-Boys."[15] But perhaps the cycle of change is not inevitable for English. "Perhaps there might be ways to fix it for ever," at least till conquest by a foreign power, and even then "our best Writings might be preserved with Care, and grow into Esteem, and the Authors have a chance for Immortality." (p. 9)

Swift's specific proposal is that an institution, a "Society," be founded by the ministry to refine the language and preserve it. The Society, with "the Example of the *French* before them," would banish, correct, and restore words, refine grammar, and ultimately ascertain and fix "our Language for ever." (p. 14) The development of such a language would insure that the glories of the reign of Anne and the ministry of Harley would never be forgotten; whereas, if nothing were done, these great events would be obscure in "about two Hundred Years hence." (p. 18) More generally, because it would give the historian the confidence of using a permanent medium, the work of the Society would encourage the writing of history, an area in which the English had been deficient. All of this is presented with effusive praise of Harley, and with a certain witty self-consciousness on Swift's part that he may be "turning Projector before I am aware." (p. 20)

There is some evidence that Swift included a private joke within his serious *Proposal*. While composing it, and after, he was an active member in the Tory group that was variously known as "The Club," or "The Society," or "The Brotherhood." An inspiration of St. John's, it originally had twelve members, including, with Swift and St. John, such wits and great men as Arbuthnot, Prior, the Duke of Ormonde, and the Earl of Orrery, its purpose being "to advance conversation and friendship, and to reward deserving persons with out interest and recommendation."[16] Meeting weekly to dine, the Society at one time ran up such expenses that, as Swift wrote Stella, Harley "is in a

[15] *A Proposal for Correcting the English Tongue, Polite Conversation, Etc.*, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford, 1957), p. 13. Other references in the text are to this edition.

[16] *Journal to Stella*, ed. Harold Williams (Oxford, 1948), I, 294. See II, 506 for Harley's reaction to the expense, and *passim* for remarks about the activities of the Society.

Rage with us for being so extravagant." Swift's remarks about the need to endow and support the academy seem not quite decorous in a public letter to the Lord Treasurer: "who knows but some *true genius* may happen to arise under your Ministry . . . . Every Age might, perhaps, produce one or two of these to adorn it, if they were not sunk under the Censure and Obloquy of plodding, servile, imitating Pedants . . . . Or, if any such Persons were above Money, (as every great *genius* certainly is, with very moderate Conveniences of Life) a Medal, or some Mark of Distinction, would do as well." He adds that the French King, in contrast to the niggardly English government, gives liberal pensions to "perhaps a Dozen in his own Kingdom." (pp. 19-20) The tone, the dozen pensions, and the use of "Society" to describe the academy imply a *bagatelle* which would have been clear to Harley and the Brothers (and perhaps also to the Whigs, as we shall see): our Tory Society, our group of geniuses (at least the ones who are poor) need support. That the Brothers later rallied one another about becoming the endowed academy is clear from a letter that Prior, in Paris, wrote to Swift: "after wch [the hoped for peace], I suppose our Society will flourish, and I shall have nothing to do but to partake of that Universal Protection wch it will receive: in the mean time, pray give my great respects to our Brethren, and tell them that while in hopes of being favoured they are spending their own money [presumably on dinners], I am advancing my own Interests in the French Language and forgetting my own Mother Tongue." [17] That is, I am forgetting that English which our Society-academy, if endowed, will preserve.

It must be remembered that this connection was at most a private joke. Swift presumably expected that the Academy would provide places for him and some others in the Tory Society. But the *Proposal* specifically argued that the Academy should be above party and the preliminary list of twenty members that Swift and Harley drew up included some Whigs.[18] The tone of the *Proposal* is partisan, but it is difficult to believe that Swift really wanted his Academy to be only a company of agreeable Tory wits.

[17] *Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Harold Williams (Oxford, 1963-65), I, 341.

[18] Swift mentioned the list with members of "both Parties" in a letter to Archbishop King (*Correspondence*, I, 295).

However, the Whigs chose to see the *Proposal* as simply another Tory strategem. There were two replies in a short time, *Reflections on Dr. Swift's Letter to Harley* by John Oldmixon and *The British Academy* by Arthur Mainwaring and others. Swift read both, complaining to Stella that "tis no Politicks, but a harmless Proposall about the Improvement of the Engl. Tongue."[19] Oldmixon was amused by Swift's comments on women, "for a Protestant Divine to erect an Academy of Women to improve our Stile, is very extraordinary and gallant."[20] In any case, the plan is visionary, Swift "may as well set up a Society to find out the *Grand Elixir*, the *Perpetual Motion*, the *Longitude*, and other such Discoveries, as to fix our Language beyond their own Times."[21] The writers of *The British Academy* had read Pellison, and part of their satiric method is to speculate about how the new Society could accomodate itself to the Statutes of the French Academy. Would Swift and the Tories, for example, be able to observe the rule that there should be no discussion of religion? Both pamphlets make a good deal of the similarity of the new Society to the French institution, using it to reflect upon the loyalty of the Tories to the Hanoverian succession and upon the servility to Kings and ministers that might be expected from it.

The Tory Brotherhood also comes in. The *Gazette d'Amsterdam* had printed a short notice about the new academy, giving a list of its proposed members that was essentially the membership of the Society. Oldmixon referred to the Dutch notice and *The British Academy* reprinted it, this all to be seen, according to Louis Landa, as a Whig strategem. It was effective and amusing for the Whigs to equate the Academy to the Brotherhood.[22]

It seems clear that Swift drew upon the history of his *Proposal* for his presentation of Gulliver's reaction to the idea of Immortality. Gulliver, who has told us earlier in the *Travels* that he had "been a Sort of Projector in my younger Days" (p. 178), is pleased, at the request of the company, to explain the scheme of living he would

[19] *Journal to Stella*, II, 535.

[20] *Reflections*, p. 3 (from the facsimile edition of both pamphlets by Louis Landa for the Augustan Reprint Society, Series Six, No. 1 [1948]).

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[22] Introduction to ARS edition of two pamphlets, pp. 3-4.

have followed if he had been born an Immortal, for he had often amused himself "with Visions of what I should do if I were King, a general, or a great Lord." (p. 209) First he would procure riches and be independent, reflecting Swift's request of funds from Harley. He would from the beginning apply himself to the arts and sciences, and "carefully record every Action and Event of Consequence that happened in the Publick," becoming in the end "a living Treasury of Knowledge and Wisdom." Gulliver here sees himself as the kind of scholar and historian that Swift had argued the Academy would encourage. The joke of the Tory Brotherhood becoming the academy is also picked up: "But, my choise and constant Companions should be a Sett of my own immortal Brotherhood, among whom I would elect a Dozen from the most ancient down to my own Contemporaries. Where any of these wanted Fortunes, I would provide them with convenient Lodges round my own Estate." (pp. 209-10) Gulliver's group would engage in academical activities, and would, like Swift's society, oppose corruption: "Those *Struldbruggs* and I would mutually communicate our Observations and Memorials through the Course of Time; remark the several Gradations by which Corruption steals into the World, and oppose it in every Step." After Gulliver's disillusionment, his final remark also can be seen in terms of the Brothers. Gulliver decides that any state faced with the problem of Immortality would have to erect similar restrictive laws to deal with it. "Otherwise, as Avarice is the necessary Consequent of old Age, those Immortals would in time become Proprietors of the whole Nation, and engross the Civil Power; which, for want of Abilities to manage, must end in the Ruin of the Publick." (214) From the point of view of the *bagatelle*, this means that if Harley had endowed the Brothers, had given in to the "avaricious" demands of Swift, then they might have ended up running the Country—not too strained a conception when one recalls that St. John, Ormonde, and Orrery were members.

We may note, if the point is not too neat, that Gulliver sees himself, exactly like Oldmixon's Swift, as living to a time when he should see "the Discovery of the *Longitude*, the *perpetual Motion*, the *universal Medicine*." This may be a coincidence—these were the three great chimeras of the time—but that Swift, in 1725, when he was writing this section of the *Travels*, actually recalled the pamphlet

controversies of 1712 is strongly indicated by the beginning of Chapter XI. Here Gulliver tells us that he does not know if anyone else has written about the Struldbruggs. "But I hope the *Dutch* upon this Notice will be curious and able enough to supply my Defects." (p. 215) The Dutch did in fact supply the "defects" in the *Proposal* by printing a list of the supposed members of the British academy.

Some other links are speculative but interesting. Did the mark on the forehead of the Struldbruggs, whose changing size is described by comparison to coins, have its origin in the suggestion in the *Proposal* that a "Mark of Distinction" be conferred upon those members of the academy who did not need money? Did the use of "two centuries" in both Gulliver's monologue and the description of the Struldbruggs have its origin in Swift's prediction in the *Proposal* that in two centuries contemporary English would be obscure? One also wonders if the female Struldbruggs, who would not directly have been suggested by the French Academy, were inspired by Swift's "Academy of Women," the conclusion of the *Travels*, being that the women are "more horrible than the Men." (p. 214)

But beyond speculation, the underlying allegory is clear. Gulliver's enthusiasm for Immortality parallels the enthusiasm that Swift in 1712 felt for an English academy. Gulliver's disillusion would imply that Swift later had occasion to develop reservations about his *Proposal*. There is no external evidence that this happened. The note before the text in Faulkner's edition, a note that Herbert Davis believes is Swift's, simply observes that the founding of the academy was impossible after the death of the Queen.[28] Perhaps in the intervening years Swift may have had occasion to have second thoughts, not about the desirability of refining language, but rather about the practicality of doing so through a state supported institution. His experience would in any case have taught him not to put any confidence in those things that were decided by the whims of Courts and Ministers. The personal parallel is the interesting one; Gulliver in the episode representing the Swift of the years of Tory power; and the Swift of 1725 taking an amused and deflating attitude toward one of the projects of those heady days.

[28] *Proposal*, p. 284.

After the adventures in Luggnagg, the systematic allegory of Part III comes to a close. But the device of having Gulliver travel from the imaginary Luggnagg to the real but remote Japan and thence home seems calculated on Swift's part to bring in the third of those great maritime powers whose disputes dominated the history of Western Europe throughout his life. That the Dutch were the only traders allowed in Japan gives Swift an occasion to record some of his typical beliefs about them—that they were cruel, arrogant, lacking in religious conviction—and, schematically, completes the grand tour of Great Britain, France, and Holland that began when Gulliver ascended to the Flying Island.

In looking for sources for Swift's knowledge of France and the Academy, we should remember that he was a close student of French history and culture, as is shown, for example, by the Sale Catalogue to his library.[24] The Preface to *A Tale of a Tub* makes clear that when he composed it he was aware of the satirical tradition that the Academy was founded to draw the energies of able men away from discussions of "Religion and Government."[25] We may assume that he looked for what was available on the French Academy when he was proposing a British counterpart. In any case the reply of Mainwaring would have brought Pellisson to his attention. That he knew Pellisson seems proved from the many close parallels between it and the *Travels*. Information about the Academy after 1652 he could have gained from scattered sources—such as publications of the Academy, including the Dictionary and the Preface to it, the memoirs of the Academician Segrais, the publications of Furetière. I would like to suggest that it is probable that Swift also got some of the details about the later Academy and France from his good friend Matthew Prior. Prior was a member of the Brotherhood and the references to him in the *Journal to Stella* make clear how close their relationship was. Prior's diplomatic career made him one of the most knowledgeable Englishmen about French affairs in the early

[24] The Sale Catalogue is reprinted in Harold Williams, *Dean Swift's Library* (Cambridge, England, 1932). The Catalogue does not list a copy of Pellisson.

[25] *A Tale of a Tub*, ed. A. C. Guthkelch and D. Nichol Smith, 2nd. edition (Oxford, 1958), p. 39.

eighteenth century. He had served with distinction in the Embassy of the Duke of Portland sent to Paris by William III. When the Treaty of Utrecht was being negotiated, Prior had crossed over to Paris with Bolingbroke, and upon Bolingbroke's return remained there until he was recalled after the fall of the Tories. He had served on confidential missions to Paris twice, once for King William, and once for Bolingbroke. His efforts on the last resulted in the celebrated "Matt's Peace" of the Whig polemicists and caused Swift to write the humorous pamphlet *A New Journey to Paris* to allay the fears that Prior, as Bolingbroke's agent, had sold out English interests. On all of these occasions, Prior, with his wit and his mastery of French, was a popular and widely received figure at the Court, in Parisian society, and among men of learning. He had many audiences, public and private, with Louis XIV; on Portland's embassy he dined with the Academicians Boileau, Fontenelle, and Dacier; and on the later embassy he became particularly close to Fénelon, who was engaged on a revision of the Dictionary.[26]

We know how often in the *Travels* Swift was fond of basing particular events upon things that had happened to his friends, to Harley, Bolingbroke, Atterbury, and others. Something similar, I think, is going on in the events in Luggnagg. Not in the sense that Gulliver continuously represents Prior (we have already seen that part of the time he represents Swift), but rather that many of the things that Gulliver observes and experiences perhaps have their source in things that Prior saw and experienced in France, a country of which Swift had no direct knowledge. Prior on many occasions met the supposed poisoner, the Duc d'Orleans. He reported to Bolingbroke on the meeting of the Parliament of Paris that ratified the King's wish that the legitimated sons be put in the line of succession.[27] He had occasion on both of his embassies to observe the Jacobite Court and the French hospitality to James II and his son. Louis was very fond of Prior, just as the King of Luggnagg was fond of Gulliver.

[26] For details of Prior's life see L. G. Wickham Legg, *Matthew Prior* (Cambridge, England, 1921) and Charles Eves, *Matthew Prior, Poet and Diplomatist* (New York, 1930); for the relationship with Swift also see Swift's *Correspondence* and *Journal to Stella*.

[27] Legg, p. 192.

The most specific detail that points to Prior is a gift that the King gives Gulliver on their leavetaking, "a red Diamond which I sold in *England* for Eleven Hundred Pounds." (p. 215) When Prior was recalled to England in 1714, Louis' parting gift was a portrait of himself in a frame set with diamonds, the whole valued at nine hundred pounds.[28] It is certainly reasonable to believe that when Swift came to write his allegorical account of France he recalled the career of his Brother and friend in the golden time of the miinstry of Oxford and Bolingbroke.

So much for the allegory, interesting in itself, but also, I believe, having some significance beyond the particular parallels it displays. For one thing, we have in the Struldbrugg episode an unusually clear example of the relationship between Swift and his *persona*, an example which shows that the Dean was not so obsessed with the weaknesses of others that he could not find his own conduct the subject of satire, his own enthusiasm the product of "the common Imbecility of human Nature." (p. 211) One is impressed throughout the section by the way in which he drew upon the actual. Again and again, details which at first view seem to be only part of the verisimilitude of the story reveal themselves as referring to historical men, events, and customs. What one could easily take to be abstract inventions to argue certain moral points—the immortality of the Struldbruggs or the arbitrariness of the King's court—turn out to have very specific sources. Such examples are more evidence of how concretely Swift's mind worked, and are a caution to those who look in the *Travels* for the kind of abstract types and schemes that Swift himself in his thought perpetually regarded with suspicion.

Because of its apparent lack of unity and coherence, and because of the obscurity of some of its satire, Part III has always been thought the least successful section of the *Travels*. An understanding of the allegory alleviates if it does not remove some of those objections. The geographical, the grand tour, aspect of Gulliver's adventures gives a kind of unity. And coherence is gained by balancing the Court of Louis XIV and the French Academy against the Court of George I and the Royal Society in the Balnibarbi episodes. The

[28] Eves, p. 346.

unveiling of the allegory strengthens the satiric force of some of the passages, explaining, for example, that the seal of the King or the theme of poisoning were not chosen arbitrarily. This would be the point at which to make the traditional observation that, in the end, Swift's work survives because of its appeal to the general reader, that he sublimated and refined the private references of the *Travels* to create a work of universal appeal. This is true of the *Travels* as a whole, and more or less true of such particular things as the Academy of Lagado, which taken literally, sufficiently demonstrates the dangers of useless and corrupt experimentation. But a moment's reflection reveals that it is not true of the account of the Struldbruggs. Reading literally, we see them as grim reminders of the virtues of death; we imagine, to use Wayne C. Booth's term, an implied author who is a stern moralist, who resolutely, almost perversely, paints the decay of body and mind. Allegorically, the facts and the tone are quite different: the Immortals are a light hearted satire on the Academy, the whole conception turning on a play of words; we see Swift having a good deal of fun with the joke on himself and his Brothers, playfully working out its possibilities, wondering if his friends would catch it. Only a truly stern moralist would complain that all this is too private, would refuse to enjoy the dexterity of Swift's counterpointing of the two levels. Let us rather aspire to the knowledge and sensibility of Dr. Arbuthnot, whom one imagines the ideal reader of the *Travels,* and who, perhaps because he saw so clearly those private things that to us are so dim, could write to Swift: "Gulliver is a happy man that at his age can write such a merry work."

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