Gulliver as Pet and Pet Owner: Conversations with Animals in Book 4

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ELH, Volume 74, Number 2, Summer 2007, pp. 323-349 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.1353/elh.2007.0014*

GULLIVER AS PET AND PET KEEPER: TALKING ANIMALS IN BOOK 4

BY ANN CLINE KELLY

In Book 4 of *Gulliver's Travels*, Gulliver narrates his story from the perspectives of both pet and pet keeper. Focusing on Gulliver's dual role as well as on the dynamics of pet keeping reveals the extent to which *Gulliver's Travels*, particularly Book 4, is situated in seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century debates about the nature of Creation and individual identity that challenged the fundamental binaries inherent in the Chain of Being paradigm, namely the oppositions of human to animal and nature to nurture. Diverse sets of individuals—empiricists, philosophers, animal trainers, and pet owners—resisted and countered to varying degrees the Chain of Being premise that Nature is a divinely-ordered, eternal hierarchy of essentially different species. In this unchanging and unchangeable chain of separate and distinct links, humankind is situated just below the angels and, by virtue of that superiority, is clearly removed from the rest of animate creation, over which it has dominion.[1] Disturbed by implications that human/animal difference is not absolute or that identity is not essentially anchored, René Descartes declares that "after the error of those who deny the existence of God . . . there is none that is more powerful in leading feeble minds astray from the straight path of virtue than the supposition that the soul of brutes is of the same nature with our own."[2] Jonathan Swift vexes the issue of what constitutes a "brute" by situating Gulliver as a pet in Houyhnhnmland, where "brutes" look just like him, and by focusing on the experience of pet keeping, which collapses the differences between the dominant, rational race and the lesser creatures whom they choose as companions.

Though at first accepting Chain of Being premises about the chasm between man and beast, Gulliver gradually comes to an alternative view engendered by his sojourns abroad, particularly in Houyhnhnmland. Gulliver's epiphany does not come in a flash but over time with a series of back-and-forth shifts of perspective that reflect the dialectical currents in English discourse concerning the relationship of humans to animals and the power of nurture to shape identity. Analyzing Gulliver's shift in attitude toward species boundaries provides a new way to un-

derstand the concluding chapters of the *Travels*, in which Gulliver's avoidance of his family and his retreat to the stable for conversations with his pet horses are cited as proofs of his misanthropy and madness. In the so-called "hard school" view of Book 4, Gulliver's mental dysfunction results from his tragic realization that like the Houyhnhnmland Yahoos, humans are essentially irrational and therefore incapable of ever attaining Houyhnhnm virtues. "Soft school" critics, believing that humans are not irredeemable, but potentially rational, characterize Gulliver in a similar way but ascribe his strange, anti-social behavior to his misguided acceptance of misanthropic "hard school" ideas.[3] In contrast to either of these critical views, I contend that Gulliver ends up relatively sane and sociable, an argument based on an analysis of the textual evidence concerning Gulliver's re-assimilation and on a survey of contextual discourse suggesting that the desire to talk to horses is not necessarily a sign of insanity. The question of Gulliver's mental balance, though, is not the most disturbing one Swift's narrative raises. Rather it is an inconvenient and uncomfortable question with radical political, social, and moral implications—to what degree do other species share the qualities humans claim for themselves?

When Gulliver first arrives in Houyhnhnmland, his thinking about species is shaped by Chain of Being principles so that when he sees horses in a field, he instantly understands that they are profoundly different from him and that he is naturally their master. He approaches a dapple gray just as "Jockies [would] when they are going to handle a strange Horse"—by stroking its neck and whistling in a certain way, but the horse makes clear it does not want to be petted.[4] Gulliver assumes he has a unique and privileged place in Nature as a member of the only language-using species, but he becomes confused when the dapple gray whinnies in such an eloquent fashion that Gulliver "began to think [the horse] was speaking to himself in some Language of his own" (225). Gulliver's confusion arises because he knows that linguistic capacity, a manifestation of reason, is an essential quality that distinguishes humankind from all other animals. After some more neighing from the dapple gray, Gulliver "fancied [himself] to understand what [the horse] meant" (225). Because Gulliver, like Descartes, knows that beasts lack both the bodily organs and mental capacity to produce rational utterances, he speculates that the creatures "must needs be [human] Magicians, who had thus metamorphosed themselves [into horses] upon some Design" (226).[5] Gulliver's association of talking horses with the supernatural is rooted in deeply embedded cultural attitudes apparent, for example, in the considerable body of English

folklore concerning "Bankes' horse," whose humanlike abilities were ascribed to black magic.[6]

Gulliver finally "ventured to address [the horse-like individuals] in the following Manner: Gentleman, if you be Conjurers . . . you can understand my language." He entreats one metamorphosed human conjurer to let him "ride upon his Back, as if he were a *real Horse*" (226, my emphasis), an idea to which the addressee signifies his objection. As the four-legged creatures communicate to each other, Gulliver finds himself imagining "that their Language expressed the Passions very well, and the Words might with little Pains be resolved into an Alphabet more easily than the *Chinese*" (226). Because in the English literary tradition animals exhibiting human-like behaviors are associated with non-mimetic or fantastic genres, such as myth, fairytale, allegory, and fable, Gulliver dismisses his initial encounters with the Houyhnhnms as fantasies generated by a waking "Brain . . . disturbed by [his] Sufferings and Misfortunes" or by a sleeping brain sunk in a dream state (228).

Within a very short period of time, though, Gulliver—who initially asserts his dominion over the horses—acknowledges that the power and rationality of these creatures gives them dominion over him. Anxious how he might be treated in this alternative Creation, Gulliver tries to sneak off, but the dapple gray sees him and requires his return in a way Gulliver completely comprehends: "[W]hereupon I turned back . . . to expect his farther Commands; but concealing Fear as much as I could; for I began to be in some Pain, how this Adventure might terminate: and the Reader will easily believe I did not much like my present Situation" (225). When the dapple-gray horse "made Signs" that the strange creature should follow him home so he could show it to the rest of the family, Gulliver begins to call him "Master" and assumes the role of pet (229). At this point human readers, who probably identify with Gulliver, are forced to assume an unaccustomed perspective on species relationships.

In becoming the Master Horse's pet, Gulliver affirms his keeper's physical and intellectual sway over him. Lacking the "flight or fight" instincts of a wild animal, Gulliver exhibits the domesticity, dependence, and subjection that make him a suitable companion animal. Introductory petting helps to define Gulliver's new role. While the horses refuse to be petted by Gulliver, the reverse is not true. The dapple gray and another horse "rubbed [Gulliver's] Hat all round . . . felt the Lappet of [his] Coat . . . stroked [his] Hand," and, after a mistaken gesture that makes Gulliver "roar" with pain, "they both

touched [him] with all possible Tenderness" (225–26). Although the horses categorize Gulliver as an animal because he lacks the superior form of their species as well as the ability to speak their language, they identify him as a potential pet because he appears to understand and respond to their communications. Indeed, he shows that he is eager to learn from them and is unnaturally precocious. "Visibly surprized" (225) at his attempts to imitate their words, the two horses then start to tutor him in order "to teach him the right Accent. . . . [T]hey both appeared amazed at [his] Capacity" (226). Gulliver accedes to being a pet primarily because he fears that if he were a non-pet animal, he would be eaten, skinned, or put to hard labor. It is no wonder that Gulliver, then, determines that his "principal Endeavor was to learn the [Houyhnhnm] Language" (234), the acquisition of which would explicitly distinguish him from the Houyhnhnmland Yahoos, who lead miserable lives as draft animals.

In becoming a pet keeper, the Master Horse decides to establish a close relationship with a docile creature of a different species that shows signs it might reciprocate his love and attention. As the pet's keeper, he will be a central and controlling figure in his pet's life, perhaps in contrast to his position within his own family or Houyhnhnm society. The Master Horse treats Gulliver unlike other animals in Houyhnhnmland mentioned in the text (birds, rabbits, asses, and Yahoos) by indulging Gulliver with special food and providing him a little hutch "but Six Yards from [his] House" (233). Most significant, though, is the Master Horse's assumption that Gulliver is educable, so he devotes "many Hours of his Leisure to instruct [him]" (234). In addition to Gulliver, the Master Horse may also have another pet—a cat. The text mentions that the Yahoos, perhaps out of jealous spite, "kill and devour the [Houyhnhnms'] cats" (271). Like a domesticated cat, Gulliver is not only intelligent and affectionate but also knows not to excrete indoors or to use his teeth and nails against his owner.

As a pet keeper, the Master Horse treats Gulliver as a close companion or family member. He spends hours talking to Gulliver and, on occasions, stroking him. In addition to the initial petting, Gulliver also describes a later incident in which the Master Horse wants to see what lies under his clothes. After Gulliver undresses, the Master "then stroaked [his] Body very gently," noting the "Whiteness, and Smoothness of [his] Skin, [his] want of Hair in several Parts of [his] Body, [and] the Shape and Shortness of [his] Claws behind and before" (237). While justified as a scientific inquiry, it seems that this ostensibly non-sexual petting provides pleasure to both Gulliver and the Master

Horse. Because pets seem eager to be talked to and petted, relationships with them sometimes replace or supplement more complicated, conditional bonds with individuals of the keeper's own species.[7]

Keith Thomas notes that by 1700 in England "all the symptoms of obsessive pet-keeping were in evidence," a new social practice that can be seen as a reaction to the alienation and isolation associated with increasing modernity. Thomas argues that pet keeping changes pet keepers' attitudes about the capacities of animals by encouraging "optimistic conclusions about animal intelligence"; "stimulat[ing] the notion that animals could have character and individual personality; and creat[ing] the psychological foundation for the view that some animals at least were entitled to moral consideration."[8] The Master Horse displays these attitudes in his relationship with his new pet. Like other pet owners, the Master Horse comes to view his companion animal as a hybrid, occupying the form of a lower link on the Great Chain yet having some of the capacities with which his superior, pet-keeping species is endowed, such as sensibility, intelligence, and an ability to understand and respond to language. Indeed, because of Gulliver's fortuitous anatomy, he has the organs needed to produce intelligible speech, that is, speech in the Houyhnhnm's language.

The Master Horse's acceptance of Gulliver "in his Family" (279) illustrates how pet/pet keeper intimacy destabilizes species borderlines when the putative Other becomes Same, a dynamic described by one of Swift's favorite writers, Michel de Montaigne, who analyzes his relationship with his cat in *An Apology for Raymond Sebond* (1595).[9] Seeing the world from his pet's point of view, Montaigne wonders who is truly the dominant species: "When I play with my cat, how do I know that she is not passing time with me rather than I with her?" Of animals in general, Montaigne muses that "they may reckon us to be brute beasts for the same reason that we reckon them to be so. . . . How could they not speak to one another? They certainly speak to us, and we to them."[10] For putting animals on the same plane as humans, Montaigne holds a central place in the development of an outlook that George Boas calls "theriophily," an emergent set of beliefs in the early modern period that dispute humankind's superiority to creatures they deem lesser.[11] Like Montaigne's conversations with his cat, the Master Horse's conversations with his Yahoo-like pet undermine the premises of the Great Chain of Being.

Within the circle of the Master Horse and his friends, Gulliver acquires an oxymoronic label—"wonderful *Yahoo*" (235)—to denote his hybrid character. At the time Swift is writing *Gulliver's Travels*,

hybrid individuals who defy species categorization were of interest not only to the Royal Society and but also to the general public, whose love of the "strange and wonderful" encouraged the popular press to headline unnatural linkages and amalgams that simultaneously proved the rule of the Chain of Being and contested it. Examples include "primitive" people who supposedly mate with animals, such as the Irish with wolves or the Hottentots with apes; European bestialists who commit carnal acts with domestic livestock; deformed "monsters" or animals born of human parents, for instance the seventeen rabbits produced by the celebrated Mary Toft; human souls occupying animal bodies as a result of metempsychosis, metamorphosis, or witchcraft; and precocious creatures, such as Bankes's horse, "The Learned Pig," and Prince Maurice's witty parrot, who seem to possess some measure of reason. Other unclassifiable or hybrid individuals are those with the human form who lack the intelligible language by which humanity is defined, such as deaf mutes, the mentally deficient, and "wild" children nurtured by forest animals.[12]

At first considered as a hybrid Other in Lilliput, Brobdingnag, and Laputa, Gulliver is ultimately accepted to some degree into those cultures because he quickly learns their language and shares a similar bodily form with them. In Houyhnhnmland, a different scenario unfolds because the consensus emerges that he is an undocumentable alien who must be deported. By making Gulliver his pet, the Master Horse put himself at odds with his fellow Houyhnhnms, for whom truths are innate and self-evident. A cardinal premise of Houyhnhnm epistemology is that the non-equine form of the Yahoo is a difference that invariably marks a vicious, irrational species. Displaying the same essentialist logic that John Locke cites as a (faulty) foundation of human understanding, the Houyhnhnms know from the Yahoos' form, for example, that they are "brute Animal[s]" (234) who lack language, and therefore reason, because they seem able to express themselves only in grunts, groans, howls, and strategic defecation. Locke subverts such essentialist notions by observing that a man who talks with no more sense than a cat or parrot would still be considered a human, though dull and irrational, but if a cat or parrot were to "discourse, reason, and philosophize," it still would be considered an animal and treated as such.[13] Locke's assault on the linkage between words and things calls attention to the nominal and socially-constructed nature of concepts such as knowledge, species, and brutishness.

Since Gulliver exhibits Houyhnhnm-like rationality, the Master Horse considers his little pet a Yahoo in name only. The Master Horse's

nominalist stance explains why he is not particularly shocked or upset when he sees Gulliver's uncovered body but agrees to perpetuate the idea that Gulliver's clothing is a "skin" that makes him appear slightly different from brutes similar to him in other respects. According to Gulliver, his Master "desired that I would go on with my utmost Diligence to learn their Language, because he was more astonished at my Capacity for Speech and Reason, than at the Figure of my Body, whether it was covered or no. . . . From thenceforth [the Master Horse] doubled the Pains he had been at to instruct me" (237–38), even though the Yahoos whom Gulliver resembles are presumed to be unteachable. After discovering the untoward behavior of the Master Horse, the Houyhnhnm General Assembly condemns him for treating Gulliver like a member of his family and claiming to "receive some Advantage or Pleasure" from his company. These actions, the Assembly decrees, are not "agreeable to Reason or Nature" (279).

In the case of his exceptional pet, the Master Horse ignores the Houyhnhnm Chain of Being and subscribes to premises inimical to it: that performance, rather than form or essence, defines the individual; and that performance or identity can be altered with nurture. The Master Horse's devotion to tutoring Gulliver may reflect the influence of Locke's revolutionary model of the mind as a *tabula rasa* imprinted by an individual's experience, a perspective that puts the spotlight on how environmental factors, such as living conditions and education, affect the achievement of one's full potential, no matter the species. Thomas notes that in the eighteenth century "[m]any believed . . . that pigs would have progressed much further if it were not for their confinement and the short lives men allowed them," and Samuel Pepys writes that he is of "the mind [that gorillas or baboons] might be taught to speak."[14] Earlier, *Maroccus Extaticus: or, Bankes' Bay Horse in a Trance* (1595) fancifully anticipates this line of thinking by depicting a scene in the stable in which Bankes's horse—studding his speech with the Latin he learned at Oxford—thanks his master for taking the pains to make him an "understanding horse." In return, Bankes expresses his appreciation for the horse's recognition of his efforts, saying, "I have brought thee up right tenderly, as a baker's daughter would bring up a cosset [baby lamb] by hand, and allow it bread and milke."[15] If Gulliver's Master had not "brought [his pet] up right tenderly," Gulliver would probably have ended his days tied to a beam in the Yahoo barn, eating rotted asses' meat, and howling protests undecipherable to the Houyhnhnms, who would register them as brutish noise.

Even after fostering Gulliver's evolution into a "wonderful *Yahoo*," the Master Horse does not rethink the culturally-inscribed line between the Houyhnhnmland Yahoos and the Houyhnhnmland horses. To him, Gulliver is the exception that proves the rule of Yahoo beastliness. By the same token, Gulliver's exposure to the articulate horses of Houyhnhnmland does not make him—at least initially—revise his view that horses in England are brutes. In conversation with his Houyhnhnm Master, Gulliver callously shocks him by saying that when horses owned by English "Persons of Quality" can no longer perform their companionate or recreational functions, they are "sold, and used to all kind of Drudgery till they [die]; after which their Skins [are] stripped and sold . . . their Bodies left to be devoured by Dogs and Birds of Prey" (241).[16] Gulliver gratuitously adds that the horses of the underclass are treated much worse. At this point in the narrative, Gulliver understands English horses and Houyhnhnmland horses to be different species with essentially different natures, and so he excuses the insensitivity of his countrymen by asserting that horses back home "had not the least Tincture of Reason any more than *Yahoos* in this Country" (241). As we will see, Gulliver later changes his mind and comes to believe that English and Houyhnhnm horses occupy a continuum where variety is not produced primarily by nature but by nurture.

Because the Master Horse situates Gulliver as companion or recreational animal, he exempts Gulliver from the economic calculus that expediently defines the lower ranks of the labor force as different and therefore inferior to those of the dominant phenotype. While Gulliver is designated a servant by the Master Horse, he never mentions performing any tasks and is treated more as a family member or friend, despite the radical contrast of his bodily form with that of the more leisured class. Among the Houyhnhnmland horses, small differences in appearance justify consignment to lower links of the Chain of Being. Their cultural perception is that horses of certain colors are not as "exactly shaped . . . nor born with equal Talents of Mind, or a Capacity to improve them; and therefore continued always in the Condition of Servants, without even aspiring to match out of their own Race, which . . . would be reckoned *monstrous* and *unnatural*" (256, my emphasis).

In the Houyhnhnmland labor force, the opposition of horses and asses represents another distinction without a significant difference. Even though horses and asses are both classified as Equidae and can mate to produce progeny, the Houyhnhnms conveniently declared

their cousins as Other or different from themselves so they could use them as beasts of burden without compunction. A mysterious switch occurred when the Houyhnhnmland horses took a "Fancy to use the Service of the Yahoos, [and] very imprudently neglected to cultivate the Breed [of asses]" (272), despite acknowledging that asses were "comely animal[s], easily kept, more tame and orderly, without any offensive Smell, [and] strong enough for Labour" (272). Perhaps the Houyhnhnm policy to use Yahoos as draft animals—no matter their shortcomings—instead of asses was designed to eliminate the temptation of miscegenation, especially since intercourse could be proven by the appearance of mule or hinny love children. Houyhnhnm strategies further to distance themselves from their ass cousins are evident in their feeding Yahoos with "Ass's Flesh" (230). Gulliver, of course, enacts similar denial of kinship when a female Yahoo sexually assaults him, an event that he momentarily accepts as proof he is "one of their own Species" (267) since she clearly desires to mate with him. In short order, though, Gulliver establishes his difference and his dominion by skinning Yahoos to make himself clothing and a canoe.

If the Master Horse had been discreet, Gulliver and he might well have been able to prolong their affectionate idyll, but the Master Horse, impressed with his pet's precocity, brags about him to the Houyhnhnm General Assembly, announcing publicly the news that Gulliver "spoke in a Language of [his] own, and had thoroughly learned theirs" (272). He then boldly reveals that Gulliver has come up with an intelligent solution to the Yahoo problem that has vexed Houyhnhnm society for years. Knowing that assertions of Gulliver's rationality would offend his colleagues' views on species boundaries, the Master Horse tries to placate them by saying, "[I]t was no Shame to learn Wisdom from Brutes, as Industry is taught by the Ant, and Building by the Swallow" (273). Not surprisingly, the Master Horse's words have the opposite effect he intends. The General Assembly instantly realizes that the presence of the hybrid Gulliver uncouples their Chain of Being. Unable to tolerate an exception that disproves rules they believe are "*discover'd* not *devis'd*" and fearing the end of the world as they want to know it, the Houyhnhnm Assembly exhorts the Master Horse immediately to send his pet back where it came from.[17] In a show of resistance, Gulliver's keeper refuses to act until his neighbors adamantly protest to the authorities.

The representations of pet/pet owner relationships in *Gulliver's Travels* stand in relief to the violence and hostility pervading the rest of the narrative. These special interspecies bonds are characterized

by seemingly mutual and overtly expressed affection that creates an intimate utopian bubble. The Master Horse's emotions come to the surface when he is finally forced to inform Gulliver that he must leave the island. Revealing the depth of his feelings, the Master Horse hems and haws, "at a Loss [about] how to begin what he had to speak. After a short Silence, he told [Gulliver] he did not know how [Gulliver] would take what he was going to say" but that he does not share the sentiments of his neighbors and the Assembly (279). According to Gulliver, the Master Horse allows "that for his own Part he could have been content to keep me in his Service as long as I lived" (279–80). The Master Horse and his Lady come to see Gulliver off, which Gulliver says, "([I]f I can speak it without Vanity) [was] partly out of Kindness" (282). The prospect of leaving his Master makes Gulliver distraught—he falls to the ground in a swoon, "Eyes flowing with Tears, and [his] Heart sunk with Grief" (282).[18] The Master Horse's rapport with Gulliver marks him as a creature of sensibility, one who is capable of empathy with lesser creatures of his own or other species. In eighteenth-century England, the "cult of sensibility" not only promoted the anthropomorphism of pets, but also anti-vivisection campaigns, interest in vegetarianism, and the development of literature focalized on the consciousness of animals, such as Anna Barbauld's "Mouse's Petition," Thomas Gray's "On the Death of a Favorite Cat," or Robert Burns's "To a Mouse, on Turning up Her Nest with the Plough."[19] Gulliver's account of his emotions joins the many eighteenth-century texts that imaginatively express the feelings of creatures categorized as animals.

Interspecies amity, such as that between the Master Horse and Gulliver, is depicted in *Gulliver's Travels* in ways that might evoke both prelapsarian Biblical times and the Classical Golden Age. According to the Bible, human and nonhuman beings in Eden coexisted peacefully and even (in some exegeses) conversed together. Meat-eating did not commence until after the Fall and will cease only at the dawn of the millennium when the "wolf shall dwell with the lamb . . . and the lion shall eat straw like the ox."[20] As in Eden, vegetarianism prevailed in the Golden Age. Humans, gods, and animals freely metamorphosed into one another or formed hybrid combinations. According to Plato (as paraphrased by Montaigne), in the Golden Age humans had the "ability to communicate with the beasts; enquiring and learning from them. . . . By this means Man used to acquire a full understanding and discretion, leading his life far more happily than we ever can now."[21]

In many ways, Houyhnhnmland displays the idealized pastoral features of Eden and the Golden Age and, as such, seems remote from

the tensions of modernity that induce pet keeping.[22] In that light, one might wonder why the Houyhnhnms keep cats or whether the Master Horse's alienation from his fellow Houyhnhnms or even his family pre-disposes him to make Gulliver a companion animal from whom he can gain some comfort and existential validation. Notwithstanding his assertions of contentment in Houyhnhnmland, Gulliver himself feels the need for a pet, and so he catches a three-year-old male Yahoo "Cub" and shows "all Marks of Tenderness" towards "it." The cub, though, "fell a squalling, and scratching, and biting with such Violence" that Gulliver "was forced to let it go" (265).[23] It is not clear whether the cub resists becoming a pet because it is essentially wild, because it has had three years of bestial Yahoo nurture, or because it has no fear of Gulliver.

Gulliver's motives for trying to tame the cub are also unclear. Isolated as the only one of his kind in Houyhnhnmland, Gulliver may need the loving gaze of a lesser animal to act as a mirror to affirm his identity and register his power. Or perhaps Gulliver seeks the pleasure of touching another creature's skin or of having a companion who seems to listen with understanding and approbation, unlike the Master Horse who is generally critical of what Gulliver tells him. Quite indifferent to the pleas from his English family to stay home with them, Gulliver may see the cub as an ersatz child that is potentially more controllable, more adoring, and less demanding than one of his own. Another benefit of Gulliver's keeping the Yahoo cub is that it clearly establishes his non-Yahoo status, since typically pets and pet owners belong to different species.

Mutual interspecies devotion, such as that expressed at the parting of Gulliver and his Master, is a frequent topic of early eighteenth-century satires. In John Gay's "An Elegy on a Lap-Dog," for instance, the death of Celia's pet makes her "frantick with despair," a condition manifest in "streaming eyes, wrung hands, and flowing hair."[24] Gay's narrator counsels Celia that the loss of her dog is insignificant because "In man you'll find more substantial bliss / More grateful toying, and a sweeter kiss," but then he undercuts the appeal of same-species love by praising the dog, who though it "*fawn'd like man*, [it] *ne'er like man betray'd*."[25] Swift's representation of Gulliver's grief at leaving his Master Horse is similar to the way Gay depicts Celia's—full of ambiguities that make the object of satire unclear. Are Celia and Gulliver being censured for their misplaced affection, or is humankind being criticized for lacking the virtues possessed by their supposed inferiors? Should readers sympathize with Celia's and Gulliver's mourning or mock them for it?

The uncertainties in reader response mirror contemporary uncertainties about humankind's relationship with the rest of Creation.

Before being adopted by his Houyhnhnm master, Gulliver also experiences true love as a pet in Brobdingnag. Glumdalclitch treats the little creature her father finds in a field like a baby—putting him in a cradle, making little clothes for him, teaching him how to talk, and no doubt caressing or petting him. But Glumdalclitch's parents fail to honor their promise to her that she could keep her new pet, just "as they did [the] last Year, when they pretended to give her a Lamb; and yet, as soon as it was fat, sold it to a Butcher" (97). The poor child must have been severely traumatized by her parents' actions, for pets are never supposed to be eaten. This time her pet is snatched from her as soon as her father realizes he can earn quick money by charging folks to see its skills, including its ability to speak the Brobdingnagian language. Glumdalclitch eventually persuades her father to let her accompany him on a tour of the kingdom to show off Gulliver's tricks. When her father brings the road show to court, Gulliver convinces the royal princess to make him her slave and admit Glumdalclitch into her service as his "Nurse and Instructor" (102). Although Gulliver sometimes resents Glumdalclitch for being overly protective, when he is whisked away by an eagle his thoughts are consumed with how much he will miss her and she, him: "How often did I then wish my self with my dear *Glumdalclitch*, from whom one single Hour had so far divided me! And I say with Truth, that in the midst of my own Misfortune, I could not forbear lamenting my poor Nurse, the Grief she would feel at my loss" (141). The emotional rhetoric here is that of a child separated from a devoted, nurturing figure. Again, these hyperbolic expressions of interspecies affection can be read simultaneously as satiric and sentimental.

Another creature in Brobdingnag—a male monkey—also wants Gulliver as a pet. Grabbing Gulliver out of his protective box, the monkey carries him up to the roof, where, according to Gulliver, he "held me as a Nurse doth a Child she is going to suckle; just as I have seen the same Sort of Creature do with a Kitten in *Europe*. . . . I have good Reason to believe that he took me for a young one of his own Species, by his often stroaking my Face very gently with his other Paw" (122). Then the monkey cradles Gulliver "like a Baby in one of his Fore-Paws . . . [while] feeding me with the other . . . and patting me when I would not eat" (122). The situational parallels between Glumdalclitch and the monkey may allude to the uncertainty of man/monkey boundaries inspired by stories of "ape-rape" and

speculations by early comparative anatomists that orangutans are a subspecies of humanity.[26] Yet, unlike Glumdalclitch, the monkey has no empathy with Gulliver and treats him as though he were a brute animal or an insensate doll, dangling him upside down from the roof and violently ramming food down his throat. Gulliver is treated in a similarly thoughtless way by one of the Brobdingnagian maids of honor who makes a pet of him but uses him as a sex toy, setting him "astride one of her Nipples." After this dehumanizing experience, Gulliver "entreat[s] *Glumdalclitch* to contrive some excuse for not seeing that young Lady any more" (119).

While Gulliver resembles them in all respects but size, ethnocentricity urges the Brobdingnagians to establish his difference, so the King's scientists set about to discover exactly what kind of an alien thing Gulliver is. Initially they ponder whether he is a clockwork mechanism, an allusion to Descartes' belief that animals are machines who might be able to produce an imitation of speech but are mentally incapable of originating expressions of rational thought. The scientists then move on to consider and reject the ideas that he might be a predatory creature (no teeth or claws), an embryo (limbs too well developed), or a dwarf (too small by Brobdingnagian standards). Unable to locate Gulliver on their taxonomic maps, the Brobdingnagian *philosophes* categorize him as a monstrous "freak of nature" or "*Lusus Naturae*," which Gulliver sardonically observes is "a Determination exactly Agreeable to the Modern [Enlightenment] philosophy of *Europe*" (103–4). He notes that while these empiricists reject the deductive classifications of Aristotle, they have merely replaced one arbitrary system with another and "invented this wonderful Solution of all Difficulties [in classifying anomalous individuals], to the unspeakable Advancement of human Knowledge" (104). Montaigne also comments on the delusion that the category of *Lusus Naturae* is anything more than a self-comforting fiction: "For [the dominant species], following Nature means following [their] own intelligence as far as it is able to go and as far as [they] are able to see. Everything else is a monster, outside the order of Nature!"[27] Although he looks like a varmint to the Brobdingnagians and a Yahoo to the Houyhnhnms, Gulliver is spared the fate of the beastly Other because in both countries he has a keeper who accepts him as a pet and teaches him the local language.

After his return to England from Brobdingnag, Gulliver quickly regains his ability to interact with regular-sized humans, but his departure from Houyhnhnmland produces profound effects that cripple his ability to socialize normally. The first humans that Gulliver encounters

after being forced to leave the horses' island are the sailors who rescue him. Instead of gratitude, Gulliver expresses horror that these creatures are talking to one another—it "appeared to [him] as *monstrous* [my emphasis] as if a Dog or a Cow should speak in *England*, or a *Yahoo* in *Houyhnhnmland*" (286). Observing Yahoo-like individuals with linguistic capacity compels Gulliver (and the reader) to consider whether these individuals are the same or different from similarly formed creatures who inhabit Houyhnhnmland. At first Gulliver equates the two groups and expects European Yahoos to manifest the violent brutishness of the Houyhnhnmland Yahoos, but Gulliver is forced to modify his generalizations about European Yahoos after conversing with the supremely civilized ship's captain, Pedro de Mendez, whose performance encourages Gulliver to treat him "like an Animal which had some little Portion of Reason" (287). Because Mendez's "whole Deportment was so obliging, [and] added to very good *human* Understanding," Gulliver begins "to tolerate his Company" (288). Step by step, and over a period of days, Mendez acts as a therapist who moves Gulliver from shell-shocked inwardness to being able to walk in a street filled with Yahoo-ish creatures and to overcome his "Apprehensions" about being attacked by their "Teeth or . . . Claws" (288). Eventually Mendez convinces Gulliver to go home to his family.

The interlude with Mendez brings Gulliver to a point where he can "tolerate the Sight of *Yahoos*," but once home he suffers a severe relapse (288). There he becomes overwhelmed with longing for the "Virtues and Ideas of those exalted *Houyhnhnms*" and can only see his wife and children in essentialist "hard school" terms as inveterate Yahoos that arouse in him "Hatred, Disgust, and Contempt" (289). For some respite from their company, Gulliver tries to recreate an Edenic or Golden Age environment in his stable, which he populates with two pet horses whom he indulges as much as possible. Under his care, "They are Strangers to Bridle and Saddle" and retain their identities as "Stone-Horses," that is, ungelded stallions (290). Although oppressive treatment has evidently caused "the Intellectuals" of English horses "to degenerate" (295), Gulliver assumes his steeds are capable of recovering their rational capacities, so he devotes himself to their improvement.

Gulliver's newfound belief in the importance of nurture is similar to that espoused by William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, an avid horse-lover and author of frequently reprinted contemporary training manuals. Cavendish deconstructs the idea that there is a natural difference between horses and humans by observing that "[i]f the wisest

man in the world were taken by a savage people, and put to draw a cart proportion'd to his strength, and if he were beaten when he refused to do his duty, would he draw just as a horse does when he is threaten'd? . . . If a man was locked up from his birth till the age of twenty, and afterwards let out, we should see that he would be less rational than a great many beasts that are bred and disciplin'd."[28] Applying such considerations to *Gulliver's Travels* causes one to wonder whether Gulliver would have sunk into Yahoo behavior were he not coddled by the Master Horse, or whether the Houyhnhnmland horses would degenerate to the level of English horses if confined to a lifetime of drawing carts and carriages.[29]

Based on his difficulties in convincing Mendez that Houyhnhnmland is not a "Dream or Vision," Gulliver, before he returns to England, makes Mendez promise to keep secret what Gulliver has relayed to him about his life with the horses, because Gulliver realizes it might put him "in Danger of being imprisoned, or burnt by the *Inquisition*" (288), the supposed fate of Bankes and his amazing horse, who were executed for being agents of the Devil. In making Mendez promise to remain silent about the talking horses in Houyhnhnmland, Gulliver recognizes how vigorously the human/non-human boundary is policed in his culture.[30] Nevertheless, Gulliver seeks—as best he can—to recreate back in England the human-horse conversations he had in Houyhnhnmland.

Dedicated to doing for his pet horses what his Houyhnhnm Master did for him, Gulliver tells the reader that he "converse[s]" with his pets "at least four Hours every Day," a regime that produces both "Amity" among them and the ability of his horses to "understand [him] tolerably well" (290). The verb "to converse" implies that some sort of reciprocal verbal exchange is going on, a scenario that has caused many readers to question Gulliver's mental balance. Yet within the context of pet ownership, conversing with animals under the assumption that some mutual understanding can be achieved is not an uncommon practice, though admitting such behavior in general company is still stigmatized even today, despite the numbers of books now on the market about how to communicate with one's pet and the ready availability of professionals in the business of talking to animals, both living and dead, such as "animal communicators" or "pet psychics." Training manuals in circulation during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries validate talking to horses and developing an amicable relationship with them.[31] Some of the most gifted trainers were known as "horse whisperers," a term that entered the language in the

nineteenth century, although the practice existed in the seventeenth century. For example, Gervase Markham, author of a popular manual, stresses that the keeper's "greatest labour is to procure love from the Horse," for there must be "a sincere and incorporated friendshippe betwixt them or else they cannot delight or profit each other, of which love the keeper is to give testimonie . . . by his gentle language to his horse."[32]

Gulliver's conversations with his horses are in line with the perspectives of certain contemporary theophilists who suggest that—while humankind might want to deny it—non-human beings are able to communicate in language. In addition to Montaigne, a number of other philosophers entertained this idea, which enraged Descartes. Marin La Chambre, in *Discourse of the Knowledge of the Beasts* (translated 1657), for instance, scoffs at a skeptic for disbelieving that beasts can talk and therefore possess reason: "Animals have often told [the skeptic] that they had Reason, and if he understood them not, it was his fault, and none of theirs."[33] In response to the skeptic's retort that if animals do not speak English, he will continue to view them as brutes, La Chambre says that the animals "might say the same thing of him as he doth of them, and that they have to doubt whither he Reasons, until they have learnt his Language."[34] For La Chambre, Montaigne, pet keepers, and others, animals with linguistic capacity might be perceived as an everyday reality, but in literary discourse, they are largely confined to worlds of fable, myth, and fairytale. Indeed, most readers understand Gulliver's interlude in Houyhnhnmland as an allegory or fable where language-using horses are normal. Once the narrative moves back to England, the conventions of realism are invoked, and Gulliver's conversations with his pet horses are read as a manifestation of his insanity. Swift's subversive parallels and his inversions of pet/pet owner and human/non-human binaries, though, compel consideration of the line between fiction and non-fiction, a binary that organizes almost every modern library.

While Gulliver's desire to converse at length with his horses might be forgiven as an eccentricity, Gulliver's unnatural treatment of his family and his equation of humans with animalistic Houyhnhnmland Yahoos are the chief reasons most readers view him as a pathologically warped individual. Although his conversations with Mendez demonstrate to him that a creature with a Yahoo form can possess "*human* understanding," Gulliver reverts to essentialism as soon as he enters his front door back in England. At the time of writing Chapter 11, in which he narrates his homecoming and his subsequent settling in,

Gulliver tells us that "it is five Years since my last Return to England" (289), that is, 1720. Gulliver remembers that when he arrived home in December of 1715, he could only see his wife as an "odious Animal," whose touch caused him to fall into a "Swoon for almost an Hour." A year after that, he recounts that he still "could not endure [his] Wife or Children in [his] Presence; the very Smell of them was intolerable; much less could [he] suffer them to eat in the same Room" (289).

In 1720, when he is writing Chapter 11, Gulliver seems to have moved somewhat closer to his family, though he gets queasy at the thought of their touching him or his food. At this point in the narrative, he reveals the purchase of his "Stone-Horses" and concludes this penultimate chapter of his *Travels* with a happily-ever-after ending in the stable that seems designed to wrap up the narrative as a whole. The chapter's final words are as follows: "The [horses] live in great Amity with me, and Friendship to each other" (290). Most readers understandably do not accept this ending as a happy one, though, because Gulliver seems more invested in his relationship with his pet horses than that with his family. However, Gulliver seems to be suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome, which causes him to experience frightful flashbacks of Yahoo aggression. His condition may explain his temporary avoidance of his family. To help heal his psychic wounds, he seeks the comfort of the stable, where his close physical and emotional contact with horses seems to have a salubrious effect, a concept known today as equitherapy.[35]

The final chapter (12) of the *Travels* is supposedly written about three years after Chapter 11. In an undated letter entitled "The Publisher to the Reader" prefacing the original edition of the *Travels* (published in 1726), the fictitious Richard Sympson tells the reader that "about three Years ago," that is, 1723, Gulliver decided to move from Redriff (near London) to Newark, in rural Nottinghamshire. Before Gulliver moves, he gives Sympson his "Papers . . . with the Liberty to dispose of them as [he] should think fit" (9). Sympson edits the narrative and, after asking Gulliver's permission, seeks "the Advice of several worthy Persons" about how to proceed from there (9). The result of these consultations is the decision to publish. Chapter 12 appears to reflect Gulliver's anticipation of the impending publication of his *Travels* on the eve to his move to Nottinghamshire. This final chapter functions like an addendum to the narrative proper. In it, Gulliver explains his rationale for agreeing to publish the *Travels* and defends his veracity. Significantly, Gulliver's outlook in Chapter 12 is quite different from that in Chapter 11. Gulliver's therapeutic conversations with his "Stone-

Horses" and his "Speculations in [his] little Garden at *Redriff*" seem to have fostered in him radical new perspectives (295). Rejecting the static, essentialist premises of the Chain of Being paradigm, Gulliver has arrived at the conclusion that the qualities of individuals are not necessarily inherent in their natures but might be the result of nurture. His new belief in the power of nurture undergirds his decision to publish. He asserts that a "Traveller's chief Aim [in publishing his narrative] should be to make Men wiser and better" (291). He says he writes "for the noblest End, to inform and instruct Mankind," to whom he "pretend[s] to some Superiority" from "conversing so long among the most accomplished Houyhnhnms" (293). Just as the Houyhnhnms nurtured him, so he will nurture his readers. In Chapter 12, Gulliver also has concluded that generalizations cannot be made about individuals seeming to belong to the same species because individuals within a nomimal grouping may have widely variant qualities depending on their nurture and because individuals are often hybrids who combine qualities and performances associated with several species. While he once thought that Houyhnhnmland horses and English horses were two different species, on the eve of his move from Redriff, he starts calling English horses Houyhnhnms and announces his intention to create a campaign "To lament the Brutality of *Houyhnhnms* in my own Country." Endowing English horses with sensibility, Gulliver promises to "always treat their Persons with Respect, for the Sake of my noble Master . . . and the whole *Houyhnhnm* race" (295). As the pet of the Master Horse, Gulliver was taught to imitate Houyhnhnm attributes, lessons he seems to have taken literally. Despite snickers at his anomalous performance, Gulliver decides to adopt the gait and intonations of horses. Perhaps Gulliver constructs himself as a hybrid to preserve his own complicated sense of self. He and his pet "Stone-Horses," in different measures, combine the qualities of horse-ness and human-ness.

By the close of his narrative, Gulliver has moved away from blanket dismissals of those who look like the Houyhnhnmland Yahoos. He uses the intimate "thee" in addressing the "gentle Reader" in the opening paragraph of Chapter 12 (291). The English Yahoos who read Gulliver's book may look like their counterparts in Houyhnhnmland, but their humble willingness to be "inform[ed]" reveals a desire to rid themselves of the vices that define the repulsive humanoid creatures Gulliver encountered in Houyhnhnmland (291). As he finishes his volume, Gulliver never says that he detests "European *Yahoos*" in general, only those "smitten with *Pride*," which makes them oblivious

to the need for self-improvement (296). Gulliver ends his narrative with the following words: "I intreat those who have any Tincture of this absurd Vice [Pride], that they will not presume to appear in my sight" (296). In the sentence before that one, Gulliver had expressed his belief that his depiction of the Houyhnhnmland horses will have an ameliorating effect on those without that "Tincture": "I dwell the longer upon this Subject [the Houyhnhnms] from the Desire I have to make the Society of an *English Yahoo* by any means not insupportable" (296).

Gulliver's recognition that *Yahoo* is a mutable rather than fixed category also may have allowed him to achieve more intimacy with his family in the three years elapsing since he wrote Chapter 11. In Chapter 12, he reports that he allows his wife to join him at the table and announces that he has embarked on a project "to instruct the *Yahoos* of my own Family as far as I shall find them docile Animals" (295). In other words, Gulliver now believes they have the capacity to change and become, like Mendez, "Animal[s] which had some little Portion of Reason," whose company he could "tolerate" (287). Evidently, even at the time he is writing the final chapter, memories of the Houyhnhnmland Yahoos still torment him. At one point he expresses the hope that "in some Time [I will be able] to suffer a Neighbour *Yahoo* in my Company, without the Apprehensions I am yet under of his Teeth or his Claws" (296). Here, though, Gulliver seems to be exaggerating his social isolation because earlier in his narrative he speaks of post-Houyhnhnmland human "Friends" who kid him because he continues to "*trot like a Horse*" and allows himself "to fall into the Voice and manner of the *Houyhnhnms*" (279).

Gulliver's narrative, then, ends on a relatively upbeat, optimistic note. As he "take[s] a final Leave of [his] Courteous Readers" at the end of Chapter 12, he seems fairly sane and interested in improving the welfare of his family, his acquaintanceship, and his nation. Sympson also testifies to Gulliver's normality. Calling Gulliver his "antient and intimate Friend" in his prefatory letter, Sympson briefly describes Gulliver's post-1723 life in Nottinghamshire by saying that "he now lives retired, yet in good Esteem among his Neighbors" (9). Sympson also cites the high opinion that Gulliver's neighbors in Redriff had of him, especially concerning his truthfulness, so much so "that it became Sort of Proverb among [them] . . . when any one affirmed a Thing, to say it was as true as if Mr. *Gulliver* had spoke it" (8). If Gulliver were dysfunctionally antisocial or mentally unbalanced, he would not be capable of the behavior implied by Sympson's reports.[36]

Critics who would consign Gulliver to a mental hospital base much of their opinion on the prefatory "Letter from Capt. Gulliver to his Cousin Sympson," which—it must be pointed out—was only added to the volume by George Faulkner in 1735, though the letter itself is dated 1727. In this letter, Gulliver castigates Sympson for convincing him to publish his *Travels* for the "*publick Good*," contrary to Gulliver's conviction that "the *Yahoos* were a Species of Animals utterly incapable of Amendment." Saying in essence "I told you so," Gulliver points out that his book has been on sale for six months and yet has not put "a full Stop to all Abuses and Corruptions . . . in this little Island" (6). If one wants to accept the 1735 Gulliver-to-Sympson letter as a legitimate component of the *Travels*, this late-arriving appendix can be read either as a sign of Gulliver's relapse into essentialism and misanthropy or as an indication that Gulliver may have his tongue firmly planted in his cheek, as his Swiftian creator—a known lover of verbal irony—often does. A complete reform of the English nation in six months is risible by any standard.

The onset of pet keeping as a social practice generated a number of perplexing and touchy questions about species boundaries that have gained increasing prominence as time has passed. In the 1970s, Peter Singer and other animal rights supporters brought the moral problems raised by human-animal relationships into the media spotlight where they have remained in polemic form ever since. A more subtle exploration of the issues occurs in a novel entitled *The Lives of Animals* (1999), written by Booker and Nobel prize-winner J. M. Coetzee. As Swift does in *Gulliver's Travels*, Coetzee disconcerts the reader by constructing a dialectical fiction full of opposing views that foreclose the possibility of synthesis. In the introduction to Coetzee's text, Amy Gutmann notes that the story "ends with the ambiguously consoling words" that the main character's son voices to his aging mother, who is an animal rights proponent: "'There, there, it will soon be over.'" Gutmann then adds, "By contrast, these moral matters will not soon be over."[37]

Swift's specific attention to these peculiarly modern "moral matters" in *Gulliver's Travels*, particularly in Book 4, shows that they had already begun to trouble the minds of his generation over three hundred years ago. At the end of his narrative, Gulliver takes up a position that PETA could approve, but Swift—as usual—teases us by never making clear how he wants Gulliver to be perceived or his narrative to be interpreted. Swift also leaves readers wondering whether the facts on which humans premise their actions towards animals might be nothing more than self-serving fictions.

Despite the interdictions of contemporary literary theory against investigating biographies of the author to find out what he intended, readers, while they may not to admit it, are usually curious about possible connections between the life and the works. What follows here is a brief overview of Swift's relationships with animals, so that readers can draw their own conclusions.

Swift was decidedly not a vegetarian (mutton was one of his favorite foods), but he did express empathy with animals, especially those in the subject position of pet. Permitting his Irish servant, Patrick, to keep a linnet in their lodgings, Swift anthropomorphizes the bird and concerns himself with the bird's psychological state: "I believe he does not know he is a bird: where you put him, there he stands, and seems to have neither hope nor fear; I suppose in a week he will die of the spleen."[38] When the former dean leaves an undesirable cat behind in the deanery, Swift does not simply evict the animal but makes sure it gets returned to its owner. In a footnote to one of Swift's letters concerning the cat, Elrington Ball is quoted as saying that "[t]here is ground for believing . . . that Swift was not without a weakness for cats."[39]

Swift claims that he could remain totally indifferent to politics as long as he had either "a Cat or a Spaniel in the house," but he seems to have devoted less attention to cats than dogs.[40] When his "favorite Dog" is injured by one of his servants, Swift gets a "Dog-Doctor" to tend to him and writes with evident relief of the dog's recovery to Lord Orrery.[41] In "Lady Acheson Weary of the Dean," Swift describes the insatiable appetites of "His Brace of Puppies" as one of the many annoyances he inflicts on his hostess at Market Hill.[42] Another time, Swift's erstwhile dog-sitter, Mrs. Whiteway, informs Swift via letter that his dogs were "in high spirits," by which she seems to be responding to his worry that the dogs were melancholy in his absence.[43]

Of all his companion animals, though, Swift's horses were probably his favorites. The following discussion draws extensively from Michael DePorte's "Swift's Horses of Instruction," in which DePorte illustrates the degree to which Swift was devoted to horses and argues that this attachment might be responsible for his use of horses in Book 4.[44] Swift usually kept a number of horses at the same time and was always on the lookout for better ones. Like Gulliver, Swift assumes horses have sensibilities and treats them in a considerate manner. Bucking conventions that disqualify human names for horses, Swift names one horse after his friend Bolingbroke.[45] He may also have helped Esther Johnson (Stella) procure a horse they called "Little Johnson."[46] Swift writes both

Stella and Esther Vanhomrigh (Vanessa) about the rationality his horse shows when they suffered a spill together: "I got a fall off my Horse riding here from Parkgate; but no Hurt, the Horse understanding falls very well, and lying quietly till I got up."[47] On various occasions, Swift characterizes himself as a horse, as, for instance, in a response to Alexander Pope, who asks how he can keep battling on behalf of Ireland as he becomes older and more ill. Swift replies, "I am like a horse, though off his mettle, can trot on tolerably," though he does not seem to have literally adopted the "Gait and Gesture" of horses, as Gulliver does (279).[48] Too kindhearted for his own good, Swift generally does not get rid of horses that are old or failing. At one point, he describes his stable to Knightly Chetwode as "a very hospital for sick horses," and he is constantly talking about having to put one or another horse "out to grass," in other words, into retirement.[49] In his account books, Swift has a separate entry for "horses." His expenditures were quite large, with about 18 pounds per year being average, and one year (1717–1718) rising to 31 pounds. In the first quarter of that year, for example, Swift's total outlay was 33 pounds, of which 12 pounds was spent on his horses.[50]

Swift rode almost daily, weather permitting, and often took long trips to distant corners of Ireland on horseback, during which he spent far more than four hours a day in the company of horses, although there is no evidence that he talked to them as he rode. If we can believe what he writes to a friend—that he lived like a hermit with scarcely any human company—then it might be possible to conclude that Swift spent more time with horses than people. Although he never mentions having conversations with his horses, he nonetheless treats them as "significant others." He no doubt insults Pope as well as his other English friends by refusing to live in England because he could not afford to keep his horses there. Swift's affectionate relationship with some of his horses can be seen in a playful letter to Mrs. Howard in which he tells her that "while I was caressing one of my Houyhnhnms, he bit my little finger."[51] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu—no friend of Swift's—says that given his being "so passionately devoted" to horses, she "can't help suspecting some very powerfull Motive at the bottom of it," namely bestiality.[52]

Swift also believed in the health benefits of spending time with horses. In his letters to Stella and Vanessa, Dr. Swift constantly prescribes equitherapy and admonishes the women to ride for a number of hours every day: "Now, Madam Stella, what say you? . . . [I]f you rid every day for a twelve-month, you would be still better and bet-

ter."[53] DePorte observes that Swift himself rode every day to maintain a sense of well-being and equated horse riding with happiness, as for instance, when he reminisces to Vanessa about the good times they had together: "Cad thinks often of these, especially on Horseback, as I am assured."[54] Conversely, he subliminally associates depression with falling off his horse. Upset with the news that Stella was dying, and delayed from reaching her because of bad weather in Holyhead, Swift dreams that he "got 20 falls from his horse."[55]

Vale. Caveat lector. Finis.

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NOTES

I would like to thank friends, family, and colleagues who evaluated the ideas in this paper with constructive skepticism and generous candor: Stephen Ackerman, Andrew Carpenter, Jennifer Jordan, Alice Kelly, Sophie Kelly, Kimberly Latta, Kathie Lesko, Candace Lines, Kathleen Lynch, Robert Mahony, Leland Peterson, Claude Rawson, and Alinda Sumers. Special appreciation goes to Frank Palmeri and Thorell Tsomondo for multiple interventions at crucial times.

[1] The *locus classicus* of discussions of the Chain of Being is Arthur O. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being: A Study in the History of Ideas* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1953). Lovejoy analyzes challenges to the Great Chain of Being in chapter 9, "Temporalizing of the Chain of Being," 242–87. The new view of animals that emerged in the eighteenth century is analyzed in Keith Thomas, "Compassion for the Brute Creation," in his *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in English, 1500–1800* (London: Allen Lane, 1983), 143–91.

[2] René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method; and, Meditations on first Philosophy*, trans. Elizabeth Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, ed. David Weissman, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1996), 1:36.

[3] For further definition of the "hard" and "soft" schools of Swiftian criticism, see James L. Clifford, "Gulliver's Fourth Voyage: 'Hard' and 'Soft' Schools of Interpretation," in *Quick Springs of Sense: Studies in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Larry S. Champion, vol. 18 (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1974), 33–49.

[4] Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, in vol. 9, *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), 224–25. Hereafter cited parenthetically by page number.

[5] See Descartes, 1:117.

[6] Bankes and his horse seemed to have been actual sixteenth-century individuals who were mythologized in numerous accounts, many of which were in print through the eighteenth century. See Edward Rimbert, "Introduction," in John Dando and Harrie Runt [pseudonym], *Maroccus Extaticus: or, Bankes' Bay Horse in a Trance*, ed. Rimbert (1595; repr., London: Reprinted for the Percy Society, 1843), v–viii. The connection of talking animals with the Devil, of course, originates in Genesis, where Satan takes the form of a beguiling snake. (On the other hand, God speaks through Balaam's Ass.) The association of talking animals with black magic reflects itself in the concept of witches' familiars. Witches, of course, are now commonly understood to be harmless old ladies who talked to their cats.

[7] See Thomas, 119.

[8] Thomas, 119.

[9] See Claude Rawson, *God, Gulliver, and Genocide: Barbarism and the European Imagination, 1492–1945* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001). Rawson analyzes how Montaigne's essays on "Cannibals" and "Coaches" influenced Swift's exploration of the "network of unacknowledged perceptions and anxieties about actual kinship between the civilized spokesman and his savage subject" (4). Rawson mentions in passing the similarity in attitudes toward "savages" and animals, as well as the putative equivalence of racism and speciesism.

[10] Michel de Montaigne, *An Apology for Raymond Sebond*, trans. and ed. M. A. Screech (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 17.

[11] See George Boas, *The Happy Beast in French Thought of the Seventeenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1933).

[12] The problems of classification coming to the foreground in the seventeenth century are discussed by Erica Fudge, "The Shape of a Man: Knowing Animals and the Law," in her *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern Culture* (London: MacMillan, 2001), 115–42.

[13] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 333. The eighteenth century's fascination with "monsters" and the troubling questions they raise are discussed by Dennis Todd, *Imagining Monsters: Miscreations of the Self in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995).

[14] Thomas, 131; Samuel Pepys, quoted in Thomas, 132.

[15] Dando and Runt [pseudonym], 6.

[16] Fudge discusses early modern perceptions about the nonworking or "recreational animal" (her coinage) in *Perceiving Animals* (133).

[17] Alexander Pope, "An Essay on Criticism," in *The Poems of Alexander Pope: A One Volume Edition of the Twickenham Text, with Selected Annotations*, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), 149.

[18] Montaigne states that "[w]e often shed tears at the loss of animals which we love: they do the same when they lose us" (43). As proof of the latter, Montaigne cites the example of Pallas's horse, Aethon, an example he draws from Virgil's *Aeneid*, book 11, line 89.

[19] For an analysis of evolving attitudes toward animals, see Thomas, chapter 4.4, "Meat or Mercy," 287–300.

[20] Isaiah 11:6–9 (KJV). See also Genesis 1:29–30 and Genesis 9:1–3 (KJV). Currently there is much debate about the nature of the dominion God gave to humankind, according to the account in Genesis.

[21] Montaigne, 17.

[22] See Thomas, 118–19.

[23] The OED notes that "cub" can refer to a young fox or figuratively to an "untutored youth." See OED Online, s.v. "cub," definitions 1, 3.

[24] John Gay, "An Elegy on a Lap-Dog," in vol. 1, *John Gay: Poetry and Prose*, ed. Vinton Dearing (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), lines 13–14.

[25] Gay, lines 27–28, 32.

[26] See Laura Brown, chapter 6, "The Orangutan, the Lap Dog, and the Parrot: The Fable of the Nonhuman Being," in her *Fables of Modernity: Literature and Culture in the English Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 2001), 221–65, esp. 224–27, 236–40. Brown, in her introduction, notes the prevalence of eighteenth-cen-

tury representations that imagine "an affinity between radically alien species"—such as between humans and their companion animals—and wonders whether that empathetic leap "opens up the possibility of a new way of being that has the potential to rise above difference" (14).

[27] Montaigne, 98.

[28] William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, *La Methode et Invention Nouvelle de Dresser les Chevaux*, anononymous translation, in John Brindley, *A General System of Horsemanship*, 2 vols. (London, 1713), 1:12–13. Quoted in Betsy Bowden, "Before the Houyhnhnms: Rational Horses in the Late Seventeenth Century," *Notes and Queries* 39 (March 1992): 39. Cavendish's text was originally published in 1658 and was extracted and republished in many subsequent versions. In a letter to Charles Ford, Swift echoes Cavendish's argument that the behavior produced by oppression should not be confused with natural slavishness: "You fetter a Man seven Years, then let him loose to shew his Skill in dancing, and because he does it awkwardly, you say he ought to be fettered for Life" (*The Correspondence of Swift*, ed. Sir Harold Williams, 5 vols. [Oxford: Clarendon, 1963], 2:342).

[29] I also discuss the nature versus nurture debate in my "Swift's Explorations of Slavery in Ireland and Houyhnhnmland," *PMLA* 91 (1976): 846–55.

[30] Of course, in addition to talking, the Houyhnhnmland horses, like animals in mythical tales, do anatomically improbable things like building houses, threading needles, and milking cows. Gulliver knows that the Houyhnhnms are not mythical but real because he saw their behavior with his own eyes. The reader is forced to decide how to register Gulliver's account of his experience.

[31] See Thomas, 101.

[32] Gervase Markham, *Cavelarice, Or the English Horseman* (London: Printed for Edward White, 1607), book 5, pages 45–47. Extracted in different versions, Markham's ideas continued to circulate through the eighteenth century. One selling point, cited on the title page of the 1607 edition, is the promise that the book will show keepers "how to teach [horses] to do trickes, like Bankes, his Curtall."

[33] Marin La Chambre, *Discourse of the Knowledge of the Beasts,* translated "by a person of quality" (London, 1657), 262.

[34] La Chambre, 263. R. W. Serjeantson, in "The Passions and Animal Language, 1540–1700," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62 (2001): 425–44, provides the early modern philosophical context for considerations of whether animals could talk. Moreover, today the question of whether animals are capable of producing thought or language (variously defined) is being investigated by scientists and social scientists in a number of fields, including neurology, primatology, experimental psychology, linguistics, comparative anatomy, biology, cognition studies, and evolutionary biology, among others. See, for example, the review of Clive D. L. Wynne's *Do Animals Think?* (Princeton, 2004) in *Science,* 16 July 2004, 344; or Donald G. McNeil, Jr., "Did the Cat Really Say, 'I Vant to be Alone'? Sorry, It Said Meow," "Science Times" in *The New York Times*, 7 September 2004, D3, columns 1–2. The emotional rhetoric on both sides of these "scientific" debates suggests that much is still at stake in maintaining distinct species boundaries.

[35] In 2007, equitherapy is a widely practiced treatment for a variety of physical and psychological problems. A few recent books on this topic (among many) are Henry N. Blake's *Talking with Horses: A Study of Communication Between Man and Horse* (1993); Adele McCormick's *Horse Sense and the Human Heart: What Horses Can Teach Us about Trust, Bonding, Creativity and Spirituality* (1997); Chris Irwin, *Horses Don't Lie:*

What Horses Can Teach Us about Our Natural Capacity for Awareness, Confidence, and Trust (2001); Wyatt Webb, *It's Not about the Horse: It's about Overcoming Fear and Self-Doubt* (2002); Linda Kohanov's *Riding between Worlds: Expanding Our Potential through the Way of the Horse* (2003); Wendy Baker's *Healing Power of Horses: Lessons from the Lakota Indians* (2004); and Carole Fletcher, *Healed by Horses: A Memoir* (2005). A search for "equitherapy" on Google produces 593 hits (February 2007). The popular movie *The Horse Whisperer* (1998), starring Robert Redford, is based on the premise that relationships with horses can heal human psyches.

[36] Rawson is one of the few critics who calls attention to Gulliver's re-acculturation and "process of adaptation" as well as to the gap between Gulliver's return to England (1715) and the publication of his *Travels* (1726). Rawson says that Swift has purposefully eclipsed the image of the re-acculturated Gulliver with the vivid images of his misanthropy; see Rawson, 159–60.

[37] Amy Gutmann, "Introduction," in J. M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1999), 11. James Gill, in "Beast Over Man: Theriophilic Paradox in Gulliver's 'Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms'" (*Studies in Philology* 67 [1970]: 532–49), also emphasizes the importance of considering theriophilic discourse and comes to an ambiguous conclusion, although he arrives at it from a different direction. Gill's analysis links reason with living according to Nature and thus privileges the Houyhnhnmland horses but also the Houyhnhnmland Yahoos, whom he sees as superior to "civilized" European Yahoos. At the end of the essay, Gill stresses the "dialectical ironies" of *Gulliver's Travels*, and states his conviction that "further examination will show that theriophilic forms of argument have been adapted in a most pervasive way to the narrative of the fourth voyage to secure a paradoxical conclusion, the aim of which is a recognition of the multiple incongruities of human thought and experience" (549).

[38] Swift, *Journal to Stella* ed. Harold Williams, 2 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974), 1:156.

[39] Elrington Ball, ed., *Swift's Verse* (1929), quoted in Swift, *Correspondence*, 2:135n.

[40] Swift to Pope, 10 January 1721, in *Correspondence*, 2:367.

[41] Swift to Lord Orrey, 17 July 1735, in *Correspondence*, 4:369.

[42] Swift, "Lady Acheson Weary of the Dean," in vol. 3, *Poems*, ed. Williams, rev. ed. (1937; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), line 334.

[43] Mrs. Whiteway to Swift, 2 December 1735, in *Correspondence*, 4:444. Paul V. Thompson and Dorothy Jay Thompson devote a section of their introduction to *The Account Books of Jonathan Swift* (ed. Thompson and Thompson [Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1984]) to Swift's many expenditures on his dogs and provide many useful references in which he refers to his love for his dogs; see Thompson and Thompson, xc–xci.

[44] See Michael DePorte, "Swift's Horses of Instruction," in *Reading Swift: Papers from the Second Munster Symposium on Jonathan Swift*, ed Richard Rodino and Hermann Real (Munchen: Wilhelm Fink, 1993), 199–211.

[45] See Thomas, 113.

[46] Swift, *Journal to Stella*, 1:8.

[47] Swift, *Journal to Stella*, 1:2.

[48] Swift to Pope, 11 August 1729, in *Correspondence*, 3:341.

[49] Swift to Knightly Chetwode, 6 October 1714, in *Correspondence*, 2:135; Swift to Chetwode, 17 September 1714, in *Correspondence*, in 2:133.

[50] See Thompson and Thompson, lxxxvi–lxxxvii, 4.

[51] Swift to Mrs. Howard, in *Correspondence*, 3:196.

[52] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. Robert Halsband, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965–1967), 2:72. Quoted in DePorte, 199.

[53] Swift, *Journal to Stella*, 1:301.

[54] Swift to Esther Vanhomrigh, 7 August 1722, in *Correspondence*, 2:433.

[55] Swift, "Holyhead Journal," in vol. 5, *Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Davis (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969), 203. As I said earlier, the material in this section on horses heavily draws on DePorte's compilation of references and his interpretations of them.