

General Article 【研究論著】

Swift, Temple, Defoe, and the Jesuits
史威夫特、坦普爾、狄佛與耶穌會士

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Abstract

The glowing accounts of China that Jesuit missionaries in the 17th Century sent back to Europe had great influence on such Enlightenment figures as Leibniz in Germany, Voltaire in France, and Sir William Temple in England. Among Temple's younger contemporaries influenced by his views of China was his secretary (and distant relative) Jonathan Swift, whose masterpiece, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), contains thematic and verbal echoes of Temple. While the first and third books of *Gulliver's Travels* are largely satires of Swift's England, the second and fourth books contain echoes of the Confucian system of values praised by Temple – values conspicuously absent in England. Some Europeans, however, were unimpressed by the Jesuit reports, notably Daniel Defoe, whose novel *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719) mocks China and its lack of a Protestant work ethic. In the contrasting attitudes taken toward China by Defoe and Temple (and, by inference, Swift) we can see how the Enlightenment image of a Confucian Utopia gave way – as Defoe's mercantile class came to power – to the negative image of the Celestial Empire of early modern times.

摘要

十七世紀耶穌會傳教士對中國的燦爛描述被送回歐洲之後，對啟蒙時代的重要人物，如德國的萊布尼茲、法國的伏爾泰及英國的坦普爾爵士，產生極大的影響。坦普爾的秘書（及遠房親戚）史威夫特是受到坦普爾中國觀點影響的同時期年輕人之一。史威夫特的名著《格里弗遊記》（1726），在主題和詞語上，含有坦普爾的迴響。《格里弗遊記》的第一部和第三部大半是史威夫特對英國的諷刺，第二部和第四部則包含坦普爾所讚揚的儒家系統價值觀——英國顯然缺乏的價值觀——的迴響。儘管如此，卻有些歐洲人對耶穌會的報導無動於衷，尤其是狄佛。他的小說《魯賓遜漂流記的進一步冒險》（1719）嘲笑中國及中國缺乏基督新教的工作倫理。我們可從狄佛和坦普爾（以及，經由推論，史威夫特）對中國態度的差異看到啟蒙時代對儒家理想世界的印象如何隨著狄佛所屬的商業階層得勢，而被近現代對天朝的負面形象所取代。

In 1689 the young Jonathan Swift, fresh out of college, had the good fortune to be taken up by his distant relative, Sir William Temple. In addition to being exposed to the conversations and cosmopolitan views of his employer-mentor, Swift was also exposed to the library at Temple's estate, Moor Park, nicely stocked with "travel literature, modern history, the various civilizations of the world, and letters, ancient and modern."¹ Temple was particularly interested in civilizations which, he felt, had been "overlooked by the modern learned"²; and, in this respect, no country impressed him more than China. In his essay "Of Heroic Virtue," Temple applauded the devoted "missionary friars and Jesuits" who "pierced with infinite pains and dangers" into the "vast continent... wholly unknown to the rest of the world."³ It is highly likely that Swift's interest in travel literature was developed at Moor Park. From the catalogue of Swift's library, and from comments made in *Gulliver's Travels*, we know that Swift, like Temple, collected travel books, many of which included mention of China. Swift owned William Dampier's *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), Richard Hakluyt's *Collection of Voyages* (date unlisted), Thomas Herbert's *Some Yeares Travels into Divers Parts of Africa and Asia* (1634), and (Samuel) Purchas his *Pilgrimes* (1625).

Most interesting of all, for purposes of this paper, Swift owned the Latin edition of Johann Nieuhof's *Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces to the Grand Tartar Cham, Emperor of China*, published in Amsterdam in 1668. Swift's copy of Nieuhof, moreover, was one of only seventy-four books (out of 657 altogether) that, according to the cataloguer, contain "Remarks or Observations on them in the Hand of Dr. Swift."⁴

1 Ricardo Quintana, *Swift: An Introduction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 4.

2 Ibid.

3 William Temple, Sir, "Of Heroic Virtue," in *Five Miscellaneous Essays*, edited by Samuel Holt Monk (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), pp. 107, 109.

4 Item number 363 of the catalogue (reprinted in Williams) gives the Latin edition of Nieuhof, "*Nieuhovii Legatio Batavica ad Magnum Tartariae Chamum*, Latine per Geo. Homium (Amst, 1668)."

No western author, to my knowledge, has considered the possibility that Swift might have shared some of Temple's interest in China, despite the fact that Temple's various comments on China were included in the volume of *Miscellanea* which Swift, as Temple's secretary, copied out and prepared for publication in 1690. Even the great Chinese scholar Qian Zhongshu considered Swift to be "unaffected by [...] Temple's contagious enthusiasm." "What a pity," he laments, "that Gulliver who visited Japan from Luggnagg should have gone thence to Amsterdam without paying a visit to China!"⁵ Yet Swift's biographer, Irwin Ehrenpreis, writes of "the profundity of Temple's effect on Swift." Swift "admired Temple's character and his mind. Temple's literary style, political philosophy, moral outlook, and aesthetic judgment became either models or points of departure for Swift's own."⁶ There are passages in *Gulliver's Travels*, Ehrenpreis has noted, that contain "verbal echoes" of Temple's "Of Heroic Virtue."⁷ But Ehrenpreis fails to mention that some of these passages in Temple contain descriptions of China which Temple, in turn, lifted right out of Nieuhof's *Embassy*.

In 1721, two decades after Temple's death, Swift told his friend Charles Ford he was "now writing a History of my Travells, which will be a large volume, and gives Account of Countryes hitherto unknown."⁸ Like Daniel Defoe, who, two years earlier had published two volumes of the *Adventures and Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, Swift was indulging in a kind of writing he sometimes described as "diverting" and sometimes as "Trash."⁹ Through the mouth of Gulliver, Swift complained that the world is "over-stocked with Books of Travels," and he doubted whether "some Authors less consulted Truth than

5 Qian Zhongshu, *The Vision of China in the English Literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, edited by Adrian Hsia (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1998), pp. 121-122.

6 Irwin Ehrenpreis, *Swift: The Man, his Works, and the Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962-1983), vol. I, p. 92.

7 *Ibid.*, vol. III, pp. 455-456.

8 Jonathan Swift's letters, in *Correspondence*, edited by Harold Williams (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963-1965), vol. II, p. 381.

9 *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 430-431.

their own Vanity or Interest," or the "Diversion of ignorant Readers."¹⁰ Defoe shared Swift's interest in travel books, although he lacked Swift's qualms about the need for truthfulness. He once bragged that, simply through reading about China, he "could give a better account of [its] laws, policies, trade, and manufactures [...] than any of our East-India captains."¹¹ In *Farther Adventures*, Robinson Crusoe reaches China and immediately denounces the false reports made by Jesuits and other actual travellers. Yet Crusoe's story is precisely the sort of tale unlikely to appeal to Swift because of its "fabulous" nature.¹² It resembles *Gulliver's Travels* less than it does the largely fictitious Peregrinations of Fernão Mendes Pinto. In 1654 Dorothy Osborne had recommended Pinto's "Story of China" to her fiancé, the young William Temple: "tis as diverting a book of the kinde as ever I read, and is as handsomely written, you must allow him the Priviledge of a Travellour and he does not abuse it, his lyes are as pleasant harmlesse on's as lyes can bee."¹³ One recalls, by contrast, Swift's declaration to Alexander Pope that his purpose in *Gulliver* was "to vex the world rather than divert it."¹⁴

For Defoe, the British tradesman turned author, the literary traveller's aim was above all to divert. In the *Farther Adventures*, written immediately after its predecessor in order to capitalize on its success, Defoe toned down the unctuous sermonizing of the first book. Crusoe, now in his seventh decade, finds himself, very much like Pinto, in the company of pirates, merchants, and desperate men travelling through various Eastern countries. Swift, for his part, claimed to be describing "Countryes hitherto unknown"¹⁵; hence, he avoided taking his hero to

10 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, edited by Robert A. Greenberg (New York: Norton, 1970, 2nd edition), p. 122.

11 John Robert Moore, *Daniel Defoe: Citizen of the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 281.

12 See Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, pp. 255-256.

13 Rebecca D. Catz, "Introduction to Pinto," in *The Travels of Mendes Pinto* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. xxvii.

14 Jonathan Swift, *Correspondence*, vol. III, p. 102.

15 Corresponding passages of Nieuhof and Temple are compared by Marburg (see Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, pp. 59-60).

countries already written up. In voyages one (Lilliput) and three (Laputa), Swift in fact set the scene in a stylized version of his native Britain. To the French translator of *Gulliver*, Swift admitted that "The same vices and the same follies reign every- where; at least, in all the civilized countries of Europe."¹⁶ Nevertheless, in the fourth and second of Gulliver's voyages, Swift suggests – however hyperbolically – that there is a world different from Europe, one that lives according to reason and that reveres and rewards virtue. This Utopian realm, occupied by horses or giants, bears similarities to the China eulogized by the Jesuits and by Swift's mentor.

The glowing accounts of China that Jesuit missionaries in the seventeenth century sent back to Europe had great influence on such Enlightenment figures as Leibniz in Germany, Voltaire in France, and Temple in England. Matteo Ricci's seminal account (as transcribed by Father Trigault) describes a world very much unlike Europe. "Neither the King nor his people ever think of waging a war of aggression," Ricci maintains. "They are quite content with what they have and are not ambitious of conquest. In this respect they are much different from the people of Europe, who are frequently discontent with their own governments and covetous of what others enjoy." Even more astonishing, the country "is administered by the Order of the Leamed,"¹⁷ by Philosophers! Only "capable" men are allowed to govern there, Nieuhof reasserted in his *Embassy* (the book annotated by Swift): "Men of great Learning and eminent Parts; for whosoever is preferred in China to places and offices of trust, has given a clear testimony of his Knowledge, Prudence, Vertue, and Valour; for neither the favour of the Prince, nor Grandeur of his Friends stand him in any stead, if he be not so extraordinarily qualified".¹⁸ Nieuhof's source here is Ricci, who contended that the inspiration

16 Ibid.

17 Matteo Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century, The Journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583-1610*, transcribed by Nicola Trigault, translated by Louis J. Gallagher (New York: Random House, 1953), p. 55.

18 Johann Nieuhof, *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Grand Tartar Cham, Emperour of China* (London: John Macock, 1669), p. 150.

for this admirable system was Confucius. In a passage excerpted in *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, which Swift and Temple surely read, Ricci praised the "morall Philosophie" of the Chinese. "Their greatest Philosopher is called Confucius, [...] by example as well as precept exciting to vertue, accounted a very holy man. And if we marke his sayings and doings, wee must confesse few of our Ethnicke philosophers before him, and many behinde."¹⁹ In Confucius's writings, Nieuhof states, "are taught Rules Oeconomical and Political, as well the way to Live well and Govern well."²⁰ Temple, in "Of Heroic Virtue," commends Confucius using Nieuhof's very words, "the whole scope of all Confucius has writ [says Temple] seems aimed only at teaching men to live well and to govern well."²¹

Temple cites the Jesuits on a number of occasions in "Of Heroic Virtue." He refers, for example, to their bravery and devotion in coming to China,²² to the missionaries' high regard for ancient Chinese records,²³ and to the accuracy of their accounts of Chinese magnificence and government.²⁴ He calls attention to the Jesuit edition of Confucius (*Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*), recently published in France (1689).²⁵ Temple also cites, as corroborating witnesses, "persons employed thither upon trade, or embassies," a reference to Nieuhof, whose account of the Dutch embassy to China was published at about the time (1667) that Temple was serving as British ambassador to Holland (1668-1671). Upon his return to England, Temple wrote a book on Holland (*Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands*, 1672) which has been called "the first serious and intelligent attempt to interpret the people and polity of one country sympathetically to another."²⁶ The author of this statement, Temple's biographer

19 Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes* (London: Fetherstone, 1625), vol. III, p. 387.

20 Johann Nieuhof, *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Grand Tartar Cham, Emperour of China*, p. 163.

21 William Temple, Sir, *Five Miscellaneous Essays*, edited by Samuel Holt Monk (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), pp. 114-115.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 109.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 112.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 122.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 113.

26 Homer E. Woodbridge, *Sir William Temple: The Man and his Work* (New York: The Modern

Homer E. Woodbridge, also calls Temple "the first English political writer to hold up the Chinese system of government as a model" – more than a half century before this became "a commonplace" to Enlightenment figures such as Voltaire.²⁷

Temple's feeling for China must have been strengthened by his own anomalous position, that of a highly cultivated English statesman, friendly with English and Dutch royalty, yet somehow excluded from the higher political positions that went to men of lesser intelligence and few moral scruples. When Swift came to work for him, Temple had turned his back on public affairs and was cultivating his garden at Moor Park, as well as writing his essays. Swift, who also suffered a lifelong sense of injured merit, would surely have pondered Temple's comments on Chinese governing principles: "Honour and respect is nowhere paid to nobility and riches as much as it is here to virtue and learning, which are equally regarded, both by the prince and the people: and the advancement to office of persons, only for excelling in those qualities, prevents the cankers of envy and faction that corrupt and destroy so many other governments."²⁸ In other words, "leapers and creepers," rope-dancers, and the other venal politicians Gulliver encounters in Lilliput-Britain are not welcome here. In Gulliver's voyage to Lilliput, incidentally, Swift borrows a passage from "Of Heroic Virtue" in praise of China. "The two hinges of all government," Temple says, "reward and punishment, are nowhere turned with greater care, nor exercised with more bounty and severity."²⁹ In Swift this becomes an ironical praise of the Lilliputians, "Although we usually call Reward and Punishment, the two Hinges upon which all

Language Association of America, 1940), p. 128.

27 Homer E. Woodbridge, *Sir William Temple: The Man and his Work* (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1940), p. 276.

28 William Temple, Sir, "Of Heroic Virtue," in *Five Miscellaneous Essays*, edited by Samuel Holt Monk (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), p. 121.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 120.

Government turns; yet I could never observe this Maxim to be put in Practice by any Nation, except that of *Lilliput*."³⁰

Nowadays Temple is primarily remembered for his connection with Swift; but it was also Temple who introduced to Europe the idea of the Chinese-style garden,³¹ and it was Temple who imported into England the French-based battle of Ancients versus Moderns.³² Temple came under fire for suggesting "that the moderns were not superior to the ancients."³³ As proofs of what he felt to demonstrate the decline of learning in modern times, Temple noted, first, a "want or decay of favour in great kings and princes to encourage it",³⁴ second, the tendency in modern times to pursue wealth rather than learning and other honorable callings,³⁵ and third, the infection of pedantry among modern would-be scholars.³⁶ China has been spared this affliction because, "near the age of Socrates, lived their great and renowned Confucius, who [like Socrates] began the same design of reclaiming men from the useless and endless speculations of nature, to those of morality."³⁷ But whereas Socrates focussed on the well-being and happiness of individuals, Confucius stressed a public ethics, a system of good government run by wise and virtuous men. Swift, while transcribing Temple's words for the printer, would certainly have agreed with Temple's sentiments – in "Ancient and Modern Learning" and, even more so, "Of Heroic Virtue" – that "no people can be happy but under good governments, and no governments happy but over good men."³⁸ It was typical of Temple, but unusual among Englishmen of his time, that he should have looked for examples of

30 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, p. 40.

31 In his essay "Upon the Gardens of Epicurus" (1685).

32 Swift's *The Battle of the Books* was written in support of Temple's position in his "Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning."

33 Clara Marburg, *Sir William Temple: A Seventeenth Century "Libertin"* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), p. 26.

34 William Temple, Sir, "An Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning," in *Five Miscellaneous Essays*, p. 67.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 68.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 69.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 46.

38 William Temple, Sir, "Of Heroic Virtue," p. 114.

"heroic virtue" not only from among the ancient Greeks and Romans but also from civilizations neglected by the "modern learned" (i.e. pedants). Besides China, Temple surveys the achievements of Peru, Scythia, and Arabia. He deems China the best of them all because – in addition to constituting "the greatest, richest, and most populous kingdom now known in the world"³⁹ – China's system has survived for so many years, a system so admirable that its invaders and conquerors were converted to Confucian values and Chinese laws.

Temple's account of Confucius in "Of Heroic Virtue" draws heavily upon Nieuhof's *Embassy*, which in turn draws upon the Jesuits. Swift, in his turn, draws upon Temple when describing, for example, the rational nature of the Houyhnhnms. Here is a passage from Temple which is itself taken from Nieuhof,⁴⁰

The chief principle [Confucius] seems to lay down for a foundation and build upon, is that every man ought to study and endeavour the improving and perfecting of his own natural reason to the greatest height he is capable, so as he may never (or as seldom as can be) err and swerve from the law of nature in the course and conduct of his life [...] That in this perfection of natural reason consists the perfection of body and mind and the utmost or supreme happiness of mankind; that the means and rules to attain this perfection are chiefly not to will or desire anything but what is consonant to his natural reason, nor anything that is not agreeable to the good and happiness of other men, as well as our own.⁴¹

This Utopian view of China reappears, to some degree, in Book Four of *Gulliver's Travels*. Swift, however, differs from his mentor in his pessimistic

39 Ibid., p. 110.

40 See George H. Dunne, *Generation of Giants: The Story of the Jesuits in China in the Last Decades of the Ming Dynasty* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962), p. 94, and Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Viking, 1984), p. 150.

41 William Temple, Sir, "Of Heroic Virtue," p. 114.

view that men are not naturally reasonable. He reserves the term "Perfection of Nature" for his horses.⁴² Only "these noble Houyhnhnms are endowed by Nature with a general Disposition to all Virtues, and have no Conceptions or Ideas of what is evil in a rational Creature; so their grand Maxim is, to cultivate Reason, and to be wholly governed by it."⁴³ Moreover, for these natural-born Confucians, "Reason [is not] [...] a Point problematical as with us, where Men can argue with Plausibility on both Sides of a Question; but strikes you with immediate Conviction; as it must needs do where it is not mingled, obscured, or discoloured by Passion and Interest."⁴⁴ Since, according to Temple, the Chinese learned are so very reasonable, "all that which we call scholastic or polemic is unknown or unpracticed, and serves, I fear, among us, for little more than to raise doubts and disputes, heats and feuds, animosities and factions."⁴⁵ What Temple calls "polemic," Swift (as Gulliver) calls "Opinion, [...] a Point [that] could be disputable." Among the Houyhnhnms, reason is so natural as to be incontrovertible; hence, "Controversies, Wranglings, Disputes, and Positiveness in false or dubious Propositions, are Evils unknown among" them.⁴⁶

In "Of Heroic Virtue" Temple asks his reader to "consider the map of the world as it lies at present before us since the discoveries made by the navigations of these three last centuries."⁴⁷ Forget the Western civilizations of Greece and Rome, forget Egypt and Persia, he advises, and look instead at the little known but "vast regions of the world" which boast civilizations that, "upon inquiry, will be found to have equalled or exceeded all the others in the wisdom of their constitutions, the extent of their conquests, and the duration of their empires or states."⁴⁸ It is in this spirit, perhaps, that Swift, mixing encomia with irony, begins his "Account of Countries hitherto unknown." Swift's hero Gulliver, is,

42 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, p. 203.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., p. 233.

45 William Temple, Sir, "Of Heroic Virtue," p. 115.

46 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, p. 233.

47 William Temple, Sir, "Of Heroic Virtue," p. 106.

48 Ibid., pp. 105-106.

coincidentally, a graduate of Temple's alma mater, Emanuel College in Cambridge, and he shares Temple's curiosity about the world. Like Temple, Swift praises what is oldest and mocks the pretensions of the moderns. "What has been produced," Temple wrote, "for the use, benefit, or pleasure of mankind, by all the airy speculations of those who have passed for the great advancers of knowledge and learning these last fifty years (which is the date of our modern pretenders) I confess I am yet to seek, and should be very glad to find."⁴⁹ Temple's "modern pretenders" are Swift's "Projectors" of volume three of *Gulliver*: scientists who live in the airy realms of theory, these same "useless and endless speculations of nature"⁵⁰ that Confucius had opposed. The only genuine heroes Gulliver encounters, on the island of Glubbudrib, are virtually all figures from ancient history.

Gulliver comes closest to China on his third voyage. His destination is the East Indies, and he arrives safely at Madras (India) and Tonquin before being captured by pirates. Although Gulliver never actually reaches China, he does visit lands which contain occasional oblique (and sometimes not so oblique) references to China. Tiny Lilliput is, of course, the very reverse of (what Temple called) the "vast continent" of China.⁵¹ Nonetheless, the minuscule Lilliputian king regards himself as if he were emperor of China. He calls himself

Delight and Terror of the Universe, whose Dominions extend five Thousand Blustrugs (about twelve Miles in Circumference) to the Extremities of the Globe: Monarch of all Monarchs: Taller than the Sons of Men; whose Feet press down to the Center, and whose Head strikes against the Sun: At whose Nod the Princes of the Earth shake their

49 William Temple, Sir, "An Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning," p. 95.

50 Ibid., p. 46.

51 William Temple, Sir, "Of Heroic Virtue," in *Five Miscellaneous Essays*, edited by Samuel Holt Monk (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), pp. 107, 109.

Knees; pleasant as the Spring, comfortable as the Summer, fruitful as Autumn, dreadful as Winter.⁵²

The contemporary reader of Swift might well have remembered descriptions of the Chinese emperor made by Thomas Herbert (in a book Swift owned and annotated): "undaunted Emperour, Lord of the whole World, Son of the Sun, and beauty of the whole Earth."⁵³ Temple, in "Of Heroic Virtue," described Peking in language borrowed from Nieuhof. "The imperial city of Peking," Temple notes, "[...] is a regular four-square; the wall of each side is six miles in length [...] The palace of the Emperor is three miles in compass, consisting of three courts, one within the other, whereof the last (where the Emperor lodges) is four hundred paces square."⁵⁴ Gulliver, in turn, describes the capital of Lilliput as follows:

I thought in all my Travels I had not seen a more populous Place. The City is an exact Square, each side of the Wall being five Hundred Foot long. The two great Streets which run cross and divide it into four Quarters, are five Foot wide [...] The Emperor's Palace is in the Center of the City, where the two great Streets meet. It is inclosed by a Wall of two Foot high, and Twenty Foot distant from the Buildings [...] The outward Court is a Square of Forty Foot, and includes two other Courts.⁵⁵

Other verbal correspondences between "Of Heroic Virtue" and *Gulliver's Travels* are the two authors' descriptions of Lilliputian and Chinese writing. Of the latter, Temple says, "Their writing is neither from the left-hand to the right like the European, nor from right to left like the Asiatic languages, but from top to bottom of the paper in one straight line, and then beginning again at the top till

52 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, p. 25.

53 Thomas Herbert, *Some Yeares Travels into Divers Parts of Africa and Asia the Great* (London: Everingham, 1677; Originally published 1634)

54 William Temple, Sir, *Five Miscellaneous Essays*, p. 111.

55 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, p. 28.

the side be full."⁵⁶ In Swift this deadpan style turns whimsical, the Lilliputian "Manner of Writing is very peculiar: being neither from the Left to the Right, like the Europeans; nor from the Right to the Left, like the Arabians; nor from up to down, like the Chinese; nor from down to up, like the Cascagians; but aslant from one Corner of the Paper to the other, like Ladies in England."⁵⁷ There is perhaps a subtler echo of Temple in Gulliver's description of Lilliputian burials, the dead buried with "Heads directly downwards," so that, "at their Resurrection," they will "be found ready standing on their Feet"⁵⁸ since the earth will be upside down. "The Leamed among them," Gulliver adds, "confess the Absurdity of this Doctrine; but the Practice still continues, in Compliance to the Vulgar."⁵⁹ Temple, in his description of the Chinese worship of idols, exempted "the leamed" from this practice. Only "the vulgar or illiterate" need "temples, idols, or priests," Temple explains. "But the learned adore the spirit of the world,"⁶⁰ that is to say, "natural reason."⁶¹

I have already drawn attention to Gulliver's fourth voyage, where the horses obey natural reason like good Confucians. But one might also note here that the Houyhnhnms regard "Friendship and Benevolence" as "the two principal Virtues."⁶² Matteo Ricci, as we know, first endeared himself to the Chinese learned when he wrote his treatise on friendship.⁶³ Leibniz, after reading the Jesuit reports, suggested that the Chinese send missionaries to the West to "teach us those things which are especially in our interest: the greatest use of practical philosophy and a

56 William Temple, Sir, "Of Heroic Virtue," p. 116.

57 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, p. 39.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 William Temple, Sir, "Of Heroic Virtue," p. 123.

61 Ibid., p. 114.

62 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, p. 234.

63 For the Jesuits' help with cannon-making, see George H. Duménil, *Generation of Giants: The Story of the Jesuits in China in the Last Decades of the Ming Dynasty*, pp. 317-318, and Louis LeComte, *Memoirs and Observations Topographical, Physical, Mathematical, Mechanical, Natural, Civil, Ecclesiastical Made in a Late Journey through the Empire of China* (London: Benjamin Tooke, 1697; First English translation), pp. 373-374.

more perfect manner of living."⁶⁴ Gulliver similarly wishes the Houyhnhnms could "send a sufficient Number of their Inhabitants for civilizing Europe."⁶⁵ Gulliver among the Houyhnhnms is not unlike the first Jesuit missionaries in China, initially mistrusted because of his foreign background, and then welcomed for a time. "They permit no Stranger to live with them," Ricci noted (in Purchas's transcription), "that mindes to returne to his Countrey, or is knowne to have Commerce with forraigne Nations; and no Stranger although of a friendly Nation and Tributarie, may have access to the inward parts of the Kingdome."⁶⁶ Had Gulliver visited China he might not have been allowed to return home. Among the Houyhnhnms, however, he is obliged to leave because of their fear that he might stir up the Yahoos to revolt.

Among the giant Brobdingnagians, Gulliver poses no such danger. The second volume of *Gulliver's Travels* contains Swift's most benign satire, and it contains the closest thing in the book to a practical Utopia. Everything about Brobdingnag is huge, of course – as huge as China according to Jesuit reports. The land itself – "six thousand Miles in Length"⁶⁷ – has never been discovered, Gulliver conjectures, because it is protected by high mountains and by ocean. According to Temple, China was long unvisited because of its "vast and unpassable mountains"⁶⁸ in addition to the expanse of ocean and the great wall. Swift locates Brobdingnag east of China and west of America; he reasons that "there must be a Balance of Earth to counterpoise the great Continent of Tartary" (China).⁶⁹ This eastern land is relatively peaceful, reminding us of the peaceable kingdom described by Ricci. The giant king wonders to hear Gulliver "talk of such charge- able and extensive Wars; [...] certainly we must be a quarrelsome People, or live among very bad Neighbours." And "what Business we had out of

64 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, "Preface to the *Novissima Sinica*," in *Writings on China*, translated and edited by Daniel J. Cook and Henry Rosemont, Jr. (Chicago: Open Court, 1994), p. 51.

65 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, p. 258.

66 Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, vol. III, p. 390.

67 William Temple, Sir, "Of Heroic Virtue," p. 108.

68 Ibid.

69 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, p. 88.

our own Islands," he asks Gulliver, in order to make wars or enslave others?⁷⁰ He is shocked when Gulliver offers to instruct him in the use of gunpowder and cannon-making. Is this a reference on Swift's part to the actions of Ricci's Jesuit successors, Fathers Adam Schall and Ferdinand Verbiest, who cast cannon for the Ming emperor?

Father Louis LeComte noted the Chinese emperor's love of geometry; and Swift characterizes the Brobdingnagian king as being himself a "learned" man, "educated in the Study of Philosophy, and particularly Mathematicks."⁷¹ He also delights in "Musick," although when his guest Gulliver hears a concert in Brobdingnag he confesses, "the Noise was so great, that I could hardly distinguish the Tunes."⁷² In similar fashion, when Ricci first heard Chinese music he observed, "to the ear of a stranger [it] represents nothing but a discordant jangle."⁷³ A closer link between China and Brobdingnag is the giants' reverence for things ancient. Gulliver notes that the Brobdingnagians "have had the Art of Printing, as well as the Chinese, Time out of Mind." One of their recent authors looks back nostalgically on "ancient times" when his countrymen were "much larger!"⁷⁴

The preference for ancient over modern times is a taste Swift shared with Temple. It is one of the things that made China so attractive to Temple in the first place. To Swift's contemporary Daniel Defoe, however, the present was infinitely better than the past, and England, the cradle of progress, was the only country of note. "Defoe's plan for his country," as his biographer Paula R. Backscheider observes, "was nothing less than world domination." But "Trade," she adds, "not military might, would make this conquest."⁷⁵ China's very antiquity and its disinclination for trade with England darkened Defoe's opinion. One of the sources for his description of China, in the *Farther Adventures of Robinson*

70 Ibid., pp. 106-107.

71 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, p. 81.

72 Ibid., p. 102.

73 Matteo Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century, The Journals of Mathew Ricci, 1583-1610*, p. 22.

74 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, pp. 112-113.

75 Paula R. Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: His Life* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1989), p. 511.

Crusoe was Father LeComte's *Memoirs and Observations Made in a Late Journey through the Empire of China* (English translation 1697).⁷⁶ "They are more fond of the most defective Piece of Antiquity," Father LeComte had noted, then [sic] of the perfectest Novelty, differing much in that from us who are in love with nothing but what is new."⁷⁷ Defoe might also have bristled at Father LeComte's account of Confucius, who taught men "to contemn Riches and worldly Pleasures, and esteem Temperance, Justice, and other Vertues."⁷⁸ "In book after book," Backscheider observes, "Defoe catalogued what England had to sell and enumerated the luxuries she bought."⁷⁹ Greed, for Defoe, is good. The Confucian doctrine of respect for authority, in the form of father and king, is also anathema to the creator of Robinson Crusoe, arch-individualist, the prodigal son as hero. From Defoe's point of view, Temple's and Swift's position was feudalistic. Above all, Defoe seems to have been put off by the Jesuits' description of Chinese pride. Describing the land as the Jesuits first encountered it, LeComte says:

They lookt upon themselves as a chosen elect People, that Heaven had produced in the Center of the Universe to give them a Law; a People only capable to Instruct, Civilize, and Govern Nations. They fancied [sic] other Men but as Dwarfs, and pitiful Monsters, that had been the Outcasts into the Extremities of the Earth, as the Dross and Off-scouring of Nature; whereas the Chineses placed in the middle of the World, had alone received from God Almighty, a rational Form and Shape, and a true Size.⁸⁰

76 Sutherland cites Defoe's reliance on Louis LeComte, *Memoirs and Observations Topographical, Physical, Mathematical, Mechanical, Natural, Civil, Ecclesiastical Made in a Late Journey through the Empire of China*, p. 142.

77 *Ibid.*, p. 70.

78 *Ibid.*, p. 202.

79 Paula R. Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: His Life* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1989), p. 511.

80 Louis LeComte, *Memoirs and Observations Topographical, Physical, Mathematical, Mechanical, Natural, Civil, Ecclesiastical Made in a Late Journey through the Empire of China*, pp. 123-

In his early travel book, *The Consolidator* (1705), Defoe had a mixed attitude toward China. Following in reverse the example of Peter the Great, who had recently visited Europe with the aim of learning how to update Russia's capacities "in War and Trade,"⁸¹ Defoe's narrator visits China in order to learn from her ancient methods. "Now, as all Men know," he says, "the Chineses are an Ancient, Wise, Polite, and most Ingenious People."⁸² With a bow to Temple, Defoe pretends to believe that the "Strength of Reason and Invention" was much better in past times than in the present.⁸³ Chinese knowledge, hence, must be best of all; and one should learn from it. Defoe's true aim in *The Consolidator* is to criticize the British monarchical system. In China, he alleges, the emperor was selected on the basis of his natural qualifications, for being "the most Worthy Person they could find." In Europe, by contrast, kings are thought to have come "down from Heaven with Crowns on their Heads, and all their Subjects [...] born with Saddles on their Backs."⁸⁴ Despite his run-ins with British authority, however, Defoe never doubted that the English were God's chosen people, and that other countries existed mainly to provide goods and colonies for England. When Defoe's career as tradesman failed, he turned to writing for a living; and it is the travel books he wrote from his late fifties on that made his fame. Noteworthy is the way in which "Defoe adopts the form of travel literature," argues J. A. Downie, "to provide a vehicle for imperial propaganda."⁸⁵

Swift, as we know, disliked imperialism. The Spanish exploitation of native peoples had been deplored by Mendes Pinto and others, but Swift draws a scathing indictment of colonialism in *Gulliver's Travels*. Gulliver speaks of

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81 Daniel Defoe, *The Consolidator, or Memoirs of Sundry Transactions from the World in the Moon* (New York: Garland, 1972), p. 1.

82 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

83 *Ibid.*, p. 60.

84 *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

85 J. A. Downie, "Defoe, Imperialism, and the Travel Books Reconsidered," in *Critical Essays on Daniel Defoe*, edited by Roger Lund (New York: G. K. Hall, 1997), p. 93.

"Pyrates" coming upon a "harmless People" who treat their visitors "with Kindness." The pirates, in return, "give the Country a new Name, they take formal Possession of it for the King, they set up a rotten [sic] Plank or Stone for a Memorial, they murder two or three Dozen of the Natives, bring away a Couple more by Force for a Sample, return home, and get their Pardon. Here commences a new Dominion acquired with a Title by Divine Right."⁸⁶ What we have here, in short, is a negative version of Defoe's travel books. Robinson Crusoe is shipwrecked on a desert island while on a trade mission to buy slaves in Africa. The only admirable character we meet in the first narrative is Friday, to whom Crusoe promptly teaches his first English word, "Master." Friday, in the original and *Farther Adventures*, distinguishes himself from Crusoe by his Confucian respect for his father. "If the same filial affection was to be found in Christians to their parents in our part of the world," Defoe admits, "[...] there would hardly have been any need of the fifth commandment."⁸⁷ But then if children obeyed their father's injunction that they remain at home, there would be no such books as *Robinson Crusoe*.

In *Farther Adventures* Crusoe eventually reaches the farthest of destinations, China, sailing on a pirate ship (although he is initially unaware of the fact). His aim now is to buy "Chinese wares, callicoes, raw silks, tea, wrought silks" and other merchandise in exchange for which Crusoe offers opium.⁸⁸ Once in China, he shows none of the fascination with the country that the Jesuits and other travellers had conveyed in their writings. Of the famous porcelain which Europeans were now collecting with great avidity, Crusoe shrugs, "As this is one of the singularities of China, so they may be allowed to excel in it."⁸⁹ Passing the most famous of Chinese landmarks, Crusoe calls it "this mighty nothing, called a

86 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, p. 258.

87 Daniel Defoe, *Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, in *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (London: Walter Scott, Ltd., n.d.), p. 326.

88 *Ibid.*, pp. 489, 499.

89 *Ibid.*, p. 512.

wall."⁹⁰ The great cities of Nanking and Peking, so lovingly depicted by travellers from Marco Polo to Nieuhof, Crusoe finds lacking in interest. "It seemed strange to me, when I came home," he says, "and heard our people say such fine things of the power, glory, magnificence, and trade of the Chinese; because, as far as I saw, they appeared to be a contemptible herd or crowd of ignorant, sordid slaves."⁹¹ "When I come to compare the miserable people of these countries with ours, their fabrics, their manner of living, their government, their religion, their wealth, and their glory, as some call it, I must confess that I scarcely think it worth my while to mention them here [...] [W] hat are their buildings to the palaces and royal buildings of Europe? What is their trade to the universal commerce of England, Holland, France, and Spain? What are their cities to ours, for wealth, strength, gaiety of apparel, rich furniture, and infinite variety?"⁹² England has finer ports, greater trade, more powerful armies: "one English, Dutch, or French man-of-war of eighty guns would be able to fight almost all the shipping belonging to China."⁹³

Although Crusoe is willing to admit that the Jesuits are to be praised for their bravery in having come to China, he dismisses their efforts once there. The "Romish priests" he meets "had been there some time converting the people to Christianity; but we thought they made but poor work of it, and made them sorry Christians when they had done."⁹⁴ Still, he notes elsewhere, there are "honest" clergymen even among Catholic priests, whom Defoe generally loathed as a body. (In the first *Robinson Crusoe* his hero says he "had rather be deliver'd up to the savages and be devour'd alive, than fall into the merciless claws of the priests and be carry'd into the Inquisition."⁹⁵) "It may well be admired," he concedes, "how they came to admit the Chinese Confucius into the calendar of the Christian

90 Ibid., p. 514.

91 Ibid., p. 503.

92 Ibid.

93 Ibid., p. 502.

94 Ibid., p. 497.

95 Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe, and Other Writings*, edited by James Sutherland (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), p. 196.

saints."⁹⁶ But then perhaps Crusoe is being ironical here; with Defoe one never knows. Commentators who have compared Defoe with Swift invariably observe that while Swift looked back to an ancient set of values that privileged deference and moderation, Defoe was looking ahead to the progressive new world of modern capitalism, one which privileges individual enterprise and the accumulation of material goods.⁹⁷ Perhaps in this sense Defoe was also looking ahead to modern China. In any case, when the British invaded China in the nineteenth century, it was in the spirit, not of Matteo Ricci or William Temple or Jonathan Swift, but of Daniel Defoe.♦

96 Daniel Defoe, *Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, p. 451.

97 Comparisons between Swift and Defoe are made by Ross, and by Dennis (See Nigel Dennis, *Jonathan Swift: A Short Character* [New York: Macmillan, 1964], pp. 122-133: "Defoe embodies everything that Swift hates").

♦ Responsible editor: Chun-wei Peng (彭俊維).

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