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**THE CONSTRUING OF ALLUSIONS**  
**IN AN UNABRIDGED TRANSLATION OF *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS***

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## **Abstract**

This is a partial critical analysis of an unabridged translation, to Brazilian Portuguese, of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, with a specific focus on its use and elucidation of allusions as an aid for reading comprehension. This was achieved by exploring research on literary allusions and the translation of allusions, and applying these theoretical views to the examination of both English-language scholars of the source text and the translator's own commentaries on the translated text. It has been found that minimum change with some measure of guidance is the best method to construe allusions in translation. The use of allusions in *Gulliver's Travels* is complex and intricate, but a rich heritage of commentary and historical views are able to render the allusions clearer to a present-day reader.

Keywords: translation, allusion, Jonathan Swift, reading comprehension.

Word count: 11.566

## **Resumo**

Esta é uma análise crítica parcial de uma tradução integral, ao português brasileiro, das *Viagens de Gulliver* de Jonathan Swift, com uma ênfase específica em seu uso e elucidação de alusões como uma ferramenta para compreensão de leitura. Isto foi realizado ao explorar pesquisas sobre alusões literárias e a tradução de tais alusões, e aplicando estas visões teóricas ao exame de estudiosos de língua inglesa sobre o texto-fonte e os comentários do próprio tradutor sobre o texto traduzido. Foi estabelecido que um mínimo de alterações na tradução com uma medida de orientação por parte do tradutor é o melhor método para interpretar alusões em tradução. O uso de alusões em *Viagens de Gulliver* é complexo e intrincado, mas uma tradição rica de comentários e visões históricas possibilita tornar as alusões mais claras para um leitor dos dias atuais.

Palavras-chave: tradução, alusão, Jonathan Swift, compreensão de leitura.

Número de palavras: 11.566

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## Introduction

At the time of its publication in 1726, *Gulliver's Travels*, far from being the children's book popularized in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was a harsh satire of individuals, institutions, governments, sciences and arts. Jonathan Swift made use of allusions and veiled references to attack the specious scientific activities of the Enlightenment movement, British rule and exploitation of Ireland, as well as religious movements and literary fads.

This may be observed particularly in Part III, "A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbudrib, and Japan", in which the main character visits the fictional islands of Laputa and Balnibarbi, where he witnesses the absurd scientific and cultural experiments of several "projectors": mad scientists, insane inventors and autistic authors. These encounters are riddled with allusions to the events and figures of the time of publication, and these allusions have become a subject of study, so that it may be conjectured which exact historical events and figures were the targets of Swift's social criticism.

An unabridged translation of *Gulliver's Travels* to Brazilian Portuguese was published in 2010 by Paulo Henriques Britto, who managed to rehabilitate the text as a serious satire and work of literature — instead of yet another children's adaptation of the first parts, famously portraying Gulliver's misadventures in Lilliput and Brobdingnag.

Within this context, the purpose of this study is to analyze and investigate how the allusions in Part III were accommodated and construed in Britto's translation. As such, it should work as a case study on the specific quandary that is the translation of literary allusions, but it might also shed some light on the specific strategies of adaptation and commentary employed by translators dealing with allusions in any genre.

## I. Background

The impact of historical circumstances on the conception of literary works has been thoroughly scrutinized by numerous scholars, and the slightest mention of *historical context* may be enough to lose the reader's interest. Nonetheless, to properly grasp the significance of a book, to tackle it as more than idle literature, to see it as a mirror, however warped, of its age and its locale, a researcher must investigate the environment that shaped it. It will not suffice to single out biographical accounts and the author's own observations on the conception and birth of his book, particularly if one is aware of the pervasive bias that usually characterizes the author's perceptions of himself and his own importance to his period and nation, and even to posterity. One must also look to the *times and mores* that cradled the author and his work, not only as a means to criticism, but as a means to evoke, as accurately as possible, a simulation of the reality that the work intended to reflect. Delving between the lines into what the author allegedly intended to say and what was effectively said despite his intentions, it might be possible to see the world he meant to portray and how it was portrayed.

Obviously, it is no small task to investigate the life and times of Jonathan Swift, as well as the genesis of *Gulliver's Travels* as an indictment against several individuals and institutions. Given the constraints of this study, the best course is to repurpose the views of noted scholars and writers on the subject and to limit the scope of what is relevant for the purpose at hand: to investigate the construing of allusions in a contemporary translation. That said, just the same, it would be negligent to fail to provide a background, no matter how simplified, on what the allusions were aimed at, or, at the very least, on what is, according to certain scholars, the consensus on what the author intended to ridicule or chastise. If it proves to be superficial and oversimplified, one should bear in mind the constraints of this study in regard to length, and look instead for an attempt at depth.

To begin with, some observations concerning the author and the publication must take precedence, such as the distinction between Swift and Gulliver. As editor and scholar Starkman points out in her introduction to a collection of Swift's works:

In Swift studies, the confusion of author and persona has been rampant. Swift's life has been read as identical with his works, his biography interpreted in terms of his works, and his works, in circular fashion, in terms of this often hypothesized biography. [...] Certainly it is easier not to misread Achilles as Homer than it is not to misread Gulliver as Swift. (*Gulliver's Travels* 3)

The frontispiece of the 1735 edition of *Gulliver's Travels* bears the following full title: *Travels into several Remote Nations of the World in Four Parts by Lemuel Gulliver, first a Surgeon, and then Captain of several Ships* — and it even includes a portrait of Lemuel Gulliver. The name Jonathan Swift was in no way associated with the first editions — “surrounded by anonymity and obfuscation,” as Starkman put it (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 15) — and his authorship was only ascribed in posthumous editions. The use of pen names has always been a common practice in the literary world, due to concerns of censorship, protection of privacy, or even as a way of providing readers with some sort of playful guesswork, but, for Swift, publishing a book under the guise of a fictional author seems to have been rather like a literary prank, as Mullan chronicles it in *Anonymity: A Secret History of English Literature*:

Look at the lengths to which Jonathan Swift went to ensure that *Gulliver's Travels* was published anonymously and you might suppose that he was anxious to keep his authorship hidden. He arranged for a sample part of the manuscript, probably transcribed in another man's handwriting, to be dropped in secret by an intermediary at a publisher's house. It was accompanied by a

letter purporting to be from Lemuel Gulliver's cousin, one 'Richard Sympson', which offered the whole of the *Travels* for publication in return for £200. The letter had been written by Swift but copied out for him by his friend John Gay. The publisher, Benjamin Motte, was told that, within three days, he should either return the 'Papers' or give the money 'to the Hand from whence you receive this, who will come in the same manner exactly at 9 a clock at night on Thursday'. With only some cavils about being allowed time to raise the large sum of money that was being demanded, Motte bravely accepted the mysterious offer. A few nights later he duly got the rest of the book. Soon afterwards, Swift's friend and probable coconspirator Alexander Pope discussed the business with the puzzled publisher, pretending to be quite as mystified as he was. He reported the conversation in a letter to Swift: 'Motte receiv'd the copy (he tells me) he knew not from whence, nor from whom, dropped at his house in the dark, from a hackney coach.' The author himself had returned to Dublin to resume his duties as Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral. (Mullan 9)

Swift employed other pen names in works such as *Drapier's Letters* and the *Bickerstaff Papers*, whereas *A Modest Proposal* and *A Tale of a Tub* were simply published anonymously. Lemuel Gulliver stands out as a special case among these personae, arguably as a *heteronym* rather than a pseudonym. One could argue, figuratively speaking, that there are two authors: the author of *Gulliver* and the author of the *Travels* — Swift authored the Gulliver persona, who in turn authored the book of fantastic travels; they are related and share the genes of genius, but they are not one and the same. Hence the suggestion that Gulliver is a heteronym rather than a pseudonym. On a parallel note, Starkman (*Gulliver's Travels* 3) suggests that "the word 'sane' is a controversial word in respect to Swift," and such a controversy has earned the attention of several scholars and even psychologists, with no final conclusion apart from the fact that Swift was a complex and hard-to-read man. He wrote his own epitaph, in Latin, which was masterfully translated by W. B. Yeats:

Swift has sailed into his rest;  
 Savage indignation there  
 Cannot lacerate his breast.  
 Imitate him if you dare,  
 World-besotted traveller; he  
 Served human liberty.

(Quoted in Fox 236)

The aforementioned *pervasive bias* common to an author's perceptions of himself is rather evident in these words, and so one should take them with a grain of salt. Without a doubt, Swift's character cast a shadow over his works, but, just as much, the circumstances in which he found himself towered over his mind and played a very significant part in forming the outlook that engendered his works. Still, it would have been rather amiss if his own views of himself had been entirely avoided in this study, no matter how emphasized is the focus on the historical circumstances that will be considered from now on.

By the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, England was the world's dominant colonial power. Colonialism in North America and India flourished, and the English would lose the American Revolutionary War only near the end of the century (1775–1783). English historian R.J. White aptly named the 18<sup>th</sup> century as the "Century of Success" for England (White 179), also known as "the English century". In the way of politics, after the Civil War and the Nine Years' War in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the establishment of the *Kingdom of Great Britain* in 1707 was brought forth by the Treaty of Union, which entailed the fusion of the parliaments of Scotland and England. Meanwhile, the *United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland* would only be established much later, in 1801. Swift, a dual-citizen Anglo-Irishman, had plenty to say about the relations between England and Ireland, and he said it most infamously in the satiric pamphlet *A Modest Proposal* (1729), in which the anonymous author, with savage irony, persuaded the famished Irish to eat their own children. Curiously, this was long

before the 1740 famine in Ireland that killed ten percent of the population, as well as the Great Famine from 1845 to 1852, which decimated up to one third of the population.

Regardless, England's prosperity enabled several domains of culture, most notably the Enlightenment movement, which had many prominent English and Scottish representatives, such as Isaac Newton, John Locke, Adam Smith, Thomas Hobbes, David Hume, Thomas Reid, and Robert Burns. *The Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge*, established in 1660, would rise to acclaim and recognition from all of Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and yet it was one of the main targets of Swift's satire. His criticism of what was then acknowledged as scientific knowledge and experiments was remarkably prescient, considering that a good portion of the knowledge and the experiments produced at the time would appear specious at best to present-day scientists.

In the religious sphere, the legacy of the English reformation would lead to a schism not only from Roman Catholicism, but also from established practices of Protestantism. In his first publication, the anonymous *A Tale of a Tub*, Swift satirized the proliferation of sects and religious ideologies that resembled a 'Christian heathendom' of sorts.

The most reviled target of his satire, however, must be England. In the collection of essays *Shooting an Elephant*, George Orwell included a critical piece titled "Politics vs. Literature: An Examination of *Gulliver's Travels*," in which he deals extensively with Swift's sociopolitical diatribe. As mentioned before, the confusion between author and character is quite common, but Orwell suggests that this confusion is not so misguided after all: "It is difficult not to feel that in his shrewder moments Gulliver is simply Swift himself, and there is at least one incident in which Swift seems to be venting his private grievance against contemporary Society" (Orwell 251). But what exactly does "contemporary Society" entail? He extricates some veiled references to England throughout the *Travels*:

Part I of *Gulliver's Travels*, ostensibly a satire on human greatness, can be seen, if one looks a little deeper, to be simply an attack on England, on the dominant Whig Party, and on the war with France. [...] Evidently Swift's animus is, in the first place, against England. It is 'your Natives' (i.e. Gulliver's fellow-countrymen) whom the King of Brobdingnag considers to be 'the most pernicious Race of little odious vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the Earth', and the long passage at the end, denouncing colonization and foreign conquest, is plainly aimed at England, although the contrary is elaborately stated. [...] Even the country mentioned in Part III, where 'the Bulk of the People consist, in a Manner, wholly of Discoverers, Witnesses, Informers, Accusers, Prosecutors, Evidences, Swearers, together with their several subservient and subaltern Instruments, all under the Colours, the Conduct, and Pay of Ministers of State', is called Langdon, which is within one letter of being an anagram of England. (Orwell 252, 253)

These veiled references are rather distinct from allusions, in that the similarity with his native country was implied within the context of Gulliver's narrative. By the time an intelligent reader in the 18<sup>th</sup> century reached Part III of *Gulliver's Travels*, he was already quite aware that the book was a satire, and, as such, a mirror of the society and culture in which both the author and the readers were embedded. However, as intelligent as the reader could have been, it would be very difficult to extricate all the allusions made by Swift throughout Part III; even if a reader was aware that the author was alluding to something, it would take many years until scholars were able to make associations between all those often obscure allusions made by Swift and their historical counterparts. Orwell himself makes no specific mention of these allusions, confining his analysis to these veiled political references.

In matters of literature, Swift was a classicist, and, as such, his views on literature were filtered by his own — perhaps rather arbitrary — distinction between "Ancients and Moderns". This distinction was famously settled in his short satire *The Battle of the Books*, as

a response to an essay by Sir William Temple, a statesman and essayist who was in turn writing a response to Fontenelle, a French author. Temple's essay was titled *Of Ancient and Modern Learning*, and, as the title suggests, it posed a comparison between classical and modern scholarship. At the time, Swift was part of a group of writers and scholars known as the *Scriblerus Club*, of which were part Alexander Pope, John Gay, John Dryden, John Arbuthnot, Henry St. John and Thomas Parnell. Alexander Pope famously translated the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* into heroic verse, and all the other members of this club were classicists who strove to produce books following and honoring the classical tradition. Swift, following the same vocation, considered any writer who deviated from this proposal to be inferior, and some of these writers and the tendencies they followed were satirized in Part III.

In the way of a plot summary, Harold Bloom was able to masterfully abridge Part III in his volume of *Modern Critical Interpretations to Gulliver's Travels*:

The Third Voyage, more properly Swiftian, takes us first to Laputa, the floating island, at once a parody of a Platonic academy yet also a kind of science fiction punishment machine, always ready to crush earthlings who might assert liberty. [...] The maddening lack of affect on Gulliver's part begins to tell upon us here; the stolid narrator is absurdly inadequate to the grim force of his own recital, grimmer for us now even than it could have been for the prophetic Swift. Gulliver inexorably and blandly goes on to Lagado, where he observes the grand Academy of Projectors, Swift's famous spoof of the British Royal Society, but here the ironies go curiously flat, and I suspect we are left with the irony of irony, which wearies because by repetition it seems to become compulsive. (Bloom 3)

Bloom's great talent for abridgment is not oblivious to the niceties and nuances of satire and irony, and, when comparing the views of other writers concerning Part IV and its condemnation of all humankind as 'Yahoos', a savage species of primate-like brutes (long

before Darwin was even born), he acknowledges that, if Gulliver and Swift are in fact one; if “the great satirist drowned in his own misanthropy and suffered the terrible irony of becoming one with his Tale-teller”, this terrible irony is “a fit retribution perhaps, but it is unwise to underestimate the deep cunning of Swift” (Bloom 4).

This deep cunning is evident in all the allusions scattered across the pages of *Gulliver’s Travels*. Swift’s age was rife with targets for satire and criticism — it was an age that saw itself above and beyond everything that came before, provoking his indomitable opposition to the abuses of power and knowledge. The early modern period, sparking the first serious manifestations of what would soon become Western scientific thought, sought to let go of influences and biases from the past. It was not only foolishness that Swift targeted, but insolence, or rather *hubris*: the arrogant pride that pervaded the cultural productions of that age and refused to recognize the heritage of the ancients and of the morals that allowed such productions to become a culmination, however insignificant they may appear today.

## **II. Theoretical Views on Literary Allusions**

Common sense and lexicographical definitions dictate that the main difference between allusion and reference is that a reference is explicit and direct, whereas an allusion is indirect and implicit. While useful as an operational distinction, it provides no fodder for a serious theoretical reflection on the nature of literary allusions that could contribute to a further examination of how allusions work on the reader’s and the author’s comprehension of a text, and, more to the point, how they should be handled in translation.

Jorge Luis Borges, in one of his lectures at Harvard, suggested not a definition of allusion per se, but a reflection on why allusion is an optimal figure of communication:

Now I have come to the conclusion (and this conclusion may sound sad) that I no longer believe in expression: I believe only in allusion. After all, what are words? Words are symbols for shared memories. If I used a word, then you should have some experience of what the word stands for. If not, the word means nothing to you. I think we can only allude, we can only try to make the reader imagine. The reader, if he is quick enough, can be satisfied without merely hinting at something. (Borges 117)

His definition of words as “symbols for shared memories” is relevant to understand a broader conception of allusion proposed in this study: an allusion is an unexplained meaning ascribed to a word or a phrase that the reader may or may not know, that is, a meaning that may or may not be shared by the reader and the author. On the subject of shared meanings, the word *intertextuality* inevitably pops up, since allusion has been defined as one of the figures of speech by which intertextuality may be identified. However, this usually has led to the assumption that allusion and intertextuality are necessarily synonymous, which is rather preposterous, as Irwin points out:

The term intertextuality was coined by Julia Kristeva in 1966, and since that time has come to have almost as many meanings as users, from those faithful to Kristeva’s original vision to those who simply use it as a stylish way of talking about allusion and influence. (Irwin, “Against Intertextuality” 227-28)

Irwin, a professor at King’s College and philosopher of literature, had published, before “Against Intertextuality,” a seminal article that provided a manifold answer to the question “What is an allusion?” — The premise for this article was rather groundbreaking:

Literary theory is the worse for not having come to a clearer understanding of allusion. There is, to be sure, no shortage of studies detailing the use of allusion. Witness, for example, the vast quantity of work devoted to T.S. Eliot's use of allusion in *The Waste Land* and Alexander Pope's use of allusion in *The Rape of the Lock* [Irwin left out the most allusive work in the English language: *Finnegans Wake*, and, in 1944, a book was published, *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake*, that proposed to unlock some of Joyce's most obscure allusions]. Still, what nearly all such studies neglect is the basic question: What is an allusion? And the result is confusion. Whereas there is no shortage of theoretical work on such subjects as irony and metaphor, there is a scarcity of theoretical work on allusion, a small number of articles, and no books. (Irwin, "What is an Allusion?" 287)

In 2001, the year of publication, this was absolutely true. A year later, however, Allan H. Pasco, a professor at the University of Kansas, published *Allusion: A Literary Graft*, a pioneering study that observes how allusion works in specific contexts, and how it affects the reading process. To illustrate the study, Pasco closely studied works by Flaubert, Stendhal, Balzac, Zola, Proust, and Robbe-Grillet, catching the allusions in their works and determining how relevant they were to the reader's understanding. Unfortunately, the acquisition of this book proved difficult and it had to be left out of this study.

There are no easy and straight answers to understand how allusion works, even if we come to understand it better with the aid of these studies on literary allusions. The most succinct definition provided by Irwin is that "allusions often draw on information not readily available to every member of a cultural and linguistic community, are typically but not necessarily brief, and may or may not be literary in nature" (Irwin 289). Harking back to the etymology of the word, it could also be understood as a play on meanings, from the Latin *alludere: ad-ludere* — to play, to mock, to jest with. Wordplay usually depends on a

reference to other meanings, and such a reference is usually covert, implicit, tacit. But allusions can also be overt, as Irwin is quick to point out:

They can be out in the open, rather than hidden to some degree. If a person or character in the midst of deciding whether or not to approach a young woman for a date resolves, “I am not Prufrock,” clearly we have an allusion. This is an indirect and possibly covert reference. The same character or person in the same situation might instead say, “I am not like Prufrock in T.S. Eliot's ‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.’” This, certainly, is an overt reference. Yet, it is still an allusion, perhaps a poor allusion, aesthetically speaking. (*Ibid* 287)

And how do these constitute allusions? For their proper comprehension, allusions depend crucially on something more than a mere replacement of a referent; they depend on unexplained meanings ascribed to words or phrases, meanings that depend on the reader's previous knowledge of certain cultural references, and may assume the guise of subtext (the underlying principle or theme), periphrasis (phrases such as *the city that never sleeps* for New York), circumlocution (a broader use of periphrasis), or innuendo (an insulting insinuation).

If properly explained and unpacked, the cultural reference used by Irwin means: “I am not like the character in that T.S. Eliot poem: an indecisive man who will have to live with the regrets of not having taken chances.” But those who have read the poem before and understood it will do without the explanation — provided they have a good memory, of course — and will be able to surmise the meaning of the allusion from the context. Sometimes, however, the reader might only suspect there is an allusion within a phrase, and might research the keywords in order to try to understand it. This is much easier nowadays than it has ever been, as Adam Kirsch noted in a short article in the *Wall Street Journal*, “Literary Allusion in the Age of Google”:

In the last decade or so, a major new factor has changed this calculus. That is the rise of Google, which levels the playing field for all readers. Now any quotation in any language, no matter how obscure, can be identified in a fraction of a second. When T.S. Eliot dropped outlandish Sanskrit and French and Latin allusions into “The Waste Land,” he had to include notes to the poem, to help readers track them down. Today, no poet could outwit any reader who has an Internet connection. (Kirsch 1)

If this new factor is taken into consideration, covert allusions cannot truly be covert now, or at least not for very long. For every great work of literature there will always be a cult-like following of scholars, admirers and critics poring over every single word in the hopes of finding new, deeper meanings that could have gone unnoticed and undetected — and this study is no different, obviously. However, despite the focus on the allusions in Part III of *Gulliver’s Travels*, there is still an awareness of the possibility of making incorrect attributions and associations that have nothing to do with the author’s alleged original intent. By the end of his article on the definition of allusion, Irwin warns us to be careful about this:

Detecting allusions sometimes demands the precision of a science, while making fruitful accidental associations sometimes demands the creativity of an art. What Harold Bloom says of criticism we can say of accidental association: “It is the art of knowing the hidden roads that go from poem to poem.” But still we must not get carried away, and we must be careful not to attribute to authors allusions they did not intend. (“What is an Allusion?” 296)

Of course, to know the author’s intentions is entirely another matter, and there is a whole subfield of research in literary theory on authorial intent, which is not really relevant in this humble paper. Still, some measure of caution should be employed when declaring what an author’s intention actually was, since only the author himself would know his intention for certain, and even then, if we take into consideration the ‘death of the author’ hypothesis, the

author himself might not be an unquestionable source on what he actually intended to allude to. But above all, scholars and commentators can never state categorically that the author intended to say this or that by alluding to this or that — they can only suggest and offer the readers and researchers a possible ‘pick’ to unlock the allusions, not the key itself.

M.H. Abrams, the 101-year-old American literary critic and main editor of the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, has also published a *Glossary of Literary Terms* in which he provides an in-depth definition of allusion, which I shall use to wrap up the matter:

Allusion is a passing reference, without explicit identification, to a literary or historical person, place, or event, or to another literary work or passage. [...] Since allusions are not explicitly identified, they imply a fund of knowledge that is shared by an author and the audience for whom the author writes. Most literary allusions are intended to be recognized by the generally educated readers of the author’s time, but some are aimed at a special coterie. For example, in *Astrophel and Stella*, the Elizabethan sonnet sequence, Sir Philip Sidney’s punning allusions to Lord Robert Rich, who had married the Stella of the sonnets, were identifiable only by intimates of the people concerned. Some modern authors, including Joyce, Pound, and Eliot, include allusions that are very specialized, or else drawn from the author’s private reading and experience, in the awareness that few if any readers will recognize them prior to the detective work of scholarly annotators. The current term intertextuality includes literary echoes and allusions as one of the many ways in which any text is interlinked with other texts. (Abrams 9)

Particularly of note is the point that some allusions “are aimed at a special coterie” — which is rather the case of *Gulliver’s Travels*. For the most part, Swift’s allusions do not exactly implicate a sort of “fund of knowledge” such as the Western canon, but rather seem to be aimed at a special circle and generation of individuals and institutions that were active during his lifetime — which is also the case of the *Divine Comedy*, in which Dante Alighieri

makes several allusions to individuals from his lifetime. And perhaps this is why the *Travels* required several years of “detective work” by scholars: because its allusions were not simply extracted from a common fund of knowledge, but rather from yet-in-progress movements and lives that still had to be properly assimilated and chronicled by historians and biographers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the following centuries, and only then find themselves available in a common “fund of knowledge.”

This section is by no means a comprehensive overview of a literary theory of allusion; it is, at best, a brief survey on working definitions of allusion and its effects on reading comprehension, which should be broad enough to allow us a rudimentary outlook in order to tackle the examination on how allusions are construed in a contemporary translation to Brazilian Portuguese. Considering, however, the relative scarcity of sources to draw from, this section should serve as an adequate starting point to carry out a more serious and thorough study of allusion theory.

### **III. Theoretical Views on the Translation of Allusions**

Whereas a bibliography for theoretical views on literary allusions is rather scarce, on the other hand, a bibliography on the translation of allusions is almost unheard-of. The field of translation studies has experienced a magnificent surge in the last two decades, but there are still some gaps in literary translation theory, and this is one such gap. Still, the main source that deals with translation of allusions found for this study is competent and detailed, so that the absence of other studies might be excused. The source is *Culture Bumps: An Empirical Approach to the Translation of Allusions* (1997) by Ritva Leppihalme, a professor and researcher from the University of Helsinki. The title is explained in its preface:

The term ‘culture shock’, which describes the result of sudden contact with another culture, implies a shock to the entire system. For less serious upsets, the term ‘culture bump’ has been suggested. Carol M. Archer (1986) has used the term of problems in face-to-face communication, culture bumps occurring between speakers of different cultural backgrounds, but we may observe culture bumps in reading situations as well, when culture-bound elements hinder communication of the meaning to readers in another language culture. Allusions are one type of culture-bound elements in a text. They are expected to convey a meaning that goes beyond the mere words used. [...] As culture-bound elements, allusions depend largely on familiarity to convey meaning. (Leppihalme, *Culture Bumps* viii)

She recognized, long before the publication of this book, the need for translation strategies to address the problems of allusion, and ‘allusion’ is understood by her in a broader sense than in literary theory; it indicates rather “the presence not only of intertextual elements in the source text, but also of references to other types of source-cultural phenomena, e.g., historical people and events and popular culture, likely to be unknown or less well known among target-text readers” (“Allusions and their Translation” 183). That is the case of most of the allusions made by Swift in the *Travels*, although it is relative how less-well-known some of the historical figures and events are to most Brazilian readers who read the *Travels* in its unabridged form for the first time.

Although she acknowledges that “it is obviously no good confidently adhering to a translation strategy of minimum change, and hence e.g. preserving a name, if the name in question is unknown to the readers” (*Ibid* 185), Leppihalme postulates her strategies along the lines of translation scholar Jiří Levý’s “minimax principle”: a minimum of effort but a maximum of effect. This way, “a familiar allusion requires less thought than an unfamiliar one; an allusion of great significance for the interpretation of the text requires more attention

than a joke adding little to the characterization of a minor speaker” (*Ibid*). In other words: the more an allusion is necessary for the proper understanding of the text as the author *might* have intended, the more this allusion requires spelling-out in translation; otherwise, if it’s a minor quirk casually mentioned by the author, a simple nod or tip-of-the-hat that shows off his cleverness and knowledge of something that does not impact directly on the main message of the text, it should not be overworked by the translator.

Leppihalme chose not to go any deeper into controversial ideas such as the reader as the real creator of the text, proposed by Genette, or even the question of authorial intent, and, in the same way, these topics will not be broached in this section, even though they are acknowledged as important and interesting topics.

Comparing the source and the target text of several excerpts of fiction containing allusions, Leppihalme found that most translators in Finland appear to favor the minimum change strategy, and the rationale behind this strategy is that it is not the translator’s job to explain anything. This view finds many defenders, even among renowned translators and scholars such as Umberto Eco, who sees the gaps of unexplained allusions in a translation as losses that every translator must be resigned to accept in his work. In *Experiences in Translation*, he goes as far as claiming that a footnote is a confirmation of the translator’s defeat in attempting to explain something that should be evident without explanation:

There are losses that we could consider absolute. They are the cases when it is not possible to translate, and if such cases occur, let’s suppose, in the middle of a novel, the translator falls back on the *ultima ratio*, introducing a footnote — and then the footnote ratifies his/her defeat. (Eco 95)

This view is rather extreme, and many experienced translators will take issue with it. But Eco practiced what he preached: when discussing the English translation of *The Name of*

*the Rose* with his American translator, he told the translator to sacrifice large chunks of text that would have been incomprehensible to the average reader, but to him this was preferable to the indignity of resorting to footnotes to explain the text (Eco 136). This is also the stance of most publishers in Brazil, who demand from their translators as fewer footnotes as possible: according to this view, if the translation does not speak for itself, it is not a good translation. There are some merits to this position, no doubt, but such hostility towards footnotes and explanations is rather misplaced. As Leppihalme posits:

The responsible translator does not allow the target text to become obscured or impoverished unnecessarily, nor does s/he leave the reader puzzled at ‘culture bumps’, anomalies resulting from unexplained source-cultural names or phrases in the target text, if this can be avoided by choosing a different strategy. (“Allusions and their Translation” 185)

It is, then, a matter of choosing the lesser evil: an inelegant translation riddled with explanations in footnotes or endnotes; or an elegant translation riddled with losses and obscure passages leading to a poor comprehension of the text by the average reader? Most publishers will usually choose the latter, while most translators will choose the former. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the translator wants to say something like, “I get what the author is saying here, it’s this or that, and I am doing my job well, instead of just replacing words from one language for another; I am providing the reader with the means to understand the text so that there is no need to do research on his own.” But, to be fair, this can be a delicate situation, since, sometimes, reading a translation and encountering a translator’s note feels rather intrusive, as if the translator was interrupting the author during a conversation to explain what s/he was saying, and showing off. As readers, our intelligence is easily insulted, even as we know that the translator is not really trying to show off.

The case against notes and explanations has been most elegantly and eloquently made by Samuel Johnson in his seminal *Preface to Shakespeare*:

Notes are often necessary, but they are necessary evils. Let him, that is yet unacquainted with the powers of Shakespeare, and who desires to feel the highest pleasure that the drama can give, read every play from the first scene to the last, with utter negligence of all his commentators. When his fancy is once on the wing, let it not stoop at correction or explanation. When his attention is strongly engaged, let it disdain alike to turn aside to the name of Theobald and Pope. Let him read on through brightness and obscurity, through integrity and corruption; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue and his interest in the fable. And when the pleasures of novelty have ceased, let him attempt exactness; and read the commentators. (Johnson 392)

It is difficult to disagree with Johnson's exhortation, which could be extended to any other classical author, not just Shakespeare. After all, the first readers or listeners of Homer and Camões never required footnotes and explanations to appreciate the beauty and the aesthetic force of their words and scenes, so why should we, readers in the postmodern age, need all this hand-holding and nestling-feeding from commentators and scholars? Why can't the text speak for itself?

If we turn to one of the pioneering texts in translation studies, Roman Jakobson's essay on linguistic aspects of translation, the view that the text should speak for itself (since the meaning of the text *already is* its own translation into an explanation provided by the reader's comprehension) has a solid theoretical foundation in linguistics: "For us, both as linguists and as ordinary word-users, the meaning of any linguistic sign is its translation into some further, alternative sign, especially a sign 'in which it is more fully developed,' as Peirce, the deepest inquirer into the essence of signs, insistently stated." (Jakobson 114) — which may prove the point that, regardless of whether there is an explanation or not, an

allusion will usually translate into something in the reader's mind; meaning will be imposed even upon apparently meaningless words or inkblots, as the Rorschach test will attest. Leppihalme corroborates this, and, in one of her experiments of reading comprehension ("Allusions and their Translation" 186) she was able to gather some evidence of how readers, unfamiliar with certain allusions, interpret them in one way or another.

Fully aware of all these nuances, Leppihalme proposes a decision process composed of five strategies to deal with allusions, which should be considered in turn:

Minimum change > Guidance > Replacement by (better-know source-text or target-text name > Replacement by common noun (or similar way of making (some of) the associations overt) > Omission or overt explanation. [...] If the allusion is thought to be familiar, minimum change is the strategy of choice. But if it is deemed unfamiliar, the translator may first attempt some unobtrusive guidance: adding a word or two to help with names (*King Harold* instead of *Harold, the battle of Hastings* instead of *Hastings*). (*Ibid* 188)

In other words, *writing the footnotes into the translation*, as some have called it. And this is just as delicate as writing actual footnotes — perhaps even more delicate, since the reader will understand this as the author's own text, not the translator's additions. This could lead to a complete perversion of the author's intent, particularly if s/he meant to make the allusions covert. The replacement strategies deal basically with what is now known as *domestication* in translation studies: conforming and adapting the allusions in the source text to equivalents from the target culture that will be familiar to the reader. This can be quite dangerous, as it incurs the risk of making the author sound *too* familiar, in such a way that could even make the text inappropriately informal, perhaps even stupid and vulgar (this has been my experience in reading certain Brazilian translations of Russian classics that make the characters sound as if they were *cariocas*). Domestication may be done well in moderate

doses, but once the translator insists on adapting every single allusion and expression to please the domestic reader, it can hardly be considered a translation anymore; it becomes an adaptation, an acculturation, which does have its own aesthetic value.

Omission is, according to Leppihalme, “generally unacceptable” (*Ibid* 190), but, as mentioned before, Umberto Eco endorsed it for a translation of his own book. If the translator has the author’s blessing, it may be justified, but otherwise, it is indeed unacceptable, a shirking of responsibility and a sign of inability to do actual work. It is, in fact, a last resort that a serious translator should never attempt.

In the final section it will be evident that, for the most part, the strategy chosen by the translator Paulo Henriques Britto has been: minimum change with a good dash of guidance in the form of endnotes, which is more or less the same strategy used by commentators of Swift’s work in English. As such, Britto meets Leppihalme’s standards as “a culturally competent translator who is aware of the allusion problem and sensitive to the needs of his/her audience.”

This section was meant to be a brief analysis of Leppihalme’s empirical views on the translation of allusions, not intended to be a full-fledged study of her work. But, just as in allusion theory, there is plenty of academic work to be done in translation of allusions, both in theory and in practice, and Leppihalme’s work will prove to be a trailblazing reference for any other researcher looking to venture into this branch of translation studies.

#### IV. Critical Analysis

There can be no textual commentary or analysis without that which has been defined as *paratext* by literary theorist Gérard Genette (1997) — a type of transtextuality

that binds the text properly speaking: a title, a subtitle, intertitles; prefaces, postfaces, notices, forewords, etc.; marginal, infrapaginal, terminal notes; epigraphs; illustrations; blurbs, book covers, dust jackets, and many other kinds of secondary signals, whether allographic or autographic. (*Palimpsests* 3)

Genette went further in a later work: “More than a boundary or a sealed border, the paratext is, rather, a *threshold*, or—a word Borges used apropos of a preface—a ‘vestibule’ that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back” (*Paratexts* 2). Upon investigating Swift’s source text and its translation, an ample array of paratexts surrounds the original text, and this array is known as a *critical* or *scholarly apparatus*. The English edition used for this study includes: an introduction by the editor; two prefaces by fictional authors; several footnotes by the editor, and no endnotes; whereas the translation includes a preface by George Orwell; an introduction by scholar Robert Demaria Jr.; a translator’s notice on the text; the same prefaces by fictional authors, no footnotes, and about 23 pages of endnotes.

According to the editor of the English edition, the text itself is substantially the same as that of the original amended 1735 edition, whereas the translator’s note provides the fact that the source text for the translation was based on the first edition published in 1726. The punctuation has been somewhat modified in the English edition, and the use of capitalization and italics has been made conformable to modern usage. It is noteworthy that no such changes have been made in the translation, which preserves the capitalization of common

nouns and the italicization of proper nouns — which is all the more unusual in the Portuguese language. The translator's decision to preserve this unorthodox detail certainly has an impact on the general tone of the translation: it serves the purpose of rendering the text rather heteroclitic, giving it a mien of archaic eccentricity.

Before proceeding into an in-depth examination of the allusions as presented in the original edition, it might be useful to recall to mind the background in the first section of this study, as a way to retain an idea of how society was configured in England and Ireland during Swift's lifetime, and how his satire was meant to be a warped mirror of it, magnifying its vices and manias, and diminishing its claims to greatness and knowledge. A summary of the events of Part III is provided concisely by Swift himself at the beginning of each chapter:

**Ch. I** – The Author sets out on his third voyage - Is taken by pirates - The malice of a Dutchman - His arrival at an island - He is received into Laputa.  
**Ch. II** – The humours and dispositions of the Laputians described - An account of their learning - Of the King and his Court - The Author's reception there - The inhabitants subject to fears and disquietudes - An account of the women.  
**Ch. III** – A phenomenon solved by modern philosophy and astronomy - The Laputians' great improvements in the latter - The King's method of suppressing insurrections.  
**Ch. IV** – The Author leaves Laputa, is conveyed to Balnibarbi, arrives at the metropolis - A description of the metropolis and the country adjoining - The Author hospitably received by a great lord - His conversation with that lord.  
**Ch. V** – The Author permitted to see the Grand Academy of Lagado - The Academy largely described – The Arts wherein the professors employ themselves.  
**Ch. VI** – A further account of the Academy - The Author proposes some improvements which are honourably received.  
**Ch. VII** – The Author leaves Lagado - Arrives at Maldonada - No ship ready - He takes a short voyage to Glubbudrib - His reception by the Governor. (*Gulliver's Travels* 151, 157, 164, 171, 177, 184, 189)

From chapter VIII to IX, Swift makes no more allusions to his contemporaries, but instead alludes quite openly to historical figures such as Homer, Virgil, Alexander, Caesar, Hannibal, Duns Scotus, Descartes, and Pierre Gassendi, apparently with no satirical intent, rather as a way of contrasting what he saw as early modern insanity and cultural illness with the sane and vigorous classical figures of his ideals. Only in the penultimate chapter of Part III, there are some extremely oblique allusions to links between specious science and the occult, but these are rather inconsequential. Therefore, our focus will rely on chapters II to VII, which are the most heavily allusive and complex.

Starkman, the editor whose edition is used in this study, will from now on be cited as the author of the footnotes included in the edition, but the *de facto* reference is Swift, *Gulliver's Travels and Other Writings*. Likewise, Britto's endnotes will be cited, while the *de facto* reference in this case is Swift, *Viagens de Gulliver*.

The allusions begin right in the first paragraph of chapter II, as Gulliver arrives at the flying island of Laputa:

At my alighting I was surrounded by a crowd of people, but those who stood nearest seemed to be of better quality. They beheld me with all the marks and circumstances of wonder; neither, indeed, was I much in their debt, having never till then seen a race of mortals so singular in their shapes, habits, and countenances. Their heads were all reclined either to the right or the left; one of their eyes turned inward, and the other directly up to the zenith. Their outward garments were adorned with the figures of suns, moons, and stars, interwoven with those of fiddles, flutes, harps, trumpets, guitars, harpsicords and many more instruments of music unknown to us in Europe. (Swift 157)

The editor includes a lengthy note to explain these descriptions:

Swift satirizes the Modern scientists' preoccupations with scientific formulations of music, "musico-mathematics" as it has been called. Thus he embroiders the clothes the Laputans wear with musical instruments, and later turns the food they eat into musical shapes. (See: Marjorie Hope Nicolson, "The Scientific Background of Swift's 'Voyage to Laputa,'" in *Science and Imaginations*, 1956, pp. 110-154, to which I am indebted for most of the annotations on the science satire that follow.) In addition, the substantial amount of political satire in Part III should be noted, in which Swift focuses on the Whig ministry under George I; he considers the Whigs political projectors whose experiments in government he satirizes as no less ludicrous than the scientific experiments reported in the *Transactions of the Royal Society*. When read against the political and scientific backgrounds both, Part III becomes most meaningful. (Starkman 157)

Britto makes no mention of these connections, and uses the only endnote concerning Laputa to speculate on the etymology of the name: "A puta' em espanhol, embora interpretações adicionais sejam possíveis, com base, por exemplo, no verbo latino *puto*, 'pensar', ou o substantivo inglês *put*, 'idiota' (*Oxford English Dictionary*, sb. 4; talvez a palavra também esteja por trás de *Lilipute*" (Britto 420).

When Gulliver says that "the word, which I interpret the Flying or Floating Island, is in the original *Laputa*, whereof I could never learn the true etymology," Starkman intervenes with a footnote: "Swift here satirizes the new philology and probably Dr. Richard Bentley, its most distinguished exponent." (160) — No mention of this is made by Britto.

Gulliver goes on to explain the functions of the "flappers" in Laputa:

This flapper is likewise employed diligently to attend his master in his walks, and upon occasion to give him a soft flap on his eyes, because he is always so wrapped up in cogitation that he is in manifest danger of falling down every

precipice and bouncing his head against every post, and in the streets of jostling others, or being jostled himself into the kennel. (Swift 158)

And Starkman interrupts to explain that “kennel” was meant as a synonym of “gutter”, but also taking the opportunity to elucidate: “Some have supposed that Swift here satirizes Sir Isaac Newton, whom he disliked not only for his mathematics but also for his championship of Wood’s half-pence in opposition to which Swift wrote his *Drapier’s Letter*” (158). This time, in an endnote to another passage referring to the connection of mathematics and astrology, Britto makes the connection: “O interesse pela política e pela fé inconfessa na astrologia apontam para a figura de Isaac Newton, que defendeu a posição de Walpole na questão do meio pêni de Wood (v. Introdução, p. 47)” (420). — As indicated by his citation of the introduction, Britto relies heavily on the paratext provided by the scholar Robert Demaria Jr. to make the connections between the satire and the historical figures.

Still in chapter II, Starkman provides short footnotes connecting the king of Laputa with the King of Great Britain and Ireland at the time, George I: “Swift may be satirizing George I who, though a patron of music and science, knew little about either. [...] George I’s hospitality to strangers, chiefly Hanoverians, called attention to itself. He tended to give them lucrative posts in England” (Starkman 158). No mention in Britto’s notes.

When Gulliver is measured by a Laputian tailor for new clothes, there is a comical scene that is quite obviously a barb aimed at mathematicians:

Those to whom the King had entrusted me, observing how ill I was clad, ordered a tailor to come next morning and take my measure for a suit of clothes. This operator did his office after a different manner from those of his trade in Europe. He first took my altitude by a quadrant, and then with a rule and compasses described the dimensions and outlines of my whole body, all which he entered upon paper, and in six days brought my clothes very ill-made

and quite out of shape, by happening to mistake a figure in the calculation. But my comfort was that I observed such accidents very frequent and little regarded. (Swift 160)

Starkman provides a detailed explanation for this passage, which goes also unmentioned by Britto:

Swift may be satirizing a well-known error made by the printer of Newton's calculations concerning the distance of the sun from the earth, which made Newton appear ridiculous. More generally he is satirizing current preoccupations with astronomical calculations and surveying and measuring instruments, as they were the subjects of many papers published in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*. Note that the word *philosophy* in the period is synonymous with our use of the word *science*. (Starkman 160)

When the city of Lagado is first mentioned, she also states, quite categorically, that it is a veiled reference to London. However, later in the beginning of chapter III, as Gulliver describes "a chasm about fifty yards in diameter, from whence the astronomers descend into a large dome, which is therefore called Flandona Gagnole, or the Astronomer's Cave" (Swift 165), Britto points out that this is "quase um anagrama de *London, England*" (43) — which goes unmentioned by Starkman.

By the end of chapter II, Gulliver describes the habits and customs of the Laputians in an obviously allusive manner:

These people are under continual disquietudes, never enjoying a minute's peace of mind, and their disturbances proceed from causes which very little affect the rest of mortals. Their apprehensions arise from several changes they

dread in the celestial bodies. For instance, that the earth by the continual approaches of the sun towards it must in course of time be absorbed or swallowed up. That the face of the sun will, by degrees, be encrusted with its own effluvia, and give no more light to the world. (Swift 160)

And Starkman weighs in right there:

In this paragraph and the following one, Swift is satirizing several scientific preoccupations of the period: Newton's theory that the earth might be absorbed or otherwise destroyed by the sun; contemporary concerns that Halley's comet (due to appear in 1758) might catapult into the earth and reduce it to ashes; and contemporary theories on the nature of the sun spots. (Starkman 160)

Britto confirms this as well: “Todos esses temores foram manifestados por membros da Real Academia e registrados em suas *Philosophical Transactions*; para maiores detalhes, v. Marjorie H. Nicolson e N.M. Mohler, *Annals of Science* 2 (1937), pp. 405-30.” (420) — It is rather curious that he now mentions the source Nicolson, to which Starkman claimed to be indebted in her first note regarding the satire of science, and yet their notes do not always overlap. If Britto is aware of all the points raised by Nicolson, why are some left out?

In any case, in the first paragraph of chapter III, Gulliver sets out to give “a philosophical account” of Laputa as a flying giant apparatus, and this account “is a direct parody of the language of the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society” (Starkman 164). This is also confirmed by Britto: “Relatório científico, uma paródia dos artigos publicados nas *Philosophical Transactions* da Royal Academy; para maiores detalhes v.

Marjorie H. Nicolson e N. M. Mohler, *Annals of Science* 2 (1937, pp. 110-54.) (420). But Starkman goes further still:

Swift's flying island is a combination of satire on voyages to the moon (here reversed to a voyage of the moon to the earth) and of flying machines. The mathematical figures assume significance when collated with William Gilbert's figures in his *De Maguete*. Swift's flying island works by the principles of terrestrial magnetism. (See Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Voyages to the Moon*, 1960, pp. 189-195.) In addition, Swift's island is satirical of the exploitation of Ireland by England in all its punitive and controlling measures. (Starkman 164)

Considering that *Gulliver's Travels* was, first and foremost, a satire on travel books, it seems rather adequate that Swift also decided to satirize voyages to the moon, no doubt influenced by Lucian of Samosata, one of the great minor satirists from antiquity.

As Laputa takes to suppressing insurrections, Starkman notes that "the satire turns to political channels as Swift satirizes English domination of Ireland; he implies economic exploitation like Wood's half-pence, punitive legislative action, and military violence" (169). Britto does not seem sure: "Provavelmente uma imagem da tirania econômica exercida pela Inglaterra sobre a Irlanda e outras colônias." (421); but Starkman provides further connections: "The spires, rocks, and stones which deter the flying island from landing have been interpreted as the Church, the nobility and the citizenry which support Ireland; the fear of breaking the adamant bottom is the fear of revolution" (169). Britto provides no such associations, adopting minimum change, allowing the text to speak for itself.

By the end of chapter III, Starkman includes this footnote: "This paragraph and the four following it were omitted from all editions of *Gulliver* until 1899; the revolutionary implications of the Irish agitation against Wood's half-pence in this passage would have

made Swift (the Drapier) vulnerable to charges” (169). The passages in question deal heavily with intrigue, insurrection, resistance by the citizens of Lindalino — identified categorically as Dublin or Ireland by Starkman (170) and Britto (421) — to the tyranny of Laputa. Britto includes a long endnote acknowledging this, which had also been mentioned before in his translator’s note. His only disagreement is that the paragraphs were published again in 1896. The omitted paragraphs include a description of “four large towers [erected] one at every corner of the city, equal in height to a strong pointed rock that stands directly in the center of the city” (170) by the citizens in rebellion. “Upon the top of each tower, as well as upon the rock, they fixed a great loadstone, and in case their design should fail, they had provided a vast quantity of the most combustible fuel, hoping to burst therewith the adamant bottom of the island [Laputa], if the loadstone project should miscarry” (170). According to Starkman, “the tower has been interpreted as the Church in Ireland (St. Patrick’s Cathedral, the four towers as the four chief agencies of the Irish government, and the combustible fuel as the incendiary pamphlets against the English, among them Swift’s *Drapier’s Letters*” (170).

In chapter IV, the satire grows much more complex and bizarre, and its allusions much more obscure. First of all, there is the matter of the endless strife between the Whigs and the Tories, while Swift himself was a Tory. When Gulliver arrives at Balnibarbi, the mainland, coming down from Laputa, he encounters “a great lord at Court nearly related to the King,” (172) which Britto does not acknowledge, but Starkman identifies as:

The Prince of Wales, later George II, was unpopular at court and notable for his lack of interest in science and music. But though he “hobbled” between the Whigs and Tories, he was substantially a Tory and thus is made to reject Whig political projects; the Tories built their hopes on his succession. Thus he is sympathetic to Gulliver and dispenses with a “flapper.” (Starkman 172)

In Balnibarbi, Gulliver is sent to a lord called Munodi, who “has been taken as Bolingbroke or Oxford, both of whom retired from public life and represented the good old Tory cause” (Starkman 173). “Bolingbroke or Oxford” refer to Henry St John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke, an English politician and political philosopher, and Robert Harley, 1st Earl of Oxford, another English politician, both good friends of Swift, and the latter even being one of Swift’s patrons who urged him to write his pamphlets. Britto partially confirms this:

Várias interpretações alegóricas foram propostas, segundo as quais, Munodi representaria Robert Harley, o visconde de Bolingbroke e *sir* William Temple; o nome parece ser uma abreviação de *mundus odi* (“odeio o mundo”), um lema filosófico que bem se adequa a qualquer um desses homens que foram ligados a Swift e se afastaram da política. (421)

As Gulliver takes a tour of Balnibarbi with Munodi, he realizes how precarious are the conditions for production and the quality of life in that mainland under the yoke of Laputa. Particularly telling is the mention of “a soil so unhappily cultivated, houses so ill-contrived and so ruinous,” which indicate a rather oblique allusion:

The satire generally is directed against Modern scientific methods of architecture and husbandry as, respectively, ugly and fruitless. The economic implications concern the South Sea Bubble which broke in 1720. Oxford, when minister, had vouched for the South Sea Company by which the government was considerably enriched; when it went bankrupt the public, which had invested in it heavily, was defrauded and Oxford was held responsible though in fact he was not. (Starkman 173)

Although this goes unmentioned by Britto, he and Starkman both agree on the episode that follows, in which Gulliver visits the academy of Lagado, meeting the *projectors*:

Swift's academy is immediately satiric of the Royal Society and many lesser societies and academies which projected large schemes for the advancement of knowledge, which Swift found vain and foolish in their aims, methods and personnel. There is very possibly an implication of political projecting here too, in the schemes of the Whigs for the improvement of the political and economic status of England. (Starkman 175)

Paródia da Real Sociedade de Londres para o Progresso do Conhecimento da Natureza, que começou a se reunir em caráter informal por volta de 1645, oficializou-se em 1622 e começou a publicar suas *Philosophical Transactions* em 1665; foi com base em relatos de experimentos reais contidos nessa publicação que Swift extraiu muitos dos planos aparentemente fantásticos que aparecem neste capítulo (v. Nicolson e Mohler); um dos sentidos de *projector* era “aquele que cria planos insensatos e impraticáveis” (Johnson, segunda acepção). (Britto 422)

What follows from then on is a description of several such experiments carried out by the academy's projectors, most of which are blatant allusions to the experiments described in the *Philosophical Transactions*. However, due to constraints of word limit, only the connections shared by both Starkman and Britto will be considered from now on.

The first of these is when Gulliver mentions that “another great advantage proposed by this invention was that it would serve as a universal language to be understood in all civilized nations, whose goods and utensils are generally of the same kind, or nearly resembling, so that their uses might easily be comprehended” (184). Starkman cuts in:

Swift refers to contemporary attempts to create a universal language, to reform English, and provide a language that would be useful for the dissemination of scientific truths. The attempt was begun by Bacon, defended by Sprat in his *History of the Royal Society*, and received its fullest expression in John

Wilkins's essay towards a *Real Character and Philosophical Language*, 1668.  
(Starkman 183)

Whereas Britto simply mentions that “projetos desse tipo eram numerosos no tempo de Swift; sobre o assunto, v. James Knowlson, *Universal language schemes in England and France 1600-1800*, University of Toronto Press, 1975” (423).

Later on, Gulliver mentions “the kingdom of Tribnia, by the natives called Langden”. “Tribnia and Langden are anagrams for Britain and England” (Starkman 188). “Anagramas óbvios — e, sob esse aspecto, pouco característicos de Swift — de *Britain* (Grã-Bretanha) e *England* (Inglaterra)” (Britto 423). These variations and anagrams for Britain, England, London, Ireland and Dublin can be very divisive: in chapter VII, when Gulliver “arrives at Maldonada,” Starkman (189) says this is Dublin, while Britto (424) says London. Referring to Lagado, Starkman (189) says this is London. In the later chapters, Britto (424) equates Glubbudrib with Dublin and Luggnagg with England.

One of the allusions in which Starkman and Britto are in complete agreement is when Gulliver meets a professor in the academy that “showed [him] a large paper of instructions for discovering plots and conspiracies against the government,” which leads to the curious allusion of finding proofs against a defendant by searching for incriminating evidence in his chamber pot, or “close-stool”:

In the trial of Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, for treason, evidence of treasonous correspondence between the Bishop and the Pretender was found in the Bishop's close-stool, or toilet; it was in code and the evidence was questionable. A lame dog, Harlequin, also figured in the evidence. (See Swift's poem: “Upon the Horrid Plot discovered by Harlequin, the Bishop of Rochester's French dog.”) Swift, a friend of Atterbury, believed in his innocence. (Starkman 188)

Sátira ao julgamento do bispo Atterbury, acusado de jacobitismo em 1722, em que a promotoria usou como provas cartas retiradas do penico do réu (Case, p. 91) Um cachorro francês manco que lhe pertencia, chamado Harlequin, foi usado para estabelecer uma ligação entre ele, através da correspondência com o conde de Mar, e um complô que visava devolver o trono aos Stuart, o que constituía traição. Swift escreveu um poema satírico sobre esse julgamento em 1722, que foi publicado pela primeira vez por Faulkner em 1735. (Britto 424)

Right after this allusion, Gulliver mentions the method of using anagrams and acrostics to find incriminating messages in apparently harmless messages: “So for example if I should say in a letter to a friend, Our brother Tom has just got the piles, a skillful decipherer would discover that the same letters which compose that sentence may be analyzed into the following words: Resist—a plot is brought home—The Tour.” (189) — Starkman’s and Britto’s notes are quite similar: “The Tour is a signature; besides implying the Tower of London, a prison, it recalls La Tour, the name by which Bolingbroke was known in France during his exile” (Starkman 189). — “The Tour é uma referência a um nome adotado por Bolingbroke no tempo em que se passou na França, M. La Tour (Case, p. 91)” (Britto 424).

There are several allusions, particularly in the experiments of the academy, that Britto does not bring up in his notes. However, he does claim that many words used by Gulliver in the academy are inspired directly by Samuel Johnson’s idiosyncratic dictionary, which Starkman never mentions at all, and this is rather dubious, since Johnson’s dictionary was only published in 1755.

As it should probably be obvious by now, both Starkman and Britto have their own merits as commentators, each providing the reader with what they find relevant to help him/her understand the allusions and their connections with historical figures and events. As a whole, Britto’s translation is a respectable scholarly edition that manages to rescue, perhaps

for the first time, the spirit of *Gulliver's Travels* as an obscure and vitriolic satire against the abuses of power and knowledge.

That said, some of the gaps in commentary that were covered by Starkman and went unmentioned by Britto are glaring in their omission. As already established, Britto was aware of the article by Nicolson that Starkman used for the comments included in Part III, to which she claimed to be greatly indebted. So the question from page 28 remains: why did Britto leave out several points raised by Nicolson that Starkman picked up on and found essential to the proper comprehension of Swift's satire? This could only be answered properly by Britto himself, but, unfortunately, an attempt at contact was unsuccessful. Obviously, the intention here is not to belittle his capacities as a translator and scholar, which are quite respectable, no doubt whatsoever.

Considering the several endnotes included in his translation, Britto would most likely agree that the most adequate solution to the construing of allusions in a translation of a work such as *Gulliver's Travels* is, as per Leppihalme's strategies, minimum change with just enough guidance to allow the reader to understand what exactly the author was hinting at. This is also the position defended in this study: the text itself should remain as unmodified as possible, within the constraints of interlingual translation, and, as Samuel Johnson would agree, allow for an unobstructed reading, which the endnotes allow, whereas footnotes would not. If the reader wishes to consult the endnotes, that is his/her choice, but footnotes are much more difficult to ignore in the page.

Overall, the verdict is that further guidance from Britto in the endnotes would have allowed for a deeper comprehension of Swift's satirical allusions by the average Brazilian reader who picks up *Viagens de Gulliver* for the first time.

## V. Final Remarks

This study is probably flawed and lacking in many respects, particularly with regard to the superficial glimpse at theoretical views both on literary allusions and the translation of allusions, which could have been expanded and provided with a deeper scrutiny in terms of literary theory and translation theory. The constraints on word limit are a predictable excuse that should not be overused and does not preclude criticism.

For all it is worth, on the other hand, considering the relative freshness of allusion as a branch for further research both in literary and translation theories, this study may have broken some ground, just enough to plow the rough field and sow some seeds that might grow into a lush garden to welcome other researchers interested in delving beneath the surface of literary texts and finding, beyond the subtext, the wealth of curiosities that allusions grant to those who seek their unraveling.

Jonathan Swift is one of the greats in the Western canon of literature, and yet his work goes mostly unnoticed not only by most present-day authors, but even by most academics, hardly being taught anymore, especially in Brazil. It was a pleasure and an honor to bring him out of his relative oblivion to do a fairly serious study on his timeless classic, which will remain not only a children's book of endless wonder and fantasy, but also a courageous diatribe aimed at any government or ruler that abuses its citizens and subjects; at any science or movement that sets itself above criticism.

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