Gulliver's Travels

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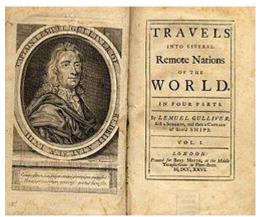
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Gulliver's Travels



First edition of Gulliver's Travels

Author(s) <u>Jonathan Swift</u>

Travels into Several Remote

Nations of the World, in

Original title Four Parts. By Lemuel

Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of

several Ships

Country Kingdom of Great Britain

Language English

Genre(s) Satire, fantasy
Publisher Benjamin Motte

Publication date 1726 **Media type** Print

Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World, in Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of Several Ships, better known simply as Gulliver's Travels (1726, amended 1735), is a novel by Irish writer and clergyman Jonathan Swift (also known as Dean Swift^[1]) that is both a satire on human nature and a parody of the "travellers' tales" literary sub-genre. It is Swift's best known full-length work, and a classic of English literature.

The book became popular as soon as it was published (<u>John Gay</u> wrote in a 1726 letter to Swift that "It is universally read, from the cabinet council to the nursery" since then, it has never been out of print.

Contents

[hide]

- <u>1 Plot summary</u>
 - o 1.1 Part I: A Voyage to Lilliput
 - o 1.2 Part II: A Voyage to Brobdingnag
 - 1.3 Part III: A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbdubdrib, and Japan
 - o 1.4 Part IV: A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms
- 2 Composition and history
 - o 2.1 Faulkner's 1735 edition
 - o 2.2 Lindalino
- 3 Major themes
- 4 Cultural influences
- 5 In other works
 - o 5.1 Sequels and imitations
 - o 5.2 Allusions
- 6 Adaptations
 - o 6.1 Music
 - o 6.2 Film, television and radio
- 7 See also
- <u>8 References</u>
- 9 External links
 - o 9.1 Online Text

[edit] Plot summary

[edit] Part I: A Voyage to Lilliput



 \Box

Mural depicting Gulliver surrounded by citizens of Lilliput.

4 May 1699 — 13 April 1702

The book begins with a short preamble in which <u>Lemuel Gulliver</u>, in the style of books of the time, gives a brief outline of his life and history before his voyages. He enjoys travelling, although it is that love of travel that is his downfall.

During his first voyage, Gulliver is washed ashore after a shipwreck and finds himself a prisoner of a race of tiny people, less than 6 inches tall, who are inhabitants of the island country of Lilliput. After giving assurances of his good behaviour, he is given a residence in Lilliput and becomes a favourite of the court. From there, the book follows Gulliver's observations on the Court of Lilliput. He is also given the permission to roam around the city on a condition he not harm their subjects. Gulliver assists the Lilliputians to subdue their neighbours, the Blefuscudians, by stealing their fleet. However, he refuses to reduce the island nation of Blefuscu to a province of Lilliput, displeasing the King and the court. Gulliver is charged with treason and sentenced to be blinded. With the assistance of a kind friend, Gulliver escapes to Blefuscu, where he spots and retrieves an abandoned boat and sails out to be rescued by a passing ship which safely takes him back home.

This book of the *Travels* is a topical political satire (see below).

[edit] Part II: A Voyage to Brobdingnag



Gulliver Exhibited to the Brobdingnag Farmer by Richard Redgrave 20 June 1702 — 3 June 1706

When the sailing ship *Adventure* is steered off course by storms and forced to go in to land for want of fresh water, Gulliver is abandoned by his companions and found by a farmer who is 72 feet (22 m) tall (the scale of Lilliput is approximately 1:12; of <u>Brobdingnag</u> 12:1, judging from Gulliver estimating a man's step being 10 yards (9.1 m)). He brings Gulliver home and his daughter cares for Gulliver. The farmer treats him as a curiosity and exhibits him for money. The word gets out and the Queen of Brobdingnag wants to see the show. She loves Gulliver and he is then bought by her and kept as a favourite at court.

Since Gulliver is too small to use their huge chairs, beds, knives and forks, the queen commissions a small house to be built for Gulliver so that he can be carried around in it. This is referred to as his "travelling box." In between small adventures such as fighting giant wasps and being carried to the roof by a monkey, he discusses the state of Europe with the King. The King is not happy with Gulliver's accounts of Europe, especially upon learning of the use of guns and cannons. On a trip to the seaside, his travelling box is seized by a giant eagle which drops Gulliver and his box right into the sea where he is picked up by some sailors, who return him to England.

This book compares the truly moral man to the representative man, the latter of whom is clearly shown to be the lesser of the two; Swift, being in Anglican holy orders, was likely to make such comparisons.

[edit] Part III: A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbdubdrib, and Japan



Gulliver discovers Laputa, the flying island (illustration by <u>J.J. Grandville</u>.) 5 August 1706 — 16 April 1710

After Gulliver's ship is attacked by pirates, he is <u>marooned</u> close to a desolate rocky island, near India. Fortunately he is rescued by the flying island of <u>Laputa</u>, a kingdom devoted to the arts of <u>music</u> and <u>mathematics</u> but unable to use them for practical ends. ("La puta" is Spanish for "the whore;" Swift was attacking reason and the <u>deism</u> movement in this book, the last one he wrote for the *Travels*.)

Laputa's method of throwing rocks at rebellious surface cities also seems the first time that aerial bombardment was conceived as a method of warfare. While there, he tours the country as the guest of a low-ranking courtier and sees the ruin brought about by blind pursuit of science without practical results, in a satire on bureaucracy and the Royal Society and its experiments. At The Grand Academy of Lagado great resources and manpower are employed on researching completely preposterous and unnecessary schemes such as extracting sunbeams from cucumbers, softening marble for use in pillows, learning how to mix paint by smell, and uncovering political conspiracies by examining the excrement of suspicious persons (see muckraking).

Gulliver is then taken to Balnibarbi to await a trader who can take him on to Japan. While waiting for passage, Gulliver takes a short side-trip to the island of <u>Glubbdubdrib</u>, where he visits a magician's dwelling and discusses history with the ghosts of historical figures, the most obvious restatement of the "ancients versus moderns" theme in the book. In Luggnagg he encounters the <u>struldbrugs</u>, unfortunates who are immortal, but not forever young, but rather forever old, complete with the infirmities of old age and considered legally dead at the age of eighty. After reaching Japan, Gulliver asks the Emperor "to excuse my performing the

ceremony imposed upon my countrymen of <u>trampling upon the crucifix</u>", which the Emperor grants. Gulliver returns home, determined to stay there for the rest of his days.

[edit] Part IV: A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms



Gulliver in discussion with Houyhnhnms (1856 Illustration by <u>J.J. Grandville</u>.) 7 September 1710 – 2 July 1715

Despite his earlier intention of remaining at home, Gulliver returns to the sea as the captain of a merchantman as he is bored with his employment as a surgeon. On this voyage he is forced to find new additions to his crew who he believes to have turned the rest of the crew against him. His crew then mutiny, and after keeping him contained for some time resolve to leave him on the first piece of land they come across and continue as pirates. He is abandoned in a landing boat and comes first upon a race of (apparently) hideous deformed and savage humanoid creatures to which he conceives a violent antipathy. Shortly thereafter he meets a horse and comes to understand that they call themselves Houyhnhms (which in their language means "the perfection of nature"), and that they are the rulers, while the deformed creatures called Yahoos are human beings in their base form.

Gulliver becomes a member of the horse's household, and comes to both admire and emulate the Houyhnhnms and their lifestyle, rejecting his fellow humans as merely Yahoos endowed with some semblance of reason which they only use to exacerbate and add to the vices Nature gave them. However, an Assembly of the Houyhnhnms rules that Gulliver, a Yahoo with some semblance of reason, is a danger to their civilization, and expels him.

He is then rescued, against his will, by a Portuguese ship, and is surprised to see that Captain Pedro de Mendez, a Yahoo, is a wise, courteous and generous person. He returns to his home in England, but he is unable to reconcile himself to living among Yahoos and becomes a recluse, remaining in his house, largely avoiding his family and his wife, and spending several hours a day speaking with the horses in his stables.

This book uses coarse metaphors to describe human depravity, and the Houyhnhms are symbolized as not only perfected nature but also the emotional barrenness which Swift maintained that devotion to reason brought.

[edit] Composition and history

It is uncertain exactly when Swift started writing *Gulliver's Travels*, but some sources suggest as early as 1713 when Swift, Gay, Pope, <u>Arbuthnot</u> and others formed the <u>Scriblerus Club</u>, with the aim of satirising then-popular literary genres. Swift, runs the theory, was charged

with writing the memoirs of the club's imaginary author, Martinus Scriblerus. It is known from Swift's correspondence that the composition proper began in 1720 with the mirror-themed parts I and II written first, Part IV next in 1723 and Part III written in 1724, but amendments were made even while Swift was writing *Drapier's Letters*. By August 1725 the book was completed, and as *Gulliver's Travels* was a transparently anti-Whig satire it is likely that Swift had the manuscript copied so his handwriting could not be used as evidence if a prosecution should arise (as had happened in the case of some of his Irish pamphlets). In March 1726 Swift travelled to London to have his work published; the manuscript was secretly delivered to the publisher Benjamin Motte, who used five printing houses to speed production and avoid piracy. Motte, recognising a bestseller but fearing prosecution, simply cut or altered the worst offending passages (such as the descriptions of the court contests in Lilliput or the rebellion of Lindalino), added some material in defence of Queen Anne to book II, and published it anyway. The first edition was released in two volumes on 26 October 1726, priced 8s. 6d. The book was an instant sensation and sold out its first run in less than a week.

Motte published *Gulliver's Travels* anonymously and, as was often the way with fashionable works, several follow-ups (*Memoirs of the Court of Lilliput*), parodies (*Two Lilliputian Odes, The first on the Famous Engine With Which Captain Gulliver extinguish'd the Palace Fire...*) and "keys" (*Gulliver Decipher'd* and *Lemuel Gulliver's Travels into Several Remote Regions of the World Compendiously Methodiz'd*, the second by Edmund Curll who had similarly written a "key" to Swift's *Tale of a Tub* in 1705) were produced over the next few years. These were mostly printed anonymously (or occasionally pseudonymously) and were quickly forgotten. Swift had nothing to do with any of these and specifically disavowed them in Faulkner's edition of 1735. However, Swift's friend Alexander Pope wrote a set of five *Verses on Gulliver's Travels* which Swift liked so much that he added them to the second edition of the book, though they are not nowadays generally included.

[edit] Faulkner's 1735 edition

In 1735 an Irish publisher, George Faulkner, printed a complete set of Swift's works to date, Volume III of which was *Gulliver's Travels*. As revealed in Faulkner's "Advertisement to the Reader", Faulkner had access to an annotated copy of Motte's work by "a friend of the author" (generally believed to be Swift's friend Charles Ford) which reproduced most of the manuscript free of Motte's amendments, the original manuscript having been destroyed. It is also believed that Swift at least reviewed proofs of Faulkner's edition before printing but this cannot be proven. Generally, this is regarded as the *editio princeps* of *Gulliver's Travels* with one small exception, discussed below.

This edition had an added piece by Swift, *A letter from Capt. Gulliver to his Cousin Sympson* which complained of Motte's alterations to the original text, saying he had so much altered it that "I do hardly know mine own work" and repudiating all of Motte's changes as well as all the keys, libels, parodies, second parts and continuations that had appeared in the intervening years. This letter now forms part of many standard texts.

[edit] Lindalino

The short (five paragraph) episode in Part III, telling of the rebellion of the surface city of Lindalino against the flying island of Laputa, was an obvious allegory to the affair of *Drapier's Letters* of which Swift was proud. Lindalino represented Dublin and the

impositions of Laputa represented the British imposition of William Wood's poor-quality copper currency. Faulkner had omitted this passage, either because of political sensitivities raised by being an Irish publisher printing an anti-British satire or possibly because the text he worked from did not include the passage. In 1899 the passage was included in a new edition of the *Collected Works*. Modern editions derive from the Faulkner edition with the inclusion of this 1899 addendum.

<u>Isaac Asimov</u> notes in *The Annotated Gulliver* that Lindalino is composed of double lins; hence, Dublin.

[edit] Major themes

Gulliver's Travels has been the recipient of several designations: from Menippean satire to a children's story, from proto-Science Fiction to a forerunner of the modern novel.

Published seven years after <u>Daniel Defoe</u>'s wildly successful <u>Robinson Crusoe</u>, Gulliver's Travels may be read as a systematic rebuttal of Defoe's optimistic account of human capability. In *The Unthinkable Swift: The Spontaneous Philosophy of a Church of England Man* <u>Warren Montag</u> argues that Swift was concerned to refute the notion that the individual precedes society, as Defoe's novel seems to suggest. Swift regarded such thought as a dangerous endorsement of <u>Thomas Hobbes</u>' radical political philosophy and for this reason Gulliver repeatedly encounters established societies rather than desolate islands. The captain who invites Gulliver to serve as a surgeon aboard his ship on the disastrous third voyage is named Robinson.

Possibly one of the reasons for the book's classic status is that it can be seen as many things to many different people. Broadly, the book has three themes:

- a satirical view of the state of European government, and of petty differences between religions.
- an inquiry into whether men are inherently corrupt or whether they become corrupted.
- a restatement of the older "ancients versus moderns" controversy previously addressed by Swift in *The Battle of the Books*.

In terms of storytelling and construction the parts follow a pattern:

- The causes of Gulliver's misadventures become more malignant as time goes on he
 is first shipwrecked, then abandoned, then attacked by strangers, then attacked by his
 own crew.
- Gulliver's attitude hardens as the book progresses he is genuinely surprised by the viciousness and politicking of the Lilliputians but finds the behaviour of the Yahoos in the fourth part reflective of the behaviour of people.
- Each part is the reverse of the preceding part Gulliver is big/small/wise/ignorant, the countries are complex/simple/scientific/natural, forms of government are worse/better/worse/better than England's.
- Gulliver's view between parts contrasts with its other coinciding part—Gulliver sees the tiny Lilliputians as being vicious and unscrupulous, and then the king of Brobdingnag sees Europe in exactly the same light. Gulliver sees the Laputians as unreasonable, and Gulliver's Houyhnhnm master sees humanity as equally so.

- No form of government is ideal—the simplistic Brobdingnagians enjoy public executions and have streets infested with beggars, the honest and upright Houyhnhnms who have no word for lying are happy to suppress the true nature of Gulliver as a Yahoo and are equally unconcerned about his reaction to being expelled.
- Specific individuals may be good even where the race is bad—Gulliver finds a friend in each of his travels and, despite Gulliver's rejection and horror toward all Yahoos, is treated very well by the Portuguese captain, Dom Pedro, who returns him to England at the novel's end.

Of equal interest is the character of Gulliver himself — he progresses from a cheery optimist at the start of the first part to the pompous <u>misanthrope</u> of the book's conclusion and we may well have to filter our understanding of the work if we are to believe the final misanthrope wrote the whole work. In this sense *Gulliver's Travels* is a very modern and complex novel. There are subtle shifts throughout the book, such as when Gulliver begins to see all humans, not just those in Houyhnhmm-land, as Yahoos.

Also, although Gulliver is presented as a commonplace "everyman," lacking higher education, he possesses a remarkable natural gift for language. He quickly becomes fluent in the native tongue of any strange land in which he finds himself, a literary device that adds much understanding and humor to Swift's work.

Despite the depth and subtlety of the book, it is often classified as a children's story because of the popularity of the Lilliput section (frequently <u>bowdlerised</u>) as a book for children. It is still possible to buy books entitled *Gulliver's Travels* which contain only parts of the Lilliput voyage.

[edit] Cultural influences

From 1738 to 1746, Edward Cave published in occasional issues of *The Gentleman's Magazine* semi-fictionalized accounts of contemporary debates in the two Houses of Parliament under the title of *Debates in the Senate of Lilliput*. The names of the speakers in the debates, other individuals mentioned, politicians and monarchs present and past, and most other countries and cities of Europe ("Degulia") and America ("Columbia") were thinly disguised under a variety of Swiftian pseudonyms. The disguised names, and the pretence that the accounts were really translations of speeches by Lilliputian politicians, were a reaction to a Parliamentary act forbidding the publication of accounts of its debates. Cave employed several writers on this series: William Guthrie (June 1738-November 1740), Samuel Johnson (November 1740-February 1743), and John Hawkesworth (February 1743-December 1746).

The popularity of *Gulliver* is such that the term "Lilliputian" has entered many languages as an adjective meaning "small and delicate". There is even a brand of <u>cigar</u> called Lilliput which is small. In addition to this there are a series of collectible model-houses known as "Lilliput Lane". The smallest light bulb fitting (5mm diameter) in the <u>Edison screw</u> series is called the "Lilliput Edison screw". In Dutch, the word "Lilliputter" is used for adults shorter than 1.30 meters. Conversely, "Brobdingnagian" appears in the <u>Oxford English Dictionary</u> as a synonym for "very large" or "gigantic".

In like vein, the term "yahoo" is often encountered as a synonym for "ruffian" or "thug".

In the discipline of <u>computer architecture</u>, the terms **big-endian** and **little-endian** are used to describe two possible ways of laying out bytes in memory; see <u>Endianness</u>. The terms derive from one of the satirical conflicts in the book, in which two religious sects of Lilliputians are divided between those who prefer cracking open their soft-boiled eggs from the little end, and those who prefer the big end.

[edit] In other works

[edit] Sequels and imitations

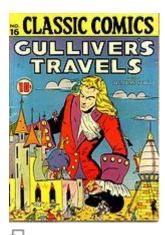
- Many sequels followed the initial publishing of the *Travels*. The earliest of these was the anonymously authored *Memoirs of the Court of Lilliput*, ^[4] published 1727, which expands the account of Gulliver's stays in Lilliput and Blefuscu by adding several gossipy anecdotes about scandalous episodes at the Lilliputian court.
- Abbé <u>Pierre Desfontaines</u>, the first French translator of Swift's story, wrote a sequel, *Le Nouveau Gulliver ou Voyages de Jean Gulliver, fils du capitaine Lemuel Gulliver* (The New Gulliver, or the travels of John Gulliver, son of Captain Lemuel Gulliver), published in 1730. [5] Gulliver's son has various fantastic, satirical adventures.
- Soviet Ukrainian science fiction writer Vladimir Savchenko published Gulliver's Fifth Travel The Travel of Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and Then a Captain of Several Ships to the Land of Tikitaks (Russian: Пятое путешествие Гулливера Путешествие Лемюэля Гулливера, сначала хирурга, а потом капитана нескольких кораблей, в страну тикитаков) a sequel to the original series in which Gulliver's role as a surgeon is more apparent. Tikitaks are people who inject the juice of a unique fruit to make their skin transparent, as they consider people with regular opaque skin secretive and ugly.
- The 1965 <u>Gulliver's Travels Beyond the Moon</u> (ガリバーの宇宙旅行 Garibā no Uchū Ryokō², Gulliver's Space Travels) is a <u>Japanese animated</u> film, portraying an elder Gulliver taking part in a space travel, joined by a boy, a crow, a talking toy soldier and a dog. The film, although being a children's production generally fascinated by the idea of space travelling, portrays an alien world where robots have taken power. Thus it continues in Swift's vein of critical approach on themes in current society.
- American physician John Paul Brady published in 1987 A Voyage to Inishneefa: A First-hand Account of the Fifth Voyage of Lemuel Gulliver (Santa Barbara: John Daniel), a parody of Irish history in Swift's manner.
- In 1998 the Argentine writer <u>Edgar Brau</u> published *El último Viaje del capitán Lemuel Gulliver* (Captain Lemuel Gulliver's Last Travel), a novel in which Swift's character is presented on an imaginary fifth journey, this time into the River Plate. It satirizes ways and customs of present day society, including sports, television, politics, etc. To justify the parody, the narrative is set immediately after the last voyage written by Swift (precisely, 1722), and the literary style of the original work is kept throughout the whole story.

[edit] Allusions

• Philip K. Dick's short story "Prize Ship" (1954) loosely referred to *Gulliver's Travels* [6]

- In the 9th book of <u>The Time Wars Series</u>, <u>Simon Hawke's</u> The Lilliput Legion, the protagonists meet Lemuel Gulliver and battle the titular army. [7]
- The <u>BBC Radio 4</u> comedy series <u>Brian Gulliver's Travels</u> by <u>Bill Dare</u> is a satirical comedy about a <u>travel documentary</u> presenter, Brian Gulliver (played by <u>Neil Pearson</u>), who talks about his adventures in the undiscovered continent of Clafenia. *Gulliver's Travels* was the only book Dare read while he was at the university. [8]
- The animated movie <u>Castle in the Sky</u> released by <u>Studio Ghibli</u> was originally titled *Laputa: Castle in the Sky*.

[edit] Adaptations



Comic book cover by Lilian Chesney.

[edit] Music

• The band *Soufferance* based and theme their 2010 album on the book, as "Travels Into Several Remote Nations of the Mind". [9]

[edit] Film, television and radio

Gulliver's Travels has been adapted several times for film, television and radio.

- <u>Gulliver's Travels</u> (1939): <u>Max Fleischer</u>'s animated classic of Gulliver's adventures in Lilliput.
- <u>Case for a Rookie Hangman</u> (1970): A satirical movie by the Czech <u>Pavel Juráček</u>, based upon the third book, depicting indirectly the Communist <u>Czechoslovakia</u>, shelved soon after its release. [10]
- Gulliver's Travels (1977): Part live-action and part-animated. Stars Richard Harris.
- <u>Gulliver's Travels</u> (1996): Live-action, 2 part, TV series with special effects starring <u>Ted Danson</u> and <u>Mary Steenburgen</u> also featuring a variety of film stars. [11] [12]
- <u>Gulliver's Travels</u> (2010): Live-action version of Gulliver's adventures in Lilliput, starring <u>Jack Black</u>, also featuring <u>Billy Connolly</u>, <u>James Corden</u>, <u>Amanda Peet</u>, <u>Chris O'Dowd</u>, <u>[13] Catherine Tate</u>, <u>Jason Segel</u>, <u>Emily Blunt</u> and Olly Alexander.

[edit] See also



- Bigendian
- Brobdingnag
- The Engine
- Glubbdubdrib
- Lemuel Gulliver
- Houvhnhnm
- <u>Lagado</u>
- Laputa
- Lilliput and Blefuscu
- Lindalino
- Struldbrug
- Yahoo

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- 2. <u>^</u> Gulliver's Travels: Complete, Authoritative Text with Biographical and Historical Contexts, Palgrave Macmillan 1995 (p. 21). The quote has been misattributed to Alexander Pope, who wrote to Swift in praise of the book just a day earlier.
- 3. Clive Probyn, 'Swift, Jonathan (1667–1745)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2004)
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- 5. <u>^ Le nouveau Gulliver: ou, Voyage de ... Google Books</u>
- 6. <u>^</u> Collected Short Stories of Philip K. Dick: Volume One, Beyond Lies The Wub, Philip K. Dick, 1999, Millennium, an imprint of Orion Publishing Group, London
- 7. ^ The Lilliput Legion, Simon Hawke, 1989, Ace Books, New York, NY
- 8. <u>^ "Brian Gulliver's Travels: Episode 1"</u>. <u>BBC Radio 4</u>. Retrieved 21 February, 2011.
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[edit] External links



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[edit] Online Text

- Gulliver's Travels at Project Gutenberg
- Gulliver's Travels (Parts I and II) with illustrations at Project Gutenberg
- *Gulliver's Travels*, full text and audio.
- RSS edition of the text
- Searchable version in <u>multiple formats</u> (<u>html</u>, XML, opendocument <u>ODF</u>, pdf (<u>landscape</u>, <u>portrait</u>), <u>plaintext</u>, <u>concordance</u>) <u>SiSU</u>

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