

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

by Jonathan Swift



THE AUTHOR

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) was born in Dublin, Ireland, the son of a lawyer. He studied at Trinity College and went on to serve as secretary to the Whig politician Sir William Temple. He was ordained by the Church of Ireland (Protestant) in 1694, but returned to England to serve Temple again. During this time, he became famous for his sharply-worded political and religious satires such as *A Tale of a Tub* (1704). Swift became disenchanted with the Whigs because of his strong allegiance to the church, and joined the Tory party in 1710, later becoming the editor of its political journal. When the Tories fell from power in 1714, he returned to Ireland and became Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral, in which position he served for the remainder of his life. Religiously, he despised both Catholics and Dissenters, especially the Puritans, and looked to the Ancient Church as his model of ideal Christianity. Among his heroes of faith were Sir Thomas More, Lord Chancellor of England executed by Henry VIII for denying the king's supremacy over the Church of England and refusing to recognize his marriage to Anne Boleyn, and William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury under Charles I who was executed by the Puritans.

While in England, Swift had become friends with Alexander Pope, and the two found a common interest in the writing of social satire. *Gulliver's Travels* was started when Pope and his circle handed out assignments to satirize certain aspects of human society; Swift's assignment was to ridicule the popular travelogue format (Daniel Defoe had published *Robinson Crusoe* just seven years earlier). Some of the work he did while in England eventually was incorporated into the third voyage of Lemuel Gulliver when his most famous work was published in 1726. In his later years, he became a staunch defender of the Irish against Whig oppression, producing such works as the scathing *A Modest Proposal* (1729). Near the end of his life, Swift became increasingly despairing of human society, as his fictional hero Lemuel Gulliver had done. He suffered a debilitating stroke in 1742 and died three years later.

PLOT SUMMARY

[Note that comments in brackets are editorial and indicate contemporary references in the satire.]

PART ONE - LILLIPUT

The novel is a first-person narrative supposedly written by one Lemuel Gulliver, an Englishman who apprentices himself to a doctor and becomes a ship's surgeon, giving him ample opportunity to travel. After his first voyage aboard the *Swallow* he returns to London and marries, but finds himself unable to support himself and his wife. He therefore returns to sea aboard the *Antelope*, bound for the South Seas, in 1699. The ship is wrecked during a storm and Gulliver, apparently the only survivor, is washed ashore on an island south of New Zealand.

When he awakes he finds himself in the land of Lilliput, where the people are only six inches tall. He discovers that he has been staked to the ground with many tiny ropes while he slept. When he tries to free himself, the inhabitants fill him with small and generally harmless arrows, but he quickly demonstrates that he is no threat to them and means them no harm. They feed him and drug the wine, then tie him to a cart and haul him to their capital city to meet the Emperor [George I]. They chain him to an old unused church building [the Church of England, now shrunk from its former glory], which is just about big enough to provide a place for him to sleep. Gradually he wins their confidence and learns their language, and they release him on condition that he help them in their war against the neighboring island of Blefuscu. He is given permission to walk around the capital city of Mildendo, at least where the roads are wide enough to permit him passage. He also learns something of the history of Lilliput and their long-standing conflicts. The two main factions at court are the Tramecksan, or High-Heels [Tories] and the Slamecksan, or Low-Heels [Whigs]. Internally, a feud began long ago between those who break their eggs on the big end [Catholics], who were outlawed and denied employment, and those who break them on the small end [Protestants]. Between the two factions there have been several wars, during which one emperor lost his life [Charles I] and another lost his crown [James II]. Externally, their traditional enemies are the men of Blefuscu [France], with whom they have been at war for years [wars between Louis XIV and William of Orange], and whence many of the persecuted Big-Enders have fled.

Blefuscu plans an invasion of Lilliput, and the Emperor calls on Gulliver to stop it. Gulliver discovers that the channel separating the two kingdoms is no more than six feet deep, so he prepares suitable ropes, wades the channel, and ties the ropes to fifty of the enemy's greatest warships, then tows them away to Lilliput, protecting his eyes, his only vulnerable point, from enemy arrows by putting on his glasses. The Emperor then demands that Gulliver return and capture all of Blefuscu's remaining warships, then destroy the Big-Enders and make Blefuscu a province of Lilliput. Gulliver refuses, which earns him the enmity of the Emperor and provides a convenient excuse for Gulliver's enemies at Court. Blefuscu soon sues for peace. Later, the Empress' bedroom catches fire and Gulliver is called to put it out. The water brought by the inhabitants is sadly inadequate, so Gulliver puts the fire out by urinating on it [some critics believe this incident is an allusion to Swift's satire *A Tale of a Tub*]. Such disrespect is against the law, and his enemies again see their chance. The incident also alienated the Empress [Queen Anne, who criticized Swift's book], who was humiliated by the way the Man Mountain (as the Lilliputians called him) put out the fire.

Gulliver then takes time to describe something of the civilization of Lilliput. Their animals and plants are of a size proportionate to that of the people. They write diagonally on the page, and bury their dead head-downward so that, at the time of the resurrection when the earth, which they

believe to be flat, turns over, they will be pointed in the right direction [a satirical comment on those in England who buried people upright in anticipation of the resurrection]. Crimes are severely punished, usually by death, but those who inform on people who prove to be innocent are themselves executed, while the innocent parties are recompensed for their time and expense from the estate of the informer. Fraud is a more serious crime than theft, and is punished by death. Law in Lilliput rewards as well as punishes, giving money and titles to those who sustain records as law-abiding citizens. Government jobs are awarded based on moral virtue rather than ability - they reason that a man of integrity can compensate for weaknesses in ability more easily than a man of talent can resist the temptation to corruption - and only those who believe in God are chosen for office, since the Emperor is supposed to be serving under God. Because fertility qualifies no one for the task of raising children, the young are removed from their parents as soon as they can walk and are educated in communal schools, for which the parents pay according to their means. Children are educated in line with their social class; boys and girls are educated equally, then receive training in the skills they will need to function in society according to gender. The elderly are supported by the government in hospitals; the kingdom contains no beggars.

Gulliver then describes his manner of life, and notes that the nation bore great trouble and expense to maintain so enormous a personage, and that Flimnap, the Treasurer, resented these expenses and also was jealous of the time his wife spent in Gulliver's company. Soon Flimnap [Robert Walpole, Whig Prime Minister under George I], in company with the Empress and Skyresh Bolgolam, the High Admiral who was embarrassed by the ease with which Gulliver had defeated the navy of Blefuscu, hatch a plot to accuse the Man Mountain of treason against the realm and get him executed. A friend informs Gulliver of the plot and tells him that friends on the Council had managed to get the sentence reduced to having his eyes put out and being gradually starved so he could be no more threat to the Kingdom or its treasury. Gulliver then flees to Blefuscu, where he had been invited for a visit. There he is well-received, but soon finds a boat floating in the ocean, which he fits with sails and an anchor and, after almost two years among the tiny folk, he puts himself at the mercy of the ocean. Soon he encounters a ship, on which he takes passage back to England, having brought with him a few tiny cattle and sheep. He shows the cattle and sells them for a profit, and intends to raise the sheep because of the great softness of their wool. After two months at home, he again becomes restless and takes to sea aboard the *Adventure*.

PART TWO - BROBDINGNAG

After the *Adventure* rounds the Cape of Good Hope, it is caught in a monsoon. The ship stops at an uncharted island to replenish supplies and find fresh water. Gulliver explores the island (which turns out to be a peninsula), and from a distance sees his ship pulling away from land rapidly with a gigantic man in pursuit. Gulliver seeks shelter and finds himself in a farmer's field where the grasses and grains are of enormous size. He is soon discovered by one of the giants, a man at least sixty feet tall. He takes him to his boss, and the farmer then takes him home to show to his wife and daughter. When they discover that he is not an animal, but a miniature human, they sustain him, largely through the efforts of the eight-year-old daughter, who dresses him in clothes she makes and builds a doll house of sorts for him to sleep in after an unpleasant night during which he has to kill two large rats with his sword. The daughter, Glumdalclitch, soon teaches him the language of the country, which was called Brobdingnag. The farmer soon begins to take Gulliver around from town to town in a large box and has him entertain the curious, to whom he charges a fee. Gulliver soon becomes exhausted, but receives a reprieve when the queen asks to meet him. She is so impressed

that she offers to buy him from the farmer, and the farmer, expecting Gulliver to die soon from the hard labor he has undergone, goes away thinking he has gotten a bargain. Gulliver asks the queen to take on Glumdalclitch as a household retainer; she agrees, to the immense pleasure of all concerned. He soon finds himself being examined by doctors and interrogated by scholars, becoming in the process somewhat of a celebrity. He makes an enemy of the queen's dwarf, whose small stature of only thirty feet now seems commonplace in comparison to the newest popular attraction. The dwarf becomes jealous of the attention Gulliver is receiving, and his mistreatment of Gulliver causes him to be banished from the capital. One day, Gulliver is attacked at breakfast by a swarm of gigantic wasps, as big as large birds. He kills several with his sword and saves the stingers, which he donates to Gresham College at Oxford when he returns to England.

In the weeks that follow, Gulliver is carried on various expeditions by his hosts and is able to learn something about the country, which is a peninsula off the west coast of North America approximately six thousand by three thousand miles in size. Gulliver is often in danger because of his size, and on several occasions almost loses his life in accidents. He views the execution of a criminal, who is beheaded, and is called upon to entertain his hosts by sailing a small boat in a trough constructed for that purpose and playing a musical instrument like a piano by beating the keys with large clubs while standing on a platform. He has long conversations with the king about the politics of Europe and Brobdingnag, and each considers the other's practices to be primitive in the extreme. Gulliver offers to teach the king to make gunpowder and artillery pieces, but the king rejects such a suggestion as horrible and inhumane. One day he is taken on a visit to the seashore, and after being left alone briefly, is carried off by an eagle and dropped into the sea, where he is rescued by an English ship and taken back home.

PART THREE - LAPUTA, BALNIBARBI, LUGGNAGG, GLUBBDUBDRIB, AND JAPAN

He soon is offered another post as ship's surgeon aboard the *Hope-well*, and the pay is so generous that he cannot refuse despite his wife's urgings to the contrary. His ship is taken by pirates and he is set adrift in a small canoe. Soon he encounters a strange sight - an island floating in the air. This island is called Laputa, and the inhabitants rule over a small group of islands in the sea below, which they keep in submission by the threat of landing the flying island on top of them. Gulliver discovers that the island flies by means of a large magnet that allows it to use the earth's gravitational field to rise, descend, and steer [the mention of the two moons of Mars and their respective distances from the planet is remarkably accurate, especially since astronomers didn't discover these things until 150 years later]. He finds the people very unpleasant, for they know only mathematics and music, though they are very skilled in both disciplines. They have no practical sense, however, and the things they build are crooked and flimsy. The inhabitants are so busy theorizing that they must be accompanied by people called flappers, who shake noisemakers near their mouths whenever they ought to speak and near their ears when someone is speaking to them. The people live in perpetual fear because of events anticipated in the distant future, such as the arrival of a comet that will burn the earth to a crisp. The women, quickly fed up with the lifestyles of their husbands, beg to visit the islands in the sea and regularly take lovers, though their husbands never notice.

Gulliver soon tires of the floating island and its inhabitants and asks to be allowed to visit the islands in the sea. He is set down in the capital city of Lagado on the island of Balnibarbi. He finds the capital city to be ugly in the extreme, with dilapidated buildings and people dressed in rags. The surrounding fields contain no crops, and therefore the citizens have little to eat. One nobleman,

Munodi, who is in disfavor with the government befriends Gulliver and invites him to his estate in the country. Gulliver finds it beautiful and well-managed with plenty to eat. When he asks the nobleman to explain what he has observed, he is told that the scientists of the kingdom despise all things old and insist that only the most modern scientific methods be applied to everything they do. But because the scientists have no common sense or ability to apply their knowledge, all their attempts to do so end in disaster. Gulliver then visits the Grand Academy in the capital [Royal Society] and finds scientists at work on all kinds of projects, most of which are totally absurd, such as trying to extract sunlight from cucumbers and attempting to turn excrement back into the food whence it came [most of the experiments cited here are exaggerations of actual experiments attempted by the Royal Society, which included such luminaries as Hooke, Boyle, and Newton]. Among the things he sees is a machine for writing that consists of small cubes with words on them in the proper proportions for normal language, but which are arranged randomly by those who operate the machine [this was intended to ridicule a similar project undertaken by Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, a great philosopher of the seventeenth century]; Gulliver responds by telling the scientist about the English practice of stealing inventions from one another, then trying to prove who had invented the thing first in order to gain sole credit [Leibniz and Isaac Newton fought for years over which one had invented calculus]. The proposals put forth by the political scientists were in fact noble and admirable, but Gulliver assured them that such ideas would never work. When differing political parties became violent, the scientists proposed that one hundred from each side be taken, their brains cut out and cut in half, and each man have one-half a brain from each faction implanted in his head. This way, the combatants fought inside themselves rather than fighting one another. Money was raised by taxing personality traits rather than property or income. The amount of tax to be collected was based on a man's follies and evil deeds as estimated by his neighbors, and on his virtues and talents as estimated by himself.

Gulliver then intends to visit the island of Luggnagg, but no ship is available for the voyage, so he goes to the nearby island of Glubbudrib instead. There he finds that all the people are sorcerers, and that the governor has the ability to bring back the dead for short periods of time. Gulliver takes advantage of this unusual skill to speak to large numbers of people from the past and finds that much of what passes for history in our world is far from the truth. He dispels persistent traditions about Alexander the Great and Hannibal, sees for himself the degradation of the Roman Senate over the centuries, is impressed by Brutus, who keeps company in the afterlife with the greatest men of history. He also speaks with Homer and Aristotle, and finds that their commentators misunderstood their writings so badly that the latter keep away from them in the afterlife out of sheer embarrassment. Aristotle freely admitted that his understanding of the natural world was speculative and faulty, but was happy to see that Descartes' ideas had met the same fate. He further speculated that the contemporary theory of attraction [Newton's Law of Gravity] would likewise prove to be useless. Gulliver also discovered that most of history was characterized by men of low character gaining preferment over those who were true and noble.

Gulliver then returns to Balnibarbi and finds a ship to transport him to Luggnagg, a voyage of a month's duration. When he arrives he introduces himself as a Hollander, since he intends to sail from thence to Japan, and the only Europeans allowed on that island are the Dutch [true for more than 200 years]. After waiting two weeks to see the king, he is taken to the capital, where he is careful to follow the tradition of crawling toward the sovereign on his belly and licking the dust off the floor. The king is pleased with the answers to his questions, and Gulliver stays on the island for three months in very comfortable circumstances. He soon hears of rare citizens called *struldbrugs* (Immortals), who are identified by a circular mark on their foreheads and never die. Gulliver is

amazed at the presence of such people in a society, and wonders why they are not regularly found at court in order to share their wisdom with the king. He is then asked how he would conduct his life if he had been fortunate enough to have been born an Immortal. He answers that he would accumulate wealth by careful husbandry, knowledge by diligent study, and would record the great people and events of history so as to become a fount of wisdom. He would then set out to teach others, and would gather other Immortals into his circle so that they might work to prevent corruption and other evils of human society. Being an Immortal would enable him to see the great changes wrought by nature, the rise and fall of nations and empires, and live to see the great scientific discoveries of the future, such as the means to calculate longitude [a great scientific problem critical for navigation in Swift's day that was finally solved by the clockmaker John Harrison in the eighteenth century], perpetual motion and a universal medicine [both of which are today admitted to be impossibilities, though scientists of Swift's day still hoped to find them]. The inhabitants with whom he converses correct his misunderstanding by noting that the Immortals largely serve as cautionary examples to keep people from loving life too much and trying too hard to avoid death. The Immortals, sadly, bore all the physical, mental, emotional, and moral infirmities of old age with no hope of escaping these miseries by dying. They loved no one and felt envious when funerals passed them by. Gulliver wishes to transport a few of these Immortals to England so that his people could learn not to fear death, but finds that the law of Luggnagg forbids it.

Gulliver then takes a ship to Japan, bearing a letter of introduction from the king of Luggnagg. He is taken to Yedo and received very graciously by the Emperor. He begs to be excused from the traditional requirement of stamping on a crucifix. The Emperor tells him that he is the only European who has ever asked such a privilege, and he therefore suspects that Gulliver must be a real Christian, but allows the favor anyway to accommodate his brother ruler from Luggnagg. He then finds a Dutch ship returning to Holland and gains passage as ship's surgeon. He arrives at his home in April 1710, after five and a half years away from his family.

PART FOUR - THE LAND OF THE HOUYHNNHMS

Gulliver stays home with his wife and family for five months, then sets sail as captain of the *Adventure*, leaving his wife quite pregnant. The ship stops in the West Indies and takes on more crew members, but Gulliver soon finds that most of them had been pirates. These men then corrupt the rest of the crew, who then mutiny against Gulliver, confining him to his cabin and then abandoning him on an uncharted island. He goes inland and encounters a group of manlike creatures, naked and hairy like artists' renderings of primitive man. These turn out to be Yahoos [this is one of many words coined by Swift that have passed into common parlance], the mute livestock of the rulers of the island. He then meets two horses who seem to be remarkably intelligent. They are curious about him, particularly with regard to his clothing and powers of speech. He soon gathers that they are the Houyhnhnms, though he does not yet realize that they are the noble rulers of the island. They then beckon him to follow them. He is taken to their home, where he finds horses behaving in a very dignified manner. He continually expects to hear the human masters of these horses, but soon finds that the horses themselves are the masters, and keep Yahoos in a kennel behind the house. The young horses are well-disciplined and the servants obedient. Gulliver soon finds that obtaining something to eat is problematic, but he learns to use oats to make bread and drinks the milk of cows, occasionally preparing salads or killing birds and cooking them to obtain meat.

Gulliver soon learns the language of the Houyhnhnms and begins to converse with the horse under whose protection he finds himself. As the two learn more about one another, Gulliver discovers that the Houyhnhnms have no word in their language for lying and cannot imagine why anyone should desire to deceive another, since language is intended for communication. The horses also discover that Gulliver's peculiar skin is actually his clothing, and wonder why anyone would want to wear anything other than what nature had given him. They also find it difficult to conceive of a country where the Yahoos are rulers and the horses serve them, even to the extent of allowing themselves to be ridden. Gulliver then tells his master about conditions in England. He talks about the foolish reasons why men go to war, about the sale of mercenaries, and about guns and artillery. The horse is incredulous that such things should exist, but becomes even more perplexed when Gulliver talks to him about the law and the practices of lawyers, who make their entire living by trying to convince others that white is black and black is white. Apparently the Houyhnhnms have neither law nor government; neither do they have sickness or doctors, as Gulliver discovers when he describes his own profession. When Gulliver explains the class disparities between rich and poor, all his master can do is note that, among the Houyhnhnms, master and servant are determined by the color of the horse, and that no servant desires to be a master, nor to mate with one outside his proper class. Gulliver is ashamed when he is asked to describe the government of his country, for his story is one dominated by official corruption on all levels. When Gulliver speaks of money and the horrible effects it has on those who covet it, his master speaks of the way the Yahoos in his land fight and kill one another over shiny stones found in some fields in the country; he also gives Gulliver examples of coquetry and gossip practiced by the Yahoo females.

Gulliver often has the opportunity of walking among the Yahoos under the protection of one of his master's servants and observing their practices. He finds them brutal and filthy, and on several occasions they attack him; once a Yahoo female tries to have sex with him while he is bathing. The Houyhnhnms, on the other hand, are noble and rational. They never quarrel, and show benevolence for all their race. Mating occurs according to eugenic principles, and the horses limit themselves to two children per couple. The children are trained in the important virtues and given exercise to keep them fit. Districts within the country meet in the spring of every fourth year to determine if any shortages exist, either of goods or offspring, and provision is made to make up anything lacking so that none may be in want. That spring, Gulliver was invited to accompany his master at the general assembly. The main subject of debate was what to do with the pestiferous Yahoos. Some favored extermination, while others advocated castration so that the species would die out of its own accord. In either case, Gulliver would not be able to continue his happy life among the Houyhnhnms, despite the fact that the other horses recognized that he was no common Yahoo. The narrator then relates to his readers that the Houyhnhnms had no written language, no close family ties, and no fear of death or grief at its arrival. Gulliver continues to enjoy the advantages he gains by listening to the wise discourse of his hosts - in fact, he tells his readers that, even after arriving at home, he still trots like a horse and often emits sounds like one - but soon is told by his master that he must leave the country. He is to make a boat and leave as soon as possible.

Within a few months (February 1715) he has constructed a canoe with a covering and sail made out of Yahoo skin, in which he sails to an island that he is able to see from the coast of the land he has so much enjoyed. His intention is to find an uninhabited island where he can live out the remainder of his days without relapsing into the vices of the Yahoos he had so come to despise. He reaches New Holland [Indonesia], where the natives who discover him shoot arrows and him and wound him in the knee as he is fleeing in his canoe. He is captured by Portuguese sailors, and is treated kindly by the captain, Pedro de Mendez, despite his attempts to escape to avoid the company

of Yahoos. The ship takes him to Lisbon, and from there he finds a ship going to London, where he is reunited with his wife and family. He never does learn to tolerate Yahoos after his experience with the Houyhnhnms, however. Five years later he still cannot stand the touch or even the company of his family, let alone other Yahoos, and spends most of his time conversing with the two horses in his barn. When he is confronted with the proposition that all the lands he has visited by law belong to the Crown, he responds that any attempts to conquer these lands would be either unwise or futile. He argues that the English are far superior in their approach to colonization than the other nations of Europe, but the ironic tone of voice with which he writes shows that he thinks other than what he speaks.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- Lemuel Gulliver - A ship's surgeon and the novel's protagonist and narrator. His journeys to strange lands provide the basis for the author's satire of early eighteenth-century England.
- Flimnap - Lord High Treasurer of Lilliput, and an enemy of Gulliver because his maintenance put great pressure on the treasury. He also suspected his wife of having a crush on Gulliver.
- Skyresh Bolgolam - High Admiral of Lilliput, he hates Gulliver because of the ease with which the Man Mountain defeated the navy of Blefuscu.
- Glumdalclitch - The eight-year-old daughter of a farmer in Brobdingnag, she adopts Gulliver as a pet and cares for him very well during his stay in the kingdom.
- Munodi - A nobleman of Lagado who shows hospitality to Gulliver, but is much out of favor with his countrymen because he runs his estates in the traditional way.
- Pedro de Mendez - The kindly Portuguese captain who takes Gulliver safely home at the end of his last voyage.

NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“He put this engine to our ears, which made an incessant noise like that of a watermill: and we conjecture it is either some unknown animal, or the god that he worships; but we are more inclined to the latter opinion, because he assures us (if we understood him right, for he expressed himself very imperfectly) that he seldom did anything without consulting it: he called it his oracle, and said it pointed out the time for every action of his life.” (Clefren and Marsi Frelock upon examining Gulliver's pocket watch, Part I, ch.2, p.44)

“Their manner of writing is very peculiar, being neither from the left to the right, like the Europeans; nor from the right to the left, like the Arabians; nor from up to down, like the Chinese; nor from down to up, like the Cascagians; but aslant from one corner of the paper to the other, like ladies in England.” (Gulliver, Part I, ch.6, p.69)

“The young ladies there are as much ashamed of being cowards and fools as the men, and despise all personal ornaments beyond decency and cleanliness.” (Gulliver, Part I, ch.6, p.73)

“Among people of quality a wife should always be a reasonable and agreeable companion, because she cannot always be young.” (Gulliver, Part I, ch.6, p.73)

“For as human creatures are observed to be more savage and cruel in proportion to their bulk, what could I expect, but to be a morsel in the mouth of the first among these enormous barbarians that should happen to seize me.” (Gulliver, Part II, ch.1, p.98-99)

“This made me reflect how vain an attempt it is for a man to endeavour doing himself honour among those who are out of all degree of equality or comparison with him. And yet I have seen the moral of my own behaviour very frequent in England since my return, where a little contemptible varlet, without the least title to birth, person, wit, or common sense, shall presume to look with importance, and put himself upon a foot with the greatest persons of the kingdom.” (Gulliver, Part II, ch.5, p.138)

“You have made a most admirable panegyric upon your country; you have clearly proved that ignorance, idleness, and vice, may be sometimes the only ingredients for qualifying a legislator; that laws are best explained, interpreted, and applied by those whose interests and abilities lie in perverting, confounding, and eluding them. I observe among you some lines of an institution, which in its original might have been tolerable, but these half erased, and the rest wholly blurred and blotted by corruptions. It doth not appear from all you have said, how any one virtue is required towards the procurement of any one station among you; much less that men are ennobled on account of their virtue, that priests are advanced for their piety or learning, soldiers for their conduct or valour, judges for their integrity, senators for the love of their country, or counsellors for their wisdom.” (King of Brobdingnag, Part II, ch.6, p.47)

“I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of odious little vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth.” (King of Brobdingnag, ch.6, p.148)

“When I first got into the ship, and the sailors stood all about me, I thought they were the most little contemptible creatures I had ever beheld.” (Gulliver, Part II, ch.8, p.163)

“In the school of political projectors I was but ill entertained, the professors appearing in my judgment wholly out of their senses, which is a scene that never fails to make me melancholy. These unhappy people were proposing schemes for persuading monarchs to choose favourites upon the score of their wisdom, capacity, and virtue; of teaching ministers to consult the public good; of rewarding merit, great abilities, eminent services; of instructing princes to know their true interest by placing it on the same foundation with their people; of choosing for employments persons qualified to exercise them; with many other wild impossible chimeras, that never entered before into the heart of man to conceive, and confirmed in me the old observation, that there is nothing so extravagant and irrational which some philosophers have not maintained for truth.” (Gulliver, Part III, ch.6, p.205)

“He likewise directed, that every senator in the great council of a nation, after he had delivered his opinion, and argued in the defence of it, should be obliged to give his vote directly contrary; because if that were done, the result would infallibly terminate in the good of the public.” (Gulliver, Part III, ch.6, p.206-207)

“Having strictly examined all the persons of greatest name in the courts of princes for an hundred years past, I found how the world had been misled by prostitute writers, to ascribe the greatest exploits in war to cowards, the wisest counsel to fools, sincerity to flatterers, Roman virtues to betrayers of their country, piety to atheists, chastity to sodomites, truth to informers.” (Gulliver, Part III, ch.8, p.216)

“Neither could I be wholly unmoved after comparing the living with the dead, when I considered how all these pure native virtues were prostituted for a piece of money by their grandchildren, who in selling their votes, and managing at elections, have acquired every vice and corruption that can possibly be learned in a court.” (Gulliver, Part III, ch.8, p.219)

“For he argued thus: that the use of speech was to make us understand one another, and to receive information of facts; now if anyone *said the thing which was not*, these ends were defeated; because I cannot properly be said to understand him; and I am so far from receiving information, that he leaves me worse than in ignorance, for I am led to believe a thing black when it is white, and short when it is long. And these were all the notions he had concerning that faculty of *lying*, so perfectly well understood among human creatures.” (Gulliver, Part IV, ch.4, p.259-260)

“Neither are any wars so furious and bloody, or of so long continuance, as those occasioned by difference of opinion, especially if it be in things indifferent.” (Gulliver, Part IV, ch.5, p.265)

“He thought his ears being used to such abominable words, might by degrees admit them with less detestation.” (Gulliver, Part IV, ch.5, p.267)

“I said there was a society of men among us, bred up from their youth in the art of proving by words multiplied for the purpose, that white is black, and black is white, according as they are paid. To this society all the rest of the people are slaves. For example, if my neighbour hath a mind to my cow, he hires a lawyer to prove that he ought to have my cow from me. I must then hire another to defend my right, it being against all rules of law that any man should be allowed to speak for himself.” (Gulliver, Part IV, ch.5, p.268-269)

“But besides real diseases we are subject to many that are only imaginary, for which the physicians have invented imaginary cures; these have their several names, and so have the drugs that are proper for them, and with these our female Yahoos are always infested.” (Gulliver, Part IV, ch.6, p.275)

“I remember it was with extreme difficulty that I could bring my master to understand the meaning of the word *opinion*, or how a point could be disputable; because reason taught us to affirm or deny only where we are certain, and beyond our knowledge we cannot do either.” (Gulliver, Part IV, ch.8, p.288)

“I enjoyed perfect health of body, and tranquillity of mind; I did not feel the treachery or inconstancy of a friend, nor the injuries of a secret or open enemy. I had no occasion of bribing, flattering, or pimping to procure the favour of any great man or his minion. I wanted no fence against fraud or oppression; here was neither physician to destroy my body, nor lawyer to ruin my fortune; no informer to watch my words and actions, of forge accusations against me for hire; here were no gibbers, censurers, backbiters, pickpockets, highwaymen, housebreakers, attorneys, bawds, buffoons, gamesters, politicians, wits, splenetics, tedious talkers, controvertists, ravishers, murderers, robbers, virtuosos; no leaders or followers of party and faction; no encouragers of vice, by seducement or examples; no dungeon, axes, gibbets, whipping-posts, or pillories; no cheating shopkeepers or mechanics; no pride, vanity, or affectation; no fops, bullies, drunkards, strolling whores, or poxes; no ranting, lewd, expensive wives; no stupid, proud pedants; no importunate, overbearing, quarrelsome, noisy, roaring, empty, conceited, swearing companions; no scoundrels, raised from the dust for the sake of their vices, or nobility thrown into it for the sake of their virtues; no lords, fiddlers, judges, or dancing-masters.” (Gulliver, Part IV, ch.10, p.298)

“When I thought of my family, my friends, my countrymen, or human race in general, I considered them as they really were, Yahoos in shape and disposition, perhaps a little more civilized, and qualified with the gift of speech, but making no other use of reason than to improve and multiply those vices whereof their brethren in this country had only the share that nature allotted them.” (Gulliver, Part IV, ch.10, p.300)

“A traveller’s chief aim should be to make men wiser and better, and to improve their minds by the bad as well as good example of what they deliver concerning foreign places.” (Gulliver, Part IV, ch.12, p.313)

“When I behold a lump of deformity and diseases both in body and mind, smitten with *pride*, it immediately breaks all the measures of my patience; neither shall I be ever able to comprehend how such an animal and such a vice could tally together.” (Gulliver, Part IV, ch.12, p.319)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. Discuss the picture given of Lilliputian civilization in chapter six of Part One of Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*. Is the chapter more satire or utopian fantasy? Is Swift attempting to criticize English society by exaggerating its foolish characteristics, or is he picturing an ideal society that he believes England should emulate, or both? Support your analysis with specific examples and quotations from the novel.
2. Discuss the picture of the civilization of the Houyhnhnms in Part IV of Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*. What does Swift consider to be the chief characteristics of a civilized society? Do you agree with his values? Why or why not?
3. Discuss the contrasts between theoretical and practical thought in Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*. In what ways does Swift demonstrate the greater value of the latter, and what are his reasons? Cite specific incidents and quotations from the book to support your arguments.

4. Discuss the theme of justification for rule over others as it appears in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. What arguments do figures in the novel use to support their right to govern or even oppress other people? How does Swift assess these arguments? Do you agree with his assessments? Why or why not? Be sure to give biblical reasons for your evaluations.
5. In what ways are the human beings of Gulliver's homeland similar to the Yahoos he encounters in Part IV of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*? Is Gulliver right to shun such creatures when he returns home, or is the criticism that leads him to despise his fellow men exaggerated to the point of uselessness?
6. Choose one of the three major societies Gulliver encounters in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* - the Lilliputians, the Brobdingnagians, and the Houyhnhnms - and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. In what ways is the society intended to be similar to that of Europe in general and England in particular, and in what ways is it intended to be superior?
7. Consider the concept of pride as it is presented in Gulliver's visit to the Lilliputians in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. What may Swift be trying to say when he pictures the smallest and most insignificant of his imaginary races as the most pompous and self-important? In what sense is this intended as a criticism of the human race? Is the theme being communicated in this section biblical? Why or why not?
8. Some critics have argued that the visit to the Brobdingnagians in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is intended to show the ugliness of man when seen "up close and personal." What biblical truth is communicated by Swift in the incidents in Brobdingnag that present this idea? Use specifics from the novel to support your argument.
9. To what extent is Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* a critique of the Enlightenment? Cite specific incidents and quotations to show Swift's skepticism concerning the "Age of Reason" and its value. Does the author question the value of all reason, or only certain kinds? Distinguish between reason that should be valued and that which is worthless according to Jonathan Swift.
10. The Enlightenment, during which Jonathan Swift lived, believed that man was essentially good and ultimately perfectible. How does *Gulliver's Travels* skewer that belief? What view of man does Swift propose as an alternative?
11. Compare and contrast the views of human nature and the solution to the human dilemma presented in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Voltaire's *Candide*. Both men wrote during the Enlightenment, of which Voltaire was an advocate and Swift a critic, though they shared the capacity for caustic satire. Be sure to use quotations from both books to support your arguments.
12. Discuss the incident with the *struldbrugs* in Part III of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. What is the significance of this incident? What is Swift trying to say about human nature and its deepest desires? Are his insights biblical? Why or why not?

13. Compare the society of the Houyhnhnms in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* to another picture of a utopian society. Choose either Plato's *Republic* or Thomas More's *Utopia* as the basis for your comparison. To what extent do you think Swift was influenced by the work you chose? To what extent are the differences between the two works due to the differences in the times in which they were written?
14. Discuss the five times Gulliver is in England in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. The novel begins in England, and he returns there after each voyage. Compare and contrast his attitudes toward his homeland on each occasion. How do the changes you observe contribute to the themes of the novel? Give particular attention to the final chapter, but be sure not to omit consideration of the gradual changes through which Gulliver goes.
15. To what extent might one argue that *every* society visited by the protagonist in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is intended to display some aspect of human nature? Choose three of the civilizations he visits and present a case, with supporting incidents and quotations, that those societies are intended to comment on the fundamental nature of man in some way.
16. In Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, to what extent is the author an advocate of cultural relativism? Does Swift believe any cultural values to be absolute, or are all values dependent on the culture that practices them? Support your arguments with details from the novel.
17. By the end of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, the protagonist obviously considers the Houyhnhnms to be the ideal after which all men should strive. Did Swift share this opinion? Do you? What weakness do you perceive in Houyhnhnm society? Support your conclusions with quotations and incidents from the novel.
18. Some critics of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* have suggested that the Houyhnhnms and Yahoos of the last voyage represent a schizophrenic view of humanity - that the physicality and drives of the Yahoos and the rationality of the Houyhnhnms are both needed in order to gain a balanced understanding of what man is. Do you agree with this assessment? Why or why not? Support your conclusion with specific incidents and quotations from the novel.
19. In Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, does the order of the adventures matter? Why or why not? How would the book be different, or perhaps weakened, by changing the order of the civilizations Gulliver visits?
20. In Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, to what extent is Gulliver a reliable narrator? Can we believe everything he says? Give attention both to facts related by the protagonist and interpretations given to the events he experiences, and be sure to cite specific examples from the novel to support your conclusions.

21. Compare and contrast the governments of Lilliput and Brobdingnag in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. What do these tell us about Swift's views of ideal government? Support your conclusions with specifics from the novel.
22. Discuss the role of religion in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, remembering that Swift himself was a clergyman in the (Protestant) Church of Ireland. What do you find in his satire that speaks to the religion of his day? Is his assessment of it what you would expect from a Christian minister? Why or why not?
23. To what extent is the protagonist the mouthpiece for the author in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*? Support your arguments by citing specific examples of times when Gulliver is clearly speaking for Swift and times when he just as clearly is not.
24. Near the end of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Gulliver says, "A traveller's chief aim should be to make men wiser and better, and to improve their minds by the bad as well as good example of what they deliver concerning foreign places." To what extent has Gulliver followed his own edict? Do you think the book succeeds in "making men wiser and better"? Why or why not?
25. Discuss the view of science presented in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Did Swift favor science or oppose it, or something in between? Use quotations from different parts of the book to support your assertions.
26. After the publication of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, the author was accused of being a misanthrope, largely because of Gulliver's closing assertions about the human race. Was this charge warranted or not? Support your conclusions about Swift's attitude toward humanity with specific references from the novel.
27. Shirley Galloway, writing about Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, said, "Jonathan Swift continues to vex the world so that it might awaken to the fact that humankind needs saving, but it has to save itself." Do you agree with this assessment? Why or why not? Does Swift picture man as able to save himself from the deplorable condition he portrays, or does he think that man cannot save himself no matter what he does? Support your conclusion with specific incidents and quotations from the novel.
28. Some critics believe that Part I of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* was in part a satire of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, the most famous fictional travelogue of his day. Discuss any connections you see between the two works, and give examples of ways in which the later work may be intended to ridicule the earlier.

29. Compare and contrast the changes experienced by the protagonists during their adventures in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Which man benefits more from his experiences? Cite specifics from the two novels to support your arguments.
30. Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* was in part a satire of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, yet the two novels are very different in their focus. Would you agree that Defoe's work is more concerned with the inner life of the protagonist, while Swift's is more concerned with influencing society? Why or why not? Cite specifics from the two books to support your conclusions.
31. Jonathan Swift was a minister of the Church of Ireland, and had no time for either Dissenters or Catholics. Daniel Defoe was a Presbyterian with definite Puritan leanings. How are the differing religious perspectives of the two authors discernible in their two most famous writings, *Gulliver's Travels* and *Robinson Crusoe*? Be sure to cite specifics from both works as you answer the question.
32. The Romantics and Victorians of the nineteenth century hated and despised Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Why do you think this may have been the case? Consider the worldviews prevalent in the nineteenth century and discuss why those who held such positions would have disliked Swift's great satire. Be sure to use specifics in your arguments.
33. Jonathan Swift believed that man was not a rational animal, but an animal capable of reason. What did he mean in making this fine distinction? Illustrate his point with examples from *Gulliver's Travels*, paying special attention to Part IV.
34. Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* are both fictional travelogues. To what extent are these works intended, not to discuss life abroad, but rather to critique life in the English society common to both authors? Compare and contrast the conclusions of the two authors, both in their criticisms of English society and in the approaches to life they advocate.
35. At the end of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, the wedding guest, having heard the Mariner's tale, is described by the words, "A sadder and a wiser man he rose the morrow morn." The same may be said of the protagonists of Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* after they return home from their journeys. Compare and contrast the two works with regard to what they say about the society in which the authors lived and the road of life along which all travel. Use supporting details from both works in your analysis.

36. Compare and contrast the society described in Thomas More's *Utopia* to the land of the Houyhnhnms in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. What aspects of English life do both men criticize? What solutions do they propose? Whose arguments do you find more compelling? Why?
37. J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* are both quest narratives. Compare and contrast the two stories, considering the protagonists, what they seek, what they experience, and how they are changed by their adventures.
38. Both Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* are travelogues of one kind or another that contain a significant amount of social criticism. Compare and contrast the two works in terms of the aspects of British society that the authors find most objectionable.