

Jonathan swift

[Art & Culture](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Jonathan Swift was the greatest satirist in his era, he was both feared and admired by tons of people. At the age of fourteen, he entered Trinity College in Dublin. After he graduated in 1688, he received his bachelor's degree and then proceeded to work as a secretary under Sir William Temple. Only four years later, at the age of twenty-two, he received his M. A. from Oxford. After receiving his Master's Degree, he returned working with Temple in 1696.

It was quite ironic that Swift was an ordained priest because in multiple works; he pursued satirical aspects that involved both the state and church. After Temple's death, he returned home to compose multiple works: A Modest Proposal and Drapier's Letters. In this period of his life, he wrote his masterpiece, Gulliver's Travels. All the material in this book reflect the political movements that England was experiencing. His book was first published in 1726, which became an immediate hit. Swift's influence shaped the future of writing in a great many ways.

Swift was a brilliant person, but the way he navigated this story with such elegance and direction was remarkable. The story recounts a man on a fictitious journey named Lemaneul Gulliver, who travels through Lilliput, Brobdingnag, Laputa, and Houyhnhnm. The stories that Swift tells can almost be seen as fairy tales, and many writers take the story and twist them to emulate a fairy-tale. Swift was brilliant with his deception, with how he was making a public statement about the affairs of England. During Gulliver's travels, he met many people of different sizes, beliefs, and behaviors.

For Swift to convey his satirical aspects, he takes Gulliver on four adventures that allow Swift to stack the story with both irony and satire. The first

adventure that Swift takes the reader on is to the island of Lilliput. He uses many forms of satire, but the most prominent is political. It is no coincidence that the first race he meets is meant to resemble the English people. The Lilliputians exemplify English traits by demanding certain things from Gulliver.

The British people thought so highly of themselves Robert Phiddian says, " Swift used the Lilliputians as a representation." Swift says, "..... I felt above a hundred arrows discharged into my left hand, which pricked me like so many needles; and besides they shot another flight into the air, as we do bombs in Europe."(Swift 7)The Lilliputians cannot harm Gulliver and the only way they can get what they want is to threaten him.

The Lilliputians were so full of themselves that they didn't want to compromise their way as it was the only way. Swift's jab at England for the way they controlled their colonies and how the colonies must feel, such as the US, impacted everyone. In this part of Gulliver's travel, Swift uses the example of experiencing something completely unworldly to show what was happening in England during the 18th century. England was having not only religious strife but also political issues as well. The political example that Swift describes is the way Lilliputians gain their power.

The Lilliputians would host a rope-dancing event and whoever could dance on a rope would be the leader. Surprisingly, the government didn't retaliate because of the clear analogy. Swift was illustrating that everyone in the government was a puppet despite being the most powerful people in the country besides the king. Swift was trying to make a point that the

government officials aren't there for pleasing the king but for checks and balances. An example of this was Henry Walpole, he would agree with whatever the king said even though he was the leader of parliament.

In William Lapardes book, *Public Opinion and Politics in the Eighteenth Century*, he states, " He knew better than most me what his success had cost and the arts that would be necessary to keep the place he had" (Lapardes 252). He talks about how Walpole bribed his way to a power position when such a spot should have been won by excellent accomplishments. After scrutinizing the politics of England, Swift continues to make multiple jabs at the King's army.

The army the Lilliputians has is composed of twenty-four cavalry troops that went through extensive exercises. The role of an army of a country is to protect everyone however the king treats his troops like toy soldiers similar to King George. He would arrive at parties with his troops to indulge " his" desires, not to protect the country. Swift uses Gulliver and his journey to the Lilliputians as a way to represent the present political and religious events that were occurring in the eighteenth century.

In part two of Swift's satirical piece, Gulliver is taken to Brobdingnag. Unlike Gulliver's first adventure, he is the " Lilliput" on this weird island. Everyone on the island is a giant and Swift uses the contrast between the first two stories quite well to play toward his satirical critiques. The Lilliputians were Gulliver's " people" even though they were a lot smaller than him because they shared the same way of thinking and anatomy. He was dwarf-like in Brobdingnag and that made him feel disconnected from the giants, which is

how the Lilliputians must have really felt about Gulliver in a way. When Swift made Gulliver small in the second adventure and the giants so much larger, it illustrated the depth of irony in the story.

The "Giants" are fearsome creatures because they are huge in comparison to Gulliver but the "Giants" turns out to be quite the opposite. Swift was critiquing the government for suppressing other lands just because they appeared different or seemed powerful.

Swift shows quite a range when he just doesn't mock religion and government but switches gears and takes a crack at humanity. He does this when Gulliver finds himself in a trap and being placed under the care of a nine-year-old girl, which played with him like a doll. Soon, thereafter Gulliver is placed on display for money.

The Queen then bought Gulliver and said, "surprised at so much wit and good sense in so diminutive an animal(Swift 89)," which was a direct hit to human pride. "Political Characterization in 'Gulliver's Travels'", which is J. A. Downie's essay, says, "the personalized wit gave overly comic but ultimately very serious indictment of Walpole's system of government."

Walpole, who was mentioned earlier was a "yes" man for the king, Swift was trying to explore that fact that the King of Brobdingnag would always be favorable to this injustice system. After having humiliating adventures with the Giants, Gulliver realizes that it is impossible to maintain any dignity among the giants because it is a different culture and Swift wanted to make a point that human pride is useless.

In Swift's third part of Gulliver's Travels, he ventures to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbudrib, and Japan. This paragraph will primarily focus on the satirical aspects of the island of Laputa. Swift's concepts of human nature didn't change in this part of the book but gave a very interesting description of Laputa.

When Gulliver encounters the flying city of Laputa, Swift uses this to ingrain the failures of religion. Swift uses the flying city to satirize the English government on how little they interact with their people but instead just deal with the punishment. He also described how Europeans thought they were the greatest race, by making the island higher than all the other places.

Swift was trying to convey that England was full of some of the most brilliant minds in mathematics and philosophical sciences but they had left no room for conventional social graces. The Laputians gave Gulliver clothes that did not fit him but that was of no worry to them but what was the talk of the town, however, was how he got to their island.

Swift was more direct in the adventure with the Laputans by having Gulliver not like them because of their narrow-mindedness. The King didn't care about anyone that was below him and the people had forgotten about justice, aligning with England at that time.

In Gulliver's fourth adventure, he finds a race of intelligent horse individuals, called the Houyhnhnms. Unlike the previous adventures, Swift makes this adventure focus on the animal-human relationship. In England, horses were considered the noblest animal and Swift took it to another level.

The irony in this is that the Houyhnhnms were puzzled when Gulliver told them that horses were for the Yahoo's benefit. The Houyhnhnms thought that it was impossible for brilliant sophisticated creatures to be below the Yahoos. The humans on this island are the servants of the Houyhnhnms, much like horses in our time. Swift wants to make this point prominent, by showing that whoever is being the servants are not experiencing the greatest thing nor have any regard for the other side.

But on the contrary, the horses in England were not smart like the Houyhnhnms and the relationship " In Gulliver's Travel" was just the opposite of how animals were treated in the world. In Swift's satire, it is hard to say whether he is an advocate for the horses or not, but the satiric aspects do provide a clearer image. Swift attacks European society in this part of the story when Gulliver arrives at the island and doesn't even recognize that Yahoo's are humans.

Swift says, " so disagreeable an Animal, nor one against which naturally conceived so strong of Antipathy"(190). Gulliver soon realizes that they are in fact human and is astonished, switching the satiric tone that confronts the European society. Swift changes pace as he criticizes the government in the earlier adventures to having no one be safe in the later adventures criticizing human society.

Gulliver's Travels wasn't just a story that showed a man's voyages to unknown places. Swift maneuvered himself in such a delicate matter that Gulliver's Travels covers political and religious issues that were occurring in

the eighteenth century England. Satire is something that can bring enjoyment to everybody but can also convey the speakers' point.

Swift is very relevant at this time because he wasn't afraid to talk about the topics that nobody else wanted to approach and we need more of that today. When he spoke, people listened to his humor or satire. Swift bravely spoke about the travesties of King George 2 despite knowing there would be repercussions. Swift uses the four adventures throughout the story to convey his satirical points and also provide an interesting and adventurous story.