

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

JONATHAN SWIFT



EDITED BY ALBERT J. RIVERO

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

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Jonathan Swift
GULLIVER'S TRAVELS



BASED ON THE 1726 TEXT
CONTEXTS
CRITICISM

Edited by
ALBERT J. RIVERO
MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY

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Preface

Published in London on October 28, 1726, by Benjamin Motte, *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World* (the actual title of the book we call *Gulliver's Travels*) became an instant best-seller as well as cultural event. Reprinted twice, in November and December, to accommodate public demand, before a "corrected" edition was issued on May 4, 1727, the work was also serialized in *The Penny* and *Parker's Penny Post* beginning in late November 1726. Another "impression," claiming to correct "*several Errors in the London Edition*," was published—very likely with Swift's approval and cooperation—in Dublin about December 2, 1726, by John Hyde. Translated into Dutch, French, and German within a year of its publication, the book has continued to attract readers (and non-readers) ever since. *Gulliver's Travels* has held our attention for nearly three centuries because of its uncanny ability to be whatever we have wanted it to be: a political book, a children's book, a merry book, a mad book, satiric, ironic, parodic, perhaps a novel, perhaps not. Academic critics, for example, have tried for many years, with varying degrees of success, to tease out the book's vertiginous ironies; more recently, they have begun to explore its complex relations to British imperialism and colonialism. It seems that, as critical fashions change, *Gulliver's Travels* adapts itself to them, though it might be more accurate to say that, no matter where we go in our critical voyages, Swift appears to have been there before us.

While academic readers have focused their attention on those aspects of the book most likely to yield topics for class discussions and scholarly publications, common readers (some of whom also happen to be university professors) continue to read *Gulliver's Travels* because it is great fun. What lies at the book's core—and one of the principal sources of its continuing appeal—is an old story, as old as Homer's *Odyssey*, of a voyager who travels to exotic lands; meets strange people (none stranger than the horse-like Houyhnhnms); and, after many trials, returns home, presumably wiser, though, in Gulliver's case, wisdom is nearly allied to madness. If Odysseus's travails are the stuff of epic and romance, Gulliver's adventures include such humbler yet nonetheless pressing concerns for travelers—concerns normally omitted in their circumstantial

narratives—as finding convenient places for discharging (in his decorous phrase) “the Necessities of Nature.” If Odysseus longs to be reunited with his faithful Penelope, Gulliver discovers upon his return to England that his wife and children, along with their neighbors, have been transformed into repulsive Yahoos; consumed by self-hatred, he despises those closest to him. No longer the confident Englishman who gloried in his superior size in Lilliput, Gulliver is now ashamed of his body and revolted by the bodies of those who look and smell like him. Pathetically re-creating his equine utopia in his stable, he becomes an exile in his own country. Unlike Odysseus’s triumphant homecoming, Gulliver’s is tragic, rendered absurd and farcical by his untrammelled pride. Yet, as we laugh at his lunacy, we get the queasy feeling that Gulliver is correct in his assessment of humankind, that the fun is at our own expense. Whatever our pretensions to reason and perfection, we are, as Alexander Pope would phrase it in *An Essay on Man* (1733), “the glory, jest, and riddle of the world”; his friend Swift, however, would have no doubt excised the first item in this triad as too flattering to our self-love.

If Swift, as he confided to Pope, wrote *Gulliver's Travels* “to vex the world,” he also ensured, by his convoluted dealings with Motte, that the published text would be a source of vexation both for himself and for future editors. Perhaps fearful that the book’s political satire might invite prosecution, Motte (or, as Swift thought, his associate Andrew Tooke) altered several passages, deleted others, and, most irritating to Swift, inserted a panegyric on Queen Anne. While some modern critics have suspected that Swift might be misrepresenting the extent of Motte’s editorial interventions—that, in fact, Motte’s 1726 edition is a fairly accurate rendition of Swift’s original but regrettably lost manuscript—others, most prominently Michael Treadwell and David Woolley, have argued that Motte did indeed tamper with Swift’s text. I agree with this interpretation of the evidence. Thus, while I follow the consensus of recent scholarship on the subject and have based my text on Motte’s initial October 1726 edition—rather than the edition published by the Dublin bookseller George Faulkner in 1735 (actually November 1734), the basis of most modern editions of the work—I have emended Motte’s text by adopting corrections from several sources that can confidently be traced back to Swift. Of these sources, the most authoritative are the list of errata Swift’s friend, Charles Ford, included in a letter to Motte on January 3, 1727, and the large-paper copy of the first edition of *Gulliver's Travels* in which Ford, in addition to inserting many of the corrections on his list, wrote out longer “restorations” on sheets later bound or “interleaved” in the book; both of these documents are now at the National Art

Library in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Most of my emendations derive from the Victoria and Albert copy.

I have also consulted, though rarely accepted, variants from Ford's second annotated copy of *Gulliver's Travels*, at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, which differs somewhat from the Victoria and Albert copy, most significantly in not including a politically charged passage detailing the Lindalinian rebellion. Because of its theft in December 1999, I was unable to consult the copy of the 1726 edition, with Swift's corrections (as David Woolley has convincingly argued), at the Armagh Public Library in Northern Ireland, except in facsimile; thus I have been reluctant to adopt corrections from this copy unless absolutely certain that the photocopying process has not falsified the original. I have pointed out my most significant emendations of Motte's text in my annotations; I have silently corrected a handful of obvious typographical errors but have otherwise not interfered with the accidentals of the text. In short, I have aimed to present to twenty-first century readers a version of *Gulliver's Travels* that attempts to re-create as closely as possible the book Swift's first readers would have read. For this reason, I have reproduced the original frontispiece, title pages, illustrations, and maps, and moved the letter to Cousin Sympson to an appendix. But, perhaps more important, this edition also tries, by taking seriously Swift's complaints that Motte "mangled" his book, to recuperate the words he claims to have written.

Although *Gulliver's Travels* is fairly accessible to modern readers, the passage of time has obscured many of its topical allusions and changed the meanings of some of its words. Previous editors have done a splendid job of annotating the work and I am indebted to their labors. For the sake of accuracy, however, I have based my annotations on my own research into primary and secondary sources; I have drawn or derived my definitions from the *Oxford English Dictionary*. From the vast wealth of contextual materials, I have selected, of necessity, only a fraction of what I consider the most significant and helpful to a modern student. Similarly, I have reprinted a relatively small but (I hope) critically varied sampling of what I regard as the best recent work on the book; the bibliography contains a larger but still very selective list of secondary sources.

Many people have assisted me in the making of this edition and I regret that I cannot name all of them here. I am indebted to the authors of the critical essays for their gracious forbearance of my editorial intrusions, for (in some cases) rewriting their work to suit the present occasion, and for (in some crucial instances) expediting the process of obtaining permissions from their publishers. For advice on textual matters, I am especially obliged to Tom Keymer,

Peter Sabor, David Vander Meulen, David Woolley, and James Woolley. For suggesting contextual materials and critical essays, I thank Janine Barchas, Joseph Bartolomeo, Jerry Beasley, John Dusinger, James Engell, Lawrence Lipking, and Donald Mell. Paul Hunter, Clive Probyn, Claude Rawson, Hermann Real, and Howard Weinbrot were helpful not only in securing permissions but in many other ways. Martin Battestin's comments on an early version of this preface alerted me to several stylistic lapses. George Justice, Alex Pettit, and John Allen Stevenson read several drafts of the annotations and contributed generously of their time and expertise to make them better. I owe special thanks to the many kind people who facilitated my research at several institutions and to those institutions for allowing me to use materials in their collections: the Bodleian Library, the British Library, the Marquette University Library, the Milwaukee County Federated Library System (in particular its North Shore branch), the Newberry Library, the National Art Library in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Pierpont Morgan Library, and the University of Chicago Library. I am pleased to acknowledge the financial assistance of the American Philosophical Society and of the Reverend Thaddeus J. Burch, S.J., and Dr. Thomas E. Hachey, former deans of (respectively) the Graduate School and the College of Arts and Sciences at Marquette University. I am most particularly grateful to Carol Bemis, who gave me the opportunity to do this edition and who, with good humor, answered many questions and encouraged my progress. Finally, I reserve my deepest gratitude for my family, who patiently endured my travels with Gulliver.

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The Text of
GULLIVER'S TRAVELS





Sturte. Sheppard. Sc.

Captain Lemuel Gulliver, of
Redriff Ætat. suæ 58.

TRAVELS
INTO SEVERAL
J. A. Russell
Remote NATIONS
OF THE
WORLD.

IN FOUR PARTS.

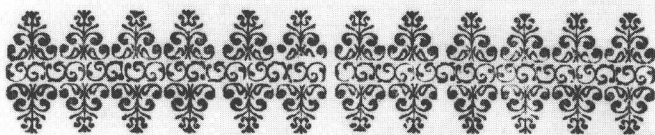
By *LEMUEL GULLIVER*,
First a SURGEON, and then a CAP-
TAIN of several SHIPS.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N :

*Printed for BENJ. MOTTE, at the
Middle Temple-Gate in Fleet-street.*

MDCCLXXVI.



P A R T I.

A Voyage to *Lilliput*.

P A R T II.

A Voyage to *Brobdingnag*.

P A R T III.

A Voyage to *Laputa*, *Balnibarbi*, *Luggnagg*, *Glubdubdrib*, and *Japan*.

P A R T IV.

A Voyage to the Country
of the *Houyhnhnms*.

The Publisher¹ to the Reader.

THE Author of these Travels, Mr. *Lemuel Gulliver*,² is my antient and intimate Friend; there is likewise some Relation between us by the Mother's Side. About three Years ago, Mr. *Gulliver* growing weary of the Concourse of curious People coming to him at his House in *Redriff*,³ made a small Purchase of Land, with a convenient House, near *Newark* in *Nottinghamshire*, his Native Country; where he now lives retired, yet in good Esteem among his Neighbours.

ALTHOUGH Mr. *Gulliver* was born in *Nottinghamshire*, where his Father dwelt, yet I have heard him say, his Family came from *Oxfordshire*; to confirm which, I have observed in the Church-Yard at *Banbury*,⁴ in that County, several Tombs and Monuments of the *Gullivers*.

BEFORE he quitted *Redriff*, he left the Custody of the following Papers in my Hands, with the liberty to dispose of them as I should think fit. I have carefully perused them three Times: The Style is very plain and simple; and the only Fault I find is, that the Author, after the Manner of Travellers, is a little too Circumstantial. There is an Air of Truth apparent through the Whole; and indeed, the Author was so distinguished for his Veracity, that it became a sort of Proverb among his Neighbours at *Redriff*, when any one affirm'd a Thing, to say, it was as true as if Mr. *Gulliver* had spoke it.⁵

By the Advice of several worthy Persons, to whom, with the Author's Permission, I communicated these Papers, I now venture to send them into the World, hoping they may be at least, for some time, a better Entertainment to our young Noblemen, than the common Scribbles of Politicks and Party.

1. Editor.

2. The name of the purported author appears only in the front matter of the book (frontispiece, title pages, etc.), not in the text itself, suggesting perhaps that it was a late addition. It might allude to King Lemuel (Proverbs 31), whose prophetic gifts were decidedly modest. Swift might also be punning on *mule*, a half-ass, half-horse creature noted for its obstinacy and stupidity (see n. 3, p. 192). A *gull* is a dupe or a fool.

3. Rotherhithe, a London dock district located on the south side of the Thames.

4. A town known for its Puritanism.

5. Since antiquity, the veracity of travel writers (and historians) has been under suspicion. Lucian's *A True Story*, one of Swift's models, features a narrator who, though telling a tale "wholly made up of Lyes," hopes to avoid the reader's censure by frankly revealing his mendacity.

THIS Volume would have been at least twice as large, if I had not made bold to strike out innumerable Passages relating to the Winds and Tides, as well as to the Variations and Bearings in the several Voyages; together with the minute Descriptions of the Management of the Ship in Storms, in the Style of Sailors: Likewise the Account of the Longitudes and Latitudes; wherein I have Reason to apprehend that Mr. *Gulliver* may be a little dissatisfied: But I was resolved to fit the Work as much as possible to the general Capacity of Readers. However, if my own Ignorance in Sea-Affairs shall have led me to commit some Mistakes, I alone am answerable for them: And if any Traveller hath a Curiosity to see the whole Work at large, as it came from the Hand of the Author, I shall be ready to gratify him.

As for any further Particulars relating to the Author, the Reader will receive Satisfaction from the first Pages of the Book.

RICHARD SYMPSON.⁶

6. Perhaps an allusion to Richard Simpson, publisher of several works by Sir William Temple (1628–1699), Swift's patron, or to "William Symson," pseudonymous author of the largely plagiarized *A Voyage to the East-Indies* (1715).

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CHAP. II.

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CHAP. VII.

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CHAP. VIII.

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PART II

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CHAP. III.

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CHAP. IV.

The Country described. A Proposal for correcting modern Maps. The King's Palace, and some Account of the Metropolis. The Author's way of travelling. The chief Temple described. p. 92.