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YORK NOTES ON
GULLIVER'S
TRAVELS

格列佛游记

Jonathan Swift



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THE GREAT WALL

FOREWORD BY

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

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Jonathan Swift

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

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《约克文学作品辅导丛书》介绍

《约克文学作品辅导丛书》(York Notes)系 Longman 集团有限公司(英国)出版。本丛书覆盖了世界各国历代文学名著,原意是辅导英国中学生准备文学课的高级会考或供英国大学生自学参考。因此,它很适合我国高校英语专业学生研读文学作品时参考。

丛书由 A. N. Jeffares 和 S. Bushrui 两位教授任总编。每册的编写者大都是研究有关作家的专家学者,他们又都有在大学讲授文学的经验,比较了解学生理解上的难点。本丛书自问世以来,始终畅销不衰,被使用者普遍认为是英美出版的同类书中质量较高的一种。

丛书每一册都按统一格式对一部作品进行介绍和分析。每一册都有下列五个部分。

① 导言。主要介绍:作者生平,作品产生的社会、历史背景,有关的文学传统或文艺思潮等。

② 内容提要。一般分为两部分:a. 全书的内容概述;b. 每章的内容提要及难词、难句注释,如方言、典故、圣经或文学作品的引语、有关社会文化习俗等。注释恰到好处,对于读懂原作很有帮助。

③ 评论。结合作品的特点,对结构、人物塑造、叙述角度、语言风格、主题思想等进行分析和评论。论述深入浅出,分析力求客观,意在挖掘作品内涵和展示其艺术性。

④ 学习提示。提出学习要点、重要引语和思考题(附参考答案或答案要点)。

⑤ 进一步研读指导。介绍该作品的最佳版本;版本中是否有重大改动;列出供进一步研读的参考书目(包括作者传记、研究有关作品的专著和评论文章等)。

总之,丛书既提供必要的背景知识,又注意启发学生思考;既重视在吃透作品的基础上进行分析,又对进一步研究提供具体指导;因此是一套理想的英语文学辅导材料。

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Part 1

Introduction

Life of Swift

Jonathan Swift was born on 30 November 1667 in Dublin. His father having died before Jonathan's birth, Swift was dependent on the family at large for his upbringing. He had four uncles to appeal to and it was the oldest, Godwin Swift, who saw to it that Jonathan received a good education, first at Kilkenny School and then at Trinity College, Dublin, from which he graduated in 1686. The family was an English one which had settled in Ireland shortly after the death of Swift's grandfather, Thomas Swift, a clergyman who had been removed from his church in Herefordshire during the Cromwellian period to be replaced by a Dissenting minister.

When political and civil strife broke out in Ireland after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 it was natural that Swift was among those who returned to England. At first he stayed with his mother in Leicester—though he had seen little of her during his childhood—but in 1689 family influence obtained for him the post of private secretary to Sir William Temple. Temple was a distinguished diplomat, now retired, a leading liberal, and a man of culture and intelligence. In his house, Moor Park in Surrey, Swift not only enjoyed a life of elegance and stimulating companionship, but became known to Temple's powerful friends in aristocratic and political circles.

Severe illness caused Swift to return to Ireland in the summer of 1690. He had experienced his first attack of Menière's disease—an illness which attacks the inner ear, causing giddiness, vomiting and deafness—which was to recur more violently in 1710 and with increasing intensity throughout his life. This disease was not medically recognised until 1861: its effects on a man of Swift's energies and temperament helped to create the legend of Swift's misanthrope and the madman, which it has taken a century of scholarship to dispel, especially as it seemed such a convenient explanation of the savage force of his satirical writings. In 1690, anyway, all his doctors could advise was a change of climate. But finding no work in Ireland he was soon back at Moor Park where he stayed from December 1691 to the summer of 1694. Here he developed his own literary powers, with access to Sir William's fine

library, and found himself involved in political affairs. The environment fired his ambition too. While working on Temple's papers he was in reality waiting for King William to appoint him to a church living in England. In 1694, tired of waiting, and offended by the offer of an obscure appointment, he angered Temple by returning to Dublin. By the spring of 1695 he was installed in the parish of Kilroot, near Belfast.

But Kilroot could in no way compensate for Moor Park. By May 1696 he was back for his third stay with Temple. It was a wise move. Although when Temple died in 1699 Swift was still without a living, he had composed three of his most famous satires, *A Tale of a Tub*, *The Battle of the Books*, and the *Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*.

Now thirty-two, Swift returned to Ireland as chaplain to the Earl of Berkeley, one of the Irish Lords Justice, and in the following year, 1700, became Vicar of Láracor, a parish north of Dublin in County Meath. Swift was certainly no less conscientious than the average churchman of the time but did not allow his work there to interrupt his political concerns. In 1701 he was in London again, with Berkeley, and wrote a pamphlet praising the conduct of the Whig, or liberal, leaders. In the guise of *A Discourse of the Contests and Dissensions between the Nobles and the Commons in Athens and Rome* this astute political service made his reputation. In the next few years that reputation leaped. He was soon known as the author of masterly pamphlets in the Whig interest as well as of *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Battle of the Books*, written at Moor Park but published only in 1704.

Despite a Royalist and High Church background Swift's intellectual upbringing had been thoroughly Whig, both in Temple's service and later in Berkeley's. The Whig party, which developed from moderately radical protestant groups in the late seventeenth-century parliament, was in the ascendancy, and its writers formed the intellectual establishment. In parliament the first minister, Sidney Godolphin (1645–1712), was himself a Tory, but served as Lord Treasurer of predominantly Whig governments from 1702 to 1710. During this period Swift formed friendships with members of the Godolphin ministry and with the writers Steele and Addison, and naturally he expected that the services he performed for the Whigs with his acid pen would be rewarded by promotion to an English bishopric. This was not merely cynical ambition. His loyalties were genuinely divided. In the years 1708–9 he was writing a series of deeply felt religious pamphlets, such as the *Sentiments of a Church of England Man* and the ironic *Argument against Abolishing Christianity*. While aiding the Whigs his deepest concern was the defence of Church interests, and by the end of the

decade he found that the Whigs were likely to pass legislation damaging to the Church.

Eighteenth-century church legislation is pretty meaningless to us today, but two minor points must be explained here if we are to understand the dramatic political about-turn Swift was soon to make. He had been campaigning for a measure known as 'Remission of the First Fruits' to be extended to the Irish church (the 'first fruits' system meant that a new minister of the Church had to pay his first year's income to a superior, and it had been reformed in England but not in Ireland). The Whigs would only allow this as part of a deal including the repeal of the Test Act, which denied political office to non-Anglicans. In Swift's eyes this was too high a price to pay, for he feared the political tendencies of religious enthusiasts whether Catholic or Dissenters.

When the Whig ministry of Godolphin fell in 1710 Swift saw no reason to fall with them. The Tory leaders Harley and St John thought Swift's pen worth having on their side. Where Godolphin had tried to force a deal on Swift, the Tories in effect bought his services with the legislation he had worked for so long. Swift did his best to use his influence to help his old friends, the essayists Steele and Addison and the dramatist Congreve, but he soon found congenial friendships among the Tories. Dr Arbuthnot, the Queen's physician, was now a close friend, and Swift mixed with Harley and St John on terms which Godolphin had never permitted. He became one of the famous 'Scriblerus Club', an association of witty writers which included St John himself, Alexander Pope the famous poet, John Gay the dramatist, and Dr Arbuthnot.

As editor of a Tory journal, *The Examiner*, and author of a brilliant attack on Marlborough and the Whigs called *The Conduct of the Allies*, Swift helped to maintain public support for the Tory ministry. Yet once again his new friends were unable to obtain for him high office in the Church in England. Not even Harley could soften Queen Anne towards the author of *A Tale of a Tub* when her closest friends and advisers, the Duchess of Somerset and the Archbishop of York, had described that work as profane and irreligious. And in fairness to the Queen that criticism of Swift's religious polemic is hard to refute.

In 1714 instead of being appointed to a place in England he returned to Dublin as Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral. Disappointed though he was, the promotion had come just in time. The Tory ministry fell apart in dissensions. Swift visited London in a vain attempt to reconcile Harley and St John—by now known as the Earl of Oxford and Viscount Bolingbroke—but after the Queen's death in that year the Tories fell

from power. A year later Bolingbroke was in exile in France, and Oxford was imprisoned in London, both under suspicion of treason. In Bolingbroke's case these suspicions were not groundless: he was welcome in France and on good terms with Jacobite sympathisers (those who wished to restore the Stuart dynasty with French aid). But Swift knew nothing against his friends and, though they had done little enough for him, he remained loyal to them when to do so was dangerous, even foolhardy. He defended them soberly in his *History of the Last Four Years of the Queen*: but this work of serious contemporary history was considered political dynamite and was not published until 1758. A different kind of defence, however, did appear in *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) in which his friends are combined in the giant form of Gulliver, tormented by Whiggish pygmies. This was published just three years after Bolingbroke's pardon and return from exile.

In Ireland Swift soon made new friends among the clergy, including Thomas Sheridan and Patrick Delaney. For the first few years his pen looked back, writing contemporary history in such works as the *Enquiry into the Behaviour of the Queen's Last Ministry*. But by 1720 he was deeply involved in Irish affairs. In that year the Whigs passed an act to increase the dependency of Ireland on Britain. In reply Swift wrote his *Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture*, instructing his fellow-countrymen in the art of economic self-reliance. When the government of Sir Robert Walpole, the new Whig leader, sought to impose a new coinage on Ireland known as Wood's half-pence (because the Londoner William Wood had been granted a licence to mint the coins) Swift responded with his series of *Drapier's Letters*. These four brilliant pieces, under the pseudonym 'M.B. Drapier', culminated in *A Letter to the Whole People of Ireland* (1724) and succeeded in so uniting the Irish—at least the Anglo-Irish elite to which Swift belonged—that the project was dropped. A reward of £300 was offered for proof of the writer's identity but no one in Ireland would now convict Swift. He had become a national hero.

By this time he had started his great work, *Gulliver's Travels*, written in 1721–5. When he visited London to arrange publication in 1726 he met his old friends Pope, Arbuthnot and Bolingbroke. He even dined once with Walpole, whose ministry he had just been satirising in *Gulliver*. If Swift still thought of being able to make a career in England these last visits in 1726 and 1727 must have disillusioned him. The rest of his life was bound to Ireland where, despite himself, he had become a popular national figure. His later writings include the bitter *Short View of the State of Ireland* (1728) and his most brilliant short satire *A Modest Proposal* (1729). Throughout the thirties he was writing fine

verse, including the autobiographical *Verses on the Death of Dr Swift* (1731), and in 1736 came a biting attack on the Irish Parliament, *The Legion Club*.

His illness had worsened steadily. In 1742 he was declared incapable of managing his own affairs, and he lingered on, in pain and isolation, until his death on 19 October 1745. He was buried in his own cathedral under an epitaph of his own composition, in Latin. We know it best in the version by another great Anglo-Irish writer, W.B. Yeats:

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

At his death it was found that Swift, who had in his lifetime given away perhaps a third of his modest income, had saved another third which he left for the building of a hospital for the insane. It was a characteristic parting stroke for one who had devoted his wit to exposing the infirmities of the world, and what the Scriblerans called its 'dulness', to protect from that world those whose wits had proved too infirm to take the strain of existence.

Varina, Stella and Vanessa

It is ironic that the name of this bachelor clergyman has always been associated, with much gossip and some fact, with three young women who entered his life at various critical points in his career.

At Kilroot, the remote parish where he worked in 1695, he proposed marriage to Jane Waring, whom he called 'Varina'. She rejected him at first and Swift's pride was stung. When in 1700 she changed her mind Swift had changed his. He offered marriage once more, but in such cold and insulting terms that he knew she could only reject them.

By then, in any case, Swift had played his part in the education of Esther Johnson, a girl in Temple's household at Moor Park. The connection was such that 'Stella', as he called her, decided to settle in Ireland after Swift's appointment at Laracor. With her companion Rebecca Dingley, Stella became Swift's life-long friend. Some people believe that they were secretly married. Swift and Stella were in daily contact when he was in Ireland, and he wrote to her and Rebecca an intimate journal throughout his visits to England—written in such

intimate baby-talk at times that many readers find it embarrassing, but containing a brilliant picture of London society. Each year he celebrated her birthday in tender, playful verses. He seems to have deliberately kept his relationship with this brilliant younger woman at a playful level, perhaps fearful of its turning into a deeper passion. When she was sick Swift could scarcely bear it. When she died he could not bring himself to attend her funeral, but consoled himself by writing a moving account of her life: 'the truest, most virtuous, and valuable friend that I, or perhaps any other person, ever was blessed with'. The evil-minded like to speculate that Swift was haunted by the suspicion that he and Stella were blood-relations, illegitimate progeny of Sir William Temple and his father.

If there was a marriage between them it must have been as secret reassurance to Stella that another of Swift's suitors could never replace her. In London, during his visits on church business in 1707-9, and in the Tory period up to 1714, he had established a friendship with Esther Vanhomrigh, eldest daughter of a brilliant household which was a centre of Anglo-Irish society. 'Vanessa', as he called her, followed Swift to Ireland in 1714 driven by a passion which he could not return, though he had thoughtlessly encouraged her at the start, and which he fended off as gently as possible. The early part of this relationship is described in the poem 'Cadenus and Vanessa', where Cadenus (an anagram for *decanus*, Latin for Dean) subjects this unequal relationship to clear scrutiny at his expense more than hers. Vanessa died in 1723 after the affair had passed through many stormy episodes; it is well described in A.L. Rowse's *Jonathan Swift: Major Prophet* (1975).

Swift and the Church

The eighteenth century saw the rise of a sentimental view of man in which it was increasingly assumed that man is naturally good. It was the era of 'The Noble Savage'. Man's conduct is motivated, when social conditions are favourable, by sympathy and benevolence, and as he is naturally rational so he is naturally virtuous. Such ideas appear in the liberal philosophers of Swift's time, and again in William Godwin at the end of the century: they end up as utilitarianism in the Victorian period, and as liberal humanism today.

Swift was untouched by such ideas. He took a sternly traditional view of man as a fallen creature, in need of redemption, driven by lust, greed and envy, or almost anything but Reason. The attack on mankind in *Gulliver's Travels* may strike modern readers as too severe for a Christian writer, yet his critique is no more extreme than one might

find in seventeenth-century sermons and a few years after Swift's death the great religious reformer John Wesley (1703–91) found in *Gulliver* admirable proofs for the doctrine of Original Sin.

Of course Wesley exhibits unmistakable religious zeal: what seems to be missing in Swift is any evidence of a joyful religious faith to offset his rigorous moral criticism. As an Anglican he seems to expend more energy mocking religious enthusiasm than encouraging faith. For this the reasons are historical. As we saw, his grandfather had been persecuted by evangelical Puritans in Cromwell's time. And in Ireland he belonged to a minority faith in a land of Catholics. To any Anglican Tory in Swift's day Dissent was considered synonymous with political tyranny, and Catholics were identified with Jacobite treason. Swift believed sincerely that the tolerant middle-of-the-road Anglican Church, associated with the kind of constitutional monarchy established by the Glorious Revolution of 1688, was the common-sense position. To defend religious liberty for all, it was paradoxically necessary to deny political power to Dissenters or to Catholics who, it was believed, would use such power to deny any liberty at all to people of other persuasions. To understand how natural it seemed in the age of Swift for a churchman to expend most of his energies in political activity it is necessary to look at the historical background, and the events to which *Gulliver's Travels* refers.

The Puritan Commonwealth

In 1629 King Charles I dissolved Parliament. Only when his attempt to impose his own religion on the Scots brought about a Scottish revolution did he summon Parliament again to raise money for an army. Parliament refused to subscribe, and in 1642 Charles fled from London and Parliament prepared for civil war: a war between 'Cavaliers' (Scots Catholics and English Royalists) on the one hand, and 'Roundheads' (Scots Presbyterians and English Protestants) on the other. In the course of the war Oliver Cromwell had trained a Roundhead army of exceptional effectiveness and religious zeal, which was unwilling to disband when Parliament attempted to dismiss it. A second civil war led to the execution of Charles in 1649, and the abolition of the Monarchy and of the House of Lords. For ten years England was ruled by Cromwell as Lord Protector, and by religious Dissenters, or Puritans. But the Commonwealth did not survive Cromwell's death.

The Restoration: Tories and Whigs

In 1660 Charles II was crowned, at the invitation of a newly elected Parliament. At first the transition was achieved peaceably. An Act of Indemnity prevented excessive acts of revenge, and a large body of former Roundheads remained in possession of lands and wealth formerly owned by Royalists. In consequence the Parliament of the early years was made up partly of old Cavaliers, the Tory squires, and partly of old Roundheads. The Tory majority began to exact a different kind of revenge by religious persecution of Dissenters. In the course of time the Roundhead element in Parliament began to gain strength, and the Tory or High Church Party found itself opposed by a Whig Party composed of Puritan sympathisers and progressive free-thinkers who believed in religious toleration, at least for Protestants.

The triple alliance

Unbelievably Charles II had learned little from his father's experience. Kept short of money by the Parliament which had restored his crown he looked increasingly towards France and alliance with Louis XIV. To most of his subjects, however, France was clearly the enemy—representing both 'Popery' (the English word for Catholicism) and tyranny. The people, and Parliament, were grateful to Sir William Temple whose diplomacy had allied England, the Netherlands and Sweden against the power of France in 1668. Charles, however, exploited the national feeling of commercial rivalry with Holland (there had been two Anglo-Dutch wars already) to undermine the alliance. He made a public treaty with Louis who wished to attack and partition Holland, and a private treaty that would enable him to use French money and French soldiers to support his plan to impose Catholicism and Absolute Monarchy on England. Only Holland's extraordinary victory put an end to this plot, and forced Charles to adapt himself to his Anglican Parliament. But Parliament, under Tory High Church dominance, used its new power to crush the Dissenters more vigorously than ever. In their turn the rising Whig party took savage revenge against suspected Catholics. The pendulum swung back and forth. And Parliament was again weakening itself by these factional feuds.

The Glorious Revolution of 1688

The first great event of James II's reign was a new Puritan revolt against the Catholic monarch, led by the Duke of Monmouth. Again the King's response was excessive. The flood of executions horrified

moderate opinion, and James attempted to secure his power by recruiting an overwhelmingly Catholic army, which he installed near the capital to impress the people. He established a standing army of 30,000 men, and nothing could have alienated his natural supporters, the royalist Tory squires, more than this clumsy reminder of recent tyranny. James, in his policy of emulating Louis, antagonised both the English (including moderate Catholics) and the Pope himself. The English, watching the French persecution of the Huguenots (who arrived in England in thousands), saw that similar horrors were in store for them.

In 1688 William of Orange landed in Torbay. James's army deserted, and the people united about the new King William and his English Queen, Mary. The King was to rule with the consent of Parliament. Religious toleration became established, except that political power was denied to Catholics or Dissenters. A Protestant succession was assured. To most Englishmen, and certainly to Swift, the balance between King, Church, and Parliament, brought about by the so-called Revolution Settlement, was a triumph of common sense. It is certainly the foundation of Swift's political views.

War with France

The Revolution succeeded so painlessly because John Churchill, the future Duke of Marlborough, had abandoned James's army at the critical moment, and William's policy of containment of France was to be made possible by this brilliant soldier.

War with France was inevitable if William was to ensure the failure of Jacobitism, that is, attempts to restore James and a Catholic monarchy in Britain. Parliament willingly financed the campaign. Marlborough led Protestant Europe throughout the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-13) and won great victories at Blenheim in 1704, and Ramillies in 1706, while Prince Eugene of Savoy won similar victories in the South. Marlborough's conquests were achieved by military genius supported by an anti-Jacobite alliance of Whigs and moderate Tories, who controlled the parliamentary purse.

But war is expensive. By 1709 Louis and Marlborough, and most of the English people, were ready for a just peace. Except for occupation of France itself, war could accomplish no more. But the Whigs were after total victory, as war cabinets usually are. At this point a series of domestic disasters caused a change of government (and Swift's change of sides). Queen Anne had succeeded her brother-in-law in 1702: she, and her new Tory ministry of 1710, desired peace. In 1713 they achieved it by the controversial Treaty of Utrecht.