

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-84164-1 - Jonathan Swift: Gulliver's Travels
Edited by David Womersley
Excerpt
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TRAVELS INTO SEVERAL REMOTE NATIONS OF THE WORLD.¹

In Four Parts, *viz.*

- I. A Voyage to LILLIPUT.
- II. A Voyage to BROBDINGNAG.
- III. A Voyage to LAPUTA, BALNIBARBI, LUGGNAGG,
GLUBBDUBDRIB and JAPAN.
- IV. A Voyage to the COUNTRY of the HOUYHNNMS.

By LEMUEL GULLIVER,
first a Surgeon, and then a CAPTAIN of several SHIPS.

————— ————— *Retroq;*
*Vulgus abhorret ab his.*²

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Figure 1. Frontispiece portrait of Lemuel Gulliver (1735)

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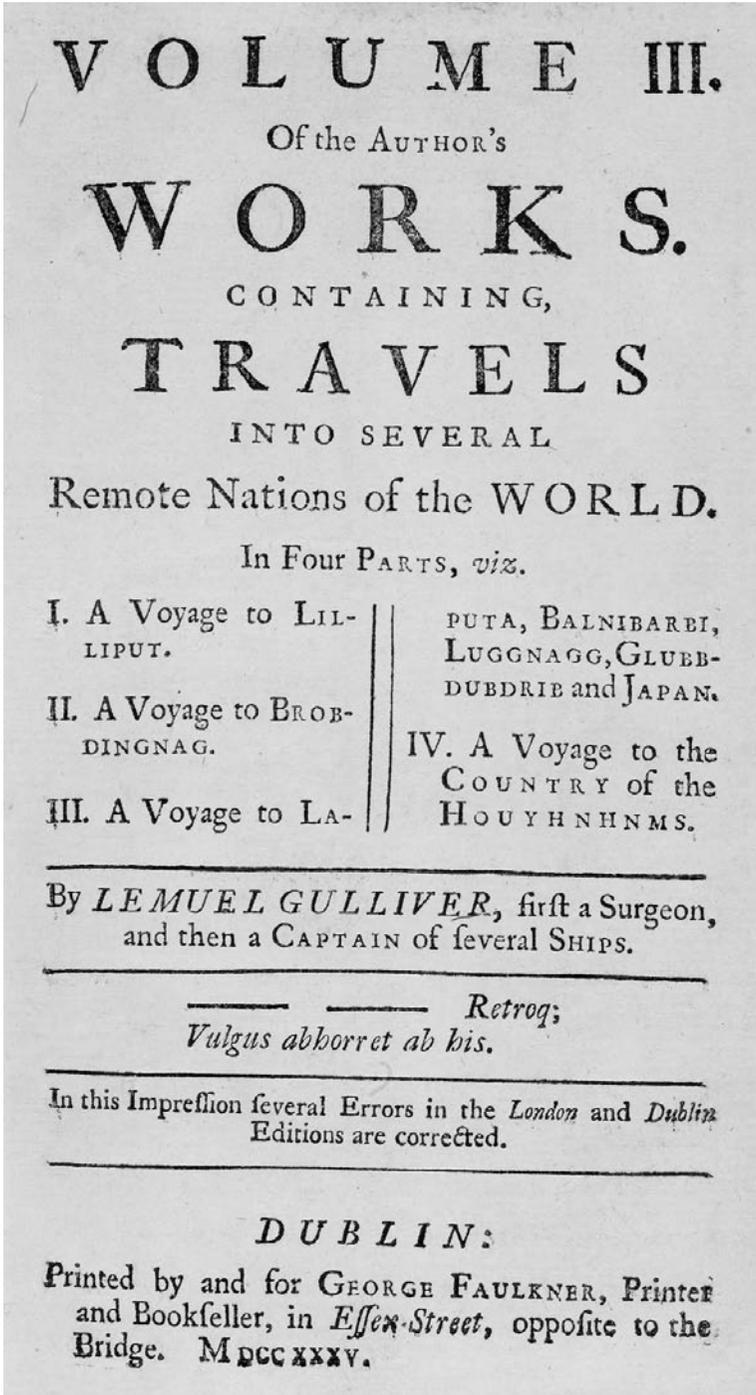


Figure 2. Title page (1735)

Note to Frontispiece

Splendide Mendax. Hor.: 'gloriously false'; Horace, *Odes*, III.xi.35. The poem refers to the myth of the fifty daughters of Danaus, who had been ordered by their father to stab their husbands, the fifty sons of Aegyptus, on their wedding night. They all did so apart from Hypermnestra, who saved her husband, Lynceus. Horace praises Hypermnestra as 'a maiden perennially noble' ('in omne virgo / nobilis aevom'; lines 35–6), and – of relevance to *GT* – has her imagine a punishment from her father of permanent banishment in distant lands (lines 37–8). In *The True History*, Lucian says of purveyors of tall stories that 'When I come across a writer of this sort, I do not much mind his lying . . . I am only surprised at his expecting to escape detection' (Lucian, vol. II, p. 137). In 'The Life and Character of Dean *Swift*', Swift twice places the opinion that *GT* is a 'lying' work in the mouth of an ill-informed and malicious speaker (Williams, *Poems*, p. 548, line 112 and p. 550, lines 190–1). Cf. also the comments on 'sober Lies' in 'Cadenus and Vanessa' (Williams, *Poems*, p. 707, lines 664–9). On the general subject of Swift and Horace, see Long note 1. For the use of noble and medicinal lies in political thought from Plato onwards, see most recently Rahe, *Throne*, especially pp. 60–1 and n. 19.

Notes to title page

- 1 *Remote Nations of the WORLD*: the phrasing and layout of the title page recall those of genuine travel books: see D. F. Passmann, *Full of Improbable Lies: Gulliver's Travels und die Reiseliteratur vor 1726* (Frankfurt and New York: Peter Lang, 1987). In his *Wisdom of God* (fifth edition, 1709), John Ray praises the compass for giving us the 'opportunity of Traffick abroad with the most remote Nations of the World' (p. 228). In a letter to Alexander Pope, probably written in August 1726 from Dublin, Swift, having returned to Ireland after leaving the MS of *GT* in London with the printer, Benjamin Motte, refers playfully to the 'quick change I made in seven days from London to the Deanery, thro' many nations and languages unknown to the civilized world. And I have often reflected in how few hours, with a swift horse or a strong gale, a man may come among a people as unknown to him as the Antipodes' (Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. III, pp. 18–19). In *An Argument Against Abolishing Christianity*, Swift recalled 'the Proposal of Horace, where he advised the Romans, all in a Body, to leave their City, and seek a new Seat in some remote Part of the World, by Way of Cure for the Corruption of their Manners' (Davis, vol. II, p. 28).
- 2 *abborret ab his*: 'the people shrink back from it'; Lucretius, IV.19–20. Lucretius regrets that his materialist doctrine is 'harsh' ('tristior') to the common people, who are not used to it. A few lines earlier he has figured his explanation of this doctrine as a journey to the unexplored land of the Pierides (lines 1–2); and (lines 10 ff.) has presented it as salubrious but bitter knowledge which must, as with medicines for children, be sweetened, so that they may be 'deceived but not betrayed' ('deceptaque non capiatur', line 16). For a more problematic use of Lucretius, see 'A Digression Concerning Madness', in *A Tale of a Tub* (1704) (*CWJS*, vol. I, pp. 106–8; Davis, vol. I, pp. 103–5). Nevertheless, the Lucretian epigraph serves to sensitize us towards the Epicurean elements in Swift's satire, such as the King of Brobdingnag's and the Master Houyhnhnm's mortifying comparisons of human feebleness with animal strength (below, pp. 198 and 357–58). Note Temple's praise of Lucretius and Epicurus in 'An Essay Upon the Ancient and Modern Learning' (Temple, vol. I, p. 159). Swift read Lucretius three times during 1697 (*CWJS*, vol. I, p. 273).
- 3 *corrected*: for an account of the early editions, see below, pp. 634–46.
- 4 *FAULKNER*: George Faulkner (1703?–75); 'the Prince of Dublin Printers' (Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. III, p. 721). See Long note 2.

ADVERTISEMENT.¹

Mr. Sympson's *Letter to Captain Gulliver*,² prefixed to this Volume, will make a long Advertisement unnecessary. Those Interpolations complained of by the Captain, were made by a Person since deceased, on whose Judgment the Publisher relied to make any Alterations that might be thought necessary.³ But, this Person, not rightly comprehending the Scheme of the Author, nor able to imitate his plain simple Style, thought fit among many other Alterations and Insertions, to compliment the Memory of her late Majesty, by saying, That she governed without a Chief Minister.⁴ We are assured, that the Copy sent to the Bookseller in London, was a Transcript of the Original, which Original being in the Possession of a very worthy Gentleman in London, and a most intimate Friend of the Authors;⁵ after he had bought the Book in Sheets,⁶ and compared it with the Originals, bound it up with blank Leaves, and made those Corrections, which the Reader will find in our Edition.⁷ For, the same Gentleman did us the Favour to let us transcribe his Corrections.

1 *Advertisement*: first printed in Faulkner's 1735 edition.

2 *Sympson's Letter to Captain Gulliver*: a slip for Gulliver's letter to Sympson.

3 *be thought necessary*: for what we know and can infer about the handling of the MS of *GT* and its treatment by the bookseller, Benjamin Motte, see the 'Textual introduction', below, pp. 634–35.

4 *a Chief Minister*: the first edition of 1726 included in Chapter 6 of Part IV a passage praising Queen Anne, and by implication criticizing George I, which was not published by Faulkner in 1735. For the passage, see below, pp. 710–11.

5 *Friend of the Authors*: Charles Ford (1682–1741), one of Swift's most trusted friends; an absentee landlord who for the most part lived in London, despite owning the estate of Woodpark, Co. Meath. Ford's interleaved copy of the first edition of *GT* is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum; another copy with annotations in his hand is in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. For their readings, see below, pp. 721–74. Ford had acted as an intermediary between Swift and Motte in the publication of the first edition of *GT*, and (according to Scott) may have been the person who surreptitiously delivered the manuscript of *GT* to Motte's house under cover of darkness.

6 *in Sheets*: unbound and unfolded (*OED*, 5b).

7 *our Edition*: in fact Faulkner's edition of 1735 does not incorporate all the alternative readings contained in Ford's interleaved copy.

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A LETTER⁸ FROM Capt. GULLIVER,⁹ TO HIS Cousin SYMPSON.¹⁰

I hope you will be ready to own publicly, whenever you shall be called to it, that by your great and frequent Urgency you prevailed on me to publish a very loose and uncorrect Account of my Travels; with Direction to hire some young Gentlemen of either University¹¹ to put them in Order, and correct the Style, as my Cousin¹² *Dampier* did by my Advice, in his Book called, *A Voyage round the World*.¹³ But I do not remember I gave you Power

8 *A LETTER*: first printed in Faulkner's 1735 edition.

9 *GULLIVER*: see Long note 3.

10 *SYMPSON*: Swift had used the name 'Richard Sympson' as a pseudonym when corresponding with Motte concerning the publication of *GT*: see Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. III, pp. 9–13. A real Richard Simpson was one of the copyright holders of Sir William Temple's writings, which Swift had prepared for publication in the 1690s: the title page of *Letters Written by Sir W. Temple* (1700) contains the name of 'R. Simpson, at the Harp in S. Paul's Church-yard'. R. W. Frantz finds a connection with 'William Symson', the fictitious author of *A New Voyage to the East-Indies* (1715): see his 'Gulliver's "Cousin Sympson"', *HLQ*, 3 (1938), 329–34. For the date of composition of this element of *GT*, see Ehrenpreis, vol. III, p. 516 and n. 3; and below, pp. 641–43.

11 *of either University*: Swift suspected that the bowdlerizing of the first edition of *GT* had been entrusted to 'Mr. Took a Clergy-man' whom Motte had asked 'not onely to blot out some things that he thought might give offence, but to insert a good deal of trash contrary to the Author's manner and Style, and Intention' (Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. III, p. 693; see also vol. III, p. 708 and vol. IV, p. 153). This was the Revd Andrew Tooke, the brother of Benjamin Tooke, Swift's bookseller; Master of the Charterhouse, 1728; *d.* 20 January 1732. Tooke was a silent partner in Motte's firm, and his responsibilities included the correction of books for the press.

12 *Cousin*: here meaning not a blood relation but a person having an affinity of nature to another (*OED*, 4); hence, a fellow writer.

13 *Voyage round the World*: William Dampier (1651–1715); buccaneer, explorer and author. His *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697) was admired as a useful and factual account of unknown lands. In the 'Preface' to that work, Dampier comments on his literary accomplishments: 'As to my Stile, it cannot be expected, that a Seaman should affect Politeness; for were I able to do it, yet I think I should be little sollicitous about it, in a work of this Nature. I have frequently indeed, divested my self of Sea Phrases, to gratify the Land Reader; for which the Seamen will hardly forgive me: And yet, possibly, I shall not seem Complaisant enough to the other; because I still retain the use of so many Sea-terms. I confess I have not been at all

to consent, that any thing should be omitted, and much less that any thing should be inserted: Therefore, as to the latter, I do here renounce every thing of that Kind; particularly a Paragraph about her Majesty the late Queen *Anne*,¹⁴ of most pious and glorious Memory; although I did reverence and esteem her more than any of human Species.¹⁵ But you, or your Interpolator, ought to have considered, that as it was not my Inclination, so was it not decent to praise any Animal of our Composition¹⁶ before my Master *Houyhnhnm*.¹⁷ And besides, the Fact was altogether false; for to my Knowledge, being in *England* during some Part of her Majesty's Reign, she did govern by a chief Minister;¹⁸ nay, even by two successively; the first whereof was the Lord of *Godolphin*,¹⁹ and the second the Lord of *Oxford*,²⁰

scrupulous in this matter, either as to the one or the other of these; for I am persuaded, that if what I say be intelligible, it matters not greatly in what words it is express'd' (sig. A3^v). In the 'Preface' to his *A Voyage to New-Holland* (1703), Dampier defended his practice of having 'what I write, Revised and Corrected by Friends' (sig. A5^v).

- 14 *Queen Anne*: see p. 5, n. 4 above. In his letter to Motte of 3 January 1727, Charles Ford refers to this passage in terms close to those used here by Swift: 'I have an entire Respect for the Memory of the late Queen, and am always pleas'd when others shew the same; but that Paragraph relating to her looks so very much beside the Purpose that I cannot think it to have been written by the same Author. I wish you & your Friends would consider it, and let it be left out in the next Edition. For it is plainly false in Fact, since all the World knows that the Queen during her whole Reign governed by one first Minister or other' (Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. III, p. 66). Rapin de Thoyras had expressed the view that Anne's natural intelligence was so limited that it was inevitable 'her Ministry wou'd have much more share in the Government than herself' (*An Impartial History of Whig and Tory*, second edition [1718], pp. 39–40). The possibly Defovian pamphlet, *The Secret History of State Intrigues in the Management of the Scepter* (1715), is a critical account, focussed on the reign of Anne, of the consequences of the sword and sceptre being put 'into the Hands of the Ministers of State' (p. 23).
- 15 *human Species*: the first of a series of what for the first-time reader of *GT* are perplexing anticipations of the language and vision of Part IV. On Swift's view of Queen Anne, see Long note 4.
- 16 *any Animal of our Composition*: i.e. any human being.
- 17 *Master Houyhnhnm*: the horse who takes Gulliver into his service in Part IV of *GT*.
- 18 *chief Minister*: in 'The Answer of . . . William Pulteney' Swift deplored the practice of governing by a minister as an '*Asiatic* custom' (Davis, vol. V, p. 117); see also his comments on the same subject in 'An Account of the Court and Empire of Japan' (Davis, vol. V, p. 101). The fashion of the Emperor of Lilliput's clothes is 'between the *Asiatick* and the *European*' (below, p. 46).
- 19 *Lord of Godolphin*: Sidney Godolphin (1645–1712); Lord Treasurer, 1702–10.
- 20 *Lord of Oxford*: Robert Harley (1661–1724); Lord Treasurer, 1710–14; created first Earl of Oxford, 1711; praised by Swift, when disgraced and in the Tower, as 'the ablest and faith-fullest Minister, and truest Lover of Your Country that this Age hath produced' (Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. II, p. 139).

so that you have made me *say the thing that was not*.²¹ Likewise, in the Account of the Academy of Projectors, and several Passages of my Discourse to my Master *Houyhnhnm*, you have either omitted some material Circumstances, or minced or changed them in such a Manner, that I do hardly know mine own Work.²² When I formerly hinted to you something of this in a Letter, you were pleased to answer, that you were afraid of giving Offence; that People in Power were very watchful over the Press; and apt not only to interpret, but to punish every thing which looked like an *Inuendo*²³ (as I think you called it.) But pray, how could that which I spoke so many Years ago, and at above five Thousand Leagues distance, in another Reign, be applied to any of the *Yahoos*,²⁴ who now are said to govern the Herd,²⁵ especially, at a time when I little thought on or feared the Unhappiness of living under them. Have not I the most Reason to complain, when I see these very *Yahoos* carried by *Houyhnhnms* in a Vehicle, as if these were Brutes, and those the rational Creatures? And, indeed, to avoid so monstrous and detestable a Sight, was one principal Motive of my Retirement hither.²⁶

Thus much I thought proper to tell you in Relation to your self, and to the Trust I reposed in you.

21 *the thing that was not*: the Houyhnhnms' periphrasis for falsehood, of which they are said by Gulliver to have no conception; see below, pp. 349, 353, 354, 366, 390, 431.

22 *mine own Work*: another complaint about the 'mangled and murdered Pages' of the first edition of *GT* (Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. III, p. 693), which Swift considered were more in evidence in the second volume (i.e. in Parts III and IV; Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. III, p. 56). Collation confirms that these Parts contain the most substantial textual variants: see below, pp. 674–718.

23 *Inuendo*: the colloquial sense of 'an oblique hint, indirect suggestion' (*OED*, 3) is already current by 1726, but the word also possesses a technical legal meaning, namely 'the injurious meaning or signification alleged to be conveyed by words not *per se* injurious or actionable' (*OED*, 2), which when Swift wrote *GT* was available and pertinent. See Long note 5.

24 *Yahoos*: the under-race of Part IV.

25 *govern the Herd*: cf. 'The Patrons of the good old Cause, / In *Senates* sit, at making Laws; / The most malignant of the Herd, / In surest way to be prefer'd —' ('The Life and Character of Dean Swift', Williams, *Poems*, p. 549, lines 162–5). Swift had also used 'herd' in a political sense in the *Contests and Dissensions* (Davis, vol. I, p. 233); it also recurs in Chapters 1 and 7 of Part IV (below, pp. 335 and 394). Writing to Pope on 10 January 1721, and therefore only a few months before the first mention of *GT* in his correspondence, Swift complained that 'I cannot but think it hard that I am not suffer'd to run quietly among the common herd of people, whose opinions unfortunately differ from those which lead to Favour and Preferment' (Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. II, p. 359).

26 *hither*: i.e. to Newark.

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I do in the next Place complain of my own great Want of Judgment, in being prevailed upon by the Intreaties and false Reasonings of you and some others, very much against mine own Opinion, to suffer my Travels to be published. Pray bring to your Mind how often I desired you to consider, when you insisted on the Motive of *publick Good*,²⁷ that the *Yahoos* were a Species of Animals utterly incapable of Amendment by Precepts or Examples.²⁸ And so it hath proved; for instead of seeing a full Stop put to all Abuses and Corruptions, at least in this little Island, as I had Reason to expect: Behold, after above six Months Warning, I cannot learn that my Book hath produced one single Effect according to mine Intentions: I desired you would let me know by a Letter, when Party and Faction were extinguished; Judges learned and upright; Pleaders honest and modest, with some Tincture of common Sense; and *Smithfield*²⁹ blazing with Pyramids of Law-Books; the young Nobility's Education³⁰ entirely changed; the Physicians banished;³¹ the female *Yahoos* abounding in Virtue, Honour, Truth and good Sense: Courts and Levees of great Ministers thoroughly weeded and swept; Wit, Merit and Learning rewarded; all Disgracers of the Press in Prose and Verse, condemned to eat nothing but their own Cotten,³² and quench their Thirst with their own Ink.

27 *publick Good*: see Long note 6.

28 *Precepts or Examples*: the inveteracy of human vice is a characteristic sentiment in Swift's later writings; cf. 'I freely own it a wild Imagination that any words will cure the sottishness of men, or the vanity of women' (Davis, vol. XII, p. 68); 'I have already said too much, and to little or no Purpose; which hath often been the Fate, or Fortune of the Writer. J. Swift' (Davis, vol. XIII, p. 140). In *A Project for the Advancement of Religion and Manners* (1709) Swift had conceded that, notwithstanding the personal excellence of Queen Anne, 'Infidelity and Vice are not much diminished since her coming to the Crown; nor will, in Probability, till more effectual Remedies be provided' (Davis, vol. II, p. 47). But cf. also 'Verses on the Death of Dr Swift': 'His Satyr points at no Defect, / But what all Mortals may correct;' (Williams, *Poems*, p. 571, lines 463–4). For Swift the possibility of amendment of life (of which Gulliver in Part IV is a vivid, if problematic, illustration) was an aggravating feature of mankind's failure to reform.

29 *Smithfield*: an area on the northern edge of the city of London; the site of public burnings of heretics and proscribed books.

30 *young Nobility's Education*: see Long note 7.

31 *Physicians banished*: cf. the satire on the medical profession in 'Verses on the Death of Dr Swift' (Williams, *Poems*, pp. 558–9, lines 169–76), and in Part IV below, pp. 376–81.

32 *Cotten*: cotton was sometimes used to make paper. In the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society, vol. II (1721), pp. 221–2, in an essay 'Of the Art of Printing', Swift might have read of the use of '*Cotton Paper*' during the middle ages and antiquity. In 1726 Defoe would report that 'much of our Paper, in this Country, is made of the Rags of old Linnen beaten to Pumice' (Defoe, *Literature*, p. 85; see also pp. 124–5).