

Lori Jackson  
English 332  
Sister Willburn  
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### The Symbolic Journey of Gulliver

While the story of *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift appears to be a convoluted tale of adventures in far-off lands, the symbolism of these foreign civilizations leave a poignant impression on Swift's readers. Gulliver's journey is not merely a physical expedition, but a journey of self-discovery and understanding of the various facets of human nature. Swift uses the symbolism of each of the civilizations to explore with his readers, in satirical form, the philosophies and customs of his own English society.

The Lilliputians are the first civilization that Gulliver visits. This community of tiny people ironically symbolizes the excessive pride of mankind in our puny existence. The long rivaling war with Blefuscu is not a dispute over land, but the interpretation of law and which side of the egg should be cracked first. The Lilliputians need to be right; their pride, seems to override any logic. This society is full of conniving subjects who see themselves to be worthy of more respect than they deserve. Swift's use of the Lilliputians demonstrates the small-mindedness of human nature and the quest for power.

In contrast to Gulliver's gigantic size in the land of Lilliput, he arrives in Brobdingnag the size of a Lilliputian. This reverse perspective prompts the examination of how a point of view can change a person's situation and circumstance in society. Gulliver's size makes him more aware of the details of the humans he is surrounded by because their characteristics are literally magnified. The Queen's reasonable views of politics and her kindness toward Gulliver show a side of human nature that is more easily observed because of Gulliver's size. The Brobdingnagians, while imperfect, represent a higher moral society.

The next society is physically higher. The flying island of Laputa symbolically demonstrates the perceived ascension of the intellectually minded. The irony of this symbolism is that these intellectuals are so caught up in thought that they are idiots. The reference to the king having his "head in the clouds" literally translates to where this civilization is located. Swift uses the irrational thinking of the Laputans to suggest the foolish aspects of intellectualism. This symbolism is not of logic but of the quest for knowledge that has no direct bearing on improving humanity.

The journey to the land of Houymnhnm allows the reader to explore the ideal of human nature. While Swift seems to allude that this level of humanity is unattainable, he asserts that it is the symbol of this human order that should not be abandoned. This ideal of a balanced way of life where moderation and sense govern their existence is symbolic of a purer reality.

Gulliver's journey of discovery symbolically allows Swift to examine human nature, man's potential for corruption, and the pitfalls of the exploitation of intellectualism. While Gulliver's travels made a good and honest man better, Swift's satire teaches putting aside the trivial characteristics that keeps us from becoming all that God sees in us.