

# *Feng Chia University*

## *Outstanding Academic Paper by Students*

Title : A Book Review of Gulliver's Travels

《格列佛遊記》的書評報告

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Academic Year: Semester 1, 2014-2015



## **Abstract**

This paper is to give a review of a classic story, Gulliver's Travels. Gulliver's Travels is a novel and also a satire written by Jonathan Swift and this version is from the Oxford Bookworms Library printed in 2008. The theme of the book is about the journey of Gulliver, a well-educated man from a rich family. He reached many countries within his four voyages and he encountered countless strange and dangerous events. The journeys brought him introspection and sometimes influenced his beliefs. This paper will illustrate human's jealousy, human's greed and national pride depicted in the story in relation to Gulliver's changes at the end of the story.

**Keyword :** Gulliver's Travels, Jealousy, Greed, National Pride

## 摘要

此文章是《格列佛遊記》的心得報告。這經典的著作不僅是喬納森·斯威夫特所寫的小說，同時也是帶有諷刺意味的作品。而此文章是根據「牛津書蟲系列」於2008年出版的版本來寫成的。格列佛來自中產家庭，接受過良好的教育，書中描繪了他在航海的遭遇和冒險。他航海四次，遊歷各國，面臨過種種困境。經歷過這一切，他開始覺得自己需要反省，有時候這些感受還會對他的信仰帶來衝擊。這報告闡述了故事中人類的嫉妒、貪婪和民族自豪感，而這些都跟格列佛在結局時的改變有所關連。

**關鍵字：**格列佛遊記，嫉妒，貪婪，民族自豪感

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## **Text**

Gulliver's Travels is a novel and also a satire written by Jonathan Swift and this version is from the Oxford Bookworms Library printed in 2008. Gulliver was well-educated and from a rich family. He had four voyages to several countries such as Lilliput (everything was small in size), Brobdingnag (everything was big in size) and Houyhnhnms (the country ruled by horses). He started his first voyage as a ship's doctor. These adventures changed Gulliver in certain ways. In the following review, I am going to illustrate human's jealousy, human's greed and national pride in the story.

As a stranger, Gulliver surprised or even scared everyone with his appearance and also abilities, and these triggered people's jealousy. After Gulliver learned the languages of those countries, he fitted into the environment. Not only had the locals loved him, but also the authority. As Gulliver helped the King of Lilliput to settle the war against Belfuscu, Flimnap, the King's highest official, felt threatened. What was more, he suspected his wife was having an affair with Gulliver too. With all of these, Flimnap's jealousy towards Gulliver grew enormously and he tried to persuade the King to kill Gulliver. When Gulliver was staying in Brobdingnag, the attention from the highest towards him triggered jealousy from the others also. Gulliver used to have a master who took care of him, but then he was used inhumanly as the golden goose. The Queen saved Gulliver from his master and gave the best living for him. Since Gulliver became the smallest person in Brobdingnag and the most popular person in the palace, Queen's dwarf was extremely angry with and jealous of him. He stuck Gulliver in a huge bone after dinner, attacked him with the big insects or dropped him into an enormous bowl of milk. Most of the time, Gulliver had to struggle painfully before being rescued. Although Gulliver did not die because of other's jealousy, he was on the edge of death every time. Jealousy was an evil thing in human which is conveyed

vividly in the story.

Human's jealousy was not the only evil thing, but greed too. The greed of people put Gulliver into dangers. The King of Lilliput appreciated Gulliver's tactics and courage to crash Blefuscu's navy. At the beginning of the war, Gulliver agreed to help as the King was trying to make peace for Lilliput, but he changed after that victory. He ordered Gulliver to destroy his opposition in Blefuscu completely so that he could become "King of the whole world". Of course, Gulliver refused but that became one of the underlying causes to the inhuman punishment made by the King later. When Gulliver arrived in Brobdingnag, he met a great master. The master and his family treated him very well by giving him food, shelter and love. But Gulliver irritated a visitor who gave a wicked suggestion to the master, showing Gulliver to the crowds, as if he was a strange wild animal, for money. Unexpectedly, Gulliver's master accepted the suggestion and showed him at their town, and also uncountable villages and town when they were on the way to the capital. Gulliver got thinner and thinner because of that exhausting journey and everyone thought he would not live much longer. Although Gulliver survived from these two examples, the greed of people pushed him towards death.

Although Gulliver chose to have adventures instead of staying in England, he was still very proud of his nation. In his stay in Brobdingnag, he met an intelligent King. However, the King looked down to England and Gulliver. He laughed at Gulliver that "an insect like this should talk of such important matters" (p.36); and he also despised the history, political system and gunpowder of England. He thought Gulliver was reasonable to be proud of things in England as they were "the poor animals aren't on our level" (p.36). Gulliver did not agree with the King, but there was nothing he could

do. The experience in Houyhnhnms surprised Gulliver too. Gulliver tried to explain the situation in Europe to Houys, the rulers. Houys did not understand why people in Europe would attack each other for land and interests or why the soldiers like Yahoos (the ugly animals ruled by Houys) would kill innocent people with guns and bullets as ordered by the King. At first, Gulliver would like to convince Houys by telling them the history in Europe and the powerful weapons which helped them to succeed, but soon he doubted those things that he was proud of. Gulliver was delighted to tell how great England was when the Kings of Brobdingnag asked him and he could barely stand the criticism towards England. After his visit to Houyhnhnms, he wanted to live under peace and truth. His national pride was lessened.

In conclusion, Gulliver's Travels is not only an interesting piece of reading, but also a book with incisive lessons. In his journey, he experienced the danger of jealousy and greed that he almost lost his life. It was unbelievable that human could have such ugly elements. Every adventure brought him introspection and sometimes slightly influenced Gulliver's beliefs. He was convinced at the end. Although he was with his family finally, his life was totally different.

## **References**

Clare West. (2008). Gulliver's Travels. Oxford University Press.