

# Cloud School Pro (CSP)

## Lecture Sheet

For 3rd Year Paid Group

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**Novel, Fiction:** Gulliver's Travels

**Writer:** Jonathan Swift (30 November 1667 – 19 October 1745)

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Gulliver's Travels, or Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, first a Surgeon, and then a Captain of Several Ships is a 1726 prose satire by the Anglo-Irish writer and clergyman Jonathan Swift, satirising both human nature and the "travellers' tales" literary subgenre. It is Swift's best-known full-length work and a classic of English literature. Swift claimed that he wrote Gulliver's Travels "to vex the world rather than divert it".

The book was an immediate success. The English dramatist John Gay remarked, "It is universally read, from the cabinet council to the nursery." In 2015, Robert McCrum released his selection list of the 100 best novels of all time, where he called Gulliver's Travels "a satirical masterpiece".

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Gulliver's Travels, original title Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World, four-part satirical work by Anglo-Irish author Jonathan Swift, published anonymously in 1726 as Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. A keystone of English literature, it is one of the books that contributed to the emergence of the novel as a literary form in English. A parody of the then popular travel narrative, Gulliver's Travels combines adventure with savage satire, mocking English customs and the politics of the day.

### About Poet/ Writer

Jonathan Swift was an Anglo-Irish satirist, author, essayist, political pamphleteer (first for the Whigs, then for the Tories), poet, and Anglican cleric who became Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, hence his common sobriquet, "Dean Swift".

Swift is remembered for works such as A Tale of a Tub, An Argument Against Abolishing Christianity, Gulliver's Travels, and A Modest Proposal. He is regarded as the foremost prose satirist in the English language. He originally published all of his works under pseudonyms—such as Lemuel Gulliver, Isaac Bickerstaff, M. B. Drapier—or anonymously. He was a master of two styles of satire, the Horatian and Juvenalian styles.

His deadpan, ironic writing style, particularly in A Modest Proposal, has led to such satire being subsequently termed "Swiftian".

### Themes

Gulliver's Travels has been described as a Menippean satire, a children's story, proto-science fiction and a forerunner of the modern novel.

A possible reason for the book's classic status is that it can be seen as many things to many people. Broadly, the book has three themes:

- A satirical view of the state of European government, and of petty differences between religions
- An inquiry into whether people are inherently corrupt or whether they become corrupted
- A restatement of the older "ancients versus moderns" controversy previously addressed by Swift in The Battle of the Books.

Gulliver's Travels' main idea is the inherent amusement of human tradition and habit, as well as the relative nature of ethics and society dependent on historical precedent. Gulliver's Travels, like so many of Jonathan Swift's works, is primarily a satire of British monarchy and Imperialism.



### **Tone, Mood, and Emotion**

Tone Gulliver's tone is gullible and naïve during the first three voyages; in the fourth, it turns cynical and bitter. The intention of the author, Jonathan Swift, is satirical and biting throughout.

### **Settings**

Gulliver's Travels takes place during the early 18th century, which marked a dramatic shift in the British political landscape. Gulliver first sets sail from England in 1699, during the reign of Queen Anne, and makes his final return in 1715, during the reign of King George I. Queen Anne strongly favored the conservative Tory party, and while she sat on the throne from 1665 to 1714, the Tories wielded considerable political control. Anne's successor, King George I, did not share her political sympathies, instead favoring the liberal Whig party. Following George's accession to the throne, the Whigs came to dominate English politics, drastically reducing the role of the Tories. Jonathan Swift satirizes this struggle between Tories and Whigs at numerous points throughout the novel.

### **Background**

**Travel Journal:** As a subset of travel literature, the travel journal focuses on the author's personal experiences and changes as a consequence of travel. First arising in Greece and medieval China, one of the most famous collections of travel diaries was written by Marco Polo as he explored Asia. Swift takes advantage of the form—which provides the opportunity to critique a number of alien cultures—to satirize British and European society, looking at aspects of its culture through the lens of an outside observer.

**The British Whigs and Tories:** In modern terms, 18th-century Whigs leaned liberal while Tories tended to be conservative. In Swift's time, Tories supported the national Anglican church and the divine right of kings to rule—which also opposed increased power for British parliament. Whigs, on

the other hand, sought greater parliamentary power. George I, king when Swift was writing *Gulliver's Travels*, was a Whig supporter who filled Parliament with his chosen political party. As a Tory supporter, Swift took inspiration from the Tory-Whig conflict for the high- vs. low-heeled shoe conflict of the Lilliputians.

### **Title**

Full title: *Travels into several Remote Nations of the World. In four parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, first a surgeon, and then a captain of several ships.*

### **Characters**

#### **Gulliver**

The narrator and protagonist of the story. Although Lemuel Gulliver's vivid and detailed style of narration makes it clear that he is intelligent and well educated, his perceptions are naïve and gullible. He has virtually no emotional life, or at least no awareness of it, and his comments are strictly factual.

#### **Richard Sympson**

Gulliver's cousin, self-proclaimed intimate friend, and the editor and publisher of *Gulliver's Travels*.

#### **Mary Burton Gulliver**

Gulliver's wife for whom Gulliver appears to have little, if any, affection. The most important facts about her in Gulliver's mind are her social origin and the income she generates.

#### **James Bates**

An eminent London surgeon under whom Gulliver serves as an apprentice after graduating from Cambridge.

#### **The Lilliputians and the Blefuscudians**

Two races of miniature people whom Gulliver meets on his first voyage. The two races have been in a longstanding war with each other over the interpretation of a reference in their common holy scripture to the proper way to eat eggs.

#### **The Emperor**

The ruler of Lilliput. Like all Lilliputians, the emperor is fewer than six inches tall. His power and majesty impress Gulliver deeply, but to us he appears both laughable and sinister.

#### **The Brobdingnagians**

Giants whom Gulliver meets on his second voyage. Brobdingnagians are basically a reasonable and kindly people governed by a sense of justice, though they tend to treat Gulliver as a plaything.

#### **The Queen of Brobdingnag**

The queen of Brobdingnag, who is so delighted by Gulliver's beauty and charms that she agrees to buy him from the farmer for 1,000 pieces of gold.

#### **The King of Brobdingnag**

The king of Brobdingnag, whose thoughtfulness and intellectual prowess mark him as a contrast to the emperor of Lilliput.

### **The Farmer**

Gulliver's first master in Brobdingnag. Generally, the farmer represents the average Brobdingnagian of no great gifts or intelligence, wielding an extraordinary power over Gulliver simply by virtue of his immense size.

### **Glumdalclitch**

The farmer's nine-year-old daughter, who is forty feet tall. Glumdalclitch becomes Gulliver's friend and nursemaid, a function she performs with great seriousness and attentiveness.

### **The Laputans**

Absentminded intellectuals who live on the floating island of Laputa, encountered by Gulliver on his third voyage. During Gulliver's stay among them, they do not mistreat him, but are generally unpleasant and dismiss him as intellectually deficient.

### **Lord Munodi**

A lord of Lagado, capital of the underdeveloped land beneath Laputa, who hosts Gulliver and gives him a tour of the country on Gulliver's third voyage.

### **The Yahoos**

Unkempt humanlike beasts who live in servitude to the Houyhnhnms.

### **The Houyhnhnms**

Rational horses who maintain a simple, peaceful society governed by reason and truthfulness. They are the masters of the Yahoos, the savage humanlike creatures in Houyhnhnm land.

### **Gulliver's Houyhnhnm Master**

The Houyhnhnm who first discovers Gulliver and takes him into his own home.

### **Don Pedro de Mendez**

The Portuguese captain who takes Gulliver back to Europe after he is forced to leave the land of the Houyhnhnms.

### **Abraham Pannell**

The commander of the ship on which Gulliver first sails, the *Swallow*. Traveling to the Levant, or the eastern Mediterranean, and beyond, Gulliver spends three and a half years on Pannell's ship.

Virtually nothing is mentioned about Pannell, which heightens our sense that Gulliver's fascination with exotic types is not matched by any interest in his fellow countrymen.

### **William Prichard**

The master of the *Antelope*, the ship on which Gulliver embarks for the South Seas at the outset of his first journey, in 1699. When the *Antelope* sinks, Gulliver is washed ashore on Lilliput. No details are given about the personality of Prichard, and he is not important in Gulliver's life or in the

unfolding of the novel's plot. That Gulliver takes pains to name him accurately reinforces our impression that he is obsessive about facts but not always reliable in assessing overall significance.

### **Flimnap**

The Lord High Treasurer of Lilliput, who conceives a jealous hatred for Gulliver when he starts believing that his wife is having an affair with him.

### **Reldresal**

The Principal Secretary of Private Affairs in Lilliput, who explains to Gulliver the history of the political tensions between the two principal parti.

### **Skyresh Bolgolam**

The High Admiral of Lilliput, who is the only member of the administration to oppose Gulliver's liberation. Gulliver imagines that Skyresh's enmity is simply personal, though there is no apparent reason for such hostility.

### **The Tramecksans**

Also known as the High-Heels, a Lilliputian political group reminiscent of the British Tories. Tramecksan policies are said to be more agreeable to the ancient constitution of Lilliput, and while the High-Heels appear greater in number than the Low-Heels, their power is lesser. Unlike the king, the crown prince is believed to sympathize with the Tramecksan, wearing one low heel and one high heel, causing him to limp slightly.

### **The Slamecksans**

The Low-Heels, a Lilliputian political group reminiscent of the British Whigs. The king has ordained that all governmental administrators must be selected from this party, much to the resentment of the High-Heels of the realm. Thus, while there are fewer Slamecksan than Tramecksan in Lilliput, their political power is greater. The king's own sympathies with the Slamecksan are evident in the slightly lower heels he wears at court.

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## **Summary**

### **Part I: A Voyage to Lilliput**

4 May 1699 – 13 April 1702

During his first voyage, Gulliver is washed ashore after a shipwreck and finds himself a prisoner of a race of tiny people, less than 6 inches (15 cm) tall, who are inhabitants of the island country of Lilliput. After giving assurances of his good behaviour, he is given a residence in Lilliput and becomes a favourite of the Lilliput Royal Court. He is also given permission by the King of Lilliput to go around the city on the condition that he must not hurt their subjects.

At first, the Lilliputians are hospitable to Gulliver, but they are also wary of the threat that his size poses to them. The Lilliputians reveal themselves to be a people who put great emphasis on trivial matters. For example, which end of an egg a person cracks becomes the basis of a deep political rift within that nation. They are a people who revel in displays of authority and performances of power. Gulliver assists the Lilliputians to subdue their neighbours the Blefuscudians by stealing their fleet.

However, he refuses to reduce the island nation of Blefuscu to a province of Lilliput, displeasing the King and the royal court.

Gulliver is charged with treason for, among other crimes, urinating in the capital though he was putting out a fire. He is convicted and sentenced to be blinded. With the assistance of a kind friend, "a considerable person at court", he escapes to Blefuscu. Here, he spots and retrieves an abandoned boat and sails out to be rescued by a passing ship, which safely takes him back home with some Lilliputian animals he carries with him.

## **Part II: A Voyage to Brobdingnag**

20 June 1702 – 3 June 1706

Gulliver soon sets out again. When the sailing ship *Adventure* is blown off course by storms and forced to sail for land in search of fresh water, Gulliver is abandoned by his companions and left on a peninsula on the western coast of the North American continent.

The grass of Brobdingnag is as tall as a tree. He is then found by a farmer who is about 72 ft (22 m) tall, judging from Gulliver estimating the man's step being 10 yards (9 m). The giant farmer brings Gulliver home, and his daughter Glumdalclitch cares for Gulliver. The farmer treats him as a curiosity and exhibits him for money. After a while the constant display makes Gulliver sick, and the farmer sells him to the queen of the realm. Glumdalclitch (who accompanied her father while exhibiting Gulliver) is taken into the queen's service to take care of the tiny man. Since Gulliver is too small to use their huge chairs, beds, knives and forks, the queen commissions a small house to be built for him so that he can be carried around in it; this is referred to as his "travelling box".

Between small adventures such as fighting giant wasps and being carried to the roof by a monkey, he discusses the state of Europe with the King of Brobdingnag. The king is not happy with Gulliver's accounts of Europe, especially upon learning of the use of guns and cannon. On a trip to the seaside, his traveling box is seized by a giant eagle which drops Gulliver and his box into the sea where he is picked up by sailors who return him to England.

## **Part III: A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbudrib and Japan**

5 August 1706 – 16 April 1710

Setting out again, Gulliver's ship is attacked by pirates, and he is marooned close to a desolate rocky island near India. He is rescued by the flying island of Laputa, a kingdom devoted to the arts of music, mathematics, and astronomy but unable to use them for practical ends. Rather than using armies, Laputa has a custom of throwing rocks down at rebellious cities on the ground.

Gulliver tours Balnibarbi, the kingdom ruled from Laputa, as the guest of a low-ranking courtier and sees the ruin brought about by the blind pursuit of science without practical results, in a satire on bureaucracy and on the Royal Society and its experiments. At the Grand Academy of Lagado in Balnibarbi, great resources and manpower are employed on researching preposterous schemes such as extracting sunbeams from cucumbers, softening marble for use in pillows, learning how to mix paint by smell, and uncovering political conspiracies by examining the excrement of suspicious persons (see muckraking). Gulliver is then taken to Maldonada, the main port of Balnibarbi, to await a trader who can take him on to Japan.

While waiting for a passage, Gulliver takes a short side-trip to the island of Glubbudrib which is southwest of Balnibarbi. On Glubbudrib, he visits a magician's dwelling and discusses history with the ghosts of historical figures, the most obvious restatement of the "ancients versus moderns" theme in the book. The ghosts include Julius Caesar, Brutus, Homer, Aristotle, René Descartes, and Pierre Gassendi.

On the island of Luggnagg, he encounters the struldbrugs, people who are immortal. They do not have the gift of eternal youth, but suffer the infirmities of old age and are considered legally dead at the age of eighty.

After reaching Japan, Gulliver asks the Emperor "to excuse my performing the ceremony imposed upon my countrymen of trampling upon the crucifix", which the Emperor does. Gulliver returns home, determined to stay there for the rest of his days.

#### **Part IV: A Voyage to the Land of the Houyhnhnms**

7 September 1710 – 5 December 1715

Despite his earlier intention of remaining at home, Gulliver returns to sea as the captain of a merchantman, as he is bored with his employment as a surgeon. On this voyage, he is forced to find new additions to his crew who, he believes, have turned against him. His crew then commits mutiny. After keeping him contained for some time, they resolve to leave him on the first piece of land they come across, and continue as pirates. He is abandoned in a landing boat and comes upon a race of deformed savage humanoid creatures to which he conceives a violent antipathy. Shortly afterwards, he meets the Houyhnhnms, a race of talking horses. They are the rulers while the deformed creatures that resemble human beings are called Yahoos.

Some scholars have identified the relationship between the Houyhnhnms and Yahoos as a master/slave dynamic.

Gulliver becomes a member of a horse's household and comes to both admire and emulate the Houyhnhnms and their way of life, rejecting his fellow humans as merely Yahoos endowed with some semblance of reason which they only use to exacerbate and add to the vices Nature gave them. However, an Assembly of the Houyhnhnms rules that Gulliver, a Yahoo with some semblance of reason, is a danger to their civilization and commands him to swim back to the land that he came from. Gulliver's "Master", the Houyhnhnm who took him into his household, buys him time to create a canoe to make his departure easier. After another disastrous voyage, he is rescued against his will by a Portuguese ship. He is disgusted to see that Captain Pedro de Mendez, whom he considers a Yahoo, is a wise, courteous, and generous person.

He returns to his home in England, but is unable to reconcile himself to living among "Yahoos" and becomes a recluse, remaining in his house, avoiding his family and his wife, and spending several hours a day speaking with the horses in his stables.

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**Book I:** When the ship Gulliver is traveling on is destroyed in a storm, Gulliver ends up on the island of Lilliput, where he awakes to find that he has been captured by Lilliputians, very small people — approximately six inches in height. Gulliver is treated with compassion and concern. In turn, he helps them solve some of their problems, especially their conflict with their enemy, Blefuscu, an island across the bay from them. Gulliver falls from favor, however, because he refuses to support the Emperor's desire to enslave the Blefuscuans and because he "makes water" to put out a palace fire. Gulliver flees to Blefuscu, where he converts a large war ship to his own use and sets sail from Blefuscu eventually to be rescued at sea by an English merchant ship and returned to his home in England.

**Book II:** As he travels as a ship's surgeon, Gulliver and a small crew are sent to find water on an island. Instead, they encounter a land of giants. As the crew flees, Gulliver is left behind and captured. Gulliver's captor, a farmer, takes him to the farmer's home where Gulliver is treated kindly, but, of course, curiously. The farmer assigns his daughter, Glumdalclitch, to be Gulliver's

keeper, and she cares for Gulliver with great compassion. The farmer takes Gulliver on tour across the countryside, displaying him to onlookers. Eventually, the farmer sells Gulliver to the Queen. At court, Gulliver meets the King, and the two spend many sessions discussing the customs and behaviors of Gulliver's country. In many cases, the King is shocked and chagrined by the selfishness and pettiness that he hears Gulliver describe. Gulliver, on the other hand, defends England.

One day, on the beach, as Gulliver looks longingly at the sea from his box (portable room), he is snatched up by an eagle and eventually dropped into the sea. A passing ship spots the floating chest and rescues Gulliver, eventually returning him to England and his family.

**Book III:** Gulliver is on a ship bound for the Levant. After arriving, Gulliver is assigned captain of a sloop to visit nearby islands and establish trade. On this trip, pirates attack the sloop and place Gulliver in a small boat to fend for himself. While drifting at sea, Gulliver discovers a Flying Island. While on the Flying Island, called Laputa, Gulliver meets several inhabitants, including the King. All are preoccupied with things associated with mathematics and music. In addition, astronomers use the laws of magnetism to move the island up, down, forward, backward, and sideways, thus controlling the island's movements in relation to the island below (Balnibarbi). While in this land, Gulliver visits Balnibarbi, the island of Glubbudbrib, and Luggnagg. Gulliver finally arrives in Japan where he meets the Japanese emperor. From there, he goes to Amsterdam and eventually home to England.

**Book IV:** While Gulliver is captain of a merchant ship bound for Barbados and the Leeward Islands, several of his crew become ill and die on the voyage. Gulliver hires several replacement sailors in Barbados. These replacements turn out to be pirates who convince the other crew members to mutiny. As a result, Gulliver is deposited on a "strand" (an island) to fend for himself. Almost immediately, he is discovered by a herd of ugly, despicable human-like creatures who are called, he later learns, Yahoos. They attack him by climbing trees and defecating on him. He is saved from this disgrace by the appearance of a horse, identified, he later learns, by the name Houyhnhnm. The grey horse (a Houyhnhnm) takes Gulliver to his home, where he is introduced to the grey's mare (wife), a colt and a foal (children), and a sorrel nag (the servant). Gulliver also sees that the Yahoos are kept in pens away from the house. It becomes immediately clear that, except for Gulliver's clothing, he and the Yahoos are the same animal. From this point on, Gulliver and his master (the grey) begin a series of discussions about the evolution of Yahoos, about topics, concepts, and behaviors related to the Yahoo society, which Gulliver represents, and about the society of the Houyhnhnms.

Despite his favored treatment in the grey steed's home, the kingdom's Assembly determines that Gulliver is a Yahoo and must either live with the uncivilized Yahoos or return to his own world. With great sadness, Gulliver takes his leave of the Houyhnhnms. He builds a canoe and sails to a nearby island where he is eventually found hiding by a crew from a Portuguese ship. The ship's captain returns Gulliver to Lisbon, where he lives in the captain's home. Gulliver is so repelled by the sight and smell of these "civilized Yahoos" that he can't stand to be around them. Eventually, however, Gulliver agrees to return to his family in England. Upon his arrival, he is repelled by his Yahoo family, so he buys two horses and spends most of his days caring for and conversing with the horses in the stable in order to be as far away from his Yahoo family as possible.

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Gulliver's Travels is a first-person narrative that is told from the point of view of Lemuel Gulliver, a surgeon and sea captain who visits remote regions of the world, and it describes four adventures. In the first one, Gulliver is the only survivor of a shipwreck, and he swims to Lilliput, where he is tied up



by people who are less than 6 inches (15 cm) tall. He is then taken to the capital city and eventually released. The Lilliputians' small size mirrors their small-mindedness. They indulge in ridiculous customs and petty debates. Political affiliations, for example, are divided between men who wear high-heeled shoes (symbolic of the English Tories) and those who wear low ones (representing the English Whigs), and court positions are filled by those who are best at rope dancing. Gulliver is asked to help defend Lilliput against the empire of Blefuscu, with which Lilliput is at war over which end of an egg should be broken, this being a matter of religious doctrine. Gulliver captures Blefuscu's naval fleet, thus preventing an invasion, but declines to assist the emperor of Lilliput in conquering Blefuscu. Later Gulliver extinguishes a fire in the royal palace by urinating on it. Eventually he falls out of favour and is sentenced to be blinded and starved. He flees to Blefuscu, where he finds a normal-size boat and is thus able to return to England.

Gulliver's second voyage takes him to Brobdingnag, inhabited by a race of giants. A farm worker finds Gulliver and delivers him to the farm owner. The farmer begins exhibiting Gulliver for money, and the farmer's young daughter, Glumdalclitch, takes care of him. One day the queen orders the farmer to bring Gulliver to her, and she purchases Gulliver. He becomes a favourite at court, though the king reacts with contempt when Gulliver recounts the splendid achievements of his own civilization. The king responds to Gulliver's description of the government and history of England by concluding that the English must be a race of "odious vermin." Gulliver offers to make gunpowder and cannon for the king, but the king is horrified by the thought of such weaponry. Eventually Gulliver is picked up by an eagle and then rescued at sea by people of his own size.

On Gulliver's third voyage he is set adrift by pirates and eventually ends up on the flying island of Laputa. The people of Laputa all have one eye pointing inward and the other upward, and they are so lost in thought that they must be reminded to pay attention to the world around them. Though they are greatly concerned with mathematics and with music, they have no practical applications for their learning. Laputa is the home of the king of Balnibarbi, the continent below it. Gulliver is permitted to leave the island and visit Lagado, the capital city of Balnibarbi. He finds the farm fields in ruin and the people living in apparent squalor. Gulliver's host explains that the inhabitants follow the prescriptions of a learned academy in the city, where the scientists undertake such wholly impractical projects as extracting sunbeams from cucumbers. Later Gulliver visits Glubbudrib, the island of sorcerers, and there he speaks with great men of the past and learns from them the lies of history. In the kingdom of Luggnagg he meets the struldbrugs, who are immortal but age as though they were mortal and are thus miserable. From Luggnagg he is able to sail to Japan and thence back to England.

In the fourth part, Gulliver visits the land of the Houyhnhnms, a race of intelligent horses who are cleaner and more rational, communal, and benevolent (they have, most tellingly, no words for deception or evil) than the brutish, filthy, greedy, and degenerate humanoid race called Yahoos, some of whom they have tamed—an ironic twist on the human-beast relationship. The Houyhnhnms are very curious about Gulliver, who seems to be both a Yahoo and civilized, but, after Gulliver describes his country and its history to the master Houyhnhnm, the Houyhnhnm concludes that the people of England are not more reasonable than the Yahoos. At last, it is decided that Gulliver must leave the Houyhnhnms. Gulliver then returns to England, so disgusted with humanity that he avoids his family and buys horses and converses with them instead.

## **Analysis**

Considered Swift's masterpiece, *Gulliver's Travels* is the most brilliant as well as the most bitter and controversial of his satires. Written in a matter-of-fact style and with an air of sober reality, the work defeats oversimple explanations. Is it essentially comic, or is it a misanthropic depreciation of humankind? Swift certainly seems to use the various races and societies Gulliver encounters in his travels to satirize many of the errors, follies, and frailties that human beings are prone to. The

warlike, disputatious, but essentially trivial Lilliputians in the first section and the deranged impractical pedants and intellectuals in the third segment are shown as imbalanced beings lacking common sense and even decency. The Houyhnhnms, by contrast, are the epitome of reason and virtuous simplicity. However, Gulliver's own proud identification with these horses and his subsequent disdain for his fellow humans indicates that he too has become imbalanced and that human beings are simply incapable of aspiring to the virtuous rationality that Gulliver has glimpsed.

### **Literary Devices/Keynotes**

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#### **Menippean satire**

The genre of Menippean satire is a form of satire, usually in prose, that is characterized by attacking mental attitudes rather than specific individuals or entities. It has been broadly described as a mixture of allegory, picaresque narrative, and satirical commentary.