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The illustration depicts a massive, brown, stone-like head of a giant, lying on a wooden cart. The cart is being pulled by a team of men and horses. The men are dressed in simple, earthy clothing and are holding torches that are lit, casting a warm glow. The horses are harnessed to the cart and are also pulling it. The background is a dark, blue sky with some clouds. The overall scene is one of a grand, ancient civilization.

Jonathan Swift
GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

Read by **Jasper Britton**

CD 1

1	Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift – The Publisher to the Reader	3:07
2	A Letter from Captain Gulliver to his Cousin Sympson	5:26
3	I find likewise that your printer has been so careless...	3:58
4	Part 1: A Voyage to Lilliput – Chapter 1	5:27
5	The declivity was so small that I walked near a mile...	5:16
6	But I should have mentioned, that before the principal...	7:11
7	It seems that, upon the first moment I was discovered...	6:18
8	Chapter 2	7:15
9	Towards night, I got with some difficulty into my house...	4:34
10	He desired I would not take it ill, if he gave orders...	7:15
11	When this inventory was read over to the emperor...	3:26
12	Chapter 3	6:17
13	When I had finished my work, I desired...	5:58
14	But because the reader may be curious to have some idea...	5:07
15	Chapter 4	2:00

Total time on CD 1: 78:43

CD 2

1	The emperor's palace is in the centre of the city...	3:33
2	He began with compliments on my liberty...	6:24
3	Chapter 5	4:57
4	The emperor and his whole court stood on the shore...	4:45
5	It is to be observed, that these ambassadors spoke...	4:57
6	Chapter 6	6:02
7	In choosing persons for all employments, they have more regard...	6:11
8	In the female nurseries, the young girls of quality...	4:30
9	I had three hundred cooks to dress my victuals...	5:26
10	Chapter 7	5:56
11	In the several debates upon this impeachment...	5:50
12	'In three days, your friend the secretary...'	6:10
13	Chapter 8	6:08
14	These considerations moved me to hasten my departure...	7:33

Total time on CD 2: 78:30

CD 3

1	Part 2: A Voyage to Brobdingnag – Chapter 1	7:00
2	I was endeavouring to find some gap in the hedge...	6:36
3	They all sat down in a circle about me...	6:36
4	When dinner was almost done, the nurse came...	7:53
5	Chapter 2	6:31
6	I was placed upon a table in the largest room...	5:50
7	Chapter 3	6:40
8	His majesty sent for three great scholars...	7:06
9	It is the custom that every Wednesday...	3:13
10	Nothing angered and mortified me so much...	5:32
11	Chapter 4	5:44
12	Besides the large box in which I was usually carried...	5:07
13	Chapter 5	4:45

Total time on CD 3: 78:40

CD 4

1	I cannot tell whether I were more pleased...	5:16
2	The queen, who often used to hear me talk of my sea-voyages...	3:45
3	But the greatest danger I ever underwent in that kingdom...	7:22
4	Chapter 6	4:56
5	The king, who, as I before observed...	5:12
6	When I had put an end to these long discourses...	4:18
7	He fell next upon the management of our treasury...	6:06
8	Chapter 7	5:48
9	A strange effect of narrow principles and views!	4:52
10	Their style is clear, masculine, and smooth...	5:02
11	Chapter 8	7:06
12	How often did I then wish myself with my dear Glumdalclitch...	7:00
13	I slept some hours, but perpetually disturbed with dreams...	6:05
14	The captain was very well satisfied with this...	6:31

Total time on CD 4: 79:29

CD 5

1	Part 3: A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbubdrib, and Japan – Chapter 1	6:16
2	The next day I sailed to another island...	5:46
3	Chapter 2	5:50
4	After dinner my company withdrew...	6:37
5	Most of them, and especially those who deal...	6:25
6	Chapter 3	6:06
7	But it must be observed, that this island cannot move...	6:12
8	Chapter 4	6:57
9	During our journey he made me observe the several methods...	7:34
10	Chapter 5	6:11
11	I was complaining of a small fit of the colic...	5:48
12	Six hours a day the young students were employed...	5:32
13	Chapter 6	3:55

Total time on CD 5: 79:18

CD 6

1	This project could not be of any great expense...	5:05
2	To keep senators in the interest of the crown...	5:30
3	Chapter 7	5:19
4	After this manner we continued in the island for ten days...	4:15
5	Chapter 8	6:54
6	Here I discovered the roguery and ignorance...	7:10
7	Chapter 9	3:15
8	The despatch came from court about the time we expected.	4:56
9	Chapter 10	7:08
10	'I would never marry after threescore...'	5:58
11	After this preface, he gave me a particular account...	7:55
12	Chapter 11	7:59

Total time on CD 6: 71:32

CD 7

1	Part 4: A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms – Chapter 1	4:27
2	In this desolate condition I advanced forward...	5:26
3	While he and I were thus employed, another horse came up...	5:59
4	Chapter 2	6:02
5	The great difficulty that seemed to stick with the two horses...	7:18
6	Chapter 3	6:52
7	I had hitherto concealed the secret of my dress...	6:34
8	Chapter 4	5:14
9	It put me to the pains of many circumlocutions...	7:50
10	Chapter 5	5:26
11	‘There is likewise a kind of beggarly princes in Europe...’	5:04
12	I assured his honour, ‘that the law was a science...’	5:43

Total time on CD 7: 72:02

CD 8

1	Chapter 6	5:50
2	I was going on to tell him another sort of people...	5:41
3	I told him, 'that a first or chief minister of state...'	6:25
4	Chapter 7	4:42
5	'That our institutions of government and law...'	5:11
6	My master further assured me, which I also observed...	5:02
7	I durst make no return to this malicious insinuation...	5:02
8	Chapter 8	6:32
9	As these noble Houyhnhnms are endowed by nature...	7:46
10	Chapter 9	6:40
11	The Houyhnhnms have no letters, and consequently...	6:22

Total time on CD 8: 65:19

CD 9

1	Chapter 10	6:29
2	I freely confess, that all the little knowledge...	5:24
3	I was struck with the utmost grief and despair...	6:36
4	Chapter 11	5:54
5	The ship came within half a league of this creek...	6:55
6	Our voyage passed without any considerable accident...	6:38
7	Chapter 12	4:44
8	I am not a little pleased that this work...	6:11
9	But as those countries which I have described do not appear...	5:20

Total time on CD 9: 54:16

Total time on CDs 1–9: 10:57:49

Jonathan Swift

(1667–1745)

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

*To shew men what they are, and to teach them what they ought to be! ...
The moral lesson is as fine as the intellectual exhibition is amusing.
It is an attempt to tear off the mask of imposture from the world;
and nothing but imposture has a right to complain of it.*

William Hazlitt, Lectures on the English Poets

Needless to say, men did complain, and not just those who failed to understand it. Some of the greatest names in English letters have felt the attitudes portrayed in *Gulliver's Travels* were evidence of amoral misanthropy or even madness; but perhaps they understood rather better the anger that seethes under this ostensibly charming fable.

Among the reasons for its continuing popularity is the brilliance of its core conceit. Jonathan Swift was a man of letters, a politically engaged pamphleteer, poet and satirist (when he wasn't doing his main work of being the Dean of St

Patrick's in Dublin), and he wanted to make a few sharp and pertinent points. To do this, he created the tiny world of Lilliput and the huge one of Brobdingnag. The peoples of these places being remarkably human in aspect, Swift could explore facets of European civilisation from two completely opposing but complementary perspectives. At the same time, he could let Gulliver pass comment on the strange new worlds he was entering; and the different peoples he met could offer opinions on the world Gulliver represented. This matter of scale, which so brilliantly illumines and

focuses the objects of concern, seems so simple; but its pleasing simplicity is that of complex genius. Once established, it allows Swift to develop his theme of the traveller visiting strange lands, and in the voyage to Laputa and the land of the Houyhnhnms, his satire develops into more surreal and then far darker territories.

Quite what he was satirising is still a matter of considerable contention. Specific Whig policies? The politics of royalty? Foreign policy? Intellectual trends of the time? Literary fashionistas? All of the above, probably, and a great deal more that requires detailed annotation from serious academics. But despite this, there are several reasons why it still forms a part of the central canon of English literature. One is that central and memorable idea of scale; another is the imaginative fancy that created such images as Gulliver in Lilliput tied down by innumerable little ropes; yet another is the truths of the broader satire, which lift the text out of its time and still bite today. It would probably depress Swift, even if it did not surprise him, that the injustices and inanities against which

he fought and wrote so passionately are still thriving.

There is a great deal known about Swift, almost all of it undercut by what we don't know about him. For example, he was born in Dublin in 1667, but we don't know who his father was. We know he was at one point taken to England by his nurse, but not whether this was with the mother's knowledge or approval or at her instigation. We know that as an adult at least two women were prepared to dedicate their lives to him (Esther 'Stella' Johnson and Hester 'Vanessa' Vanhomrigh; both nicknames given by Swift), but no one knows for certain whether he actually married Stella. He suffered from serious ill health throughout his life, but we don't know quite what it was – vertigo, perhaps, which in acute cases can be profoundly debilitating. We know he died in 1745, and that he had been silent for some years before that; but not what it was that killed him or whether the silence was literal or metaphorical. Various doctors over the centuries have guessed at the cause of his death, but those who claim to be certain haven't

troubled with the evidence, and those that tested what there is to test can't be sure. Indeed the volume of information, anecdote and spurious recollection rather swamps biography.

He was a Protestant in Ireland and graduated from Trinity College, Dublin. When the deposed Catholic James II attempted to take over the British throne by invading Ireland (the plot failed at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690), many Protestants fled to England, and Swift was among them. He took a post as secretary to Sir William Temple in Surrey, and it was there he met Stella, who was eight years old at this time. As well as helping her read and write, they became close friends over the following ten years. During that time, he became an ordained priest back in Dublin, and until 1714 his life was split between his clerical career in Ireland, which he initially hated, and his growing reputation and friendships among the literary and political elite (Pope, Addison, Steele, Gay, Congreve and Arbuthnot especially) in England. His work with Sir William had introduced him to the world of politics, and he had started to write

seriously, with considerable success and influence. He had great hopes that his pamphlets and publications would lead to a satisfactorily well-paid role in England, but the death of Queen Anne and the success of the Whigs meant he returned to Ireland, miserably, to take up his role as the Dean of St Patrick's.

His personal life remained obscure. He had met Vanessa in London while Stella was in Ireland; Vanessa even followed him back to Dublin. But the discomfort of that arrangement seems to have proved too much – had he in fact married Stella? – and in 1723 Vanessa died. By this time, the fury that had showed itself in his earlier work, writings that helped shape public opinion in England, was to find inspiration in the appalling treatment of Ireland by the British. Between 1725 and 1729, he wrote *The Drapier's Letters*, which gave him a reputation as an Irish patriot, *Gulliver's Travels*, which gave him international success (and was the only writing he ever received payment for), and *A Modest Proposal*, which cemented his reputation as a vicious satirist. However, 1728 saw Stella's death, and the beginning

of what seems a long and lonely decline.

He continued to publish during the 1730s, but much of the work he produced at that time is scatological, prurient and frankly rather distasteful. Needless to say, academics and critics are split over whether these are serious poems making a satirical point, crude pieces of filth indicative of a diseased mind, or simply attempts to be funny. Whatever they are, there are pre-echoes of these themes in *Gulliver's Travels* and elsewhere in his writing. It is tempting to draw broad conclusions about Swift's general attitude to the physical body and relate them to his views on the body politic; but it would do little more than add to the speculative miasma that floats over any attempt to generalise this complex creative mind.

Shortly after he made his will in 1742, Swift's affairs were placed in the hands of guardians, and whatever the nature of the darkness and silence that descended upon him, he died three years later. He was fairly wealthy, but had always given substantial sums to charity, and left money for the establishment of an asylum in Dublin. It seems impossible to know

him; but the 'savage indignation' that marked his writings was clearly aimed at the oppressor, the powerful, those who would impose their will on others. At the same time, he created delightfully comic absurdities to make his points. Hazlitt was right; and this combination of deep moral anger and brilliantly barbed invention makes him the standard-bearer for all satirists since.

Notes by Roy McMillan



Jasper Britton's theatre credits include *Macbeth* and *The Tempest* at Shakespeare's Globe, *Oedipus* and *Fram* at the National Theatre, *Richard III* at Regent's Park, *The Taming of the Shrew* at the Royal Shakespeare Company and *Bedroom Farce* at Aldwych Theatre. His film credits include *The New World* and *Morris: A Life With Bells On*.

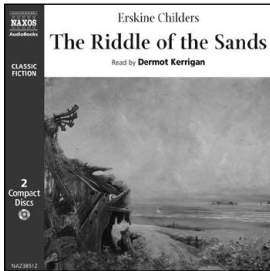
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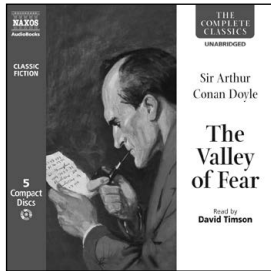
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Cover image: *Gulliver is transported by the Lilliputians*, courtesy of Mary Evans Picture Library

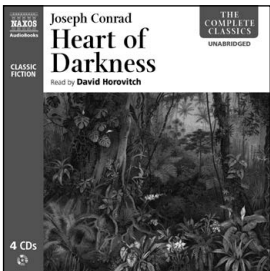
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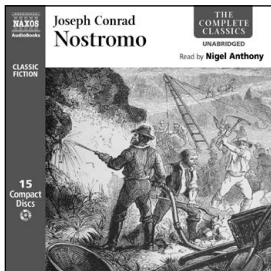
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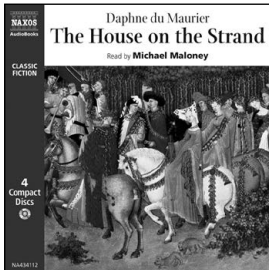


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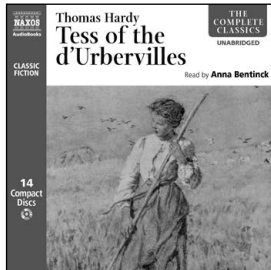
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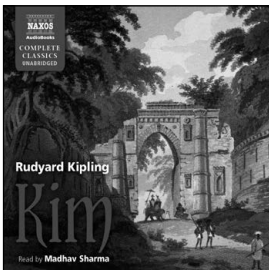
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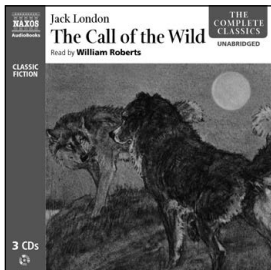
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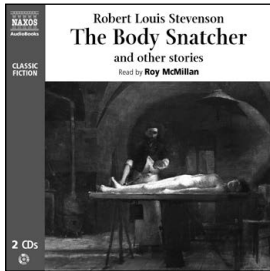


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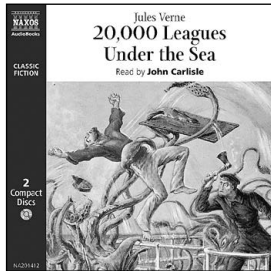
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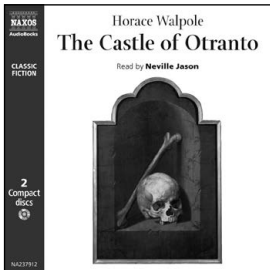
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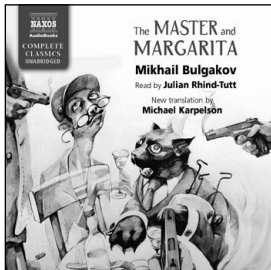
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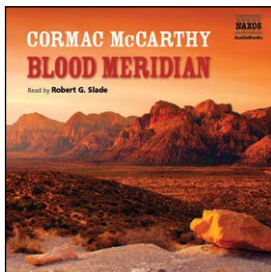
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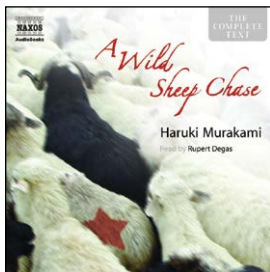
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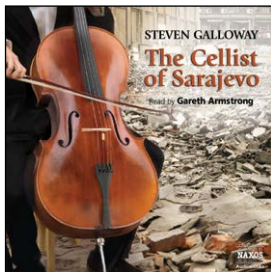
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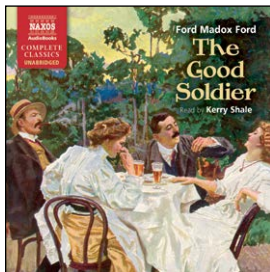
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