Gulliver, the protagonist in Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, a critiquing account of human nature set during the 18th century Age of Enlightenment, is emblematic of the typical English outlook. Swift criticizes the notions of political power and superiority in society that were prevalent in the imperial world. Such vices have the power to not only corrupt but also to direct humans away from true enlightenment. Objective descriptions of two countries that represent the flaws in humanity’s morale allow Gulliver to become aware of the imperfections embodied by all of mankind. The evident contrast between Gulliver’s society and those of the Lilliputians and the Brobdignags through the exaggerated portrayal of human vices forces consideration upon mankind to eradicate such traits from the community. Swift’s contempt of human nature is based on man’s false sense of pride over those considered socially below him on the Great Chain of Being and man’s inability to judge scrupulously. Swift situates a naïve Gulliver in the lands of two countries opposite to England with distorted and magnified elements of human society to make mankind conscious of shortcomings in their values and morals in order to guide human society away from corruptible vices and towards moral redemption.

Swift achieves his desire for mankind’s spiritual and moral enlightenment by inflating human weaknesses represented through the divergence of the Lilliputian and Brobdignag culture from human society in political and social aspects. Governance in a theoretical civilization
created by Swift like that of the Lilliputian’s, though structured differently from English society, still embody the conceptual imperfections abundant in human customs. Gulliver becomes aware of the discrepancies in the political elections and diplomacy of his homeland through perceptible disparity between Lilliputian politics and English customs and his struggles at drawing parallels between two societies forces reconsideration of human norms and customs. The errors in human political principles are represented in their altered and amplified form to attain Gulliver’s attention towards an aspect overlooked in human society: “They are not always of … liberal education. […] Five or six of those candidates petition to entertain his majesty and the court … and whoever jumps the highest without falling, succeeds in office” (Swift 47). The Lilliputian democracy is based on the ability of appealing the voters through stunts and physical attributes rather than a judgment of the politician’s fittingness for office and administration capabilities. The Lilliputians represent flaws that exist in English government but the strike contrast in execution of similar conceptual beliefs makes it hard for Gulliver to justify human actions. Swift is able to emphasize the true nature of political practices in Gulliver’s society by presenting the shortcomings in an altered system. Mankind becomes aware of previously neglected facets through this comparison. Just as the Lilliputian political system enhances the flaws in human society, the peninsula of the Brobdignags emphasizes the lack of just treatment in human civilization. The apparent pride that establishes physical and mental superiority over others is based on characteristics and status in society. The lack of fair treatment in the Brobdignag kingdom, one different to England only in terms of the inhabitants’ size, as a result of Gulliver’s smaller physical structure brings Gulliver to the realization of the sinful nature of human actions and brings the reader to a reassessment of human nature. Difference in physical traits brings about false pride and prejudiced judgments but Gulliver is initially unable to grasp the
motivations behind the Brobdignag evaluation of him: “How contemptible a thing is human
grandeur, which could be mimicked by such diminutive insects as I” (121). In a culture where
Gulliver is physically separated by size, he finds himself reduced to the status of animals and
subjected to biased treatment. The Brodignag kingdom differs from English society only in
physical aspects but the flaws in mentality continue to prevail. The kingdom represents the
separation based on physical size that results in a higher regard of self over others. Similar
preconceptions occur in human society but separation results in the form of race, sex, color and
language. Swift exposes mankind to a vice prevalent in human society through establishing a
contrast based on physical difference. The exaggerated and contrasting form of governance and
social treatment between the foreign lands and the English society reveals the disregarded flaws
in human actions. The distortion and magnification of flaws in human society allows mankind to
become closer to redemption from sins through self enlightenment.