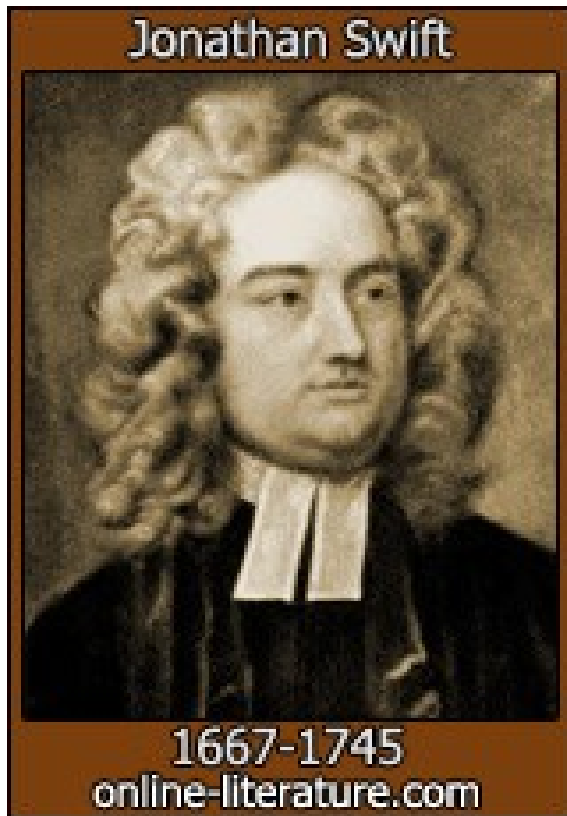


Jonathan Swift



Biography

Jonathan Swift was born in Dublin. His father was Irish born and his mother was born in England. Swift arrived seven months after his father's untimely death. Most of the facts of Swift's early life are obscure, confused and sometimes contradictory. It is widely believed that his mother returned to England when Jonathan was still very young, then leaving him to be raised by his father's family.



Jonathan Swift at Trinity, Dublin

In 1682 he attended Dublin University. Swift was studying for his Master's degree when political troubles in Ireland surrounding the **Glorious Revolution** forced him to leave for England in 1688. Swift left Temple in 1690 for Ireland because of his health, but returned to Moor Park the following year. The illness, fits of vertigo or giddiness would continue to plague Swift throughout his life.

Swift appears to have been miserable in his new position, being isolated in a small, remote community far from the centres of power and influence. However, twenty miles (32 km) from Dublin, Swift ministered to a congregation of about fifteen people, and had abundant leisure for cultivating his garden, planting willows, and rebuilding the vicarage.

Swift became increasingly active politically after 1707.



Bust in St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Once in Ireland, however, Swift began to turn his pamphleteering skills in support of Irish causes, producing some of his most memorable works: *Proposal for Universal Use of Irish Manufacture* (1720), *Drapier's Letters* (1724), and *A Modest Proposal* (1729), earning him the status of an Irish patriot.

Also during these years, he began writing his masterpiece, *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World, in Four Parts, by Lemuel Gulliver, first a surgeon, and then a captain of several ships*, better known as *Gulliver's Travels*. Much of the material reflects his political experiences of the preceding decade.

Death

became a frequent feature in Swift's life. from this point. In 1731 he wrote *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift*, his own obituary published in 1739. In 1732, his good friend and collaborator John Gay died. In 1735, John Arbuthnot, another friend from his days in London, died. In 1738 Swift began to show signs of illness and in 1742 he appears to have suffered a stroke, losing the ability to speak and realizing his worst fears of becoming mentally disabled. ("I shall be like that tree," he once said, "I shall die at the top.") In order to protect him from unscrupulous hangers on, who had begun to prey on the great man, his closest companions had him declared of "unsound mind and memory." However, it was long believed by many that Swift was really insane at this point

Epitaph



Epitaph in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin near his burial site.

Jonathan Swift wrote his own epitaph in Latin,
which William Butler Yeats translated as:

Swift has sailed into his rest.
Savage indignation there
cannot lacerate his breast.
Imitate him if you dare,
world-besotted traveller.
He served human liberty.