

# An Early Account of Brain Transplantation

The accounts with which the surgeon Lemuel Gulliver returned from his various travels in the late 17th and early 18th century were often treated with considerable scepticism if not frank incredulity and ridicule. Nonetheless, as someone with some medical training, we should perhaps look carefully at his reports of medical practice in other lands. Amongst these, there appears to be an early account of brain transplantation surgery, originating from the Academy at Lagado on the island of Balnibarbi:

When Parties in a State are violent, [the Ingenious Doctor] offered a wonderful Contrivance to reconcile them. The Method is this. You take an Hundred Leaders of each Party, you dispose them into Couples of such whose Heads are nearest of a size; then let two nice Operators saw off the *Occiput* of each Couple at the same time, in such a manner that the Brain may be equally divided. Let the Occiputs thus cut off be interchanged, applying each to the head of his opposite Party-man. It seems indeed to be a Work that requireth some exactness, but the Professor assured us, that if it were dextrously performed, the Cure would be infallible. For he argued thus; that the two half Brains being left to debate the Matter between themselves within the space of one Skull, would soon come to a good Understanding, and produce that Moderation as well as Regularity of thinking, so much to be wished for in the Heads of those, who imagine they come into the World only to watch and govern its Motion.



Mr Lemuel Gulliver, from 'Gulliver's Travels' as illustrated by Luis Quintanilla. www.lqart.org

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**References**

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