

JONATHAN SWIFT, THE REFORMATION OF GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY

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Abstract: This article raises the topic about reformation of English government and society in the works of Jonathan Swift called "The adventures of Gulliver". Through Gulliver's encounters with different civilizations, the story explores individuality, cultural relativism, and what it means to be self-aware. In addition, it involved some shortcomings of society which was illustrated by satire.

Key words: Jonathan Swift, adventures of Gulliver, satire, society, government, enlightenment, travel, Lilliputians and question of truth.

Аннотация: В данной статье поднимается тема реформирования английского государства и общества в творчестве Джонатана Свифта «Приключения Гулливера». Через встречи Гулливера с различными цивилизациями история исследует индивидуальность, культурный релятивизм и то, что значит осознавать себя. Кроме того, речь шла о некоторых недостатках общества, что иллюстрировалось сатирой.

Ключевые слова: Джонатан Свифт, приключения Гулливера, сатира, общество, правительство, просвещение, путешествия, лилипуты и вопрос истины.

Izoh: Ushbu maqola Jonatan Sviftning "Gulliverning sarguzashtlari" nomli asarlarida ingliz hukumati va jamiyatini isloh qilish mavzusini ko'taradi. Gulliverning turli tsivilizatsiyalar bilan uchrashishi orqali hikoya individuallik, madaniy relativizm va o'z-o'zini anglash nimani anglatishini o'rganadi. Bundan tashqari, u satira bilan tasvirlangan jamiyatdagi ba'zi kamchiliklarni o'z ichiga oladi.

Kalit so'zlar: Jonatan Svift, Gulliverning sarguzashtlari, satira, jamiyat, hukumat, ma'rifat, sayohat, Liliputlar va haqiqat savoli.

Introduction:

Jonathan Swift was an Anglo-Irish satirist, author, essayist, political pamphleteer, is remembered for works such as A Tale of a Tub (1704), An Argument Against Abolishing Christianity (1712), Gulliver's Travels (1726), and A Modest Proposal (1729). His deadpan, ironic writing style, particularly in A Modest Proposal,

has led to such satire being subsequently termed "Swiftian". Several authors have paid attention to Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels" by either writing about it, referencing it in their own works, or analyzing its themes and meanings. For example, George Orwell, the author of "1984" and "Animal Farm," had high praise for Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels." Orwell considered the novel to be a masterpiece of satire and social commentary.¹

A very popular satire as well as one of the favorite children's books, Gulliver's Travels, is widely taught in schools and colleges as a syllabus book across the globe. "The Adventures of Gulliver" was first published in 1726 and hit the headlines at that time for its biting satire and hidden attacks on the politicians, religious clergy, and a plethora of travelogues appearing at that time. An also Jorge Luis Borges, the renowned Argentine writer and critic, had a deep appreciation for Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels." Borges praised the novel for its imaginative and satirical portrayal of human nature and society².

The book has achieved the status of the classics of the English language, has impacted the world, specifically the children. The story starts with the self-revelatory letter of Lemuel Gulliver, an English surgeon, who takes to navigate seas to lift his spirits after a business failure. However, the story goes in a linear fashion in that he goes from one place to another and narrates important happenings in an impassioned tone.

The main idea behind "Gulliver's Travels" is to persuade the British to reform their society.

Using his reliable narrator, Gulliver, Swift presents through his own eyes a series of comically brutal and absurd fictional cultures. It is not surprising that the beliefs and practices of these societies are similar, if exaggerated, to the general beliefs and practices in Britain. Swift's point is to satirize the brutality and irrationality of Britain at the time. For example, the Lilliputians Gulliver meets are small and beautiful, but small and cruel, while the Brobdingnags are huge and ugly to Gulliver, but kind and humane. Here, Swift satirizes the tendency to attribute positive moral qualities to people who are beautiful on the outside and condemns the ugly rather than seeing their hearts. One of the key themes in "Gulliver's Travels" is the corruption and incompetence of government officials. Swift uses the fictional lands that Gulliver visits to highlight the flaws and absurdities of government systems, showing how those in power often prioritize their own interests over the well-being of their citizens. Swift also criticizes societal norms and practices, such as the treatment of women, class inequality, and religious intolerance. Through his sharp wit and keen observations, he calls attention to the injustices and hypocrisies present in society at the time. Overall,

¹ An examination of "Gulliver's Travels" critical essay by George Orwell (1946).

² Jorge Luis Borges "The Congress" (1971).

Swift's works advocate for reform in both government and society, urging readers to question authority and strive for a more just and equitable world. His powerful satires continue to be relevant today as they shed light on timeless issues that still plague modern societies. Additionally, J.R.R. Tolkien, the author of "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, praised Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels" for its satirical wit and imaginative storytelling. He admired Swift's skill in creating a fantastical world that was both entertaining and thought-provoking.³

Kurt Vonnegut, on the other hand, criticized "Gulliver's Travels" for its dark and cynical view of humanity.⁴ Vonnegut felt that Swift's portrayal of human nature as corrupt and depraved was overly pessimistic and lacked empathy for the human condition.

Overall, both Tolkien and Vonnegut recognized the literary importance of "Gulliver's Travels" but had differing opinions on its themes and messages.

In "Gulliver's Travels" by Jonathan Swift, there are several examples of the reformation of government that Gulliver encounters during his travels to different lands. Some examples include:

1. In Lilliput, Gulliver witnesses the political intrigue and corruption within the government, as well as the absurdity of their laws and customs. This leads him to reflect on the flaws of his own society.

2. In Brobdingnag, Gulliver encounters a utopian society where the government is based on reason and benevolence. The king rules with wisdom and compassion, and there is no room for corruption or injustice.

3. In Laputa, Gulliver encounters a society governed by intellectuals who are detached from reality and have no concern for the well-being of their subjects. The government's focus on abstract knowledge leads to neglect of practical matters.

4. In Houyhnhnmland, Gulliver encounters a society governed by rational horses (Yahoos) who value reason and virtue above all else. The government is based on strict moral principles and adherence to natural law.

These examples in "Gulliver's Travels" serve as a critique of contemporary European governments and societies, highlighting their flaws and offering alternative models for reform.

In conclusion, "Gulliver's Travels" by Jonathan Swift is a satirical masterpiece that critiques various aspects of society and human nature through the lens of fantastical voyages. Through the character of Lemuel Gulliver, Swift explores themes such as political corruption, hypocrisy, and the folly of humanity. The novel remains relevant today for its sharp wit, clever satire, and thought-provoking commentary on human behavior. Overall, "Gulliver's Travels" is a timeless classic that continues to

³ J.R.R.Tolkein "The Lord of the Ring" (1955).

⁴Thomas F. Marvin's 2002 book Kurt Vonnegut: A Critical Companion

captivate readers with its insight and humor. In addition, every bad vice destroys spirituality. Through this work, the writer encourages people to avoid such bad situations and fight with them. If the government changes the reforms for the better ways, it will benefit the state and every citizen. In particular, enlightened people will increase and they bring great benefits to society.

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