

Swift's Use of Satire in *Gulliver's Travels*



Romana Rouf Chowdhury

Student ID : 10203020

Department of English and Humanities

April 2014

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A Thesis

Submitted to

The Department of English and Humanities

of

BRACUniversity

by

Romana Rouf Chowdhury

Student ID : 10203020

In Partial fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Bachelor of Arts in English

April 2014

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to each member of the faculty of the Department of English and Humanities, BRAC University. I would like to give special thanks to Professor FirdousAzim for being the head of the committee and for giving me the support I needed at the early stages of the thesis and especially for the support at the end. I would also like to give special thanks to Ms. Mushira Habib for taking out time for me and to discuss the thesis as it was developing. I also thank J & J Book Shop for their assistance in printing the thesis for the committee members and for delivering copies to them. I would also like to thank my entire family for their unconditional support and encouragement to get my thesis done.

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Abstract

Most works of literature contain the writers' ideas; often including their social criticism. One of the most prominent forms used to bring reform or change in the society or in individuals is that of satire. Satire can be considered as an essential device to bring out the author's thought. This thesis concerns with the study of satire in Jonathan Swift's novel *Gulliver's Travels*. Through *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift attempted to satirize the proud eighteenth century population, who were too proud of the rapid scientific progress. Through my thesis, I am trying to show how Swift uses Gulliver to satirize the society in the eighteenth century England and beyond. In showing Swift's satire of the social condition, the discussion of Lemuel Gulliver's voyages to four different lands becomes symbolic and significant. By doing this study, I want to show the way Swift uses Gulliver in satirizing the society and the objects of his satire. Gulliver's first voyage is to Lilliput, the land of little people, in which Swift satirizes the littleness of human beings; the second to Brobdingnag, the land of giants, is the satire on the meanness of humanity; the third, to the flying island of Laputa, is a satire on scientists and philosophers; and the final journey to the strangest land of all, that of the Houyhnhnms, is the satire on the denunciation of human species. Thus these four voyages of Gulliver represent Swift's criticisms of and concerns about his own time and the future of humanity.

Introduction

Jonathan Swift, one of the greatest satirist that the world ever saw, produced such literature where “every line and every detail is vivid by a humor which consists in presenting the most improbable extravagance with an imperturbable gravity and procures belief for them”; comments Émile Legouis, the author of *A History of English Literature*. Swift was a man of piercing intellect and this intellect showed the chaos, confusion and corruption of the eighteenth century England. He saw the folly and the iniquities behind the façade of reason and common sense. Swift’s sharp intellect was able to perceive evil in all its forms and areas of existence and he could not tolerate the absence of reason in any aspect of human life. Displeased with the ways of the world, Swift felt responsible to try to reform it. Religious corruption was highly and strongly attacked along with the useless application of scientific knowledge in his works. Swift felt that man could never achieve perfection. He often assumed a ‘mask’, hiding behind which, he was free to satirize whomever and whatever he aimed at. This wonderful craft used for constructive criticism of the world is perhaps what fascinated me and I decided to write my thesis on Jonathan Swift; and no other work of his could be chosen before his masterpiece, *Gulliver’s Travels*, which is the summation of all his talent and discontentment.

Swift mastered the genre of satire, a technique used to expose and criticize foolishness and corruption of an individual or a society through the use of humor, irony, exaggeration or ridicule. A mixture of dramatic irony and parody gave new heights to Swift’s genius in writing satires. Satires intend to correct individuals, countries or even the world by criticizing their follies and foibles and are usually meant to be funny. Its greater purpose is often constructive social criticism, using wit as a weapon and as a tool to draw attention to both particular and wider issues in the society.

There are three main types of satire: Horatian, Juvenalian, and Menippean. Horatian satire gently mocks, Juvenalian aims to destroy and to provoke; and Menippean spreads its internal attacks at a wide number of targets. As Horatian satire is the gentlest of all the types of satire, it is done from an affectionate point of view. The emphasis is put on humor, where the subject of fun can be social vices; through which, an individual's follies are teased. A key element of Horatian satire is that the audience is also laughing at themselves as well as at the subject of mockery. One of the most popular Horatian satires, the Part I of *Gulliver's Travels*, "A Voyage to Lilliput," was even turned into a children's book due to its readability and humour appreciable by all age groups.

Juvenalian satire, in contrary, is the harshest type of satire, and it does not hold back in its hurtful lacerations of its targets. It targets social vices, individuals, companies, and organizations. The purpose of such invectives is to provoke an angry reaction from the audience aimed at the subject. As a result of this intention, humor is put into the background and biting social criticism and polarized opinion come to the forefront. The first example of a Juvenalian satire that comes to the mind of an English reader is perhaps Swift's "A Modest Proposal," attacking the English rule in Ireland. The grotesque and dark imageries used in this essay horrify its readers and forces them to consider Ireland's desperate condition during the colonial days.

Menippean satire resembles Juvenalian ideas on satire; however, it lacks the focus of a primary target. Rather than a single target, it takes a scattergun approach that aims poisonous prongs at multiple targets. It does not follow a sustaining narrative and being more rhapsodic, Menippean satire is also more psychological. *Gulliver's Travels*, as a whole, qualifies as a Menippean satire as it satirized various aspects of the society all at once, having no fixed target. The persona of Gulliver exposed all of Swift's intentions and concerns the best, in the four parts of *Gulliver's Travels*. Swift, through Gulliver, referred to the

Lilliputians as insignificant corrupt politicians, to Brobdingnagians as epitome of moral giants, lived in the land of utopia where human pride was insignificant, to Laputians as the mad scientists and lastly, Houyhnhnms were animals and they represented 'the perfection of nature'. Gulliver considered them as his masters. Man was the Yahoo, who possessed an ugly body and mind.

In my thesis, I intend to analyze the multi-faceted satiristic approach of Swift in *Gulliver's Travels* as a commentary on the eighteenth century England and beyond. Thus I want to explore the appropriateness of the genre in addressing these issues and show how a reading of this novel can give its readers a comprehensive critical analysis of Swift's time and context. Gulliver was continuously observing the matters of the Court of Lilliput, which was the main part of the political satire. He compared the political situation of England with the country of Lilliput perhaps. Voyage to Brobdingnag attacked human 'pride' and compared the truly moral man to the representative man. Swift was keen to make such comparisons and reversed the situation in the Lilliputians where Gulliver was a Lilliputian in Brobdingnag. At the Grand Academy of Lagado, great resources and manpower were employed on researching completely ridiculous schemes such as extracting sunbeams from cucumbers, softening marble for use in pillows, and he was uncovering political conspiracies by examining the excrement of suspicious persons. In the land of the *Houyhnhnms*, there were savage human-like creatures called *Yahoos* for which Gulliver conceived a violent hatred, and a race of horses, *Houyhnhnms*, meaning 'the perfection of nature'. Gulliver became a member of a horse's household and adopted their lifestyle and rejected the *Yahoos*. After his return to England from his fourth voyage, Gulliver spent much of his time in his stable conversing with the horses. He was so disappointed after all his adventures into different lands and among different people that he rejected the whole of mankind and chose horses as company.

The first part began in the style of books of the time, with a short introduction of Lemuel Gulliver, who gave a brief history of his life before his voyages. He enjoyed travelling and adventures. Gulliver was washed ashore, during his first voyage, after a shipwreck and found himself a prisoner of a race of tiny people, less than 6 inches tall, who were the inhabitants of the island country of Lilliput. His good behavior got him a residence in Lilliput and he became a much loved member, especially in the court. He was also given the permission to roam around the city on a condition that he must not harm their subjects. Gulliver assisted the Lilliputians to suppress their neighbours, the Blefuscudians, by stealing their fleet. But, he refused to conquer the whole of Blefuscu for Lilliput, thus displeasing the King and the court. Gulliver was charged for urinating in the palace, though he was putting out a fire and saving countless lives. He was convicted and sentenced to be blinded. With the assistance of a kind friend, he escaped to Blefuscu. He retrieved an abandoned boat and sailed out. He was back in England.

In Part II, the adventure was blown off by storms and Gulliver was forced to sail for land in search of fresh water. Gulliver was deserted by his companions and was found by a farmer, who was 72 feet (22 m) tall; the scale of Brobdingnag was about 12:1. The farmer brought Gulliver to his home and his daughter took care of Gulliver. The farmer exhibited him for money. As Gulliver fell sick, and the farmer sold him to the queen of Brobdingnag. The farmer's daughter was brought to the palace to take care of Gulliver. Since Gulliver was too small to use their huge chairs, beds, knives and forks, the queen ordered for a small house 'travelling box' to be built for him, so that he can be carried around in it. Between small adventures being carried to the roof by a monkey, the dwarf, and the bird, he discusses the state of Europe with the King. The King was unhappy with Gulliver's accounts of Europe, especially upon learning of the use of guns and cannons. On a trip to the seaside, his traveling

box was seized by a giant eagle which dropped Gulliver and his box into the sea, where he was picked up by some sailors, after which he returned to England.

In Part III, Gulliver's ship was attacked by pirates near India. He was rescued by the flying island of Laputa, a kingdom devoted to the arts of music and mathematics, but was unable to use them for practical world. Laputa had a custom of throwing rocks down at rebellious cities on the ground conceived as a method of rivalry. Gulliver toured Laputa as the guest of a low-ranking courtier and saw how ruin was brought about by the blind pursuit of science without practical result. This was a satire on bureaucracy and on the Royal Society and its experiments. At the Grand Academy of Lagado, great resources and manpower were employed to research on outrageous and ridiculous schemes, which mock the manipulation of power and resource in the name of research. Gulliver was taken to Balnibarbi and then taken to Japan. Gulliver took a short side-trip to the island of Glubbdubdrib, where he visited a magician's dwelling and discussed history with the ghosts of historical figures, the most obvious restatement of the "ancients versus moderns" theme in the book. In Luggnagg, he encountered the *struldbrugs*, who were immortal. They did not have the gift of eternal youth, but suffer the infirmities of old age and are considered legally dead at the age of eighty. After reaching Japan, Gulliver met the Emperor. Gulliver returned home, determined to stay there for the rest of his days.

In Part IV, Gulliver returned to the sea as the captain of a merchantman, where his crew was working against him. He was abandoned in a landing boat, where he came across a race of hideous, deformed and savage human-like creatures called *Yahoos*, for which he conceived a violent hatred. Shortly afterwards he met a race of horses, who call themselves Houyhnhnms, which in their language meant 'the perfection of nature'. Gulliver became a member of a horse's household and adopted their lifestyle and rejected the Yahoos. An Assembly of the Houyhnhnms commanded that Gulliver, a Yahoo with some semblance of

reason, was a danger to their civilization, and expelled him. He was rescued by Captain Pedro de Mendez, a Yahoo, who was a wise, courteous and generous person. He returned to his home in England, but he was unable to reconcile himself to be living among Yahoos and so he remained in his house. He largely avoided his family and his wife, and spent several hours a day speaking with the horses in his stables; and in effect, became insane.

In my thesis, I look at each of these parts of *Gulliver's Travels* to analyze every bit of satire and mockery present in them. I show how this book is the epitome of Swift's social and political criticism and reveals most of Swift's despises against and concerns about humanity in general.

Chapter 1: A Voyage to Lilliput

The readers were lured by the traditional opening of *Gulliver's Travels* of Lilliput into accepting the hero and his evaluation of his early career at face value; Gulliver seemed undistinguished, but conscientious readers were quite willing to believe what he told them. Swift was letting us almost imagine Gulliver jotting his doings in the form of a diary, kept alive all the freshness and astonishment of his response at each encounters, just as it was practiced in any other travelogues and adventure stories of that time. According to Robert P. Fitzgerald¹, "Ironically but just as but just as assertively, Swift is telling what he took to be the most important kind of truth, moral truth about human nature and human history, for which the fantasy provides a vehicle."

The Lilliputians were courageous and ingenious little people. They were undisturbed by the horror that so strangely came upon them. Swift made them admirable people, who prudently controlled and subjected a being many times their size, and yet they showed kindness and consideration in feeding and housing Gulliver. Swift, through Gulliver, gave exactness to the details of his capture by the Lilliputians. Gulliver gave figures and facts, dimensions and proportions and translated these into human terms. Swift made vivid 'pictures' with fantastic scenes as a sincere and instructive story teller.

A comparison with his undeniable friendliness and good-natured leniency with some alarming qualities were discovered in the Lilliputians. Apparently they were capable of vast cruelty in dealing with prisoners, and of immense pride far out of proportion to their capabilities. With the hope of winning his liberty, Gulliver took pains to cultivate the trust and favor of the Lilliputians, such as dancing in hands and playing hide and seek in his hair.

¹ Robert P. Fitzgerald, The Structure of '*Gulliver's Travels*', Studies in Philology, Vol. 71, No. 2(Apr., 1974), pp. 247-263), University of North Carolina Press.

The Emperor commanded Gulliver to stand like a Colossus with his legs wide apart for the whole army to pass under him in review, and Gulliver confessed that his breeches were in “so ill a condition, that they afforded some opportunities for laughter and admiration (p. 27).” This was Swift’s way of showing how the Lilliputians were playing their nasty games on Gulliver like they laughed about the size of his private parts. Gulliver was still full of innocent goodwill towards his captors, attempted to entertain and please them even at the price of his own dignity. Unwilling to criticize their odd customs, he enjoyed and admired their proficiency at court tricks and military discipline, while the officers drew up conditions for Gulliver’s freedom. The Lilliputians were taking advantage of Gulliver’s innocence and naiveté. He continued to obey petty commands, whereas he could have crushed a few hundred of the prideful Lilliputians under his heel. This was Swift’s irony: the Lilliputians were tiny people with immense pride; while Gulliver was a giant, belittled and innocent. Gulliver humbly submitted to innumerable indignities, while patiently commending the Lilliputians’ skill in the mathematic calculations they had devised to reckon his daily allotment of food. Yet, some other nasty traits of the Lilliputians were being noticed, like pettiness, greed and favoritism. Swift, here, was satirizing what he felt were Whig’s corruption in England at that time.

Gulliver’s evident delight in his visit to Mildendo showed other skills and proficiencies of the Lilliputians. Hard upon these facts, however, Swift’s amusing discussion of the rival parties, Tramecksan and Slamecksan, competing for power in the government and the dispute between the Big and Little Endians. It was interesting to learn from history that Swift was specifically mocking the controversy between Tories² and Whigs in contemporary politics. Swift was ridiculing the political conflict by making the Lilliputian conflict revolved over the differences in the height of heels. Reldresal, the Secretary of Private Affairs, showed

² The Tories were members of two political parties which existed, sequentially, in the ‘United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland’ from the 17th to the early 19th centuries.

Gulliver that volumes had been written on the controversy and over eleven thousand men had died rather than changing their habits of egg-breaking. The Lilliputians had divisions in religion on the basis of a controversy on a doctrine of their prophet, which stated “that all True Believers shall break their eggs at the convenient end (p. 35).” With the Big and Little Endien dispute, Swift took a crack at religious dissension, whittling it down relentlessly to a question of which end of an egg should be broken before it is eaten. Since, Swift had plenty of religious rivalry to rant over, the struggles were rampant between Protestants and Catholics in England. The history of Swift’s time showed suspicion and prejudice between religious factions resulted in volumes of passionate words, countless exiles and many deaths. It was made laughable by Swift when he applied them to the rebellious and stubborn Big and Little Endians, who preferred to die rather than change their egg breaking habits.

There were continuous antagonisms between England and France; particularly the War of the Spanish Succession was doubtlessly intended in the Blefusudian invasion story. This allowed Swift to indulge in the wild fights of satiric fancy. During the Blefusudian invasion, Gulliver managed to cut the anchor cables and pulled fifty ships after him, brought them back to Lilliput, where he was received by the Emperor and created a “nardac (p.38),” the highest title of honor, on the spot. The Emperor then ordered Gulliver to seize the rest of the Blefusudian fleets and help the Emperor to make himself the “Sole Monarch of the Whole World (p.38)” and Gulliver did not agree to his proposal. So, the Emperor angrily and secretly plotted against Gulliver. Swift was mocking the sense of pride in the tiny Emperor through this incident.

When the fire broke out in the Royal apartments, Gulliver urinated on the fire, which helped to extinguish it. The theme of ingratitude was strengthened by this incident. Although Gulliver performed an immeasurable service in saving the apartments form destruction, the

Emperor remained ungratefully nasty. Swift took this occasion to prove how unpredictable and selfish these monarchs were.

Lilliputians were peculiar in the way they wrote the scripts, slanting from one corner of the paper to the other as ladies did in England and they buried their dead upside down. Swift was mocking the so-called polished English women and the English beliefs. People were chosen for employment on the basis of their character rather than their abilities, and “the Disbelief in a Divine Providence render a man Incapable of holding any public station (p.46).” Swift interestingly pointed out how the ministers got their political positions through rope dancing and leaping over sticks. These were corruptions in the original institutions brought about by the party leaders. Lilliput was revealed to have degenerated from an almost Utopian state to its present. Swift was very clearly indicating towards the reprehensibility of a country that allowed itself to abandon its brave accomplishments and noble traditions to strife and dispute. Party and faction quarreled and bickered. Swift undoubtedly reflected England while he was talking about the civil conflicts in Lilliput. Swift was lamenting the corruption in the English institutions of politics, religion and society in general. Frank Brady³, in his essay, “Vexations and Diversions: Three Problems in *Gulliver’s Travels*”, said that while describing the ‘ideal’ laws of Lilliput, Gulliver said he was referring to “the original institutions, and not the most scandalous corruptions into which these people are fallen by the degenerate nature of man (p.60).”

Gulliver recounted the Lilliputian customs, where Swift inserted his own opinions of wifely behavior: “a wife should be always a reasonable and agreeable companion, because she cannot always be young (p.48),” education – male children were to be provided with learned professors while girls of quality were to be taught to despise “all personal ornaments

³ Frank Brady, Vexations and Diversions: Three Problems in *Gulliver’s Travels*, *Modern Philology*, Vol.75, No. 4, (May, 1978), pp. 346-367, The University of Chicago Press.

beyond decency and cleanliness (p.48)” and child-rearing. He pointed out all too well the lack of moderation and common sense in his contemporary society and he took this occasion to chide Walpole in the amusing incident on Flimnap’s wife: the overweening pride that little fellow had to suspect an affair between a six-inch woman and a giant.

Most importantly, no one had questioned the identification of Flimnap and Walpole, the references to the Big-Endians and Little-Endians, the high-heels and the low-heels according to J. A. Downie.⁴ Flimnap and Bolgolam were two of the more repulsive individuals that darted out. Swift used them to show the extent of repugnant that anyone could be. Dishonesty, intrigue and character defamation made the way of the world in Lilliput. Phillip Harth, in “The Problems of Political Allegory in *Gulliver’s Travels*”⁵, claimed that the readers of that era definitely saw allusions in Swift’s description of Lilliput, which they applied to contemporary England, associating Flimnap with Walpole, the enmity between Lilliput and Blefuscu with their own wars with France, the low heels and the high heels with the Whigs and the Tories; but they could not have imagined that the account of Gulliver’s adventures in the land of the pygmies was intended as a consistent allegory relating the political history of England in the early eighteenth century. This was true even of contemporary reactions to Swift’s satire. Bertrand A. Goldgar⁶, who had recently conducted a study based on the “comments in political journals, ‘keys’ newspapers, and pamphlets in the first five years of the publication of the book,” concluded that, much was made of individual allusions in the first voyage, “none of these tracts . . . provided a reading of the Travels as a consistent political allegory”. As late as in 1882, Sir Henry Craik could declare that in the voyage to Lilliput, Swift “cannot refrain altogether from references to contemporary affairs:

⁴ J. A. Downie, Political Characterization in ‘Gulliver’s Travels’, Yearbook of English Studies, Vol. 7 (1977), pp 108-120.

⁵ Phillip Harth, The Problems of Political Allegory in Gulliver’s Travels, Modern Philology, Vol.73, No. 4, Part 2 A Supplement to Honor Arthur Friedman (May, 1976), pp. S40-S47, The University of Chicago Press.

⁶ Henry Knight Miller, Eric Rothstein, and G. S. Rousseau “*Gulliver’s Travels* and the Opposition to Walpole,” in The Augustan Milieu Presented to Louis A. Landa, ed. [Oxford, 1970].

but his side strokes at Walpole, at the French wars, at the divisions of party and of sect, are occasional only, and not systematic.”⁷ Swift remarked “whatever Difference may be found in their several Conjectures, they will be all, without the least Distortion, manifestly deducible from the Text.”⁸ He continued by saying Swift’s cautious behavior in 1726 indicated towards some concern on his part with the political content of his book and Swift’s words and actions did indeed suggest that his ‘Travels’ contained some political reflections so uncommonly bold that a printer might hesitate to print them. In ‘Political Characterizations in ‘Gulliver’s Travels,’ J. A. Downie⁹, commented on the ridicule of Whig ministers and the defense of a former administration, (cleared of all charges as long before as 1717) which modern historians had discovered in the voyage to Lilliput, Swift was sufficiently courageous and skillful to describe the court of King George II in a genuine allegory more scathing than anything yet discovered in the voyage to Lilliput. The Lilliputian treasurer, Walpole, and the ancient enmity between Lilliput and its neighbor Blefuscu, reminded us of England’s repeated wars with France.

Swift’s satire gradually became even more direct. The Lilliputians felt that blinding and starvation were a more humane punishment for Gulliver than outright death. Gulliver did not agree with this, though he could not see the implications of the Lilliputians, who were themselves virtually blind to logic, reason, justice and gratitude. Gulliver’s friend told him that the Treasurer and the Admiral had insisted that he would be put to death by burning him in his house, but that Reldresal, the Secretary, had suggested the more lenient course of blinding him in both eyes and then gradually starving him to death. The later method would reduce the chance of infection from the remains of Gulliver’s dead body, “leaving the

⁷ Case “corrects” Firth on a number of points. Besides adding some refinements of his own to the Firth-Case interpretation, Irvin Ehrenpreis offers several ‘corrections’ in ‘The Origins of Gulliver’s Travels.’ PMLA 72(1957): 880-99.

⁸ Swift, A Tale of a Tub, in Prose Works, 1:118.

⁹ J. A. Downie Political Characterizations in ‘Gulliver’s Travels,’ The Year Book of English Studies, Vol. 7 (1977). pp.108-120, Modern Humanities Research Association.

skeleton as a monument of admiration and posterity (p.58).” Swift ironically compared Lilliputians’ vanity with the giant Gulliver’s humility; the pride of the Lilliputians should be commensurate with their size. Christ-like, Gulliver remained good for evil, merely removing himself from the threatening situation by setting out for Blefuscu. Swift’s moral was plain: human beings were blind to their limitations, as well; and to a giant overseer, human vanity would seem as ridiculous and absurd as the Lilliputians’ pretensions seemed to human eyes.

Gulliver became thoroughly wary of princes, ministers and all political institutions. He realized that governments were corrupt by party antagonisms, the rivalries of factions, and wicked intriguing. Human behavior was often motivated by jealousy, vanity, lust and ingratitude. The innocent and friendly Gulliver could not retain his curiosity and restless nature; neither his affectionate love, nor trust in his fellow creatures.

Swift filled the end of his first adventure with fascinating anecdotes of the returning traveler: the enchanted visions of Gulliver’s miniature cattle grazing in the lush deep of the English blowing green, and he was lulled momentarily into a false assumption that all was well with the human race. This was an important part of Swift’s trick and it was also a credit of skill for the anticipatory imagination for his next voyage.

Chapter 2: A Voyage to Brobdingnag

The *Adventure* sailed for Surat in June of 1702 and the violent monsoon drove the ship off course to an unknown land. Gulliver wandered apart from the others of the ship where he was captured by a huge giant farmer. Gulliver was now a “Lilliputian” in a land of giants. Swift had reversed the previous scenario now of the earlier view of human nature. Gulliver’s experiences in Lilliput had made humans identify themselves with Gulliver; humans were disappointed on Gulliver’s meeting with the Brobdingnagians. Gulliver had a hard time convincing his giant captors that he was not a nasty, vicious little beast. The same friendly, benevolent Gulliver to the Lilliputians was now frightened of the giant farmer’s wife. When the farmer introduced Gulliver to the farmer’s wife, she started and shrieked “as women in England do that the sight of a toad or a spider (p.74).” Swift’s intention was to transfer all the pity and sympathy towards Gulliver as he struggled to preserve his dignity and also his life, among his colossal hosts, to human condition. Gulliver was overwhelmed and disgusted by the coarseness and color of the nurse’s skin. He reflected sadly that even the most beautiful fair skin of English women would be odious if viewed through a magnifying glass. He realized that he himself must have appeared shocking and monstrous to the Lilliputians. Swift was pointing out that human worth can be viewed from different perspectives in an increased or diminished manner.

Swift began, then, his exploration of social possibilities by representing the very real, very possible world. His doing this made reasonable his choice of a size difference to distinguish his hero. The Lilliputians were in a way still Gulliver’s own people. He was not strikingly different from them in his psychology, intellectual powers or physical configuration. As he was dwarf-like in Brobdingnag, his feelings of fear and insecurity would and made a kind of detached, elevated, satiric view of an ordinary world that Swift presented

in Part I. Making Gulliver small and insecure and the Brobdingnagians large and wise gave direction to the theme of varied knowledge and gaze.

Gulliver's evaluation of their learning was obviously meant by Swift to be ironic. In contrast, the modern technology that Gulliver had mastered was deflated. His microscopic vision, paralleling the use of microscopes in Europe, and unnaturally fine for the lands of the giants, it only emphasized and exaggerated the ugliness. The art of sailing and navigation were often brought forward by the moderns as evidence of superiority to the ancients. The giants were not seafarers but Gulliver was and this art was ironically displayed when Gulliver rowed and sailed his little vessel in a trough. Gulliver began to accept and admire much of the wisdom of the giants.

Gulliver rejected the morals of the sacred book of the giants, which taught, like the Bible, that man was mean and contemptible and full of pride. Those who were not powerful could not command respect and they would be subjected, no matter what their intrinsic worth, to urge and misjudge the powerful.

In this voyage, Swift adopted the old 'country' maxim of attacking measures not men, and he rehearsed 'country'¹⁰ ideology in Walpole and all he stood for. In J. A. Downie's essay "Political Characterization in '*Gulliver's Travels*,'" he stated that Swift's politics had been complicated unnecessarily by his apparent change of party in 1710. The complicated factor on the political psychology was the religious matter and support of the Church of England.

¹⁰ William and Mary Quarterly, Country theory was a doctrine in which 'the balance of the constitutions depended on the complete separation of Parliament and administration': 'It was for the Crown to govern, and for Parliament to exercise a jealous surveillance of Government; 'corruption' would follow if the Crown discovered any means at all of attaching members of parliament in the pursuit of its business. J.G.A. Pocock, 'William and Mary Quarterly Machiavelli, Harrington, and English Political Ideologies in the Eighteenth Century', 22(1965), 549-83 (pp.571,577)

Human pride was vigorously mocked by Swift when Gulliver found himself under the care of a nine-year-old girl, who, though affectionate and solicitous towards him, obliged him to play the role of a docile and a slightly undignified doll. There were several different types of Brobdingnagians – the trustworthy and loving Glumdaclitch, her shrewd and exploiting father, the mischievous school-boy and the curious, gawking crowds that came to see Gulliver. The Brobdingnagians were interestingly similar to humans, despite their size and the same virtues and vices as accustomed by humans. Swift exposed the human limitations by ridiculing typical human skills and accomplishments; and showed the similarity between the tricks performed by intelligent pets and Gulliver's exhibitions of his talents. Gulliver was shown to the visitors in exchange for money on the Market Day.

Gulliver was soon sold to the Queen, who was “surprised at so much wit and good sense in so diminutive an animal (p. 89)” and it was a direct blow at the prodigious pride of human beings. Brobdingnagians' response to Gulliver was very much like Gulliver's response to the Lilliputians. Gulliver explained laws, manners, religion, government and learning of Europe to the King, which made him observe “how contemptible a thing human grandeur, which could be mimicked by such diminutive insects as I (p. 93).” Now it was Gulliver's turn to defend his native country against the all too just accusations of an honorable and upright ruler. Swift's satire was to view one's own country and customs with Brobdingnagians' eyes. He was now able to recognize the contemptibility of human folly. Even after all the pains and indignities Gulliver went through, Swift pointed out Gulliver's extreme struggle and continual attempt to prove himself as a man. All his encounters, misfortunes and predicaments clarified Swift's contention that it was only his physical size that separated Gulliver from the Brobdingnagians. Swift, through Gulliver, showed how all the human beings were insecure beings or animals vainly striving for attention and protection from the more powerful ones.

Swift indulged his delight in fantasy and described the geography, customs and economy of the Brobdingnagians, in order to further reinforce the enormous dimensional differences between the Brobdingnagians and Gulliver. The image of a whale served on a dining table in the same manner as a large fish would be served in Gulliver's land showed a similarity in culture. A comparison between the tower of the chief temple with Salisbury Cathedral steeple was also given. Gulliver was becoming exhausted by the constant assessment of English life in terms of Brobdingnagian's life. Swift angrily spoke about the very human reluctance to believe one another without proof.

Swift's satire sympathetically admonished humans for their childish manifestations of pride, their craving for admiration and their putty defense for their own dignity. Gulliver's frustrated rage at the bird that seized food from Gulliver's hands was the satiric caparison done by Swift to show more of the behavior of a spoilt child than of a provoked adult. Even the bird did not take him seriously. His injured pride provoked and prompted him to do peculiar and pitiful things; such as jumping manure piles. Pride was the cause of his falling out with the court's maids of honor, through their immodesty and sexual pranks, which astonished and embarrassed him. It was the fact that they ignored him as a man that wounded him most deeply. Gulliver was treated as a source for sexual excitement and interest for the maids of honor, as a means of diversion for the Queen and the ladies – they sailed his boat with the wind of their fans, and a laughing stock for the whole court – when he fell into the cow dung, Gulliver realized that his feelings of insignificance was heightened by successively humiliating adventures. He was ready to admit that it was impossible to maintain human dignity among the giants. He also came to the point of realization of how vain all pride and self- esteem are. Swift made his point successfully and showed how useless human pride was.

Gulliver appeared to have made some striving efforts in rescuing his self-respect. When Gulliver told the Brobdingnagians' King about the noble institutions and laudable achievements of his country, the king listened attentively and took many notes, later showed his wisdom and insights by inquiring with numberless enquires and objections into same institutions. The King was astonished at Gulliver's accounts of suits in chancery, taxes, the mercenary army, religious manipulations and the social class divisions. The King appropriately labeled English history a "heap of conspiracies, rebellions, murders, massacres, revolutions, banishments (p. 118)." Swift approached direct invective in the King's angry condemnation of Englishmen as "the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth (p. 118)." Downie, in his essay, "Political Characterization in 'Gulliver's Travels'"¹¹, said the personalized wit gave overly comic but ultimately very serious indictment of Walpole's system of government. The most precise formulation occurred in Gulliver's dialogue with the King of Brobdingnag, the consistent feature of which was a desire to belittle Walpole's power by the stress on human insignificance alongside with Brobdingnagians, and the basis for the King's unfavorable opinion of men. Dealt first with parliament, Swift's irony was at once apparent in Gulliver's account of the House of Lords, "the ornament and bulwark of the kingdom (p.114)." From the Lords, Swift turned to the Commons, "all principal gentlemen *freely* pick and culled out by the people themselves, for their great abilities, and love of their country (p.114)." The emphasis on the word "*freely* (p.114)" in view of Walpole's blatantly corrupt elections was more than sufficient to serve as a handle for the King of Brobdingnag, in conjunction with Walpole's creation of peers for political reasons. Whereas, as Z. S. Fink¹² said the Kingdom of the Brobdingnagians was a party-less state, and the point was emphasized when, after one

¹¹ J. A. Downie, Political Characterization in Gulliver's Travels', The Yearbook of English Studies, Vol. 7 (1977), pp 108-120, Modern Humanities Research Association.

¹² Z. S. Fink "Political Theory in Gulliver's Travels" The John Hopkins University Press, ELH, Vol. 14 No.2(Jun., 1947), pp151-161.

of Gulliver's expansive accounts of England to the King, the monarch picked him up and in a fit of laughter asked whether he was a Whig or a Tory (p. 105). Swift related to the thought of the classical republicans of the Puritan era, found in his treatment of military matters; that a standing army was a very useful device for those who would smother opposition was discovered in the fifteenth century by the kings of France and in England by Oliver Cromwell during the regime of the major generals. Swift strongly damned the standing army and the Brobdingnagian Kingdom provided with such an organization and it was specifically advanced as a device for insuring the assumption of more than its due share of power by any one of the three elements of the state¹³. Fink commented that Swift could have thought of such a view independently.

Professor Case noted that Swift "proposed reforms which often (though by no means always) called for a return to a real or an imagined earlier practice that was nearer to perfection," and that was not strange in view of the fact that Swift lived "in an age which was habituated to a belief that the world tended to decline¹⁴." Gulliver found the Brobdingnagians living in a state of internal tranquility. He learnt from their history that for many ages they had been troubled by civil strife, "the nobility often contending for power, the people for liberty, and the king for absolute dominion." But we were told that in the time of the grandfather of the reigning king, the militia had been established by common consent that since that time civil peace had continued without interruption (p 124). The equilibrium had been more perfectly adjusted by this move. We are forced to the conclusion that Swift's notion on political deteriorationism and its correctives were, like several other aspects of his thought, especially in the classical traditions. Frank Brandy, in his essay, "Three Problems in

¹³ Professor Case's statement that the king was supposed to maintain the balance between the people and the nobles applied to the Discourse of the Contents and Dissentions, but he was in error in finding the same concept in Gulliver's Travels (see p. 124). It was clear that on this matter he views changed.

¹⁴ R. F. Jones, *Ancient and Moderns: A Study of the Background of the 'Battle of the Books'*, (Washington University Studies in Language and Literature, New Series, 6, St. Louis, 1936).

*'Gulliver's Travels'*¹⁵ commented when Gulliver's ideal England was reduced to something than its imperfect actual state by the King of Brobdingnag, he remarked, "I observe among you some lines of an institutions, which in its original might have been tolerable; but these half erased, and the rest wholly blurred and blotted by corruptions (p.118)." Swift had added a further device to Gulliver and the natives: the perfect state; as a means of satirizing the European society.

Gulliver's pride was not wholly abased because he still attributed the King's indignation at his account of conditions prevailing in Europe to ignorance and naiveté, the result of "narrow principles and short views (p.121)." In the passionate defense of England, Gulliver was completely unaware of the happenings in Europe. Swift's satires about Gulliver's cruel suggestion to the King to use "certain powder (p.120)" indicated gunpowder while the Lilliputian monarch's proposal to subdue and subject the Blefuscutians was comparable. The Brobdingnagians' king represented compassion, justice and reason while Gulliver had become nastily disgusting. Swift showed Brobdingnagians's King as the ideal man while Gulliver as the modern corrupted man. Swift's irony was thoroughly and severely castigated. Gulliver's judgment reversed about the Brobdingnagians' life and also his dismissal of Brobdingnagians' culture proved Swift's tempered praise. Brobdingnagian learning and law being practical and resistant to corruption, they were not extravagant. They were a content nation with free people leading peaceful, sensible lives and they were ruled by a rational, prudent and kind king. According to J. A. Downie, Swift of course satirized the British Politics and Walpole's political morality and the methods by which he achieved and maintained power. The queries voiced by the King of Brobdingnag amounted to a 'Country' manifesto: these were the abuses and anomalies Swift sougled to mend. Swift's own views were voiced through the King, in competition with no one, and evaded the possible confusion

¹⁵ Frank Brandy, *Vexations and Diversions: Three Problems in "Gulliver's Travels"*, *Modern Philology*, Vol. 75, No.4 (May, 1978), pp. 346-367, The University of Chicago Press.

of using Gulliver as his medium. When Swift required his political characterization to be recognized and understood, he left no room for doubt in the identification. Swift's genuine political message figured as a cameo in Brobdingnag: the fact that his most precisely formulated political grievances were shown in this manner. Swift expected that his 'Travels' would 'wonderfully mend the World.'¹⁶ It was the timeless quality of society, not political, satire that made the work relevant to readers.

Gulliver escaped and returned home. Swift's inventiveness was admirable in exploring Gulliver's difficulties in readjusting to 'normal' dimensions after his stay with the Brobdingnagians. The shock of seeing virtue on such a large scale had clarified the vices of mankind, at the same time belittled their progress towards fulfilling human potential.

¹⁶ Correspondence, III, 87: Swift to Ford, 14 August 1725.

Chapter 3: A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbudrib, and Japan

In this part, Gulliver's boat was captured by two ships of Japanese pirates, who were a serious threat to sailors in the seas around China and Southeast Asia, particularly in the seventeenth century. The Japanese pirates were accompanied by a Dutchman, who wanted the English to be tied up and thrown into the sea. Gulliver begged him to let them go as Gulliver referred to the Dutchman as a "brother Christian (p.141)." Through this action of Gulliver, it was understood how Swift was biased against the Dutch. The inclusion of Japanese pirates however, reinforced stereotypical conventions about the Asians and other Eastern nations, popular during his age. In all other parts, Swift maintained the practice of giving imaginary names to lands Gulliver visits, but Japan seemed to be a distant reality for him, which did not need a symbolic or constructed name to be represented as.

Gulliver's first two voyages had done little in changing his concepts of human nature. Swift's most interesting description was provided through the introduction of the most unusual country, the floating island of Laputa, which flew over Balnibarbi. Swift literalized the comic potential of the travel narrative and its illustrative apparatus through this. Swift satirized England's government where the floating island symbolized how England never interacted with its people but instead only dealt with the punishments and laws without considering the welfare of the people. Swift satirized the self-satisfaction of the Europeans of their idea of being the greatest race in the universe and Brogbdingnagians' land mirrored this. Gulliver detailed the bizarre characteristics of the inhabitants of the Flying Island. His

astonishment disguised Swift's satiric disapproval of the people's involvement in abstract thinking that they were unable to manage their normal responsibilities and social activities. The Laputans could not carry on sensible conversations or behave with common courtesy towards each other; their dependence on the mathematics, philosophical and astronomical science left them with no room in their lives for knowledge and concern with other arts and social graces. Swift was not against science but he showed his concern over the impractical, speculative science which he felt distracted men from discovering how to improve living conditions or enrich men's enjoyment of their lives on earth. In Laputa, Gulliver went around in clothes that did not fit him since the Laputans were more concerned with the theory than practical. They could not build adequate housing and were awkward and unhandy in everyday affairs. Yet Gulliver appeared enchanted and found the island "the most delicious spot of ground in the world (152)" despite the fact that he was inclined to turn his nose up at the people who were so lost in abstractions that they did not even notice their wives were having affairs with the men from the country below. Here, Swift provoked fun at women as if they were universally restless, discontented and unreliable.

Gulliver chided the Laputans for their narrow-mindedness; the King for example, was disapproving of the customs and intellectual pursuits which differed from his own. The Laputans' crime was that they were unwilling to learn from example. The impression of the King's seal was of "A King lifting up a lame beggar from the Earth (p.204)." The King had no regards for public welfare; yet his seal was without any resentment at its deception. People seemed to have forgotten the true meaning of justice.

Gulliver was always willing to learn new ideas, new ways of doing things. He explored the island, discovered the complicated scientific magic that gave the King his power over his dominions below. Having already learnt of the disorganized and mismanaged personal lives of the Laputans and their apprehensions about astronomical catastrophe, Swift

directed to look upon the Astronomer's Cave as a *curiosity*, political ritual related directly to the King's greed for unchallenged power.

During the time of Swift, people undoubtedly saw the true meaning in the discussion of the King's method of controlling his Kingdom, like cutting off sun and rains, pelting the stones, crushing were means of lowering the Flying Island. Here the rebellious towns of Lindalina, Swift referred to the relationship between Ireland and England. Swift, being half-Irish, never missed any chance to criticize the British treatment of Ireland. He used to get involved in the Anglo-Irish struggle quite frequently. England courted its own certain destructions in attempting to suppress Ireland.

The novelty of Laputa was worn off and Gulliver was bored and disillusioned by social encounters that lacked mutual respect and trust. Through his visit to Balnibarbi, Gulliver was introduced to Munodi, Swift's 'ideal man'. Munodi represented Swift's outlook on the proper use of science and intellect and was brought in for comparison with the grotesques. Swift had been condemning Munodi's estate and showed the happy results of a wise reliance on traditional learning, a sensible respect for the true foundation of art, science and social affairs. By contrast, the projectors had committed themselves to scheme, which glorified newness for newness' sake, were living in unspeakable misery and deprivation. Swift's contempt for science offended the modern ears. His insistence on moderation and common sense as basic guideposts to intellectual study could not be easily dismissed. For Munodi, it was a foot dragging conservative among today's science worshippers, a general conversion to the abstract logic of the projectors appeared far more destructive in terms of the quality of human life. It was the attitude towards, not to the existence of, scientific endeavor that elicited Swift's calculated irony.

Lengthy descriptions of the experiments promoted the projectors at the Grand Academy. One by one, Swift presented with examples the complex researches and ingenious

operations which failed to yield the expected results. Many of the experiments illustrated preposterous ignorance of basic physical laws; for example, houses built from the roof downward. Others showed a native preoccupation with the 'new', however inefficient or useless; for example, letting dogs 'plough' a field by rooting for previous buried food. Another demonstrated the lack of application to human problems – the development of a species of wool-less sheep; Swift was ridiculing the experiments of the Grand Academy. Gulliver became almost as mute as a spectator while Swift energetically revealed the insanity of each 'project'. Swift took pride in blinding the projectors to the folly of their schemes. They had grown incapable either of perceiving the limitations of the human mind; or, conversely, its true potential for wise and productive thinking.

Chloe Houston, in his essay, "Utopia, Dystopia or Anti-utopia?"¹⁷, commented on the Academy of Lagado that Gulliver made repeated visits to, and he encountered a chemical engineer engaged in tasks as "reduce human excrements to its original food (p.168)" and "to calcine ice into gunpowder (p. 168)." He continued saying that Swift satirized the "wonderful curiosities (p.170)" of the Academy of Lagado and other members of the Royal Society had also been the subject of Swiftian parody¹⁸. The representation of the ideal research community was reflected in Swift's ironic portrayal of a model scientific community. The education-based institutions were found to be corrupt. As a part of this satire, Swift parodied scholars, who carried bags of books around to prevent having to absorb knowledge by some other means, "sages (p.173)" of Laputa, who carried things to be used for conversations.

Swift satirized the notions of learning and further attacked them on a belief held by the educational reformers of the Secondary Reformation: that new and reformed system of learning will enable faster and more thorough absorption of knowledge.

¹⁷ Chloe Houston, Utopia, Dystopia or Anti-utopia? Gulliver's Travels and the Utopian Mode of Discourse, *Utopianj Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3, Irish Utopian (2007), pp. 425-442, Penn State University Press.

¹⁸ Vickers 87.

Deserting his castigation of imaginary and fictional ills for a moment, Swift took a swipe at the behaviors of the contemporary scientists and inventors; Gulliver admitted it was common European custom to steal inventions from one another. This could be interpreted as an allusion to the history of colonization as well as so-called cultural exchange, where the creative and crafty civilians from all over the world would be transported to England. They would be nurtured there in order to master their talents, adding to the English wealth or prospects. On other occasions, ideas of philosophy or knowledge of art would just be learnt by the English and passed off as their own.

In the School of Languages, Swift derided the Professors for their lack of understanding as to the true nature of language, which was to eliminate the inconvenience and ambiguity of such a method of communication as the Professors were promulgating. These Professors had a confused view of learning, assuming that cramming facts into the children taught them to reason and understand and said “Everyone knew how laborious the usual method is of attaining to arts and sciences; whereas by his contrivance, the most ignorant person at a reasonable charge, and with a little bodily labor, may write books in philosophy, poetry, politics, law, mathematics, and theology, without the least assistance from genius or study (p.170-171).”

A departure from Swift’s customary mode of satire was one ingenious doctor, who proposed to diagnose the ills of political senates and councils, prescribing and administering cures for the troubles found, this same Professor advised such devices as kicking and punching to jog the forgetfulness of court minister, and directed that for the good of the public, votes must be casted exactly opposite to the opinion argued by the voter. His method of reconciling parties with ideas was to sever their heads and interexchange halves so that each man had part of a brain loyal to each party: “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 (p.177).” Again two Professors were engaged in a heated debate over whether it would be more effective to tax people on their vices and follies as judged by their neighbors, or upon their sexual prowess, wit, valour and politeness, as assessed by them. They agreed that “honor, justice, wisdom and learning, they should not be taxed at all, because they are qualification of so singular a kind, that no man will either allow them in his neighbor or value them in himself (p.178).” Similarly, women should be taxed according to their valuation of their own beauty and skill in dressing. The schemes of the political projectors, however exaggerated, were aimed at correcting real political evils, such as favoritism in governmental employment, corruption in councils and senates, and disputes among political leaders. Swift, through Gulliver, rejected the various corrective devices, not because they were inherently ridiculous and arbitrary, but because he despaired of mankind’s improving it.

Gulliver’s trip to Glubdubdrib gave Swift a chance to take a hard look at history and its important figures. After Gulliver called upon the Roman Senate and a British parliament for comparison, he noted that “the first seemed to be an assembly of heroes and demigods; the other a knot of peddlers, pickpockets, highwaymen, and bullies (p.184).” Upon questioning eminent men, Gulliver was shocked to find that the history he had been taught was a pack of lies. Swift revealed his own bias towards the ‘great men’ of history, singling out some for scorn, others for emulation. He also remarked on the degeneration of democratic institutions and assemblies, holding up the ‘ideal’ Roman Senate as a comparison to the British Parliament. Gulliver called up a dozen or so modern kings and their ancestors and was shocked and disappointed to find lineages bounding in “pages, lackeys, valets, coachmen, gangsters, fiddlers, players, captains and pickpockets (p.187).” He was also disgusted by the modern historians who had glorified blackguards and exalted villains of every description. He learnt of the treachery and deceit that were the real causes of great

events and of the infamous methods utilized by the might to gain their ends. Gulliver was no less saddened to find that such corruption in the government and society were mirrored in the degenerated faces of his countrymen.

Gulliver's dealing with the world of the dead continued to astonish and educate him. The conclusions he drew from his encounters corresponded directly to the lessons Swift so explicitly taught. Historians were not to be trusted, since they were motivated by human vanity and distorted the truth to satisfy national and personal preferences. Dishonest themselves, they glorified villains and glossed over the deceit and treachery, which were the real causes of so many historical events. Swift put an end to philosophical debates by showing that philosophers and their ideas had a temporary vogue, quite apart from the misrepresentations of critics and commentators. Therefore, they should have a vogue quite apart from the misrepresentations of critics and commentators. Gulliver's disappointment over the ancestry of modern kings mirrored Swift's anger at the degeneracy of his aristocracy. Apparently, he had little faith in the elite class which composed of men, who were the products of disreputable marriages, "bought" titles, or other corruptions of pure lineage.

When Gulliver and his two companions returned to Maldonade, the customs officials questioned him on his travels and confined him and they waited for the orders from court. When Gulliver was summoned to court, where he was required to literally "lick the dust before his [king] footstool (p.192)." and crawled on his belly to the throne. Gulliver then pronounced the standard greeting of "May your Celestial Majesty outlive the sun, eleven moons and a half (p. 193-194)" and then conversed with the King. The traditional greeting to the King expressed just a vain and pretentious notion. Swift believed to distrust princes and ministers. He implied both a criticism of historical monarchs and modern rulers in his stories of the kings who had devised a method to simultaneously flatter his vanity and at the same

time to destroy any threats to his supremacy. Most of the time, innocent people suffered accidentally. Swift pointed out that such were the unnecessary tragedies associated with men, who had chosen to overlook the fact that they were subjected to human limitations.

Gulliver was brought face to face with what Swift considered the vanity of vanities: the wish for eternal life. Gulliver at first, held the erroneous view that immortality would have erased the most universal calamity known to man, death; after considerable probing into the miserable and pathetic lives of the people with eternal lives, the Struldbruggs. The Struldbruggs, although immortal, grew perpetually older and were subject to diseases of the old age to such a degree that they “lament and repine that others are gone to an harbor of rest to which they themselves never can hope to arrive (p.200).” They lost their memory with youth and became progressively more “opinionated, morose, vain, peevish and covetous (p.200) and then lost their sense of affection and friendship. Swift, through Gulliver, made his point of view that the concept of immortality degraded and cheapened life itself. It was with a full awareness of his weakness, his limitation, indeed, his mortality, that a human being could come in terms with his place in the scheme of things and understand his true nature. Since mortality is the way of life, to wish personal immortality was to wish for the wretched plight of the Struldbruggs, who were condemned to a perpetual aging and declined extending on and on to the vanishing point beyond human imagination. Released from his fear of death by the hideous and unthinkable alternative represented by the Struldbruggs, Gulliver was relieved to find himself part of the ‘normal’ process of change and decay and death, a dependable cycle which ultimately revolved to creation and growth.

Swift came to the conclusion of his discussion of the complexities and the problems of travel, familiar complaints about strange people and alien customs that gave a brief respite before the most corrosive Swift that was reserved for mankind.

Chapter 4: A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms

Swift, through Gulliver, was the spokesman for the utopian societies for that time according to Eugene R. Hammond¹⁹. He added that reason was intimately linked with justice and in each; the institutional injustice of the contemporary society was pointedly satirized through comparison with justice of an imaginary and rational society. Hammond said that Gulliver reports to the King of Brobdingnag and to his Houyhnhnm Master that courts of law existed not to provide justice but to benefit their own officers, the civil and religious leaders governed with motives and Swift left it to us to determine “how far this might be applicable in our Courts and Favourites, and Ministers of State (p.263).” Hammond pointed out that Swift’s wittiest use of the word “nature” occurred in his portrait of the inverted English system of justice. Gulliver explained that to judge justly would be, for an English magistrate, unnatural. As Merrill D. Cluubb said “There Houyhnhnms, using their ‘general Reason’ always act not for their own good, but for the good of their species.”²⁰

Swift satirized an important aspect of the travel narrative through *Gulliver’s Travels* as its form of reflection on contemporary European society. Travelogues’ observations about new nations and experiences would be used to cross-examine domestic culture and customs. Gulliver’s progressive disappointment with his own society, and his preference for the civilized world of the Hounymnms, represented the contemporary

¹⁹ Eugene R. Hammond, Nature Reason Justice in Gulliver’s Travels.

²⁰ Merrill D. Cluubb “The Criticism of Gulliver’s ‘Voyage Hounyhnhnm,’ 1726-1914,” Stanford Studies in Language and Literature (Stanford, 1941), p. 211

development to be taken to an extreme. The severe attacks made on mankind in an amusing point of view, where a man was seen as a doll, a monstrous giant, a crazy scientist or a wild animal and in the land of the Houyhnhnms was seen as a comic figure cleaner than pigs.

Swift began his pitiless exposure of man's faults and follies here. When the Master Horse asked Gulliver about humans, Gulliver was cornered into disclosing the unflattering truths about his species. He was silent as to love, kindness, justice, and mercy that also abounded in human nature. For that was not Swift's intent; it would be impossible and shocking to see mankind from the ethico-moral point of view of the Hounynms. Gulliver told the Master Horse that the men were "fellow of desperate fortunes, forced to fly from the places of their birth on account of their poverty or their crimes. . .drinking, whoring and gaming. . .treason. . .murder, theft, poisoning, robbery, perjury, forjury, coining false money. . .or deserting to the enemy (p.232)." Gulliver talked about human beings' "desire for power and riches of the terrible effects of lust, intemperance, malice and envy (p.232)." Swift was showing not a goal, but a pattern for rational life. Gulliver went mad at last because he failed to realize that men could never be Houyhnhnms. The horses lived in a simple level and had no knowledge of the evil, they were not actively choosing the good, but rather resigned themselves to the only behavior available to them.

Gulliver talked about the various wars and revolutions and the cause of all the brutality that was happening in his country. Gulliver said "poor nations are hungry, and the rich nations were proud; and pride and hunger will ever be at variance (p. 234-235)." Houyhnhnms were curious about the term 'law' and Gulliver told all the Europeans that Yahoos were slaves to a society of men and they needed proof that "white is black and black is white, according as they are paid (p.237)." As Gulliver felt Houyhnhnms' dislike for the Yahoos, he grew bitter against European customs. The wars were dreadful and the motivations for fighting, degrading: this was what Swift wished to show. Gulliver viewed the

evils of his society were at ease with an overflow of vicious brutality, ugly corruption, and unbridled perversions. He shocked the ears of the Houyhnhnms. Horrified at Gulliver's catalogue of depravity, the Master Horse concluded that mankind had used its power of reasoning to increase the 'natural' vices exhibited by the Yahoos. The Country of the Houyhnhnms was an inversion of Gulliver's England, a place where horses were civilized people, and humans were uncivilized animals.

Gulliver further elaborated on corruptions, such as class inequalities, intemperance, diseases and political hypocrisy in England "in order to feed the luxury and intemperance of the males, and the vanity of the females (p.240)." England exported large quantities of necessary things and imported the "materials of diseases, folly and vice for internal use (p.240)." Furthermore, poor people were compelled to "seek their livelihood by begging, robbing, stealing, cheating, pimping, forswearing, flattering, suborning, forging, gaming, lying, fawning, hectoring, voting, scribbling, star-gazing, poisoning, whoring, canting, libeling, free-thinking, and occupations (p.240); a scenario present in Swift's "A Modest Proposal" as well. Swift was criticizing England for fostering vast inequalities of wealth, which resulted in the follies of luxurious living. On the other hand, Swift painted a vivid picture of the evils and diseases constantly plaguing mankind as a result of intemperance. He set these dreadful extremes before the Hounynms' fixed class system, which allowed no frustration among any of them striving. By comparison, Gulliver related the disgraceful attitudes of a class system in which the ruling group was riddled by idleness and libertinism, greed and depravity. Disgusted with effete nobility, Swift attacked them with enthusiasm, relished his chance to point to the absurdity of placing governmental responsibility in such impotent hands. Swift's criticism of the Chief Minister as backbiting about his enemy, Walpole, was instructively read as a portrait of corrupt political leader and as one of the most indignant rebuke that Swift ever delivered.

Gulliver had become so immersed in admiration for the Houyhnhnms that he accepted the Houyhnhnms' judgment of mankind and resolved to remain there for his life-time with his loved tutors. Gulliver was stricken with horror at his seduction by the female Yahoo; he was embarrassed and ashamed at his realization that he must be "a real Yahoo in every limb and feature (p.255)."

Gulliver retained his human pride and refused to see human reason, by nature, limited. Raymond Bentman, in his essay, "Satiric Structure and Tone in the Conclusion of *Gulliver's Travels*"²¹ stated that "humans were portrayed as wild animals because Gulliver thought of himself as so divorced from humanity he could make shoes and a canoe out of Yahoo skins and the Houyhnhnms seriously contemplated genocide. They probably considered such ideas much too far from man's known or expected behavior to be taken for anything but satiric extravagance."

Houyhnhnms were desirable and worthy of praise. Though, they could never sink to the depths of human misery and wretchedness, they never could soar to the human heights of joy and exaltation. Swift's instruction was to emulate the admirable behavior of the Houyhnhnms while at the same time retaining the emotional warmth, spontaneity, and devotion of which human beings were uniquely capable. It was part of Swift's final irony that Gulliver mistook this instruction and went astray. This simplified a complex matter, still an issue of critical dispute among scholars. There were many for whom Swift's narrative voice was so convincing that they would not allow that he even believed in human joy and happiness and it was the ultimate purpose of the satirist to be constructive, yet would hold that Swift was too unrelenting in his condemnation of humanity to be no more than destructive.

²¹ Raymond Bentman, Satiric Structure and Tone in the Conclusion of *Gulliver's Travels*, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol. 11, No. 3, Restoration and Eighteenth Century (Summer, 1971), pp. 535-548, Rice University.

Gulliver was very sensible of the great honor of being allowed to improve his mind by listening to the Houyhnhnms' conversations "where . . .the greatest *decency* was observed, without the least degree of ceremony; where no person spoke without being pleased himself, and pleasing his companions, where there was no interruptions, tediousness, heat, or difference of sentiments (p.265)." Gulliver raved on about the perfection of the Houyhnhnms' life and the contentment of existence with such flawless mentors. He was so dazed with admiration that he attempted to imitate their very walk, vocal pattern, and gesture.

Gulliver rejected one of Swift's 'ideal men', Captain Pedro de Mendez because Gulliver now rejected all other human beings. Gulliver's trouble was his pride: at the beginning of his voyages, his pride prevented him from seeing the corruptions of his society; later, he was unable to trace the source of evil in man himself. Now, he was still blinded by this same pride from recognizing the virtue in the kind and understanding Mendez. Gulliver, in true sense, Swift, was doomed to disappointment though man's greatest potential was fulfilled in striving for the good, he was utterly incapable of achieving the automaton-like virtue of the Houyhnhnms, "for who can read the virtue I have mentioned in the glorious Houyhnhnms without being ashamed of his own vices, when he considers himself as reasonable, governing animal of his country (p.280)?" Gulliver wanted to send a few civilized Europeans to the Houyhnhnms for teaching "the first principles of honor, justice truth, temperance, public spirit fortitude, chastity, friendship, benevolence and fidelity (p.282)." Gulliver did not approve of the European custom of discovering a new land, robbing, plundering and killing the natives, claiming the territory under divine right and colonizing the land with a "acts of inhumanity and lust . . . crew of butchers employed in . . .barbarous people (p.282)." Although he acquitted England of such crimes, he felt that the countries he visited had no desire to be "conquered, enslaved, murdered or driven out by colonies (p.283)," and they did not abound in gold, silver, sugar, tobacco or any other goods

of interest to Europe. Swift gave an ironic twist by showing Gulliver still reluctantly inhabited his native land, still inveighing bitterly against the sin of pride, and still hopelessly unaware that he was as guilty as those he scorned.

Conclusion

Gulliver's Travels had appealed to everyone; it was an interesting simple story for children and a challenging satire for adults, complicated enough to confuse them. Jonathan Swift, through *Gulliver's Travels*, showed the need for reason in the political interactions of England and Ireland during the reign of King George II. The ideas included the unjust ways and actions the royalty and the privileged class took against the working and lower class. Swift's work became prophetic and implied for 18th century England.

The first significant way in which *Gulliver's Travels'* satire engaged was the utopian mode; second was its rejection of the ideal earthy society and with this denial, it reached to the conclusion as Utopia²². The satire of the utopian conventions in *Gulliver's Travels* was both general and specific. Swift's tale shared with the utopian form, it used fantastic journeys and shipwrecks, the naïve narrator, stories of new places and seemingly ideal societies, according to Chloe Houston's essay, "*Gulliver's Travels* and the Utopian Mode of Discourse." There were the features which had led scholars to place it within "a canon which included Plato's Republic, Lucian's True History, More's Utopia, the works of Rabelais, and Bacon's New Atlantis," whether it was indeed "utopian fiction or merely a Menippean satire." Jonathan Swift aimed to make people understand the actual situations using satire and showed the people of that era that they should use their power of reason.

²² Christopher Kendrick offered a useful overview of theoretical imaginings of utopia towards a broad definition of utopia not restricted to the early modern utopia, in his recent book on the early utopia (3-73).

Swift had accomplished what he desired. Bentman wrote in the previously mentioned essay that “Gulliver was mad or sane, his madness was a light-hearted joke or a deadly horror, he was sane but an object of satire, or he was not only sane but was Swift’s spokesman, showing an acute vision of a Horatian or a Juvenalian satirist.” Gulliver’s rejection of all mankind was because he failed to live up to some abstract ideals and anti-human ideology. According to “Satiric structure and Tone in the Conclusion of *Gulliver’s Travels*”, by Reymond Bentman, “Swift intended Gulliver to be taken as mad and ridiculous not only to defend himself against the holding beliefs which most of mankind found horrendous, but to grant his greatest work in the status of a prophetic satire, and made clear what Swift saw as the logical results of his own time (543).” Swift put emphasis on Gulliver’s reactions in the latter part to show his own state of mind about the English society during his times. Bentman continued: “when his rationality fails, he does not try an alternative. Instead, he discovers that his ‘Hatred and Contempt seemed to increase’; he begins to lose much-insisted-upon honesty in ‘pretending’ sickness; and in trying to be completely rational, becomes a victim of his own excessive emotionalism (546).” Pride made man think that he controlled himself, his environment and his destiny.

Swift was unable to configure these experiences into one useful and meaningful worldview. The ultimate result of all Gulliver’s experiences was a profound disorientation, he had no innate sense of himself and his own values, and he was fighting with his value systems of the cultures that he found himself in. Thus, Gulliver became a spokesperson for Swift, often alienated the subject of satire from himself, and often became a part of it himself. His mockery was not only pointing at others, but also towards his inner self. Swift’s notion of the ideal satire was the kind that reveals the inner-conflicts of the author’s mind, while reflecting on the world and society. Swift believed that:

There is a brain that will endure but one scumming; let the owner gather it with discretion, and manage his little stock with husbandry; but, of all things, let him beware of bringing it under the lash of his betters, because that will make it all bubble up into impertinence, and he will find no new supply.²³

Gulliver never fell short on ‘new supply’ or aspects of the society to criticize. This Menippean satire attacks several recurrent issues of Swift’s satire and brings them all together under the same book. Thus, Gulliver surmises all of Swift’s objects of satire beautifully, making *Gulliver’s Travels* Swift’s best piece of satire.

²³ Preface, *The Battle of the Books* (1704).

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