



# THE ENDURING SATIRE AND SCIENTIFIC VISION IN JONATHAN SWIFT'S GULLIVER'S TRAVELS: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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**Abstract:** *In the novel by the English writer J. Swift, Gulliver clearly shows that a person can never find happiness in a society ruled by greedy, careerist, vain, arrogant kings and ministers. This article explores the themes of ignorance, hypocrisy, and pride in Jonathan Swift's work.*

**Key words:** *Gulliver's Travels, travel interpretation, adventure, customs, travelogues, expedition.*

**Annotatsiya:** *Ingliz adibi J. Sviftning romanida ochko'z, mansabparast, tekinxo'r, takabbur qirollar va vazirlar hukmronlik qilgan jamiyatda inson hech qachon baxtini topa olmasligini Gulliver sayohat qilgan o'lkalar timsolida ochiq-ravshan ko'rsatadi. Ushbu maqolada Jonatan Sviftning asarida jaholat, ikkiyuzlamachilik va g'urur mavzusi keng yoritilib beriladi.*

**Kalit so'zlar:** *Gulliverning sayohatlari", safar talqini, sarguzasht, urf-odatlar, safarnoma asarlar, ekspeditsiya.*

**Аннотация:** *В романе английского писателя Дж. Свифта Гулливер наглядно показывает, что человек никогда не сможет найти счастья в обществе, которым правят жадные, карьеристские, тщеславные, высокомерные короли и министры. В этой статье исследуются темы невежества, лицемерия и гордости в творчестве Джонатана Свифта.*

**Ключевые слова:** *Путешествия Гулливера, путевая интерпретация, приключение, обычаи, травелоги, экспедиция.*

## Introduction

Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) stands as one of the most enduring satirical texts in English literature. Published anonymously under the title *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World*, this four-part novel merges fantastical adventure with biting social and political commentary (Swift, 2005). As a parodic response to the travel narratives popular in Swift's time, the novel employs the fictional voyages of Lemuel Gulliver to critique the moral, political, and intellectual landscape of 18th-century England.

The genius of *Gulliver's Travels* lies in its multi-layered narrative, where each fantastical land visited by Gulliver reflects specific societal flaws and ideological follies.



From the petty politics of Lilliput to the philosophical dilemmas of the Houyhnhnms, Swift constructs a world where satire and allegory work in tandem to question the foundations of reason, governance, and humanity itself. This paper aims to explore the thematic complexity of the novel through an interdisciplinary lens, focusing on its socio-political critique and remarkable foresight in astronomical imagination.

### **Literature Review**

Scholars have long debated the intentions behind Swift's use of satire and allegory in *Gulliver's Travels*. Kelly (1988) suggests that Swift skillfully manipulates language to expose the inconsistencies of Enlightenment rationalism, using irony and exaggeration to highlight the absurdity of unquestioned progress. Meanwhile, Bishop (1998) examines how Swift embeds deeper meanings in seemingly comedic situations, drawing attention to the dehumanizing nature of colonialism and institutional power.

From a scientific and historical perspective, Bondareva (2012) offers insights into Swift's engagement with contemporary astronomical theories. She notes that Swift's depiction of two Martian moons, written more than a century before their actual discovery, suggests either inspired intuition or a satirical jab at scientific dogma. Encyclopædia Britannica (n.d.) emphasizes that Swift's work extends beyond literary satire to question fundamental assumptions about human nature and societal organization. Furthermore, Cambridge University Press (2008) identifies the educational potential of the text, noting its capacity to engage readers in critical reflection through complex narrative structures.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative literary analysis to examine *Gulliver's Travels* through both a critical and speculative lens. The methodology involves a close reading of selected passages from the novel (Swift, 2005), with emphasis on how Swift uses irony, allegory, and speculative fiction to construct his critique. Supporting interpretations are drawn from relevant secondary sources, including scholarly articles and historical encyclopedias.

Key themes such as political satire, ethical relativism, and proto-scientific imagination are explored in relation to their historical context and lasting impact. The analysis is structured according to the four voyages, providing a segmented approach that allows for detailed thematic exploration. The study does not rely on empirical data but instead interprets textual and symbolic patterns within a framework of critical literary theory.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Political and Social Satire**

In Lilliput, Swift satirizes British politics by depicting a kingdom obsessed with trivialities. The conflict between high- and low-heeled factions parodies the ideological rift between the Tories and Whigs (Swift, 2005, pp. 165–166). Political appointments based on rope-dancing abilities ridicule the superficiality and favoritism prevalent in public office. The war between Lilliput and Blefuscu over egg-breaking customs is an exaggerated yet effective allegory for religious intolerance and doctrinal disputes.



Brobbingnag serves as a moral counterpoint, where the king views British society as corrupt and hypocritical. Gulliver's attempts to glorify England's governance are met with skepticism, especially when he introduces the idea of gunpowder, which horrifies the king (Swift, 2005, pp. 56–57). This episode critiques not only militarism but also the moral blindness of European imperial powers who justify violence under the guise of civilization.

### **Scientific Satire and Intellectual Critique**

Laputa, the flying island, represents Swift's critique of impractical scientific theorizing. The Laputians, though obsessed with music and mathematics, are inept in practical matters—an allegory for scholars detached from real-world concerns (Kelly, 1988). The absurd experiments in Lagado, such as extracting sunlight from cucumbers, mock the Royal Society's fixation on useless innovation (Bishop, 1998).

Remarkably, Swift also anticipates scientific discovery by inventing two moons orbiting Mars. Though satirical, his description of their motion and distance is uncannily close to reality (Bondareva, 2012). This suggests a deeper commentary on the speculative nature of scientific knowledge and the fine line between visionary thought and absurdity.

### **Philosophical Anthropology and Moral Reflection**

In the land of the Houyhnhnms, Swift offers a radical contrast between rational horses and savage Yahoos. This dichotomy questions the very essence of humanity. The Houyhnhnms' society, based on reason and harmony, starkly contrasts with the violent and greedy Yahoos, representing the basest aspects of mankind (Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d.). Gulliver's preference for horses over humans by the end of the novel reflects Swift's growing misanthropy and distrust in the potential for human moral progress.

The philosophical depth of this section lies in Swift's refusal to offer a clear resolution. Rather than advocating for total rationalism or condemning humanity outright, he forces readers to confront their own assumptions about civilization, morality, and identity. The result is a powerful meditation on the limits of enlightenment thinking and the contradictions at the heart of human nature.

### **Conclusion**

*Gulliver's Travels* remains a seminal work that challenges readers to question the values and assumptions of their own societies. Through its four voyages, Swift constructs a comprehensive satire that critiques politics, science, and morality. His ability to blend fantastical storytelling with deep philosophical insight allows the novel to transcend its historical context and maintain relevance today.

Moreover, Swift's incorporation of speculative science—particularly in the case of Mars' moons—demonstrates his capacity to engage with intellectual trends while maintaining a critical distance. By blurring the boundaries between satire and prophecy, Swift invites reflection on the nature of knowledge itself. Ultimately, *Gulliver's Travels* endures not only as a literary masterpiece but also as a profound commentary on the human condition.



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