

EXPLORING SATIRE AND SOCIETY IN JONATHAN SWIFT'S "GULLIVER'S TRAVELS DURING THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

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Abstract: This article explores the enduring appeal of Jonathan Swift's novel "Gulliver's Travels" and its satirical depiction of society during the Age of Enlightenment. Through the protagonist Gulliver's voyages to imaginary lands, Swift critiques various aspects of human folly, politics, religion, and science. The novel's division into four parts highlights different societal flaws and reflects Swift's commentary on the world around him. The Age of Enlightenment, characterized by reason and progress, influenced Swift's satirical approach and the novel's lasting impact on literature.

Key words: Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels, satire, society, Age of Enlightenment, reason, progress, Swiftian humor, Cultural criticism, moral values.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqola Jonatan Sviftning "Gulliverning sayohatlari" romanining doimiy jozibasi va ma'rifat davrida jamiyatning satirik tasvirini o'rganadi. Bosh qahramon Gulliverning xayoliy mamlakatlarga qilgan sayohatlari orqali Svift inson ahmoqligi, siyosat, din va ilm-fanning turli jihatlarini tanqid qiladi. Romanning to'rt qismga bo'linishi turli xil ijtimoiy nuqsonlarni ko'rsatib beradi va Sviftning uning atrofidagi dunyo haqidagi sharhini aks ettiradi. Aql va taraqqiyot bilan ajralib turadigan Ma'rifat davri Sviftning satirik yondashuviga va romanning adabiyotga doimiy ta'siriga ta'sir qildi.

Kalit so'zlar: Ma'rifat davri, Jonatan Svift, Gulliverning sayohatlari, satira, jamiyat, aql, taraqqiyot, Sviftiy hazil, Madaniy tanqid, axloqiy qadriyatlar.

Аннотация: В этой статье исследуется непреходящая привлекательность романа Джонатана Свифта «Путешествия Гулливера» и его сатирическое изображение общества в эпоху Просвещения. Через путешествия главного героя Гулливера в воображаемые страны Свифт критикует различные аспекты человеческого безумия, политики, религии и науки. Разделение романа на четыре части подчеркивает различные социальные недостатки и отражает комментарии Свифта к окружающему миру. Эпоха Просвещения, характеризующаяся

разумом и прогрессом, повлияла на сатирический подход Свифта и длительное влияние романа на литературу.

Ключевые слова: Джонатан Свифт, Путешествия Гулливера, сатира, общество, Эпоха Просвещения, разум, прогресс, юмор Свифта, Культурная критика, моральные ценности

The eighteenth-century philosophical impulse known as the Enlightenment rested on five general beliefs: the inevitability of progress; the perfectibility of man and his institutions; the efficacy of reason; the beneficence of God; and the plenitude and perfection of nature. It stressed the primacy of science over theology, skepticism over authority, reason over faith. In the eighteenth century England achieved, politically and economically the position of a great power in Europe. Eighteenth century England was distinguished also in science and philosophy. (Isaac Newton, David Hume, Adam Smith). The most active sections of population at that time were the commercial classes that are the middle classes.³

Eighteenth-century England is also often called the Augustan Age. The term comes from the name given to the reign of the Roman emperor Augustus. During his reign, which lasted from 27 B.C. to 14 A.D. Latin literature reached its height with such great writers as Virgil, Horace, and Ovid. English authors tried to imitate or recapture many of the philosophic and literary ideals of this period of Roman history. Like the ancient Romans, they believed that life and literature should be guided by reason and common sense. They strove for balance and harmony in their writings. Augustan literature is sometimes divided into two periods, each named for its most influential man of letters - The Age of Pope, and after 1750, the Age of Johnson. Satire was one of the most common types of literature during the Augustan Age. The leading satirists of the period were Jonathan Swift in prose and Alexander Pope in poetry.

Some literary critics divide the literature of the age of the Enlightenment into three periods: The first period lasted from "The Glorious Revolution (1688) till the end of the 1730s. It is characterized by classicism in poetry. The greatest follower of the classic style was Alexander Pope. Alongside with this high style there appeared new prose literature, the essays of Steele and Addison and the first realistic novels written by Daniel Defoe and Jonathan

³ Usmanova, S & Ibragimova, D (2022) Developing of British and American literature, Textbook, Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Fergana State University / "Classic" Publishing House/ 223 pages.

Swift. Most of the writers of the time wrote political pamphlets. The second period of the Enlightenment was the most mature period. The realistic social novel of the time was represented by Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollett. The third period refers to the last decade of the 18th century. It is marked by the appearance of a new trend, sentimentalism, represented by the works of Oliver Goldsmith and Laurence Sterne. The realistic drama of the time was represented by Richard Brinsley Sheridan.⁴

During the Enlightenment period, many famous writers lived and wrote their works and, in their writings, they tried to describe the condition of the society and people in their fiction characters. One of them were, Jonathan Swift who was the greatest of English satirists. He is generally thought to be the greatest prose writer of the eighteenth century. He was a man whom many considered a misanthrope (one who hates humankind) because his writings were deeply critical of humanity. It was, however, his deep love for humanity that caused him to criticize it, and his great dream was to cure the ills of his age through humor.⁵

In 1713 Swift was made Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin. In Ireland Swift came into contact with common people and saw miserable conditions under which the population lived. Swift wrote pamphlets criticizing the colonial policy of England. In 1726 Swift's masterpiece "Gulliver's Travels" appeared and it made a great sensation.

In "Gulliver's Travels" (originally the novel was called "Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World by Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon and then a Captain of Several Ships") Swift criticized and satirized the evils of the existing society in the form of fictitious travels. Apart from being a good story, it is the indictment of the human race for refusing reason and benevolence as the ways of life. The scenes and nations described in the book are so extraordinary and amusing, that the novel still arouses interest with both children and adults. It covers the adventures of a ship's surgeon who is washed up on a number of imaginary shores. The novel is divided into four parts that are actually four voyages:

Part 1. A voyage to Lilliput.

Part 2. A voyage to Brobdingnag.

⁴ Usmanova, S & Ibragimova, D (2022) Developing of British and American literature, Textbook, Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Fergana State University / "Classic" Publishing House/ 223 pages.

⁵"History of The Royal Society", Royal Society Publishing, n.d. Web. 19 April 2013

Part 3. A voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glabdubdrib and Japan.

Part 4. A voyage to the country of the Houyhnhnms.

Thus, Gulliver first visits Lilliputians - tiny people whose bodies and surroundings are only 1/12 the size of normal people and things. At first the Lilliputians treat Gulliver well. Gulliver helps them, but after a time they turn against him and he escapes their land.

Gulliver's second voyage takes him to the country of Brobdingnag, where people are 12 times larger than Gulliver and amused by his tiny size.

Gulliver's third voyage takes him to several strange kingdoms. The conduct of the strange people of these countries shows the types of foolishness Swift saw in his world. For example, in the academy of Lagado, scholar's waste all their time on useless projects such as extracting sunbeams from cucumbers. Here Swift satirizes impractical scientists and philosophers.⁶

In his last voyage, Gulliver discovers a land ruled by wise and gentle horses called Houyhnhnms. Stupid, savage creatures called Yahoos also live there. The Yahoos look like human beings. The Houyhnhnms dislike and distrust Gulliver because he looks like Yahoos, and they believe he is also a Yahoo. Gulliver wishes to stay in the company of the Houyhnhnms, but they force him to leave. Thus in each country Gulliver makes observations about society in general. He finally returns to England with a painful recognition of his own country's flaws. The greatest merit of the novel is the satirical description of all the vices of the society of the time. Under the cloak of fantasy Swift satirized the politics of the time, religious prejudices, wars of ambition and the absurdity of many aspects of science.

In conclusion, The Age of Enlightenment or the Enlightenment, also known as the Age of Reason: "the period in the 18th century in Europe when certain thinkers taught that science and the use of reason would improve the human condition"⁷ Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels" is considered as a bright example of this period. It serves as a powerful satirical commentary on society during the Age of Enlightenment. Through the lens of Gulliver's fantastical voyages and encounters with various societies, Swift skillfully critiques the political, social, and moral issues of his time. By using satire to expose the flaws and absurdities of human nature and society, Swift prompts readers to reflect on their own beliefs and behaviors.

⁶ Isaac Newton. (2015). The Biography.com website. Retrieved 02:17, May 14, 2015

⁷ Connolly, P.J. "John Locke (1632-1704)" Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Iowa State University. Web. 10 May 2015

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