

**SWIFT'S GULLIVER'S TRAVELS : A TIMELESS SATIRIC CRITIQUE  
OF HUMAN CONDITIONS**

**Dr. Amar Singh**

Head,  
Department of English  
Govt. Autonomous P.G. College,  
Chhindwara ( M.P.)

In demonstrating Swift's parody of the social situation, the argumentation of Lemuel Gulliver's voyages to four separate places turn symbolic and noteworthy. This novel incorporates numerous examples of satire. Basically, it is a reflection that uncovers the reality of the world; however, the reason behind why we appreciate it so much is because we are not able to find that reality in ourselves.

In the first section of the four written parts, Swift recites the voyage to Lilliput. Swift expounds on Gulliver's voyage in an incredible detail.

As indicated by Robert P. Fitzgerald, "Ironically but just as assertively, Swift is telling what he took to be the most important kind of a truth, moral truth about human nature and human history for which the fantasy provides a vehicle. Gulliver was a sailor, first as a ship's surgeon, then as the captain of diverse ships. Swift makes a realistic structure by fusing nautical jargon, elucidating detail that is connected in a "factual, ship's-log" style, and rehashed claims by Gulliver, in his story, "to relate plain matter(s) of fact in the simplest manner and style". (Fitzgerald, 1974.247-263)

In his first travel, Gulliver is confronted with the very small size people, called Lilliputians. There, in Lilliput, capability of walking on a rope or stick jumping was the criterion of being a minister, and the rank of their position as the minister would last as long as they could keep overcoming these tasks (Swift, 1962. 89).

Lilliputian kids were taken from their parents at birth and given to the State to nurture. In a prior parody, *A Modest Proposal*, he had explained that the poor and miserable people in Ireland sold their children to the English as gourmet food. Likewise, Swift highlights the prudery of politicians by telling the reader of some of the commendable and novel optimal and practices of Lilliputian culture like how this society admired law-abiding people. They considered the break of trust as the greatest offence, and rebuffed false prosecutors and ingratitude. It demonstrates that, similar to humans, even the Lilliputians don't act according to their own norms when they show ingratitude for Gulliver's assistance. They use Gulliver power and strengths to face their enemies but at the end they want to punish him.

Swift uses the social orders of Lilliput and Brobdingnag to build up his parody in part 1 and 2. He makes Gulliver take numerous points of view. He is a spectator looking down upon the Lilliputian community in microcosm part 1, which is fitting in the light of the fact that they are a microcosm of British society.

By using the terms High and Low Heels, Swift wants to demonstrate the futility of the battles between the two parties, Tories and Whigs. Gulliver does not gratify the king's greed for power so he loses his popularity and grace and also, the religious contrasts about whether they do not act on their own norms when they show gratitude for Gulliver's help and blame him for high conspiracy. The Lilliputians based on their religious impressions are classified and follow their prophet, and based on his statement: "That all true Believers shall break their eggs at the convenient end". (*Gulliver's Travels*. 35)

Gulliver by his indecorous deed turns into the subject of Lilliputians' discussion and here the author tries to explain to the reader that every situation that influences the society, notwithstanding of its undesirable nature, has to be argued and faced accordingly.

J.A. Dowlin in his impressive article entitled *Political Characterization in Gulliver's Travels*, notices that Swift's clear shift of party in 1710 led to unnecessary complication of his politics. The religious subjects and the strong support of the Church of England were considered complicated elements about political psychology.

Frank Brady believes that, Swift's focuses in these sorts of satiric derision are "human contentiousness and lack of perception". (Brady.1968.21) By mimicking the physical variations between Gulliver and the Lilliputians, Swift is able to oppose pretentious nature of English society that he considers as unsatisfactory through Gulliver's travel to Brobdingnag.

The author, applies a specific strategy to satirize European's arrogance by using Gulliver's vulnerability, and compels the reader to think about general relativity of human abilities. Swift in *Gulliver's Travels*, depicts a steady moving forward and backward between reality and fantasy, normal and abnormal, until the readers are willing to purchase a pig in a poke. The option of similitude in every voyage serves more especially the different purposes of Swift's satiric vision.

According to Eddy, "The effect of reducing the scale of life in Lilliput is to, strip human affairs of their self-imposed grandeur. Rank, politics, international war, loses all of their significance. This particular idea is continued in the second voyage, not in the picture of the Brobdingnagians, but in Gulliver himself, who is now a Lilliputian," (Eddy, 1923. 149).

The four volumes of *The Gulliver's Travels* to different lands are likewise introduced in a parallel manner so that book 1 and 2 reflect and criticized different aspects of English society and the conditions of man within it. While voyages 3 and 4, are more engrossed with human instincts. Yet, these components stand side by side, and with every voyage, Gulliver, and hence the reader, is dealt with not only varying but also ever extending perspectives of human instinct that peaks in Gulliver's epiphany when he distinguishes himself with the detestable. Swift in the voyage to Laputa, uses a technique of floating

island that moves slowly above the world. It allegorically refers to Swift's idea that an excess of theoretical thinking can be negative. It can cut an individual off from the actual realities of the world and it won't assist learning or society.

In *Gulliver's Travels*, the perfect form of living belongs to Houyhnhnms but when Swift presents them as non-human beings is very important because it shows that only such creatures are able to live in equilibrium and just utopia.

The dream of having a perfect, flawless and balanced society for human-beings will be long and may never bring the situations of the Houyhnhnms.

According to Ewald "As a satire, the main purpose of *Gulliver's Travels* is to show certain shortcomings in 18<sup>th</sup>- century English society..." (Ewald, 1967.151)

*Gulliver's Travels* has dependably been the most interesting work of Swift. Critics have given a different sort of interpretation of each of the four voyages, of Swift's satiric targets, and of the story voice. But the most pivotal to the comprehension of *Gulliver's Travels* is a comprehension of the fourth voyage, to the place where there are the Houyhnhnms. Merrel D. Clubb has noticed that "the more extended that one studies Swift, the more evident it turns into the elucidations and decision to be set on the 'Voyage to the Houyhnhnms' is, as it would turn out, the focal issue of Swift criticism, there Houyhnhnms, utilizing their 'general Reason' dependably act not for their own particular great, but rather for the benefit of their species." (Clubb.1914.211-213). A significant part of the contention encompasses three conceivable interpretations of the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos.

It is the pride that forced man to that he controlled himself, his surroundings and his predetermination. Gulliver's dismissal of all humanity was on the grounds that he neglected to experience some theoretical standards and hostile to the human philosophy. As per "Satiric structure and Tone in *the Conclusion of Gulliver's Travels*", by Raymond Bentman, "Swift planned Gulliver to be taken as insane and humorous not just to save himself against the holding convictions which the most of human beings discovered frightful, yet to allow his most noteworthy work in the status of a prophetic parody, and made clear what Swift saw as the intelligent consequences he could call his own time" (Ibid.543).

Thus *Gulliver's Travels* speaks to everybody. It was a beautiful simple tale for children and a testing parody for grown-ups, full of complexity to confuse them. Jonathan Swift, through *Gulliver's Travels*, demonstrated the requirement for reason in the political cooperation of England and Ireland amid the rule of King George II. The thoughts incorporated the vile ways and activities the sovereignty and the favored class took against the working and lower class. Swift's work is a timeless classic that critiques the human conditions.

### References:-

1. Robert P. Fitzgerald, *The Structure of Gulliver`s Travels*, Studies in Philology, Vol.71, No. 2 PP.247-263), University of North Carolina Press,1974
2. Downie, J,A., Political Characterization in Gulliver`s Travels, The Yearbook of English Studies, Vol 7, p. 282, 1977
3. Brady, Frank, *Twentieth Century Interpretation of Gulliver`s Travels*, Englewood Cliff, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc, 1968
4. Eddy,W.A, *Gulliver`s Travels: A Critical Study*. Princeton, 1963 N.J. 1923; repr. 22
5. Ewald, William, *The Mask of Jonathon Swift*,Oxford, Blackwell, 1954, 149-151
6. Merrel, D. Clubb “*The Criticism of Gulliver`s Voyage Hounyhnhnm*”1726-1914. Stanford Studies in Language and Language and Literature, Stanford, 1941
7. Reymond, Bentmen, *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. 531-548