



The Appreciation of the Satiric Arts and the Cultural Influence in *Gulliver's Travels*

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Abstract

As an outstanding literary giant of the 18th century in British literary history, Jonathan Swift, a famous English novelist, is well known for his flexible use of ironic skills in his works. It is just because of the ironic skills that his representative satiric novel, *Gulliver's Travels*, has been widely read up to now, leaving readers lost in its endless aftertastes. The essay is intended for appreciating the exquisite ironic skills and accordingly, bringing a supernatural, fantastic world to readers' mind, with the ironic skills ingeniously utilized by Swift. The novel also applies the funny form applied in *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*, by Francois Rabelais, simultaneously influenced by The War between England and France, by *Cecily* and *Anneddy* and fully reflects the English culture.

Key words: Satiric arts; Swift; *Gulliver's Travels*; Cultural influence

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INTRODUCTION

Jonathan swift (1667-1745), born in Berlin, Ireland's capital, is a most outstanding satirist, statesman essayist, political pamphleteer, poet and cleric who became dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, in Dublin, in the early 18th century. Representative works include *Gulliver's Travels*,

The Battle of the Books, *The Story of a Barrel*, *A Modest Proposal*, *A Journal to Stella*, *Drapier's Letters*, *An Argument Against Abolishing Christianity*, and *A Tale of a Tub*. Swift is recognized as the foremost prose satirist in public eyes but his poems are less well known to us. Swift originally published all of his works under pseudonyms. He is also known as the master of two styles of satire: the Horatian and Juvenalian styles. Swift is also the founder of the radical democracy in the British enlightenment movement.

Jonathan swift, an orphan of a decaying British aristocrat, is haunted by loneliness all his life. His father, a native of England, died in Dublin about 7 months before he was born, leaving him a posthumous child and his mother returned to England. He was committed to his influential uncle, Godwin, a close friend and confidant of John Temple, whose son later employed Swift as his secretary. His uncle shouldered the responsibility to bring him up, during which he entered the well known trinity college in Dublin (named after the "trinity" of the Catholicism), from which he received his B.A. in 1686, and developed his friendship with William Congreve. At the time, becoming the church's ministry was the safest way out for poor children, but his interests lay in history and literature, rather than theology and philosophy, troublesome courses to swift. Swift was studying for his Master's degree when political troubles in Ireland arising from the glorious revolution, forced him in 1688 to leave for England. Fortunately, his unfavorable academic career gave way to his acute intelligence, and he soon stepped into the society to make a living by pen, finally appearing in the political arena as a famous wielder of "Party" newspaper. In the process, he felt that the situation is tantamount to "a literate slave". Soon, he showed us the talent embedded in his incisive and wickedly sharp articles. One of his political articles revealing the corrupt acts of government directly led to the truce of British and French, which some people call "swift's contract".

Although he later became the prime minister's crony and the draftsman of the queen's speeches, he was still proud of his poverty. Swift had no official titles and never asked for remuneration for his checking up manuscripts; He was ever angry to return the bonus offered by the prime minister for his writing, declaring not to be a hired writer. The queen and her ministers expelled him out of London eventually for fear of the influence of his popularity and ironic articles. He actively devoted himself to the war of Irish people's struggle for freedom and independence in Dublin, publishing violently aggressive military theories, making the British colonial policies restrained. Swift is deeply loved by the Irish people. When the authorities placed a price on his head for his anonymous works, people offered him their duty-bound protection. When he returned from the last visit to the UK, the people accompanied him to return to his home in holding their torches and blowing their bells. Even so, the disillusion of ideals and the frustration of political career ultimately left him a victim of political struggles, and he finally suffered the fate of the nearly exiled return to Ireland. He became cynical and inclined to pour out his wrath because of bumpy life, as well as awareness of the evil and corruption from the upper society. In his later life, Swift was very lonely, with only a handful of friends accompanying him. He contributed a third of his savings to various charities, and built a St Patrick hospital with another one third of the income for the mentally disabled. At the end of his life, Swift encountered a bleak and miserable life. Encephalopathy, diagnosed at a young age increasingly deepened his suffering from deafness and intense headache. In the last years, the final mental disorder trapped him in lethargy from time to time and fits of vertigo or giddiness continued to plague Swift throughout his rest life. The outstanding satirist died on October 19, 1745, buried under St. Patrick's cathedral.

As a great thinker and writer standing on the high degree in ages, Swift's satiric works, which are widely appreciated and highly praised by many prominent figures from Fielding, a foreign famous writer, Byron, a talented poet in England to Lu Xun, a well-known Chinese writer, has a profound influence on later generations. His works are regarded as immortal masterpieces in the history of world literature. Swift is a prolific writer, especially notable for his satires. He is universally recognized as one of the greatest masters of English prose and a master of satirists and even today he is still regarded as a national hero in Ireland.

1. EXQUISITE IRONIC ARTS EMBODIED IN GULLIVER'S TRAVELS IN THE FORM OF TRAVEL BODY

Gulliver's Travels including a total of four parts is an outstanding masterpiece of Jonathan Swift in his later

years, describing the experience of surgeon Gulliver sailing drift to Lilliput, Brobdingnag, a flying island, and Houyhnhnms. The Novel, through the fictional plot and an exaggerated way, reflects British social contradictions in the first half of the eighteenth century, exposes and criticizes the corruption and evil of the British ruling class, as well as the crazy plundering and cruel exploitation of British bourgeoisie in the capitalist primitive accumulation period. The following brief analysis of the protagonist of the novel, Gulliver, is intended to usher us into the realm of his satire art embedded in the content of the work arrangement and the building of characters

The protagonist of the novel Gulliver, like Robinson, was born to be obsessed with adventure, and unwilling to remain out of limelight. Gulliver is inherent in strong memory, good at learning and observation, adept at thinking, endowed with unique thinking as well as moderate and guileless temperament, friendly and kind to people, easy to communicate with people, grateful to his helpers, gentle to others, willing to help any friend, willing to risk his life for his friends, and ready to fight against all who are adverse to his friends. At the same time, he is witty, courageous, tactful and reasonable while tackling affairs, eloquent and smart while speaking, and decisive and resolute while behaving. He can seize every opportunity to pursue freedom, with a strong self-confidence and believe that he will surely succeed. He is frank, patriotic and sensitive to his reputation as well. Meanwhile, he is hostile, disgusted and scornful of people full of hatred to him, but respects noble men and knowledgeable scholars. In general, he is a traveler with reasoning spirit, passion for the truth, and endure for life. In his travels, he comes to the conclusion that British society is not civilized. In view of increasing corruption reality of the society, Gulliver's image, is the manifestation of the author's thought. The author gives life to the characters in his story with his own virtues. Gulliver does not care about personal gain and loss, and takes good care of others. Gulliver is a positive ideal character.

Swift uses a large number of ironies in his novel, fully embodying his witty, humorous satire ability. In this novel, the ubiquitous use of ironies working as the soul of the work is conducive to pushing the article to the peak of the sharpness. Even Scott thought that Swift richened the moral implications of his works with humor, exposed absurdity with irony, and with the characters and narrative framework applied, incredible events became a reality. Even *Robinson Crusoe* is also hard to match with its excellence, in terms of the caustic and diverse narration.

When the author lashes and satirizes the British parliament and reactionary political and religious forces relentlessly and pungently through the work, literal contempt, gentile breath, caustic metaphor, as well as metonymic sarcasm by beast became his arms, all of

which are humorous and vivid. The unique artistic charm of the fiction is also reflected in the organic combination between the fantasy of the plot and the reality of the truth. Although the author shows a fictional magic world like a fairy tale, it is based on a realistic social life of the British life. The fine, precise and exquisite descriptions of the author bring us into a real world, rather than a fictional illusion.

Gulliver's Travels describes four fantastic voyages of Gulliver. Swift describes him as an observer, a reporter and a victim of circumstance. "Swift's *Gulliver's travels* is best remembered for Gulliver's visit to Lilliput" (Smith, 2001, p.261). In his first travel, his ship wrecks and of all his crew, he alone survives. His accident takes him to Lilliput where he is a giant observing tiny people and where the tallest lilliputian is only six inches. The emperor in Lilliput advises Gulliver to learn language, and supplies enough food to him. With his help, Lilliput easily beats the neighboring fleet. He wins the generous reward offered by the emperor because of his help. However, it is his unwillingness to continue to destroy the neighbors that enrage the emperor. Once, the imperial palace is on fire, and he douses the fire burning in the queen's bedroom with his urine, arousing the discontent hidden in the hearts of the queen and some ministers. The navy secretary falls into the abyss of jealousy because of his wife's contact with Gulliver, while the chancellor of exchequer complains that Gulliver's appetite is too large, in the long run, which will cause the empty offers. The discontent hidden in the heart of the emperor is stimulated by the queen and ministers, in the end, secretly deciding to blind Gulliver's eyes, and slowly reduce his food supply until he starves to death. Gulliver gets the news and flees to the nearby country. Miraculously he gets a small boat and with the help of the neighbor country's emperor, he repairs the boat, leaving the island. During the period of his stay in the island, through his meticulous observation, he notices acute contradictions arising from the small state-owned country, among which, wearing shoes with high or low heels brings the formation of high heel party and low heel party. In order to get more support, the prince has to wear shoes with both a high heel and a low heel. External contradiction arises from the egg's way of beat, one claiming to beat the big head, while the other deeming it right to beat the small head, finally the big end party and small end party form. Through the story, Swift pours out his satire on the battles of the Tories, the incarnation of low heels and the Whigs, the embodiment of high heels, both of which he ever serves, finally ending in the victory of the Tory. The emperor himself in Lilliput has lower—heeled shoes with one heel higher than the other one, making him walking unevenly, which attacks the injustice of the government. In terms of the argument over breaking eggs with big head or from small head, it reflects the religious wars, meanwhile,

satirizing the continuous wars between Britain and France. Initially, although Gulliver thinks the Lilliput and the British are not alike, in fact Lilliput is the portrayal of the British. Through seemingly ridiculous logic, we can see that the king, a nail higher than his subjects only, he arrogantly makes himself the ruler of the universe, who can decide the fate of the common people with his fit of moody uncertainty. Officials need not be qualified with both ability and political integrity, whoever jumps high can get high position. All kinds of exquisite satires reflected on the political situation are hidden in a small story.

In Brobdingnag, he is the tiny person in a land of giants where he is exhibited as a curiosity at markets and fairs. The story puts the satire on English lords and ladies. The flying island of Laputa is the scene of his next voyage. Scientists from the flying island, isolated from the people and the actual life, are engaged in irrelevant "scientific research". Especially to the inhabitants of the land, surprising brutal means fall upon slightly rebellious ones, of blocking sunlight while aircrafts flying up in the sky or of rolling the inhabitants into powder when landing. Here is the incarnation of British colonial ruling in Ireland. Gulliver also goes to a magic kingdom, dating from the period when Roman politics exist, and compares it with the British system. At this time, his thoughts have been converted from the support to the Monarchy to the Republic. However, he is just favor of the patriarchal society under "natural state". In this story, a satire on corrupted philosopher and projectors is spread under his pen. "The fourth book of Gulliver (*Houyhnhnms*) is significantly different from the first three books" (Laffal, 1995, p.349). The fourth and final voyage takes him to the home of the *Houyhnhnms*, where gentle horses rule the land, where he encounters Yahoos, filthy bestial creatures who resemble humans. Yahoos are just the incarnations of the corrupt people in the story. In the fourth volume, it is true of the descriptions of money. Gulliver comes to the world without money, army and policemen and explains to his horse master: people in our kingdom consider either spending or saving money, and an eternal truth is the more people have, the better life is. Their nature is greed and luxury. The rich enjoy the fruits of the poor laborers but the proportion of the poor and the rich is one thousand to one. Thus, most of our people are forced to live a miserable life.

The novel not only attacks the social status, but on a deeper level, directly satirizes the human nature itself. The author is aware of pure money relation in capitalist society among people, and therefore, overcome by his doubt on human nature. Gulliver's adventures include a total of four times, with a time span of 16 years and 7 months. He recorded all these personal stories, and he said "the only purpose for me is to cater for the interests of the public, so no matter what happened, I can never be disappointed".

2. THE INFLUENCE OF GULLIVER'S TRAVELS ON BRITISH CULTURE

Wu Houkai made a deeper evaluation of *Gulliver's travels* in literature status: *Gulliver's Travels* is a unique masterpiece. The novel, which is similar to European novels in the 18th century, gives an account of a series of adventures of the hero drifting at sea, inheriting the structure methods of the tramp novel, taking over the popular story of travels, especially the novel mode of sailing adventure.

In a sense, it is affected by *Robinson Crusoe*, by Defoe and other adventure novels of travel definitely. Although *Gulliver's Travels* is similar to these novels, the nature is different. *Gulliver's Travels*, which is endowed with different unique properties from realistic novels rising at the beginning of the eighteenth century, is the further development of the *stories of Barrels and the War of Books*. We can find traces of British society at that time in this fictional work. The work reflects all sorts of contradictions and religious wars at the first half of the 18th century in British society.

Each society has its cultural tradition, embodied by various forms: such as literature, religion, education and others, but in Swift's works, in addition to the combination between literature and culture, the organic unity of fantasy and reality is the biggest characteristic of this work. This work has been translated into many languages and widely enjoys the preference of readers from all over the world. The art form of Swift is ubiquitous in all corners of the world, bringing the profound influence on the culture of the UK and other countries. "In the nearly three hundred years since it was first published, however, *Gulliver's Travels* has become associated with children's literature, though it is usually abridged, bowdlerized, and/or totally transformed" (Stallcup, 2004, p.100). The Bart Press of London tower, for the first time, published a special children's version, with three colorful copper illustrations in 1805. So far, only the adventure in Lilliput and Brobdingnag has been involved in the children's version of *Gulliver's Travels*. *Gulliver's Travels* has an important influence on children's literature in the UK and the world, and especially the fantastic technique and descriptions make sense creatively in the history of British children literature. In addition, it is not a simple children's book, but a literature masterpiece full of the applications of irony and criticism. "His well-known *Gulliver's Travels*, apart from being a serious human being criticism,

contains many interesting and unrecognized comments about medical and other scientific facts. Swift made what seems to be the first account of a dement illness in the elderly" (Marcelo, 2011, p.396). "Apart from its keen political satire, *Gulliver's Travels* approaches, in a very non-standard way, interesting socioeconomic topics such as the legal system, political science, and colonization" (Fernandes, 2001, p.98). The famous English writer George Orwell read more than six times in his life, adding:

If I had to open a bibliography to list six books at the cost of other books' destruction I would take *Gulliver's travels* into the list as in this book, Swift's narrative techniques and irony got reflected incisively and vividly to the fullest.

CONCLUSION

Gulliver's Travels is provided with the profound thought connotation and a comparatively perfect art form. Swift's artistic skills in many aspects are worth our reference and learning. Swift depicts the British social reality at that time with fictional plot and fantastic skills. At the same time, he also creates a rich, colorful and fantastic world like a fairy tale, based on the reality of the British. Swift's fantasy world is based on reality, in which, the reality of conflict is more concentrated. Everything is reasonable, bulletproof, and at the same time, realistic art of the work has a great appeal, which pushes the satire to a high peak of effect.

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