Swift’s Critique of XVIII century England:

La obra es una sátira de Inglaterra.

Exageration and caricature. Descriptions of Emperor.

Irony and humour, as a sarcastic novel.

Jonathan Swift (1667 - 1745):

He was born in Dublin. He was an Anglican priest. Satirist.

Colonial identity.

Critic: costumes, society, English prostitution, English system, public figures….

We can connect with some Satire characteristics (some type of jokes, sarcasm, making fun of the characters, exaggerations…).

Against France.

Also travel literature (+satire). Inventing places and people. Series of journeys. Critic to this travel literature. Exaggeration of this travel, even inventing it.

Part II. Chapter 1: the narrator is Gulliver himself and the main character.

Presented as travel literature. Record of the thing he sees. Use of technical language. Date, time, latitude (5 degrees of latitude)… Mocking of it. Particular details. Accurate descriptions. Verisimilitude. We also have a map to preside the location.

¿Cómo se explica que llegara a Lilliput? Evento sobrenatural: una tormenta y un naufragio, donde queda él sólo, sin nadie más que pueda dar testimonio, verify, del suceso.

Excepto en el último viaje, donde es el capitán. En el medio del mar hay un motín y vuelve a quedar él sólo. Luego llega a la isla.

The place is fantasy, they are not real: Lilliput is invented. Fantasy and imagination.

Caricaturización y exageración (Part 1, chapter 5: Voyage to Lilliput. Cuando se quema el Castillo). Repeating words of the native people from the islands.

Ironía en el propio personaje por cómo actúa y por cómo le tratan. Por lo que le pasa y lo que le hacen.

Chapter 6: end of the second journey. Meeting the government of the island and having interviews with them (politics). Position of disadvantage.

Paricular satirización:

* Rationalism. Gulliver is a scientific man, and he feels that he is better than some other people. He is selfish. Science explains everything in the world. (La tecnología (ciencia) nos da derecho a maltratar al resto de seres vivos del planeta).

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Swift’s Critique of Eighteenth Century England:

Rationalism and Cartesian thought (abstraction of truth into purely intellectual concepts) → scientific spirit.

Experimental and theoretical science (Royal Society).

Conception of man as outcome of reason and science.

The new moneyed wealth of England (trade & speculation).

Increasing power of centralised government, concentrated on a few Ministers (Walpole) and the King.

Critique of British Colonialism and foreign politics.

Swift: a Christian (man’s fallen nature) and a Humanist (preservation of moral and spiritual qualities). Chain of Being. Human beings as flawed creatures. Human beings were instinct, which makes them closer to animals. Human between animal and God. An example of this could be: book number 4: because the habitants were animals: horses and monkeys (yahoos). The difference between the two of them is that the monkeys were more instinct, they did not have the ability to speak. The horses, that were the rulers of the island, had intellectual, they cannot lie (it was not in their language), epitome of perfection. Horses did not like monkeys as they considered them animal because of their instinct.

Progression of Gulliver as character: common man → outcast. Is Gulliver affected during his travel? Because of the weird situations he lives? Physical and psychological changes?

Pride:

As a Christian and a moralist, Swift inherited a tradition in which pride was regarded as the chief human fault and a “main cause of psychological distortion” of “prejudice, misperception, misunderstanding, and worse, delusion, in one’s thinking about oneself and everything else”. He lives in a kind of illusion. Empieza como un personaje normal y llega muy cambiado.

Gulliver’s pride:

◦ Position of moral superiority (Books I & III). When he travelled to Lilliputh of Laputa. They represent a bad society and criticizes some institutions clearly. (connection between book I and III) .

◦ Moral and critical judgement of others.

◦ As a metaphor: Defective sight and myopic vision. He has eye’s problems. He has inability to see the world properly.

◦ Gulliver’s eventual madness and alienation from the human race (misanthropy). He feels desperation at the end of the novel. Misantropo.

Narrative Structure of Gulliver’s Travels:

Who is the narrator and the protagonist? Gulliver.

Does he give the manuscript to someone? He gives it to Mr Sympson.

We have 2 letters at the beginning of the novel. It is said that the editor is Sympson.

How is he presented in the letters? Can we trust him? Is he reliable? He is respected by neighbours, reliable… This is ironic as the island are like fiction.

In the second edition of the novel, there is a second letter: in this letter it is a sense of disclaimed. He complains about the edition of the novel. He is upset with the final product of the novel because some information was omitted, and he also added some críticas. It is part of the satire.

Memoir-Novel: elaborate narrative apparatus → verisimilitude.

• Notice from Sympson to Reader (43): https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gulliver%27s\_Travels/Th e\_Publisher\_to\_the\_Reader.

• Letter from Gulliver to Richard Sympson: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gulliver's\_Travels/A\_Lett er\_from\_Captain\_Gulliver\_to\_His\_Cousin\_Sympson.

• Gulliver’s narrative (Four Voyages): attachment to truth (chapter I).

Relationship among Voyages:

This order is made because of the evolution of the personage. He is in a position of vulnerability, never in equal conditions.

Books I & III:

* Critique of 18th-century English Society→ Gulliver’s detachment. Positions of superiority.
* Lilliput/Laputa.
* Focus of Gulliver’s **ridicule**.

Are we just reason? We do not need passion, instinc…? It is imposible. Gulliver feels that he has limitations.

He feels identify with the giants, and he wants to feel like them. In one point he feels as bigger as them. They are humans beings.

Horses are not human beings, they are just intellectuals. Alianated.

When Gulliver is abandoned by the horses, a Portuguese save him. Don Pedro is the epitome of generosity.

Books II & IV:

* Critique focuses on Gulliver as sample of humankind→Gulliver’s identification (185).
* Gulliver: object of ridicule himself. Position of disadvantage and inferiority.

Two major devices:

1. Comparison & Opposition: George Berkeley’s New Theory of Vision (1709). Relativity of Judgement (125). Sense of displacement.
2. Intensification/progression of Critique.

• Gulliver: invariably in a position of disadvantage.

Common Structure to All Voyages:

Justification of Gulliver’s Departure.

Exact date of departure.

Name of ship.

Weather conditions during voyage: latitude & map.

Storm/riot: disruptive element.

Description of unknown land.

Satisfaction of physical necessities.

Language acquisition.

Description of life and habits of inhabitants.

Gulliver’s Search (spectacles; 73/handkerchief).

Object of Ridicule.

Gulliver’s Friend (Book I: Reldresal 106. Book II: King 173).

Return to England.

Satire. Adressed to political people. Early 18 century England. Critic lifestyle, institutions… It has didactic intention. Humorous novel. Ridiculous situations. Full of details. Knowledge of navigation.

Ironic aspects: travel book of places that never existed, and he describes it with details.

Not only he parodies travel literature, but also some conventions of the realistic novel such as verisimilitude, accuracy, and literature as a mirror of life.

The parody is entailed in the first two letters of the Preface. There are 2 letters: the first one written by Sympson (the editor, who introduces the character as a reliable person).

Gulliver publishes a second letter, which is an addition on the second edition, where he complains about the role of editorship. He says that the novel has several inaccuracies, in terms of omissions.

It is a first-person narrator; Gulliver is the narrator and the protagonist of the events. But there some parts that were manipulated by the editor (this all is similar to Moll Flanders).

Relation of the different journeys (the disposition of the journeys has a lot to do with a particular critic made to England as a country):

* Book I and book III: phonetics similarities of the names “Lilliput” and “Laputa”. Concentrated in a particular critique to England: English people, institutions, government… In the book we find negative societies.
* Book II and book IV: we find “better societies ideal”. These places put Gulliver in a position of vulnerability, disadvantages… He is never in a position of equality. As a consequence, we (readers that see the world through Gulliver’s narration) are also placed in a position of vulnerability.

Book I: Critique of Modern Political Practice:

Lilliput: Gulliver feels physical superiority, in terms of size and moral superiority, as they are presented with negative vicious and cruel.

– Tyranny of Monarch & capricious nature (78-9): https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gulliver%27s\_Travels/Part\_ I/Chapter\_III. Anxiety of ascend (socially). Political ascension is linked with a dance, with a play of not falling from the rope.

– Critique of political events: Treaty of Utrecht (89).

– Court scandal (102): https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gulliver%27s\_Travels/Part\_ I/Chapter\_VI. Having an affair with other member of the office (this happened in real life and also to Gulliver).

– Gulliver’s impeachment (acusación, destitución) (parody of impeachment of 4 Tory Ministers in 1715).

– Betrayal of Friend (106): https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gulliver%27s\_Travels/Part\_ I/Chapter\_VII.

Book II: Fair political practice/Moral integrity:

Brobdingnag: giants. Positive society, positive characters. Gulliver’s identifies himself. He describes kind of lands, kingdoms and he refers to the kind of knowledge, training, the education that they have… It is ironic, because in this book he says that people there were more concerned with practical knowledge rather than with abstractions, what he sees as something negative, which is also ironic because that is precisely the ideal of science. “Right perception of science” (in contrast with Laputans). Society concerned about hunger, wars, problems… Gulliver not only in smaller in terms of science, but also in terms of his position in human beings, he is inferior. Ridiculous character though the novel. He is not taken seriously; he is ridiculed lots of times. “A weird king of creature”.

He is adopted by a family that discovers that he is very profitable to take him to fairs and markets; showing him as a diversion.

• Empirical knowledge, rejection of abstraction, language (177):’The learning of this people …’ https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gulliver%27s\_Travels/Part\_II/ Chapter\_VII.

• Similar problems to humankind (179): ‘I was curious to know how this prince...’ https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gulliver%27s\_Travels/Part\_II/ Chapter\_VII.

• Critique falls on Gulliver as a representative of England and humankind (172): ‘As for yourself …’ : https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gulliver%27s\_Travels/Part\_II/ Chapter\_VI.

• lusus naturae, freak of nature, he is identified by the people there as a yahoo (race of the horses), buuut he identifies himself with the giants, because they represent a positive society and good qualities. (142-3): ‘His majesty sent for three scholars …’: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gulliver%27s\_Travels/Part\_II/ Chapter\_III.

• Fascination with the often-ambiguous boundaries of human nature, intense curiosity about those borderline cases were expressed in the popular culture of Swift’s day, where fairs and outdoor entertainments regularly featured monster shows and exhibitions of a variety of prodigies and freaks, including giants, dwarfs, and hairy "wild" men resembling beasts.

He has forgot where his house was process of alienation. When he entered in his house he bent down (se agachó para pasar por la puerta), as he believes he is a giant.

Book III: Critique of modern philosophy and its effect on modern political practice:

Laputa: they are more defected, in practical things in life. They know about constructions, mathematics, physics… they are very good trained in this sense. But this seems to be a big disaster when it comes to everyday kind of things, as houses. “Excess of theorising” as negative, as it is not taken into account the application of science into practical things.

They are human beings, but they are deformed. That deformation minors their moral values. Gulliver does not identify himself with them, as they represent a negative society. Physically deformed, but also they do not look straight.

One of their eyes could turned inwards, so this means that they were obsessively focus on themselves, unable to see other and to care for others. The other eye was looking to he zenith, what has to do with speculation and abstraction… it is a failure when it goes to ordinary tasks, such as get dressed, or building houses… their “extremely rational” knowledge (good in mathematics, physics…) is useless because there are unable to apply it to anything profitable. Obsession (neurotics) with geometrical shapes (clothes and even the meal they eat). Alienation of the physical world.

• Critique on speculative knowledge: flying island (203), inhabitants (200): https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gulliver%27s\_Travels/Part \_III/Chapter\_II.

• Obsession with geometrical shapes (202): ‘The knowledge I had in mathematics …’ https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gulliver%27s\_Travels/Part \_III/Chapter\_II.

• Academy of Lagado (223-4): https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gulliver%27s\_Travels/Part \_III/Chapter\_V. This academy is a critic of Royal society in England.

• Cruel and vicious race: criminals (214); women (208).

Book IV: Ancient Utopian Politics. Platonic Philosophy:

He is unable to stay with the horses and behave like them.

Representation of a utopia, a society that cannot take place because it is really ideal. Swift cause doubts on this question on the ideal society. The representation of this society is inspired by a Platonic philosophy.

This land is habited by 2 different kind of creatures:

* Some weird of animals, similar to human shape. Between humans and monkeys. They do not have rationality. They have instincts. They are called Yahoos.
* Horses represent exactly the opposite: they represent intellect superiority, reason, rationality, purity, perfection… (passions desires) they are perfects according to Gulliver, who is completely impressed by houyhnhnm.

And, in presenting 2 oppossed human beings: Instinct and Intellect. It is very influenced by the Platonic philosophy, this mix makes us closer to perfection and closer to God.

• Inhabitants: ANIMALS, not human beings.

• **Yahoos** (269-70) vs **Horses** (286): <https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gulliver%27s_Travels/Part_IV/Chapter_VIII>. Gulliver identifies with those that represent the faction, no with the creatures that represent failure.

Ironic moments: the horses do not ever regard Gulliver as one of them rather they called him a “yahoo”, quite offensive for Gulliver as he defends that he has raison and the ability of speech. Horses believed him a Yahoo with a little bit of reason // He is unable to stay with the horses as he is a composite of instinct and reason, and he cannot regard his instinct side, from his own nature. // Human beings are not Yahoos.

In presenting Yahoos and Horses, Swift was trying to represent 2 opposite modes of behaviours:

* What if human beings just behave only driven by passion, desire, and instinct? Just the way of satisfying necessities. This would make than like Yahoos.
* A creature that just possesses intellect and it is not driven by passions, feelings, desires… This is also like “irrational”.

As he can find the correct balance between both, he gets crazy.

• Self-detachment (284, 314-5). Pride, as he identifies with the horses (307).

• English Politics: Glorious Revolution (292), nobility (304).

• Horses as pure intellect (316, 322).

• Slavery and race selection (319): <https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gulliver%27s_Travels/Part_IV/Chapter_IX> They made a meeting to talk about the extermination of all the Yahoos on earth.

• Lack of feelings and emotions. They are not human, they do not feel pain, love… Even when Horses family die. GENOCIDIO. Gulliver is also losing some feelings; for example, his last travel was while her wife was pregnant. He didn’t look after his family, he did not care.

• Don Pedro Mendez (336): https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gulliver%27s\_Travels/Part\_IV/Chapter\_XI. Portuguese captain who rescues Gulliver, without any kind of interest. But Gulliver is so proud and detached of human race, that he is unable to give Pedro any credit. Pedro represents actually a Cristian model: love for the other, care, generosity… He is balanced. But Gulliver is so blind and selfish that is unable to see that.

• Gulliver: alienation and misanthropy (344-45): <https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gulliver%27s_Travels/Part_IV/Chapter_XII>. He ended up being mad. He denies his own humanity. Alienated from society.

Conclusions: Gulliver is too proud to acknowledge his own humanity. Believing himself to be perfect, the most horrible sin that a man o a woman could ever commit.

Gulliver means being naïf.

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**Jonathan SWIFT (1667-1745)**

Born in Dublin to English family of the Anglican Ascendancy, the Protestant English minority that ruled over the vast Roman Catholic majority.

His father died before Swift was born + mother left him in charge of relatives => odd relation with women: admiration and, at once, tendency to attend to their scatological side [ex. disgusting sight of a female breast in the voyage to Brobdingnag, Ch. 1 (p. 130)].

**Education**: Kilkenny Grammar School + Trinity College, Dublin (BA *spetiale gratia* due to disciplinary problems).

1694: Takes orders as a priest for the Anglican Church of Ireland 🡪 Dean of St. Patrick’s (1713)

1704: Swift begins his literary career in England: *The Battle of the Books* (imaginary battle between old and modern works) together with *A Tale of a Tub* (attack on religious abuse, a defence of Anglicanism that was misunderstood by Queen Anne and cause him trouble)

Acquaintance with Joseph Addison, Richard Steele, and particularly John Gay and Alexander Pope.

Suffered from vertigo (Meniere’s Disease) most of his life, went insane in old age, developed a brain tumour and died.

Founds with Gay, Pope and others the “Scriblerus Club”, whose aim was to ridicule false learning through the character of the charlatan Martin Scriblerus.

* 1713: “a lover of liberty, I found myself more inclined to be what they call a Whig in politics […] But, as to religion, I confessed myself to be a High-churchman [i.e., a *Tory*]”
* 1714: Queen Anne dies and the Hanover successors (George I [1714-1727] and George II [1727-1760]) supported, and were supported by, the Whigs => Swift’s aspirations of personal promotion and efforts to improve the wretched state of Ireland were frustrated => Swift becomes an exemplary **Irish patriot**: vehement, furious, sarcastic, pessimist
* **1720-1730:** Swift produces his best work in a historical context marked by Britain’s oppressive colonial policy over Ireland (led by the Whigs) and by Irish passivity and victimism

1720: *A Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture* (claiming the right to trade)

1724-: *Drapier’s Letters*: a series of letters presumable written by a balanced, moderate and humble merchant in defence of Irish rights.

“For in reason, all government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of **slavery** […] by the laws of GOD, of NATURE, of NATIONS, and of your own COUNTRY, **you ARE and OUGHT to be as FREE** a people as your brethren in England.” **(Letter IV. “A Letter to the Whole People of Ireland”)**

1729: ***A Modest Proposal*** *for Preventing the Children of the Poor People of Ireland from Being a Burden to Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Public* (a shocking satire in which the political “projector” proposes to use the surplus of population to feed the rich: one-year-old Irish babies should be sold to the wealthy as food)🡪 Swift had given up any hope:

“As to this country, there have been three terrible years dearth of corn, and every place strowed with beggars, but dearths are common in better climates, and our evils here lie much deeper. Imagine a nation the two-thirds of whose revenues are spent out of it, and who are not permitted to trade with the other third, and where the pride of the women will not suffer them to wear their own manufactures even where they excel what come from abroad: This is the true state of Ireland in a very few words. These evils operate more every day, and **the kingdom is absolutely undone, as I have been telling it often in print these ten years past**.” **(Letter to A. Pope on August 11, 1729)**

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**GULLIVER’S TRAVELS**

Preliminary:

Full title: *Travels into several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts, By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of Several Ships.*

*The Memoirs of Martin Scriblerus* as precedent: Martin also visits “the ancient Pygmaean Empire”, “the Land of the Giants, now the most humane people in the world” and the “Kingdom of Philosophers, who govern by Mathematicks” and ends with the traveller discovering “a Vein of Melancholy proceeding almost to a Disgust of his Species”.

15 April 1721: mentions in a letter to Charles Ford that he feels attacked from all sides and declares he will strike back **by travelling** 🡪 genre of “**imaginary travel**” (a way to expose social evil; ex. Thomas More’s *Utopia* [1516]).

Actually, Swift **enjoyed reading travel Parts, but put the stress on its defects** (ex. In 1720 he annotated *A Relation of Some Yeares Travaile into Africa and Greater Asia* [1634]by Thomas Herbert: “If this Part were stript of its Impertinence, Conceitedness and tedious Digressions, it would almost worth reading, and would then be two thirds smaller than it is.” In 1722, he included in “the abundance of Trash” that he was reading “many diverting Parts of History and Travells” **(Quoted in J. A. Downie. *Jonathan Swift: Political Writer*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984. p. 266 ).**

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**Characteristics:**

1. Connected to history, historically anchored (abundance of historical, topical references) (ex. Part I. Ch. 4: *Tories-*high heels vs. *Whigs-*low heels, the latter in power now in Lilliput-England [p. 84]).
2. Argument is left open (as it addresses some [normally] social problem of the present which remains unsolved) (ex. social evils and human sins remain at the end of *Gulliver’s Travels*).
3. Clear intention: admonishing, punishing, hurting, reforming, warning, etc. (“the chief end I propose to myself in all my labours is to vex the world rather than divert it”. Letter to Pope on Sept. 29, 1725, commenting on *Gulliver’s Travels*).
4. Borrows from, or appropriates, other genres 🡪 formally protean (ex. *Gulliver’s Travels* is written in the form a “travel Part”)-> It can take the for of a newspaper article (ex. many of the pieces in Richard Steele’s *The Tatler* [Apr 1709-Jan 1711]), an epic poem (ex. Poe’s “mock heroic” poems), a projector’s pamphlet (ex. Swift’s *Modest Proposal*) …, even, a rock song (ex. Pink Floyd’s “Have a Cigar”).
5. Creates fantastic, absurd or grotesque worlds or situations (behind/beneath which we must see the real, present-day world).
6. Comicity and humour (often bittersweet, or, even, black), exaggeration and caricature (ex. Description of the Emperor of Lilliput in Part I Ch. 2 [p. 65]; or the projector of the Academy of Lagado in Part III Ch. 5 [pp. 223-231]).

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**SATIRE:**

**Some definitions:**

\*Northrop FRYE (1957): “Two things, then, are essential to satire; one is wit or humour founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd, the other is an object of attack.” **(*Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 224).**

\*Edward ROSENHEIM (1963): “[Satire is] an attack by means of a manifest fiction upon discernible historical particulars.” **(*Jonathan Swift and the Satirist’s Art*. Chicago: University of Chicago P, 31)**.

\*Stephanie B. HAMMER (1990): (a tripartite definition): “1.) Satire is a literary kind which borrows its form from other sorts of writing, 2.) satire is characterized by an attack or censure of vice and evil in society which fuses the aesthetic and ethical, and 3.) satire is characterized by its use of rhetorical and dramatic irony to effect its critique.” **(*Satirizing the Satirist: Critical Dynamics in Swift, Diderot, and Jean Paul*. New York: Garland, 12).**

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Power point presentation:

• Rationalism and Cartesian thought (abstraction of truth into purely intellectual concepts) → scientific spirit. *In the future we are going to find this in Frankestein.*

• Experimental and theoretical science (Royal Society). *Criticizes institutions.*

• Conception of man as outcome of reason and science. *Human being are reasons, without any kind of religious or moral values.*

• The new moneyed wealth of England (trade & speculation).

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*When Gulliver is abandoned by the horses, a Portuguese save him. Don Pedro is the epitome of generosity.*

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1) Comparison & Opposition: George Berkeley’s New Theory of Vision (1709). Relativity of Judgement (125). *Sense of displacement.*

2) Intensification/progression of Critique

• Gulliver: invariably in a position of disadvantage

COMMON STRUCTURE TO ALL VOYAGES:

• Justification of Gulliver’s Departure.

• Exact date of departure.

• Name of ship.

• Weather conditions during voyage: latitude & map.

• Storm/riot: disruptive element.

• Description of unknown land.

• Satisfaction of physical necessities.

• Language acquisition.

• Description of life and habits of inhabitants.

• Gulliver’s Search (spectacles; 73/handkerchief).

• Object of Ridicule.

• Gulliver’s Friend (Book I: Reldresal 106. Book II: King 173).

• Return to England.

BOOK I: CRITIC TO MODERN POLITICAL PRACTICE.