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Politics in Jonathan Swift's Literature

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Abstract

Jonathan Swift has been considered one of the most skillful authors of the eighteenth century due to his harsh and accomplished satirist style of writing, and the polemic that it caused in the society of the time. His masterpiece, *Gulliver's Travels*, an apparently simple travel book - among many others of the time- seems to camouflage, nevertheless, a brilliant satire that does not differ too much from the political essays and pamphlets published by the same author. In those writings, he harshly criticized the situation of his country by not only blaming Irish politicians and the British government, but also the own population and the stupidity of the human race. In this dissertation, I intend to find out about the author's ideology through the study of the ideas captured in his literature. For this purpose, I have first analyzed four of Jonathan Swift's political essays. Then, I have examined *Gulliver's Travels* from the perspective of the conclusions reached through these first readings in order to expose the connection between Swift's political treatises and his fiction.

Key words: Jonathan Swift, politics, corruption, *Gulliver's Travels*, government, Ireland, England

Jonathan Swift es considerado uno de los mejores autores del siglo dieciocho debido a su conseguido estilo satírico y por la polémica que causó en la sociedad de su tiempo. Su obra maestra, *Los Viajes de Gulliver*, que aparenta ser un simple libro de viajes -entre los muchos otros de su época-, presenta una brillante sátira que no se distingue demasiado de los ensayos y panfletos políticos que el mismo autor publicó, y en los cuales criticaba la situación de su país. Una crítica dirigida tanto a los políticos irlandeses y al gobierno británico, como a la propia población y a la raza humana en general. Con este trabajo pretendo acercarme a la ideología de este autor a través de las ideas que pudo plasmar en su literatura. Para ello, he analizado cuatro de sus ensayos políticos para después examinar *Los Viajes de Gulliver* desde la perspectiva de este primer análisis, y así poder revelar la conexión que existe entre los tratados políticos de Swift y su ficción.

Palabras clave: Jonathan Swift, política, corrupción, *Los Viajes de Gulliver*, gobierno, Irlanda, Inglaterra.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	7
1. Jonathan Swift: life and works.....	8
1.1. Prose works.....	10
2. Ireland: Political context.....	10
2.1.The relation with England.....	11
2.1.1. Repercussions: A damaged economy.....	12
3. Political Ideas.....	13
3.1. <i>A Modest Proposal</i>	13
3.2. <i>A Short View of the State of Ireland</i>	15
3.3. <i>The Art of Political Lying</i>	16
3.4. <i>Predictions for the Year 1708</i>	17
4. <i>Gulliver's Travels</i>	18
4.1. Part I: A voyage to Lilliput.....	19
4.2. Part II: A Voyage to Brobdingnag.....	23
4.3. Part III: A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbubdrib and Japan	26
4.4. Part IV: A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms.....	30
Conclusion.....	33
Works cited.....	36

Introduction

Even though a common reader might believe that *Gulliver's Travels* is just a travel book or a children's adventure story, it is well known by scholars, critics and other people with certain knowledge of English literature, or Jonathan Swift, that the subtext of this novel is a political message. Therefore, this topic has been already studied, practically since the book's publication. In this dissertation, I intend to give it a new approach by not only looking at the political metaphors and historical references that we can find within each chapter of *Gulliver's Travels*, but also by trying to deduce the ideas that this author had in mind and wanted to convey with his literature. For this purpose, I have decided to analyze this book, along with four of the political pamphlets written by the same author, in the belief that the ideas expressed in them are crucial to understand the political message in *Gulliver's Travels*. Actually, what most differentiates this from previous studies is my comparison of the novel with the political pamphlets. In this way, I have applied the conclusions of these first readings to the interpretation of *Gulliver's Travels*. From these texts I will approach Swift's ideology: what he thought about eighteenth-century society and the aspects that he desired to change in order to improve it.

This dissertation consists of four main sections. The first two set the historical part containing the background that will locate us within the political context of the period and within Swift's life. Then, the other two sections set up the practical analysis. Section three examines four political pamphlets of the author (*A Modest Proposal*, *A Short View of the State of Ireland*, *The Art of Political Lying*, and *Predictions for the Year 1708*), meanwhile the fourth section contains the study of *Gulliver's Travels*, analyzed in the light of Swift's political ideas as expressed in these essays. Thus, I attempt to see the criticism in them and their link with the ideas taken from the previous pamphlets.

It must be said beforehand that Swift's personality is not simple at all, we are going to see how he was raised and educated in a well-off family with the suitable conditions for a comfortable life. This means that he was not directly affected by the social problems suffered

by the poorest population of Ireland. But, in spite of this, he seemed really concerned with the common people's social problems. He was born and raised in Ireland but he lived in England most of his adulthood, so he had connections with both countries. To further complicate his personality, his political preferences changed throughout his life, and he actually seemed to be dissatisfied with politics in general. As we shall see, he seemed to be quite liberal regarding political thought, but he had conservative ideas coming from his religious convictions, something that significantly influenced his ideology.

1. Jonathan Swift: life and works

An author's background is necessary to understand his literary production. This is the case of Jonathan Swift, whose biography will help us understand the basis of what critics have considered key points of his literature. These are his relationship with his home country and with England, as well as the events leading him into politics.

Jonathan Swift was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1667 and he lived until 1745. His parents were English who had to move to Ireland after the Stuart Restoration. His father died seven months before Jonathan's birth and his mother went back to England, leaving Swift under the care of his uncle Godwin, a close friend of Sir John Temple's whose son would eventually employ Swift as his personal secretary in England (Fox x-xii). Swift was educated at Kilkenny Grammar School, one of the best schools of the time in Ireland; and later, he graduated in Trinity College, Dublin, where he obtained an unexceptional academic record that was besmirched due to many offences against discipline (Fox 17). During all his life, his temperament did not help him to gain many friends, but he mixed up with many important personalities such as the poet Alexander Pope.

In 1688, with the beginning of the Glorious Revolution –the War between the Catholic king James II and the Protestant William of Orange- Swift moved to England where he worked for the English diplomat William Temple, the job that introduced him to political issues. During Swift's life, there were two main opposing political parties in England: the Whigs -the liberal

party- initially supported by him and the Tories -the conservative party- (Encyclopedia Britannica, "Whig and Tory"). In 1710, he started supporting this party and attacked the Whigs in the British newspaper where he published, *The Examiner*. According to Joseph McMinn (19), the reason for Swift's final preference for the conservative party was the Whig's support and toleration for dissenters (English Protestants who dissented from the Church of England) in contrast with the Tory defense of the Anglican Church.

As we can see, this writer was quite active in religious issues: in 1695 he was ordained priest in Dublin and took the prebendary of Kilroot, near Belfast. Five years later, he became vicar of Laracor, County Meath and prebendary of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. Then, in 1713 he finally received the title of Dean in the mentioned Cathedral and returned to London where he met important personalities such as the Tory wits Alexander Pope, John Gay, Robert Harley, Thomas Parnell or John Arbuthnot during the meetings of the "Scriblerus Club." This was an informal British literary club founded in 1727, whose aim was to ridicule, through the use of satire, their contemporary scholars' attempt to impress with their jargon, or in other words, the frivolity in cultural life (McMinn 22-23).

In addition to politics and religion, it is also interesting to look at Swift's peculiar view of the human race, which has been labeled by Fox as a possible case of misanthropy: "he does not hate specific people; he just does not expect very much from them" (3). Swift himself said that "man is not a rational animal, but an animal capable of reason."

To conclude, a fact of important biographical interest is the letter that Jonathan Swift wrote to Alexander Pope, in which he expressed his political principles in an attempt of self-vindication for those who had misunderstood his intentions due to his complex satire and parody. In short, he claimed that "he always felt a responsibility to expose corruption and hypocrisy, as well as the right to do so" (McMinn 25).

1.1. Prose works

Jonathan Swift started to write under William Temple's influence. Swift's first writings consist on short essays and a manuscript for a later writing, and the edition of Temple's memoirs after his death in 1699 (Fox 18-19). His first political pamphlet was *A Discourse on the Contests and Dissentions in Athens and Rome*, published in 1701, in which he defended the ideology of the Whig party. Later in 1704, he released three satires anonymously. These are *A Tale of a Tub*, *The Battle of the Books* and *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*, in which he criticized the divisions within Christianity. They would transform Swift's career by demonstrating in them his satirical talent (McMinn 20). After becoming editor of *The Examiner*, he denounced the Whig government in *The Conduct of the Allies* (1711) and England's colonial behaviour in *The Story of the Injured Lady* (published in 1746). He also wrote about economy in several essays such as in *A Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture* (1720) or in the seven pamphlets collected in *The Drappiers Letters*. Almost all of these topics are under examination in this dissertation, when examining some of Swift's treatises and his fiction book: *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World, in Four Parts*, better known as *Gulliver's Travels*, published in 1726.

2. Ireland: Political context

This section analyses the historical events that can be considered the basis of the problems taking place in the eighteenth century and therefore important to understand Swift's criticism of that society, as it is inevitable to think of the context in which his writings were being created, mainly because of their relation with the events that were taking place in the Ireland of the time; including the social, religious and political situation. However, we cannot talk only about this country in isolation, considering the important role that England played in all these aspects of the history of Ireland and in the author's life itself.

Thus, in order to understand the complex social, political and religious situation of Ireland in the eighteenth century, it is necessary to look at external factors such as the connections between Ireland and England, and on the other hand, to the internally divided Ireland in religious and political terms. For this reason, this part of the paper reviews some important events of the past, from the twelfth century till the times of Swift.

2.1 The relation with England

The strained connections between both countries started early, in the twelfth century when Henry II and the principal king of the island, Rory O'Connor, signed a Treaty for which Ireland would support the presence of the English king in return for the defense against the Norman invaders. Therefore, the relations seemed to start as a peaceful agreement that would turn, over the years, into several disputes between kings and their attempts to control the neighboring country. Some of the first restrictive laws imposed to Ireland date from the year 1366, when the king Edward III established a law within the Statue of Kilkenny whose purpose was to defend the English colonists from the powerful Irish Lordship of the time (Joyce 108-109). With this, they tried to make a difference between the English settlers and the Irish natives by forbidding the mix of both cultures. Rather than solving any problem, this measure contributed to the increase of hostilities between the two races. Later, in 1494, Henry VII enacted the Poyning law which banned the meetings of the Irish Parliament without the permission of the English king (Joyce 120). Thus, the English political control slowly increased and continued during those years and especially with the arrival of the Stuart dynasty (1603-1714), a period of religious oppressions and radical politics that will reach its highest point with Elisabeth I and her persecution of Catholics. But getting closer to the eighteenth century, which is the period reflected in Swift's writings, the Glorious Revolution (1688) was a key factor. It started with James II's decision to appoint Catholics to various offices, something that was considered a threat for the Restoration political settlement (Oakleaf 32). In this conflict Ireland supported King James II, who was nevertheless defeated by the Protestant English king William III. He invaded Ireland and then acceded to the power, imposing the dominance of the Irish Protestants over a majority of Catholic population.

Between 1692 and 1704, several Penal Laws were established in Ireland, depriving Irish Catholics of many of their rights (Kilfeather 44-45): These encouraged Protestant settlement in Ireland, the Catholics' property was reduced, and the Test Act of 1704 stopped Catholics from buying land. At the same time, the power of the rich Protestants was politically and economically limited by the English government, as the best positions in both church and government were occupied by the English settlers. In short, the power was actually in the hands of English natives while the Protestants just enjoyed of certain advantages within the Irish society (Kilfeather 45).

2.1.1. Repercussions: A damaged economy

As mentioned above, Ireland suffered important restrictions of power, which meant that its parliament had no weight in terms of political decisions. But most importantly, the English policy towards Ireland affected the island in economic terms. The following acts had economic consequences which will be discussed in detail in connection with some of the author's political essays: Firstly, the English Navigation Act of 1663, in which the exportation of Irish products was limited to England. It was not especially harmful to Ireland because the country did not export many products to other countries, but its application implied the same kind of constrictions that were applied to the American colonies. Later in 1660, the Navigation Act was amended with the prohibition of wool exportation to any country with the exception of some English ports (Joyce 707). The purpose of this measure was to ensure the monopolization of the Irish wool industry, resulting in the destruction of the most important economic sector in Ireland, and consequently, the waves of emigration: "It is stated that 40,000 of the Irish Protestants were immediately reduced to poverty by it; and 20,000 Puritans left Ireland for New England" (Joyce 232).

In conclusion, Ireland was subdued over these years to the same type of control and restrictions of a colony, which contributed to the country's poverty, causing problems of unemployment and famine. As we shall see, Swift employed his writing as a political tool by satirizing of all these injustices as we are going to see in some of the essays that have been analyzed in the next section.

3. Political Ideas

The analysis of these four political pamphlets aims at figuring out the author's personal vision of the politics of the time. The selected texts are *A Modest Proposal*, *The Art of Political Lying*, *A short view of the state of Ireland*, and *Predictions for the year 1708*. Some of them are written in a more direct and clear way than others that are, on the contrary, more satirical and ironic, so they need to be interpreted.

I have selected these four pamphlets due to the fact that each of them reveal Swift's opinion about different issues that, as I have noticed during my readings, were a matter of concern for the author. Hence, each of them can be considered illustrative of the topics discussed or explained in other texts. Additionally, in my selection, I have taken into account the points that I wanted to highlight for the analysis of *Gulliver's Travels*. The most important are the Irish problems, the government's unsuitability and corruptions and the abusive powers.

I have decided to present them from the latest to the oldest, as I consider that the following first two treatises –especially *A Modest Proposal*– are some of the most harsh and representative of his political unrest and the use of his characteristic satirical tone. In this way, the reader can get used to Swift's use of irony and satire from the beginning, for a better understanding of the more subtle metaphors. Additionally, the choice of these pamphlets, published both in his early and late years as a writer, has to do with my intention to analyze the evolution of Swift's personality, instead of just focusing on the times of *Gulliver's Travels*.

3.1. *A Modest Proposal* (1729)

A Modest Proposal (1729) is one of the pamphlets published in *The Examiner*, whose full title is *A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from Being a Burthen to their Parents, or the Country, and for making them Beneficial to the Public*. The title introduces the reader to the irony that he is going to find all along the essay, which starts by implying that children can be “a burden for their parents or the country”. Swift proposes, in an apparently serious and formal way, that children from poor families, who are starving because

of their financial hardship, could be sold in the market so they would feed rich people in order to solve the problems of famine, overpopulation and unemployment. The author pretends that this is a serious economic study by means of statistics and calculations that justify his arguments, but his cruel suggestions are the result of his satirist style. Moreover, he suggests cooking recipes and he even claims that it will benefit both the poor and the wealthy families and their morality: “It would increase the Care and Tenderness of Mothers towards their Children [...] Men would become as fond of their Wives, during the Time of their Pregnancy” (Swift, *A Modest Proposal* 114). Besides, he talks about the poor children as if they were cattle, calculating their weight, the age at which they should be sold and their price: “I have reckoned upon a Medium, that a Child just born will weigh 12 Pounds, and in a solar Year, if tolerably nursed, encreaseth to 28 Pounds” (Swift, *A Modest Proposal* 109).

The targets of Swift’s criticism in this essay are: the landlords, “I grant this Food will be somewhat dear, and therefore *very proper for Landlords*, who, as they have already devoured most of the Parents, seem to have the best Title to the Children” (Swift, *A Modest Proposal* 110); the Irish government, blaming them for their incapability to conduct any serious attempt that could improve the situation in Ireland; and naturally, the English government:

[...] we can incur no Danger in *disobliging* England. For this kind of Commodity will not bear Exportation, the Flesh being of too tender a Consistence, to admit a long Continuance in Salt, *although, perhaps, I cou’d name a Country, which wou’d be glad to eat up our whole Nation without it.* (Swift, *A Modest Proposal* 116)

England is accused of its abusive relation towards Ireland whereas the Irish are incapable of solving the problems by themselves. Furthermore, he complains about the fact that his previous (and more serious) proposals that we are going to see below, have not been heard and that’s why now he proposes a more radical one.

3.2. *A Short View of the state of Ireland (1727)*

In this earlier pamphlet, Swift focuses on economic matters, attacking those who pretend that Ireland is a prosperous nation. He starts with a list of fourteen factors that contribute to a thriving kingdom: “the Fruitfulness of the Soil [...] the Convenience of safe Ports and Havens, to carry out their own Goods [...]” (Swift, *A Short View of the state of Ireland* 83), which he later uses for the analysis of the situation in Ireland:

First, he claims that Ireland has the appropriate soil and climate conditions, and therefore it is a country with all the potential of being prosperous (83-85). However, the country does not count on the support of people with the appropriate skills to achieve the country’s flourishing, and the same happens with the industries needed to exploit those resources. Later, he complains because Ireland is the only country having restrictions in the exportation of its own commodities and manufactures and these restrictions are imposed by the English government (85). This alludes to the fact that Ireland had no free trade, which is another impediment for prosperity. According to Swift, the resources of a country should be beneficial for the own nation, which means that all the rents and profits should be spent in the country where they are produced and not in another as opposed to what happens with the Irish product, whose principal benefactor is England (88). The English Government exploits these resources for their own purposes as if Ireland was another of its colonies. Thus, Irish public revenues are employed in England, but according to Swift, these should be spent at home. Finally, he argues that a country should be able to live with its own manufactures, and avoid unnecessary luxuries. Also, Ireland was denied to coin in gold, silver or copper, meanwhile in Isle of Man they are allowed coin their own silver. With this, the author lays out how Ireland is deprived of many things that are nevertheless allowed in other monarchies or states, even in the smaller island. As for the commerce, Ireland imports most of the goods from England, and Ireland is limited to few importations such as French wine for which, as Swift says, “they pay a big amount of money” (*A Short View of the State of Ireland* 88).

Even though Ireland continued to be a Catholic country after the Restoration, the official posts were in English hands, as Swift stated, “we are in the condition of patients who have their

Physick sent them by Doctors at a Distance, Strangers to their Constitution, and the Nature of their Disease” (*A Short View of the State of Ireland* 86). The term “physick”, which in this period meant “medicine”, is interpreted by Probyn as a metaphor of the series of legislative acts aimed to restrict the Irish economy since 1690, which enforced the Irish dependence on England (Probyn 22).

In short, this essay allows us to understand that the author perceived Ireland as a country rich in resources where, even so, people had no liberties: they had neither free trade nor the privilege of coining; they did not develop industries and labor, and as long as England was taking as much advantage as possible from Ireland, this country did not obtain any reward from it. According to this, once again the attack goes against England, as it was the country that was stopping Ireland of growing up and flourishing on its own. In addition to this, the author points out that Irish people were living in poverty, striving to live, and how both England and the bankers were enriching themselves at the cost of the Irish poor population (90). These ideas of England as an oppressive force are going to be useful when analyzing *Gulliver’s Travels*, especially in Part III, with the island of Laputa representing the abuses of England towards the population; and in Part IV, when Gulliver expresses his ideas on commerce, being these parallel to those stated here by Swift.

3.3 *The Art of Political Lying* (1710)

In this essay, published in *the Examiner* on November 9, 1710, Swift criticizes politicians in general, differently from later pamphlets in which the attack goes against the English and Irish governments in particular. He sets out how the lie has become something attached to politics. According to him, the devil is the inventor of lies, even though this art has been improved by others over the years, we cannot know, however, who brought it into politics. He adds that the lie “has been cultivated these twenty years past in the southern part of our own island” (Swift, “The Art of Political Lying” 53) and that politicians make use of this art –as Swift calls it- in order to gain political power; otherwise, to maintain the power; or in the event of having lost the power, for revenge. In this mention to “our island” we can see how he accuses Irish

politicians of being liars, and he will do the same with the English when he puts the head of England as an example of one of the characteristics of a liar: one of them is to have a short memory, so the liar says something and immediately afterwards, he contradicts himself with another lie. This confuses the listener at the same time that it reveals how the liar does not believe in his own word. So, considering this, we can wonder why politicians keep on lying if their lies have become so noticeable for the public. The author answers with the following statement: “as the vilest writer has his readers, so the greatest liar has his believers” (Swift, “The Art of Political Lying” 54). Finally, Swift ironically argues that the Government of England has a right to lie because, as we are dealing with a democracy, people must have given their consent to this practice and therefore, they also have the right of defending themselves by using the same tactics (that is, lying).

We can conclude, from the above, this idea of the lie being inherited to politics, which includes both the politicians from England and Ireland. Besides, it seems to be a criticism to a government which does not represent the population’s wishes, provided that lying shall not be accepted by them.

3.4. *Predictions for the Year 1708 (1708)*

Predictions for the Year 1708, Written to prevent the People of England from being farther imposed on by vulgar almanack-makers is a criticism of the impostors who write about Astrology, a science that predicts events of the human world by relating them with astrological phenomena. He does not question the science itself but just those who address this issue without being experts, and whose written style is poor. In particular, he attacks the almanac-makers, the authors of these books that are annually published with the astronomical data for the coming year. After the criticism, he makes his own astrological predictions such as the death of the almanac-maker Partridge, other public personalities like the son to the Duke of Anjou and anonymous people, in addition to meteorological predictions and other public affairs. The following quote summarizes the purpose of his writing: “This essay, intended for a good design, to cultivate and improve an ancient art long in disgrace, by having

fallen into mean and unskillful hands” (Swift, *Predictions for the year 24*). This has not much to do with the political criticism of the essays presented above, but it will be useful for the analysis of Swift’s satirical tone in the chapters of *Gulliver’s Travels* where the inhabitants base their knowledge and their society in this and other sciences that can be, in a way, debatable. Thus, the target of Swift’s criticism, as pointed out by Probyn, is the “superior kind of fool” (12). Philosophers, theologians, authors, scientists, economists, and of course, politicians are the real “villains” who are meant to lead others, but their actions show “the delinquency of high authority and the screen for motives of personal aggrandizement” (Probyn 12).

Gathering the ideas from the previous essays has provided me with a comprehensive view of Swift’s opinion about economy, commerce, politics, and even about other sciences such as astrology. All of them question at least one aspect related to the society of his time, which contain the main points that are going to be analyzed within the criticism that Swift intended for *Gulliver’s Travels*.

4. *Gulliver’s Travels*

As is well known, the book relates the adventures of Lemuel Gulliver, a surgeon who will become a Captain of several ships and will discover four different unknown lands where he will spend a time living together with the inhabitants while discovering their diverse cultures and languages.

The story is narrated in first person, following a realistic style in which the author introduces himself to the reader (education, family and profession). With this, the reader is provided with a background knowledge that locates Gulliver within English Society. This factual style evolves through the story as long as we advance, or in other words, the events narrated become more and more unbelievable as we move forward, and we are going to see how the criticism comes to be more evident towards the end, when Gulliver has already learnt to mistrust humanity.

4.1.Part I: A Voyage to Lilliput

In this first chapter, after the mentioned description of the protagonist's background, he initiates the first adventure in which he will accidentally end up in a strange island. When he awakes, he discovers that he has been tied up by the tiny people of six inches of high inhabiting the island. With his good behavior, he will progressively gain the natives' confidence and his posterior freedom. During his stay in the island, Gulliver achieves to learn about the country's culture and costumes as well as their language.

Political content

First of all, many authors such as George Orwell have interpreted the size of the inhabitants as a symbol for the insignificance of the human being; "the essential manoeuvre is [...] to make the human being look ridiculous by imagining him as a creature six inches high" (n.p.). But in addition to this, we need to consider that *Gulliver's Travels* was written in the times of the imperialist England, a country with a powerful fleet that made possible the conquest and discovery of other countries. In these expeditions, the conquerors had to confront a variety of societies and cultures with their own particular ways of life. Their response to those differences could be summed up as a sense of superiority over those societies that were rather seen as savages and uncivilized people. Hence, the smallness of the inhabitants of this land might come to symbolize that sense of inferiority of the inhabitants with regards to the bigness of Gulliver, who would represent the superiority of the conquerors. In fact, the narrator himself points out his size and strength:

I should certainly have awaked with the first sense of Smart, which might so far have roused my Rage and Strength, as to have enabled me to break the Strings wherewith I was tied; after which, as they were not able to make Resistance, so they could expect no Mercy. (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 28)

This interpretation of the Lilliputians' size has been already discussed by Probyn, who claimed that "Swift is concerned to show the relativity of all things" (35) by showing Gulliver's European sense of superiority in his first voyage to the tiny Lilliput, and then, the opposite feeling that he experiences in his voyage to the gigantic world of Brobdingnag,

Nevertheless, Gulliver does not act as a colonist and does not make any attempt to harm the inhabitants. He rather decides to show his good intentions to them by staying in the island, learning their language and customs, and he even helps them when the Emperor requires it. Gulliver discovers that the natives' size is not an obstacle for them to be intelligent and courageous people. Thus, Swift could be setting an example of behavior which should be likewise applied to the natives of the colonized countries, who are underestimated by the English colonizers.

Then, by looking at the descriptions provided by Gulliver about Lilliput's political system (Chapter III, Part I), it is interesting to think of the ideas taken from *The Art of Political Lying*, where politicians are treated as liars and corrupted people who only care about their own well-being. In Gulliver's Travels we are going to see an attack to the Whigs as well as he did in other political pamphlets. With Gulliver's description we discover the political system of these inhabitants; the way the government is elected in their land is based on a demonstration of skills that, actually, have nothing to do with politics. For instance, the rope-dancing or the officials who have to jump through hoops in order to show their qualification: "This diversion is only practiced by those Persons who are Candidates for great Employments, and high Favour, at Court" (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 38). Gulliver does not judge these practices but he lets the reader see the absurdity of it. These might be ridiculing the way politicians are elected in England, by favoritism and without considering the real characteristics required for a position like that. Moreover, it has been stated by DeGategno, Paul J., and R. Jay Stubblefield (161) that one of the best rope-dancers of Lilliput, the treasurer Flimnap, might be representing Sir Robert Walpole, the head of the Whig party at the time. According to them, Flimnap's ability to dance on the rope is a satire of Walpole's political dancing act amid a succession of crisis and obstacles throughout his career, and that the fall that this treasurer suffered once, before Gulliver's arrival, is symbolizing the rescue of Walpole's political career by the duchess of Kendal.

In Chapter IV we learn that the two main political parties in Lilliput are the Tramesckam and the Slamecksan, which are representing the English Tory and Whig parties. They are High

and Low Church parties, respectively, who distinguish themselves by the height of their heels. Swift is told that the High Heels are “most agreeable to our ancient constitution: but however this be, his Majesty has determined to make use of only low Heels in the Administration of the Government” (Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels* 47) and that we can observe that the Majesty’s Heels are slightly lower than any of his court, a fact that implies favoritism and shows the preferences of the monarch –making reference to George II, who was favorable to the Tories until he was crowned and retained Walpole’s Whig administration (Demaria 277). In addition, Gulliver is told that the High Heels are superior in number and, however, the power is on the side of the minority of Low heels, which makes us go back to the political context’s section of this essay in which the superiority of a powerful Protestant population amid the Catholics is mentioned. Thus, we can see here the connection between politics and religion. So far, we can see how Swift deals with social inequalities caused by the abusive powers: England and all the governors, who tend to access to the power by the use of tricks and lies – as we have seen in *The Art of Political Lying-*, or with the help of favoritisms, as stated in this and other chapters of *Gulliver’s Travels* that we are going to see.

In the same chapter, Swift is informed of the war between Lilliput and the neighbor Empire of Blefuscu, which began with an absurd dispute about how to break the eggs before eating them. This triggered several rebellions and the death of one Emperor and the loss of the Crown by another, which, according to Robert Demaria (277), are references to the beheaded king Charles I and the disposal of James II in 1688. This conflict might remind us of the continuous wars that were taking place between England and France, fighting for the possession of their colonies. A connection that can be seen in references such as the Fleet that was threatening Lilliput, which is the same that was happening at those times with the French Fleet and England; or in Belfuscu’s location (France), separated from Lilliput (England) “by a Channel of eight hundred Yards wide” (Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels* 49).

Going back to the religious dimension, Gulliver is told that Lilliputians are divided according to their beliefs: “all True Believers shall break their eggs at the convenient end” (Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels* 48). Besides, there is a division between the defenders of each idea: the Big

Endians, symbolizing the Catholic Church, and the Little Endians, being the Anglicans of the Church of England (Probyn 37). It is evident the reference to the favoritisms for the Church of England and the Catholic's loss of rights: "The Books of the Big Endians have been long forbidden, and the whole party rendered incapable by law of holding Employment" (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 48). In consequence, the Big-Endians had to become exiles in Blefuscu, starting the war between both Emperors. At this point, Lemuel Gulliver loses his faith in politics and he "starts to conceive an imperfect idea of courts and ministers" (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 53), especially after he accepts to help the Emperor by stealing the enemy's fleet:

So unmeasurable is the Ambition of Princes that he seemed to think of nothing less than reducing the whole Empire of Blefuscu into a Province, and governing it by a Viceroy; of destroying the Big-Endian Exiles, and compelling that People to break the smaller end of their Eggs [...] (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 51)

Gulliver, however, refuses to collaborate in enslaving the inhabitants of Blefuscu. This is one of the examples of Swift's denounce of "colonization and foreign conquest, plainly aimed at England," as George Orwell pointed out in "Politics vs. Literature: An Examination of *Gulliver's Travels*." Here we can find a connection with the idea of the criticism of England as an imperialist and ambitious power that has been already seen in the political writings analyzed in the previous sections on *A Modest Proposal* and *A Short View of the State of England*. It allows to ascertain a parallel between the type of dominion that Lilliput tried to impose over Blefuscu and that which England was imposing in Ireland.

The following events of the book (Chapter V) contribute to Gulliver's loss of political naivety: the accident in which he will extinguish a fire with his urine, an action taken as an offence; and the friendly dialogs with the opposing Empire that were taken as treason. These circumstances, along with the economic problems derived from Gulliver's maintenance, unleash the Court's discussion about Gulliver's punishment in which the Emperor shows himself as a merciful king by proposing to change the death penalty for putting out his eyes. According to Ian Higgins (175-176) this makes reference to the year 1723, when the Jacobite Sir Francis Atterbury was accused of treason and was called to trial in order to decide whether

to impose the death penalty on him because he was suspected of trying to make peace with the French.

In conclusion, Probyn considers that the main themes of *A Voyage to Lilliput* are “measurement, dominance, imprisonment, and alienation” (Probyn 36) and on the basis of my analysis, I consider that this Part I of *Gulliver’s Travels* reveals a criticism of the Whig English political party, along with other political ideas such as the refusal to imperialism, war and slavery. At the same time, he attacks the Emperor’s ambitions and the favoritisms in political offices.

4.2. Part II. A Voyage to Brobdingnag

After two months in England, Gulliver embarks on a journey to the Cape of Good Hope and Madagascar. Unfortunately, a storm drags his ship into another unknown land in which he is left alone after his travel companions run away from a huge human creature. Gulliver is forced to stay in the island until he is found by one of the giants with whom he will remain for a period of time until he is finally sold to the Queen. She will use the protagonist as an entertainment at court.

Political content

In this second part, the British government is, once more, the target of Swift’s satire. The most interesting part in political terms is Chapter VI, in which Gulliver describes his country to the Brobdingnagian King in a very patriotic way. In spite of his efforts to idealize the English country, Gulliver does not convince the king, who at the end of Gulliver’s speech makes several questions that reveal the flaws of the English system. Gulliver tells him about the Court; the justice system; the parliament and the House of Commons, who are “freely picked and culled out by the people themselves, for their great Abilities, and Love of their Country, to represent the wisdom of the whole nation” (Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels* 119), finishing with a historical account of events in England “for about an hundred Years past” (Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels* 119). During the speech, the King questions the methods by which

the Lords or the commoners are chosen, suggesting corruption in the election process, in addition to accusing them of avarice or impartiality:

What Qualifications were necessary in those who were to be created new Lords: Whether the Humour of the Prince, a Sum of Money to a Court-Lady, or a Prime Minister, or a Design of strengthening a Party opposite to the Public Interest, ever happened to be Motives in those Advancements [...]. He then desired to know what Arts were practiced in electing those whom I called commoners. Whether a Stranger with a strong Purse might not influence the vulgar Voters to choose him before their own Landlord. (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 120)

These allusions to corruption and the “arts” practiced by politicians in order to achieve power take us to the previously mentioned criticism in *The Art of Political Lying*. In the same way, we can relate the criticism of the oppressions carried out in the country to those that we have seen in the political context (see pages 10-11) in terms of political ideas and religious divisions. For instance, when the king of Brobdingnag claims that he “knew no Reason, why those who entertain Opinions prejudicial to the Public, should be obliged to Change, or should not be obliged to Conceal them”(Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 122), the king seems to share the same opinion as Swift about the freedom of thought, as he wrote in his *Thoughts on Religion* that “Every man, as a member of the commonwealth, ought to be content with the possession of his own opinion in private, without perplexing his neighbor or disturbing the public” (Oakleaf 39). Oakleaf claims that this statement reveals Swift’s rejection of religious and ideological divisions.

Finally, as for the events of the English history, the king concludes that “it was a Heap of Conspiracies, Rebellions, Murders, Massacres, Revolutions, Banishments [...]” (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 122), remarking the defects that he finds in the society that Gulliver has described. These are avarice, faction, hypocrisy, lust, rage, madness, envy, malice and ambition, among others. According to Probyn, “the driving energy of this list is Swift’s own” (41), and McMinn, in turn, claims that many of King of Brobdingnag’s political principles correspond to those expressed by Swift in his 1722 “Letter to Pope” (McMinn 26), a letter addressed to his friend Alexander Pope (see last paragraph of Swift, page 8). Hence, the king seems to be expressing Swift’s thoughts, meanwhile Gulliver constantly conveys his

apologies to the reader for the king's daring to criticize his beloved country, this might be a satirical device used by the author in order to express his ideas as if they were not his own, without being censored or accused for his criticism of England. For this, he sets Gulliver as a truly defender of his nation, who considers the king's arguments a consequence of his prejudices and narrow-mindedness. In Orwell's words:

When the story demands it he has a tendency to develop into an imbecile who is capable of boasting of 'our noble Country, the Mistress of Arts and Arms, the Scourge of France', etc., etc., and at the same time of betraying every available scandalous fact about the country which he professes to love. (n.p.)

Thus, Swift's attack of politicians is specially present in this chapter, in which they are accused of having all kind of defects that do not prevent them from accessing the official posts, but they rather seem to be part of the requirements needed to be a member of the government: "you have clearly proved that Ignorance, Idleness and Vice are the proper Ingredients for qualifying a Legislator" (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 122). In contrast to England, in Brobdingnag politics is understood as a science. Then, it is based on reason, compassion and justice, that the king adds that "whoever makes two Ears of Corn, or two Blades of Grass to grow where only one grew before, deserves better of Mankind, and does more essential Service to his Country than the whole Race of Politicians put together" (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 126). This suggests that any tradesmen or farm worker can have more abilities to serve his country than all the politicians together.

To conclude with this part of *Gulliver's Travels*, I would like to focus on Swift's rejection of war, already mentioned in his biography and the previous section. We could see this in Lilliput, when Gulliver refused to help in the king's war against Blefuscu; and now we notice it in the King of Brobdingnag's negative reaction when Gulliver tells him about the creation of the gunpowder:

The King was struck with Horror at the Description I had given of those terrible Engines [...] he was amazed how so impotent and groveling an Insect as I [...] could entertain such inhuman Ideas, and in so familiar a manner as to appear wholly unmoved at all the Scenes of Blood and Desolation. (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 125).

Despite Brobdingnag's first impression of perfect society, Gulliver points out that this country has not escaped, as its history record reveals, from wars and other "mankind's diseases" (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 128) such as the nobility's greed of power, or the king's desire for absolute dominion. As we are going to see in the next sections, these ideas about war, corruption or ambition are going to be expressed differently in the several societies that Gulliver encounters and whose role is to parody England and its government.

4.3. Part III. A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbdubdrib and Japan

Gulliver sets sail again, and this time he is taken by pirates, ending up in a canoe which will lead him to Laputa, an island which hovers over Balnibarbi, a position that allows it to dominate and oppress the island below. Here, Gulliver had the opportunity of visiting Glubbdubdrib and Japan, being Laputa, Balnibarbi, and Luggnagg the most interesting for the political analysis.

Political content

Part III contains, as the previous ones, several references to political events of the time as well as a description of the political system in the newly discovered land, which acts as a satire of the Government of England. This time Laputa is representing England, meanwhile Balnibarbi would be symbolizing Ireland, and here we may find the most evident reference to the English dominion over Ireland in the whole novel. Gulliver is told how Laputa, the flying island, uses its privileged position to oppress the other towns, as it has the power to deprive Balnibarbi from the sun or the rain, or even to squash over them, destroying the city, "if any Town should engage in Rebellion or Mutinity, fall into violent Factions, or refuse to pay the usual Tribute, the king hath two methods of Reducing them to Obedience" (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 159), and when they commit any crime, they are stoned from the island above. At the end of chapter III, Gulliver tells us about an accident that happened about three years before his arrival, when the king was in "progress over his Dominions" (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 160) as England was with his colonies) that consisted on a rebellion that took place in Lindalino Dublin, as stated by Demaria (285). They built four large towers at the city's corners in order to defend themselves from Laputa during a rebellion in which they demanded

to choose their own governors “and other the like Exorbitances” (Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels* 159). But the King rejected to relinquish to their petitions and decided to attack them with such a little success that he was finally forced to give up. According to Probyn (43-44) and Demaria (286), this event represents Irish resistance to Wood’s Halfpenny. This consisted on the English attempt to dominate the Irish economy through the imposition of the minting of copper coin. Thus, William Wood obtained the legal right to supply Ireland with copper coins to the value of £108,000 in 1722. Swift campaigned against this in *The Drapiers Letters*, forcing Walpole’s government to withdraw the plan, and at the same time, it provoked the rebellion of the Dublin Irish against England.

We can relate this part of Gulliver’s Travels to three of the political writings analysed before. These are *Predictions for the Year 1708*, *A Short View of the State of Ireland* and again, *The Art of Political Lying*. The first one has relation with the criticism of the intellectuals of the time. The society that Gulliver encounters is based on two sciences: Mathematics and Music, which are applied to every aspect of their lives. They are also experts in Astrology, but actually, the application of all these arts into their lives turns out to be useless: The irregularity of their buildings or the unsuitable clothes that they made for Gulliver after having measure him up are example of their uselessness. Gulliver seems to trust the ordinary people and to mistrust the intellectuals:

These two Sciences in which I am not unversed, but at the same Time so Abstracted and involved in Speculation that I never met with such disagreeable Companions. I conversed only with Women, Tradesmen, Flappers, and Court Pages [...] yet were the only People from whom I could ever receive a reasonable Answer” (Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels* 162).

Then, as for *A Short View of the State of Ireland*, I have related some of Swift’s ideas with the descriptions of Balnibarbi, whose metropolis is called Lagado:

I saw many Labourers working with several sorts of Tools in the Ground, but was not able to conjecture what they were about, neither did I observe any expectation either of Corn or Grass, although the Soil appeared to be excellent. I could not forbear admiring at these odd Apearances both in Town and country, and I made bold to desire my Conductor, that he would be pleased to explain to me what could be meant by so many busy Heads, Hands and Faces, both in the Streets and the Fields, because I did not

discover any good Effects they produced; but on the contrary, I never knew a Soil so unhappily cultivated, Houses so ill contrived and so ruinous, or a People whose Countenances and Habit expressed so much Misery and Want. (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 164)

We have already seen in the essay in question (see above, page 14), that Swift supported the idea of Ireland as a wealthy country in terms of the potential of its soil and climate conditions, which were nevertheless wasted due to the government's apathy and the English control of the Irish economy. Now, we see the same idea expressed in this description of Lagado.

After this city, Gulliver visits the palace of Lord Munodi, who had been Governor of Lagado until he was "dischargued for Insufficiency" (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 164) and who lives in a palace which follows the rules of ancient architecture, being different from the modern conceptions. Mundodi tells Gulliver that the new rules and methods of agriculture and buildings have been conceived by an Academy of Projectors, an institution which parodies the Royal Society. This was created in about 1654 and became official in 1665 when its members (including names such as Robert Hooke, Newton, or Bishop Sprat) started to publish the scientific journal *Philosophical Transactions*. It contained several scientific experiments from those that Swift satirized in chapters 4 to 6 (Demaria 287). For instance, their attempt to build a palace in a week with a material of such a good quality as to last forever and with a person doing the work of four, did not result efficient at all in the end. This suggests that every attempt of improving the agriculture, buildings and other aspects of their society turned to be a complete failure due to the absurdity of the decisions taken by the people in charge. In Chapter V, Gulliver visits the Academy of Lagado, in which he knows more about these absurd experiments. Here, he evaluates the School of Political Projectors where "Lagadian surgeons operate on the body politic, arguing that social faction is a disease of the individual brain" (Probyn 46).

These unhappy People were proposing Schemes for persuading Monarchs to chuse Favourites upon the Score of their Wisdom, Capacity and Virtue; of teaching Ministers to consult the Publick Good; or rewarding Merit, great Abilities and eminent Services; of instructing Princes to know their true Interest by placing it on the same Foundation with that of their People: Of chusing for Employments Persons

qualified to exercise them; with many other wild impossible Chimaeras, that never entred before into the heart of Man to conceive [...]. (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 175)

This passage summarizes what Swift seemed to consider the ideals that every political system should follow, which are those missing in Balnibarbi (here symbolizing England). In the same page, one of the doctors within the School of Political Projectors suggests that politics suffer from “Diseases and Corruptions” (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 175). Thus, Swift is implying here that politicians are corrupt and this is, together with the social factions, consequence of a disease that they all suffer. On the other hand, Gulliver claims in this chapter that “the Favourites of Princes are troubled with short and weak memories” (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 176), which is recalling Swift's argument in *The Art of Political Lying*, claiming that one of the characteristics of a liar (hence, of a politician) is to have a short memory. According to Probyn, the author “dehumanizes political leaders” (47) and at the same time he is suggesting that their schizophrenia is being externalized in their professional life. On the other hand, this chapter has been also interpreted by George Orwell, who considers that the term projectors describes “people not engaged in disinterested research but merely on the look-out for gadgets which will save labour and bring money” (n.p.). Therefore, avarice and selfishness are attributed to these people, who work for their own profit.

To sum up, this chapter ridicules, once again, English leaders. They are branded as corrupted and liars, ambitious people and tyrannical rulers who are oppressing the island (Ireland), and additionally, it is insinuated that they do not have the necessary qualities for ruling a country, because they lose their time with absurdities that are not aimed at the country's actual improvement but at their own profits. Thus, these ideas, expressed before in three of Swift's political treatises, support the assumption of *Gulliver's Travels* as a novel that has achieved to convey a political discourse comparable to that of the pamphlets. This has been accomplished through the use of metaphors and by making up symbols from the elements developed in the travel books.

4.4. Part IV: A voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms

This is the fourth and final trip that Gulliver makes, this time as a Captain of the ship. As usual, he suffers several inconveniences such as the death of some of his crew members and feels forced to recruit some more people from different nations who will betray him. Gulliver is left alone in another unknown island in which he is received by horses, the intelligent race of that land. Here, he gets to know these peculiar inhabitants and their language until he is able to tell them about Europe and mostly about England.

Political Content

The Houyhnhnms are presented as an ideal and perfect society, whose vocabulary has no place for words denoting lying or falsehood. For this reason, it becomes so difficult for Gulliver to explain them the reason why his traveling fellows had betrayed him, and the same happens with the account of the history of England. Gulliver relates some of the events previously commented in the contextual section such as the Glorious Revolution, under the prince of Orange; the war the same prince started with France; and Queen Anne's persecution of Catholics. Gulliver's listener reflects his astonishment in light of the cruelties involved, and Gulliver provides him with the following reasons:

Sometimes the Ambition of Princes, who never think they have Land or People enough to govern; sometimes the Corruption of Ministers, who engage their master in a war, in order to stifle or divert the Clamour of the Subjects against their evil Administration. Difference in Opinions has cost many Millions of Lives: for instance, whether flesh be bread, or bread be flesh [...]. Neither are any Wars so furious and bloody, nor of so long a Continuance, as those occasioned by difference in Opinion, especially if it be in Things indifferent. (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 226)

On the one hand, the ideas of corruption and ambition appear here and all over the book. For instance, when Gulliver informs his master of the justice system in England, he says that you have to hire a lawyer in order to defend yourself and suggests that having money is more important than your level of guilt, bearing in mind that you can bribe the lawyers in order to win the case, and you need to wait for at least thirty years until the case is resolved. But the

justice system works in a very different way if your crime is against the state. In this case the criminal is judged in a shorter period of time. Therefore, Swift is suggesting that the English justice system is neither objective nor fair. He goes even further by assuring that lawyers are, like politicians, corrupt and evil by nature, as we can see in the following quotation:

Lawyers [...], having been biased all their Lives against Truth and Equity lie under such a fatal Necessity of favouring Fraud, Perjury, and Oppression, that I have known several of them refuse a large Bribe from the side where justice lay, rather than injure the Faculty by doing anything unbecoming their Nature or their office. (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 203)

According to this, lawyers are even expected to reject a big amount of money if it comes from the innocent's side, because their nature leads them to favor the guilty ones.

On the other hand, we find the anti-war sentiment which firstly appears satirized in Lilliput, when they enter in war due to their disagreements when discussing about how to break an egg. But in this passage, Gulliver is likewise arguing that even the most ridiculous reason may lead to war. One of the most anti-imperialist statements of this paragraph is the following: "If a Prince sends forces into a Nation, where the people are Poor and ignorant, he may lawfully put half of them to Death, and make Slaves of the rest, in order to civilize and reduce them from their barbarous Way of living" (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 227).

In *A Short View of the State of Ireland*, we have seen Swift's ideas on commerce. He criticized the fact that wealthy people can obtain any kind of luxury, while many people are lacking the basic diet, and in this chapter, Gulliver mentions how workers are exploited by the landlords in order to obtain products that are destined to the rich people's consumption. Additionally, England produces more than what is needed in the country because the rest of it is exported in exchange for other unnecessary things, meanwhile many people live in poverty and have to make a living from robbing, begging, etc.

In order to feed the Luxury and Interperance of the Males, and the Vanity of the Females, we sent away the greatest part of our necessary things to other countries, from whence in return we brought the Materials of Diseases, Folly, and Vice, to spend among ourselves. (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 232)

Avarice, ambition and falsehood are again applied to the higher social classes as well as to the leaders of the state. Thus, when Gulliver talks about the Government and the Chief Minister of State, he describes him as someone who does not make “use of other Passions but a violent Desire of Wealth, Power, and Titles [...] that he never tells a Truth, but with an Intent that you should take it for a Lie” (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* 235). In the same passage, he claims that the ingredients for being a Minister are “Insolence, Lying, and Bribery” (235).

As stated by George Orwell, there is no doubt that Swift hates kings, lords, bishops, generals and titles in general, “but he does not seem to think better of the common people than of their rulers, or to be in favour of increased social equality, or to be enthusiastic about representative institutions” (n.p.). The (supposedly) perfect society of the Hoyalnoms distinguishes between races, the interbreeding is forbidden and the horses occupy a different position in society depending on their races and colors. The same happens in Lilliput, where the poorest children do not go to school because they are destined, from birth, to work in the farming.

Finally, in an attempt to define Swift's political ideology, Orwell affirms in the same essay that Swift was “a kind of anarchist”: “Part IV of *Gulliver's Travels* is a picture of an anarchistic Society, not governed by law in the ordinary sense, but by the dictates of “Reason”, which are voluntarily accepted by everyone” (n.p.). Overall, Orwell discusses that it is not easy to successfully locate Swift within any political ideology, and using an anachronistic political label, Orwell proposes that the author of *Gulliver's Travels* could be considered a “Tory anarchist” who despises authority inasmuch as he does not believe in the possibility of liberty, but he still preserves the aristocratic outlook at the same time that he scorns aristocracy. Nevertheless, the author's ideology has been discussed by several scholars who do not reach an agreement. One of the most interesting interpretations, in my opinion, is that Swift could have been a Whig in politics and a Tory in religion (Oakleaf 38). This idea is

supported by the writer's own description of his ideology in *Memoirs, Relating to That Change Which Happened in the Queen's Ministry in the Year 1710*:

I talked often with lord Somers upon this subject; told him, that having been long conversant with the Greek and Roman authors, and therefore a lover of liberty, I found myself much inclined to be what they called a whig in politicks; and that besides, I thought it impossible, upon any other principles, to defend the revolution: but as to religion, I confessed myself to be a high churchman, and that I did not conceive how any one, who wore the habit of a clergyman, could be otherwise. (qtd. in Oakleaf 38).

Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation, as stated in the introduction, was to discover, interpret, and unmask Jonathan Swift's ideology. By approaching his works, we get an idea of the complexity of his views on eighteenth-century society and politics. The principal method has been to find out the similarities between the novel and the political pamphlets. During the analysis, I have confirmed that there is a relation between the ideas presented in the two literary genres studied. Moreover, I have encountered pamphlets requiring a deepest interpretation, due to Swift's use of metaphors. For instance, in *A Modest Proposal* and *Predictions for the Year 1708*. And on the other hand, *The Art of Political lying* and *A Short View of the State of Ireland* present the ideas in a plainest way, but without losing the author's characteristic satirical style. This is exactly the same that happens in *Gulliver's Travels*, as we see how the first chapters are full of symbols, metaphors and irony that evolve into a slightly more direct criticism. So, the author employs this satirical tone (sometimes more pronounced than others) both in his novel and the political pamphlets.

I have concluded that the targets of Swift's criticism are those people and institutions invested with authority. All the victims of his criticism come to be politicians, intellectuals, lawyers, ministers, kings and Queens, nobility, or those belonging to high social classes in general, despite of the fact that Swift belongs to an accommodated social class himself. Swift accuses them of having all kind of vices and of abusing their power. He seems to consider that they

are all people with no moral sense. But his satire goes beyond the criticism of individuals or social classes; we can see how Gulliver does not only compare the society of the lands he visits with England, but also with Europe. Thus, Swift did not just look at his own homeland when analysing human behaviour but at the whole continent.

As a political writer, it is no secret that Swift's criticism was mainly directed to politicians. Both in his political pamphlets and *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift expresses that Politicians cannot be trusted, he considers that they are all liars and corrupt people. In my opinion, Swift's main intentions were to fight the greed, dishonesty and detachment which seem to be inherited in every political leader. At a first sight, he did not even seem to agree with any of the political parties of the time, as he always directed his satire against the political party in power at the moment (first the Tories and then the Whigs). Nonetheless, in the end his political preferences turn out to be determined by his religious convictions. Thus, he ends up supporting the political party that matches with his religious beliefs. From my point of view, he seems to desire the freedom of thought in political issues, but he prefers some kind of religious control, avoiding factions and having the Anglican Church as an authority.

Swift's complex political ideas become even more complex when we think of his national identity, as it is complex to assert whether he felt more English than Irish, or the other way round. On the one hand, Swift's parents are English, and he spent many years in this country working in political issues and writing about them. On the other hand, he was really concerned with the social conditions of Ireland and he has been considered a kind of advocate of the Irish common people. The problem of Ireland has been a central issue in his political pamphlets and of course, in *Gulliver's Travels*. He denounced the English colonial policy in Ireland, the oppressions and restrictions over the Irish economy. Overall, Swift wanted an independent Ireland, a country able to manage its own economy. He wanted to get the freedom of the Irish people and always defended the rights of the Irish workers.

One of the first ideas that seem to be clear for this author is his rejection of imperialism and war. As we have seen, a rejection of the colonizer's superior feeling or in Gulliver's opposition to the war in Lilliput (which symbolizes the war between England and France). In

relation to this, Swift also penalizes patriotism, especially in Part II, chapter II of *Gulliver's Travels*, when Gulliver describes his country with excessive pride. Nevertheless, Swift's active intervention in Irish affairs has been many times interpreted as a patriotic attitude.

In general, we have seen Swift's concern about the political management, economy, religious divisions, the justice system, wars and colonization. All of them share a criticism of the abusive powers by a writer who claimed a fair and well organized society, but always within the conservative perspective of a religious man.

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