

ALLEGORICAL NUANCES IN GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

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ABSTRACT

The fictional story of Gulliver's Travels, Swift's political affiliations and his attitude towards science and intellectual curiosity show that the cast of his mind was reactionary. He was committed to certain convictions which he preached in his works. He possessed a terrible intensity of vision.

There have been few periods when the literature of the time has been more politically conscious than that of the Restoration and the eighteenth century in England. Politics and the political figures, especially the personality of Walpole, exercised a great influence on the literature which was produced in the first half of the eighteenth Century. Pope, Swift, Addison, Steele, Arbuthnot, to mention some of the greater figures, were all committed to one political party or the other. Donald Greene in The Age of Exuberance shows how the tussle between the Whigs and the Tories over the internal and external policies of Walpole, specially the continuity of war with France, had divided the English literary writers into two groups. Steele and Addison supported the Whig party of which Walpole was the leader; whereas Pope, Swift and Arbuthnot showed resentment against Walpole's policies and acted as publicists for the Tory Party. They were intensely aware of the political issues and mixed political discourses with literary modes of expression.

Gulliver's Travels, like Swift's other works, is the product of the social and political conditions of its time. The period between the publication of A Tale of a Tub (1704) and Gulliver's Travels (1726) was very busy for Swift. During this period he experienced tremendous political changes and personal disappointments which he depicted in Gulliver's Travels. There is an abundance of allusions to political issues and moral corruption in the English society of the eighteenth century. Swift adopted allegorical method which helped him keep the names of the places, persons and incidents ambiguous. The advantage of being allusive and indirect was that it provided Swift safety and stimulated the curiosity of the readers.