

LAPUTA(The third voyage of Jonathan Swift in Gulliver's travels)

Aside

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October 22, 2012

The book called Gulliver's Travels is a satire on four aspects of man: the physical, the political, the intellectual, and the moral. The book is also a brilliant parody of travel literature; and it is at once science fiction and a witty parody of science fiction. It expresses savage indignation at the follies, vices, and stupidities of men, and it shows an awareness of man's tragic insufficiency. At the same time it is a great comic masterpiece, a fact which readers of solemn temperaments often fail to recognize.

- CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Laputa is a fictional place from the book Gulliver's travels by Jonathan Swift. It is a fictional flying island or rock, about 4.5 miles in diameter, with an adamantine base, which its inhabitants can maneuver in any direction using magnetic levitation.

Laputa's population consists mainly of educated people, who are fond of mathematics, astronomy, music and technology, but fail to make practical use of their knowledge. Servants make up the rest of the population.

The Laputans have mastered magnetic levitation and discovered the two moons of Mars (which in reality would not be discovered for another 150 years). However, they are unable to construct well-designed clothing or buildings, because they take measurements with instruments such as quadrants and a compass rather than with tape measures. Laputa is a male-dominated society. Wives often request to leave the island to visit the land below; however, these requests are almost never granted because the women who leave Laputa never want to return.

Laputa is more complex than Lilliput or Brobdingnag because its strangeness is not based on differences of size but on the primacy of abstract theoretical concerns over concrete practical concerns in Laputan culture. but, physical power in Laputa is important as in Lilliput and Brobdingnag. Here, power is exercised not through physical size but through technology. The government floats over the rest of the kingdom, using technology to gain advantage over its subjects. The floating island is both a formidable weapon and an allegorical image that represents the distance between the government and the people it governs.

- THE SYMBOL

The eighteenth century was a worried time, beginning with the Restoration which began in 1660 with Charles II returning to England. When he died, his brother James became king. He was deposed and his daughter Mary, with her husband William, shared the crown. Anne succeeded as queen when William died. In 1714 George I became king when Anne died). The eighteenth century was also called the Age of Reason, or the Enlightenment. It was an age of scientific exploration. The point is that the late seventeenth century was a period of dramatic progress in science, philosophy, and learning, an age of optimism in which Newton along with other great astronomers, physicists, and mathematicians under the auspices of the Royal Society were being credited with explaining the entire universe. In this time the Royal Society was attracting its greatest attention, but they apparent "uselessness" of the new science that they found. the scientist are too busy with their research but they forgot to the world around them. in this section, Swift wants to mock this scientist.

The story of the Flying Island(Laputa) is a fairly obviously satire on the oppression of Ireland by England, and the state of that helpless land in the power of a foreign government. The Academy of Lagado is a thinly disguised slur on the Royal Society of Dublin, but it applies to all countries blinded by science. Scientific learning was greatly extended in the eighteenth century, but Swift felt nothing but disgust for the host of quacks, mad inventors, promoters of schemes for obtaining untold wealth, and arm-chair technicians whose projects so captivated a gullible public that they brought about a financial panic of which the South Sea Bubble was part.

- THE SATIRE OF ROYAL SOCIETY

The third voyage to Laputa is probably the least impressive of the novel. The satire in this section is purposed mainly for the high society that fail to practice their knowledge. Gulliver's first purpose in this section is to mock the extreme ideas of some philosophers and scientists from the Royal society and what he feels are the problems with the science of his day.

- The flying island of Laputa is England, and the stationary island of Lagado is Ireland. The king, living in Laputa, has never even been to Lagado and, thus, has no real knowledge of Lagadoan needs or concerns. When the Lagadoans rebel, Laputa cuts off their means of survival, and threatens to crush them.
- In the Laputans and their Flappers, Swift is mocking "intellectuals" who are so deep in thought that they have lost touch with practical concerns.
- The ill-fitting clothes and other disastrous projects Gulliver observes are Swift's way of mocking the Royal Society which at one point, wanted to use scientific knowledge to make the crafts more efficient. However, most of the knowledge gained by the Society is theoretical and offers no new or useful technologies.
- Gulliver's journeys to other islands in this section allow Swift to mock the human tendency to revere the past and historical figures; ignoring the fact that these people were merely human.
- Swift also mocks the vanity and emptiness of human desires by showing how the Struldbrugs, who possess immortality; something most humans profess to desire are selfish, petty, cynical, and eternally sad.

Through Gulliver, Jonathan Swift travels to four different foreign countries, each representing a corrupt part of England. Swift criticizes the corruption of these parts, and focuses on the government, society, science, religion, and man. Swift not only criticize the customs of each country, he mocks the naive man who has the inability to figure out the double meaning of things and Gulliver believes that everything he is told which symbolizes the irony of the English system.