

The social criticism in the works by jonathan swift and oliver goldsmiths



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Both, Jonathan Swift and Oliver Goldsmiths use satire in their works but they use it for different purposes.

Swift uses satire as a tool to fight social vices. He uses it in two main approaches. First of all, he uses satire to make a point at current faults of the society and to highlight necessary changes in social and political structure.

Knowing the power of satire, he also uses it to demolish his enemies.

Gulliver's Travels is much more than just an interesting tale about giants and tiny people. It contains several layers of meaning and attentive reader can

discover them (Lock). Swift, an active satirist along with other prominent

individuals, such as Pope and Bolingbroke, criticized Walpole's political

system. Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift is a universal book, which can be

interesting for any audience. Along with sharp political satire, it touches such

important themes as morality, religion, politics and quest for sense of life.

Swift is ridiculing the society considering Lilliput " a satire on human pride"

(Ehrepreis 87).

The sole purpose of Gulliver's travels is to satirize and so criticize the

Walpole regime. In my opinion, Swift copes with his task brilliantly. He shows

all vices of the society, not speaking candidly that was impossible in his time

but showing all historical individualities and events with the help of satire.

Jonathan Swift's argument in his work " A Modest Proposal" is the most

ridiculous and unusual argument that was ever written by any writer. The

readers are shocked by his proposal to sell babies to eat them as a method

to solve Irish problems of poverty and famine. Swift created his satirical work

not just to make fun and make people laugh. In fact, the main aim of the

essay is to show sustaining, real anger on the government and its negligent attitude to the citizens. In Swift's work we can find serious statements that make us think about the reality we see everyday in the streets. Swift proclaims: " I desire those politicians who dislike my overture, and may perhaps be so bold to attempt an answer, that they will first ask the parents of these mortals, whether they would not at this day think it a great happiness to have been sold for food at a year old, in the manner I prescribe, and thereby have avoided such a perpetual scene of misfortunes, as they have since gone through" (Swift 79). So, the satire is used not only for entertaining purpose but also to attract the people's attention to serious problems of the contemporary society.

Oliver Goldsmiths also uses satire to depict the vices of the contemporary society. In contrast to Swift, Goldsmiths uses soft and sometimes even kind satire. Some critics still regard his *Vicar of Wakefield* as a sentimental pastoral novel, while most of the critics agree that this novel is a satire. This novel portrays a life of the village is such a way that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the limit between sentimental description of country life and light irony and social satire. Neither critics nor readers can distinguish whether *The Vicar* is a sentimental account of pastoral England or social satire targeting this very pastoral England with its values and morals. Even writing in the genre of social satire Goldsmiths seems to feel sympathy to his characters. His satire is much softer and warmer in comparison to Swift's satire, which is sharp and accusatory. Goldsmiths uses humor and light satire while addressing complicated social issues, hypocrisy, snobbery, rigid stratification of the society and penal reform.

Despite Goldsmiths and Swift use different kinds of satire in order to reveal social vices, they both find their own ways to the readers' hearts. Popularity of their works shows that themes and problems, eliminated by the authors, did not lose their actuality even nowadays and are still interesting for the modern reader.