

A modest proposal for preventing the children of poor people in ireland, from bei...

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A Modest Proposal for preventing the children of poor people in Ireland, from being a burden on their parents or country, and for making them beneficial to the public

Jonathan Swift's 'Modest Proposal' uses an ironic way of criticizing the government as well as the masses in the plight of poverty that the citizens of Ireland experience. At the beginning of the essay, Swift describes the scene of poverty in the country, by focusing on the welfare of children born out of poor families. As such, they were not provided with food and other basic needs which children of their age need to have. At the start of the essay, it was as if Swift would propose a budget for rearing these children to become well-honed citizens, as seen in the statistical analysis he presented.

However, the statement to follow changed the mood established at the start.

It says:

"I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious nourishing and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricasie, or a ragoust" (Swift, 2003).

For me, this ending was a bit surprising because it shifted its proposed solution, from a very traditional perspective of allotting budget to solve poverty into a peculiar one, and that of selling the flesh of infants to reduce unemployment and economic crisis. Of course, Swift is not suggesting cannibalism or what. To reiterate, it just serves as a criticism to the authorities and citizens. This is clearly explained by this phrase, "Therefore I repeat, let no man talk to me of these and the like expedients, till he hath at

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least some glympse of hope, that there will ever be some hearty and sincere attempt to put them into practice” (Swift, 2003).

REFERENCES

Swift, J. (2003, September 03). A modest proposal for preventing the children of poor people in Ireland, from being a burden on their parents or country, and for making them beneficial to the public. Retrieved from <http://www.victorianweb.org/previctorian/swift/modest.html>