

Gulliver's Travels Literary Device

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Figures of Speech

Metaphor: When something is described as something else, without using “like” or “as.” Gulliver starts to see his own people as Yahoos, showing human nature as wild or animal-like.

Irony: When the opposite of what is expected happens, or what is said means something else. Gulliver considers himself civilized but ends up admiring horses (Houyhnhnms) and despising humans.

Allusion: A reference to a famous person, story, or event. References to real English kings, wars, or religious disputes (like Big-Endians and Little-Endians). Swift uses these allusions to satirize real politics and religion.

Symbols: A symbol is a thing (like an object, color, or place) that stands for or represents something else, especially an idea, feeling, or quality.

The Lilliputians: Human pride, smallness of mind, and political pettiness. Their tiny size and silly arguments over eggs and shoes represent how small and foolish human quarrels can be.

Gulliver's Size: Change in perspective. Gulliver is a giant in Lilliput but tiny in Brobdingnag. This symbolizes that what seems powerful or important depends on the point of view.

The Floating Island (Laputa): The detachment of intellectuals and government from ordinary people. Laputa floats above the ground and ignores the suffering below—like leaders who ignore real problems.

The Houyhnhnms: Rationality, ideal society, and the hope for perfect reason and honesty. The horses represent a world ruled by logic and morality, in contrast to the Yahoos.

The Yahoos: The animalistic, greedy, and dirty side of human nature. They stand for what is worst in mankind—selfishness, violence, and lack of reason.

The Egg (Big-Endians vs. Little-Endians): Religious and political conflict over trivial things. The fight about which end to break an egg symbolizes all foolish, stubborn arguments in society.

The Rope-Dancing: Unstable political favoritism and corruption. Court officials must dance and risk falling to keep power, representing the dangers and instability of court politics.

Moral Lesson:

- Pride and greed can destroy people and society.
- Wisdom, honesty, and reason are more valuable than power or appearance.
- Real goodness is shown by action, not by words or status.
- Prejudice and narrow-mindedness cause suffering.
- It is important to be self-critical and question our own society.

LxNotes