

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

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Published anonymously in 1729, Jonathan Swift's satirical essay, *A Modest Proposal*, puts forth the darkly comical idea that the starving poor of Ireland might alleviate their economic condition by selling their children as food for wealthy gentlemen and ladies.

At its core, Swift's *Modest Proposal* satirizes English exploitation of Ireland in particular and the heartless attitude that rich elites can develop towards the poor in general. Along with *Gulliver's Travels*, *A Modest Proposal* is an early English example of the black comedic genre.

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