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A Rereading of Books III and IV in *Gulliver's Travels* in the Light of the Conventions of Menippean Satire

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Abstract

Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) has traditionally been viewed as a work of Horatian satire, employing humor and irony to criticize the social and political corruption of 18th-century England and Europe. However, scholars such as Northrop Frye and Mikhail Bakhtin have also argued for its alignment with Menippean satire, which criticizes abstract ideas through philosophical inquiry and satirical exaggeration. This study examines *The Travels* through the lens of Menippean satire, focusing specifically on Books III and IV. Unlike the first two books, which primarily target specific individuals and institutions, the latter sections move beyond contemporary political satire to engage in broader criticism of human nature and to interrogate epistemological and moral constructs. By drawing on Bakhtin's framework of Menippean satire, this analysis situates *The Travels* within the Menippean tradition by revealing its deeper engagement with the overall human nature, and seeks to offer new insights into Swift's criticism of reason, morality, and human pretensions.

Keywords: *Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels, Mikhail Bakhtin, Menippean satire.*

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Gulliver'in Gezileri'nin Üçüncü ve Dördüncü Kitaplarının Menipposçu Satir Gelenekleri Işığında Yeniden Okunması

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Özet

Jonathan Swift'in *Gulliver'in Gezileri* (1726) 18. yüzyıl İngiltere ve Avrupa'sındaki toplumsal ve siyasal yozlaşmayı mizah ve ironi yoluyla eleştiren Horatiusçu bir hiciv eseri olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Ancak Northrop Frye ve Mikhail Bakhtin gibi bazı akademisyenler, eserin aynı zamanda felsefi sorgulama ve hicivsel abartı yoluyla soyut düşünceleri eleştiren Menipposçu hiciv türüyle de örtüştüğünü öne sürmüşlerdir. Bu çalışma, *Gulliver'in Gezileri*'ni özellikle Üçüncü ve Dördüncü Kitaplara odaklanarak Menipposçu hiciv merceğinden incelemektedir. İlk iki kitaptan farklı olarak, bu bölümler yalnızca belirli kişi ve kurumları hedef almamakta; bunun ötesine geçerek insan doğasına yönelik daha kapsamlı bir eleştiri sunmakta ve bilgi ile ahlak kavramlarını sorgulamaktadır. Bu analiz, Bakhtin'in Menipposçu hiciv çerçevesinden yararlanarak *Gulliver'in Gezileri*'ni Menipposçu geleneği içine yerleştirmekte ve Swift'in akıl, ahlak ve insanın kendini beğenmişliği üzerindeki eleştirilerine dair yeni bir bakış açısı sunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: *Jonathan Swift, Gulliver'in Gezileri, Mikhail Bakhtin, Menipposçu satir.*

Introduction

Written by Jonathan Swift in 1726, *Gulliver's Travels* is a great satire on human nature and the contemporary England and Europe. For his great satire, Swift utilized the popular literary form of his time – travel literature – as a vehicle. Through his protagonist Lemuel Gulliver's adventurous voyages to unknown fantastic lands where he encounters various races of unusual sizes, behavior and philosophies, Swift discussed the overall human condition, and criticized the social and political corruption in his contemporary England and Europe. As to the type of satire of *The Travels*, it has usually been considered to be a work of Horatian satire mainly because it exposes and ridicules human follies, absurdities, and flaws in an entertaining manner through its playful humour. However, it has been argued that Swift's work could be considered as a work of Menippean satire as well. Northrop Frye, for instance, suggests that *The Travels* should not be considered as a novel but as a fiction written within the conventions of Menippean satire (1973, 308-9). Besides him, Mikhail Bakhtin points out in *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* (1963/1999) that Swift, alongside Rabelais, Voltaire, and some others, played a role in the continuation of the ancient tradition of Menippean satire in the subsequent epochs (1963/1999,116). In the same book, Bakhtin provides a comprehensive analysis of this form of satire through a detailed account of its basic characteristics. In the light of these characteristics put forward by Bakhtin, this paper aims to offer a possible insight into *The Travels* by analyzing Books III and IV within the context of Menippean satire. These two parts have been included in the analysis because unlike the first two books presenting a satire more toward individual targets from Swift's contemporary England, the final two books concern a satire toward more abstract concepts and human attitudes as befitting the characteristics of Menippean satire.

Menippean Satire and Its Defining Features: A Bakhtinian Perspective

Menippean satire took its name from the Greek philosopher Menippus (third century B.C.), who fashioned it “into its classical form”, although “the term itself was first

introduced by the Roman scholar Varro (first century B.C.)”, whose satires were called ‘saturae menippeae’” (Bakhtin, 1963/1999, 112-13). This form of satire differs from the “formal verse satire” as it is usually written in prose (Dyer, 2006, 18). It usually targets certain ideas, viewpoints, mental attitudes, or contemporary conventions rather than attacking specific individuals and entities. It actually deals with what the satirist sees as harmful attitudes in his contemporary society or world. If a Menippean satire focuses on individuals, it does that in order to associate the characters to certain “ideas” or “abstractions” (Dyer, 2006, 18). Thus, the characters in this form of satire serve as “the implied and embodied opinions” that present “the main matter of the work” (Dyer, 2006, 101). In other words, the characters are “subservient to” the work’s “Utopian and satirical ideas” (Yeomans, 1968, 263).

In Menippean satire’s various definitions, a great deal of emphasis is laid upon its characteristic of “thematic heterogeneity” (Musgrave, 2014, 23). One aspect of this heterogeneity is related to the use of “vulgarity, coarseness or grotesquery”; vulgar, coarse or grotesque elements are employed in order to provide sharp contrasts to the “intellectual sphere” that is being satirized. Another aspect of thematic heterogeneity is “the mixture of fantasy and morality”. Fantastic worlds are created to provide an observation or a discovery of the “flawed real world” (Musgrave, 2014, 23). In Menippean satire, this thematic heterogeneity is sometimes seen in its “grotesque” images such as “comic mesalliances, giants, talking machines, dwarves, talking animals, odd combinations of human with nonhuman, transformations”, and “strange powers” (Musgrave, 2014, 23). Apart from these, it is frequently seen that “the narrator” or the “characters” exhibit some sort of “eccentricity, madness, foolishness, extreme behaviour or abnormal mental states” (Musgrave, 2014, 23).

In his seminal work, *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* (1963/1999), Mikhail Bakhtin provides a comprehensive framework for understanding such defining characteristics of Menippean satire. He identifies several key features that distinguish this form of satire from other literary genres, emphasizing its philosophical nature, the interplay of the fantastic and the crude, and its engagement with contemporary ideological currents. One of the primary characteristics of Menippean satire is the heightened presence of the comic element. As Bakhtin states, “the comic element is generally increased” in this form of satire (Bakhtin, 1963/1999, 114). This

amplification of comedy serves not merely as entertainment but as a means to facilitate critical reflection on philosophical and ideological themes. Furthermore, Menippean satire is not constrained “by any demands for an external verisimilitude to life”. Instead, it employs an unrestrained “use of the fantastic”, granting authors the freedom to construct extraordinary settings and situations that challenge conventional perceptions of reality. However, Bakhtin emphasizes that the fantastic elements in Menippean satire are not arbitrary; their use is usually motivated by and devoted to “a purely ideational and philosophical end”. In other words, extraordinary situations are crafted to provoke and test “a philosophical idea, a discourse”, or “a truth” (Bakhtin, 1963/ 1999, 114). To this end, the hero of Menippean satire is often “placed in extraordinary life situations” —ascending “into heaven”, descending into “the nether world”, or wandering through “unknown and fantastic lands”, thereby gaining a unique perspective from which to criticize human nature and social norms (Bakhtin, 1963/ 1999, 114).

In addition to the free use of the fantastic to provoke or test certain ideas, Menippean satire frequently combines “the symbolic” with “an extreme and crude slum naturalism” (Bakhtin, 1963/1999, 115). “The adventures of truth” of a Menippean satire’s hero often take place in settings where he can confront “worldly evil, depravity, baseness, and vulgarity in their most extreme expression” (Bakhtin, 1963/ 1999, 115). To Bakhtin, this juxtaposition is essential to the genre’s function, as it exposes human depravity, baseness, and vulgarity in their most exaggerated forms. This “slum naturalism” serves as a counterbalance to the fantastical elements, grounding the satire in a form of exaggerated realism that magnifies the flaws of human nature and society.

Another defining characteristic of Menippean satire is its reliance on “philosophical dialogue” (Bakhtin, 1963/ 1999, 115). These dialogues do not merely serve a narrative function but instead contribute to the satire’s broader “philosophical universalism” (Bakhtin, 1963/ 1999, 115). Through the questionings of ‘universal’ matters, these philosophical dialogues provide an opportunity “to contemplate the world on the broadest possible scale” (Bakhtin, 1963/ 1999, 115). Often set in “the nether world” or among historical or mythical figures, the dialogues engage with timeless philosophical debates, allowing the satire to transcend its immediate historical context.

They provide a platform to engage in overt and covert polemics with various philosophical, religious, and ideological schools of thought. The concept of “the nether world” holds particular significance in Menippean satire. For Bakhtin, this feature gave rise to “the special genre of ‘dialogues of the dead,’” which was “widespread in European literature of the Renaissance, and in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries” (Bakhtin, 1963/ 1999, 116).

A further hallmark of Menippean satire is its employment of “a special type of experimental fantasticality”, wherein reality is observed from an unusual or heightened perspective (Bakhtin, 1963/ 1999, 116). To Bakhtin, this method of experimental fantasticality in Menippean satires continued into the subsequent epochs with Swift, Rabelais, Voltaire, and some other writers (Bakhtin, 1963/ 1999, 116). It often manifests through radical shifts in scale, as seen in the works of Swift, Rabelais, and Voltaire, where human concerns are either magnified to the point of absurdity or diminished to insignificance. This method allows authors to criticize the moral assumptions of their time by altering the reader’s perception of reality.

Additionally, Menippean satire is characterized by “scandal scenes, eccentric behavior, inappropriate speeches and performances” (Bakhtin, 1963/ 1999, 117). This form of satire frequently thrives on violating “the customary course of events” and “the established norms of behavior and etiquette” (Bakhtin, 1963/ 1999, 117). The inclusion of such disruptions contributes to the genre’s emphasis on subverting conventional narratives. Furthermore, Menippean satire employs “sharp contrasts and oxymoronic combinations” (Bakhtin, 1963/ 1999, 118), revealing the stark disparity between the ideal and the actual, and reinforcing the satirical intent.

Another defining feature of Menippean satire is its deep engagement with contemporary and topical issues. Hence, Bakhtin describes Menippean satire as “the ‘journalistic’ genre of antiquity,” highlighting its tendency to expose and criticize “the ideological issues of the day” (Bakhtin, 1963/ 1999, 118). In this respect, he points to the works of the Syrian satirist Lucian as prime examples of Menippean satire, noting how they incorporate both “overt and hidden polemics with various philosophical, religious, ideological and scientific schools, and with the tendencies and currents of his time” (Bakhtin, 1963/ 1999, 118). These satires, according to Bakhtin, are “full of

allusions to the great and small events of the epoch” (Bakhtin, 1963/ 1999, 118). In other words, they maintain their relevance and immediate social impact by embedding references to the major and minor events of the epoch.

Besides a concern with the issues and currents of its age, in Menippean satire there also appears a “moral-psychological experimentation” (Bakhtin, 1963/ 1999, 116). This experimentation is reflected in the portrayal of human beings in “unusual, abnormal moral and psychic” states, often manifesting as “insanity,” including “split personality, unrestrained daydreaming, unusual dreams,” and “passions bordering on madness” (Bakhtin, 1963/ 1999, 116–17). Thus, the genre often explores extreme psychological and moral states, portraying characters experiencing forms of insanity, split personalities, obsessive daydreaming, or passions bordering on madness. Such psychological exploration allows Menippean satire to investigate the limits of human rationality and the complexities of moral consciousness, thereby deepening its engagement with philosophical and existential themes.

In sum, Menippean satire, as characterized by Bakhtin (1963/ 1999), is a genre that transcends conventional literary boundaries through its use of the fantastic, crude naturalism, philosophical dialogue, and engagement with contemporary issues. By employing radical shifts in perspective, grotesque humor, and moral-psychological experimentation, it challenges prevailing ideological frameworks and offers a profound and multifaceted commentary on the absurdities of human nature and society. Through these distinctive features, Menippean satire remains a powerful vehicle for intellectual inquiry and cultural criticism.

Menippean Satire in *Gulliver's Travels*: A Bakhtinian Perspective

When the defining characteristics of Menippean satire put forward by Bakhtin (1963/ 1999) are closely examined, it appears that most of them can be traced in Jonathan Swift's satirical work, *Gulliver's Travels*, especially in Books III and IV. First of all, Swift makes use of ‘the comic element’ in his work in order to poke fun at human follies, absurdities and vices, and to criticize philosophical and ideological themes. To exemplify, in Book III where Gulliver discovers a floating island named Laputa, Swift employs a series of comic elements to satirize ‘impractical’ and ‘futile’ science that has no relation to human life and provides no use in the actual world. In this flying

island, everyone is so obsessed with abstract scientific theories that they cannot carry out the simplest tasks of daily life. They are so distracted that they even have difficulty in holding a daily conversation when they are left to themselves. They can only carry on their conversation thanks to some servants called 'flappers' walking among them and flapping their mouths and ears with a blown bladder fastened to the end of a short stick in order to recall them to themselves and disperse their meditations. These flappers also prevent their absent-minded masters from tripping over things or bumping into walls. Swift adds some other comic elements to Book III in order to continue his satire on scientists or projectors who are cut off from the real life due to their obsession with abstract scientific theories. He gives comic details of Gulliver's observations in the academy of the metropolis, Lagado, where scientists and philosophers are engaged in many bizarre projects and experiments. Among these projects and experiments are extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers, turning human excrement back into food, building houses from the roof down, and treating colic by plumping air into people's anuses. The comic elements are also provided through Gulliver's visit to the educational wing of the academy where professors give lessons on how to learn mathematics by eating wafers with equations written on them. In this educational wing of the academy, a new strategy is also discussed by the professors to enable people to stop speaking, on the grounds that speech shortens the lifespan, and to communicate only by showing each other the actual objects they want to refer to. Swift uses all these comic elements to satirize the new institutions of his time and the scientists carrying out useless projects that do not provide any benefit to society.

In addition to the increased weight of the comic element, Swift makes use of 'the fantastic' in his work to satirize the absurdities and vices of his age and humanity in general. He creates extraordinary situations for his protagonist in unrealistic settings and portrays the 'unusual' dispositions, lifestyles, and philosophies of various races in those fantastic lands. Through Gulliver's observations and experiences in those lands, Swift draws parallels and contrasts between his 'real world' and those fantastic worlds, and thus provokes questions and ideas related to the overall human condition. In Book III, he creates fantastic settings through Laputa, a flying island; Glubbudrib, an island of sorcerers, where Gulliver speaks with the ghosts of famous persons from the past such as Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Caesar and Brutus; and Luggnagg, a land

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inhabited by the grim immortal Struldbrugs. In the flying island of Laputa, Swift makes use of extraordinary situations to satirize the Enlightenment period of great intellectual experimentation and theorization; he attacks abstract scientific knowledge and theories that provide no practical use in the actual world. In this island, everyone is so obsessed with abstract mathematical, musical, and astronomical theories that they are utterly incompetent about practical matters in their daily lives. Although they seem to pay great attention to accurate measurement, they live in misshapen houses as they insist that the houses be built without any right angles as they hate practical geometry, which they despise as vulgar and mechanic. Another reason their houses are very ill built is because their complex calculations cannot be well understood by the workmen. In another fantastic land called Lagado, where the Laputians' theories have turned a once functioning people into a broken society, Swift continues his satire on 'futile' science that deals with nothing related to practical life. In this metropolis, although so many people seem so busy working, they cannot produce any good practical effects. For instance, many labourers working with several kinds of tools to cultivate the soil cannot grow any corn or grass in spite of the fertile soil. Gulliver then encounters another contradictory situation when he is taken by the king's friend Munodi to his private estate away from the city. In a stark contrast to the strangely built houses of Lagado, Munodi's estate is an orderly and productive house with a mill, cropfields, and symmetrical landscaping, since it is one of the last few houses that were built according to "the best Rules of Ancient Architecture" (Swift, 2005, 164). When Munodi gives an account of what happened forty years ago, it becomes apparent that the Lagadans look on the old, traditional ways of their ancestors with an eye of contempt, and no matter how useless the new methods are, they stick obstinately to these new ways. As Munodi tells it, forty years ago a group of Lagadans went up to Laputa and returned with a new knowledge of art and mathematics to revamp their entire society. They opened academies and filled them with professors who invented "new Rules and Methods of Agriculture and Building", and "new Instruments and Tools for all Trades and Manufactures" in order to improve people's lives (Swift, 2005, 164). However, all those highly new scientific and mathematic schemes have failed and left the country impoverished, infertile, and horrifically disorganized. Through all these useless attempts causing the Lagadons to experience nothing but new failures in their daily lives, Swift satirizes the use of scientific knowledge and

theories for the sake of science again, not for the benefit of people or for the improvement of human life. While doing that, Swift also praises traditional methods in order to imply that humanity needs not only the knowledge and theories of the present, but also the wisdom, common sense, and purity learned from ancestors and passed down across generations.

Book IV also takes place in a fantastic land where Gulliver experiences highly extraordinary situations. This land is the country of the Houyhnhnms, the noble and reasonable horses, trying to do their best to control the ugly and degenerate 'human-like' Yahoos for the maintenance of the social order. Swift creates these two absolutely different fantastic creatures to expose and ridicule the vices and follies of human nature. He portrays the Yahoos as human in form, but as savage animals in character and morality. These 'brute' and 'wild' beasts lack logic, reason, and morals. They suck up to their leaders, but then they throw their excrement at that leader as soon as he is replaced. They are endlessly greedy and selfish; they kill each other over a shiny stone found in their lands, and even if there are only five Yahoos supplied with enough meat to fill fifty Yahoos, they still attack each other to hoard extra supplies. They are gluttonous; they have an undistinguishing appetite to devour anything that come in their way, "whether Herbs, Roots, Berries, the corrupted Flesh of animals, or all mingled together" (Swift, 2005, 243). But on the converse, the Houyhnhnms, horses in shapes, are a race of highly rational, clean, civilized, and benevolent beings. Unlike the Yahoos, they lead a life of virtue; there is no "doubting" or "not believing" among them. When Gulliver once talks to the master horse of "Lying" or "false Representation" in the other parts of the world, the master has difficulty in comprehending what Gulliver means. This is because their society is so perfect that they have no concept of a lie; their only word for evil is 'Yahoo'.

Through these two highly fantastic creatures, each positioned completely on opposite ends of the rational and moral spectrum, Swift exposes and satirizes the flawed human world. Especially through the parallels he draws between the 'corrupt' worlds of human beings and the 'human-shaped' Yahoos, he presents a harsh ridicule of the weaknesses and vices of humankind. This satire on human nature through these fantastic creatures also seems to be a criticism of the Enlightenment thought of the eighteenth century, which privileged rational thought as the chief source of knowledge

and accordingly viewed human as superior to all other creatures based on the faculty of reason. This criticism is provided especially through the description of the 'human-like' Yahoos as "the most unteachable Brutes" (Swift, 2005, 219) and of the Houyhnhnmns as "rational Beings" (Swift, 2005, 222). In contrast to 'human-like' Yahoos, the horses seem to be endowed with the qualities considered 'ideal' according to the Enlightenment standards. Apparently, Swift turns the exalted ideas of the Enlightenment upside-down through these two fantastic races.

In addition to the use of 'the fantastic' to provoke or test certain ideas, Swift also combines a great deal of 'crude' naturalism with the fantastic, which is another convention of Menippean satire. In Book IV, Gulliver comes to face the vulgar, vicious, and corrupt sides of human nature through this combination. Throughout the Book, a great deal of emphasis is put on the nakedness and 'despicable' bodies of the 'human-shaped' Yahoos. This 'human-like' race is portrayed as extremely ugly creatures; Gulliver is disgusted especially by the thick hair on their heads, breasts, anuses, and genitals whenever he sees them. When he encounters them for the first time, he feels so disgusted at their sight and smell that he thinks they are a "cursed Brood" (Swift, 2005, 210), and concludes that he never saw "any sensitive Being so detestable on all Accounts" (Swift, 2005, 215). In that first encounter, Swift also experiences a disgraceful event; they defecate on his head, climbing a tree. Since then he tries to distance himself from them at every turn, trying to prove that he is actually different from this 'human-like' race. The excrement in that first encounter scene is significant as it actually symbolizes the 'crude' reality of human nature and human body. This symbol of excrement also appears in Book III, where a man in the Academy of Projectors works on a project of turning human excrement back into food. In this part of the work, the projectors and professors are also portrayed as dirty and in rags; the man working on a project for extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers is described as having "sooty" face and hands, long hair and beard, "ragged and singed in several places" (Swift, 2005, 167). As for the projector working on turning human excrement back into food, his hands and clothes are covered with filth, and Gulliver first cannot enter his chamber and hastens back due to the horrible stink in there (Swift, 2005, 167). All this combination of the fantastic with a crude naturalism becomes an effective way of exposing the vulgar, primitive, and brutal sides of humankind, and thus prevents

any attempt to view human as a wholly flawless being. This emphasis on the common filth in human's life is also a possible attack against the Enlightenment thought of the 18th century, which tends to view human as 'rational' and 'perfectible' beings rather than 'primitive' and 'vulgar' ones.

Besides the combination of the fantastic with such a crude naturalism, 'philosophical dialogue' also plays a key role in the creation of satire in *The Travels* because the satire in this work deepens especially through the dialogues taking place between Gulliver and the kings, or the masters he meets in those fantastic lands he travels to. In the course of such dialogues, they question one another about their own countries and contemplate on such weighty matters as education, religion, law, government, and war. Through the questionings of such universal matters, these conversations provide an extraordinary philosophical universalism and an opportunity to contemplate the world on the broadest possible scale, which is also another characteristic of Menippean satires. In Book IV where Gulliver converses with the master horse about his own country and the several events of his life prior to his arrival there, the dialogues progress from an account of his contemporary country and Europe toward a general philosophical questioning of human world. Thus, the conversation progresses toward an attempt to comprehend humanity as a whole, and inevitably leads to an exposition of the absurdities, follies and vices of humankind. To exemplify, this happens when Gulliver once tells of his last voyage, during which many members of his crew died at sea, and the master wonders how Gulliver can persuade strangers out of different nations to venture with him after so many dangers and losses. To Gulliver, the reason is that those men as the "Fellows of desperate Fortunes" are compelled to escape from their hometowns due to "their Poverty or their Crimes". Their lives have been ruined either by lawsuits or as they have spent all their money "in Drinking, Whoring, and Gaming". Besides, some others had to flee from their countries "for Treason; many for Murder, Theft, Poysoning, Robbery, Perjury, Forgery, Coining false Money; for committing Rapes or Sodomy; for flying from their Colours, or deserting to the Enemy" (Swift, 2005, 226). This conversation on human weaknesses and vices takes several days as the master horse, as a Houyhnhnm, cannot understand what might be the use or necessity of practising such vices. He has difficulty in understanding the corrupt human world because he does not have the least knowledge

of such follies and vices. This is also because there are no terms in his Houyhnhnm language whereby those vices could be expressed.

The satire on the 'corrupt' human world provided through such dialogues also continues in their conversations on other weighty matters, one of which is war. When the master horse once wants to learn about the usual causes of wars, he discovers from Gulliver's account of "innumerable" causes that it is not so difficult for the European countries to start a war and kill millions of people, devastating the cities. The countries can wage a war due to the ambition of kings who never think they have enough lands to govern, or due to the corruption of ministers occupying their prince with a war in order to "divert the Clamour of the Subjects against their evil Administration". The countries can also start a war for 'foolish' causes such as a split in opinion on "whether Flesh be Bread, or Bread be Flesh", or "Whether Whistling be a Vice or a Virtue" (Swift, 2005, 229). Through this conversation exposing the absurdity of the endless wars breaking out over petty causes, and especially through the master's philosophical questionings about the motives for starting a war, Swift also invites to contemplate the issue of war on the broadest possible scale because the usual causes of wars put forward by Gulliver are not actually just related to the certain conditions of his own country, or to the insatiable ambitions of his own country's rulers. Those causes are also related to the overall human condition of greed, which causes human to want more and more in everything. Therefore, while Swift refers to the specific individual targets from his contemporary England and Europe, he also presents a broad-scale satire on humankind as a whole. For this reason, his work turns into a timeless and universal satire as well.

Swift's work also attaches great importance to 'the nether world' as befitting the characteristics of Menippean satire. In the *Travels*, this is seen in Book III where Gulliver goes to the island of Glubbudrib governed by the magicians practising necromancy. Gulliver gets the chance to speak with the ghosts of certain famous persons from the past thanks to an 'extraordinary' offer from the governor. The governor offers him to summon any dead person he wants to meet, and to question them about anything "within the Compass of the Times they lived in" (Swift, 2005, 182). Extremely excited over this offer, Gulliver first sees the ghosts of ancient rulers such as Alexander the Great, Hannibal and Caesar, alongside the Senate of Rome in a

large chamber and “a modern Representative, in Counterview, in another” (Swift, 2005, 182). This extraordinary experience causes Gulliver to discover many flaws in his knowledge of history. For instance, he finds out that several famous stories told about Alexander and Hannibal are not actually true; Alexander died not from poisoning but from a fever caused by excessive drinking, and Hannibal never broke any rocks blocking him from the Alps by using vinegar. Gulliver is also disappointed by the fact that the modern senators are nothing but “Pedlars, Pickpockets, Highwaymen and Bullies”, in contrast to the Roman senators constituting “an Assembly of Heroes and Demy-Gods” (Swift, 2005, 182). In addition, Gulliver sees Homer and Aristotle, the ancients most renowned for their wit and learning, along with the huge crowd of their ‘modern’ commentators. When Gulliver sees them, he observes that in the underworld, these commentators keep themselves in the most distant quarters from the ancient philosophers as they feel shame for their own ‘horrible’ misinterpretations of the meaning of Homer and Aristotle’s works to posterity (Swift, 2005, 184). Gulliver experiences another disappointment when he sees “a dozen or two of kings” of his own country and other European countries, along with their royal ancestors, and finds himself to be “chiefly disgusted with modern History” (Swift, 2005, 186). Having conversed with the ghosts, he concludes that the world he witnesses in the underworld had been horribly misled by modern historians, who tend to ascribe virtues such as bravery, piety and honor to those who were actually only cowards, hypocrites, and corrupt figures. Through this highly extraordinary experience of his protagonist – entrance into the nether world, Swift presents a satire on modern history and raises questions about the reliability of historical accounts, exposing that the universally accepted ‘facts’ are actually nothing but a pack of lies and distortions invented by modern historians. Swift creates this satire through Gulliver’s discovery of many flaws in his knowledge of history and through his great disappointment with the fact that history is not actually what it has always been portrayed to be. This satire on modern history also becomes a satire on the corrupt human world as a whole since it exposes human failings and vices from different epochs and realms.

As a prime example of Menippean satire, Swift’s work also employs an ‘experimental fantasticality’. Especially Book III presents fantastic experimentality

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through the floating island of Laputa. This circular flying island is moved up, down, forward, backward, and sideways through the astronomers' use of the laws of magnetism, and thus its movements are controlled in relation to another island below, Balnibarbi, which is also ruled by the King of Laputa. The king manages this land below mostly by manipulating the motions of his flying island. If any town in Balnibarbi defies his orders, he reduces them to obedience either by keeping his island hovering over that rebellious town's lands, whereby he can deprive them of sunlight and rain, or by pelting them from above with huge stones that would beat their houses to pieces. If the Balnibarbians continue misbehaving, he also lets his island drop directly upon their hands, threatening to crush them. Through this fantastic flying island and the 'opportunities' it provides the king in order to take the Balnibarbians under total control, Swift seems to present a satire on the kings who tyrannized their subjects with threats of physical violence, without caring about realizing their wishes or demands. In doing this, Swift also provides an 'unusual' point of view that results in a radical change in the life of Balnibarbians; a population in Balnibarbia called the Lindalinians are so tired of their king's oppression that they rebel for 'democracy', demanding to choose "their own Governor". To Gulliver, this is a "very bold" demand and an "exorbitance" (Swift 160), however, the Lindalinians fighting determinedly for their liberty manage to break entirely the king's measures and liberate themselves.

Apart from experimental fantasticality, *The Travels* presents another fundamental characteristic of Menippean satire; it features scandal scenes, eccentric behavior, inappropriate speeches and performances. The customary course of events and the established norms of behavior and etiquette are frequently violated through a series of unusual characters, eccentric forms of behavior, and scandal scenes. Since each Book takes place in various fantastic lands, where Gulliver experiences extraordinary situations, there appear lots of unusual characters in the whole work. Books III and IV include such unusual characters as well. Among them are the Struldburgs, a race of immortals born with a red circular spot in their foreheads; the ghost servants of the Glubbdubdribian Governer; and the Houyhnhnms, a race of horses but more rational than human-shaped Yahoos. Through such unconventional characters, Swift easily creates scenes that can be considered a 'scandal'. In Book IV, for instance, the scene where the human-like Yahoos defecate on Gulliver's head, and

the scene where he feels mortified as he is accosted by a female Yahoo while bathing stark naked in a river can be considered to be among such 'scandal' scenes. In Book III, the scene where a doctor tries an apparently 'useless' experiment on a dog and causes its death is another scene that could be considered a 'scandal'. Swift's 'scandal' scenes actually serve as satiric scenes that expose and criticize a certain human folly or vice. Here, the former scenes expose the vulgar and aggressive sides of human nature, while the latter reveals the selfish side of human nature. The latter also presents a satire on the use of scientific knowledge and theories just for the sake of science itself without any common sense or moral values. Besides such 'scandal' scenes, Swift also creates in his work certain unexpected situations that occur or proceed contrary to the generally expected or customary course of events. In Book III, for instance, the Laputians who are so obsessed with accurate measurement can no way sew clothes that would fit Gulliver; their meticulous calculations only result in very ill-made and quite out-of-shape clothes. Another example from Book III is that many labourers working with several kinds of tools to grow corn and grass cannot grow anything in spite of the fertile soil. Swift again makes use of such unexpected results in the customary course of events in order to reveal certain human absurdities and follies. Here, he exposes and ridicules human's obsession with impractical and useless theories, which causes them to experience nothing but many failures in their actual lives.

Besides such unconventional characters, scandal scenes, and violations of the customary course of events, Swift makes use of sharp contrasts and contradictions in an attempt to expose the differences between the ideal and the actual. In Book IV, Swift draws a sharp contrast between the Yahoos and the Houyhnhnms, revealing the sharp differences between vice and virtue, or between what man is and what he ought to be. He describes the human-shaped Yahoos as brute, filthy, greedy, and dumb creatures, while portraying the Houyhnhnms as an 'ideal' race of rational, peaceful, generous, and civilized beings. Swift draws this stark contrast between the two races to expose and satirize the corrupt human world. Book III includes such sharp contrasts as well; this time Swift contrasts Munodi with the other Lagadons in order to criticize the obsession with 'impractical' scientific theories and the use of scientific knowledge not for the improvement of human's life, but just for the sake of abstract knowledge

itself. Munodi is portrayed by Swift as the one 'sensible' man in all of Lagado; in the whole country he is the only one person who lives a decent life as he follows the customs of his ancestors. However, he is detested and ridiculed in his community since he refuses to adopt new, but 'useless' experimental methods of managing his household. In contrast to Munodi who lives a decent life thanks to the old and traditional methods of his ancestors, the Lagadons are seen leading an impoverished life as they obstinately stick to the new, but useless ways and methods. Through this contrast drawn between the lives of Munodi and other Lagadons, Swift again praises the traditional methods that have been tested many times before, and ridicules the uselessness of abstract knowledge and theories that could never be applied for the improvement of human life.

As befitting another significant characteristic of Menippean satire, *The Travels* acutely echoes the ideological concerns of its era. Swift addresses contemporary concerns and satirizes what he saw as corrupt practices in his age. In Book IV, for instance, he satirizes the corrupt political and judicial systems of his contemporary England and Europe through Gulliver's conversations with the master horse. While telling of the judicial system in England and Europe, Gulliver exposes the corruption in their legal system. To him, lawyers constitute "a Society of Men" who are "bred up from their Youth in the Art of proving" that "White is Black, and Black is White" by multiplying the words for their purpose, "according as they are paid". As for the judges, he mentions them as persons who dislike "Truth and Equity" but favour "Fraud, Perjury and Oppression" (Swift, 2005, 232). Gulliver also speaks of trials as long, tedious and aggressive accounts of endless details that are always "dwelling upon all Circumstances which are not to the purpose". Through these accounts, Swift exposes and satirizes the corruption that permeates the legal system in his contemporary England and Europe. Following his accounts of the legal system, Gulliver also addresses another problem of his age; this time he tells of the nature of government in his country and exposes the political corruption. To him, statesmen are largely motivated by "a Desire of Wealth, Power, and Titles", and chief ministers control their councils through bribery (Swift, 2005, 237). He further adds that if a man wants to rise to the position of a chief minister, he could only rise either by murdering female relatives, betraying his predecessor, or by showing "a furious Zeal" against "the

corruptions of the court” in public assemblies (Swift, 2005, 238). Thus, with a concern for the vices of his age, Swift satirizes the political corruption in his country through his protagonist who tells of such statesmen and courtiers trying to grab power by immoral means and to retain that power through lies and deception.

In addition to the political corruption in his contemporary world, Swift also presents a concern for the philosophical tendencies and currents of his age in *The Travels*. He wrote his work during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment which was an intellectual and cultural movement privileging the reason and rationalist thought over faith and superstitions. In that movement, a great emphasis was laid upon the significance of scientific observations and experiments in understanding the world and improving the human life. When these prevailing ideas of the period are taken into consideration, Swift seems to draw satirical parallels between his protagonist's adventures and the Enlightenment ideals. In Book III, he achieves this through the Laputians who lose their hold on common sense due to their absolute devotion to abstract scientific knowledge and theories. The Laputians live in defective houses, cannot carry on a daily conversation due to meditation, and cannot even control their own bodies. Their minds are so taken up with intense speculations that they cannot even notice their wives stepping out on them. Swift also attacks the Enlightenment ideals of his period through the Academy of Projectors in Lagado, which is a representation of the Royal Academy of his time, and through its scientists carrying out meaningless and useless projects providing no use in the actual life. In a stark contrast to the Enlightenment thought emphasizing the role of scientific experiments in improving the human life, the experiments carried out by these Lagadon scientists do not provide any benefit to human life, but only cause them to experience many failures in their daily lives.

Besides a concern with the issues and currents of its age, *The Travels* presents a ‘moral-psychological experimentation’ as well. The protagonist of the story, Gulliver, experiences an unusual psychic state at the end of the work. He is so disgusted by the corrupt world of the ‘human-like’ Yahoos and so fascinated by the egalitarian society of the Houyhnhnms that he does not want to return to his own country and wishes to prolong his stay in the Houyhnhnm land for as long as possible. He wants to stay in exile from human world because he becomes alienated from humankind as he

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associates the 'brute' and 'savage' Yahoos with human beings. However, Gulliver is not given the choice; when the kingdom's assembly gathers, they determine that he is a Yahoo and must either live with the uncivilized Yahoos or return to his own country. When he finally returns to his country, he feels disgusted at the sight and smell of the 'civilized' Yahoos. As for his wife and children, he cannot help seeing them as primitive, ugly and beastlike creatures; their sight fills him only with "Hatred, Disgust, and Contempt" (Swift, 2005, 271). As a consequence of his effort to be as far away from his 'Yahoo' family as possible, he eventually retreats into a kind of 'madness'; he buys two horses and spends at least four hours everyday conversing with them in his stable. He further thinks that they can understand each other "tolerably well" (Swift, 2005, 271). Gulliver's experience of 'madness' or abnormal psychic state is actually a result of his inability to accept what he has encountered in the savage and vicious world of the 'human-like' Yahoos. Through his encounter with such a corrupt 'human-like' race, his ideas related to humanity are tested and he has difficulty in keeping his sanity. His experience of 'madness' is significant as it carries the satire on humanity in the whole work to a higher point.

Conclusion

In the light of all these examples examined in Books III and IV within the context of Menippean satire, it can be suggested that the final two books of Swift's satirical work exemplify key characteristics of this form of satire, offering a multifaceted criticism of Enlightenment ideals, scientific rationalism, and human nature. Through its portrayal of futile scientific pursuits, distorted historical narratives, and the contrast between the rational Houyhnhnms and the depraved Yahoos, the work exposes the flaws of contemporary society and human folly. In line with these satirical targets, the text's use of various fantastical settings and 'unusual' characters reveals sharp contrasts between the ideal and the actual, and serves to expose the flaws of the real world. The protagonist's extraordinary experiences in those fantastic lands and his conversations provide a contemplation of the flawed world on the broadest scale possible, and invite the audience to provoke questions about humanity and human vices. His conversations with the dead in the nether world in Book III expose the distorted historical facts and question the reliability of modern history. In Book IV, his encounter with the rational and benevolent talking horses in contrast to the savage and

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vicious 'human-like' creatures in the Houyhnhnm land exposes and criticizes the corrupt human world. In the two books, a 'crude' naturalism is also presented in those fantastic lands, whereby some scandal scenes are created and the 'vulgar' side of human nature is exposed and ridiculed. In the light of all these parallels drawn between the conventions of Menippean satire and the examples from the two books, it can be suggested that the final two books of Swift's work can be considered as prime examples of this type of satire. This possible insight into Swift's work within the conventions of Menippean satire is not a new attempt, but this analysis can provide new possible perspectives through its various examples drawn from the two parts of the work. Swift's work's potential to provoke critical reflection on the reliability of knowledge and the moral shortcomings of humanity also makes it an effective and valuable tool for fostering critical thinking by encouraging the audience to analyze and question power structures and dynamics, institutions, and to distinguish between meaningful and futile pursuits in science and academia. The text's portrayal of governance, knowledge, and human nature may encourage comparative analysis with contemporary issues, enhancing the audience's ability to assess arguments critically. By incorporating debates and interdisciplinary discussions, Swift's satire can be used to cultivate analytical reasoning and intellectual inquiry, reinforcing the text's enduring relevance in critical discourse.

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