

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS : HORSES AND MEN
GULLIVER'IN SEYAHATLERİ: ATLAR VE İNSANLAR

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ÖZET

'Gulliver'in ...Seyahatleri' farklı biçimlerde yorumlansa da, kuşkusuz edebiyatın en çarpıcı hiciv örneklerinden biridir.

Dört seyahat içerir. Bunlardan sonuncusu Houyhnhnms'a olan yolculukdui. Sıradışı bu ülkede Houyhnhnms denilen atlar yaşamakta ve herşey onların egemenliğindedir. Houyhnhnms'lar Yahoos olarak tanımlanan insan soyu ile karşılaştırılır. Houyhnhnms'lar insanların kötülüklerinden hiçbirini almamışlardır. Sözün özü ile erdemi simgelerler. Ancak bu gerçekleştirilmesi imkansız bir düşüdür.

Bu çalışmada dördüncü yolculuk odak alınarak 'Gulliver'in Seyahatleri' farklı boyut ve çağrışımlarıyla incelenmiştir.

ABSTRACT

Much as 'Gulliver's, Travels' is interpreted in different ways, it is undoubtedly one of the most devastating satires in literature.

It includes four voyages. Of them the last one was a voyage to the Houyhnhnms. In this strange country horses known Houyhnhnms are in command. They are compared with human race known as Yahoos. Houyhnhnms, in no case, have any evil which humankind have. They are simply the soul of virtue. However, this is nothing but a utopia.

In this study different aspects and implications of Gulliver's Travels focusing on the fourth voyage are analysed.

What Kind of Book is *Gulliver's Travels*?

Gulliver's Travels is a complex book. It is of course, a satire on four aspects of man: the physical, the political, the intellectual, and the moral. The last three are inseparable, and when Swift writes of one he always has, in view of the others. It is a brilliant parody of travel literature. It is also a witty, parody of science

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fiction. It expresses savage indignation at the follies, vices, and stupidities of men. But at the same time it is a great comic masterpiece.

Gulliver's Travels is an amazing rhetorical achievement. It is the classic children's story and it is a rather obscene tale. One of the strange ironies of literature is that the bitterest satire in the English Language has become a children's classic. **Gulliver's Travels** is a merciless diatribe against the follies, vices, and indiscretions of mankind.

Gulliver's Travels is a discussion of human nature, particularly of political man, in the light of the great split. In general, the plan of the book is as follows: Book I, modern political practice, especially the politics of Britain and France; Book II, ancient political practice on something of a Roman or Spartan model; Book III, modern philosophy in its effect on political practice; Book IV, ancient Utopian politics used as a standard for judging man understood as the moderns wished to understand him. By "ancient" Swift means belonging to Greece and Rome-Greece for philosophy and poetry, republican Rome for politics.

The book is an account of four imaginary voyages. It was inspired by the immense popularity of travel narratives, real and fictitious, during Swift's age. The narrator of the tale is Lemuel Gulliver, a ship's surgeon, whose travels are prompted by his insatiable desire to see foreign lands. His descriptions are so authentic and specific that we think we can find the islands of Lilliput, Brobdingnag, and Laputa, and the country of the Houyhnhnms in our maps and atlases.

A Voyage to the Houyhnhnms

A "Voyage to the Houyhnhnms" is Gulliver's fourth and last adventure. It is, in fact, the most vicious of all of Swift's satires. Again, the world has been turned upside down. However, this time man is not being weighed against man, but against beast. It is Swift's devastating conclusion that man, in the chain of ascendancy, is of decidedly lower status. Natural man is represented as being below

the beast- civilized man, a veritable fiend. The Houyhjinnms are a race of highly intelligent, civilized horses who are served by a despised, filthy, and degenerate human race as Yahoos. In my opinion, the Yahoos do not represent Swift's view of man, but rather of the bestial element in man. This is the unenlightened, unregenerate, irrational element in human nature. Gulliver is at first naturally mistaken for a Yahoo himself, though he finds, them exceedingly repulsive and vehemently denies any kinship; "Upon the whole, I never beheld in all my travels , so disagreeable an animal,, or one against which,I naturally conceived so strong an antipathy." When Gulliver protests to the Houyhnhnmş that his resemblance to the Yahoos is only in the body and that his mind is comparable to that of a Houyhnhnm, he is given an opportunity to describe the civilization and history of his own country. The exposition is humiliating to Gulliver, for the recounting is actually a confession of the inferiority of the human race.

The voyage of the Houghnhnms is of particular significance , for this was his last trip and the one that most affected Lemuel Gulliver. It is under the influence of seeing Houghnhnms contrasted with Yahoos that he wrote this book. In Lilliput and Laputa he learned nothing and found nothing to admire, in Brobdingnag he admired, but among the Houghnhnms he imitated. Any reform must be in the direction of their practices. The Houghnhnms are not human beings; man's standard is now a nonhuman one. , .. v

The description of Gulliver's return to civilization is probably the most scathing indictment in the whole of the forth voyage Gulliver returns to his wife and family, but finds^ them unbearable after associating with the Utopian Houyhnhnms.

"As soon as I entered the house, my wife took me in her arms, and kissed me; at -which.,, not having been, used, to the touch of that odious animal for so many years, Ifell into a swoon for almost an hour. At the time of this writing, it is five years since my last return to England: during the first

year I could not endure my wife or children in my presence, the very smell of them was intolerable; much less could I suffer them to eat in the same room. To this hour they dare not presume to touch my bread, or drink out of the same cup; neither was I ever able to let them take me by the hand. " (Swift, pp. 310-311)

In the course of time he does his utmost to adapt himself to his own family circle, that is, the civilisation he was once familiar with. Yet he is still at a loss. He suffers from lack of peace of mind. Some of the numerous words in the book relevant to the subject go as follows:

" I began last week to permit my wife to sit at dinner with me, at the farthest end of a long table; and to answer (but with the utmost brevity) the few questions I asked her. Yet the smell of a Yahoo continuing very offensive, I always keep my nose well stopped with rue, lavender, or tobacco-leaves. And although it be hard for a man late in life to remove old habits; I am not altogether out of hopes in sometime to suffer a neighbour Yahoo in my company, without the apprehensions I am yet under of his teeth or his claws. " (Swift, p. 317)

Swift As A Great Satirist

Jonathan Swift's portrayal of the contrasting ways of life of the Houyhnhms and the Yahoos may best be interpreted in association with the previous books of **Guliver's Travels**. For the whole work is a perfect unit presented as a phantasy. It is a satire, with a masculine voice, of everything that Jonathan Swift saw around him in his life. Swift's imagination and exploratory search for wisdom and humanism land him in the land of Houyhnhms. There he finds the virtues and the vices of life. The Houyhnhms are "ideal" beings and the Yahoos closest to man.

I cannot interpret this portrayal by Swift "as a libel against all humanity" as some critics ably try to do. I interpret it as the State of Man as he should be and what happens to Man when he sins or falls. I take Swift's portrayal as Man and His Fall. Swift shows how a man may become worse than a mule-locust when he falls. On the other hand he portrays the simple virtues of the Houyhnhnms.

Jonathan Swift tries to portray how much better a Man can be when he keeps to the basic elements of love, honour and reason etc.. He contrasts these with the Yahoos that cannot control their tempers and enjoy destroying things.. In Other words Swift's portrayal of Man is the two sides of the picture: He portrays Man in the Yahoo as a real brute. So when Swift wants to be a Houyhnhnm, he is telling the reader that it is, better to be a rational loving human being. When Swift detests the Yahoo, he detests the brutish element in Man - he hates his making war, telling lies and acting like an animal. And when he calls his wife Yahoo, he detests maybe her escapism from her basic good nature as a human being and adoption of superficial manners.

After all, Gulliver's Travels taken as a whole is a strong satire of England, the English-French War, English Court Life, Anglo-Irish Relations, the Irish Trade Restrictions, the Projections, the Critics - in a word or two, of life at that time. So, Swift's portrayal of the contrasting ways of life of the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos is in reality the final and the finish of the satire. What actually Swift does, after satirizing concrete things or events, is that he turns right on to the heart, soul and mind of Man. He satirizes his thinking and feelings and points to the wisdom one can find in this world and compares and contrasts Man as a human being and as a brute. He laughs at the lies and excuses of the fallen man and praises the elements of love, common sense and reason etc. which God endowed us with when created.

Utopian Ideas

It is this Humanism that Jonathan Swift really idealizes and hopes and wishes that Man could attain this standard. But it does not seem to be within the bound of possibility. It is virtually just a Utopia. Allan Bloom takes this case and gives his ideas on the subject in the following way:

"What Swift has done in the land of the Houghnhnms is to elaborate a Utopia. Utopia

based on Plato's "Republic", but it is a super Republic, for the problem which made the

construction of the best city so difficult for Socrates has disappeared-the Houghnhnms lack the passionate part of the soul. The whole difficulty in the Republic is to make the three orders take their proper in relation to one another. Punishment and rhetoric are necessary ;the book is full of struggle between the rational and the appetitive; and the irascible or spired, intended as reason's ally, shows a constant tendency to turn against it. " (Bloom, p. 658)

As for Samuel Holt Monk's remark on this subject, it is as follows:

"Does Swift recommend that Gulliver should strive to become a Houghnhnms? We discover that in every sense Houghnhnmland is a rationalistic Utopia. The Houghnhnms are the embodiment of pure reason. They know neither love nor grief nor lust nor ambition. They cannot lie; indeed they have no word for lying and are hard put to it to understand the meaning of opinion. Their society is an aristocracy, resting upon the slave labour of the Yahoos and the work of an especially-bred servant class." (Monk, p. 645)

Power of Money and Unavoidable Results

Jonathan Swift takes the use of money in the work and tells about the importance and function of money in the society where men are in command. All the facts about money in human society are so disgusting that he feels pain to describe them to horses. It is not so easy to change the existing order. Swift puts it this way:

Whereupon I was at much pains to describe to him the use of money, the materials it was made of, and the value of the metals: that, when a Yahoo had got a great store of this precious substance, he was able to purchase whatever he had a mind to; the finest clothing, the noblest houses, great trackts of Land, the most costly meats and drinks; and have his choice of the most beautiful females. Therefore since money alone was able to perform all these feats, our Yahoos thought, they could never have enough of it to spend or to save, as they found themselves inclined from their natural bent either to profusion or avarice. That, the rich man enjoyed the fruit of the poor man's Labour, and the latter were a thousand to one in proportion to the former. That, the bulk of our people was forced to live miserably, by labouring every day for small wages, to make a few live plentifully". (Swift, pp. 267-268)

I am aware what I have just quoted is rather long. Yet I could not leave even a word out for they all reflect our current situation connected with money despite the fact that the work was written some three hundred years ago.

Somewhere else in the book Jonathan Swift compares his life, in other words, the way the decent live with those of indecent people:

"...that my birth was of the lower sort, having been born of plain, honest parents, who were just able to give me a tolerable education: that, nobility among us was altogether a different thing from the idea he had of

it: that, our young noblemen are bred from their childhood-in idleness and luxury: that, as soon as years will permit, they consume their vigour, and contract odious diseases among lewd females; and when their fortunes are almost ruined, they marry some woman of mean birth, disagreeable person, and unsound constitution, merely for the sake of money, whom they hate and despise: that, the production of such marriages are generally scrupulous, rickety, or deformed children.....". (Swift, p. 274)

At the conclusion of his account of Gulliver's voyages, Swift remarked "they [the travels] are admirable things, and will wonderfully mend the world". This expression points out that he is hopeful of the future of the world. On the other hand, Swift made it clear that he was never full of hatred for individuals. He qualified the extremely negative and pessimistic theme of the book, writing a letter to Alexandre Pûpö; In the letter he says:

'I have ever hated all nations, professions, and communities, and all my love is towards individuals: for instance, I hate the tribe of lawyers, but I love Counsellor Suca-a-one: so with physicians. . . soldiers, English, Scotch, French, and the rest. But principally I hate and detest that animal called man, although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas, and so forth. "
(Linneus, p. 117)

Conclusion

Swift's purpose in writing **Gulliver's Travels** was predominantly satirical and reformative. He produced the prototype of the fable type of novel by adopting the new fictional techniques. New narrative skills and devices are present in the work.

Both Houyhnhnms and Yahoos convey terrible and concrete truths about human cultures and civilisations. Swift hated the stupidity, the sinfulness, and the

folly of mankind. But no matter how bitter his attack, the implication is always present that the world could become a fit place in which to live and man could become a noble, high-minded creature if he would strive to follow the dictates of his highest faculty, reason. If the Houyhnhnms seem to be almost perfect, it should be remembered that they are a species devoid of emotion and, therefore, untroubled by conflicts arising between the mind and the soul. But at least for the time being what Swift dreams of is just a Utopia

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