

Enlightenment, Utopia and Encarnalization of Swift's Houyhnhnms in Carter's *Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman*

Aydınlanma, Ütopya ve Carter'in *Doktor Hoffman'ın Arzu Makinaları* Romanında Swift'in Houyhnhnm'lerinin Şehvanileştirilmesi

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Abstract

In *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno trace the roots of modern bourgeois thought in the Enlightenment ideology that is characterized by the effort of establishing order over nature and that dates back to *Odyssey*. They argue that the whole human history has been motivated by the fetishism of 'truth' and 'facts,' devaluation of nature, a fear of social deviation. Well-known utopian works such as Plato's *The Republic*, Augustine's *The City of God*, and Thomas More's *Utopia* represent this 'fear of social deviation' and 'devaluation of nature.' The Fourth Part of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, entitled "A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms," is a utopian work in which a horse-race called 'Houyhnhnms' creates such logocentric system based on the 'fear of social deviation' and on the control of nature and the carnal. In *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* Angela Carter parodies the logocentric world of Swift's *Houyhnhnms*. In the chapter entitled "Lost in Nebulous Time," which is an overt parody of Swift's the "Country of Houyhnhnms," centaurs which are half horse and half human creatures are depicted as extremely involved in carnal desires and as having an innate tendency for evil. The article handles the logocentric enlightenment discourse represented in Swift's "A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms" and studies how in "Lost in Nebulous Time" of *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* Angela Carter parodies Swift's utopia by carnalizing and carnivalizing it.

Keywords: Enlightenment, Utopia, Logocentricism, Carnal, Deconstruction.

Öz

Aydınlanmanın Diyalektiği adlı eserlerinde Max Horkheimer ve Theodore Adorno modern burjuva düşüncesinin köklerini doğayı denetim altına alma çabası olarak tanımlanabilecek ve tarihi Homeros'un *Odysseus* eserine kadar giden aydınlanma ideolojisinde ararlar. Onlara göre, bütün insanlık tarihi doğru ve gerçek olanın fetişleştirilmesine, doğanın değersizleştirilmesine ve toplumsal olarak doğrudan sapma korkusuna dayanmaktadır. Platon'un *Devlet'i*, Saint Augustine'in *Tanrı Şehri* ve Thomas More'un *Ütopya'sı* gibi ünlü ütopyalar bu doğrudan sapma korkusunu ve doğanın değersizleştirilip tahakküm altına alınmasını yansıtmaktadırlar. Jonathan Swift'in *Güiver'in Seyahatleri* romanının "Houyhnhnm Ülkesine Seyahat" başlıklı son bölümünde, bir at ırkı olan Houyhnhnm'lerin yarattığı akılmerkezci bir ütopya anlatılır ve bu ütopya Houyhnhnm'lerin doğrudan sapma korkularını ve doğayı ve şehvani olanı bastırma arzularını yansıtır. *Doktor Hoffman'ın Şeytani Arzu Makinaları* adlı romanında Angela Carter Swift'in akılmerkezci Houyhnhnm'lerinin parodisini yapar. Swift'in Houyhnhnm Ülkesinin açık parodisi olan romanın "Zamansızlıkta

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Kaybolma" (Lost in Nebulous Time) başlıklı bölümündeki insan başlı atlar (centaurs), hayatı bedensel ve şehvani zeminde yaşayan ve doğuştan kötülüğe eğilimli varlıklar olarak resmedilirler. Bu çalışmada, *Güliver'in Seyahatleri*'nin "Houyhnhnm Ülkesine Seyahat" başlıklı bölümünde temsil edilen akılmerkezci aydınlanmacı söylem incelenmekte ve Angela Carter'in *Doktor Hoffman'ın Şeytani Arzu Makineleri*'nin "Zamansızlıkta Kaybolma" bölümünde Houyhnhnm'leri şehvanileştirip karnavallaştırarak ütopyalarındaki akılmerkezci özün yapıbozumu yapması ele alınmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aydınlanma, Ütopya, Akılmerkezçilik, Şehvani, Yapıbozumu.

The enmity between the carnal and the spiritual and the organization of social, religious and intellectual lives on the rejection of the carnal has a long history in the Western world. In *Phaedo* Plato describes the philosopher as one who rejects all bodily pleasures including food, sex, and clothing; "such a man's concern is not for the body, but so far as he can aside from it, is directed towards the soul" (64c). The philosopher differs from other men in releasing his soul, as far as possible, from its communion with the body (64c). In Book II of his *Confessions*, Saint Augustine states how in young age he was surrendered to the foul pleasures of the body until learning to detest the body and dedicate himself to the love of God. We can even say that all Christianity, as explicitly seen in the Seven Deadly Sins, was founded on the profanation of the body and bodily functions. As such, Christian thought categorized the spirit and everything related to it as sacred and the body with its functions and desires as profane. The first utopia in Semitic religions, the story of *Genesis*, ended with the exclusion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden because of Adam and Eve's recognition of their body and their tasting bodily pleasure, with Eve being held responsible for the sin.

Using poststructuralist terminology, all Western thought is based on binary oppositions in which two opposites are set off against one another and in which one item of the pair dominates the other or struggles for the absence of the other. Nature/culture opposition, according to Derrida, is one of the oldest and can be seen as the basis for the others. Derrida states,

In spite of all its rejuvenations and its disguises, this opposition is congenital to philosophy. It is even older than Plato. It is at least as old as the Sophists. Since the statement of the opposition—it has been passed on to us by a whole historical chain which opposes "nature" to the law, to education, to art, to technics—and also to liberty, to the arbitrary, to history, to society, to the mind, and so on. (963)

In a similar vein, talking about binary oppositions and sex, Michel Foucault argues, "with the great series of binary oppositions (body/soul, flesh/spirit, instinct/reason, drives/consciousness) that seemed to refer sex to a pure mechanism devoid of reason, the West has managed not only, or not so much, to annex sex to a field of rationality [...] but to bring us almost entirely—our bodies, our minds, our individuality, our history—under under the sway of a logic of concupiscence and desire" (*History of Sexuality: An Introduction* 78). According to Max Horkheimer and Theodore W. Adorno, the root of these oppositions should

be sought in the enlightenment ideology. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, they call the logocentric western thought enlightenment ideology and state how this ideology fights against the carnal and feminine spheres. The enlightenment ideology, they argue, whose history can be traced back to Homer, is the effort to dominate nature and the body and to make them analyzable, calculable, and modifiable under the rule of logic and the mind. According to them, "self-preservation, for which, the endeavour of preserving oneself is the first and only basis of virtue, is the true maxim of Western civilization" (22). The enlightened social self was founded on the control of nature and of everything related to it. This led to the creation of binaries and dichotomies that the enlightened social self should be cautious about. The criterion of the enlightenment ideology was self-preservation, the ability to control oneself against the enchantments of the body, nature and the feminine. According to Horkheimer and Adorno, Odysseus' struggle with the song of the Sirens in *The Odyssey* represents the effort of enlightened man to keep nature and pleasure outside the circle of life. The Sirens, invoking the primeval feminine life source, "threaten the patriarchal order, which gives each person back their life only in exchange for their full measure of time" (46). In order not to hear the song of the Sirens, Odysseus plugs his ear with wax. Anyone who wants to survive must not listen to the enchanting sound of nature. Odysseus realizes that "however he may consciously distance himself from nature, as a listener he remains under its spell. He complies with the contract of his bondage and, bound to the mast, struggles to throw himself into the arms of the seductresses" (46).

With this centralization of reason or *logos* and classification of everything not subject to it or not controlled by it as dangerous, the enlightenment ideology did not only cause the creation of such binaries as female/male, body/spirit, and nature/culture but also led to the abhorrence of the body and sexual desire and to the fetishization of male logic and the spirit. We can say that well-known utopian works such as Plato's *The Republic*, Augustine's *The City of God*, and Thomas More's *Utopia* represent the fetishization of male logic under the name of "Reason" and the 'fear of social deviation.' These works represent the male logic of enlightenment philosophy which labels everything that is carnal, everything that falls into the spheres of nature and desire as 'different' and 'deviation.' They are based on the rejection or control of the body and on the effort of subjecting the enchantments of nature to the rules of logic. To use Nietzschean terminology, the world of these utopias represents an Apollonian state of existence, and thus its very existence is based on the exclusion of the Dionysian desire. Thomas More's *Utopia*, for instance, is a work in which the ideal society is defined as one in which the rule of reason is perfect, nature is subdued, desire excluded, and women presented in terms of their reproductive functions and on the basis of "loyalty" to the husband.

Thomas More's *Utopia* is worth of note among these utopias because it seems to have provided a model for the creation of the Houyhnhnmland. In the prefatory letter to *Gulliver's Travels*, defending the reality of the societies he encountered in his voyages, Gulliver says, "I have great reason to complain that some of them are

so bald as to think my book of Travels a mere fiction out of mine own brain; and have gone so far as to drop hints, that the Houyhnhnms and Yahoos have no more existence than the Inhabitants of Utopia” (Swift 40). Both works are similar in that “in the fictional societies of Utopia and Houyhnhnmland More and Swift have created memorable images of simplicity, utility, fellowship, and justice which readers are encouraged to compare with the ‘justice’ in their own lands” (Hammond 449). They also share a common ground in their attribution of great importance to reason: “The Utopians believe that a person who is following the guidance of nature and obeys the dictates of reason. The grand maxim of the Houyhnhnms is to cultivate Reason, and to be wholly governed by it” (Hammond 450). Thus, the Houyhnhnmland of Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* can be studied as a utopia in which, analogous to *Utopia*, the man of enlightenment fulfils all his ideals. However, when taken in terms of the strict logocentric world of the Houyhnhnms and the way the Yahoos are represented, it is difficult to call the Houyhnhnmland a utopia. As Houston discusses in “Utopia, Dystopia or Anti-Utopia? *Gulliver’s Travels* and the Utopian Mode of Discourse,” “the text is neither a utopia, nor a dystopia, nor even an anti-utopia (as it has variously been read); rather, it contains images of and interactions with ideas of utopia and dystopia which reflect its engagement with the Utopian mode and qualify it as simultaneously Utopian and dystopian” (427). Based on the overall discussion of this article, it is simultaneously utopian and dystopian because what is utopian for the Houyhnhnms is dystopian for those who do not accept the strict confinements of reason.

The word *Houyhnhnm*, in the tongue of the island of the Houyhnhnm, signifies a horse and means the perfection of nature. Nature here should not be taken as separate from reason; it is subdued to reason because the social order of the Houyhnhnm is based on reason which is the most frequently mentioned word in the language of the Houyhnhnms. The Houyhnhnms’ taking Gulliver to their house because they see some glimmerings of reason in him indicates the importance of reason in their world. The Houyhnhnms are described with terms that are totally absent in the Yahoos. In other words, in ideological and metaphorical terms, where they are present the Yahoos are absent, and where they are absent the Yahoos are present. The world of the Houyhnhnms is one that excludes everything that is carnal, whereas the world of the Yahoos is totally carnal. Gulliver observes that “these noble Houyhnhnms are endowed by Nature with a general disposition to all virtues and have no conceptions or ideas of what is evil in a rational creature, so their grand maxim is, to cultivate *Reason*” (Swift 315). When they converse, their subjects are usually “on friendship and benevolence, or order and economy, sometimes upon the visible operations of Nature, or ancient traditions, upon the bounds and limits of virtue, upon the unerring rules of Reason” (326). Friendship and benevolence are the two principal virtues among the Houyhnhnms, and they preserve decency and civility to the highest degree. They have no fondness for their children, but they take special care for educating them according to the dictates of reason. Such enlightenment values as temperance, industry, exercise, and cleanliness are taught to the children.

In contrast, the Yahoos are completely carnal beings. They are presented with an elaborate emphasis on bodily functions. We can see this as soon as they appear in

the novel when they discharge their excrements on Gulliver's head. Though they are just like humans, they are more hairy and their females are more hideously shaped. Unlike the Houyhnhnms, they are ambitious, sexually immoral, jealous, interested in precious stones, and always liable to fight with each other.

As already mentioned, the place of women is a highly controversial issue in well-known utopias. Reason, which is fetishized by the ideology of enlightenment, is attributed to man, and, as Horkheimer and Adorno argue, "for the being endowed with reason, concern for the unreasoning animal is idle. Western civilization has left that to women" (206). The man of enlightenment is one who is temperate and who does not fall prey to the enchantments of nature or to his own desires. In *The History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault discusses, "Western man has been drawn for three centuries to the task of telling everything concerning his sex; that since the classical age there has been a constant optimization and an increasing valorization of the discourse on sex (*History of Sexuality: An Introduction* 23). What distinguishes these last three centuries is "the variety, the wide dispersion of devices that were invented for speaking about it, for having it be spoken about, for inducing it to speak for itself, for listening, recording, transcribing, and redistributing what is said about it: around sex, a whole network of varying, specific, and coercive transpositions into discourse" (34). According to these discourses, a man should not allow himself to be dominated by his desires and pleasures. Abstinence from sex (with a woman or a boy), abhorring bodily pleasures, and moderation were seen as the main criteria of male sexual ethics. Falling into the trap of bodily pleasures was identified as a feminine attitude. As Foucault puts it, "that moderation is given an essentially masculine structure has another consequence, which is symmetrical and opposite to the one just discussed: immoderation derives from a passivity that relates it to femininity" (*History of Sexuality: The Use of Pleasure* 84). The role prescribed for women in the enlightenment logocentrism is only a domestic one: subordination to the husband and childbearing. In the logocentric society, Horkheimer and Adorno argue, woman "became an embodiment of biological function, an image of nature," and "to dominate nature boundlessly, to turn it into an endless hunting ground, has been the dream of millennia" (206). The subjugated woman "mirrors her conqueror's victory in her spontaneous submission, reflecting defeat back to him as devotion, despair as the beautiful soul, the violated heart as the loving breast" (207).

In the Fourth Book of *Gulliver's Travels*, like in most other utopian works, women are rarely mentioned, and when mentioned, they are presented through their domestic or child-bearing functions. The prevailing atmosphere of the world of the Houyhnhnms, as in previous utopias, is either totally rejecting sex and women or approaching them with self-restraint and only on the basis of domestic love, with all bodily pleasures excluded. In Chapter 8 of the Book, while describing the Houyhnhnms, Gulliver observes that courtship, love, presents, and settlements have no place in their thoughts. Marriage is a technical issue for preserving the quality of the race and controlling the population, and women are lifeless agents that are there just for the achievement of reproductive purposes.

While the female Houyhnhnm is depicted with no desire or any other bodily function apart from childbearing, the female Yahoo is presented as nothing but body and desire. The Yahoos, it is said, have their females in common and a female Yahoo admits a male one even when she is pregnant. The females do whatever they can to attract male Yahoos. She often stands “behind a bank or a bush, to gaze on the young males passing by, and then appear, and hide, using many antic gestures and grimaces” and then, attracting the male with her offensive smell, she runs into some convenient place where she knows the male would follow her (Swift 311-12). Gulliver is never so detested than when he is attacked by a desirous and lustful female Yahoo while bathing stark naked in a stream. Being enflamed with desire when she sees Gulliver’s body, the female Yahoo comes running towards him with all speed, leaps into the water, and embraces him in a fulsome manner, upon which Gulliver cries for help from his master. After being driven to the opposite bank of the stream by the master, the female Yahoo continues gazing and howling all the time while Gulliver is putting on his dress.

As it is seen in the analysis above, the utopian world of the Houyhnhnms is based on reason and on the rejection of the carnal sphere. In the logocentric world of the Houyhnhnms, there is no place for desire, passion, courtship, love, and the body in general. While nature identified with the body and the feminine is ominous and detestable, what the Houyhnhnms call ‘Nature’, the initial letter always written in capital, is very important in the conceptual world of the Houyhnhnms; it is the so-called universal and static hu/man nature, the ultimate end of male logic and ethics. In contrast, the Yahoos are presented as detestable creatures with no reason, moderation, and control over bodily functions. They are presented as body incarnate, and thus what is a utopia for the Houyhnhnms is a dystopia for them.

In “Lost in Nebulous Time” of *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* Angela Carter parodies the logocentric world of Swift’s *Houyhnhnms* by depicting centaurs (half human and half horse creatures in Greek mythology) as extremely involved in carnal desires and as having an innate tendency for evil. *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* is a novel about a journey through a world in which all of man’s desires come true with the help of a machine built by a scientist named Dr. Hoffman. The novel relates the journey of Desiderio, the first-person narrator of the novel, through the world of desire and his assistance to the Minister of the city in the war against Doctor Hoffman’s desire machine and his manipulation of reality. *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* is mostly described as a picaresque novel because of Desiderio’s journey through the world of desire and the sexual ordeals he undergoes during this journey. The novel includes retelling of many myths and stories with an erotogenic view, and thus it can be regarded as a response to the enlightenment ideology which ignores the body and desire and which locks the woman in the prisonhouse of domestic life.

In *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman*, the enlightenment logocentricism and its binary thinking are deconstructed in many ways. One of them can be seen in the presentation of femininity and masculinity. In the novel, “Carter subverts traditional quest narratives by changing the fate of the female characters to challenge the patriarchal order (Kilic 35). To do this, instead of strict male-female categorization that is characteristic of logocentric thinking, she

presents the world of the novel as a mostly androgynous one. For instance, Albertina, Doctor Hoffman's daughter whom Desiderio searches and desires throughout the novel, appears in ambivalent and androgynous forms. At first, she appears in the disguise of a male ambassador whom Hoffman sends to communicate the terms of the war with the minister. As soon as Desiderio sees the Ambassador, he thinks he is "the most beautiful human being" he has ever seen (Carter, *The Infernal* 31). He resembles the dialogue between the ambassador and the minister to one between a flower and a stone. As he goes, the ambassador leaves behind a handkerchief on which the name Albertina is written, making Desiderio realize that the ambassador is in fact Albertina and hence a female. Likewise, in the chapters entitled "The Erotic Traveler" and "The Coast of Africa," which are about Desiderio's journey with a Sadeian Count, the Count's male assistant Lafleur—whose name means 'flower' in French—turns out to be Albertina. After the death of the Count, Desiderio says, "two privates seized Lafleur's shoulders and dragged him away from me. They cut off his robe, although he struggled, and I saw not the lean torso of a boy but the gleaming, curvilinear magnificence of a golden woman" (197). He recognizes that the face is Albertina's. Another example of androgyny is in the chapter entitled "The Acrobats of Desire," at the end of which Desiderio—the narrator of the novel—is raped by nine Moroccan acrobats while accompanying a traveling fair. In this chapter, one of the exhibitionists of the travelling fair is a woman with a beard, Madame la Barbe, who makes a living by exposing her androgyny with the name of the Bearded Bride.

The ambivalent sexual status of Desiderio also manifests the deconstructive representation of gender. Carter states: "To be the object of desire is to be defined in the passive case" (*The Sadeian*, 88). While we expect the woman to be the desired one and in the passive case, in the novel, as Kilic puts it, "it is not Albertina but Desiderio as a man who is defined in the passive case" (60). Kilic adds: "the literal meaning of his name, the desired one, signals that he is the object of desire whom Albertina follows wherever he goes" (60). Her appearing to him in different disguises—as the ambassador, the little girl Aoi in "The River People, as Lafleur in "The Erotic Traveller" and "The Coast of Africa," and as the prostitute in The House of Anonymity—and his seduction by the Mama in "The River People," by the Acrobats of Desire, and the Count are examples that show that he is in the passive case and the desired one in the novel.

The deconstruction of the enlightenment logocentrism is also seen in the representation of time, which is one of the most important aspects in the study of "Lost in Nebulous Time." In his *Laocoön*, G. E. Lessing distinguishes painting from poetry discussing that "painting uses completely different means or signs than does poetry, namely figures and colors in space rather than articulated sounds in time" (78). Lessing adds:

If these signs must indisputably bear a suitable relation to the thing signified, then signs existing in space can express only objects whose wholes or parts coexist, while signs that follow one another can express only objects whose wholes or parts are consecutive. Objects or parts of

objects which exist in space are called bodies. Accordingly, bodies with their visible properties are the true subjects of painting. Objects or parts of objects which follow one another are called actions. Accordingly, actions are the true subjects of poetry. (78)

Thus, while painting is necessarily spatial because the visible aspect of the objects can best be presented juxtaposed in time, poetry makes use of language and is composed of a succession of words proceeding through time. Having thus described the spatial aspect of painting and the temporal nature of poetry, Lessing categorizes music, dance and the novel as temporal arts, and painting, sculpture and architecture as spatial ones. Discussing the weaknesses of Lessing's strict categorization of painting as spatial art and literature a temporal art, Joseph Frank analyzes the poetry of Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot and claims that aesthetic form in modern poetry "is based on a space-logic that demands a complete reorientation in the reader's attitude toward language" (15). For Frank, this space-logic exists not only in poetry but also in the novel. This method of spatialization was applied on a gigantic scale by James Joyce in the composition of *Ulysses*. In *Ulysses*, Frank argues, Joyce presents a picture of Dublin seen as a whole by breaking up his narrative and giving the impression of simultaneity (19). In "Secondary Illusion: The Novel and the Spatial Arts," Joseph Kestner develops Frank's idea arguing that the simultaneity of the spatial arts implies a temporal relation and the succession of the temporal arts implies a spatial relation: "In the spatial arts, therefore, time is the secondary illusion; in the temporal arts, like the novel, space is the secondary illusion" (103). It follows that though the novel as a genre is a temporal art, the spatial always exists in it as a secondary illusion because the tendency to attain the spatial form of the picture is what distinguishes the novel from history texts.

What makes *Gulliver's Travels* not a history text but a great novel is the presence of such supernatural characters as the six-inch-high Lilliputians, the colossal-sized Brobdingnagians, the flying island Laputa, and the Houyhnhnms, which indicates the existence of the space-logic of fantasy in the novel. In other words, the known and familiar world of temporality is disrupted with the picturesque, imaginary, and otherworldly elements of fantasy. However, in spite of the fantasy in it, *Gulliver's Travels* still has a strong temporal element. It represents or satirizes the European world or more specifically the English society of the time with a successive arrangement of the events in the plot; satire of the religious and political conflicts and the scientific developments and philosophical discussions of the 18th century Europe and England are the main concerns of the novel. For instance, the political parties and religious segregation in the first book of the novel, titled "A Voyage to Lilliput," represent those in 18th century England. Thus, the novel deals with the socio-temporal reality of the period and problematizes the weaknesses in conforming to the rules of reason. In other words, problems of the historical period are presented with a chronological plot, which implies the strong temporal relation of the novel.

The logical/temporal world of *Gulliver's Travels* is countered in *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* with what is called nebulous time, which is an indefinite and atemporal time. In *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman*, the space logic becomes the primary illusion because the novel attains the form of

the picture. This novel follows the young Desiderio's (from Latin 'desiderius': 'ardent desire') erotic adventures and journeys through nebulous time, 'the anteriority of all times' (Sellberg 95). At the beginning of Doctor Hoffman's war with the minister of the city, a messenger the Doctor has sent to the capital announces that the Doctor is in the process of sending out a variety of images which transform the perception of reality. Doctor Hoffman's warfare of illusions has rendered time and space non-linear and multi-dimensional (95). In this regard, the war of the doctor is to distort the temporal world of the city with the spatiality of images to release all that has been repressed with regard to people's desires. With these images, the consecutive nature of time is spoiled with the flux of mirages so that the relationship between the past and the present becomes no longer a matter of chronology. As Satoshi Masamune puts it in "Timelessness in Angela Carter's *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman*":

To Desiderio's eyes, not only do the things of the past that are unknown to him appear isolated, they also overlap with images associated with the present...it seems clear that the Doctor, in sending his images, wants to make the status of the past equal to that of the present. As can occur in film, which is referred to several times in this novel, he tries to make what happened in another place and time appear here and now. Apparently, he believes that if he continues to emit images, he will eventually succeed in eliminating the distinction between the past and the present. (80)

The distortion of temporality by images results in the novel in nebulous time that manifests itself not only in the experience of modes of repressed desire but also in the construction of the plot. The old peep-show proprietor, who is Hoffman's assistant and with whom Desiderio travels, describes nebulous time as "absolute mutability when only reflected rays and broken trajectories of an entirely broken source of light fitfully reveal a continually shifting surface, like the surface of water, yet a water which is only a reflective skin and has neither depth nor volume" (*The Infernal* 116). The peep-show provides a good example for representing nebulous time. The samples in the peep-show are pictures displaying different forms of desire without any order. The chapters of the novel are also organized like sliding samples of the peep-show in which Albertina appears in "a series of marvelous shapes formed at random in the kaleidoscope of desire" (6), which indicates that the plot structure of the novel is organized not on well-sequenced events—as in *Gulliver's Travels*—but on random shots of pictures of desire experiences. The picaresque journey of Desiderio can be said to be one among peep-show samples of desire because as soon as he begins his journey, the first object he sees is the peep-show. The peep-show proprietor he meets there describes his purpose in the peep-show as "to demonstrate the difference between showing and saying. Signs speak. Pictures show" (50). From this point of the novel onwards, each experience of Desiderio—his sexual experience with the Mayor's pallid-faced daughter Mary Anne and her death, his living for a period of time with the river people and his marriage ritual with the nine-year daughter of Nao-Kurai, later on his journey with the traveling fair and his rape by the nine acrobats of desire—is presented as a journey among the sliding pictures in the

peep-show in which different kinds of desire, most of which are Sadeian, are exhibited. The peep-show samples are all “the most outrageous tableaux of blasphemy and eroticism, Christ performing innumerable obscenities upon Mary Magdalene, St. John and His Mother; and, in this holy city, I was fucked in the anus, against my will” (135). Thus, the peep-show samples deconstruct such grand logocentric narratives as Christ and Mary Magdalene by carnalizing the relationship between them, that is, by devoiding them of their spiritual kernel and drawing them to the plane of the body. The above quotation also indicates that Desiderio sees his sexual experiences as part of the sliding picture-narratives of the peep-show. In “Lost in Nebulous Time” the word ‘nebulous’ means being outside of time and place and suggests the atemporal world of the chapter and the novel in general.

In “Lost in Nebulous Time” the temporal/rational world of Swift’s Houyhnhnms is made ‘nebulous’ by carnalizing the centaurs. Angela Carter shows her interest with *Gulliver’s Travels* in the novel by mentioning it in the chapter “The River People,” where Desiderio makes Nao-Kurai buy it to learn English. The relationship with Swift’s novel is made obvious when the Houyhnhnms are directly mentioned as Desiderio tells the bay centaur that “the greater number of social institutions were created by weak, two-legged, thin-skinned creatures” much the same as Albertina and him, for which the bay centaur says Desiderio is lying because they are men and not Houyhnhnms and thus they have many words to describe deceit (227).

After having many experiences, Desiderio finds out that Albertina has appeared to him throughout the novel, as already mentioned, in different disguises: first as the sexually ambivalent Ambassador of Doctor Hoffman, then as Lafleur who is the Count’s assistant and who is sexually badly treated by the Count, and lastly as the Madame of the brothel, which Desiderio visits with the Count to satisfy his unappeasable hunger for sex. “Lost in Nebulous Time” is chapter 7 of the novel and it is towards the end of the novel. After the Count is killed in the Coast of Africa, Albertina reveals her identity, and the samples which keep Doctor Hoffman’s desire machine working are destroyed, and consequently Desiderio and Albertina are lost in nebulous time, that is, in the atemporal world of the centaurs.

Desiderio and Albertina move in nebulous time for three days when they come to the strangest of all trees which is rooted in the earth by four quivering legs, which they call ‘equine tree.’ They stand on the hill beside the buzzing tree, half horse, half tree, when they see four strange creatures approaching them, one of dark brown colour, one black, one a speckled grey, and one all unspotted white and all covered with mazy decorations. As these creatures come closer, Albertina and Desiderio realize that they are centaurs covered with the most intricate tattoo work. The males of these centaurs are partly tattooed, whereas the females are tattooed all over their body.

The centaurs are Houyhnhnm-like creatures that have created their utopian world. At the very beginning of their appearance, though nature is hostile, the scene is idyllic and edenic. They are so comely that Desiderio does not want to mount on their backs. They look like “Greek masterpieces born in a time when gods walked among us” (207). The centaurs are presented as good-mannered and

reasonable folks who base their lives on the spiritual plane, trying to correct an ancestral guilt with ritualistic songs. It turns out the centaurs believe they are the deformed children of a union between Sacred Stallion and the Bridal Mare because the Bridal Mare and her lover, Dark Archer, once killed the Sacred Stallion so that they might be together. The centaurs believe that they are to spend all of the eternity making amends for this affair, which includes self-administered beatings and tattooing, especially against the women.

While in *Gulliver's Travels* the carnal plane is left to the Yahoos, Angela Carter brings the logocentric world of Swift's Houyhnhnms to dialogue by carnalizing her centaurs. As Mikhail Bakhtin argues in his analysis of Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, presenting the body with all its parts and members, all its organs and functions, that is, focusing on the corporeality of human life had a revolutionary effect in the history of ideas (170). For Bakhtin, "in the process of accommodating this concrete human corporeality, the entire remaining world also takes on new meaning and concrete reality, a new materiality; it enters into contact with human beings that is no longer symbolic but material" (170). The human body plays a crucial function in this process in that it is "a concrete measuring rod for the world, that measurer of the world's weight and of its value for the individual" (71). In other words, drawing the novel to the level of the body, that is, 'fleshing out' the novel functions to destroy the established hierarchy of values which culminated in Christian thought and later on in neoclassical ideology.

Angela Carter destroys the hierarchy of established order represented in the utopian world of the Houyhnhnms by overemphasizing the bodily functions of the centaurs. First and foremost, their mythical past is based on pleasure-taking and its consequences. Second, shit, which is related to the Yahoos in the world of the Houyhnhnms, signifies the presence of the Sacred Stallion here, on whom all religious world is based. Their holy hill on which the strange horse-tree is situated is a dungheap. Their religious services end with explosive shedding of all the dung in every bowel present.

Most importantly, as soon as the centaurs bring Desiderio and Albertina home, a white centaur lowers his muzzle and begins to sniff her vagina comprehensively. The bay centaur, who hosts Desiderio and Albertina, lies them side by side on a table. Maybe the most striking scene of this chapter is the centaurs' raping Albertina all in turns and with a cold-blood, which is reminiscent of Desiderio's precedent rape by the nine Moroccan acrobats of desire in the chapter entitled "The Acrobats of Desire." While the males make "this prolonged and terrible assault upon Albertina," the bay centaur organizes the females into a line to do the savage game on Desiderio this time. However, they treat Desiderio with far less severity because the aim of the activity is just to humiliate the female centaurs. And while doing these activities, comically enough, they are serious like the Houyhnhnms. "None of them seemed to extract the least pleasure out of the act. They undertook it grimly, as though it were their duty" (207).

This pornographic submission of Albertina, the meatifying of her flesh, and her treatment as a prey for the carnivorous male agent represent the sexual politics of enlightenment ideology towards women. In *The Sadeian Woman* Angela Carter

argues that all pleasure “contains within itself the seeds of atrocities,” and thus “all beds are minefields” (28). In other words, it is in the nature of sex that sexual pleasure consists primarily in the submission and “annihilation of the partner” (167). In the novel, both women and men undergo submission and violence in the sexual act. Desiderio’s rape by the nine acrobats of desire, the valet’s sexual harassment by the Count and the Count’s beastly sex with a woman in the brothel, which is called The House of Anonymity, are examples that show different forms of Sadeian desire directed to different genders. However, Carter thinks that the one who is mostly treated as a slave and whose body is mostly harassed is the woman. She states, “Violence, the convulsive form of the active, a male principle, is a matter for men, whose sex gives them the right to inflict pain as a sign of mastery” (*The Sadeian* 25). Sexual activity, for Carter, is a predatory act in which “the butcher’s job of rendering the flesh of the victim into meat on the table [...] is the assertion of the abyss between master and victim” (166). Thus, using Carter’s terminology, it can be said that the rape of Albertina is a sex orgy directed to the enslavement of the woman in the sex act. It is like “an infertility festival with a choric quality” in which the participants “assemble themselves in architectonic configurations, fuck furiously, and discharge all together— all fall down” (170). Even if Albertina is harassed here, the carnalization of Swift’s Houyhnhnms and ‘fleshing out’ the relationship between the sexes is a deconstruction of the noncarnal relationship typology in the logocentric enlightenment ideology.

The sexual treatment of Albertina indicates that females are oppressed in many ways in the world of the centaurs. As we have already said in the previous parts of this article, in the logocentric worldview of enlightenment, man approaches woman with a certain self-restraint and the woman is either dismissed in utopia or her place in the society is defined in domestic terms: she is bound to the husband and functions as a childbearing agent. In the world of the centaurs of Angela Carter’s novel, women are also seen as inferior, and they are tormented in social life as they are seen as the cause of the original sin in the mythic world of the centaurs. For instance, while the male centaurs are partly tattooed, “the womanfolk are tattooed all over, even their face, in order to cause them more suffering, for they believed women were born only to suffer” (*The Infernal* 208). It is said that the centaurs prize fidelity more than all other virtues. An unfaithful wife is “flayed alive and her hide is given to her husband to cover his next marriage bed,” and her lover is castrated and he is forced to eat his penis, uncooked (211). However, Desiderio says this rigorous puritanism does not prevent every male in the village from raping Albertina (211). There are many other points which represent the centaurs’ bad treatment of women. For example, females eat after the males eat their meal; the males eat meat, while the females eat oat and grass; the females do all the work, while the males do nothing but reading and singing their ritualistic songs; the wife is responsible for giving birth to sons and continue the race. If she does not give her husband a son, the husband has the right to dismiss her from the house and get married to another woman. When the rape of Albertina is taken within this context, it can be said to be a reenactment of the punishment of the female centaurs by transforming, to use Carter’s terminology in *The Sadeian Woman*, her flesh into meat butchered by the male knife, that is, the male organ that is always erect and always ready to bleed the vagina, for it is in the very nature of the vagina to bleed.

The oppression of woman is so exaggerated that it may be thought by the author as part of the parody of the Houyhnhnm-like world of the centaurs. In the parodied world of the centaurs, Swift's Houyhnhnms are dialogized with a detailed description of bodily functions. It is not possible for the female centaurs to be left outside this parodying.

As seen in the overall discussion of the paper, the enlightened world of the Houyhnhnmland is deconstructed in "Lost in Nebulous Time" by carnalizing and carnivalizing its logocentric gist. Swift's "A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms," like famous utopias that precede it, is based on the subjugation of nature and woman and on the profanation of the body and bodily functions. The Houyhnhnms are presented as beings that base their world on reason, moderation, and on the refusal of the carnal sphere. On the other hand, the Yahoos, the detested ones, are identified with nature, desire and the body. In this respect, we can argue that Swift's utopia is based on the conflict between the carnal and the spiritual, and the triumph of the spiritual over the carnal. In this regard, it represents the victory of enlightenment ideology over all forms of deviation. Different from Swift's novel, Angela Carter's *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* glorifies the carnal sphere and desire. In the chapter "Lost in Nebulous Time" of the novel, Swift's utopia is encarnalized by drawing the Houyhnhnm-like centaurs to the carnal sphere experiencing different forms of carnal desire. Women are subverted in both works; however, in "Lost in Nebulous Time" this is done not on the submission or rejection of the body but on the experience of excessive carnal desire. Even their religion is grounded on bodily functions. Angela Carter's novel deconstructs logocentricism and enlightenment ideology by 'fleshing out' the novel and carnivalizing Swift's Houyhnhnms. Angela Carter also carnivalizes the novel genre in *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffmann* by distorting the temporality of the enlightenment with the help of images of desire released by Doctor Hoffman. This replacement of the temporal reality with the nebulous time of mirages also manifests itself in the spatial formation of the plot upon distorted images.

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