

Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Jonathan Swift is the most original writer in his time and one of the greatest masters of English prose. It is undoubtedly true, as Monk stated, that "Swift represents an important aspect of the eighteenth century as he satirized the politics of his day, the religious quarrels, the wars of ambition, the lucubration of science, and also the very nature of man and the whole human species" (284). Thus, the thesis writer is interested to write a thesis on one of Jonathan Swift's works for he was extremely different from the eighteenth century men in literature.

The years 1660-1745, roughly **the** period of Swift's life, were the heyday of English satire. More satire and

better satire was written then than in any other period of English literature. Monk adds, "It was in this age that Jonathan Swift established his reputation as one of the wits and a formidable satirist. He stands supreme as a satirist in prose for he was simply louder than most men about his concern for mankind" (285). Moreover, the thesis writer frequently finds him being the subject of discussion in many books mainly as a satirist.

Another challenging reason of choosing Jonathan Swift instead of other prose writers in English letters is because Swift has his own characteristics both as a writer and a great artist.

Swift as a writer was a man whose immense talent exploded in works that seem to erupt from some center of strange, sometimes-demonic power (Blamires 160). It means that Swift has a great talent with the instinct to attack something which he disapproves, and this expresses in his works. It is true, as Blamires adds that "among English prose stylists none exceeds him as a master of a perfectly clear, exact and firm prose. The true greatness of Swift as a prose stylist lies in the tout, nervous energy of his sentences; he was a man whose every word was alive with the instincts of attack and defense. Directness, vigor, simplicity marks every page of his works. The element of spontaneity and opportunism that exist in the texture of his works are in this way often ignored or seen as something

unacceptable, instead of another facet of the strange life that exist in his writing. However, his writing was based upon purely rational criteria" (160-162).

Next, as a great artist, Swift is constructing his object with the ruthless logic of the creator, whose supreme value is the value of his artistic institution at the moment, his exploration to the uttermost of the suggestion made him **by** the imagination (Dobree 449). Thus, Dobree gives further information that "his vision and magnificent imagination enabled him to transcend all the petty restrictions of neo-classical taste. However, he was an artist whose cause is finally one with that of humanity. And by the sheer force of his personality, his wit, and his incisive prose, he became one of the most powerful men in England" (449).

Swift is distinguished from famous controversialists; all born in the same century, by his successful work with children as well as their elders, "from the cabinet council to the nursery", as Pope and Gay wrote it. His inner quality is different from any he had before shown capable of, and not so much the man of many interest and a brilliant skill in controversial prose and intellectual satire" (Monk 283). It means that Swift shows his greatest skill in constructing and appreciating art, in this case the art of criticizing, especially in his Gulliver's Travels more than his other

works. And this reason makes him different from other English writers in his time.

In the same period, in a society of some of the most brilliant wits in English literature—John Gay, Congreve, Parnell, Addison, Steele, Arbuthnot, Pope—Swift was king of them all. Among those writers, Swift stands almost alone in his disdain of literary affects (Ross 16). Usually, after a writer publishes his work, there will be followed by comments from other writers whether expressing support or criticizing the work. Thus, Swift stands alone in depending what he believes to be true in his works.

Pope, Arbuthnot, and Swift were the leading spirits of a delightful group called the 'Scriblerus Club', whose purpose was to attack the pretension of the world, particularly its art and science. Unlike his friend, Addison, Swift saw, in the growing polish and decency of society, only a mask for hypocrisy; and he often used his verse to shock the newborn modesty by pointing out some native ugliness, which his diseased mind discovered under every beautiful exterior (Dobree 449).

Since the eighteenth century is also known as the period of satire, Dobree said that, "it is in this decade that Swift at his greatest wrote his masterpiece, Gulliver's Travels or Travels Into Several Remote Nations of the World by Lemuel Gulliver" (450). Therefore, along the same line with her curiosity in the study of satire, the thesis writer

is interested to analyze Gulliver's Travels as Swift's greatest satiric volume.

Gulliver's Travels was written at the height of the Enlightenment, one of the most influential periods of Western history that grew quiet naturally out of the Renaissance and became the first clearly defined manifestation of modernity. In Swift era, men generally believed in man's essential goodness, while Swift always wrote in opposition to the idea of mankind of the Enlightenment. All of his disagreements to the idea of man's essential virtue drove him to reply with all of his strength in Gulliver's Travels, his satiric masterpiece (Monk 283).

Ultimately, the thesis writer prefers to choose a novel in this case, Gulliver's Travels rather than other literary works to be analyzed because a novel, especially a good one, takes us into the lives of other people and thereby enlarges our own life. When we read a novel, we are with the characters in all kinds of experiences. We know what he says and does. More than that, we know what he thinks and feels. As with imagined people in all good novels; we can share his inner life. The writer of the thesis finds that Gulliver's Travels is interesting for it was one of the few books of the Augustan age of English Literature that are read by everybody, including people not particularly interested in a close study of the early eighteenth century. Like Defoe's Robinson Crusoe's Adventures, Gulliver's Travels enjoys the

privilege of amusing children while making man think
(Legovis 216).

Thus, Swift was leading his fullest life, in the enjoyment of his richest imagination, and at the height of his intellectual powers, when he wrote the Gulliver's Travels that he could declare with the irony of complete detachment would 'very much mend the world' (Dobree 447).

In completing her thesis, the writer also wants to show that Gulliver's Travels compared to other Swift's satire volumes is undoubtedly consider as masterpiece. In The Literature of England, it is evident that Swift has published anonymous by a volume containing three very closely related satires A Tale of A Tub (1704), The Battle of the Books (1704), and The Mechanical Operation of The Spirits. The Tale is a brilliant, reckless, powerful ridicule of that entire Swift recognized as dangerous in religion. It satirizes modern authors who confuse irresponsible new-fangledness with excellence because they assume mere change to be progress. The Tale began as a grim exposure of the alleged weaknesses of three principal forms of religious belief, Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist, as opposed to the Anglican; but it ended in a satire upon all science and philosophy (Long 272). Compared with A Tale of A Tub, Gulliver's Travels is a model of clarity and order, but it is more inclusive than the earlier work, for Swift's perfect choice of vehicle enables him to deal without

confusion, often in the same incident or character, with science, philosophy, politics, and morals. Another of Swift's satire work, The Battle of the Books (1704) is a mock-epic satire in which the books on the shelves of a library fight the battle of the relative merits of the ancient and the modern. While The Mechanical Operation as Pagliaro stated, ridicules religion zealots, both members of non-conformists Congregations and their ranting preachers (325).

Swift also wrote many small works, the effect of which is cumulative. He began a brilliant series of pamphlets on church matters. The most famous of these is the ironically titled 'An Argument to Prove the Inconvenience of abolishing Christianity' (1708) in which he banners very wittily writers who had attacked religion. It is a remarkable example of Swift sardonic method of defending a cause. It is nevertheless a better example of a typical Swift's satire, in its characteristic blend of the urbane with the mordant, of the idealistic with the cynical. Another pamphlet is The Sentiments of a Church of England Man with respect to Religion and Goverment (1709), which was written in a more serious strain (Sampson 390).

Other tracts, able as they are, belong to the history of controversy rather than to the history of literature. A Letter to A Young -----, lately entered into Holy Orders (1721), is especially attractive for its revelation of

Swift's interest in the study of English Language. **And** the famous and most successful of Swift's political pamphlets is The Conduct of the Allies and of the late Ministry in beginning and carrying on the present war [1.711], a masterpiece of argument written in the perfection of plain prose.

Among all of Swift's works, **it** is undeniable that Gulliver's Travels (1726) is his greatest achievement, earning him a place among the view that have been able to write a book *so* wide in its appeal that **it** becomes known throughout the world (Greenacre 259). _____ thus, is the most mature, the most pondered, and the most complex; for though **it** has in many ways a deceptive air of simplicity, as compared with the more fuliginous Tale of A Tub, in the later book was packed a lifetime of experience to add to the brilliant bookishness of the earlier.

For Gilliver's Travels provides the writer's interest in the study of satire, due to that consideration therefore she finds the book is valuable to be analyzed. Gulliver's Travels thus, has been called "universal satire" (Greenacre 259). Swift fashioned his observation of the ways men and women, the kings and queens, court and ministers, into a parody or humorous imitation of a travel. book. In Gulliver's Travels, Swift makes an issue out of the new conception of man's nature in the eighteenth century. In this work, he attacks the pettiness, follies and **also** vices of the

eighteenth century learned and enlightened people who are proud of their being 'naturally good and benevolent' through the corrupted nature of his main character. Moreover, he wants to emphasize that man could never somehow transcend his limitation and become an 'angel'. Thus, in Gulliver's Travels Swift attempts to build satirical situations where he can express his oppositions to the new conception about man in his time. In his novel too, Swift used the form to expose the inadequacies of British politics and society. For Gulliver is, in a sense, a tragic work, as near a tragic work as the age ever got, in that it is the picture of man's collapse before his corrupt nature, and of his defiance in face of the collapse (260-262).

Gulliver's Travels however, is a continuously funny book. It consists of four interesting voyages: The first two books, the voyages to Lilliput and Brobdingnag have the satiric basis which is the conception known as relative size, and regarded purely as a satiric devices this is apt and successful. Man is seen more clearly and with more detachment when seen from a far lower or far higher physical position. While in book three, Gulliver continues his adventures in Laputa, the flying island held up in the air by loadstone. In this third voyage, the satire is upon all the scientists and philosophers. The evident purpose is to strip off the veil of habit and custom, with which men deceive them, and show the crude vices of humanity as Swift

fancies he sees them. It is in this voyage too that we hear of the Struldrugs, a ghastly race of men who are doomed to live upon earth losing hope and the desire of life. The fourth voyage however, is the merciless satire that is carried out to its logical conclusion. This brings us to the Land of Houyhnhnms, in which horses, superior and intelligent creatures, are the ruling animals. In addition, all our interest is centered on the Yahoos, a frightful race, having the form and appearance of men, but living in unspeakable degradation (Long 275). Ultimately, in Gulliver's Travels Swift attacks pomposity and hypocrisy, dishonesty and cruelty, in positions of high authority as well as in ordinary men. He sets up a series of voyages for Gulliver that is always amusing. He attempts men into laughing at their ridiculousness and he also attempts to build satirical situations where he can express his oppositions to the new conception about man in his time. And what becomes interesting in this case is his way in satirizing the society and the object that he is satirizing.

Considering the facts that Swift is a great writer and satirist in his time whose the expressions of his talent and skill shown in his works, the thesis writer's attempts to write a thesis on Swift's novel that is Gulliver's Travels.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Considering that satire blends in **all** literary genres, hence, through this thesis, the writer is curious to find out how Swift uses Gulliver to satirize the society in the eighteenth century. Moreover ~~she~~ she wants to know what is being satirized in Jonathan Swift's Guliiver's Travels.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

By doing the study, the thesis writer wants to show the way Swift uses Gulliver in satirizing the society in the eighteenth century. Next, the thesis writer also wants to show the objects that Swift is satirizing in his Gulliver's Travels.

1.4 Importance of the Study

By writing this thesis the writer also encourages other readers especially Petra Christian University students of Faculty of Letters to write about satire in their thesis. Actually, a study of satire is also like a study of literary criticism, but in this case the readers are the ones who have to know what the author has been criticizing. Therefore, by writing her thesis on satire the writer wishes that: many students might **willingly** write their thesis on satire. Moreover, the writer chooses one of **Swift's novels** instead of other writers' in **his** age because she wants to make the readers see that actually Swift is an imposing

writer in English Letters. Moreover, the thesis writer wishes the reader to realize that Gulliver's Travels is also an important study. Additionally, she hopes that the study can arouse the reader's curiosity to know more about the novel and the author.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

Regarding the scope and limitation of the study, the writer of the thesis decides to focus her discussion on the hero of the novel that is Lemuel Gulliver. The writer chooses to analyze the hero because he is the one who plays a major role in the novel. Besides, the thesis writer considers that satire, which becomes her hypothesis, is quite dominant in this novel.

1.6 Methodology

In analyzing the novel, the thesis writer uses the analytical method by using library research in collecting the data and information to support her study. She will also use literary approach in order to analyze the topic. The literary theories is used to examine the details referring to the topic i.e. satire.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

The writer of the thesis divides her discussion into four chapters. The first chapter the introduction including the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the importance of the study, the scope and limitation, and the organization of the study. The second chapter is the review of related literature, which consists of some theories of satire, and irony used in analyzing the topic of this thesis. The third chapter consists of the analysis. And the last chapter is the conclusion of this thesis.