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Introduction

Humour is part of everyday life. Humour accentuates every single conversation. Humour is an essential factor in literature. Humour is what readers usually search in a literary text. It is what readers want to see in a character. Humour can make a difference in the likability of characters. Readers try to seize this difference before choosing the character they like. If humour is a fundamental component in a literary text and involves readers to sympathize with the character they enjoy, then it is also important to infer the aim of humour, that is, what each text communicates to readers. Readers will find it more interesting and challenging to interpret the aim of each type of humour the writers were using in their texts in specific periods of time.

English literature offers many examples of the most common types of humour from the Middle Ages to 20th century literature. Some of the texts, taken into consideration for this MA thesis, are completely based on humour. Some other texts only partially use humour, but all the texts chosen for this thesis study have one or several of the most common types of humour as their characteristic. The reason to analyze the most common types of humour is not to make a description of the types of humour per se, but to understand what the authors wanted to depict about the society of the time when they were writing their works, and, additionally, what their texts interspersed with humour conveyed to the readers.

This thesis will analyze the aims of the most common types of humour in the texts chosen from different ages in English literature starting from Geoffrey Chaucer's 'Tale of Sir Thopas' (1387), following with William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1596), Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) with Francis Ford Coppola's film adaptation (1992), and concluding with James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922).

In Geoffrey Chaucer's 'Tale of Sir Thopas,' the aim is that of representing the romantic, medieval knight via caricature in his physical appearance and in his clothing. Sir Thopas compromises the chivalrous reputation of a romantic knight. Sir Thopas ridicules the traditional idea of the medieval knight. He is the burlesque version of a valiant and brave knight. Sir Thopas' burlesque representation appears in his physical description, in the description of his clothing, and in the origin of his name and birth. Moreover, Sir Thopas' burlesque caricature is not only the result of his physical appearance but it is also based on his different behaviour, because of not respecting the knights' code of behaviour. The 'Tale of Sir Thopas' with its unique style of humour is one of the finest examples of burlesque to be found in the Medieval English literature. Moreover, Chaucer's manner of writing has to be added to Sir Thopas' physical description and behaviour

because of parodying also the medieval romances. The aim of burlesque in the ‘Tale of Sir Thopas’ is to poke fun at this particular genre of romance through a comic inversion¹, whose result is a caricature of the traditional medieval knight and at the same time a parody of the medieval romances. In Sir Thopas’ physical description, the language is deconstructed through the use of words and colours which contribute to a greater textual force. Moreover, Sir Thopas’ “gendered performance” (Reeser 83) and his “corporeal style” (Butler 139) have to be seen either as “part of his overall performance” (Reeser 88) or as part of his ability to perform in a different way.

In William Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, the aim is that of shaping irony through Shylock’s revenge on a Christian and the reason of his revenge. Why does Shylock want his revenge on Antonio through a “pound of flesh”? What does a “pound of flesh” mean in the context of Antonio and Shylock’s bond? Is it really a “pound of flesh” that Shylock wants or Antonio’s blood? What does blood mean for Shylock? All these questions serve to understand if Shylock really wants to kill Antonio and the reason of a “pound of flesh,” and decipher the difference between the “pound of flesh” and blood for Shylock. Moreover, how is irony shaped through Shylock’s acting? Antonio and Shylock’s relationship puts on evidence a list of opposite terms: flesh/blood and money; evil and good; wrong and right; inhuman and human; head and heart; “gravity” and “levity”; tragic and comic. The different connotation of these terms and their binary opposition in relation to Shylock and Antonio — who are subjected to a change in their destiny — is not only to be seen as the starting point for the shaping of irony in *The Merchant of Venice*, but it has also to be connected to Shylock’s attempt to move forward from a bodily fluid into another (from yellow bile into blood), from a temperamental type into another (from choleric into sanguine), and above all to his wish of being like a Christian, with an equal moral status, an identical justice, and the same standards of value. Shylock’s attempt to change into his opposite is to be seen, per se, as a metaphor of dramatic irony,² because it entails a disintegration of his world.

In Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, the aim is that of giving the readers through a moral lens a new vision of the game of politics and of the human social follies. Swift presents a commentary on the human condition through *Gulliver’s Travels*, since he believed that man is a mixture of sense and nonsense. Gulliver’s four adventures convey a satirical expression of mankind. Gulliver’s understanding of human nature brings him to realize how people are generally ridiculous, petty, greedy and proud. In the world of the tiny Lilliputians, he realizes that their politicians are as much

¹ *ThoughtCo*. “What Is Burlesque Literature?”: “Burlesque creates an incongruity, a ridiculous disparity, between the manner of the work and its content. Adam Burgess. Feb. 2019. Web. 26 Aug. 2019. <<https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-burlesque-literature-740474>>

² *Merriam-Webster*. “Definition of Dramatic Irony: incongruity between a situation developed in a drama and the accompanying words or actions that is understood by the audience but not by the characters in the play.” Web. 16 May 2020. <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/irony>>

morally despicable as the European ones. In the world of the huge Brobdingnagians, Gulliver relates a story with potential morals. Relativism and perspective guide the two worlds. There is a sort of perfect symmetry in *Gulliver's Travels*. The protagonist goes from being a giant among Lilliputians to being a tiny person among Brobdingnagians. Moreover, Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians' physical size reflects their moral stature: the tiny Lilliputians appear beautiful at Gulliver's eyes but they are disagreeable and contemptible in their behaviour; the huge Brobdingnagians appear ugly in his eyes but they are high in dignity and virtue. Gulliver reflects that identity itself is completely dependent on perspective, and that truth is also created by perspective. Thus, *Gulliver's Travels* ultimately suggests that one's perspective on reality is even more powerful than reality itself. Swift satirizes the conditions of Europe by downplaying the significance of the Lilliputians' ridiculous and tiny arguments, and shows the absurdity in the European traditions by seeing the absurdity of the Lilliputians. Satire in Lilliput is the result of nonsensical, ridiculous, and tiny arguments, while in Brobdingnag it is a more specific attack on the political machine and on the particular custom of human condition. Thus, the use of literary devices serves to relate Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians' size, actions, and physical appearance through a miniaturizing or magnifying lens showing that the status of humans is not idyllic in *Gulliver's Travels*.

In Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and in Francis Ford Coppola's film adaptation, the aim is that of searching for the Gothic self-serious elements among the supernatural ones and their transformation into parody. Blood and bats are two of the most impressive images in *Dracula*, and have to be considered two of the Gothic self-serious elements transformed into parody. Moreover, Lucy is a parodic distortion of the Victorian ideal of femininity embodying the concept of the new woman as an over-sexed vamp racing forward in her desires. She regrets having to turn down two of three proposals of marriage she receives on the same day. Lucy's blood transfusions from each of her former suitors symbolically echo of her desire for three husbands or lovers. She is also a parodic distortion of maternal femininity because of feeding upon defenceless children as a vampire. The in-between state of undeadness is another Gothic self-serious element showing Dracula's inability to die and his feasting on the blood of the living as a problem which has to be solved at the end. Moreover, the idea of insanity and confinement is a thread of humour among the characters facing Dracula. Van Helsing and Seward worry about their madness because of tracking Dracula according to the laws for hunting vampires, forgetting that they are men of science. The combination of religious, ritualistic, and scientific modes which allows Van Helsing and the group to kill Dracula — the cause of their illness — is often parodied either in the novel or in Francis Ford Coppola's

film. However, in the film more than in the novel, the monster is deprived of his fearful properties, mostly because of his romantic nature, but also for the sake of evoking laughter. Thus, the Gothic elements turn into comedy when the nature of terror is disturbed and it results in a comic effect. Francis Ford Coppola's *Dracula* aims at ridiculing of the well-known and once fearsome characters by means of laughter-evoking tricks. The combination of humour with horror evokes a desire of fear interwoven with fun in audiences. The film offers many examples of this combination of humour with horror where blood functions as a means of parodying Dracula's metempsychosis which is to be found in the blood of the living rather than in the souls of the dead. The transformation into parody of all the Gothic elements has the aim of showing how "fear [...] is defeated by laughter" (Bakhtin 47), and how the inhuman power of Dracula is uncrowned and he is transformed into a "funny monster" (Kayser 139).

In James Joyce's *Ulysses*, humour is used as an excuse for the absence of profundity, as a result of elaborate artifice for the presence of shallowness, and with the aim of obliterating the individual differences among the protagonists. The Homer's epic poem and the other superstructures, such as the Christian Church, the Viconian cycles, and the Irish Renaissance, serve to cancel the absence of profundity in the novel and load it with humorous facts and events. The experimentation of several techniques is the starting point of Joyce's use of elaborate artifice. The chapter on Joyce takes into consideration, among many techniques, that of "embryonic development"³ with the recapitulation of the entire history of English language through a series of parodies of many writers, that of "enthymemic"⁴ with the "disintegration of the world" (Eco 36) and in its representation through the rhetorical figures, and that of "*fuga per canonem*"⁵ as a parody of the musical form in relation to women and sexuality. Finally the use of humour serves to obliterate the individual differences among the protagonists. Bloom's performances throughout *Ulysses* show a comedy of mankind in the ordinary life "between laughter and tears" (Kopper 50). Bloom's conversation, as a parody of lack of communication with Molly and non-verbal communication with Stephen, reveals how his human indignity in relation to Molly and his recognition of otherness in relation to Stephen obliterates their individual differences.

³ Stuart Gilbert. Schema for *Ulysses* in *James Joyce's Ulysses*. Faber and Faber. London. 1930. 40.

⁴ Robert Spoo. *James Joyce and the Language of History*. Oxford University Press. New York. 1994. 117.

⁵ Susan Sutliff Brown. "The Mystery of the 'Fuga per Canonem' Solved" in *European Joyce Studies*. Vol. 22 (2013):173–193. Web. 10 May 2020.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/44871357?read-now=1&refreqid=excelsior%3A2d3c324719c23201ce258a89e6ba4475&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents>

In addition, the deconstruction of language, of the world and the human identity, in these five works written over a time span of five hundred years, contributes to integrate the types of humour and their aims into a systematic framework.

Chapter One

1. Burlesque Via Caricature in the 'Tale of Sir Thopas' by Geoffrey Chaucer

In Geoffrey Chaucer's 'Tale of Sir Thopas' the chivalrous reputation of a knight is compromised. The idea of the romantic knight is jeopardized. The prototype of the medieval knight is ridiculed. Sir Thopas as a knight is the absurd version of a romantic knight. He is the burlesque version of the traditional, medieval, valiant and brave knight. He is showed via caricature in his physical appearance and in his clothing. His representation is a caricature of the romantic version of a knight. The origin of his name and of his birth is under close scrutiny with the purpose of highlighting some features of this atypical and remote knight. All these aspects in his description carry meaning to the burlesque representation of Sir Thopas as a knight.

The analysis of the 'Tale of Sir Thopas' starts with his physical description and the description of his clothing, the origin of his name and of his birth. Questions are posed on Sir Thopas' appearance and on the origin of his name and birth. Sir Thopas' approach of not respecting the knights' code of behaviour makes the difference between his own way of being a knight and the romances of other famous knights. Sir Thopas is a knight beyond all the expectations: he is the opposite of the traditional medieval knight; and he is a hollow mirror reflecting images upside down like a topaz, whose name comes from. Thus, his unexpected physical appearance and his different behaviour contribute to build up his burlesque caricature.

Particular emphasis is given to the theoretical vocabulary for the analysis of this type of humour through a deconstructive use of language and imagery, especially on words which provide to reinforce the textual references to Sir Thopas' caricature. Moreover, Sir Thopas' acting like a female in his physical appearance shows another kind of man performing a different way of masculinity through the images of theatricality and clothing which are to a certain extent "symbols of gender performativity" (Reeser 88) but also part of the overall performance.

Chaucer creates in the 'Tale of Sir Thopas' a unique style of humour and writing which is one of the finest examples of burlesque to be found in the Medieval English literature. Burlesque via caricature is not only visible in Sir Thopas' physical description and in his behaviour, but also in Chaucer's manner of writing. Chaucer, the author, and Chaucer, the narrator, are parodying the medieval romances. The result of this parodying was successful because romances were popular since many people were familiar with the standard structure of romances.

Burlesque is "a seventeenth-century coinage, first used in Italian and then French, but passing rapidly into English" (Dentith 123). The aim of burlesque in the 'Tale of Sir Thopas' is to poke fun

at this particular genre of romance which was already over in Europe by the fourteenth-century but at that time had been adapted to suit the different taste in England. Thus, in Sir Thopas' tale, Chaucer imitates either the matter of the serious literary genre or the manner, its form and style, through a comic inversion⁶, whose result is a caricature of the traditional medieval knight and at the same time a parody of the medieval romances.

1.1 Sir Thopas' Physical Description, Description of His Clothing, Origin of His Name and of His Birth

In Chaucer's tale, much attention is paid to Sir Thopas' superficial chivalrous reputation as a knight: his looks, his beautiful armor and charm. Sir Thopas is not the prototype of a medieval knight. He is a slightly absurd version of a romantic knight. Firstly, he was born in a far country, "fer contree, [i]n Flaundres" (l. 7–8)⁷, in the Flanders, a country which no fourteenth-century Londoner could have regarded as either remote or romantic for a knight, in the town of "Popering" (l. 9), a parish in the marches of Calais, whose inhabitants had a reputation for stupidity⁸. Moreover, Sir Thopas' father was the lord of Popering "a man ful free, [a]nd lord [...] of that contree" (l. 10–11), where he ruled in "Goddess grace" (l. 12), which meant he was the abbot of the local monastery, who could not have legitimate children. Sacred and profane are associated to the person of the abbot. Thus, Sir Thopas' short description of lineage adds further disturbing details about the origin and the emblem of his family: "[u]pon his crest he bar a tour, [a]nd ther-in stiked a lily-flour" (l. 195–196), he wore on top of his helmet upon his crest a small emblem of a tower with a lily stuck in it which would have been unwieldy and absurd for a knight, but it recalled his father's role as an abbot, and because of that he was in "God shilde" (l. 197), God was with him. Sir Thopas' character appears to be meaningful not because of his own merits but as a result of his origin in relation to God. Secondly, his name is neither a name for a knight, nor a name for a male: he is named for the semiprecious stone topaz, which, in medieval lapidaries, was linked to all the virtues, including chastity⁹. Sir Thopas' name has another meaning: the topaz was known to reflect images like a hollow mirror, i.e. upside down, in the Middle Ages. Chaucer, by naming his knight Sir Thopas, wanted to convey that his hero has an opposite appearance in relation to his audience's expectations. The name *Topas* was also used in

⁶ *ThoughtCo*. 'What Is Burlesque Literature?': "Burlesque creates an incongruity, a ridiculous disparity, between the manner of the work and its content. Adam Burgess. Feb. 2019. Web. 26 Aug. 2019. <<https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-burlesque-literature-740474>>

⁷ *Sparknotes*. Geoffrey Chaucer. *The Canterbury Tales*, 'The Tale of Sir Thopas.' Web 13 Jan. 2020. <https://www.sparknotes.com/nofear/lit/the-canterbury- Tales/sir-thopas-tale/page_3/> Subsequent citations are taken from this website.

⁸ *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*. ed. F. N. Robinson. Boston. 1957. 324. Web. 13 Sep. 2019. <http://www.saylor.org/courses/engl201>

⁹ Jacqueline de Weever, *Chaucer Name Dictionary*. Garland Publ. New York and London. 1988. Web. 18 Jan. 2020. <<http://www.columbia.edu/dlc/garland/deweever/T/thopas.htm>>

romances as a name for females¹⁰. At Chaucer's time, a topaz was a gemstone usually "worn by young girls as a charm against luxury" (Conley 42), but when this gemstone is associated with Sir Thopas' name, it bestowed an "ironical eulogy" of his effeminacy and chastity¹¹. Many maidens would bring in Sir Thopas to sleep with, "[f]ul many a mayde [...] moorne for him" (l. 31–32), but he was chaste, and no lecher, "chaast and no lechour" (l. 34). Thus, Sir Thopas' name refers to a name for girls, and to a gemstone worn by them, and this association to women builds up the idea of his effeminacy, and his unconscious feeling of being like a girl appears in his way of being chaste like many maidens. He refuses to sleep with girls because he unconsciously feels like them. His "gendered performance" (Reeser 83) and his "*corporeal style*" (Butler 139) show that he is acting like a female.

Moreover, Sir Thopas' effeminacy is clearly visible in his physical description throughout the text: "his face as payndemayn" (l. 14) was like fine white morning bread; "[h]ise lippes rede as rose" (l. 15) were red like a rose; "[h]is rode is lyk scarlet in grayn" (l. 16) his complexion was like poppies in grain; "[h]e hadde a semely nose" (l. 18), a comely nose; "[h]is heer, his berd, was lyk saffroun" (l. 19), hair and beard like saffron, which were so long that reached his waist, "his girdel raughte" (l. 20); "[a]nd sweete as is the bremble-flour" (l. 35), sweet like the fruit that is shed by the bramble flowers, which was a medieval symbolic expression of "Man's fallen condition"¹²; and then Sir Thopas is described "with sydes smale" (l. 125), which is a conventional description for a woman's waist. All these elements in his physical description highlighted by colours, white for his face which stands not only for chastity but also for purity, red for his lips and complexion which conversely stands for longing and lust, yellow and orange like saffron for his hair and beard which stand not only for fascination, happiness and joy but also for cowardice and deceit, enhance Sir Thopas' effeminacy together with his body's shapes and lines, visible in his comely nose, in his slender waist, and in his hair and beard's length which reach his waist and emphasize even more a woman physical description with the exception of his beard which in this case is associated to his hair's length. All these images related to Sir Thopas' theatricality and clothing appear to be "revelatory of how gender is [...] performed [and] serve as symbols of gender performativity" (Reeser 88). Moreover, Sir Thopas' character is shed by the sweetness and the scent of the bramble flowers which are woman's common features, and add more details to complete his caricature as a result of his man's fallen condition.

¹⁰ Roland M. Smith "The Name of Sir Thopas," *MLN* 5.5 (1936): 314–315

¹¹ J. A. Burrow Explanatory Note for 717, *Riverside*. 918. In Laura F. Hodges, *Chaucer and Array: Patterns of Costume and Fabric Rhetoric in The Canterbury Tales, Troilus and Criseyde and Other Works*. Amazon. 2014.

¹² *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. "The Medieval Garden Enclosed. Natural Symbols". 2013. Web. 12 Sept. 2019. <<http://blog.metmuseum.org/cloistersgardens/tag/bramble/>>

In addition to his physical description, Sir Thopas' clothing is also colourful: "[h]ise shoon of Cordewane" (l. 21), his shoes of fine Spanish leather; "[h]is robe [...] of ciclatoun" (l. 24), which is a rich Oriental stuff of silk and gold very expensive. Then, his legs are covered of "quirboilly" (l. 164), a French, boiled or prepared leather, also used to cover shields; "[h]is swerdes shethe of yvory" (l. 165), with his ivory sheath; "[h]is helm of laton bright" (l. 166), with his helmet of shiny brass; "[h]is sadel was of rewel-boon" (l. 167), with his saddle of a whale bone which may be narwhal tusk ivory; "[h]is brydel as the sonne shoon" (l. 168), with his armor which shone in the sun, or in "the mone light" (l. 169) in the moon light. Most of his clothes and accessories are colourful, expensive, luxurious and unique. He does not adapt to "the idea of the knight as definitional of masculinity" (Reeser 84) despite shining in his armor either in the sun or in the moon light, and showing all his bright and luxurious knightly accessories. Sir Thopas is "performing as another kind of man" (Reeser 88). He does not care about showing another kind of masculinity. All these details in Sir Thopas' style of clothing add a further negative connotation to his unknightly demeanour, and make him even unsuited for the simplest knight errands.

1.2 Sir Thopas' Uncommon Way of Being a Knight in Comparison to the Knights' Code of Behaviour and the Traditional Medieval Romances

Sir Thopas' weird way of being a knight appears in some of his qualities such as archering — he "was a good archeer" (l. 28) "[w]ith grey goshawk" (l. 27), — which were a yeoman's sport and bird; and he was the best at wrestling — "wrestling was ther noon his peer" (l. 29) — which was also a sport of the low classes people. Archering and wrestling were certainly not knightly accomplishments in the traditional medieval romance. Then, Sir Thopas' spear is "a launcegay" (l. 41), whose name comes from 'azagay' with a singular identity of termination, which was the name of a Moorish weapon (Robinson 324), and it was an unconventional weapon for a medieval knight. Then, a knight would be expected to have a gold or silver drinking vessel, but Sir Thopas drinks in wooden goblets made of pine, "mede eek in a maselyn" (l. 141). It is also singular that the forest he passed through was full of many wild beasts, "wilde best" (l. 44), which were no more than deer and hares, "bukke and hare" (l. 45). Then, Sir Thopas falls in love after hearing the sparrowhawk and the parrot "[t]he sparhawk and the papeiay" (l. 56), and the thrush when "he herde the thrustel singe" (l. 62), which are birds that can only squawk unpleasantly, and their song is not particularly romantic. His object of love is "[a]n elf-queen" (l. 79), whom he has seen in a dream, "[m]e dremed al this night" (l. 76), and he has figured of having sex with her, "[a]nd slepe under my gore" (l. 78), which makes him upset to be under love's domination, if it is considered that "he was chast and no lechour" (l. 34), and he would not have sex while unwed. That is the reason why he invokes help:

“‘[o] seinte Marie, benedicite!’ [w]hat eyleth this love at me” (l. 73–74) that love has made him so squirmy. He realizes that no other woman is interesting for him but the elf-queen of his dreams. Thus, he is moved to search for her, “[a]n elf-queen for tespye” (l. 88), but as soon as he reaches “[t]he contree of Fairye” (l. 91), the country of fairies and sprites, he encounters “a greet geant” (l. 96) whose name is “sir Olifaunt” (l. 97) according to Sir John Mandeville’s definition (Robinson 324) of elephant. Sir ‘Olifaunt’ is considered a dangerous man, “[a] perilous man” (l. 98), because of treating Sir Thopas badly. He refers to Sir Thopas as a “child” (l. 99), and mentions “Termagaunt” (l. 99) in his speech because of being a ranter or a blusterer — known as a pagan or Saracen deity in the medieval literature (Robinson 324). Therefore, Sir Thopas is constrained to escape because of the giant’s threats, “if thou prike out of myn haunt [...] I slee thy stede” (l. 100–101). He is sent out of the place where the elf-queen — “the queen of Fayërye” (l. 103) — lives, is “[d]welling” (l. 105), because of being in the giant’s haunt. He is unable to fight the giant because he has forgotten to wear his “armoure” (l. 108), and he rides away, “escapeth child Thopas” (l. 119), from the forest when the giant throws stones at him. Sir Thopas’ threats of killing the giant by bestrewing his guts, “[t]hy mawe [s]hal I percen” (l. 112–113), the day after when he will have his armor, “[t]omorwe wol I mete thee [w]han I have myn armoure” (l. 107–108), appear to be useless.

Thus, Sir Thopas’ funny and largely silly adventures are described in glowing terms like it occurred with his physical appearance and chastity. There is no action to back up the description. His ‘queen’ is imaginary, and he runs from battle. He does not behave like a traditional medieval brave knight who falls in love and valiantly defeats his frightening enemies. However, Sir Thopas’ “ability to perform in different ways may be part of his overall performance” (Reeser 88). Chaucer’s parody of Sir Thopas’ masculinity appears to be at the same time a parody of “the very notion of an original” (Butler 138). Chaucer made not only fun of the hero and his actions but also of the love romances. Thus, all these elements of the story satirize the traditional parts of a romantic tale. Chaucer wanted to clearly show Sir Thopas as the perfect anti-hero to an audience which was familiar to the traditional romances. Sir Thopas’ characteristics contradicted those of the romantic hero, and because of that he is turned into a burlesque caricature of the medieval knight.

1.3 Chaucer’s Manner of Writing: Parodying the Traditional Medieval Romances and Knights through Sir Thopas’ Performances

In the ‘Tale of Sir Thopas’ is under scrutiny not only Sir Thopas’ physical description and his reputation of not respecting the knights’ code of behaviour, but also Chaucer’s manner of writing and his way of parodying romances and knights. On the one hand, Chaucer begins the third part with a meandering description about the gallantry of Sir Thopas comparing him to knights of great

renown, such as Sir Bevis of Hampton and Sir Guy of Warwick, “Bevis and sir Gy” (l. 188), and “sir Libeux” (l. 189), who was one of Arthur’s knights, also called ‘Ly beau desconus’, ‘the fair unknown’, and “the knight sir Percivel” (l. 205), Sir Percival de Galois, one of the most famous knights in the French romances, and comparing his tale to “romances of prys” (l. 186), excellent romances. On the other hand, the ‘Tale of Sir Thopas’ subject matter does not have anything to do with those knights who were valiant champions and brave protagonists of excellent medieval romances. Moreover, Chaucer’s manner of writing and his way of parodying those romances and knights are even more highlighted by the host’s critiques of the “rym dogerel” (l. 925)¹³, which is considered “the devel” (l. 924) because his “eres aken of [...] drasty speche” (l. 923), his ears ache from Chaucer’s character crappy speech, which “is nat worth a toord” (l. 930), not worth a turd. Thus, the host asks him to stop telling the story because he is obsessed with the “rym dogerel”¹⁴, but Chaucer’s character wonders why he should stop ““the beste rym [he] kan”” (l. 928), the best rhyme he knows. The host’s obsession about the rhyme emphasizes not only the triviality of this form of verse — thence a critique of Chaucer’s manner of writing — but also focuses on the apparent purposeless narrative in the ‘Tale of Sir Thopas’ through the words: “[t]hou doost noght elles but despendest tyme”” (l. 931), you do nothing else but waste time: “[i]t is [...] this lack of action that is the root of the Host’s objections [...] for [...] just wasting time” (Wood 389). In addition, the host suggests that the narrator should no longer go further with his trivial rhyme, “thou shalt no lenger ryme” (l. 932), and he advises him rather to tell something in prose, “telle in prose” (l. 934), in which there may be some mirth, “som murthe” (l. 935)¹⁵. Mirth and solace, “myrthe and [...] solas” (l. 714), bliss and happiness, but also gaiety and knowledge, “doctryne” (l. 935), are expected by the narrator in telling the story. Moreover, the host abhors the idea that the narrator tells something which may not be interesting in its form and may not express some gaiety and gladness through laughter. However, the way the narrator is making the tale up as he goes along with packed pointless details emphasizes his lack of creativity. Thus, the narrator has to ask the company to listen or to be quiet, “lordynges alle, I yow biseche” (l. 953), “to yow alle I preye” (l. 960), and “lat me tellen al my tale, I preye” (l. 966), implying “laughter [...] of derision” (Dentith 37), jeers and responses of a less-than-impressed pilgrim audience.

¹³ *Harvard's Geoffrey Chaucer Website*. “The Prologue and Tale of Sir Thopas, and the Host's Interruption.” Web. 8 Febr. 2020. <<https://chaucer.fas.harvard.edu/pages/prologue-and-tale-sir-thopas-and-hosts-interruption>>

¹⁴ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Definition of ‘Doggerel’: “a low, or trivial, form of verse, loosely constructed and often irregular, but effective because of its simple mnemonic rhyme and loping metre”; and then “[o]ne of the earliest uses of the word is found in the 14th century in the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, who applied the term ‘rym doggerel’ to his ‘Tale of Sir Thopas,’ a burlesque of the long-winded medieval romance.” Web. 11 Febr. 2020. <<https://www.britannica.com/art/doggerel>>

¹⁵ *Webster's II New College Dictionary*. Definition of Mirth: “Gaiety and gladness, esp. when expressed by laughter.” Ed. Webster's New World Dictionary. Web. 12 Febr. 2020. <https://books.google.it/books?id=OL60E3r2yiYC&pg=PA716&lpg=PA716&dq=symbol+of+mirth+in+the+middle+ages&source=bl&ots=CzWlEMV3uj&sig=ACfU3U0n2RdLL14ASxHN0P0iutkNbVtuWA&hl=it&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwio3f_jx8znAhUailwKHW0hCBYQ6AEwDnoEAgQAQ#v=onepage&q=symbol%20of%20mirth%20in%20the%20middle%20ages&f=false>

There is a sort of similarity between Chaucer, the storyteller, who is reluctant to tell a tale, and Sir Thopas, the knight, who is so desperate to escape the combat. In the ‘Tale of Sir Thopas’, Chaucer is parodying his own endless inventiveness because he has definitely run out of things to say. Chaucer lampoons through the tale of Sir Thopas the genre of medieval romance which was very popular in his time. He has created a unique style of humour and writing which is one of the finest examples of burlesque to be found in the Medieval English literature where “irony is added to laughter, arising from the degradation of high literature” (Bakhtin 305). Furthermore, the ‘Tale of Sir Thopas’ is one of the funniest tales in Chaucer’s work because of having been written in a “bouncy tail rhyme”¹⁶ and packed with many bizarre pastoral details. Thus, the tale is a hilarious parody of the Middle English verse romances, which requires to be understood that the audience be familiar with the genre or tradition that is being parodied. Chaucer also aimed his parody at formal aspects of romances, such as their mechanical style, their sometimes terrible rhymes, and even the minstrels’ lack of creativity. As soon as the flourishing of the popular romance literary genre was over in France and Germany by the fourteenth-century¹⁷ either in verse or in prose, the old material was taken up again and changed in order to suit the different taste in England with developments and adaptations. Thus, Chaucer was able to parody that genre because the structure and elements of romances were already very popular among many people in that time.

¹⁶ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Definition of ‘Tail rhyme’: “[...] a verse form in which rhymed lines such as couplets or triplets are followed by a tail—a line of different (usually shorter) length that does not rhyme with the couplet or triplet. In a tail-rhyme stanza (also called a tail-rhymed stanza), the tails rhyme with each other.” Web. 14 Feb. 2020. <<https://www.britannica.com/art/tail-rhyme>>

¹⁷ Dieter Mehl. *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*. Routledge Revivals. London. 1968. Ed. Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2011. Web. 14 Febr. 2020. <<https://books.google.it/books?id=Dc6sAgAAQBAJ&pg=PT8&lpg=PT8&dq=romance+literary+genre+in+France+and+Germany+by+the+14th+century&source=bl&ots=AqTHOAAaLlq&sig=ACfU3U39ckSyyomOZ-z6lozKgtngAN5SA&hl=it&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjpopvO3NHnAhVKXsAKHbyJDsgQ6AEwCXoECAYQAQ#v=onepage&q=romance%20literary%20genre%20in%20France%20and%20Germany%20by%20the%2014th%20century&f=false>>

Chapter Two

2. The Shaping of Irony in *The Merchant of Venice*

The Merchant of Venice is a play where a series of events changes first Antonio's destiny and then Shylock's destiny. Antonio's ship is lost. Antonio has a 'bond' with Shylock of a pound of his flesh if he does not return three thousand ducats in the terms fixed. Shylock refuses the doubling of ducats he lent to Antonio claiming his 'bond' of a 'pound of flesh' with Antonio. Shylock has decided to obtain his revenge on Antonio, and at the same he has decided to have his revenge on a Christian. The rationale behind Shylock's revenge enlightens the hard relationship between Jews and Christians during Shakespeare's time.

Moreover, it is also challenging to understand in *The Merchant of Venice* if Shylock wants to kill Antonio and the reason of a 'pound of flesh'. Jews and Christians did not agree upon many things at that time in their everyday life, despite their relations being often intermingled with trade exchanges. Thus it may be reasonable to place the 'pound of flesh' in this context.

Although the 'pound of flesh' could be interpreted as a means of exchange in the Jewish-Christian relationship, it would also be appropriate to recognize the blood's function in this relationship, and how blood and the 'pound of flesh' could be connected to each other. Does Shylock literally want to kill Antonio in his process of extracting the 'pound of flesh'? Does he really think of not shedding Antonio's blood?

Eventually, Shylock loses all his properties and almost his life. Events change the destiny of both — the Jew and the Christian — and their opposition puts on evidence a list of opposite terms: flesh/blood and money; evil and good; wrong and right; inhuman and human; head and heart; "gravity" and "levity"; tragic and comic. These opposites show the interchangeability of Shylock and Antonio's destiny. The change of Shylock and Antonio's destiny is highlighted by the use of terms with negative and positive connotation. The different connotation of these terms and their binary opposition in relation to Shylock and Antonio is the starting point for the shaping of irony in *The Merchant of Venice*.

2.1 Shylock's Revenge on a Christian and the Reason of His Revenge

Shylock refuses from Bassanio the doubling of ducats he lent to Antonio, even though he should be pleased as a usurer to regain double the money he lent. Bassanio tries to convince him to accept six thousand ducats, but Antonio describes Shylock as:

A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch
Incapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy (*Merchant*: IV.i.2–4)¹⁸.

Antonio eventually realizes that it is useless to convince Shylock to accept money, and money seems not to be the object of Shylock's interest.

Shylock wants to obtain a revenge on Antonio, but Antonio himself is not the purpose of his revenge. He clearly wants to have a revenge on a Christian. One of the possible reasons for this is because Shylock's life is not easy in Venice: he believes that the Christians abuse him for his money. Christians visit him only when they need money. Shylock is a sort of economic support for the Venetians. He helps them satisfy their extravagant life and repay their debts. Although Shylock is rich, his richness does not help him to gain an acceptable reputation in the Venetian society. He "is put outside that society" (Moody 27). Shylock as a 'merchant' and as a Jew is considered "the stranger outside Christianity" (Adelman 4), and because of that he is secluded in a ghetto. Venetians consider him only when they want to borrow money from him. Shylock often feels that Christians not only abuse him, but also they curse at him and treat him like a stray dog. Yet he does not accept his isolated condition. He expects respect and consideration from the Venetians because of the support he provides in terms of money, but that unfortunately does not happen for him.

Shylock's revenge on a Christian is based on a sophisticated tendency to a playful wit:

[...] The villainy you teach me I will execute,
And it shall go hard but I will better the instruction
(*Merchant*: III.i.66-67).

His tone of speech and his slow, brooding calculation do not soothe the Christians' tone. Shylock challenges the Christians' "dominance, by setting gravity against levity" (Moody 27). Shylock's 'gravity', based on his words — 'I will execute' and 'I will better the instruction' — is opposed to the Duke's 'levity':

[...] touched with human gentleness and love,
Forgive ... (*Merchant*: IV.i.24–25)

and

We all expect a gentle answer, Jew (IV.i.33),

but the Duke, calling Shylock 'Jew', emphasizes the distance between Christians and Jews, which cannot be reduced. Shylock may assume that he will never be accepted as a peer by the Venetian society.

¹⁸ Shakespeare, William. 1596. *The Merchant of Venice*. Ed. A. R. Braunmuller. Penguin Books. New York. 2000.
(all further quotations are taken from this text)

Moreover, Jessica, Shylock's daughter, abandons her father's house to marry a Christian, Lorenzo. This is an even greater reason for Shylock's revenge on Christians. Jessica is the only person who gives importance to Shylock's life together with his trade as usurer. Shylock has already lost his wife, Leah, who could have been a Christian according to a conjecture.¹⁹ Thus Jessica would be half-blooded by 16th century standards and beliefs. Shylock has a double feeling of abandonment: first, his wife's death; then, his daughter's escape. In addition, Shylock's daughter takes Leah's ring with her. This ring was the only living memory of Shylock's wife. It had a precious value which could be either sentimental or economic in Shylock's mind. Shylock feels very disappointed about Jessica: she has deprived him of this good memory of Leah.

Shylock and Jessica's relationship could be seen in terms of an authoritarian father's figure. Shylock considers Jessica entirely as his creation. Lorenzo, Jessica's future husband, confirms:

That she is issue to a faithless Jew (*Merchant*: II.iv.37).

Shylock cannot tolerate this humiliation of losing whatever he loves: "[h]e feels injured by Jessica's desertion" (Moody 30). In this context, what makes Shylock's lamentation grotesque is his association of his daughter with his ducats:

My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! My ducats are turned Christian!
(*Merchant*: II.viii.13–14).

The association of the two, rather than making his misery acceptable to human understanding, ridicules it. Moreover, Shylock's performance of the grotesque is further developed when he says:

I would that my daughter were dead at my foot,
And the jewels in her ear! (*Merchant*: III.i.81–82).

Shylock's wish of having his daughter dead in order to "recover his wealth makes a shocking mockery [of his being] attached grotesquely to an unworthy object" (Moody 30), rather than feeling his love and affection only for her as he claimed. Then, it is not surprising that Shylock is deprived of his daughter's love if it is considered how his love for her is distorted, and because of that it is denied to him.

¹⁹ Clinton Craig, "'Of Hagar's Offspring': Leah's possible Christianity in *The Merchant of Venice*". *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews*. 31.4. (2018): 218-222. Web. 20 May 2019. <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0895769X.2018.1433015?scroll=top&needAccess=true&journalCode=vanq20>>

2.2 The Reason of a 'Pound of Flesh' between Shylock and Antonio and the Blood's Function in Their Relationship

Revenge is the only action Shylock wants to wield on a Christian. He does not accept any compromises either based on money reward or on his clemency through the Duke's mediation. It is enlightening to understand the reason why Shylock wants his revenge through a 'pound of flesh'. What does a 'pound of flesh' represent in the context of Antonio and Shylock's bond? It is evident that Shylock, through a pound of Antonio's flesh, wants to kill him, so that his revenge will be fulfilled. But why does their bond say just a 'pound of flesh'? A 'pound of flesh' in their bond is a specific part of the body which might correspond to the heart as the most vital part of the body in the Shakespearian time, and because of that would have a special value in Shylock's revenge. The heart "was the seat of affections and emotions — joy, anger, hope, fear etc. — and the source of the soul's uneasiness"²⁰. Shylock is "desperately and insanely seeking to act out upon Antonio a precise image of the hurt he has himself suffered" (Moody 31). Shylock wants to deprive Antonio, by extracting his heart, of his emotions and feelings, and by extension that of other Christians. In the same way he was deprived of his daughter, left alone with his emotions and feelings, and excluded from the Venetian society and also not considered as a peer by the Christians.

Another question may be asked to understand the blood's function in Shylock and Antonio's relationship: what does blood mean for Shylock? It seems that Shylock can easily achieve his revenge: nothing and no one can stop him from having 'justice':

I'll have my bond [...] (*Merchant*: III.iii.5);

and then

The duke shall grant me justice [...] (III.iii.9).

Shylock unequivocally wants the blood of a Christian as a result of his 'bond' and for 'justice': blood means for him to reduce the difference with Christians, and extracting Antonio's heart is a way to reach his goal. As we have already seen, Shylock hates the Christians because of having been treated badly. He says:

You called me 'dog' [...] (III.iii.7);

and

[...] since I am a dog, beware my fangs (III.iii.8).

²⁰ Elizabethan Beliefs. Web 28 Aug. 2019 <https://digilander.libero.it/mgtund/elizabethan_beliefs.htm#Elizabethan%20Medical%20Beliefs>

Shylock, because of being considered an outsider and treated like a ‘dog’, with the action of extracting the ‘pound of flesh’, feels he would attain his revenge with Christians. This would be the only way for him to obtain justice against Christians, if he considers that his daughter is taken away from him to marry a Christian. Moreover, Shylock, as a Jew, may have other reasons for having the Christian’s blood: he wants to compensate for the act of violation that had been perpetrated on his own ‘flesh’ with loss of blood because of the circumcision²¹. Another reason may be that blood would facilitate Shylock to change from a choleric personality type into a sanguine personality type²². He unconsciously refuses the way he acts and behaves, but he assumes that only blood may allow him to change his personality type. According to the theory of the four humours, dating back to ancient Greece²³, but was also accepted in Shakespeare’s time:

the body’s four humours [...] were believed to control [...] personality; [...] the body was seen more or less as a shell containing four different humours, or fluids — blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile. [Moreover,] [i]f blood dominates, [...] a sanguine temperament [prevails]; yellow bile makes [someone] choleric; black bile melancholic; and phlegm leads [...] to being phlegmatic (Ekström)²⁴.

Shylock believes that his vengeful and choleric behaviour is the result of yellow bile excess, and he is also convinced that his deficiency of blood, and the fact that it “is separated in the body and not mixed with others” (Mann 262), makes him feel in pain and distress, and in disproportion and imbalance with the Christians.

2.3 The Shaping of Irony in Shylock and Antonio

Shylock tries to change his bodily fluid through his vengeful action in the play. He is resolved to compensate the disproportion of blood he has with the Christians because of the circumcision which might have him caused distress. This would help him change his temperamental personality from choleric into sanguine, and would consequently allow him to be similar to the Christians. Moreover, Shylock wants to be equal to the Christians, by pretending the same moral status of Christians, and by

²¹ “This is My covenant [...] between Me and you and [...] every male among you shall be circumcised [...] and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.” in the *Hebrew Bible* (Genesis 17:10–14) <<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+17%3A10-14&version=NIV>>

²² “Choleric individuals [...] [i]n Greek, Medieval and Renaissance thought, [...] were [...] violent, vengeful, and short-tempered.” while “Sanguine personality type is described primarily as being highly talkative, enthusiastic, active, and social.” in <<http://www.thetransformedsoul.com/additional-studies/miscellaneous-studies/the-four-human-temperaments>>

²³ “The Human body contains blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile. These are the things that make up its constitution and cause its pains and health. Health is primarily that state in which these constituent substances are in the correct proportion to each other, both in strength and quantity, and are well mixed. Pain occurs when one of the substances presents either a deficiency or an excess, or is separated in the body and not mixed with others.” W.N. Mann (1983). G.E.R. Lloyd (ed.). *Hippocratic writings*. Translated by J Chadwick. Harmondsworth: Penguin. p. 262.

²⁴Nelly Ekström. “Shakespeare and the four humours”. 2016. <<https://wellcomecollection.org/articles/W-MM-xUAAAinxgs3>>

Demanding justice (*Merchant*: III.ii.222)

likewise when

a Jew wrongs a Christian (III.i.61).

Thus, he refuses two sorts of justice and two different standards of value. Shylock's attempt at moving forward from a bodily fluid into another (from yellow bile into blood), from a temperamental type into another (from choleric into sanguine), and of being like a Christian with an equal moral status, an identical justice, and the same standards of value, shapes the irony in *The Merchant of Venice*.

The shaping of irony in Shylock moves to another question: does he really think of not shedding Antonio's blood while extracting his heart? Shylock cannot:

[...] shed

One drop of Christian blood (IV.i.307–308),

and Portia's clever piece of legal hairsplitting reminds him of this fact:

Tarry a little; there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh.'
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice (IV.i.303–310).

This makes the difference: he cannot be his opposite; he cannot be like a Christian. He will still be unaccepted and refused by the Christians. Shylock wanted to overcome the borders which separate a Jew from a Christian through their different standards of value, but he is outwitted by Portia, who represents the Christians and performs her role with a mask as a lawyer. Portia's performance can be seen not only as a substitution of Antonio in terms of gender roles, and in terms of power and riches, but also as a substitution of a real lawyer in terms of a professional role.

Portia's performance of being her opposite, as a male rather than a female, in addition, as a powerful, rich and professional man, reconnects with a series of opposites which reside all over the play and enable the two main characters, Shylock and Antonio, to unwillingly change their destiny. Thus Shylock and Antonio's opposite destiny, and how it changes in the play, puts on evidence a list of opposite terms, which are referred first to Shylock and then to Antonio. The binary opposition of this sequence of terms highlights how the Jew can be considered evil, inhuman, and 'wrong' for his

thirst of revenge; and also how the Christians, taking revenge on him, depriving him of all his properties, and of his faith, are likewise 'wrong', inhuman, evil. Then, the opposition, between the tragic in the way of acting about the 'pound of flesh' and the comic in the way of not shedding a drop of blood, is the essence of the play itself, which is neither a tragedy nor a comedy. Another opposition consists of head and heart, where head is once related to Shylock for his rationale and his 'gravity', and once to Portia for her clever legal hairsplitting, while heart is related to Antonio for his 'pound of flesh' and his 'levity' and to Shylock for having his heart brought into Christianity. The resolution of all the opposites in this binary opposition and the constant change in Shylock's status shape the irony in *The Merchant of Venice*. Irony is the conclusion of all these opposites. Shylock lives his distress because he does not accept his destiny: first, he refuses money back for the 'bond' he had with Antonio; secondly, he wants his revenge on a Christian with a 'pound of flesh'; thirdly, he refuses that his daughter marries a Christian. Then, all these facts revolve against him: he does not receive money back; he does not obtain any revenge; he suffers his daughter's loss. In addition, he is dispossessed of his wealth, he is constrained to renounce his faith, and he is humiliated as a man. Shylock's life is the perfect example of a man unhappy with his life, of what he possesses, of what he can manage to do, of people around him; and finally, when he realizes he will lose everything.

Chapter Three

3. The World of the Tiny Lilliputians and the Huge Brobdingnagians as a Satirical Expression of Mankind in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*

Gulliver's Travels appears to be a travel log with the purpose of chronicling the adventures of a man, Lemuel Gulliver, on the four most incredible and imaginable voyages in the world. *Gulliver's Travels* is not generally written with the intention of bringing about social change, but it has the primary goal of entertaining readers and offering them useful insights into their own behaviour. Swift wrote *Gulliver's Travels* in order to give his readers through a moral lens a new vision of the game of politics and of the human social follies. It was an indictment for politicians, scientists, philosophers, and Englishmen in general. Swift was roasting people, and they were eager for the banquet. In this way, Swift presents his commentary on the human condition through *Gulliver's Travels*. He believed that man is a mixture of sense and nonsense. Swift was certainly not one of the optimists typical of his century.

Gulliver is taken on four adventures in order to convey through them a satirical expression of mankind. He is driven by fate, a restless spirit, and the pen of Swift. Gulliver is constantly surprised at the weirdness of the worlds and people he has visited. He finds a lot of differences and similarities between these worlds and his homeland. Gulliver's understanding of human nature steadily changes after his four voyages around the world. He realizes how people are generally ridiculous, petty, greedy and proud.

In the first book of *Gulliver's Travels*, Gulliver becomes increasingly blindfolded about appearance and reality in the world of Lilliputians. Gulliver's point of view is contingent upon his physical and social circumstances. When he looks at these tiny people's circumstances, he understands a lot about their, and his, point of view. However, he realizes that the tiny Lilliputians and their politicians are as much morally despicable as the European politicians and parties. In the second book of *Gulliver's Travels* in the world of Brobdingnagians, Gulliver relates not only an abundant story about perspective but he also does it with potential morals. There is a sort of perfect symmetry in *Gulliver's Travels*. The protagonist goes from being a giant among Lilliputians to being a tiny person among Brobdingnagians. Gulliver's second journey to the Land of Brobdingnag is another strong lesson in relativism: Brobdingnagians appear infinitely huge at Gulliver's eyes. Thus, beauty is a matter of perspective: littleness and distance help magnify the idea of beauty. Gulliver appears handsome at the Lilliputians' eyes because of distance, but he is unpleasant to them because of closeness. Brobdingnagian women's largeness makes the difference between beauty and ugliness, likewise Gulliver's face seen by the Lilliputians through a close eye

underlines all his imperfections. However, the littleness of the Lilliputians is inversely proportional to the largeness of the Brobdingnagians in terms of vice and virtue. In the first two books, Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians' physical size reflects their moral stature: the tiny Lilliputians appear beautiful at Gulliver's eyes but they are disagreeable and contemptible in their behaviour; the huge Brobdingnagians appear ugly in his eyes but they are high in dignity and virtue. Gulliver reflects that identity itself is completely dependent on perspective, and that truth is also created by perspective. Moreover, Gulliver's reentry after Lilliput and Brobdingnag to human society connects the themes of perspective and truth and shows how flexible a person's sense of truth is. Thus, the novel ultimately suggests that one's perspective on reality is even more powerful than reality itself.

In *Gulliver's Travels*, there are examples of Horatian²⁵ and Menippean²⁶ satire targeting people's stupidity and vices. In addition, there are also examples of Juvenalian²⁷ satire which is harsher than Horatian satire. Swift satirizes the conditions of Europe by downplaying the significance of the Lilliputians' ridiculous and 'tiny' arguments. He shows the absurdity in the European traditions by seeing the absurdity of the Lilliputians' ones. If satire in Lilliput is the result of nonsensical, ridiculous, 'tiny' arguments, in Brobdingnag it is the result of a more specific attack on the political machine and on the particular custom of human condition. Swift presents a virtue and then turns it into a vice through Gulliver's words. Swift manages to voice an attack against the English state and society through the Brobdingnagian king's mouth. What seems to be of little esteem to humans is simply practical to the Brobdingnagians because they have no concept of abstractions. The status of humans is not idyllic in *Gulliver's Travels*; in addition to the inculpatations because of man's physical size, Swift sees above all many flaws in man's moral stature.

Swift's life was a continual disappointment and complaint. Thus, he was using satire as a medium of defence against his enemies, and against mankind for over a quarter of a century. Exaggeration is only one facet of Swift's satiric method in the first two books. The other literary devices used are understatement and juxtaposition in relation to Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians' size, actions, and physical appearance seen through a miniaturizing or magnifying lens. However, other weapons of satire are parody and mock seriousness: parody of the popular travel narrative and mock seriousness of the English customs and politics at Swift's time²⁸.

²⁵ TCKpublishing.com. "Types of Satire: Definitions and Examples from Literature." Web. 28 Febr. 2020. <<https://www.tckpublishing.com/types-of-satire/>>

²⁶ The Victorian Web. "Menippean Satire as an Ancient and Modern Literary Genre." Andrzej Dinijeko. 2016. Web. 28 Febr. 2020. <<http://www.victorianweb.org/genre/menippean.html>>

²⁷ Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Juvenalian satire." Web. 26 Aug. 2019. <<https://www.britannica.com/art/Juvenalian-satire>>

²⁸ Encyclopaedia Britannica. Patricia Bauer, Vybarr Cregan-Reid. *Gulliver's Travels*. Web. 22 Mar. 2020. <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jonathan-Swift/Withdrawal-to-Ireland>>

3.1 Relativism in the World of the Tiny Lilliputians

In his first adventure, Gulliver begins on a ship that runs aground on a submerged rock into the open sea far from the coast of Sumatra²⁹. After swimming to land, Gulliver finds himself a giant among six inch tall beings: “Lilliputians are one-twelfth the size of humans” (Turner 289)³⁰. However, Gulliver is surprised “at the intrepidity of these diminutive mortals, who durst venture to mount and walk upon [his] body” (*Gulliver* 20), and also astonished that he “was not able to stir” (17) while lying on his back because his

Arms and Legs were strongly fastened on each Side to the Ground; and [his] Hair, [...] long and thick, tied down in the same Manner [and he] felt several slender Ligatures across [his] Body, from [...] Armpits to [...] Thighs (17).

It is awesome and ironic “the simultaneous recreation of Gulliver as giant and prisoner” (Reilly 167). In a contract for his freedom, Gulliver agrees with the Lilliputians to protect them from the people of Blefuscu which is another island not far from Lilliput. The articles that Gulliver signs to obtain his freedom and the method he must swear to the articles are particularly absurd and complicated: “he must hold his right foot in his left hand and place the middle finger of his right hand on top of his head with the right thumb on the tip of his ear.”³¹ Then, it is curious how people are selected for public office in Lilliput which depends upon the dexterity in rope dancing, the best of “Rope-Dancers” (*Gulliver* 33) receive the higher office. Moreover, Gulliver is surprised of a dispute about the breaking of eggs on the big end and on the small end which provokes a war between “the two great Empires of *Lilliput* and *Blefuscu*” lasting “for six and thirty moons past” (43). Gulliver captures Blefuscu’s naval fleet, “seizing the Enemies whole Fleet” (45), preventing an invasion but he declines to assist the emperor of Lilliput in conquering Blefuscu to “beat the Enemy to whom he intended to betray the Fleet” (186). Then, Gulliver extinguishes a fire in the royal palace by urinating on it,

the Flames [...] by [his] labouring to quench, made the Wine (50),

“the delicious wine,” he had drunk plentifully the evening before,

²⁹ Jonathan Swift. *Gulliver’s Travels*. 1726. Oxford University Press. New York. 2005. 14. (All further citations are taken from this book)

³⁰ Paul Turner. *Explanatory Notes in Gulliver’s Travels*. Oxford University Press. 1971. 289.

³¹ *Over The Footlights*. “Lilliput Land of the Little People.” 72. Web. 25 Mar. 2020. <<http://www.overthefootlights.co.uk/5.%2018th%20Century%20Novels.pdf>>

begin to operate by Urine; which [he] voided in such a Quantity, and applied so well to the proper Places, that in three Minutes the Fire was wholly extinguished; and the rest of that noble Pile [...] preserved from Destruction (50).

This episode recalls the one in Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, when Gargantua decides to give the people of Paris "some wine" so he

bitterly all-to-bepissed them, that he drowned two hundred and sixty thousand, four hundred and eighteen, besides the women and little children. Some, nevertheless, of the company escaped this piss-flood by mere speed of foot, who, when they were at the higher end of the university, sweating, coughing, spitting, and out of breath, they began to swear and curse, some in good hot earnest, and others in jest (I, xvii).

While Swift in *Gulliver's Travels* tells a story in terms of relativism over Gulliver's size in relation to the Lilliputians and in terms of satire through exaggeration because of the amount of urine, Rabelais in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* structures the grotesque with striking numbers and his "pretense at exactitude in situations where a precise count is impossible" (Bakhtin 464). Thus, Rabelais produces "a comic effect through hyperbole (the quantity of [...] wine [...]) [and the number of people] immeasurable [because of transgressing] all limits" (464). Moreover, "Rabelais's writings are [...] a satire upon learning [because] they swing [...] from parodic scholarly lists compiled at ludicrous length, to celebrations of the gargantuan guzzlings, belchings, pissings and evacuations of the giant bodies who inhabit the novel" (Dentith 79). In addition, the "exaggeration of the inappropriate to incredible and monstrous dimensions is [...] the basic nature of the grotesque; [thence], the grotesque is always satire" (Bakhtin 306). However, Swift's world "in which only the inappropriate is exaggerated is only quantitatively large, but qualitatively it is extremely poor, colorless, and far from gay" (Bakhtin 308). Thus, Swift's world seems to be "gloomy" in relation to "Rabelais' merry and rich universe" (308), and "[s]atire alone would not suffice to explain even the positive pathos of the quantitative exaggeration, not to speak of the qualitative wealth" (308). Later Gulliver falls out of the Lilliputian emperor's favour who, out of mercy, "no Mercy" (*Gulliver* 21) plans to blind and starve him. At the end, Gulliver flees to Blefuscu where he finds a normal-size boat and thus he is able to return to England:

It is not easy to express the joy I was in upon the unexpected Hope of once more seeing my beloved Country (70).

In the first book of *Gulliver's Travels* in the world of the Lilliputians, Gulliver thinks that he learns to distinguish appearance and reality, but he becomes increasingly blindfolded. He not only

wonders about the tiny size of the Lilliputians, but he is also astonished at their meanness and nastiness, vices, moral corruption, hypocrisy and deceit, jealousy and envy, filled with greed and ingratitude and, at the same time, by their

Countenance erect, [...] Body and Limbs well
proportioned, all [...] Motions graceful, and [...]
Deportment majestick (25).

Gulliver is not only surprised by the Lilliputians' littleness but also by their pettiness. Thus, the Lilliputians show their littleness and pettiness, but also their good appearance and their excellent skills at Gulliver's eyes. Gulliver realizes by visiting them how the notions of beauty, goodness, and fairness in these tiny beings are radically different from England. He is unable to see merit either in his own country's perspective or in the Lilliputians' perspectives, and he acquires fair-mindedness from immersing himself in the Lilliputians' culture and adopting their opposite point of view, which is a clear sign that he is an unreliable satirical persona. Thus, Gulliver's first journey to the Land of Lilliput is a strong and consistent demonstration of unreliability of his point of view about the Lilliputians' social and physical circumstances. He exploits the world of tiny people for his own profit by showing off Lilliputian animals for profit in England. He represents the Lilliputians like the bloody-minded and treacherous English politicians with their cruel methods to kill him. The tiny beings are associated to the vicious politicians because the politician is always a midget in *Gulliver's Travels*. Politics is seen as petty and red tape as harassing. The tiny Lilliputians and their politicians are morally despicable, but Gulliver also lies to conceal what is despicable about the European politics and parties. However, Gulliver is gullible with the Lilliputians and he is also acquisitive of learning more about them, which makes sense considering that his name, coming from Old French 'goulafre'³², means glutton.

3.2 The Power of Perspective in the World of the Huge Brobdingnagians

The second journey brings Gulliver to Brobdingnag, where his situation is reversed: now he is the midget in a land of giants; the "scale is reversed in Brobdingnag, twelve to one" (Turner 289). Gulliver observes "a huge Creature," a "Monster" (*Gulliver* 77) while approaching the land of Brobdingnag,

a great Island or Continent [...] a small Neck of Land
jutting out into the Sea (76),

³² Surname DB. "Last name: Gulliver." 2017. Web. 8 Mar. 2020. <<https://www.surnamedb.com/Surname/Gulliver>>

a peninsula, which he surmises must be in northwest America (74). The Brobdingnagians are physically huge. They are sixty feet tall³³ which means eighteen metres and twenty-eight. They are gigantic: they are twelve times bigger than men. Gulliver is caught by one of these huge creatures

between his Fore-finger and Thumb [like] a small
dangerous Animal (79)

and taken to his master, a farmer, who, after observing Gulliver bowing towards him, is convinced that Gulliver

must be a rational Creature (80).

Gulliver has lunch with the farmer's family, who delights in watching him eat tiny pieces of their huge meal. He is almost squeezed by the farmer's son and eventually saved by the farmer who he refers to as his 'master.' Then, he is disgusted by the complexion of the farmer's wife that

made [him] reflect upon [their] Size, and their Defects
[...] seen [...] through a magnifying Glass (83).

Gulliver is cared for by the Brobdingnagian farmer's daughter who is teaching him their language. After spreading news about Gulliver around the town and following the miserly neighbour's advice, the farmer decides to make money by showing Gulliver

as a Sight upon a Market-Day (87).

Then, Gulliver is sold by the farmer to the Brobdingnagian queen. He recounts his gruelling treatment under the farmer and expresses confidence that the queen will treat him better. The philosophers ordered by the Brobdingnagian king to examine Gulliver determine that he is a freak of nature. The maids of honour in the Brobdingnagian court undress and urinate,

a very nauseous Sight (95),

in front of Gulliver without a thought of modesty, and they titillate themselves with him on their naked bodies. Gulliver is disgusted,

Horror and Disgust (108),

by the magnified odours and flaws of their huge bodies, with

monstrous Breast [whose] Nipple [is] about half the
Bigness of [his] Head, and the Hue [...] and the Dug so

³³ Houghton Mifflin Harcourt - CliffNotes. "Gulliver's Travels." 2020. Web. 11 Mar. 2020. <<https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/g/gullivers-travels/character-analysis/the-brobdingnagians>>

varified with Spots, Pimples and Freckles, that nothing could appear more nauseous (82–83),

and then,

[t]here was a Woman with a Cancer in her Breast [and] a Fellow with a Wen in his Neck, larger than five Woolpacks; and another with a couple of wooden Legs, each about twenty Foot high (102).

Later Gulliver offers to teach the Brobdingnagian king about the governance of state in England. He describes the land holdings and divisions of government, and he hopes his words can do his country justice, but the king is unsatisfied with Gulliver's lessons and is disgusted by humans. He feels disbelief at Gulliver's words, and says:

My little Friend *Grildrig*; you have made a most admirable Panegyric upon your Country. You have clearly proved that Ignorance, Idleness, and Vice are the proper Ingredients for qualifying a Legislator. That Laws are best explained, interpreted, and applied by those whose Interest and Abilities lie in perverting, confounding, and eluding them (120);

and because of that the king notes that England's priests, soldiers, judges, and senators are without merit. He concludes, after Gulliver's reluctance to answer his questions, by saying that Englishmen are

the most pernicious Race of little odious Vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the Surface of the Earth (121).

Gulliver tries to find some excuses for the king's remarks. He believes that

great Allowances should be given to a King who lives wholly secluded from the rest of the World (122).

Even though Gulliver does not find the king to be correct, he should "admit that the workings of the parliamentary government is vitiated by the method of selecting peers [...] so that [...] the original idea of the institution" (Firth 10) is

blurred and blotted by corruptions (*Gulliver* 120–121).

Moreover, the king is appalled by Gulliver's abstract suggestion to make gunpowder with its immense power of destruction, considering that their military is only formed to keep peace. He is

amazed how so impotent and groveling an Insect as [Gulliver] could entertain such inhuman Ideas (123).

Thus, the king's remarks serve once more to debunk Gulliver's role of the satirist. At the end, Gulliver regrets that, despite hiding

the Frailties and Deformities of [his] Political Mother,
and plac[ing] her Virtues and Beauties in the most
advantageous Light. [That] was [his] sincere Endeavour
in those many Discourses [...] with [the] Monarch,

he

unfortunately failed of Success (122),

and because of that he is satirized by the king. The king is not fond of Gulliver at all because of having seen him first as an entertaining

piece of Clock-work (93),

and then as a sly little fellow who is not to be trusted.

In the second book of *Gulliver's Travels* in the world of the Brobdingnagians, Gulliver relates not only an abundant story about perspective but also he does it with potential morals. Gulliver considered the Lilliputians to be miniature men. Now he is considered a toy, not a man, first by the Brobdingnagian farmer, and then by the Brobdingnagian maids. There is a sort of perfect symmetry in *Gulliver's Travels*. The protagonist goes from being a giant among the Lilliputians to being a tiny person among the Brobdingnagians. Gulliver was respected in Lilliput because of his size while he is simply considered a curiosity for public amusement in Brobdingnag. However, if Gulliver exploited the Lilliputian animals for profit and the Brobdingnagian farmer exploits Gulliver to show him at the market, there is a difference with the Brobdingnagian maids: their behaviour is not out of malice; it is done for their amusement, but in doing that they abuse Gulliver — they deny his humanity and his manhood. Gulliver's second journey to the Land of Brobdingnag is another strong lesson in relativism: the Brobdingnagians appear infinitely huge in Gulliver's eyes. After seeing the horrifying Brobdingnagian breasts,

swelled to a monstrous Size, full of Holes (101),

and their skin

so coarse and uneven, so variously coloured [...] with a
Mole here and there as broad as a Trencher (108),

Gulliver reflects

upon the fair Skins of [the] English Ladies, who appear
so beautiful (83)

because of their

Size, and their Defects not to be seen but through a
magnifying Glass (83),

and he realizes

by Experiment (83)

that also their

smoothest and whitest Skins look rough and coarse, and
ill coloured (83).

The consequence of the Brobdingnagians' size is that it magnifies their imperfections: the cancers on the breasts of Brobdingnagian women, and the wen on the neck of their males appear at Gulliver's eyes unsightly in relation to the smooth skins of English ladies, but this is how the "defects" on their skin, and of Gulliver himself, appear to the Lilliputians. Gulliver recalls when he

was at Lilliput, the Complexions of those diminutive
People appeared to [him] the fairest in the World: And
[his] Face appeared much fairer and smoother [...] from
the Ground, than it did upon a nearer View [...] which
[...] was at first a very shocking Sight [with] great
Holes in [his] Skin; that the Stumps of [his] Beard were
ten Times stronger than the Bristles of a Boar; and [his]
Complexion made up of several Colours altogether
disagreeable (83).

Thus, beauty is a matter of perspective: littleness and distance help magnify the idea of beauty. The Lilliputians appear beautiful at Gulliver's eyes because of their littleness. Gulliver appears handsome at the Lilliputians' eyes because of distance, but he is unpleasant to them because of closeness. The Brobdingnagians are disgusting at Gulliver's eyes because of their largeness. Gulliver cannot help compare the beauty of the English ladies with the unpleasant appearance of the Brobdingnagian women. Their bulk makes the difference between beauty and ugliness. The Brobdingnagian women's bulk seen through a "magnifying glass" highlights all the imperfections in their bodies, likewise Gulliver's face seen by the Lilliputians through a close eye underlines all his imperfections, the English ladies' closeness stresses as well the "defects" in their skin. However, the littleness of the Lilliputians is inversely proportional to the largeness of the Brobdingnagians in terms of vice and virtue. All facts narrated in the first two books remain on a certain presumption that Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians' physical size reflects their moral stature. The tiny Lilliputians appear beautiful at Gulliver's eyes but they are disagreeable and contemptible in their behaviour: they try to kill and starve Gulliver. The huge Brobdingnagians appear ugly at his eyes but they are high in dignity and virtue: their physical height coincides with their possession of high morality. The Brobdingnagians are the epitome of moral giants. Their height reflects their moral

stature. There is goodwill and calm virtue among the Brobdingnagians. They are physically ugly but their unpleasant appearance is magnified by their moral beauty. The huge Brobdingnagians are superhuman: they are bound to humans by flesh and blood, but they are bigger morally than them. Gulliver shows all his ordinariness in comparison to the Brobdingnagians. The prince laughs at the sight of an ordinary human being like Gulliver — he observes

how contemptible a Thing was human Grandeur, which
could be mimicked by such diminutive Insects (96)

like Gulliver. Gulliver's reflection implies that identity itself is completely dependent on perspective. He realizes that a person's dignity is not inherent but depends on its being recognized by the people around him. The Brobdingnagians are fond of Gulliver but they see his dilemmas as jokes, and consider him first as a toy, and later entertaining. The king's reaction gives further evidence that plain truth does not exist, and that truth cannot be objective, but is rather the result of a subjective interpretation. Thus, truth is created by perspective. Whereas Gulliver thinks that he is exalting England and depicting a glorious account of his nation for the Brobdingnagian king, the king hears only a miserable report of England's immorality and frailty. Gulliver's attempt to tell of England's "Virtues" (122) fails. As a result of the humans' vices in the king's eyes, the Brobdingnagians' virtues are impossible to attain for them because it would take so much maturing to reach the stature of moral giants, only a few humans may achieve it. Moreover, Gulliver's reentry after Brobdingnag, as it happened with his return to human society from Lilliput, connects the themes of perspective and truth and shows how flexible a person's sense of truth is. The process of Gulliver's reentry continues to highlight the inseparability of the themes of perspective and truth. After spending two years among the Brobdingnagians, Gulliver's mind is no longer adapted to humans. Gulliver is

confounded at the sight of so many Pigmies (132),

speaking of the men who rescued him,

after having so long accustomed [his] Eyes to the
monstrous Objects [he] had left (132).

He considers humans as freaks, likewise he was considered as an anomaly by the Brobdingnagians. He is amazed by the size of humans: he finds them tiny despite his littleness in the world of the Brobdingnagians. The novel ultimately suggests that one's perspective on reality is even more powerful than reality itself.

3.3 Satire as a Result of Relativism and Perspective in the World of the Tiny Lilliputians and in the World of the Huge Brobdingnagians

Gulliver's Travels is an example of Horatian satire targeting human vices. However, in *Gulliver's Travels*, there are also examples of Menippean and Juvenalian satire which are harsher than Horatian satire. *Gulliver* is not generally written with the intention of bringing about social change. Satire in Lilliput is the result of a nonsensical, ridiculous, tiny argument, such as the one about the eggs of the Lilliputians in relation to England seen through Gulliver's eyes. This argument about the breaking of eggs on the big end and on the small end to Gulliver appears to be completely ridiculous, for he could hardly distinguish the difference in the ends of their eggs. What is absolutely irrelevant and ridiculous to Gulliver is of vital importance to the Lilliputians. There are some analogues between Lilliput to England, and Blefuscu to France fighting for many issues in their history. This tiny argument over the breaking of the eggs is an understatement of the needless bickering and fighting between the two nations. Then, the absurd practice of "rope dance" as a custom method of selecting people for public office in Lilliput is an anachronism in relation to Europe in Swift's time when no nation chose public officers on skill, but rather on how well the candidate could line the right pockets with money. Swift satirizes the conditions of Europe by downplaying the significance for the Lilliputians over the breaking of the eggs, and by demonstrating how out of touch the Lilliputians' society is over their ability in "rope dance". He shows the absurdity in the European traditions by seeing the absurdity of the Lilliputians' ones. In addition, the Lilliputians' absurd and complicated method of swearing to the articles which Gulliver must sign to obtain his freedom — "holding his right foot in his left hand and place the middle finger of his right hand on top of his head with the right thumb on the tip of his ear"³⁴ — is an exaggeration in relation to Whig politics and red tape, seen as petty and harassing. Swift satirizes an aspect of Whig politics by overstating the extent of the Lilliputians' achievements over their swearing to the articles. Moreover, the Lilliputians' custom of burying —

their Dead with their Heads directly downwards;
because they hold an Opinion, that in eleven Thousand
Moons they are all to rise again; in which Period, the
Earth (which they conceive to be flat) will turn upside
down, and by this Means they shall, at their
Resurrection, be found ready standing on their Feet
(*Gulliver* 51–52)

despite

³⁴ *Over The Footlights*. "Lilliput Land of the Little People." 72. Web. 25 Mar. 2020. <<http://www.overthefootlights.co.uk/5.%2018th%20Century%20Novels.pdf>>

[t]he Learned among them confess the Absurdity of this
Doctrine; but the Practice still continues, in Compliance
to the Vulgar (52)

— is a juxtaposition in relation to the European custom of burying their dead upwards. Swift satirizes this “practice” of burying the Lilliputian dead by highlighting the contrast with the European custom, but, if the combination of the two different practices of burying is unexpected, what makes this juxtaposition more effective is the concept of “resurrection” which equates the Lilliputians with the Europeans.

If satire in Lilliput is the result of a nonsensical, ridiculous, tiny argument, in Brobdingnag it is the result of a more specific attack on the political machine and on the particular custom of the human condition, and then it finishes with being “the most savage onslaught on humanity ever written” (Murry 3). Swift makes a hard remark, while facing Gulliver to the Brobdingnagians’ king, that mankind is

the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that
Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the
earth (*Gulliver* 121).

The king’s remark attacking mankind over Gulliver’s argument defending his homeland is an understatement. Gulliver tries to convince the king about his

Political Mother, [placing] her Virtues and Beauties in
the most advantageous Light (122),

but his attempt unfortunately fails. Gulliver’s portrait of his country appears as deceptive and foolish in the king’s eyes. Swift presents a virtue and then turns it into a vice through Gulliver’s words. Gulliver criticizes the “defective” education of the Brobdingnagians, who learn only

Morality, History, Poetry, and Mathematicks (124).

Gulliver’s critique of the Brobdingnagians’ inadequate education is an understatement of the little esteem that these subjects have among humans, but in which the Brobdingnagians excel, especially mathematics that

may be useful in Life; to the Improvement of
Agriculture and all mechanical Arts (124).

If Gulliver’s critique of the Brobdingnagians’ defective education is an understatement in relation to human subjects, likewise human laws —

interpreted, and applied by those whose Interest and
Abilities lie in perverting, confounding, and eluding
them (120)

— are an overstatement in relation to the Brobdingnagians' laws whose principles

are expressed in the most plain and simple Terms,
wherein those People are not Mercurial enough to
discover above one Interpretation (125).

What seems to be of little esteem to humans is simply practical to the Brobdingnagians because they have no concept of abstractions like writing

a Comment upon any Law (125),

which would be considered

a capital Crime (125).

Their laws are brief, blunt, and interpreted by everyone in the same way. Moving on to consider morality, Gulliver's diversion over "a little old Treatise" dealing with "Morality" in relation to

the Weakness of Human kind (125)

is a juxtaposition between the high morality and strength of the huge Brobdingnagians and the

diminutive, contemptible, and helpless [...] Man in his
own Nature [...] unable to defend himself from the
Inclemencies of the Air, or the Fury of wild Beasts [...] excelled by one Creature in Strength, by another in
Speed, by a third in Foresight, by a fourth in Industry
[...] that Nature [...] could now produce only small
abortive Births in Comparison of those in ancient Times
[...] that the Species of Men were originally much
larger, but also that there must have been Giants in
former Ages (126).

This juxtaposition is not only based on the size of humans and Brobdingnagians and on man's weakness in relation to the Brobdingnagians' strength but also on the chronological consideration of present and past when men were supposed to be huge too. Thus, humans' littleness and Brobdingnagians' largeness juxtaposed to men's weakness and Brobdingnagians' strength convey not only men's incapability of defending themselves but also man's impossibility of attaining the Brobdingnagians' high moral stature

in Comparison of those in ancient Times
[...] as it is asserted by History and Tradition

when man exceeded

the common dwindled Race of Man in our Days
[and] the very Laws of Nature absolutely required

that man

should have been made in the Beginning, of a Size more
large and robust, not so liable to Destruction from every
little Accident of a Tile falling from an House, or a
Stone cast from the Hand of a Boy, or of being drowned
in a little Brook (126).

All this illustrates the precariousness of human life which was very well depicted by Juvenal in his
third *Satire*³⁵ about ‘The Evils of the Big City’

And now let’s consider all the other varied dangers, at night:
What a long way it is for a tile from the highest roof to fall
On your head; how often a cracked and leaky pot plunges down
From a sill; what a crash when they strike the pavement, chipping
And cracking the stones. If you go out to dinner without making
A will, you’re thought of as simply careless, dismissive of those
Tragic events that occur: there are as many opportunities to die,
As there are open windows watching you, when you go by, at night.
(*Satires*, iii. 268–275)

Nothing is more meaningful than Juvenalian harsh satire to describe man’s feebleness and
vulnerability in which tragic and comic coexist and enhance the distance between humans and
Brobdingnagians. This distance is emphasized in Swift and Juvenal with “a Tile falling” (*Gulliver’s
Travels* 126) and “a tile [...] to fall” (*Satires*, iii. 269). The dimension of this “fall” not only shows
that man is unable to survive the

Laws of Nature (*Gulliver* 126)

and

every little Accident (126),

and that he has so

many opportunities to die (*Satires*, iii. 274),

but he is also unable to assimilate all the

Lectures in Morality (*Gulliver* 126)

like Gulliver during his stay in the land of the Brobdingnagians. The status of humans is not idyllic
in *Gulliver’s Travels*: in addition to the inculcations because of man’s physical size, Swift sees
above all many flaws in man’s moral stature. Special emphasis is given to man’s physical size

³⁵ Poetry in Translation. Juvenal. *The Satires*. “Satire III.” AD 100—112. Trans. A. S. Kline. 2001. Web. 20 Mar. 2020. <<https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/JuvenalSatires3.php>>

through the choice of Gulliver's name, *Grildrig*³⁶ — a translation of manikin, little man or dwarf — from the farmer's daughter, likewise to man's moral stature through Gulliver's

inhuman Ideas (123)

of suggesting to the king to make gunpowder with its enormous power of destruction. Moreover, Gulliver's disgust at the view of the Brobdingnagian maids' "monstrous Breast" (82) with their nipples as big as half of Gulliver's head, of the farmer's wife's skin flaws, and of a man's huge "wen" in his neck, is an exaggeration in relation to the English ladies' beauty, if it is considered that proportionally Gulliver's and the English ladies' skin imperfections appear equally unpleasant in the Lilliputians' eyes, likewise Gulliver's praise of the governance in England to the Brobdingnagian king is an exaggeration in relation to the king's reaction saying that Englishmen, and with them mankind, are

the most pernicious Race [...] upon the Surface of the Earth (121).

Gulliver's praise over England's virtue is turned into the king's disgust over the Englishmen, and humans' vice. However, exaggeration is only one facet of Swift's satiric method. Swift draws "our attention repeatedly to this idea of steady human degeneration and the natural depravity of human nature" (Lee 119). The author of *Gulliver's Travels* seems to widely suggest that "man must realize that he is degenerate in order to strive for moral regeneration" (119). Gulliver and the reader are aware of Swift's understanding of human nature and his negative view of it.

³⁶ Houghton Mifflin Harcourt - CliffNotes. "Gulliver's Travels." 2020. Web. 21 Mar. 2020. <<https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/g/gullivers-travels/study-help/full-glossary-for-gullivers-travels>>

Chapter Four

4. Gothic and Humour in *Dracula* Bram Stoker's Novel and in Francis Ford Coppola's Film

In the second half of the 18th century when the Western civilization was concerned with the principles of the Enlightenment, and reason and science were the keystone of the modern thought, the human mind required a replacement to the known world of the time, and had the necessity to go beyond the geographical borders of the world already explored. Thus, writers needed to escape from the strict realism of the modern novel in order to embrace the fanciful elements of the medieval romance, such as horror and death known as Gothic³⁷. The first definition of “Gothic Story”³⁸ was first given by Horace Walpole in the second edition of his 1764 novel *The Castle of Otranto*. In addition, these elements needed to be tied by an aesthetic to “sav[e] the best tales from becoming mere anecdote or incoherent sensationalism” (Bloom 8). Thus, an emotional aesthetic for a Gothic novel came to light through Edmund Burke's work — *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757) — which “codif[ied] the gothic emotional experience”³⁹ with his thoughts on the sublime, terror, and obscurity. The sublime was identified with the “strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling” (Burke 45). As a result, the sublime was most often evoked by terror, “an apprehension of pain or death” (74) which “fill[s] the mind with strong emotions of horror” (44). Moreover, terror was caused by obscurity which is necessary in order to experience the terror of the unknown, otherwise “the apprehension vanishes” (76). Burke's descriptive vocabulary was essential either to the Gothic works or to the Romantic ones. Thus, Gothic with its dose of emotion and terror serves as an extension of the Romantic literary movement and puts emphasis on extreme stories which take place in the medieval history of Europe. Gothic was further developed by many English writers between the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century in prose by Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817) Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* (1843) and further examples can be found in poetry such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798) and Lord Byron's *Don Juan* (1819).

³⁷ Online Etymology Dictionary. “Gothic: literary style that used northern European medieval settings to suggest horror and mystery.” Web. 31 Mar. 2020. <<https://www.etymonline.com/word/gothic>>

³⁸ Wikipedia. “A Gothic Story.” Horace Walpole. Web. 31 Mar. 2020. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gothic_fiction>

³⁹ Spooky Scary Skeletons Literary and Horror Society. “Early and Pre-Gothic Literary Conventions & Examples.” Edmund Burke. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*. 1757. Web. 2 Apr. 2020. <<http://www.spookyscarysociety.com/2015/10/31/october-2015-literary-meeting-early-and-pre-gothic-literary-conventions-examples/>>

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) is a typical Gothic novel, despite having been published several decades after other famous Gothic novels. The novel can be considered Gothic mainly because of containing such elements as old castles, sweeping views of nature, interactions with a horrible monster, but also because it contains considerations about science, superstition—with legends of the Carpathian mountains and Transylvania as the 'locus classicus'⁴⁰ of the Gothic, and reinterpretations of the Eastern European myths about vampires. Although the novel is influenced by Victorian ideas about morality, it draws on the Gothic and melodramatic traditions. Moreover, *Dracula* is a Gothic novel where the mysterious imagination provides the readers with a sense of wonder and terror, and the suspension of disbelief. In this scenario the readers are required to accept the idea that there might be something "beyond that which is immediately in front of us"⁴¹. Thus, all the melodramatic elements are played straight in this Gothic novel in order to convey a self-serious manner. However, in *Dracula*, this self-serious manner of narrating the story with the dreadful and decaying setting, the night journeys, the elements of fear, the predatory villain, the evil characters, the ruffians, the virginal maiden, the hero, is often parodied with excesses, stereotypes, and frequent absurdities either in the novel or in the numerous films based on *Dracula*. Searching for these Gothic self-serious elements and their transformation into parody either in Bram Stoker's novel or in Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 film based on *Dracula* is the aim of this chapter on Gothic and humour.

4.1 Function of Blood and Bats in Bram Stoker's Novel

One of the foremost symbols and the most impressive image in the novel is that of blood. Dracula must feed on the blood of the living to survive. Blood is his life-power which enables him to live for long periods of time. Dracula drew blood from Lucy Westenra, a nineteen-year-old aristocrat, whose moral weakness allows him to prey repeatedly upon her during the night. Dracula drew blood from Mina, Jonathan Harker's fiancé. He also attempted to draw blood from Harker, a solicitor sent to do business with him. The three seductive female vampires, the "weird sisters" (*Dracula*⁴² 58), who resided with Count Dracula in his castle in Transylvania, referred to as *The Brides of Dracula*⁴³, wished to drink from Harker's blood as well. Blood also matches with Dracula's "remarkable ruddiness" (*Dracula* 21) in his lips. Dracula's stealing of women's blood at

⁴⁰ Merriam-Webster. Definition of 'locus classicus': "a passage that has become a standard for the elucidation of a word or subject." Web. 22 Apr. 2020. <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/locus%20classicus>>

⁴¹ British Library. "Terror and Wonder in the Gothic Imagination." Retr. 26 Mar. 2016. <<http://www.bl.uk/events/terror-and-wonder--the-go-thic-imagination>>

⁴² Bram Stoker. *Dracula*. 1897. Collins Classics. London. 2011. Print. (All further citations are taken from this book)

⁴³ *The Brides of Dracula*. Directed by Terence Fisher. UK: Hammer Film Productions, 1960.

night is a thinly veiled indicator of his desire to “take [women’s] soul[s]” (398) in a manner not unlike sexual assault, as they are considered so “[u]nclean [that e]ven the Almighty shuns [their] polluted flesh” (358). In addition, Renfield’s desire like Dracula’s desire of feeding on living animals is associated with bats because of their desire of blood, and of living things. Thus, Dracula’s parasitic need to live off others is shared by the bat, and his drawing of blood has in the bat his primary bestial representation. The bat is also nocturnal, and Dracula’s acting like a bat allows him to fly and have access to places which he might not otherwise be able to reach. Morris attempts to shoot a bat he sees flying at the insane asylum. At the end of the novel, when Dracula is killed and the world is free of his spirit, bats lose their power and return to the wild.

4.2 The Concept of the New Woman in the Novel

Stoker had aligned Count Dracula with everything which was regarded as morally corrupting, criminal and perverse by the respectable late-Victorian society. However, it seems that Stoker used the character of Lucy to attack the concept of the new woman in the late-Victorian society. The new woman was seen either as a mannish intellectual or an over-sexed vamp. Thus, the beautiful Lucy Westenra was dangerously modern in her ways. She was portrayed racily forward in her desires. For example, she regrets that she has to turn down two of the three marriage proposals she receives on the same day:

“Why can’t they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble?” (*Dracula* 70).

Lucy is

smitten with the romantic notion of being pursued, proposed to, and betrothed. Her lack of firm ego boundaries leads to sleepwalking (in which she crosses of bedroom, house, and neighborhood) and to nightmares (in which Dracula dissolves the boundaries of her psyche) (Brennan 53).

The blood transfusions from the three suitors symbolize Lucy’s desire for three husbands. However, Lucy’s free-spirit does not help her survive Dracula attacks. Lucy is “like an unclasped window inviting forced entry, an open coffin awaiting possession” (53). Dracula steals “her soul and turns her into a female version of himself, an extension of his dark sexual power” (53). Dracula’s

attacks result in [Lucy’s] psychic disintegration in which the unconscious part of [her] mind begins to overwhelm [her] consciousness (48).

Dracula embodies Lucy’s nightmares. Lucy’s “psyche decenters the Self and ultimately self-disintegrates (49). Unlike Mina and Harker, who

integrate their split-off dream selves [...] into consciousness and proceed successfully toward individuation, [Lucy] lacks a sense of Self that can incorporate the unconscious (49).

Thus, “her vulnerability to Dracula’s invasions into her unconscious destroys it” (52), and as a result of that, Lucy becomes a vampire and feeds upon defenceless children in a parodic distortion of the Victorian ideal of maternal femininity. The act of vampirism itself, with the idea of tainted blood, suggests the fear of physical and moral decay that was believed to be afflicting society. At the end, Lucy’s decline from the Victorian feminine ideal to the perceived selfish unnaturalness of the new woman is complete.

4.3 The In-between State of Undeadness in the Novel

The in-between state of undeadness is one of the most important themes in the novel. It is that state between life and death, and it occurs

for all that die from the preying of the Un-Dead [who]
become themselves Un-Dead (*Dracula* 258).

Thus, the in-between state is a kind of undeadness in the novel. The word ‘between’ recurs several times in the novel to emphasize this state of uncertainty. In addition, “[t]he paratactic dislocation of the syntax, the semantic bafflement created by the juxtaposition of the ‘between’ [...] and the metonymic (and desperate) claim of the nothingness, all contribute to conveying the speaking dead’s Gothic otherness” (Gutleben 308). Here is a list of quotations where the juxtaposition of the ‘between’ throughout the novel conveys this “Gothic otherness”:

[t]he dilemma had [Van Helsing] between [Dracula’s]
horns (*Dracula* 444);
between dawn and sunset (422);
between this and Kingdom Come (71);
between them his little golden crucifix (255);
gleams of moonlight between the rents of the heavy
clouds (250);
waters between us [...] not want to pass (378);
none of that unity of purpose between the parts of the
body which marks even lethargic sanity (332);
between sleeping and waking (184);
all that makes the difference between God and man
(359);
in his form of man between the hours of noon and
sunset (291);
crossing the country between the river and the
Carpathians (429);
[b]etween the inner hand and the wood was a crucifix
(96);

the passing gleams of the moonlight between the
scudding clouds crossing and passing—like the gladness
and sorrow of a man's life (252);
stand between you and death (351).

Lucy's state is an in-between state of undeadness, too. Lucy is confined to a tomb

after death [...] when she is the dead Un-Dead (248),

and her soul is only set free with "her real death" (276) when Arthur drives a stake through her heart. However, undeadness does not have anything to see with the resurrection. The in-between state of undeadness shows the soul which cannot abide God in heaven trapped in the body feasting on the blood of the living. At the end, the novel suggests that undeadness must be eliminated in order to allow the souls to rise to heaven. Thus, Mina rejoices only when the evil Dracula has his soul released from his terrible body and is saved.

4.4 Sanity Versus Insanity and Science Versus Superstition in *Dracula*

Themes, such as those of sanity and insanity are to be found throughout the novel, whose only remedy seems to be that of confinement. Every character in the group questions his or her wellness or sanity at some point. On the one hand, Jonathan Harker is confined within Dracula's castle as a prisoner and believes he is going insane after having visions of Dracula. He feels the Count's hand on his shoulder while "he was beginning to shave" (30), though the mirror he holds shows only his own reflections — "a symbol that the Count is indeed a part of Jonathan's own identity, though one he likes to hide from consciousness" (Brennan 57). In this case, "Jonathan's shadow is so deeply repressed that he is slow to admit what his consciousness is telling him" (57). In addition, Jonathan's unacknowledged fear is connected to Neumann's uroboric incest⁴⁴ because of the ghastly three sisters who incite in him "a wicked, burning desire (*Dracula* 44) and "a languorous ecstasy" (45) that "threaten to seduce his ego into a self-destructive regression" (Brennan 57). The three vampire women represent Jonathan's sexual desires repressed and hidden from Mina, "thus inhibiting his sexual fulfillment and broadening of consciousness to embrace his feminine side" (57). Moreover, Jonathan's desires grow so strong that before lapsing into a coma-like "brain fever" (*Dracula* 119), he is at the mercy "of these monsters" (63), whom he will not call "women" because "Mina is a woman" (63), "though not one with their sexual power" (Brennan 57). Jonathan's psyche has produced "monsters" because of the ghastly three sisters. Harker's swoon upon staying at Dracula's castle nearly kills him. When Harker escapes, he is treated for a nervous

⁴⁴ ARAS — *The Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism*. Neumann's definition of 'uroboric incest' "a form of entry into the mother, of union with her [...] the emphasis upon pleasure and love is in no sense active, it is more a desire to be dissolved and absorbed [...]" The Great Mother takes the little child back into herself." 2019. Web. 19 Apr. 2020. <<https://aras.org/concordance/content/uroboric-incest>>

illness. He needs many months regaining his full health, even more after finding that Mina has been afflicted by Dracula's bite. On the other hand, "Mina's undeveloped [...] sexuality makes her vulnerable to animus-possession [which] opens the gap in her psyche that Dracula [...] penetrates" (55). At this point, Mina feels Dracula like "a poison in [her] blood" (*Dracula* 398) that puts her "soul at stake" (335). Thus, she "remains a proper-enough Victorian lady that Dracula can invade her psyche" (Brennan 55). In addition, there is a sort of "psychic decentering that renders her vulnerable to self-destruction" (55). Mina carries symptoms, such as "devouring anxiety" (*Dracula* 309) and nightmares. She feels her "animus-possession" before losing her consciousness, and says — "sleep begins to flirt with me" (313) — which is "a blatant link of Dracula with sex" (Brennan 55). However,

unlike Lucy who is unable to heed the warnings of her Gothic nightmares that her psyche needs balancing, Mina and Jonathan recover from their psychic wounds. And by integrating into consciousness the split-off selves of their dreams [...] Mina and Jonathan proceed successfully toward psychic unity (58).

All the characters in the novel, through their socially aberrant behaviour, show different aspects of illness and madness which require, according to late Victorian cultural attitudes, their confinement. Dracula himself is confined and destroyed in Transylvania by Van Helsing, Morris and the others.

Throughout the novel there is a sense that Dracula represents an inexplicable, alien force, with his ability to pass through keyholes like a mist and his affinity with bats, rats and wolves, which science on its own cannot defeat. *Dracula* suggests that modernity and science may have their limits. These limits may have been reached facing the supernatural figure of the Count. The intangible concepts of religious faith and the supernatural are set against this atmosphere of scientific advance. However, Dracula is not only a devil walking the earth or a mythical monster in Romanian legends, he is a social virus that Victorians wanted to destroy. In the novel, superstition and occult practices are interwoven with Christian beliefs. The group's efforts to fight Dracula draw on these superstitions, designed to ward off the evil eye and vampires with garlic, the wooden stake, and decapitation, which come from Transylvania and date back to the Middle Ages. Van Helsing, the universal man of learning, unifies the Christian and occult attitudes to the rational and scientific frame of mind. All his knowledge of superstitious practices from central Europe, and medicine and biology is brought to bear in the capture of Dracula.

4.5 Parody of Metempsychosis in *Dracula* through Blood in Francis Ford Coppola's Film

The self-serious manner of narrating the story with dreadful and decaying settings, night journeys, elements of fear, evil characters, ruffians, plus the predatory villain, the virginal maiden, and the

hero, is often parodied with excesses, stereotypes, and frequent absurdities, in *Dracula*, either in Bram Stoker's novel or in Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 film. Francis Ford Coppola's *Dracula* film is the most popular among the many of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* cinematic adaptations, although with various changes to the plot. In this production, Count Dracula (Gary Oldman) is a more complex character equipped with a melancholic back story of a romantic nature, combined with the usual demonic features. The viewer becomes a witness to the dramatic circumstances of the tragic suicidal death of his beloved wife, which resulted in the Count's profound despair followed by his renouncement of God and subsequent transformation from a human to a demon. Throughout the film *Dracula* displays a mixture of human and vampire instincts, feelings and actions, which in turn makes him a complex and morally ambiguous character, escaping easy and straightforward assessment. Nevertheless, *Dracula* remains a terrifying vampire and a supernatural, unearthly and demonic figure which evokes fear and awe. The viewer is transferred into the fictional land of the undead, the supernatural and the uncanny with all the awareness of the awaiting dread and horror that the genre promises. At first glance, the connection between Gothic horror and humour can be perplexing. However, "humour and Gothic do not exclude each other but can be complementary" (Gutleben 308) because humour encourages critical reflection "by creating a critical distance from its target. The monster, even the humorous monster [...] produces an effect of destabilisation (314). Moreover, the association of humour and Gothic increases textual indeterminacy because the former creates hermeneutic ambiguity while the latter relies on conceptual uncertainty. Following the reflection of Noël Carroll, although "being horrified [...], there is some intimate relation of affinity between horror and humor" (145–146). In addition, this statement is supported by Francis Hutcheson's 18th century Incongruity Theory of Humour asserting that "an essential ingredient of comic amusement is the juxtaposition of incongruous or contrasting objects, events, categories, propositions, maxims, properties, and so on" (Carroll 248). Thus, if the defining element of the horror genre is the presence of a fearful and loathsome monster, for the sake of evoking laughter, the monster must be deprived of his fearful properties. In other words, horror can turn into comedy or farce when the nature of terror is disturbed in such a way that it results in an amusing effect. The parodies of the filmic horror genre aimed at deconstructing the ethos of terror and dread. Francis Ford Coppola's *Dracula* with tradition and horror convention aims at ridiculing of the well-known and once fearsome characters by means of laughter-evoking tricks. In this process, a figure like *Dracula* becomes an object for the viewers' amusement. The combination of humour with horror proved to be a successful venture, and it evokes a desire of fear interwoven with fun in audiences. Francis Ford Coppola's *Dracula* film offers many examples of this combination of humour with horror where blood functions as a means of parodying *Dracula*'s metempsychosis:

I shall rise from my own death (Coppola, *Dracula*
4:25);
The blood is the life (4:51);
Blood is too precious a thing in these times (14:32);
To share its life, its changes — its death (15:32).

Then, Renfield, at the asylum after visiting Dracula at his castle before Jonathan Harker, is:

obsessed with some bloodlust (22:40);
The master will come (24:42);
He's promised to make me immortal (24:48);
The blood is the life! (24:55).

Then, Dracula says while seeing Harker shaving:

Take care you cut yourself. It is more dangerous than
you think (25:44),

and he takes Harker's razor and while unseen tastes Harker's blood on it. Dracula, the undead, is
eager of living blood. At the same time, Harker feels uncomfortable of his situation:

I've seen strange things already. Wolves chasing me! A
blue inferno! (27:40),

while Dracula is mentioning the wolves as:

The children of the night (27:59),

and he is crawling on the walls (28:36). Harker feels like "a prisoner" (28:56) at Dracula's castle.
Moreover, when he hears some voices:

Lay down. Lay back into my arms (30:54),

he realizes that

Dracula has left him with these women, these devils of
the pit (54:47),

the three sisters, or Dracula's brides, who

drain [his] blood to keep [him] weak, so [he] cannot
escape (54:52),

despite he wants to

leave this cursed land where the the Devil's children
walk with earthly feet (55:06).

The image of blood recurs throughout the film with Lucy's red dress and with pictures of blood
cells. Then, Dr. Seward referring to Lucy says:

She manifests repeated blood loss (56:41)

and Dr. Van Helsing adds:

This young lady needs blood and blood she must have
(57:59),

after Lucy's misadventure of having been caught by the vampire while sleepwalking (41:20). Lucy feels:

My soul... It seemed to leave my body (41:26),

and she can still see

Those red eyes. I still have the taste of his blood in my
mouth (41:46).

On the one hand, Lucy is losing her blood with her soul leaving her body. On the other hand, the vampire by gaining her blood is outliving her. Is it worth giving her more blood as her fiancé, Lord Holmwood, is suggesting?

I would give my last drop of blood to save her (58:24),

and Van Helsing is mocking him:

Your last drop? Thank you, I don't ask as much as
that... yet (58:27).

Then, he adds referring to Dr. Seward in a sort of mockery:

Jack that poor creature has had the blood of two men
put into her (58:48);
Her whole body couldn't hold that much blood (58:51),

even though Seward wonders:

Where did the blood go? (59:20),

despite

Those marks on her throat... (59:07).

Van Helsing tries to give him an explanation:

Something went up there sucked it out of her and flew
away (59:32);

and then he says, "materialization" (59:55), and disappears in order to give a demonstration to the three men — Seward, Holmwood and Morris — of what he is talking about. All of them agree that

There is something unspeakable out there (1:00:25).

Something which is

Dead but not dead [something which] stalks [them] with
some purpose (1:00:28),

and this weird creature

To live, it feeds on Lucy's blood. It is a beast. A monster
(1:00:36).

Mina is sharing this kind of feeling because of her encounters with Dracula, a beast and a monster, which she does not deeply know. She is asking herself:

What is happening to Lucy and to me? (1:00:57);
My feelings are so troubled I wish I were myself again
(1:01:00);

and again

It is odd, but I feel almost that my strange friend is with
me (1:12:18);
He speaks to me in my thoughts (1:12:34)

in a sort of "mesmerism" or "hypnotism" (59:55). On the one hand, Van Helsing says to her:

It is Dracula, the undead (1:13:18),

and he warns her not to become

a bitch of the Devil (1:13:46),
a whore of darkness (1:13:49),
the Devil's concubine (1:14:08),
a willing recruit [and] a devoted disciple (1:14:03)

like Lucy. On the other hand, Dracula answers:

You're impotent men with their foolish spells (1:16:38)
cannot protect you from my power (1:16:42),

and he adds referring to Lucy:

I condemn you to living death (1:17:00)
To eternal hunger for living blood (1:17:02).

Lucy has now become another creature who needs blood to survive and outlive the others. Lucy's metempsychosis like Dracula's one is rather to be found in the blood of the living than in the souls of the dead. Thus, according to Van Helsing, the only way to stop this cycle of life and death through blood is:

to cut [Lucy's] head and take out her heart (1:18:50),

and he has to convince the others that

She is undead. Undead (1:20:54),

and that

She lives beyond the grace of God. A wanderer in the
outer darkness (1:21:47).
She is a vampyre, nosferatu⁴⁵ (1:21:52),

and adds

These creatures do not die (1:21:57)
but grow strong and immortal once infected by another
nosferatu (1:22:00),

and that they are fighting

not one beast, but the legions of the ages (1:22:09)
feeding on the blood of the living (1:22:14).

Then, Van Helsing asserts:

Vampires do exist (1:25:59),

and that Dracula

can also control the meaner things of life. The bat, the
wolf (1:26:11),

and

can appear as mist or fog and vanish at will (1:26:14),

but Mina still does not realize who is Dracula. She feels in love with him and wants to be like him,
despite Dracula is saying to her:

You must die from this life and be reborn to mine
(1:35:03)

in order to give to her

life eternal (1:35:23),
everlasting love (1:35:30),

and

the power of the storm and the beasts of the earth
(1:35:33).

Thus, Dracula offers to her to drink his blood to join him

in eternal life (1:36:22),

even though his conscience is bothering him whether it is the right decision to make:

You will be cursed to walk in the shadow of death for
all eternity (1:36:46),

and

I love you too much to condemn you (1:36:51).

⁴⁵ Nosferatu. A suggested etymology of the term is derived from the Romanian Nesuferit 'offensive' or 'troublesome' in Emily Gerard.
"Transylvanian Superstitions." *The Nineteenth Century*. Vol. 18, 1885: 128–144.

However, Mina wants to be taken

away from all this death (1:36:59).

She realizes now that she is

becoming like him (1:40:03),

even though Van Helsing reminds her:

Your salvation is his destruction (1:40:05),

and he adds referring to Harker,

the vampire baptized her with his own blood. Her blood
is dying (1:42:03).

Mina is wondering whether Van Helsing is going to

cut off [her] head and drive a stake through [her] heart
(1:46:23)

as he did with Lucy. At the end, she acknowledges

in the presence of God (1:54:11)
how [her] love could release [either her or Dracula]
from the powers of darkness (1:54:11)

in order to make their

love [...] stronger than death (1:54:21).

Thus, Dracula begs her:

give me peace (1:54:33),

and Mina stabs him in his heart and cuts his head off. Dracula had made Lucy a vampire driven by pure instinct and need of blood. He had almost made Mina a creature of darkness because of love, although with some hesitation. However, Dracula refuses to make Renfield his proselyte, despite Renfield is invoking him several times, “master,” and

he’s obsessed with some bloodlust (22:40)

and thinks that Dracula has

promised to make [him] immortal (24:48),

and that he has been

promised eternal life (27:11).

Renfield is

a man fighting for his soul (28:57),

but Dracula does not care about him. At the end, Dracula appears as fog at the asylum and kills Renfield. The two women are a choice for Dracula. Renfield is not. Sex appeal has the same importance as bloodlust in Dracula's choice.

The transformation into parody of all the Gothic elements has the aim to show how "[f]ear, [which] is the extreme expression of narrow-minded and stupid seriousness [...], is defeated by laughter, [and] [a]ll that was frightening in ordinary life is turned into amusing or ludicrous monstrosities" (Bakhtin 47). Thus, according to Kayser the essential trait of grotesque is "something hostile, alien, and inhuman" (*The Grotesque in Art and Literature* 139). Kayser stresses the element of alienation: "[t]he grotesque is the alienated world" (139) where "all that was [...] familiar and friendly suddenly becomes hostile" (Bakhtin 48). Part of this alienation is in the madness because something alien is always in the mind of the madman, "as if some inhuman spirit of irony [has] entered his soul" (49). Renfield experiences this "inhuman spirit" in "his soul" (Coppola, *Dracula* 28:57), and Van Helsing realizes that they "have all become God's madmen" (1:53:19) after chasing Dracula in his land. In the grotesque world this alien, inhuman power is uncrowned and transformed into a "funny monster" (Kayser 139). Renfield appears as a "funny monster" and, as such, is confined to the asylum, and then killed by Dracula. Dracula himself is released from "the powers of darkness" (1:54:11), and stabbed in his heart, and then beheaded by Mina. It is a world which "is destroyed so that it may be regenerated and renewed. While dying it gives birth" (Bakhtin 48). Moreover, Kayser asserts that "the grotesque expresses not the fear of death but the fear of life" (139) where, in the opposition of life to death, death is part of life and is an indispensable component for "its constant renewal and rejuvenation" (Bakhtin 50). "[L]ife as a whole can inspire fear" (50), but in Mina's action of releasing her and Dracula "from the powers of darkness" in order to make their "love [...] stronger than death" (Coppola 1:54:21) "death and renewal are inseparable" (Bakhtin 50) in the system of grotesque imagery. Thus, "the grotesque form acquires the traits of mockery and cynicism, and [it] becomes satanic" (Kayser 139) in the combination of laughter with bitterness. Moreover, this kind of laughter presented in macabre images was in the spirit of Romanticism.

Whereas macabre humour in the least analysis is inseparable from terror and serves as a defense mechanism against the fear of death, grotesque humour is inseparable from awe and serves as a defence mechanism against the holy dread with which we face the mysteries of reproduction [...] these two types of humour help [...] to accept death and to belittle life. (Mercier 49, in italics).

In addition, this laughter was interpreted as a “destructive humor” (Kayser 139), and was “inspired by the unfathomable” (35), such as when Van Helsing answers to Mina, who had asked whether Lucy “was in [...] great pain” (Coppola 1:24:38):

Yes, until we cut off her head and drove a stake through
her heart (1:24:39).

Grotesque is defined as a “play with the absurd” made to “invoke and subdue the demonic aspects of the world” (Kayser 185). At the end, the meaning of grotesque implied “a loss of substance” (26–27) because it stressed the importance of its humorous and comic elements, and neglected its horrific and terrifying features.

Chapter Five

5. Humour, Artifice and Comedy in James Joyce's *Ulysses*

Ulysses is one of the most important works of modernist literature. *Ulysses* is the narration of Leopold Bloom's itinerant encounters in Dublin during the ordinary day of 16th June 1904. The novel establishes a series of parallels with Homer's epic poem, the *Odyssey*, and it also imitates the styles of different periods of English literature. The novel with its stream-of-consciousness technique, careful structuring, and experimental prose — rich with parodies and broad humour — has been regarded as one of the greatest literary works in history.

In the current chapter, parodies and humour are offered in three different ways: firstly, humour is an excuse for the absence of profundity; secondly, it is a result of elaborate artifice for the presence of shallowness; and thirdly, it serves to obliterate the individual differences among the protagonists. The primary use of humour foresees a series of parallels with Homer's epic poem, and with other superstructures, such as the Christian Church, the Victorian cycles, the Irish Renaissance, but, above all, the human pretentiousness. Thus, the thread of humour running throughout the novel will be on the basis of these venerated institutions. They serve to give profundity to *Ulysses*. The protagonists of the novel refer to them in their encounters. Every single reference or allusion to these institutions is an attempt to cancel the absence of profundity and load the novel with humorous facts and events. The secondary use of humour is offered as a result of elaborate artifice. Joyce's ability in the experimentation of several techniques allows the readers to find bits and pieces of meaning in the innumerable sounds, voices, phrases running throughout the novel. These sounds, voices, phrases are developed through a series of elaborate artifice whose significance is part of the readers' interpretation. Joyce's elaborate artifice appears in the recapitulation of the entire history of the English language through a series of parodies of many outstanding authors, among them, Milton, Walpole, Newman and Dickens, and of latinate prose and Anglo-Saxon alliteration. The elaborate artifice appears in Joyce's "disintegration of the world" (Eco 36) and in its representation through the rhetorical figures. In addition, Joyce's artifice appears in his model of *fuga per canonem* as a parody of the musical form with the contrapuntal "fugue" (Potts 72) in relation to women and sexuality. Finally the tertiary use of humour serves to obliterate the individual differences among the protagonists. *Ulysses*, as a comedy "between laughter and tears" (Kopper 50), offers the idea of the comic on behalf of the protagonist, Bloom, who is the epitome of mankind with all his blemishes and faults. Bloom's performances throughout the novel show what everyman faces in the ordinary life. The parody of Bloom's conversation, as lack of communication with Molly and non-verbal communication with Stephen, reveals either his human indignity or his recognition of

otherness. Moreover, the use of parody in Bloom, Molly and Stephen's life in relation to the venerated institutions serves to obliterate their individual differences.

5.1 Use of Humour as an Excuse for the Absence of Profundity

In *Ulysses* the absence of profundity provided by Leopold Bloom's encounters during the day is covered by Joyce's Homeric parallels and events related to organized religion, human pretentiousness and Irish Renaissance. In addition, the allusions to Homer's poem, the Christian Church, the Victorian cycles and the Irish Revival are also an excuse for the use of humour in the novel.

As concerns the Homeric references, Joyce uses "the parallels [...] as his own structuring device and as a means of self-discipline" (Kopper 49). Moreover, "the parallels to Homer lend a classical tone to the book and help to define Bloom's mission as a humanist; [...] they show both the smallness and nobility of modern man by contrasting him with the ancients" (49). *Ulysses* in its eighteen episodes has correspondences to the episodes in Homer's *Odyssey*. Looking at Leopold Bloom, Stephen Dedalus and Molly Bloom's life events means finding these correspondences throughout the novel. For example, in episode eight, the Lestrygonian episode, there is a correspondence between Bloom's vision of mastication at the Burton Restaurant where men bolt down meat and Odysseus's visit to the island of cannibals in the *Odyssey*, and because of that, the meat-eater Bloom declines to eat meat:

Stink gripped his trembling breath: pungent meatjuice
slop of greens. See the animals feed. Men, men, men.
Perched on high stools by the bar, hats shoved back, at
the tables calling for more bread no charge, swilling,
wolfing gobfuls of sloppy food, their eyes bulging,
wiping wetted moustaches (*Ulysses* 301)⁴⁶.

In this case, Bloom heads instead to Davy Byrne's for a vegetarian lunch. Episode three is associated with Proteus, the shape-shifting god, and because of that the episode is full of transformations which characterize the movement of Stephen's thought. For example, Stephen associates landscapes, figures, and animals of all sorts — shifts their shape in his poetic consciousness, and translates them into a new context, or into a new body. All these elements apparently insignificant and disconnected build up in Stephen's thoughts and are transformed into a new shape of consciousness of the things around and beyond him. In episode seventeen, the Ithaca episode, Bloom's return to his house and his preparation for bed corresponds to Odysseus's return to his court. On the one hand, Odysseus slays Penelope's suitors and then he reveals himself to

⁴⁶ Joyce, James. 1922. *Ulysses*. Planet PDF ebook. Web. 20 May 2019. <<http://www.planetpdf.com>> (All further citations are taken from this book)

Penelope after the slaughter. On the other hand, Bloom does not “slaughter the suitors when he returns home but simply nuzzles a different type of melon” (Kopper 51), and then his mind skims over the assumed catalogue of Molly’s twenty-five past suitors.

He kissed the plump mellow yellow smellow melons of
her rump, on each plump melonous hemisphere, in their
mellow yellow furrow, with obscure prolonged
provocative melonsmellonous osculation (*Ulysses*
1212).

Thus, Bloom’s homecoming, rather than offering a triumphant resolution, shows a clear resignation. He decides to use his wife’s behind as a resting place unlike an infant with the mother’s womb.

In *Ulysses*, Joyce’s best humour is also directed against organized religion through another set of allusions. For example, Buck Mulligan plays the Pope as he begins the Mass of *Ulysses* on the top of the Martello Tower. He is performing a mock mass with his shaving bowl:

Introibo ad altare Dei (2),

and then

He lunged towards his messmates in turn a thick slice of
bread, impaled on his knife (20).

Stephen takes time out from his gloomy meditations on Sandymount Strand to speak into an imaginary telephone cord connecting all men by their navel cord to Eve:

the cords of all link back, strandentwining cable of all
flesh (66).

In Nausicaa episode, Gerty McDowell is a false Virgin Mary. She is blue in the face. Her blouse is electric blue. She is crippled. The climax, which she stimulates in Bloom, coincides with the elevation of the Host at the climax of the Mass. In this episode, “Joyce is combining sex and religion as only his model, the Bible, is allowed to do” (Kopper 48). Then, Bloom’s charity is a parody of Christ:

More sensible to spend the money on some charity for
the living (*Ulysses* 201).

Bloom is a Christ-like man who speaks of love while the soles of his feet hurt, and he gets a stitch in his side —

Stitch in my side (793)

— when he chases Stephen through Nighttown. On the one hand, Stephen, before having cited Bloom as the Christ of the Second Coming—

A time, times and half a time (875)

— in the brothel district, he affirms the divinity of Bloom's humanity:

Ex quibus, Stephen mumbled in a noncommittal accent,
their two or four eyes conversing, *Christus* or Bloom his
name is or after all any other, *secundum carnem* (1049).

On the other hand, Bloom says to the heretical Stephen:

orthodox as you are (1050)

because

Since Easter he had cursed three times. [...] bitch's bast.
And once at masstime he had gone to play. Once by the
churchyard he had passed and for his mother's rest he
had not prayed (515).

This is a clear relation to St. Peter's apostasy because of 'Easter' and 'three times' references as concerns Stephen's disaffection for his mother.

In *Ulysses*, there are also some parallels with the Viconian cycles⁴⁷ in the Nestor episode when Stephen is debating that history is something that cannot be controlled:

History [...] is a nightmare from which I am trying to
awake (60).

Stephen's assertion refers not only to the circumstances of his own past, but also to the philosophical problem of how history should be used to understand present circumstances. Stephen's version of history as a "nightmare" is an explicit challenge to Garrett Deasy—the headmaster in the school where Stephen was teaching—whose conception of history is as something moving toward one goal, which is for him the manifestation of God, and an implicit challenge to Haines—an English student, Buck Mulligan's friend in episode one—whose version of history is as something impersonal and cut off from the present —

It seems history is to blame (36).

Stephen sees history as filled with violence. In Deasy and Haines's conceptions, history enables this violence—in Deasy's case by excluding certain people from history who do not believe in a Christian God, in Haines's case by absolving from any blame those who perpetrate violence. Then, Molly's period —

⁴⁷P2P Foundation Wiki. "Viconian Civilizational Cycles." 2013. Web. 2 May 2020. <https://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Viconian_Civilizational_Cycles>

the waters come down at Lahore (1280)

— in the last episode, the Penelope episode, “is essentially related to the generation through cycles” (Kopper 51):

and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my
mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes
and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts
all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and
yes I said yes I will Yes (*Ulysses* 1305).

Molly’s final word “yes” is not only an affirmative of emotional and physical love, but also a litany of many masculine pronouns enhancing a sort of ambiguity between her memory of accepting Bloom’s proposition of marriage and other memories of love scenes in the cycles of her life. Another example of Viconian cycles is

Bloom, the acquiescent, the charitable, the anti-hero, [who] realizes that today is both forever and insignificant—one part of always [when he] enters bed as he enters a new day, convinced [...] that the new day will be no better, but that in its wonderful imperfection it is more than sufficient (Kopper 51–52):

To reflect that each one who enters imagines himself to be the first to enter whereas he is always the last term of a preceding series even if the first term of a succeeding one, each imagining himself to be first, last, only and alone whereas he is neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity (*Ulysses* 1206).

The theme of continuity in history is subsumed in the recumbent Molly, Gea-Tellus, and the other assumed lovers of Molly:

Mulvey to be the first term of his series, Penrose, Bartell d’Arcy, professor Goodwin, Julius Mastiansky, John Henry Menton, Father Bernard Corrigan, a farmer at the Royal Dublin Society’s Horse Show, Maggot O’Reilly, Matthew Dillon, Valentine Blake Dillon (Lord Mayor of Dublin), Christopher Callinan, Lenehan, an Italian organgrinder, an unknown gentleman in the Gaiety Theatre, Benjamin Dollard, Simon Dedalus, Andrew (Pisser) Burke, Joseph Cuffe, Wisdom Hely, Alderman John Hooper, Dr Francis Brady, Father Sebastian of Mount Argus, a bootblack at the General Post Office, Hugh E. (Blazes) Boylan and so each and so on to no last term (*Ulysses* 1207),

in which Bloom becomes the link between the Blazes Boylan of yesterday and the Blazes Boylan of tomorrow.

The background material of the Irish Renaissance is another approach to *Ulysses* in which “Joyce’s allusions are put to most humorous advantage in his satirizing of the false enthusiasms and mixed purposes of the Irish Revival” (Kopper 50). In episode one, we witness Stephen’s struggle with the ins and outs of Irish identity. For example, the withered milk woman is a “parody of Poor

Old Ireland, [she] cannot speak Irish, but counsels its use” (Kopper 50). Stephen is unresigned to life in Ireland: he tries to persist and resist despite having a perception of himself as a servant throughout *Ulysses*. Buck’s jokes, rather than implying that Stephen is a servant, serve to reveal Stephen’s stubborn pride. He is unresponsive to Buck’s aggressive joking and decides not to return to the Martello tower when he is asked to leave the house key since he feels that he has been taken over by the English student, Haines, the ‘Usurper’. Buck Mulligan wonders:

I’m the only one that knows what you are. Why don’t you trust me more? What have you up your nose against me? Is it Haines? (*Ulysses* 10).

However, Stephen feels frustrated because he is yet unrealized as an artist. Buck adds:

Five lines of text and ten pages of notes about the folk and the fishgods of Dundrum. Printed by the weird sisters in the year of the big wind (20).

Then, Stephen fluctuates between perceptive recognition of and prideful resistance to various authorities in his discussion with Haines. For example, when Haines asks:

You’re not a believer, are you? [...] I mean, a believer in the narrow sense of the word. Creation from nothing and miracles and a personal God (34);

or when Mulligan says to him:

It’s what I’m telling you, mister honey, it’s queer and sick we were, Haines and myself, the time himself brought it in (358).

Stephen’s resentment for Ireland, despite being still dressed in mourning for his mother in the Telemachus episode, is reflected in the Martello Tower which is “a symbol of lapsed hopes, both phallic and national” (Kopper 50). Stephen blames “the divided aims of those who cut Ireland off from Europe in an effort to make her a free state” (50), although Buck Mulligan is proud of stating:

Our players are creating a new art for Europe like the Greeks (*Ulysses* 387).

In addition, in *Ulysses* “[a] bit of Irish history is blended skillfully with Bloom’s marital situation” (Kopper 50) in which “a dishonored wife is the cause of all of Ireland’s misfortunes” (50). In this case, Bloom’s wife is compared by the Citizen to Derbforgaill or Derval⁴⁸, a queen of Ireland in the 12th century famously known as the ‘Helen of Ireland’, whose abduction from her husband played some part in bringing the Anglo-Normans to Irish shores. However,

⁴⁸ *Wikipedia*. Derbforgaill or Derval. Web. 3 May 2020. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derbforgaill_ingen_Maeleachlainn>

Derbforgaill was abducted by the rival king and after one year had left Leinster and returned to her family's lands in Meath, while Molly perseveres in being "a dishonored wife."

In *Ulysses*, humour also punctures human pretentiousness. For example, at the funeral of Paddy Dignam, Bloom muses:

The resurrection and the life. Once you are dead you are
dead (*Ulysses* 104).

Then, Stephen challenges Deasy's anti-Semitism during their conversation with his bohemian-intellectual comment that God is

a shout in the street (*Ulysses* 61)

despite his unwillingness to participate in a political argument on Deasy's terms. Moreover, Stephen's reverie of feeling ashamed of his family recalls the intellectual pretensions of his youth. In addition, in episode three, Stephen's philosophical solipsism considers the idea that the world only exists in our individual perceptions of it. His attentiveness to his own physical presence within his surroundings leads him to produce art:

He climbed over the sedge and eely oarweeds and sat on
a stool of rock, resting his ashplant in a grike (79),

the "stool of rock" as an observation point to look at the "Cocklepickers" (83) and a source of inspiration to create art which he had not yet achieved on that day of 16th June 1904.

5.2 Use of Elaborate Artifice as an Excuse for Shallowness

One of the questions which may be asked when reading *Ulysses* is why could this novel be interesting to the readers when it tells about plain facts and vague memories of the protagonists (Bloom, Molly and Stephen) during an ordinary day? However, *Ulysses* is not simply a list of facts lived or recalled. The readers need to go beyond this apparent shallowness of the novel in order to get a clear view of the different layers in which *Ulysses* is structured. Every single layer has its own significance which is developed through a series of elaborate artifices. Thus, its readers are supposed to discover these elaborate artifices in a constant and progressive reading.

A striking example of Joyce's elaborate artifice with the "embryonic development" technique appears in episode fourteen, the Oxen of the Sun, in which the entire history of the English language is recapitulated from latinate prose to Anglo-Saxon alliteration, and moved on through parodies of Milton, Walpole, Newman, Dickens, and many others, before concluding in a haze of nearly incomprehensible slang. Thus, Joyce decides to make "the opening difficult to understand in

order to warn his readers that what follows requires careful reading” (Atherton 313). For instance, the “first word ‘Deshil’ is a pun in Gaelic, being a phonetic rendering of *deiseal*, *deisil*, which, when used by itself, means ‘May it be right!’ or ‘May it go well!’ and is thus suitable to begin a difficult task” (313). Following that there are some examples of parodies starting from latinate prose:

It is interesting because [...] we are all born in the same way but we all die in different ways. Mr M. Mulligan (Hyg. et Eug. Doc.) blames the sanitary conditions in which our greylunged citizens contract adenoids, pulmonary complaints etc. by inhaling the bacteria which lurk in dust (*Ulysses* 768),

whose dry content of the prose imitates that of a scientific treatise, to Anglo-Saxon alliteration:

Before born bliss babe had. Within womb won he
worship (704),
Some man that wayfaring was stood by housedoor at
night’s oncoming (705),
In ward wary the watcher hearing come that man
mildhearted eft rising with swire ywimpled to him her
gate wide undid (705),

in which Joyce “attempted to recreate the syntactic idiom and the vocabulary of the original” (Wales 320). Moreover, he “was able to exploit both diction and syntax toward his dual goals of humor [sic] and bafflement [...] employing both oddly ordered sentences [...] and archaic words and phrases” (Gooch 188) with the purpose of amusing his readers. Then, Joyce’s spirit of hilarity merges with seriousness in a passage evoking Newman:

There are sins or (let us call them as the world calls them) evil memories which are hidden away by man in the darkest places of the heart but they abide there and wait. He may suffer their memory to grow dim, let them be as though they had not been and all but persuade himself that they were not or at least were otherwise. Yet a chance word will call them forth suddenly and they will rise up to confront him in the most various circumstances, a vision or a dream, or while timbrel and harp soothe his senses or amid the cool silver tranquility of the evening or at the feast, at midnight, when he is now filled with wine. Not to insult over him will the vision come as over one that lies under her wrath, not for vengeance to cut him off from the living but shrouded in the piteous vesture of the past, silent, remote, reproachful (*Ulysses* 774)

connected to a further passage in which through Bloom’s memory of Roundtown it is possible to see Stephen’s mother watching her son

from the PIAZZETTA giving upon the flowerclose with
a faint shadow of remoteness or of reproach (*alles
Vergangliche*) in her glad look (775).

Moreover, Joyce imitates John Milton when “the exquisite anguish in Stephen’s conjuring of his mother’s shade [...] repeats the maternity tropes [and] condenses the more expansive magniloquence, of [...] Latinate meditations” (Sherry 88):

But thou hast suckled me with a bitter milk: my moon
and my sun thou hast quenched for ever. And thou hast
left me alone for ever in the dark ways of my bitterness:
and with a kiss of ashes hast thou kissed my mouth
(*Ulysses* 721).

Then, Joyce parodies Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* by using gothic terms, such as “creep” (755), “ghostly” (756) “hell” (756) “the mystery was unveiled” (756–757), “graveyard” (757) “vendetta” (756), “curse” (757), “haunted” (757) and “Murderer” (757) in relation to Manfred’s stabbing of his daughter in *The Castle of Otranto* and Haines’ murder of Samuel Childs in Buck’s tale. In addition, death reappears in Charles Dickens’ sentimental style, when Doady, the nickname of David, the main character and narrator in *David Copperfield*, plays the part of Mina’s husband, Theodore, in *Ulysses*. The use of this name shows a similarity between the two Doadys and between Dora, David’s first wife, and Mina. The sentimentalized treatment of Mina and the naming of her child seem to perfectly merge Dickens’ style with that of *Ulysses*. However, there is a paradox between Joyce’s use of *David Copperfield*’s style of celebrating a child’s birth and *David Copperfield*’s description of David’s first wife death. For example, Joyce uses Dickens’ phrase —

a weary, weary while (772)

— to describe Mina’s and the doctor’s experience of the long period of labour. Moreover, Mina is described as being

in the first bloom of her new motherhood (772)

while Dora is very ill and dying. This similarity between *David Copperfield* and *Ulysses* shows Joyce’s “ability to find similarity between dissimilar things - that is, hidden similarities” (Freud 4), which is his “favorite definition of joking” (4). Then, the grand finale of the Oxen of the Sun is studded with eighteenth century slang, Dublin slang, seventeenth century underworld cant, and many other linguistic tropes. For instance, a seventeenth century cant, whose first phrase

the ruffin cly the nub of (*Ulysses* 783),

meaning “the devil take the head of” (Gifford 445), is taken from the first line of Thomas Dekker’s *The Beggar’s Curse*⁴⁹, is “abundant in London vernacular [which] demonstrates how Joyce foregrounds the subversive inventiveness and cynicism of Cockney” (Loukopoulou 21)⁵⁰:

The ruffin cly the nab of Stephen Hand as give me the
jady coppalee. He strike a telegramboy paddock wire
big bug Bass to the depot. Shove him a joey and
grahamise. Mare on form hot order. Guinea to a
goosegog. Tell a cram, that. Gospeltrue. Criminal
diversion? I think that yes. Sure thing. Land him in
chokeechokee if the Harman beck copped the game
(*Ulysses* 783),

explained by Joyce to his German translator in this way:

Stephen Hand met a telegramboy who was bringing a private racing telegram from the stable of the celebrated English brewer Bass to the police depot in Dublin to a friend there to back Bass’ horse Sceptre for the Cup. Stephen Hand gives boy 4 pence, opens the telegram over steam (grahamising), recloses it and sends the boy on with it, backs the Sceptre to win and loses. (This really happened and his name was Stephen Hand though it was not the Gold Cup) (Cohn, 194).

Particular emphasis is given to the word “grahamise” —“opens the telegram over steam (grahamising)” — meaning “to open letters that are en route to their destination” (Gifford 446), because of the British statesman Graham, who in 1844 “procured a warrant to open the letters of the Italian political theorist and revolutionary Giuseppe Mazzini” (446) in order to communicate “the contents to the Austrian minister, which resulted in a public outcry against Graham’s betrayal, in the course of which his name became a verb” (446). Thus, it seems that at the end of the episode the language dissolves into slang and gibberish and that the transitions between styles would have to be less disjointed in order to mimic the gradual development of a foetus. In other words, language dissipates and logic effectively dies: “[p]rose style disintegrates into a violent, explosive chattering in which slang, dialect, and the utterance of illiteracy go side by side with the sensational vulgarity of press and hoarding” (Blamires 157). However, if the narrative technique and the embryonic development work towards the unified goal of the birth of a child, the progression of language leads to chaos and lack of unity and misleads the parallels between the development of a foetus and the development of language. Moreover, the imitations of the styles of different time periods and outstanding writers seem parodic because the styles are markedly exaggerated.

Another impressive example of Joyce’s elaborate artifice with the “enthymemic” technique appears in episode seven, *Aeolus*, in which

⁴⁹ Thomas Dekker. *The Beggar’s Curse*. Web. 9 May 2020. <<http://www.fromoldbooks.org/Farmer-MusaPedestris/the-beggars-curse.html>>

⁵⁰ Eleni Loukopoulou. “London, Language and Empire in ‘Oxen of the Sun’ of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*.” *The Literary London Journal*. Literary London: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Representation of London. 3.1 (March 2005): 1–32. Web. 9 May 2020. <<http://www.literarylondon.org/london-journal/march2005/Eleni.html>>

Joyce wants to denounce the paralysis of Irish life and [...] the paralysis and disintegration of the world (Eco 36).

Joyce's

judgement does not appear as an explicit 'content' of the text. Rather it is represented solely by the form of the chapter, in which all the rhetorical figures are employed (36).

He

does nothing but record the vacuous and presumptuous exchanges of newsmen without pronouncing judgement (36).

In this episode, Joyce's

radical conversion from 'meaning' as content of an expression, to the form of an expression as meaning, is the direct consequence of the refusal and destruction of the traditional world in *Ulysses* (36).

Thus, the random and trivial newsmen's speeches are rendered into more than sixty different rhetorical figures within the headlines and the general text. More than a half of them are listed here:

1) polysyndeton and asyndeton

Majesty's vermilion mailcars, bearing on their sides the royal initials, E. R., received loudly flung sacks of letters, postcards, lettercards, parcels, insured and paid, for local, provincial, British and overseas delivery (*Ulysses* 207);

2) chiasmus

Grossbooted draymen rolled barrels dullthudding out of Prince's stores and bumped them up on the brewery float. On the brewery float bumped dullthudding barrels rolled by grossbooted draymen out of Prince's stores (207);

3) prosopopoeia

Youth led by Experience visits Notoriety (235);

4) onomatopoeia

Thumping. Thumping (210);

5) hypotyposis

WITH UNFEIGNED REGRET IT IS WE ANNOUNCE
THE DISSOLUTION
OF A MOST RESPECTED DUBLIN BURGESS (210);

6) anastrophe

Three bob I lent him in Meagher's (213);

7) anadiplosis

Poor Penelope. Penelope Rich (264);

8) zeugma

Seems to see with his fingers (218);

9) simile

Brains on their sleeve like the statue in Glasnevin (223);

10) etymological figure

We think of Rome, imperial, imperious, imperative (234);

11) epanadiplosis

Mouth to my mouth (236);

12) oxymoron

I feel a strong weakness (239);

13) epiphora

Working away, tearing away (211);

14) hyperbaton

—A sudden—at—the—moment—though—from—
lingering—illness—often—previously—expectorated—
demise (255);

15) metaphor

Witless shellfish swam in the gross lenses to and fro,
seeking outlet (252);

16) anacoluthon

Love and laud him: me no more (255);

17) hyperbole

Back in no time (231);

18) palindrome

Madam, I'm Adam. And Able was I ere I saw Elba
(244);

19) irony

Our old ancient ancestors, as we read in the first chapter
of Guinness's, were partial to the running stream (234);

20) sarcasm

The pensive bosom and the overarsing leafage (220);

21) metonymy

That was a pen (242);

22) pleonasm

It was revealed to me that those things are good which
yet are corrupted which neither if they were supremely
good nor unless they were good could be corrupted
(253);

23) syncope

Getonouthat (226);

24) metathesis

Clamn dever (245);

25) periphrasis

She was a nice old bag of tricks (250);

26) paronomasia

And Able was I ere I saw Elba (244);

27) anaphora

*had he bowed his head and bowed his will and bowed
his spirit before that arrogant admonition* (254);

28) diaphora

*It seemed to me that I had been transported into a
country far away from this country, into an age remote
from this age* (252);

29) metalepsis

The closetmaker and the cloacemaker will never be
lords of our spirit (238),

in which the word “spirit” is polysemous because of having several synonyms, such as vigor, humour, mood, courage, energy, temperament, but also not having synonyms, such as ghost, atmosphere, and so on;

30) solecism “darlint” (258) which stands for darling;

31) apocopation “*aer*” (246);

32) antonomasia “Skin-the-Goat” (242) which refers to Fitzharris.

Thus, in the Aeolus episode, wind is represented by the windy rhetoric used in journalism. However, if rhetoric is a means for making arguments and convincing listeners, it gets short shrift here. The arguments are swallowed in the noise of the newspaper pressrooms while language works with jokes, cryptic remarks, and stage-whispered comments.

Episode eleven, the Sirens, offers another example of Joyce’s artifice with his model of *fuga per canonem* — “a fugue with all musical notations” (Potts 72) — as a parody of the musical form starting from the introductory section with a series of harmonically interdependent sounds —

Bronze by gold heard the hoofirons, steelyringing
Imperthnthn thnthnthn.
Chips, picking chips off rocky thumbnail, chips (*Ulysses*
328)⁵¹
Blew. Blue bloom [...] Trilling, trilling [...]
Jingle jingle jaunted jingling.
Coin rang. Clock clacked. [...]
Boomed crashing chords. [...]
A sail! A veil awake upon the waves. [...]
Horn. Hawhorn. [...]
Full tup. Full throb. [...]
Clapclap. Clipclap. Clappyclap. [...]
A moonlit nightcall: far, far [...]
Wait while you wait. Hee hee. Wait while you hee. (329)
But wait! [...]
By bronze, by gold, in oceangreen of shadow. Bloom.
Old Bloom. [...]
Pray for him! Pray, good people! [...]
Big Benaben. Big Benben. [...]
Pwee! Little wind piped wee.

⁵¹ Joyce, James. 1922. *Ulysses*. Flamingo Modern Classic. Glasgow. 1994. (All further citations are taken from this book)

True men. Lid Ker Cow De and Doll. Ay, ay. Like you
men. Will lift your tschink with tschunk. [...]
Where bronze from anear? Where gold from afar?
(330),

— intermingled with independent contrapuntal voices in relation to women and sexuality:

Goldpinnacled hair.
A jumping rose on satiny breast of satin, rose of Castile
(329).
With a cock with a
carra. [...]
Tiny, her tremulous fernfoils of maidenhair. [...]
Fro. To, fro. A baton cool protruding. Bronzelydia by
Minagold. [...]
One rapped, one tapped, with a carra, with a cock. [...]
Last rose Castile of summer left bloom I feel so sad
alone (330).

The ambitious technique of this episode with its demystification of music offers “a parodic distortion or ironic reduction of the musical (Cosgrove 6) and “of sentiment that glances both at women and music” (7) with the “possible deflation of feminine beauty” (7). Moreover, the ironic reduction occurs in a passage with a reference to “a baton cool protruding” (*Ulysses* 329):

Fro, to: to, fro: over the polished knob (she knows his
eyes, my eyes, her eyes) her thumb and finger passed in
pity: passed, reposed and, gently touching, then slid so
smoothly, slowly down, a cool firm white enamel baton
protruding through their sliding ring (369),

which shows how Joyce is “undeceived by the sentimental disguises the female sexual nature will assume” (Cosgrove 7). In the Sirens, it is no longer visible only “the angelic side of women” (Potts 195) but how their sentimental disguises are rendered into the female sexual nature and how the “ironic treatment of such sentimental disguise [is a] small aspect of the more sustained ironic resistance to the sentimental appeal of music” (Cosgrove 7). At the end, the disjunctive phrases, as a sort of musical overture in the opening section — with the purposeful repetition of some of them, such as “a cock with a carra,” “Fro. To, fro,” “a baton cool protruding”, with the beautiful and flirtatious barmaids “bronze by gold” and the renditions of longing love songs (especially the sentimental verses of *The Croppy Boy*⁵²) combined with the recurring “tap” sound of the blind piano tuner’s cane, with the interspersed “jingle” of Boylan’s car, and with the overflowing of composite names such as “Siopold” (356) and the labeled name “tankards” (356) in relation to the two men ordering tankards of beer, as a further source of humour, plus Bloom’s juxtaposition with “old fogey” (333) remarking his unattractiveness, as a response to his enticement for one of the Sirens, “miss Douce” (333) — all become of them part of the plot, rather than the transparent medium that

⁵² *Music in the Works of James Joyce. The Croppy Boy.* Web. 14 May 2020. <http://www.james-joyce-music.com/song16_lyrics.html>

communicates the plot. Thus, the interference between narrative and plot is another medium of communicating Joyce's artifice of *fuga per canonem*.

5.3 Use of Comedy to Obliterate Individual Differences

In *Ulysses*, comedy plays a very important role to obliterate individual differences between Bloom, Molly and Stephen. Joyce's allusions to Homeric artifacts, the Christian Church, the Viconian cycles and the Irish Revival deepened by the use of elaborate artifice in their superstructures "are means of portraying the totality of life, which is often farcical" (Kopper 48). All the superstructures and the set of allusions make *Ulysses* "a comedy [...] treading the thin line between laughter and tears" (50). *Ulysses*' presentation of laughter and tears recalls

elements of Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, whose gigantic hero, when confronted with his dead wife and his bouncing new-born child, did not know whether to laugh or to cry—so he did both at once (51).

Bloom is the central character in *Ulysses* and, as such, he is the epitome of mankind with all his blemishes and faults: "Joyce did not know whether to make Bloom saint or sinner and tried to make him both" (52). However, in Bloom's case "laughter cannot be absolutely just. Nor should it be kind-hearted either. Its function is to intimidate by humiliating" (Bergson 60b). Bloom epitomizes "the idea of [...] the comic [...] as a species of DEGRADATION" (39a). He is the one "who deviates from the center" (Kopper 46) and because of that he feels "[b]etrayed and wronged in everything [in] this bitter world where vice is king" (*The Misanthrope*, Molière)⁵³. However, "the humor of Molière [...] stereotypes persons and [...] ridicules the eccentric [...] in an attempt to drive the societal wanderer back into the fold" (Kopper 46). Several examples of stereotyping the characters and ridiculing the eccentric protagonists occur throughout *Ulysses*.

For instance, in the Sirens episode, a blind man while walking on the street addresses Bloom, who is unaware where he is walking:

God's curse on you, he said sourly, whoever you are!
You're blinder nor I am, you bitch's bastard! (*Ulysses*
451)⁵⁴.

It is quite evident that "the traits of Bloom's character afford not complexity or paradox but contraiety"⁵⁵ (Kopper 52), and enhance "his inability [...] to handle sexual problems" (52). In

⁵³ *The Misanthrope Quotes*. Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Molière. *The Misanthrope*. 2020. Web. 5 May 2020. <<https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/685838-le-misanthrope-ou-l-atrabilaire-amoureux>>

⁵⁴ Joyce, James. 1922. *Ulysses*. Planet PDF ebook. Web. 20 May 2019. <<http://www.planetpdf.com>> (All further citations are taken from this book)

⁵⁵ James Greenwood. *An essay towards a practical English Grammar*. Definition of 'contraiety' as opposition. London. J. Nourse. 1753. 216. Web. 6 May 2020. <https://books.google.it/books?id=LRNJAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA216&lpg=PA216&dq=contraiety&source=bl&ots=7a6Rjipkrr&sig=ACfU3U0qSN7Fy22apHX_lvwMAYuxg_7r-g&hl=it&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewitwqf63p_pAhW3wcQBHWUSByM4ChDoATAAegQIBxAB#v=onepage&q=contraiety&f=false>

addition, Bloom's difficulty makes clear Joyce's use of scatological⁵⁶ matters in order to emphasize his auto-eroticism, his uxorious behaviour because of buying "pornographic literature for his wife [or] carrying about an obscene photograph" (52), or his being cuckolded and in the Nausicaa episode "left with only a stick [as] a substitute phallus" (52). Then, Bloom's "entrance to the Holles Street Hospital [which] mimics that of a sperm about to fertilize an ovum" (52) is a clear metaphor of an ordinary intercourse. In addition, Joyce "uses his hero to demonstrate his own view of the lower man" (52) by letting Bloom move in Nighttown where "he suffers every indignity known to a man" (52). Bloom performs in his night errands what everyman faces in the ordinary life. Moreover, Molly's soliloquy is a mirror of Bloom's "secret fetishes [...] about [his] underclothing" (53). Then, the denouement episode "of the search of father for son" (54) shows Bloom and Stephen communicating in a unique way:

At Stephen's suggestion, at Bloom's instigation both, first Stephen, then Bloom, in penumbra urinated, their sides contiguous, their organs of micturition reciprocally rendered invisible by manual circumposition, their gazes, first Bloom's, then Stephen's, elevated to the projected luminous and semiluminous shadow (*Ulysses* 1156).

The parody of this conversation, which happens through the action of urinating, manifests not only "the complete and utter solitude [of] the cold mathematical language" (Kopper 54), but also the distance in time and age between the two protagonists:

The trajectories of their, first sequent, then simultaneous, urinations were dissimilar: Bloom's longer, less irruent, in the incomplete form of the bifurcated penultimate alphabetical letter, who in his ultimate year at High School (1880) had been capable of attaining the point of greatest altitude against the whole concurrent strength of the institution, 210 scholars: Stephen's higher, more sibilant, who in the ultimate hours of the previous day had augmented by diuretic consumption an insistent vesical pressure (*Ulysses* 1156–1157).

However, the distance of their different "trajectories" appears to be a clear sign that father and son will not be successful in their reciprocal search in this particular case because

each contemplating the other in both mirrors of the reciprocal flesh of theirhisnothis fellowfaces (*Ulysses* 1156).

⁵⁶ Merriam-Webster. Definition of 'scatology': interest in or treatment of obscene matters especially in literature. Web. 6 May 2020. <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/scatology>>

On the one hand, their meeting with their wordless interaction reveals that a father-son connection has not occurred. On the other hand, their union has been symbolically meaningful because of tapping various themes, such as the one of recognition — “reciprocal flesh.” Moreover, the “theirhisnothis” suggests that their meeting is realistic in terms of physical presence — “fellowfaces” — and ideal in terms of recognition of their otherness. Other examples of this playing with words occur in relation to Stephen’s real father when he recalls, while walking along Sandymount Beach, his father’s words about his in-laws:

O weeping God, the things I married into” (68),

which is “a verdict proper to one who sang concerning [...] his marriage” (Kopper 48–49); or when Bloom, in Calypso, speaks of metempsychosis, and Molly answers:

O, rocks! [...] Tell us in plain words (*Ulysses* 110).

In conclusion, Joyce satirizes every single aspect of Bloom, Molly and Stephen’s life in *Ulysses*. Moreover, the venerated institutions, as the object of Joyce’s parody, serve to obliterate the individual differences among the protagonists.

Conclusion

The aim of this MA thesis was to provide an analysis of humour in selected English literature starting from the Middle Ages with Geoffrey Chaucer's 'Tale of Sir Thopas' (1387) and the burlesque depiction of Sir Thopas' caricature, following with William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1596) and the ironic representation of Shylock's character, going on with Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and the satirical expression of mankind through Gulliver's adventures in the lands of Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians, then, with Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), and its Francis Ford Coppola's film adaptation (1992), and the parodic distortion and transformation of Dracula's Gothic character, and concluding with James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and the humorous representation of Bloom's performances as a comedy of mankind in the ordinary life.

What has Sir Thopas taught us with his knightly errands, his burlesque representation, and ultimately with his unique way of being a knight? Sir Thopas' performances — seven centuries before our time — show his ability to perform in a different way as a mark of freedom beyond the rules asking him to be a valiant knight. In addition, his own way of being a knight is not to be seen as a failure in his "gendered performance" (Reeser 83) but as "part of his overall performance" (Reeser 88).

What has Shylock taught us with his extreme stubbornness in requiring revenge on Antonio? Shylock's performance shows — four centuries before our time — how men cannot change their destiny. Whatever they do is a challenge in which they may fail, nevertheless it is worth a try. Shylock performs his challenge without caring about the consequences. His stubbornness is to be seen as a metaphor of dramatic irony in which he cannot foresee the development of his destiny but the audience can.

What do the worlds of the tiny Lilliputians and the huge Brobdingnagians beyond the lesson on relativism and perspective teach us? What do we see beyond the satirical expression of mankind showed by the absurdity of the Lilliputians' ridiculous and tiny arguments and the Brobdingnagians' specific attack on the political machine and on the human condition as a whole? The most important lesson we learn from Swift's satirical expression of mankind is that humans' littleness and Brobdingnagians' largeness when juxtaposed to men's weakness and Brobdingnagians' strength convey not only men's incapability of defending themselves but also man's impossibility of attaining the Brobdingnagians' high moral stature. Thus, it appears evident how men's fragility does not put them in condition of facing the most basic things in everyday life, because of being:

so liable to Destruction from every little Accident of a
Tile falling from an House, or a Stone cast from the
Hand of a Boy, or of being drowned in a little Brook
(*Gulliver* 126),

a condition which had already been depicted by Juvenal in one of his *Satires* —

[...] for a tile from the highest roof to fall
On your head; [...] a cracked and leaky pot plunges down
From a sill [...] (iii. 269–271)

— about twenty centuries before our time.

What is possible to see through the representation of Gothic and humour in *Dracula*'s novel and in its Francis Ford Coppola's film adaptation? First, in the novel, we see the depiction of Dracula's Gothic character in which he has been compared to a poison, and considered an illness or a social virus that must be isolated and destroyed. Then, in the film, we witness the transformation of Dracula's character as an object for the viewers' amusement, and the combination of humour with horror, of fear interwoven with fun. However, what is the lesson that we have learnt from Dracula? The idea of Dracula as a vampire and, as such, like a virus destroying man easily, recalls that of the current situation we are living with coronavirus, and the connection with bats, which is enormously more dangerous than that of Dracula, and vampires, whose remedy seems also to be that of confinement, but a confinement that, unfortunately, goes beyond the nocturnal hours in order to allow men with their defenceless powers to survive.

What role does humour play in *Ulysses* in relation to the three protagonists, Bloom, Molly and Stephen? What lesson have we learned from the Homeric superstructure, the Church rituals, the Viconian cycles, and the Irish historical references? Bloom is presented as the perfect anti-hero throughout the novel. Bloom's errands in relation to Molly, Stephen, and the superstructures have highlighted that he is diametrically opposite to the Homeric hero. He is not a perfect husband. He cannot be a perfect father. His errands are a perfect parody of the *Odyssey*. His lack of communication with Molly and Stephen is a perfect comedy of his performances in the ordinary life. Bloom represents the perfect "societal wanderer" (Kopper 46). His roaming shows "the paralysis and disintegration of the world" (Eco 36) in which he lives in. At the end, Bloom's humorous performances in his fragmented world are also visible through the techniques employed in the novel.

Sir Thopas and Bloom can be considered two perfect anti-heroes of their times. Sir Thopas runs away from the strict knights' code of behaviour and offers — through his missed "gender performativity" (Reeser 88) — a burlesque caricature of a knight and of a man. Bloom accepts "the

paralysis” (Eco 36) of his world and makes of it a parody. Shylock does not accept his world with its superimposed rules which do not fit for him. His missed revenge is a metaphor of dramatic irony in the play. Fragility equates man’s destiny in *Gulliver’s Travels* and in *Dracula* because of a possible, accidental man’s death in *Gulliver*, or an unexpected man’s death caused by a viral monster in *Dracula*. Both of these circumstances satirically have showed how weak and defenceless is the human body.

In addition, the deconstruction of language, of the world and the human identity, in these five works written over a time span of five hundred years, has contributed to integrate the types of humour and their aims into a systematic framework.

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Appendix 1: Abstract

This thesis has analyzed the aims of the most common types of humour in English literature starting from Geoffrey Chaucer's 'Tale of Sir Thopas' (1387), following with William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1596), Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) with Francis Ford Coppola's film adaptation (1992), and concluding with James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922).

In Geoffrey Chaucer's 'Tale of Sir Thopas,' the aim has been that of representing the romantic, medieval knight via burlesque caricature in his physical appearance, clothing, and different behaviour.

In William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, the aim has been that of shaping irony through Shylock's attempt to change into his opposite as a metaphor of dramatic irony.

In Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, the aim has been that of conveying a satirical expression of the human follies through a moral lens.

In Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and in Coppola's film adaptation, the aim has been that of searching for the Gothic self-serious elements among the supernatural ones, and their transformation into parody.

In James Joyce's *Ulysses*, humour has been used as an excuse for the absence of profundity. Humour has been the result of elaborate artifice for the presence of shallowness, and it has had the aim of obliterating the individual differences among the protagonists.

In addition, the deconstruction of language, of the world and the human identity, in these five works, has contributed to integrate the types of humour and their aims into a systematic framework.

Appendix 2: Zusammenfassung der Masterarbeit

„Ziele der häufigsten Arten von Humor in der englischen Literatur“

Diese Masterarbeit hat die Ziele der häufigsten Arten von Humor in der englischen Literatur analysiert, beginnend mit Geoffrey Chaucers ‘Tale of Sir Thopas’ (1387), gefolgt von William Shakespeares *The Merchant of Venice* (1596), Jonathan Swifts *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726), Bram Stokers *Dracula* (1897) mit Francis Ford Coppolas Verfilmung (1992) und Abschluss mit James Joyces *Ulysses* (1922).

In Geoffrey Chaucers ‘Tale of Sir Thopas’ war es das Ziel, den romantischen, mittelalterlichen Ritter durch burleske Karikaturen in seiner physischen Erscheinung, Kleidung und seinem unterschiedlichen Verhalten darzustellen.

In William Shakespeares *The Merchant of Venice* war es das Ziel, die Ironie durch Shylocks Versuch zu formen, sich als Metapher dramatischer Ironie in sein Gegenteil zu verwandeln.

In Jonathan Swifts *Gulliver’s Travels* war es das Ziel, einen satirischen Ausdruck der menschlichen Torheiten durch eine moralische Linse zu vermitteln.

In Bram Stokers *Dracula* und in Coppolas Verfilmung war es das Ziel, nach den gotischen selbsternstigen Elementen unter den übernatürlichen zu suchen und sie in Parodie umzuwandeln.

In James Joyces *Ulysses* wurde Humor als Entschuldigung für das Fehlen von Tiefgründigkeit verwendet. Humor war das Ergebnis einer ausgeklügelten Kunstfertigkeit für das Vorhandensein von Oberflächlichkeit und hatte das Ziel, die individuellen Unterschiede zwischen den Protagonisten auszulöschen.

Darüber hinaus hat die Dekonstruktion der Sprache, der Welt und der menschlichen Identität in diesen fünf Werken dazu beigetragen, die Arten von Humor und ihre Ziele in einen systematischen Rahmen zu integrieren.