

PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF OCULESICS IN GULLIVER'S TRAVELS BY JONATHAN SWIFT

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Abstract

While gestures are daily fact of life in the real world, we frequently overlook their importance in fictional worlds. This is perhaps not surprising, for as students of language we have become so accustomed to examining the words of a text that we often fail to pay adequate critical attention to the presence of non-verbal forms of communication. Gulliver's Travels provides a compelling example of this. Gestures abound in Gulliver's Travels, yet their nature, purpose, and effects have been ignored. Far from being a mere formulaic addition to a travel narrative, they are, I believe, an essential element of the text, employed by Swift in a variety of ways. Gestures, it will be seen, are used to provide a realistic and effective means of communicating between people who do not share a common language, to delineate Gulliver's character, to manipulate the reader's response to Gulliver, and to implement several of Swift's philosophical themes.

Keywords: Oculesics, Eye Movements, Paralanguage, Pragmatics, Eye, Culture.

INTRODUCTION

The desire to communicate with all men and to restore to the human race through language the unity and oneness that existed before the Fall piqued the imagination of earlier ages in the concept of a universal language. It was not, however, until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that the interest in and demand for establishing a universal language became pervasive. It was believed by many that gestures constituted just such a common form of communication. Here we can see some examples, especially, related to eye movements. "I answered in a few words, but in the most submissive manner, lifting up my left hand, and both my eyes to the sun, as calling him for a witness; and being almost famished with hunger, having not eaten a morsel for some hours before I left the ship, I found the demands of nature so strong upon me, that I could not forbear showing my impatience (perhaps against the strict rules of decency) by putting my finger frequently to my mouth, to signify that I wanted food". The nonverbal tools 'lift up my left hand', 'lift up my eyes to the sun' and 'put my finger to my mouth' are utilized in order to communicate with foreigners and here Jonatan Swift give the information 'to get one's attention' with the help of 'to lift up eyes'.

Materials and Methods

Another example is “His excellency, having mounted on the small of my right leg, advanced forwards up to my face, with about a dozen of his retinue; and producing his credentials under the signet royal, which he applied close to my eyes, spoke about ten minutes without any signs of anger, but with a kind of determinate resolution, often pointing forwards, which, as I afterwards found, was towards the capital city, about half a mile distant; whither it was agreed by his majesty in council that I must be conveyed”. ‘Careless eyes’ gives the meaning ‘without anger’.

“I did so, and immediately all the troops gave a shout between terror and surprise; for the sun shone clear, and the reflection dazzled their eyes, as I waved the scimitar to and fro in my hand”. Here ‘dazzled their eyes’ give the information terror and surprise.

“His majesty gave orders, upon pain of death, that every soldier in his march should observe the strictest decency with regard to my person; which however could not prevent some of the younger officers from turning up their eyes as they passed under me: and, to confess the truth, my breeches were at that time in so ill a condition, that they afforded some opportunities for laughter and admiration”. Here we can get the meaning ‘avoid paying attention’ with ‘turn up their eyes’.

‘That if his majesty, in consideration of your services, and pursuant to his own merciful disposition, would please to spare your life, and only give orders to put out both your eyes, he humbly conceived, that by this expedient justice might in some measure be satisfied, and all the world would applaud the lenity of the emperor, as well as the fair and generous proceedings of those who have the honor to be his counsellors’. ‘Put somebody's eyes out’ is a phrase that means to poke or injure someone's eyes.

‘That the loss of your eyes would be no impediment to your bodily strength, by which you might still be useful to his majesty; that blindness is an addition to courage, by concealing dangers from us; that the fear you had for your eyes, was the greatest difficulty in bringing over the enemy’s fleet, and it would be sufficient for you to see by the eyes of the ministers’. For many individual who are suffering from opening one’s eyes – People who suffer from fear of opening one’s eyes. At most times are purposely avoiding coming into contact with what it is that triggers them to experience fear or anxiety in the first place.

‘Thus, by the great friendship of the secretary, the whole affair was compromised. It was strictly enjoined, that the project of starving you by degrees should be kept a secret; but the sentence of putting out your eyes was entered on the books; none dissenting, except Bolgolam the admiral, who, being a creature of the empress, was perpetually instigated by her majesty to insist upon your death, she having borne perpetual malice against you, on account of that infamous’. ‘Put somebody's eyes out’ is a phrase that means to poke or injure someone's eyes.

‘In three days your friend the secretary will be directed to come to your house, and read before you the articles of impeachment; and then to signify the great lenity and favour of his majesty and council, whereby you are only condemned to the loss of your eyes, which his majesty does not question you will gratefully and humbly submit to; and twenty of his majesty’s surgeons will attend, in order to see the operation well performed, by discharging very sharp pointed arrows into the balls of your eyes, as you lie on the ground’.

‘All I ventured was to raise mine eyes towards the sun, and place my hands together in a supplicating posture, and to speak some words in a humble melancholy tone, suitable to the condition I then was in: for I apprehended every moment that he would dash me against the ground, as we usually do any little hateful animal, which we have a mind to destroy’. ‘Raise one’s eyes’ means ‘look at something and pay attention’.

‘...who was old and dim-sighted, put on his spectacles to behold me better; at which I could not forbear laughing very heartily, for his eyes appeared like the full moon shining into a chamber at two windows’. ‘Eyes appeared like the full moon shining into a chamber at two windows’ is a really interesting phrase that gives the information ‘eyes kindled with happiness’.

Results and Discussions

‘But the most hateful sight of all, was the lice crawling on their clothes. I could see distinctly the limbs of these vermin with my naked eye, much better than those of a European louse through a microscope, and their snouts with which they rooted like swine. They were the first I had ever beheld, and I should have been curious enough to dissect one of them, if I had had proper instruments, which I unluckily left behind me in the ship, although, indeed, the sight was so nauseous, that it perfectly turned my stomach.’ Naked eye, also called bare eye or unaided eye, is the practice of engaging in visual perception unaided by a magnifying, light-collecting optical instrument, such as a telescope or microscope, or eye protection.

‘The captain understood my raillery very well, and merrily replied with the old English proverb, ‘that he doubted mine eyes were bigger than my belly, for he did not observe my stomach so good, although I had fasted all day;’ and, continuing in his mirth, protested ‘he would have gladly given a hundred pounds, to have seen my closet...’ ‘that he doubted mine eyes were bigger than my belly, for he did not observe my stomach so good, although I had fasted all day’ is a proverb means think someone is greedy.

‘This flapper is likewise employed diligently to attend his master in his walks, and upon occasion to give him a soft flap on his eyes; because he is always so wrapped up in cogitation, that he is in manifest danger of falling down every precipice, and

bouncing his head against every post; and in the streets, of justling others, or being justled himself into the kennel’.

‘The people in the streets walked fast, looked wild, their eyes fixed, and were generally in rags. We passed through one of the town gates, and went about three miles into the country, where I saw many labourers working with several sorts of tools in the ground, but was not able to conjecture what they were about: neither did observe any expectation either of corn or grass, although the....’. If his eyes were fixed on or upon something it means that he is looking at something with a great focus.

‘By all which, instead of being discouraged, they are fifty times more violently bent upon prosecuting their schemes, driven equally on by hope and despair: that as for himself, being not of an enterprising spirit, he was content to go on in the old forms, to live in the houses his ancestors had built, and act as they did, in every part of life, without innovation: that some few other persons of quality and gentry had done the same, but were looked on with an eye of contempt and ill-will, as enemies to art, ignorant, and ill common-wealth’s men, preferring their own ease and sloth before the general improvement of their country.’ The least researched of the seven universal emotions, contempt is the feeling of dislike for and superiority (usually morally) over another person, group of people, and/or their actions.

‘Homer was the taller and comelier person of the two, walked very erect for one of his age, and his eyes were the most quick and piercing I ever beheld.’

‘They went some paces off, as if it were to confer together, walking side by side, backward and forward, like persons deliberating upon some affair of weight, but often turning their eyes towards me, as it were to watch that I might not escape. I was amazed to see such actions and behaviour in brute beasts; and concluded with myself, that if the inhabitants of this country were endued with a proportionable degree of reason, they must needs be the wisest people upon earth.’

‘I feared my brain was disturbed by my sufferings and misfortunes. I roused myself, and looked about me in the room where I was left alone: this was furnished like the first, only after a more elegant manner. I rubbed my eyes often, but the same objects still occurred. I pinched my arms and sides to awake myself, hoping I might be in a dream. I then absolutely concluded, that all these appearances could be nothing else but necromancy and magic.’ ‘To rub my eyes’ means ‘to look tired and lazy’

Conclusion

‘He then began to find fault with other parts of my body: ‘the flatness of my face, the prominence of my nose, mine eyes placed directly in front, so that I could not look on either side without turning my head: that I was not able to feed myself, without lifting one of my fore-feet to my mouth: and therefore nature had placed those joints to answer that necessity.’ ‘Mine eyes placed directly in front’ means ‘to stare at something’.

‘After which, like one whose imagination was struck with something never seen or heard of before, he would lift up his eyes with amazement and indignation. Power, government, war, law, punishment, and a thousand other things, had no terms wherein that language could express them, which made the difficulty almost insuperable, to give my master any conception of what I meant.’

‘But I must freely confess, that the many virtues of those excellent quadrupeds, placed in opposite view to human corruptions, had so far opened my eyes and enlarged my understanding, that I began to view the actions and passions of man in a very different light, and to think the honour of my own kind not worth managing; which, besides, it was impossible for me to do, before a person of so acute a judgment as my master, who daily convinced me of a thousand faults in myself, whereof I had not the least perception before, and which, with us, would never be numbered even among human infirmities.’

‘When all was ready, and the day came for my departure, I took leave of my master and lady and the whole family, my eyes flowing with tears, and my heart quite sunk with grief. But his honour, out of curiosity, and, perhaps, (if I may speak without vanity,) partly out of kindness, was determined to see me in my canoe, and got several of his neighbouring friends to accompany him.’ ‘Eyes flowing with tears’ means ‘to look sad and cry’.

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