Utopia, Dystopia or Anti-utopia? *Gulliver's Travels* and the Utopian Mode of Discourse

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Should his tall tales of marvellous voyages, newly discovered peoples, and fantastic societies be insufficient to call Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), and utopian writings in general, to his reader's mind, "Lemuel Gulliver" refers to *Utopia* directly in a letter to his cousin printed with the second edition (1735) of his *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World* (familiarly know as *Gulliver's Travels*):

> If the Censure of the *Yahoos* could any Way affect me, I should have great Reason to complain, that some of them are so bold as to think my Book of Travels a meer Fiction out of mine own Brain, and have gone so far as to drop Hints, that the *Houyhnhnms* and *Yahoos* have no more Existence than the Inhabitants of Utopia. (Swift 30)

The joke here is obviously on the naïve reader, and underlines that the primary feature shared by the Houyhnhnms, Yahoos, and Utopians is their fictionality. If it is to be inferred from this feature that the Houyhnhnms and Yahoos are similar to More's Utopians in any other way, then the comparison does little to help the reader (naïve or otherwise) learn more about Swift's imagined peoples. More's Utopians, like the text which described them, are "shrouded in ambiguity," which nearly five hundred years of interpretation have yet to dispel (Manuel and Manuel 5). The reason for this is of course that ambiguity is integral to More's text, as recent criticism has recognised.[1] So, Swift's likening of his own invented people to those of Thomas More is more than a tongue-in-cheek aside; it serves to remind us that ambiguity and irony have always been a feature of the utopian mode of discourse.

The use of journeys, strange new societies and peoples, and a potentially mendacious narrator have made Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* an obvious subject for those interested in the development of the utopian mode of discourse in the eighteenth century.[2] Several modern interpretations of the text recognise its utopian nature or even understand it as consisting of a series

of utopias.[3] Others have looked in detail at the relationship between *Gulliver's Travels* and *Utopia*, as the most obvious benchmark of utopianism during this period, to show that More's text is to some extent a model for Swift's. Such endeavours are predicated on an understanding that utopia, its features and its history, provides an important context for understanding Gulliver's fantastical journeys and his reporting of them. Brian Vickers, who has given a detailed reading of the relationship between the two texts by focusing on their satiric function, argues that, despite important differences—and in particular the divergent use of satire which involves Swift's satiric method of comparison becoming "almost an inversion of More's"—these two portrayals of other worlds share significant common ground (241). In Vickers' reading, *Utopia*, in its political and ethical attack on contemporary society through the juxtaposition of an imaginary equivalent, emerges as a source and model for *Gulliver's Travels*.[4] Even if *Utopia*'s status as model is established, this relationship does not, of course, mean that Swift's novel is itself a utopia, or even utopian. Given the frequent critical arguments to which this text has been subjected, it is hardly surprising that there is no consensus on this issue. Those who reject its utopian nature may emphasise the wide range of genres with which *Gulliver's Travels* engages, or see it as "anti-utopian in outlook" (Donnelly 115).[5] Others, however, recognise a kind of fellowship between Swift's book and *Utopia* which rests on their shared utopianism, or mutual discovery of "the moral and spiritual reality of utopia in our everyday lives" (Traugott 145).[6] It soon becomes evident from the secondary literature on the utopianism of *Gulliver's Travels* that a uniform idea of what it means for a text to be "utopian" is lacking. Broadly speaking there is a distinction between those critics who take *utopian* to mean idealistic or perfectionist about human society and perfectibility, and those for whom the deciding factor is the nature of its engagement with the utopian tradition or with a particular utopian text, usually (indeed, almost exclusively) More's *Utopia*.[7]

This discussion highlights a wider issue in the study of utopianism and utopian literature in the early modern period: how should utopia be understood in generic terms? Whilst much work has been done on defining utopia, the question here is not a generic one of definition but a broader one of identification: how do we identify and describe the ways in which a text is part of or interacts with the utopian mode of discourse? In other words, what makes a text *utopian*? This article will examine this question with reference

to *Gulliver's Travels*, arguing that the text is neither a utopia, nor a dystopia, nor even an anti-utopia (as it has variously been read); rather, it contains images of and interactions with ideas of utopia and dystopia which reflect its engagement with the utopian mode and qualify it as simultaneously utopian and dystopian. *Gulliver's Travels* thus provides a noteworthy case study for those interested in the development of the utopian mode during this period because it is an example of utopian writing which engages with the utopian mode whilst not being utopian in the sense of idealistic or optimistic; it is a utopian text which is also anti-utopian, or dystopian. This self-reflexive utopianism is a feature of the text's satirical nature; the utopian mode is satirised through use of the utopian form and by attacks upon features common to utopian fiction.[8]

Its employment of satire is the first significant way in which *Gulliver's Travels* engages with the utopian mode; the second is its rejection of the ideal earthly society, a rejection which, far from proclaiming the "anti-utopian" stance of *Gulliver's Travels*, signals the depth of its response to *Utopia* itself. *Gulliver's Travels'* utopianism can ultimately be identified in its denial of the possibility of an ideal state on earth; with this denial, it reaches the same conclusion as *Utopia*. [9] This article seeks to evaluate the nature of *Gulliver's Travels'* engagement with the utopian mode of discourse by paying attention to its relationship not only with *Utopia* but also with other prominent utopian fictions of the early modern period: Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1626), Johann Valentin Andreae's *Christianopolis* (1619), and Jan Amos Comenius's *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart* (1623).

The satire of utopian conventions in *Gulliver's Travels* is both general and specific. Swift's tale shares with the utopian form its use of fantastic journeys and shipwrecks, the naïve narrator, stories of new places and seemingly ideal societies. These are the features which have led scholars to place it within "a canon which includes Plato's *Republic*, Lucian's *True History*, More's *Utopia*, the works of Rabelais, and Bacon's *New Atlantis*," whether it is indeed "utopian fiction or merely Menippean satire" (Mezciems, "Unity" 5). However, a closer reading of the text reveals a more complex use of utopian features by highlighting not only the satirical nature of Swift's text but its deliberate mockery of earlier descriptions of new and ideal societies. Productive examples may be found in Gulliver's journey to Laputa, and in particular his relation of the grand Academy of Lagado and its peculiar inhabitants. Given

the utopia's historical concern with the subject of education, the description of the Academy seems an appropriate point at which to examine the text's utopianism.

Gulliver makes repeated visits to the Academy of Lagado, in which he calculates he enters at least five hundred rooms, each inhabited by a "Projector" (180). The first of these projectors encountered by Gulliver is chemical engineers employed in such tasks as "reduc[ing] human Excrement to its original Food" and turning ice into gunpowder (171). The Academy of Lagado clearly draws upon that other storehouse of scientific wonders, the idealised research institute of Salomon's House in Bacon's *New Atlantis*. In *New Atlantis*, Salomon's House is portrayed as the "very eye" or "lanthorn" of Bensalem, the "fair city" encountered by a group of travellers who put in there after a storm (464, 471, 457). Salomon's House is a large research institution which is run by several "Fathers," whose purpose is "the knowledge of causes, and secret motions of things; and the enlarging of the bounds of human Empire" (480). Whilst the work of Salomon's House is clearly fantastic, it is offered by Bacon as an image of the potential of the pursuit of knowledge in support of his wider project for the instauration of human understanding. Like the narrator of *New Atlantis* encountering the marvels of Salomon's House, Gulliver is impressed by the technologies on display, reporting how he is "highly pleased" and "fully convinced" by various inventions (171, 172). One particularly noteworthy experimenter is "*the universal Artist*" who has spent thirty years "employing his Thoughts for the Improvement of human Life" (173). Among the innovative schemes under his production are systems for attempting to soften marble "for Pillows and Pin-cushions," and to "sow Land with Chaff," the latter being proved by several experiments which Gulliver confesses he was not "skilful enough" to understand. The grand finale of this list of wonders is a scheme for breeding naked sheep throughout the kingdom by preventing the growth of wool on young lambs (173).

It is impossible to read such descriptions without calling to mind the similarly naïve and sincere admiration of other utopian travellers, in particular the narrators of *New Atlantis* and Andreae's *Christianopolis*. Like *New Atlantis*, *Christianopolis* recounts the experiences of an anonymous narrator who reaches a strange and far-off land after a sea-journey and storm. A large section of the narration is taken up with admiring descriptions of the laboratories, observatories, and lecture theatres of the idealised society,

Christianopolis. The narrator repeats his wonder at the knowledge and technologies of this utopian society in whose laboratories "heaven is married to the earth" and "the divine mysteries imprinted on the earth are discovered once more" (Bacon, *New Atlantis* 209). Although Andreae's emphasis is on the need to reorder society upon truly spiritual grounds, his narrator, like Bacon's, emphasises the seeming miracles that humanity could achieve in the right circumstances. However, whereas their enthusiasm reflected the genuine approval of Bacon and Andreae for the possibilities offered by technological advances, the narrative voice of *Gulliver's Travels* is firmly located within the satirical range. Swift's satirising of the "wonderful Curiosities" (173) of the Academy of Lagado may be interpreted within the wider context of his long-held aversion to the "new science," represented in particular by Bacon, whom Swift attacks in others of his works, such as *A Tale of a Tub*.[10] Other seventeenth-century experimenters such as Boyle and other members of the Royal Society had also been subject to Swiftian parody.[11] But in his lampooning of the Laputan experimenters and their ridiculous productions, Swift is satirizing not only natural philosophy but also its presentation in utopian terms and, thus, the utopian texts that had heralded the wonders of the new technologies a century before.

Certain parallels between the Academy of Lagado in Laputa and the idealised research institute, Salomon's House, in *New Atlantis* reflect the way in which the scientific experiments which were seen as genuine wonders in Bensalem have become objects of ridicule in Laputa. Like the Academy of Lagado, Salomon's House is large in size and filled with experimental scientists: 36 named officials as well as servants, novices, and apprentices (487). In the Academy, research is undertaken to "condens[e] Air into a dry tangible Substance, by extracting the Nitre, and letting the aqueous or fluid Particles percolate" (173), just as in Salomon's House the scientists "qualify the air as we think good and proper for the cure of divers diseases, and preservation of health" (481). Similarly, whilst the Academy boasts an experimenter dedicated to "extracting Sun-Beams out of Cucumbers" (170), Salomon's House contains "perspective-houses, where we make demonstrations of all lights and radiations" and "find also divers means, yet unknown to you, of producing light originally from divers bodies" (484). Whilst the Fellows of Salomon's House make "observations in urine and blood, not otherwise to be seen" (484–485), the scientists of the Academy examine human excrement in order

to identify its concealed parts (171). Just as the practitioners of Salomon's House have control over fire, using it for a variety of purposes and creating unquenchable "wildfires" as well as "new mixtures and compositions of gun-powder" (486), so a Laputan Projector is "at work to calcine Ice into Gunpowder" and intends to publish "a Treatise he had written concerning the Malleability of Fire" (171). Thus, the representation of the ideal research community and the naïve observer in *New Atlantis* are reflected in Swift's ironic portrayal of a model scientific community.

The parallels between earlier utopian fiction and *Gulliver's Travels* are not restricted to the kinds of physical experiments being undertaken. The ideal language schemes and mathematical systems described in *Gulliver's Travels* are reminiscent of the satire on such practices in Comenius's *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart*. Comenius's text is rather different from the other utopias here considered; indeed, its status as a utopia is not usually discussed. The *Labyrinth* clearly engages with the utopian mode, however; it offers an image of an ideal society on earth which is not a physical society, but a spiritual one founded on shared community with Christ. The *Labyrinth* relates the experiences of its narrator, a pilgrim who journeys around a version of contemporary society in order to learn more about the world and decide "with what affairs I should occupy my life" (62). In his tour of the world, the pilgrim becomes increasingly disgusted by each profession and aspect of the human condition that he observes. The institutions of the world, and specifically knowledge-based institutions such as the library and the university (which should provide guidance and knowledge), are found to be corrupt and as failing to offer the individual and social support which is their true function. Ultimately, the pilgrim realises that the only prospect of an ideal life is within himself, in communion in Christ, and he commits himself to this path. Comenius may not offer a plan for a perfect society, but his presentation of the potential for each individual to know Christ and discover a paradise in his own heart makes attainment of a good life on earth feasible.

However, before this utopia is reached, Comenius exposes the labyrinth's educational system and its institutions through a biting satire which attacks the inequality of educational opportunity, the cruelty of schools, the failure of universities to teach, and, more broadly, the failure of society to prepare its young people for a happy life. As part of this satire, he parodies scholars who merely carry bags of books around to prevent having to absorb

knowledge by some other means (97), an image which is called to mind by the "sages" of Laputa, who are hampered by the weight of sacks of "*Things,*" which they are obliged to carry around in order to be able to use them in conversation (176). In the *Labyrinth,* the scholars' other method of gaining knowledge is the eating of the written word in the form of books (97), exactly as the Laputan students of mathematics are encouraged to eat formulae written on wafers, which they will then absorb as they digest them (176–177).

Whilst both Comenius and Swift satirize the notion that learning can so easily be taken in, Swift goes further in his attack on a belief dearly held by the educational reformers of the Second Reformation such as Comenius: that new and reformed systems of learning will enable faster and more thorough absorption of knowledge. Comenius's satire on the educational practices that his pilgrim observes in the world are intended as evidence—as part of his wider project of pedagogical reform—for the need to improve learning and its organisation. For Swift, however, it is these new systems of learning which fail to produce the results they promise. In Laputa, Gulliver observes the development of a linguistic computer in the form of a large frame which creates sections of sentences through the random movement of words within it (173–174). The purpose of this experimentation is to show the world the "Usefulness" of a project which will enable the "most ignorant" would-be authors to "write Books in Philosophy, Poetry, Politicks, Law, Mathematicks and Theology, without the least Assistance from Genius or Study" (173). Technology has overtaken the need for human intelligence and learning, a state which directly satirizes the utopian hopes of the early seventeenth century that developments in education and the organisation of learning would lead to an amelioration of the human condition.[12] Shortly afterwards, Gulliver notes a variety of language schemes, including one that involves "entirely abolishing all Words whatsoever." This scheme would have the benefit of operating "as a universal Language to be understood in all civilized Nations" (176). Thus, the emphasis on usefulness, the interest in universal languages and systems of learning, and the enthusiasm for the reform of education which characterized the utopian thinking of social reformers such as Bacon, Andreae, and Comenius are all fodder for Swift's satire on the idealism which their writings embodied. Unlike the narrators of *New Atlantis* and *Christianopolis,* and despite the wonders he has witnessed, Gulliver displays no desire to stay in Laputa: "I saw nothing in this Country that could invite me to a longer Continuance;

and began to think of returning home to *England*" (182).[13] Gulliver may be impressed by the achievements of the Academy of Lagado, but the scientific institution is no longer the focus of the ideal society.

Another important way in which *Gulliver's Travels* engages with the utopian mode of discourse is by presenting a society which the narrator interprets as ideal. In the land of the Houyhnhnms, Gulliver finds an ideal society organised entirely along rational lines. The Houyhnhnms are naturally virtuous, with no capacity for vice, and as a consequence "their grand Maxim is, to cultivate *Reason*, and to be wholly governed by it" (242). This emphasis on rationality leads them to arrange all aspects of social life according to logical patterns. Procreation, for instance, is organised for the benefit of the breed, and children are treated with a common affection that does not distinguish one individual's offspring from another's (243). As their lives are untroubled by the vicissitudes of unwanted emotions and passions, the operation of the Houyhnhnms' reason "is not mingled, obscured, or discoloured by Passion and Interest." Although their society relies upon slavery and is thus not wholly equal, there is nowhere in the land in which a stranger is not welcomed as though he were at home (242). This rational society produces feelings of great admiration in its visitor, who considers its inhabitants the most impressive he has met (251). All of these features reflect the obvious parallels between the land of the Houyhnhnms and Utopia, which is described in similar terms by the narrator Hythlodaeus. Like Houyhnhnmland, Utopia is organised entirely along rational lines: there is an absence of sin; children are brought up in common; a system of slavery operates; and one city is exactly the same as another, so that the Utopian is everywhere at home. Like Hythlodaeus, Gulliver compares his own society with the land of the Houyhnhnms in unfavourable terms. The Houyhnhnms' society, like Utopia, is characterized in Gulliver's terms by what it lacks, as much as by its positive features:

> Here were no Gibers, Censurers, Backbiters, Pickpockets, Highwaymen, House-breakers, Attorneys, Bawds, Buffoons, Gamesters, Politicians, Wits, Spleneticks, tedious Talkers, Controvertists, Ravishers, Murderers, Robbers, Virtuoso's; no Leaders or Followers of Party and Faction; no Encouragers to Vice, by Seducement or Examples: No Dungeon, Axes, Gibbets, Whipping-posts, or Pillories;

> No cheating Shopkeepers or Mechanicks: No
> Pride, Vanity or Affectation: No Fops, Bullies,
> Drunkards, strolling Whores, or Poxes: No
> ranting, lewd, expensive Wives: No stupid,
> proud Pedants: No importunate, over-bearing,
> quarrelsome, noisy, roaring, empty, conceited,
> swearing Companions: No Scoundrels raised
> from the Dust upon the Merit of their Vices;
> No Lords, Fidlers, Judges or Dancing-masters.
> (250)

More also employs litotes to describe his idealised society. In Utopia, "fraud, theft, rapine, quarrels, disorders, brawls, seditions, murders, treasons, [and] poisonings" no longer exist, and nor do "fear, anxiety, worries, toils, and sleepless nights" (243). Just as Hythlodaeus's narration of the virtues of Utopian society is ostensibly related in order to benefit others, Gulliver tries to emulate the Houyhnhnms and to publicise their character and habits in order to be "useful to my own Species, by celebrating the Praises of the renowned *Houyhnhnms*, and proposing their Virtues to the Imitation of Mankind" (253).

There is an important difference, however, between Gulliver's and Hythlodaeus's experience of these idealised societies. Hythlodaeus, although he has left Utopia, lived there happily for five years and is able to return; at the end of the dialogue, it is believed he may have done so (117). Gulliver, on the other hand, is barely tolerated whilst living with the Houyhnhnms, and is eventually exiled and obliged either to live with his fellow Yahoos or swim back whence he came (252). On hearing this shocking news, the traveller faints. Helped to build a vessel by his Houyhnhnm Master, he leaves his newfound land "quite sunk with Grief," and at last returns home to England (254). Unable to adjust to life at home, and in particular to the offensive smells of his own family, Gulliver ends his narrative five years after his return from the land of the Houyhnhnms. Having removed himself from human society, due to his fear of his fellow Yahoos' "Teeth" and "Claws," the former traveller finds solace in the company of his two horses, with whom he converses for four hours a day and who can understand him "tolerably well," and in the equine smell of his groom (261). Gulliver has encountered a society which he feels to be truly ideal, but he is not fit to live there. Forever changed by his experience, he is unable to re-assimilate into his own environment, and ends up caught between the perfect society he remembers and the real world

in which he is obliged to live. In a final utopian touch, Gulliver reveals that it is the pride of his fellow human beings which he finds particularly abhorrent:

> My Reconcilement to the *Yahoo*-kind in general might not be so difficult, if they would be content with those Vices and Follies only which Nature hath entitled them to. . . . But, when I behold a Lump of Deformity, and Diseases both in Body and Mind, smitten with *Pride*, it immediately breaks all the Measures of my Patience. (266)

Pride is also the sin which Hythlodaeus identifies as chief among evils; the Utopians' success is down to their combat against "this one single monster, the chief and progenitor of all plagues" (243). Similarly, it is the absence of pride which Gulliver identifies as being the strongest feature of the Houyhnhnms. Begging all those "who have any Tincture of this absurd Vice" to keep out of his sight, Gulliver tries and fails to bring his utopia home (266).

Just as Gulliver sees the land of the Houyhnhnms as an ideal society, scholars have frequently read it as a utopia within the text as a whole. As such, it offers a standard of perfection towards which it is presumed human society is meant to strive:

> Swift's Houyhnhnmland is this [i.e., a Platonic] sort of contemplative utopia: a picture of the Platonic society against which the Yahooish order of actual human societies can be judged—and condemned. Man, of course, can never be a Houyhnhnm, nor was meant to be, but the rational society of Houyhnhnmland nevertheless offers a goal of moral perfection toward which he should strive, even if—or perhaps because—he will never reach its sublime equilibrium. A society's reach, after all, should exceed its grasp, or what's a utopia for?
> (Beauchamp 209)[14]

Whatever utopia is "for," it may hardly be seen to be fulfilling this idealistic function in *Gulliver's Travels*. A more recent study of the text has argued that,

on the contrary, Swift's purpose is to manifest Gulliver's ideal and simultaneously to show its impossibility: by "parading the Houyhnhnms, the epitome of virtue and rationality, before and for Gulliver, Swift exhibits the ideal which the philosophy of the schools . . . claimed for man's nature" (Real 100). This results in a "double-edged" satire which simultaneously "shows that humanity does not measure up to its own standard" and moreover that "this standard is not for man." Humanity's failure to reach its own ideal is thus perceived as a manifestation of an inability to live by reason alone just as Gulliver is unable to manage to emulate the Houyhnhnms' rational model in his own world. Gulliver's fate ultimately shows that "man's desire to be regarded as reasonable is a symptom of madness" (100). According to this understanding of the relationship between *Gulliver's Travels* and the utopian tradition, it is a mistake to understand Swift's satire as utopian in character or intent. Whilst *Utopia* is a paradox, lacking resolution and refusing to hold a position itself but inviting the continuation of debate, *Gulliver's Travels* is seen as a closed book: "the conversation is over, and nothing else remains to be said" (97, 106).

In spite of the considerable differences between the two texts, however, there are ways in which Swift's novel may be seen as utopian both in character and intent. As the brief reading of the text above has shown, there are similarities between the societies of the land of the Houyhnhnms and the Utopians that seem more than superficial. More importantly, *Gulliver's Travels* can also be seen as utopian in its refusal to concede that the ideal society can exist in the real world. As in *Utopia*, a seemingly ideal society can only be imagined far from English shores. Upon return to the home environment, it soon becomes apparent that the characterising features of the utopia, in particular its rationality, mean that it cannot serve as a useful model for real people in the real world. More's *Utopia*, despite repeated efforts to read it as a genuine representation of an ideal society, ultimately refuses to allow such a reading to stand by frequently signalling that its presentation of an ideal human community, with its layers of narration and moments of deliberate confusion of the reader, is not to be taken at face value. By presenting an apparently perfect society through Hythlodaeus's narration, More offers not an ideal state but a type of an ideal state—an imagining of a society that is ideal by certain standards and criteria. Ultimately, however, these criteria are shown to be unsatisfactory. The Utopians' commitment to living rationally, for example, leads them to practice assisted suicide, to live for pleasure above

all else, to believe that religious faith is a matter of free will, and to exhibit signs of spiritual complacency (187, 167, 163, 237). Thus, rather than offering a solution to the ills of the world, *Utopia* is deliberately enigmatic, and sceptical about the possibility of an ideal human existence in this life. Swift's text, like More's, is doubtful about the ideal commonwealth and rejects the notion that practices can be lifted from one society into another without difficulty. It is in its rejection of the ideal society that *Gulliver's Travels* is most like its forebear *Utopia*.[15]

Another shared feature of these texts is that, whilst the ideal nature of the utopian society is destabilised, no truly ideal equivalent is offered in its place within the text. However, in *Utopia* the nature of the truly ideal society is implied by its absence. On one level, *Utopia* denies the possibility of a perfect social community through the creation of an environment which seems as good as can be but is really too good to be true. For More, the perfect human life on earth is a contradiction in terms; the only prospect for such an existence is after death. For Christian humanists such as More and his friend Erasmus, the question of the nature of the ideal life would ultimately be spiritual in nature. There is a hint of this ideal life even in Erasmus's sarcastic *Praise of Folly* (1511), as Folly speaks in the voice of Christ to criticize those who think it possible to live a perfect life based on outward appearance, or indeed that it is possible to live a good life at all outside Christ's teaching (both of which features characterize the Utopians):

> Long ago in the sight of all, without wrapping up my words in parables, I promised my father's kingdom, not for wearing a cowl or chanting petty prayers or practising abstinence, but for performing the duties of faith and charity. . . . Those who also want to appear holier than I am can go off and live in the heavens like the Abraxasians, if they like, or order a new heaven to be built for them by the men whose foolish teaching they have set above my own commands. (167)

It is interesting to remember here that Utopus's realm was known as Abraxa before he renamed it Utopia (99). *Utopia's* answer to the question of the ideal life is its demonstration that a "new heaven" cannot be built on this

earth; the only heaven, or ideal human existence, exists outside of human experience. Thus, on another level *Utopia* is confident about the potential of the ideal society: it exists as a spiritual possibility for true Christians. Similarly, the other utopian texts considered in this article, whether they posit the ideal society in the present or the future, on earth or in a spiritual community, are founded on the understanding that it can and will exist.[16] This is the crucial difference between these utopias and *Gulliver's Travels*. Swift satirises aspects of the utopian tradition and rejects the notion of the ideal earthly society whilst choosing not to offer an alternative. Thus, whilst the utopian mode has in one sense come full circle in 200 years—in that it is once again the rejection of the ideal commonwealth in a satirical mode—there has been a crucial change in its operation. In *Gulliver's Travels*, it is no longer certain that the ideal society can exist in any form or time. Gulliver's travels leave him sheltering in his stables, unable to bear human society, having learned nothing that will improve the life he is ultimately obliged to live. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the utopian mode was used to explore the question of how to live the good life with a view to offering its readers the prospect of the ideal society through the "sincere" utopias of writers such as Andreae and Comenius. The eighteenth century would see the publication of sincerely idealistic utopias, but through texts such as *Gulliver's Travels* it would also see the development of the utopian satire, the necessary development for the emergence of the dystopia, or anti-utopian fiction.[17] Thus, it is in its use of its ironic utopianism, as well as its satire of the utopian tradition, that *Gulliver's Travels* establishes itself as a simultaneously utopian and dystopian text.

Endnotes

[1] The ironies of More's text have been a focus most recently for Grace 273; Fox 27; and Baker-Smith 217–218, 232.

[2] These features also signal the text's interaction with another form of writing which also developed in important ways in the early modern period and is linked to utopia, the genre of travel writing. For Swift's use of travel narratives in *Gulliver's Travels*, see Passmann, Eddy, Shimada, and Loveman 15.

[3] For *Gulliver's Travels* as a utopia or series of utopias, see Morton 132; Raymond Smith 389–398; Voigt 117–120; and Siu-Han Yip 467.

[4] See also Ehrenpreis 3: 346; and Brink.

[5] For *Gulliver's Travels* as "anti-utopian," see Donnelly 115–124. For the wide range of genres in *Gulliver's Travels*, see Frederik N. Smith 246.

[6] Traugott sees Swift and More as sharing "a particular kind of view . . . a peculiar kind of irony" (146) and a "utopian mentality" (151).

[7] An example of a scholar who uses the first interpretation of utopia is Donnelly whilst Vickers subscribes to the second usage of the term. Other readings of the relationship between *Gulliver's Travels* and *Utopia* include Traugott, Vickers, Mezciems ("The Unity of Swift's 'Voyage to Laputa'"), Hammond, Radner, Rielly, and Real.

[8] For *Gulliver's Travels* as a satire, see Rosenheim 90–102; and Fabian 421–434.

[9] For definitions of utopia and the utopian, see Frye 25; Suvin 50, 52; Manuel and Manuel 4–5; and Davis 18–19. In his recent book on the early modern utopia, Christopher Kendrick offers a useful overview of theoretical imaginings of utopia towards a broad definition of utopia not restricted to the early modern period (3–73).

[10] Vickers 92, 99.

[11] See Vickers 87. However it has also been argued that assumptions that Swift parodied Bacon are false; see Quintana, and Mezciems, "Utopia and 'the Thing which is not'" 60n7.

[12] Bacon frequently wrote that the practice of natural philosophy would provide the means of restoring man's dominion over nature by enabling him to re-attain the Adamic condition. See, for example, his *Valerius Terminus*, in *Works* 3: 222.

[13] In contrast to Gulliver, Bacon's narrator records that only 13 visitors to Bensalem have been known to leave it; his own departure from the place is not recorded (471). In *Christianopolis*, the narrator frequently avows his desire to remain, and his intention to return (282).

[14] A similar opinion is expressed by Hart 128.

[15] For the opposite opinion, see Radner 51. For the deliberate enigmatism of *Utopia*, see Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Thought* 1: 255–262, and "Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* and the Language of Renaissance Humanism" 123–124.

[16] This feature of utopianism has been identified by Ernst Bloch as the "Not Yet." See Bloch 177.

[17] For the existence of eighteenth-century British utopianism, see

Claeys vii. Claeys argues that *Gulliver's Travels* inspires utopian satire, a "sub-genre of utopianism" (xli).

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