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ERUDI

Real or imagined? The non-fictional and the fictional in Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moon* (1638) and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726)

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In Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moon* (1638) and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), which are both works of fiction, the characters and societies described, as well as the travels recounted by the narrators, were imagined by their authors. Generations of critics and scholars have tried to decode and to analyse elements of reality or of veracity in these texts. In this essay, I will focus on some features both texts have in common, while trying to answer the following questions: to what extent were both authors' imaginations influenced or fed by previous or contemporary travel literature? To what extent do the fictional situations and societies reflect the authors' contemporary political institutions and societies? And to what extent do the narrators reflect the personal views or aspirations of the two authors?

Through examples selected from the narratives, and on the basis of various scholars' analyses, I will demonstrate that, though both works belong to imaginary travel literature, a large part of their fictional – and sometimes extravagant – human characters, institutions and societies are inspired by real ones, and either deformed through satirical lenses or disguised to mask the authors' own views. To do so, I will analyse each of the three "dimensions" or "layers" of both books. First, I will enhance how the narrative – the literal meaning of the story – is intended to entertain the reader, notably by using the codes of "real" travel accounts. Second, I will uncover some of the authors' messages – the essential meaning of the story which lies under its surface – disguised through writing modes and techniques such as satire and blurring the borders between fiction and non-fiction. Furthermore, I will highlight in some examples how a successful satire establishes an emotional bond, some kind of intellectual complicity, between the author and the reader, while protecting the author from censorship. Finally, I will disclose how both authors manipulate not only their narrators but also their readers, for example through the prefatory materials added to their stories.

Apart from being both Anglican bishops, Francis Godwin and Jonathan Swift shared the characteristic of being "armchair travellers" who wrote imaginary travel stories without travelling themselves. Except for a few cases reported by scholars, most of Godwin's and Swift's contemporary readers understood that the narrators' adventures were fictional ones. Though both books share the characteristic of not belonging to a specific genre – they cannot be pigeonholed as travel books, novels, comedies or allegories – they first and foremost appeal to the public by recounting wonderful tales. Be it three or four centuries ago or today, everyone enjoys a good story. With the proliferation of foreign travel and the discoveries of the 17th and early 18th centuries, travel literature proliferated, thus facilitating the writing of fictional travel accounts as parodies or imitations of "real" ones.

Scholars have found evidence that both authors, though separated by almost a century, had the opportunity to read contemporary travel accounts and fed their stories with some of the real geographical and sociological details mentioned in those books. For example, in his article "A Note on Bishop Godwin's *Man in the Moone*: The East Indies Trade Route and a "Language" of Musical Notes", James R. Knowlson demonstrates that the description of "the blessed Isle of S. Hellens" in *The Man in the Moone* (Godwin[1], p. 74) was borrowed from previous accounts of voyages to the East Indies, which were published between 1598 and 1600, and were thus available when Godwin wrote his tale. "But, though he clearly felt no obligation to maintain complete accuracy, he did portray the island much as it had appeared in the standard accounts of the time and as it had been shown visually in contemporary maps and woodcuts" (Knowlson, p. 358). Knowlson also suggests that Godwin's idea of the Lunars' language of musical notes may come from the "tonal system" of Chinese, which was

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[1] Godwin, Francis. *The Man in the Moone*. Ed. William Poole. Toronto: Broadview Editions, 2009.

described by Father Ricci – a Jesuit missionary in the Far East – in his diaries, published in 1615 (Knowlson, p. 360).

According to R. W. Frantz[2], it is common knowledge that Swift was fond of voyage accounts and was influenced by them in writing *Gulliver's Travels*, either copying their style – for example, William Dampier's – or keeping in mind certain revolting details which the voyagers had described in their "vivid, homespun prose" – for instance in creating and shaping his Yahoos. For example, Gulliver's first encounter with the Yahoos, who "leaped up into the tree; from whence they began to discharge their excrements on [his] head" (Swift[3], p. 169) may have been borrowed from Dampier's description of monkeys in his *Voyages and Descriptions*, published in 1699. Another source of inspiration for the Yahoos may have been the "[n]auseating descriptions of the depraved Hottentots, whose faces, like those of the Yahoos, were 'flat and broad (…)' [which] appeared in print with striking frequency throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries" (Frantz, p. 53).

In *The Origins of Gulliver's Travels* (1957), Irvin Ehrenpreis demonstrates how Swift drew his inspiration from friends and contemporary political figures in his creation of the characters and situations in *Gulliver's Travels*, and gives a striking example for each part of the book. In Part One, Gulliver's misfortunes echo what happened to Viscount Bolingbroke after the signature of the Treaty of Utrecht and the Whigs' investigation of the secret terms in which it had been negotiated. Gulliver's most important foe, Flimnap, represents Sir Robert Walpole, then instigator of the Committee of Secrecy. In Part Two, the character of Sir William Temple may have inspired the portrait of the King of Brobdingnag. Ehrenpreis refers to the philosophical quarrel between Swift and Bolingbroke to interpret the pseudo teachings

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[2] Frantz, R. W. "Swift's Yahoos and the Voyagers". *Modern Philology*, vol. 29, no.1, August 1931, pp 49-57.
[3] Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver's Travels*. Ware (Hertfordshire): Wordsworth Classics, 2001.

of the Houyhnhnms in Part Four, and shows that the Reverend Thomas Sheridan "gave [Swift] a model for the king and people of the flying island" in the third voyage. (p. 895).

However, the borrowing of traits from real people or of real facts from contemporary non-fictional travellers' accounts should not be confused with elements of realism, which were introduced by Godwin and Swift in their works to facilitate the readers' suspension of disbelief, as in any work of fiction. Throughout both books, for example, detailed information such as dates, dimensions, daily activities, and sums of money are given generously and accurately, like the exact content of Gonsales' purse in *The Man in the Moone* (p. 71) or the inventory of Gulliver's pockets made by the two Lilliputian officers in *Gulliver's Travels* (pp. 23-24). The size of the people of Brobdingnag is humorously rendered in the accessories and tools created by Gulliver from materials found on the island: "there was the comb I had contrived out of the stumps of the king's beard; (…) I shewed him a corn, that I had cut off with my own hands, from a maid of honour's toe; it was about the bigness of a Kentish pippin" (p. 110).

> As Knowlson explains in "A Note on Bishop Godwin's *Man in the Moone* (…)",
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> [w]ithin the tale itself a very effort is made to lend an apparent verisimilitude to the fiction. The borrowings (…) from authentic travel books, together with a liberal supply of dates, recognizable place-names and proper names, a first-person autobiographical account of the hero's life and adventures, and a fairly precise historical and geographical setting, all tend to persuade the reader to accept the fantastic voyage that was to follow (p. 359).

This remark is also relevant for Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*: in "Swift and Travel Literature", Arthur Sherbo studies the similitudes between some details mentioned and situations encountered by Gulliver all along his story and those narrated in many travel accounts that Swift could possibly have read and remembered when he wrote his book. Through his analysis of ships' proper names, men's occupations, nautical jargon, and parallels between the prefatory matters of *Gulliver's Travels* and non-fictional travel memoirs, Sherbo demonstrates that Swift used everywhere in his book "the language, conventions, and the very details of

travel literature as the vehicle for his satire of man and his institutions" (p. 125). He also underlines that the satirist expected his readers to have read enough of this popular genre to understand his allusions to it throughout his text. This reflection leads us to explore the second dimension of both *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Man in the Moon* and, by extracting the essential meaning of the story from the texts, understand what kind of reality lies behind the fiction. I will also explain what kind of narrative technique was chosen by the two authors to disguise their opinions.

Being a master of satire, Swift used irony as a powerful tool to convey his criticism of his country's customs and institutions, as I shall demonstrate in the following two examples. In Part One of *Gulliver's Travels*, A Voyage to Lilliput, the "two struggling parties in this empire, under the names of Tramecksans, and Slamecksans, from the high and low heels on their shoes" (p. 34) is an obvious satire of England's two political parties, the Tories (or the High Church party) and the Whigs (or the Low Church party). The controversy among the Lilliputians about breaking their eggs upon the large or small end before eating them, reflects the religious tensions between Protestants ('Little-Endians') and Catholics ('Big-Endians'). Blefuscu, the rival and historical enemy of Lilliput (England), represents France, which harboured and aided Catholics under the Commonwealth and the Pretender to the English Crown (James Edward Stuart), after James II had been deposed:

> Now the Big-Endian exiles have found so much credit in the Emperor of Blefuscu's court; and so much private assistance and encouragement from their party here at home, that a bloody war hath been carried on between the two empires for six and thirty moons with various success (p. 35).

In Part Three, the account of the relation between Laputa, the floating island, and Balnibarbi, its impoverished and wasted dominion below, is a satire of the relations between England and Ireland. In chapter 3, the story of the Lindalino (Dublin) rebellion is an allegory

of the Wood's Halfpence affair, a political scandal that Swift had already – though anonymously – denounced in his *Drapier's Letters* (1724). This passage was omitted by both Motte and Faulkner in the first editions of *Gulliver's Travels*, presumably out of fear of prosecution[4]. In chapter 4, once arrived on Banilbarbi, Gulliver observes that he "never knew a soil so unhappily cultivated, houses so ill contrived and so ruinous, or a people whose countenances and habit, expressed so much misery and want" (p. 132). Chapter 5, in which Gulliver describes the grand academy of Lagado, is interpreted by Doreen Roberts (in her notes to the text[5]) as a charge against the Royal Society and its famous scientists–like Isaac Newton and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz–and its "universal artists" (p. 137)—like Robert Boyle or Francis Bacon. Through the description of the projectors' tasks, Swift ridicules "not only scientific inventors but also devisers of political, social, educational or commercial schemes (…). After the scandal of the South Sea Bubble (1720), the term [projector] particularly connoted financial speculation" (*Gulliver's Travels*, p. 238). In his French translation of *Gulliver's Travels*, Jacques Pons sees in chapter 5 a charge against the Philosophical Society of Dublin – founded in 1683 as a branch of the Royal Society – and its "great men", like Robert Boyle or William Molyneux, whose experiences were parodied in Swift's text. (*Voyages de Gulliver*[6], notes pp. 428-429).

Since satire, like irony, says one thing and means another, the reader must be able to understand the true intent of the satirist in order to smile with him. Though Swift used many caricatures and exaggerations to signal his purpose to his readers, the targets of his attacks were certainly more obvious to his contemporaries than to today's readers, who have to do some research on the context in order to fully appreciate the flavour of Swift's irony. However, in Part Four, Swift's satire of man's dual nature is intemporal and the reader cannot

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[4] *Gulliver's Travels*, Wordsworth Classics, 2001, Note 197, p. 237
[5] *Gulliver's Travels*, Wordsworth Classics, 2001
[6] *Voyages de Gulliver*, Collection Folio Classique, traduit et annoté par Jacques Pons, édition Gallimard, 1976

but agree with Robin Wilkinson's commentary[7] on a passage from *Gulliver's Travels*, Part Four, chapter VII:

> Gulliver's failings encourage the readers to identify with him as imperfect, typically human, somewhere between a primitive Yahoo and a superior Houyhnhm. However, in Swiftian satire the strongest bond is that created by the complicity between the implied author and reader – we smile with the satirist at our own and yet familiar world. Involvement makes for an enlightened reader. (p. 106)

While Swift uses satire to criticise real facts and situations in a fictional travel story, Godwin tries to open his readers' minds onto the 17th century's new astronomical theories and the unlimited possibilities which might stem from them. First, he uses Gonsales' flight to ridicule the Aristotelian cosmology of realms of fire: "As for that imagination of the Philosophers, attributing heat together with moystnesse unto the ayre, I never esteemed it otherwise then a fancy" (p. 91). Then, the "little eyewitness" testifies that "the Earth according to her natural motion (for that such a motion she hath, I am now constrained to joyne in opinion with Copernicus,) turneth round upon her owne Axe every 24. howers from the West unto the East" (p. 92). Considering *The Man in the Moone* as an ancestor of science-fiction, Brian Stableford explains that

> [a]lthough most early accounts of lunar voyages are calculatedly ludicrous, the proposition that the moon and the planets were other worlds was a central contention of the heliocentric theory of the solar system. That theory became an important champion of the cause of science in its contest against religious faith because the Christian Church had adopted the geocentric cosmology favoured by Aristotle into its faith-supported view (Stableford, p. 16).

However, if Godwin promotes the theory of the diurnal rotation of the earth, thus embracing William Gilbert's position in *De Magnete* (1600), he remains cautiously indecisive about Copernicus' heliocentrism, which also implies the annual and axial motions of the Earth: "I will not go so farre as *Copernicus*, that maketh the Sunne the Center of the Earth, and unmoveable, neither will I define any thing one way or other" (p. 94). Indeed, Godwin uses a subtler way to convince his readers. In "*The Man in the Moone* and the New Astronomy:

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[7] Wilkinson, Robin. "2. Jonathan Swift - *Gulliver's Travels* (1726)". *Le commentaire littéraire anglais – Close Readings*. Paris: Quadrige Manuels, 2015, pp. 101-108.

Godwin, Gilbert, Kepler", Sarah Hutton studies the influence of Gilbert's *De Magnete* and Kepler's *Somnium* on Godwin's fictional narrative, concluding that

> [i]n Godwin's book, one set of hypotheses is rejected as imaginary, while others are upheld in an imaginary setting. In this way, Godwin reverses fact and fiction to give his 'essay of fancy' the semblance of verisimilitude, in order to shift [his readers'] perspective on received cosmological notions (p. 6).

Ryan Vu points to a similar reversal of perspective between the Moon and the Earth systems of reference. He demonstrates that, when Gonsales arrives on the moon, he

> encounters a lunar society that immediately tries him for the heresy of believing their world to be a Moon to his Earth rather than vice-versa. The confrontation between geocentrism and selenocentrism revealing their mutual absurdity would become the most commonly recurring trope of the subgenre. (…) Though it may seem unserious to the reader of modern SF, the lack of distinction between theological, proto-scientific, literary and merely fanciful elements in these texts may have been their most subversive feature in the context of intense 17th century social and intellectual upheaval (Vu, p. 26).

In highlighting that the blurring of borders between fiction and reality, and scientific discourse and philosophical views, was a common characteristic of some literary works in the 17th century, Vu reinforces Hutton's opinion, and links it to Frederique Aït-Touati's. In her comparative study[8] of Godwin's *The Man in the Moone*, a story which contains many theoretical passages, and Wilkins' *A Discovery of a New World in the Moone*, a treatise which at times reads like a piece of fiction, Aït-Touati demonstrates how accounts of moon travel contribute to the blurring of fiction and theory, or rather, of the possible and the probable. A striking example of such blurring can be found in the preface of *The Man in the Moone*, in which Godwin draws on the recent discovery of the New World to open the reader's mind onto the probability of travelling to the moon:

> In substance thou hast here a new discovery of a new *world*, which perchance may finde little better entertainment in thy opinion, than that of *Columbus* at first, in the esteeme of all men (…). That there should be *Antipodes* was once thought as great a *Paradox* as now the *Moon* should bee habitable (p. 67).

Now, let us focus on the difference between Godwin's and Swift's treatments of scientific and technological discoveries in their books, which will give us a glimpse into the

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[8] "La découverte d'un autre monde : fiction et théorie dans les œuvres de John Wilkins et de Francis Godwin"

"third dimension" of their texts. Even if Godwin does not endorse all of Copernicus' theories, he envisions what the scientific advances of his time could contribute to humanity, and he uses his narrator as a mouthpiece to inform and influence his contemporary readers. Indeed, early in the story, when Gonsales stays on the island of St Helena (pp. 77-81), he spends his time in an industrious manner, conducting empirical experimentations with Gansas (as scientists did in Godwin's time) until he designs and tries an innovative flying device. On the contrary, in Part Three of *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift ridicules the scientists of the newly founded Royal Society through a ferocious parody, for example when he portrays a projector who "ha[s] been eight years upon a project for extracting sun-beams out of cucumbers" (p. 135), and another one "at work to calcine ice into gun-powder" (p. 136).

Moreover, when Gulliver is supposed to embrace the new entrepreneurship mood of the early 18th century, and build a fortune thanks to his travels, he reveals himself as the most unfortunate traveller of British literature. Though he arrives at Lilliput with a full adventurer's set in his pockets – as inventoried by the two Lilliputians in chapter 2 (pp. 23-24) – he never uses it. He is often presented as passive or as being acted upon, if not as a victim of circumstances: the way he recovers his freedom at the end of Part Two, when an eagle carries his box up in the air (pp. 105-106), is a conspicuous example of how Swift uses his narrator as the butt of his satire. In Part Four, Chapter 11, Gulliver behaves like an anti-Robinson Crusoe: where Defoe's narrator manages to survive 28 years on his island, Gulliver cannot stay for more than four days on New Holland, the island where he is attacked by the natives (p. 215).

While Defoe fully embraces the changes and opportunities offered by the early 18th-century society, and conveys some of his convictions through his narrators, Swift seems to reject all these changes and criticises them through his satire: in the *Travels*, he parodies not only travel literature, but also the various changes in his contemporary society, including the novel as a new literary genre. The novel emerged at the beginning of the 18th century, and

Defoe was one of its most prominent representatives. This point of view is discussed at length in J. Paul Hunter's article "*Gulliver's Travels* and the Novel" as well as in Michael Seidel's article "*Gulliver's Travels* and the Contracts of Fiction", which will be analysed in the third part of this essay.

We have seen that Godwin and Swift convey opposite messages about scientific advances to their readers; though both authors use their narrators to do so, they do so again in opposite manners. Godwin uses Gonsales as a mouthpiece, while Swift uses Gulliver as the butt of his satire. In both books, not only do the narrators prove to be unreliable but the relationships between the authors and their narrators are also changeable. If the writers manipulate their narrators, they manipulate their readers as well, by further blurring the borders between fundamental notions such as reality, imagination, fiction, truth or veracity in their texts. Let us now explore the complexity of *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Man in the Moone*, in what I called their "third dimension".

Both Gonsales and Gulliver being quite proud and sometimes boastful, they are easy targets for their authors' irony. Indeed, both Swift and Godwin use their narrators as masks or puppets, making them sometimes their spokesmen, sometimes the butts of their satires, though for different reasons. For Ruth Menzies[9], Godwin's "choice of a Spanish-narrator traveller is an ideal ruse" to achieve his specific literary ends, which is to criticise the Ptolemean worldview while encouraging readers to think carefully about the ideas investigated in his book:

> Presenting a text supposedly written by a Spanish, Catholic narrator is an ideal means of circumventing official interference and possible censorship. Not only does the use of Domingo Gonsales set Godwin at safe distance from his text, but the narrator's account is apparently discredited by his portrayal as vain, boastful, unreliable and frequently motivated by personal ambition and greed (Menzies, p. 9).

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[9] "The Bishop and the Braggart: truth and fiction in Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone*".

Indeed, in the 17th-century context, supporting a scientific opinion (heliocentrism) against the official view of the Christian Church (geocentric cosmology) would have been suicidal for a member of the Anglican Church hierarchy. Therefore, *The Man in the Moone* was first published posthumously and anonymously[10]. Godwin's strategy was to use the contemporary clichés about Spaniards in England, thus making his "little eyewitness" the butt of his satire, so as to distance himself from his narrator and his critical remarks about the philosophers and mathematicians who claimed that the Earth had no motion.

Throughout the *Travels*, Gulliver proclaims his truthfulness, particularly in the concluding chapter. However, these repetitive claims of veracity send a contrary message to the reader and raise his suspicion, particularly when Gulliver admits that he lies occasionally. For example, in Brobdingnag, after he has fallen in a hole, he "coin[s] some lye not worth remembering, to excuse [him]self for spoiling [his] cloaths" (p. 87). Later in the narrative, Gulliver says that he "was every day furnishing the court with some ridiculous story" (p. 92)[11]. In the prefatory material of the 1735 edition, the readers can also find several clues which increase their doubts as to the narrator's veracity. For example, when Cousin Sympson praises Gulliver's reliability and declares that

> [t]here is an air of truth apparent through the whole; and indeed the author was so distinguished for his veracity, that it became a sort of proverb among his Neighbours at Redriff, when any one affirmed a thing, to say, it was as true as if Mr Gulliver has spoke it (p.5),

his compliment to Gulliver backfires on the narrator because of the first part of the sentence: in his story, there is only **an air of** truth. Moreover, under Gulliver's portrait, an inscription declares him to be "Splendide Mendax," i.e., gloriously false/nobly untruthful (Menzies and Patel, fig.4, p. 7). Gulliver is indeed an unreliable narrator, and the satire frequently depends on the reader's ability to see that to which Gulliver is blind.

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[10] Even the preface was signed by an enigmatic E.M., about whom scholars have elaborated various hypotheses, one of them being that it was Francis Godwin himself.
[11] These examples come from Jan Borm's article "*Gulliver* : voyages et véracité"

As Ginette Emprin underlines in "Appearance and Reality in *Gulliver's Travels*", the relationship between Swift and Gulliver is complex and variable, depending on which part of the book is concerned: if, in Part One, Swift voices his ideas through Gulliver, he does so through the king of Brobdingnag in Part Two. "In Part Three, Gulliver generally expresses Swift's ideas, but Gulliver can be unpredictable and hold views opposite to those of Swift" (Emprin, p.39). This is illustrated with an example from chapter 6:

> In the school of political projectors, I was but ill entertained; the professors appearing in my judgement wholly out of their senses (…) These unhappy people were proposing schemes for persuading monarchs to chuse favourites upon the score of their wisdom, capacity and virtue. (Swift, p. 141)

As for Part Four, the question as to whether it describes Swift's Utopia or a satiric Utopia has been a subject of debate among critics and scholars for decades.

In the previous part of this essay, we have seen that the reader's ability to understand the true meaning of the story, often at the narrator's expense, creates an intellectual bond, a sort of complicity with the writer. However, in *Gulliver's Travels*, this relationship is not a reliable one either, as Swift manipulates his readers as well as his narrator. In "Transparency and Truth: Prefatory Material in Fictional and Non-Fictional Eighteenth-Century Travel Writing", Ruth Menzies illustrates how Swift's intentions towards his readers changed and became more complex between the first Motte edition (1726) and the Faulkner edition (1735). She focuses on the alteration of the "portraits" of Gulliver published in the frontispieces, the discursive transparency, and the performatives within the paratext. The latter "incite the reader to view all aspects of the narrative, but particularly those that might seem most factual and concrete (and therefore more transparent), with deep mistrust" (Menzies and Patel, p. 270). Michael Seidel goes much further in his article "*Gulliver's Travels* and the contracts of Fiction": on the basis on the prefatory material added by Swift in 1735–a letter from Gulliver to his cousin Sympson, and a letter from Sympson to the reader–he suggests that

> Swift might have wished the reader to infer in 1726 the proposition he reinforces in 1735: Gulliver was entirely mad when he turned over his manuscript to his cousin Sympson. At the very least, the letter opens the prospect that Gulliver suffers from a sort of delusion whose major symptom is the travels themselves. (…) [T]here is something in [Gulliver's] tone and insistence of the references that renders Gulliver fictionally suspect. (…). Depending upon where readers pick up the narrative thread Gulliver is literally a different narrator within two reading contracts. Readers have the option of beginning where they once might have arrived. Gulliver is a traveller in one contract; a madman in another (pp. 83-84).

Seidel thus argues that in *Gulliver's Travels*, the traditional, naïve contract of fiction "understood by readers as part of a general theory of literature", is paralleled by another satirical contract: "The greatest truth about Gulliver is his fullest lie, the abiding satiric contract of the *Travels*." (p. 87). The origin of Seidel's disruptive argument is grounded in Swift's supposed contempt for the novel, which represents

> another symptom (…) of the corruption of values and literary tastes in his age. (…) In his parody of the Crusoe-like subject, Swift makes a mockery of this egocentric contract for fiction, and any moral justification that would tag along with it. He parodies the language of modern fiction while debasing the enterprise. (…). In Swiftian satire, (…) [c]haracters are always invalidated by their actions, and satire means stripping them of their narrative bona fides that the emerging novel grants them so fully and readily (pp. 77-78).

From Seidel's argument, we can infer that Swift's status as a writer evolves from Master of satire to Master of manipulation, who plays a game with his readers without disclosing its rules to them. Indeed, the impressive number of books and articles which have been written by scholars and academics providing divergent interpretations of *Gulliver's Travels*–or rather, divergent understandings of the rules of Swift's game–tend to support this point of view.

Godwin seeks to open his readers' minds to the new, revolutionary theories in astronomy, while entertaining them with the amusing, marvellous and sometimes unfortunate adventures of a little, boastful Spaniard. Indeed, the writer uses Gonsales as the butt of his satire to distance himself from his narrator and his controversial opinions and criticisms. In a more sophisticated parody of travel accounts and contemporary novels, Swift embarks his

narrator and his readers on a kind of intellectual roller-coaster. Read at face value, the narrative makes us laugh at Gulliver's misfortunes. Decoding the text with the keys of irony and satire, we understand the essential, hidden meaning of the story and smile with the author – often at the expense of Gulliver, once again. Thus enlightened, we feel wiser and brighter. However, when we try to dig deeper into the text, for example to disclose Swift's true opinion about Houyhnhnmland – does he provide a genuine or a mock utopia in his book? – we soon get lost in a maze.

Being bishops of the Anglican Church, both authors had certainly received a higher education. As preachers, they certainly were skilful orators and were used to influencing and convincing people. Obviously, these communication skills transpire in their writings. They are both masters in blurring reality and imagination, fiction and non-fiction, truth and lies in their texts, so much so that even the border between influence and manipulation – be it of their narrators or their readers – seems also blurred. Such ambivalence between the writer and the clergyman raises some questions in the readers' minds and can even trouble them. The same ambivalence appears in the way religion – or the absence of it – is treated in both books: why does Swift's narrator never think of God? And "[a]re Godwin's Lunars fallen beings saved by Christ's sacrifice, and if not, then what is Christ to them?"[12]. This subject alone would deserve another essay to be discussed at length.

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[12] Poole, William. Preface to *The Man in The Moone*, p. 41.

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