

Voyages Towards Utopia: Mapping Utopian Spaces in Early-Modern French Prose

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## DEDICATIONS

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Figures.....	iv
Chapter	
Introduction .....	1
The Travel Narrative Tradition in Early Modern France .....	2
The First Phase: “Real” Voyages.....	3
The Second Phase: Fantastic Imitations.....	6
The Third Phase: Imagination Before Authenticity.....	9
Imaginary Voyages and Utopia: Common Ground .....	11
My Approach: Gender and Sexuality in the Imaginary Voyage.....	13
Methodology: Physical and Allegorical Voyages Towards Utopia .....	16
Chapter Descriptions .....	20
Chapter 1: Utopian Voyages to the <i>Terre Australe</i> : Writing Society on Blank Spaces .....	20
Chapter 2: Achieving the Utopia of Ideal Masculinity with Moderation .....	24
Chapter 3: Mapping the Geography of Queer Utopia in <i>L’Autre Monde</i> .....	26
Chapter 4: The Utopian Function of Negativity: Anti-Social Refusal in <i>Lettres d’une Péruvienne</i> .....	27
Imaginary Voyages: Pertinence and Possibility.....	29
1. Utopian Voyages to the <i>Terre Australe</i> : Writing Society on Blank Spaces.....	31
Mythology and Monsters of the <i>Terre Australe</i> .....	34
Theories of the <i>Terre Australe</i> .....	37
Cartography of the <i>Terre Australe</i> .....	41
The <i>Terre Australe</i> in Voyage Accounts .....	47
The (Austral) World, According to Veiras and Foigny.....	53
<i>L’Histoire des Sévarambes</i> , a Man’s World.....	54
<i>La Terre Australe Connue</i> : Societal and Personal Utopia .....	80
2. Achieving the Utopia of Ideal Masculinity with Moderation.....	97
The Danger of Lack: Threats to Masculinity on Venus’ and Calypso’s Islands .....	107

King Pygmalion as the Embodiment of Excessive Masculinity .....	128
Achieving Utopia: Télémaque’s Fulfillment of Ideal Masculinity .....	135
3. Mapping the Geography of Queer Utopia in <i>L’Autre Monde</i> .....	151
Generating Possibilities: Male Pregnancy in <i>L’Autre Monde</i> .....	174
Running with the Devil: Dyrcona and the <i>Démon de Socrate</i> .....	181
Death (and Sex) at a Funeral: The Philosopher’s Death .....	186
Les Arbres Amants: Rewriting Love’s Origin Story .....	196
4. The Utopian Function of Negativity: Anti-Social Refusal in <i>Lettres d’une Péruvienne</i> .....	208
Departure: Torn from Utopia .....	224
First Encounters: Zilia at Court.....	229
The (Mis)Education of Céline de Déterville.....	234
Day-to-Day Duties in the French Court.....	241
Marriage, Courtship, and Other Dystopia.....	244
Achieving Anti-Social Utopia.....	259
5. Conclusion .....	274
Appendix A: .....	296
Travel Narratives in Special Collections.....	296
Yale Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library .....	296
Wachs Collection, Vanderbilt University .....	296
Appendix B:.....	299
PhD Reading List.....	299
Appendix C: Figures .....	303
Maps and Images .....	303
Works Cited.....	312

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1.....	302
2.....	302
3.....	303
4.....	303
5.....	304
6.....	304
7.....	305
8.....	306
9.....	307
10.....	308
11.....	309
12.....	310

## INTRODUCTION

*“L’Homme ne porte aucun caractère plus naturel, que le désir de pénétrer dans ce qu’on estime difficile, & de comprendre ce qui paraît à plusieurs inaccessible.”*<sup>1</sup>

In the chaos of a wild storm, a rogue wave drives Jacques Sadeur’s ship into a rock, cleaving it in half. He falls unconscious clinging to the wreckage. When he wakes, he finds himself floating near an uninhabited island. After eating strange fruit to restore his energy, he explores his surroundings. Suddenly, giant monstrous birds engage him in a fight to the death. He kills one of the birds but is severely wounded. Fortunately, a boat full of guards arrives from a neighboring land. The guards welcome him as their savior for killing the beast and tend to his wounds. As he recovers, he discovers that the inhabitants of this foreign land are all hermaphrodites; that is, they all possess “les deux sexes,” and only welcomed him into their hidden society because Sadeur is himself a hermaphrodite. After recovering from his harrowing journey and unexpected rescue, Sadeur proceeds to explore the austral society.

While this story may read as a fever dream, Gabriel Foigny insists in his *Au Lecteur* that he shares nothing but the truthful account that Jacques Sadeur himself gave him on his deathbed, and Foigny was but the loyal editor who brought these veracious texts to an avid reading public. Far from being an isolated writing experiment, texts like these—bizarre travel accounts peppered with adventure, monsters, and foreign societies—were wildly popular in the early modern period. These strange accounts captivated my attention and prompted me to develop questions. What factors led to the emergence of such texts? Who read them, and who wrote them? Did other imaginary voyages engage in such unexpected innovation regarding gender, or

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<sup>1</sup> Gabriel Foigny, *Avis au Lecteur, La Terre Australe Connue*, p. 15.

sexuality? To address these questions, one must step back to consider the travel narrative, from which the imaginary voyage evolved.

## THE TRAVEL NARRATIVE TRADITION IN EARLY MODERN FRANCE

In French, ‘travel narrative’ can be translated as *récit de voyage* or *relation de voyage*.<sup>2</sup> The *relation* suggests real-life voyages narrated by a voyager, whereas the *récit* can refer to accounts of real *or* imagined voyages, or texts which fall somewhere between the two.<sup>3</sup> The *relation de voyage* varied from the “simple journal de bord du navigateur, de la relation du missionnaire, d'un rapport d'ambassade ou du carnet de route de l'érudit en quête de curiosités savantes et d'antiquités,” but always provided “le compte rendu d'une enquête, l'apport d'observations qui doivent servir à rectifier ou compléter une connaissance encore incertaine et incomplète du globe” (Chupeau, 537). If the travel narrative began closer to the reality suggested by the *relation*, it would shift towards the ambivalence of the *récit*.

The travel narrative acts as a source of inspiration from which genres as varied as the *voyage imaginaire*, the utopia, early science fiction, the *conte philosophique*, and much more would develop and proliferate. To address the complexity and significance of the travel narrative, I develop a working definition of the (authentic) travel narrative and the (fictitious) imaginary voyage, which I unite under the general term of “travel narratives.” I identify three

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<sup>2</sup> I use “travel narrative” as a blanket term to refer to the wide variety of texts including but not limited to the *récit de voyage*, *relation de voyage*, *voyage imaginaire*, utopia, and more. I clarify when I refer to texts understood as authentic travel narratives or imaginary voyages, and use “travel narrative” when I wish to convey the broadest possible range of texts.

<sup>3</sup> In *La Trésor de la Langue Française*, pertinent definitions of *relation* include “Action de relater, rapporter, de faire connaître ce dont on a eu connaissance, dont on a été le témoin” or “Récit fait par un voyageur, un explorateur.” For *récit*, pertinent definitions include “Présentation (orale ou écrite) d'événements (réels ou imaginaires),” “Œuvre littéraire narrant des faits vrais ou imaginaires,” and “relation d'un événement.”



major phases in the evolution of travel narratives and the emergence of the imaginary voyage.<sup>4</sup> At first, readers understood travel narratives to be the accounts of voyages undertaken by their authors. In the second phase, travel narratives grew to include imaginary voyages; the texts continued to depict real, recently discovered lands, and were posited as authentic, but the authors themselves based these works upon actual voyager's travel accounts, rather their own experiences. Although the travel narrative as *relation de voyage* could once be considered distinct from the imaginary voyage, the two engaged in mutual borrowings to the extent that they became near-impossible to distinguish from one another. In the final phase, authenticity and credibility lose their pertinence in favor of impossible voyages set in increasingly imaginative realms. My identification of three phases provide a basic structure rather than absolute model, as these phases coexisted, overlapped, and continually evolved. Although the categories of truth and fiction lack meaningful clarity in the travel narrative, I argue that moral and social values, anxieties, and ideals become more salient in these articulations of distant spaces.

### *THE FIRST PHASE: 'REAL' VOYAGES*

Initially, travel narratives were understood as representing the writer's genuine experience.<sup>5</sup> Although explorers wrote about their voyages long before and after the early

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<sup>4</sup> A sweeping study of imaginary voyages would have to begin in Antiquity and reach to the present day; however, I restrict myself to a limited temporal period to examine what could be considered the golden age of imaginary voyages and utopia. For this introduction, I primarily consider the dominant trends and developments in the travel narrative from the 16th to the 18th century, as this was a period marked by the rapid proliferation of such texts as well as significant developments in a short period of time. I consider this golden age to be during the 17th and 18th centuries; however, Arthur considers the 17th-19th century to qualify as the golden age of the imaginary voyage, to include authors such as Jules Verne. See Arthur, Paul Longley. "Fictions of Encounter: Eighteenth-Century Imaginary Voyages to the Antipodes." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 49, no. 3, 2008, pp. 197–210.

<sup>5</sup> That said, it would be problematic to say these accounts were factual. Celebrated travel accounts, such as those of Mandeville, Marco Polo, William of Rubruck, Odoric of Pordenone, and Columbus contained exaggerations, mythological creatures, and frequently borrowed stories from other travel accounts and incorporated them as their own. We may know these individuals undertook voyages, but we may also assume they did not encounter mermaids, monstrous hybrids, and similarly improbable sights. For more on these early, factually suspect travel narratives, see Greenblatt, Stephen. "Marvelous Possessions". The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 1991.

modern period, the 16<sup>th</sup> century was particularly rich in travel narratives, as it coincided with the Age of Discovery.<sup>6</sup> Overwhelmingly, the travel narratives of the 16th century qualify as *récit de pèlerinage* and *récit de découverte*.<sup>7</sup> A dominant mentality prevailed in which the *relation de voyage* and the *roman* seemingly maintain a respectable distance predicated on communicating geographical knowledge and valuable information like navigational details rather than providing entertainment.<sup>8</sup> Initially, certain expectations regarding content and style dominated. The credibility of an account was conveyed by “la simplicité du style, qui est donnée, dans toutes les préfaces, comme la preuve la plus sensible de la vérité des faits rapportés;” thus, by avoiding eloquent rhetoric and lofty figures of speech, the *récit de voyage* was able to achieve authority, contrary to the falsehoods associated with literature (Chupeau, 540). A fallacious assumption of the duality of travel narratives as truth and novels as fiction persisted.

At certain times, travel narratives shared the authority commanded by historical accounts. Around the 16<sup>th</sup> century, travel accounts were readily incorporated into historical texts and thus inscribed into French history.<sup>9</sup> Jacques Cartier’s *Voyages au Canada* illustrates the

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<sup>6</sup> For a consideration of travel writing before the period in question, see Duteil, Jean-Pierre. *Les Littératures De Voyage: La Découverte Du Monde (XIVe-XVe-XVIe Siècles)*. Éditions Arguments, Éditions Quae, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Marie-Christine Gomez-Géraud et Philippe Antoine, dirs., *Roman et récit de voyage* (Paris, Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2001)

<sup>8</sup> This time period was marked by a supposed opposition between “la frivolité du roman et l'utilité du récit de voyage” (Chupeau, 539). The novel was considered frivolous and capable of misleading readers. In contrast, the travel narrative was upheld as providing important contributions to geographical knowledge (Chupeau, 537).

<sup>9</sup> This is well demonstrated by the Portuguese overtaking of Fort Coligny, the newly-constructed island fortress established at the short-lived French Brazil. The construction of this fortress, followed not long after by its defeat in November 1555, was described in Jean Crespin’s *Book of Martyrs* (beginning with the second edition of 1564), Jean de Lery’s *Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil* (1578) and in Thévet’s *Les Singularités de la France Antarctique*. Both Léry and Thévet travelled to Brazil. The events described therein were later incorporated into the historical records compiled by a variety of writers, but voyagers differed in their interpretations of the event. Significant historians who recorded these events include Belleforest, Beza, La Popelinière, de Serres, de Thou, Lescarbot, and d’Aubigné (McGrath, 386). McGrath views this event as the site of significant disagreement regarding the events that transpired there. See McGrath, John. “Polemic and History in French Brazil, 1555-1560.” *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 27, no. 2, 1996, pp. 385–397. JSTOR

straightforward narration that convinced readers.<sup>10</sup> On the whole, his *relation* reads as an impersonal log of days, distances, and geographical features. Personal opinions and judgements only emerge in his interpretations of the customs of the indigenous populations he encounters.<sup>11</sup> His accounts were also (mis)informed by his predecessors, a trend which would continue in later travel narratives. Earlier *relation de voyage* texts shaped voyagers' expectations.<sup>12</sup> Because these accounts inherited a wealth of monstrous mythology associated with distant regions dating from Antiquity and elaborated in the Medieval period, these supposedly viable accounts of the world were littered with fantastic beasts.<sup>13</sup> As a result, "Cartier, comme tous ses contemporains voyageurs, s'attend à rencontrer des monstres, des animaux hybrides, des hommes à têtes de chien, des griffons et autres créatures d'étonnement ou d'effroi" (Fraïssé, 15). Moving into the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the travel narrative's commitment to truth diminished in favor of drawing in readers, which was accomplished by incorporating imagination and embellishments.

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<sup>10</sup> In her introduction to 2002 edition to Cartier's *Voyages au Canada*, Marie H el ene Fra iss e describes his writing style: "Ces narrations documentaires, sans fioritures, livrent quasiment 'en direct' le choc du nouveau" (Fra iss e, 13). She also asserts he possessed "un exceptionnel sens de l'observation et du d etail r ev elateur...[et] un effort d'objectivit e tr es novateur, qui annonce le si ecle suivant" (Fra iss e, 15).

<sup>11</sup> One could argue that personal judgements contaminate the travel narrative's supposed alignment with truth and fact. When reading 16th century travel narratives, today's reader must acknowledge how the later emergence of ethnography and anthropology influences perceptions of these texts. Now, personal biases, judgements, and dichotomies of the other as civilized or uncivilized are particularly striking and exclude the text from qualifying as a reliable account; however, in their time, these demonstrations of subjectivity would not have been remarkable.

<sup>12</sup> "Le Voyage en Asie d'Odoric de Pordenone" (1351), Marco Polo, "Devisement du monde"/ "La Description du Monde" (1477) Binot Paulmier de Gonneville, "M emoires touchant l' tablissement d'une mission chrestienne dans le troisi eme monde: autrement appel e, la terre australe, m eridionale, antarctique & inconnue" (1505) are several examples of earlier, influential travel narratives.

<sup>13</sup> In his *Les Litt eratures De Voyage: La D ecouverte Du Monde (XIVe-XVe-XVIe Si ecles)*, Duteil elaborates on how influential works like Pliny the Ancient's *Natural History* provided an authoritative description of mythical and foreign beasts around the world. These creatures and monsters were later incorporated into bestiaries in the Medieval period, such as that of Honorius of Autun. I elaborate on the early modern period's inheritance of early monsters in Chapter 1.

## THE SECOND PHASE: FANTASTIC IMITATIONS

These “authentic” travel narratives became highly popular among readers, especially because international travel was a largely inaccessible privilege. Only those with navigational expertise and a proposal, approval, and funding from the monarch could undertake such voyages. For armchair voyagers, their only access to the outside world was through maps and travel accounts.<sup>14</sup> Authors increasingly crafted their own travel narratives to exploit the public’s preoccupation with the rest of the world. Entering the second phase of travel narratives, authors maintained a concerted effort to realistically evoke travel, but didn’t always undergo these voyages themselves.

As the travel narrative matured as a genre, certain expectations regarding style and content concretized. Authors consistently evoked key elements to create thorough representations of the lands and peoples visited. A letter from physician and traveler Jean Chapelain to critic and poet François Bernier dating from November 13<sup>th</sup>, 1661 outlines the elements that the proper voyager must address in his *relation de voyage*:

Rien n'est oublié, ni l'histoire du pays depuis les temps les plus reculés, ni l'étude des mentalités, des croyances religieuses, des sciences et des coutumes, de la géographie et du gouvernement, ni l'examen détaillé des arts mécaniques, labourage, bâtiments, manufactures, charpenterie, menuiserie, orfèvrerie, taille d'habits, fabriques d'armes, fonte de canons, cuisinerie, boulangerie, jardinage, trafic de navigation... sans omettre

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<sup>14</sup> In Chapter 1, I expound upon the intersecting roles of cartography and travel literature in shaping public perceptions of the outside and distant world.

enfin ce point de mœurs essentiel au regard d'un homme du XVIIe siècle, à savoir la situation des femmes et leur rôle dans la société (Chupeau, 537-538).<sup>15</sup>

Travel narratives throughout the early modern period consistently depict some, if not all, of these elements. Once established, this model of formulaic travel writing was quickly adopted by clever mimics who penned imaginary voyages in a style both recognizable and convincing to its readers. Just like their authentic counterparts, imitations featured “meticulous biographical details, navigational information, and personal responses of the male traveler to the world around.” Furthermore, “detailed titles, prefaces, and even maps are included, as well as explanations for why the purported author of the text has since died or why his identity is not known, and why the reader should nevertheless believe in the authenticity of the text” (Arthur, 202). Writers would imitate the style of Cartier or Lery, or even copy navigational data and place descriptions from voyage accounts.<sup>16</sup> This point in the evolution of the imaginary voyage established an essential template for the next generations of imaginary voyages and utopia, from which subsequent texts would deviate little for centuries. This phase also initiated a period of extreme frustration for the future historians and literary critics who would later attempt to distinguish authentic travel narratives from imaginary voyages.

While imaginary voyages initially prioritized conveying veracity by imitating authentic narratives, a simultaneous process further compromised the authenticity of the *relation de*

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<sup>15</sup> The source for this letter can be found in Jean Chapelain, *Opuscules critiques*, éd. par Alfred C. Hunter, S.T.F.M., Paris, Droz, 1936, p. 447-449.

<sup>16</sup> That said, borrowings and inspiration from other texts existed since the earliest of travel accounts in the Age of Discovery. Duteil illustrates this in his discussion of Francesco Carletti’s *Voyage autour du monde* (1594-1606), whose travel narrative “prend appui sur des ‘classiques’ de la littérature de voyage, comme Nicolo de Conti, dont le Voyage a été publié par Ramusio, l’Itinéraire de Varthema, Pigafetta, et un atlas chinois attribué à Shu Zuben, réédité en 1595 et dont il rapporte un exemplaire. L’auteur s’inspire de ces divers écrits, parfois sur des aspects précis, mais jamais au point de recopier des passages entiers” (Duteil, 337).

*voyage*. Voyaging writers went to ever-greater lengths to embellish once-authentic travel narratives to render them more entertaining and ensure a captive audience. Priorities shifted; for the travel narrative, “la volonté d'instruire s'efface au profit du plaisir de conter, et le récit de voyage tend à se transformer en récit d'aventures” (Chupeau, 544). If the 16<sup>th</sup> century was a period in which travel narratives were intertwined with works of historical documentation, a new shift was underway, categorized by “le glissement de la relation vers la littérature mondaine de divertissement” (Chupeau, 551). Increasingly, even (initially) accurate travel accounts were vulnerable to “writerly embellishment and highly subjective, often politically motivated, interpretation.” Even if they began as highly accurate and neutral accounts of voyages, the final version was typically doctored by professional writers with no knowledge of the places they wrote about, who were inclined to embellishment for stylistic as well as financial reasons (Arthur, 205). These exaggerations and inventions could range from colossal sea monsters, clashes with pirates, bizarre human-monster hybrids, and depictions of highly perilous storms.

Between the 17th and 18th centuries, authentic travel narratives continued to emerge alongside the proliferation of highly popular imaginary voyages. Despite this competition for readers, the travel account continued to hold great authority and appeal.<sup>17</sup> In this second phase, the mutual influence between authentic and invented travel narratives culminated into chaos, the two genres indistinguishable. The “fake” voyages passed themselves off as “true” voyages by imitating a simple style and evoking real geographical locations, whereas the “true” voyages sought to appeal to readers by adopting the embellished, more adventurous narration employed

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<sup>17</sup> The (authentic) 18th century travel narrative fractured into increasingly specific categories: the *récit d'exploration*, *l'itinéraire de voyage*, *le rapport d'expédition scientifique*, and *la relation missionnaire*, all of which imply the writers representing voyages they personally undertook. See Pierre Berthiaume, *L'Aventure américaine au dix-huitième siècle. Du voyage à l'écriture* (Ottawa, Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1990), "Cahiers du C.R.C.C.F."

by the “fake” voyages.<sup>18</sup> As a result, “actual discoveries sometimes seemed too fantastical to be taken seriously,” and, “the public were as likely to be skeptical of genuine accounts as they were ready to be convinced by imaginary ones” (Arthur, 199). Although this intermingling and confusion between real and imaginary voyage accounts would endure, the next development in the evolution of travel narratives reinstated distance between the two genres.

### *THE THIRD PHASE: IMAGINATION BEFORE AUTHENTICITY*

If the second phase of evolution for travel narratives and imaginary voyages saw the two genres blend to a confusing degree, in the third phase, imaginary voyages became so divorced from reality that they were more readily recognizable as fictitious.<sup>19</sup> However, I do not imply that this third phase replaces the first and second; rather, all three phases coexisted. Whether actual travel occurred or not, the travel narratives of the mid-17th and 18th centuries are marked by a heightened interest in representations of other peoples and places.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, the imaginary voyage expanded to increasingly otherworldly realms, represented a broader range of destinations, and portrayed ever-more complex and strange modes of transportation.

Throughout Europe, authors of imaginary voyages clamored to pen increasingly far-flung and far-fetched voyages to continue to capture readers’ attention and demonstrate their own originality. For instance, Campanella’s imaginary voyage traveled just below the equator,

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<sup>18</sup> For example, Denis Veiras’ *L’Histoire des Sévarambes* was purportedly mistaken for an authentic travel narrative (See Ch. 1).

<sup>19</sup> Even in this phase, the problem of mutual borrowings between the *relation de voyage* and the *voyage imaginaire* continued, with the ongoing publication of texts that straddled the two categories. However, this third phase introduces the new element of obviously fake voyages, identified as such by innovations such as time travel or space travel.

<sup>20</sup> Arthur Evans provides specific examples of works that demonstrate this: “Such works as Montesquieu’s *Lettres persanes* (1721), Marivaux’s *L’Ile des esclaves* (1723), Voltaire’s *Micromegas* (1752), and Diderot’s *Reve de d’Alembert* (1769) and *Supplement au voyage de Bougainville* (1772)—not to mention the futuristic *L’An 2440* by Louis-Sébastien Mercier (1771), Casanova’s subterranean *Isocameron* (1788), and Restif de la Bretonne’s highly imaginative *La Decouverte australe* (1781) and *Les Posthumes* (1796, 1802)—all reflect this passionate interest in distant locales and radically different social perspectives” (Evans, 255).

Berginton sent Gaudence de Lucques to Africa, and Veiras, Foigny, and Restif sent their voyagers to the alleged *Terre Australe*. Not to be outdone, others sent their voyagers into space; Godwin and Wilkins portrayed imaginary voyages to the Moon, Bergerac sent his protagonist to both the Moon and Sun, and the chevalier de Béthune sent his voyager to Mercury. Lastly, Cavendish and Holberg sent their voyagers underground (Trousson, 56).<sup>21</sup> Authors innovated not only on a spatial plane, but also temporal one; Mercier's protagonist unwittingly traveled to Paris in the year 2440, and Graffiny's Peruvian woman was taken from the Incan empire to the court life of Enlightenment France. Entry into this third phase signals a crucial turning point in the evolution of the travel narrative, where the voyages depicted became too detached from reality to fit any pretensions of authenticity. This phase paved the way towards new literary genres such as philosophical voyages and early science fiction by valorizing speculation and invention.<sup>22</sup>

After the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the ongoing popularity and proliferation of the *voyage imaginaire* prompted literary and historical scholars to study the genre more closely. These readers were substantially “misled by the way in which imaginary voyages could so closely and effectively simulate genuine voyage accounts,” and in approaching them, “critics tried almost fanatically to separate fact from fiction” (Arthur, 200). Nineteenth-century critic Charles Garnier went to extreme lengths to make sense of the imaginary voyage.<sup>23</sup> Garnier's efforts were imitated by later critics, but no amount of textual analysis could advance scholars beyond this stumbling

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<sup>21</sup> The Chevalier de Mouhy's imaginary voyage *Lamékis* also features subterranean travel (1737). This is only a limited list of texts that selected especially distant locales as the setting for their narratives.

<sup>22</sup> For example, Voltaire's *Candide* and *Micromégas* are two examples of the *voyage philosophique*, which features voyage accounts that do not attempt to convey veracity, but rather, use allegory and humor to communicate philosophical lessons and debate. Cyrano de Bergerac's *Etats et empires de la lune et du soleil* qualifies as a work of early science fiction, depicting inventions facilitating space travel.

<sup>23</sup> Garnier made “the first known attempt to classify the genre into various branches in his thirty-six volume compilation *Voyages imaginaires, songes, visions et romans cabalistiques* (1787). He tried to sort imaginary voyages into categories on the grounds of the purported voyages being ‘possible’ or ‘impossible,’ although at no point does he state his criteria for making distinctions between individual examples” (Arthur, 200). I examined many of the volumes in this compilation during my study at the Vanderbilt Wach's Collection.



block: even supposing that the authentic travel narrative and the imaginary voyage were ever fully distinct, they intersected to the point that it became impossible to distinguish them.

Today's scholars should not imitate Garnier's project of trying to distinguish the authentic from the imaginary; such an effort is futile. Rather, the true value of travel narratives lies in what these texts can reveal about the ideals, anxieties, and societal values held by the authors that penned them, within the societies from which they emerged. Existing scholarship teaches us that travel narratives can do anything from incite wonder,<sup>24</sup> promote national imperialism,<sup>25</sup> or push readers to think critically about their own society.<sup>26</sup> As travel narratives diversified, readers' accessibility to the world (or worlds) increased, and access to these new horizons held greater value than the veracity of the accounts. Travel narratives are valuable for how they expand readers' minds; they enable readers to imagine a voyage to lands that would otherwise remain inaccessible to them, visualize forms of social organization distinct from their own, or even to push them to imagine the impossible. The travel narrative was vulnerable to both imitation and elaboration, yet these weaknesses can be appreciated as the strengths of this genre as such deviations resulted in a rich source of depictions of alterity and other ways of being.

## IMAGINARY VOYAGES AND UTOPIA: COMMON GROUND

It would be remiss to advance the value of imaginary voyages without discussing the notion of utopia. Especially during the 17th and 18th centuries, utopia carried multiple meanings.

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<sup>24</sup> Greenblatt studies how wonder plays a monumental role in the consumption of travel narratives: "Wonder effects the crucial break with another that can only be described, only witnessed, in the language and images of sameness. It erects an obstacle that is at the same time an agent of arousal. For the blockage that constitutes a recognition of distance excites a desire to cross the threshold, break through the barrier, enter the space of the alien" (Greenblatt, 135).

<sup>25</sup> According to Arthur, "imaginary voyage fiction helped embed social acceptance of colonial expansion by modeling cultural domination as natural, beneficial, and welcome" (Arthur, 197).

<sup>26</sup> Travel narratives, particularly imaginary voyages, are typically "written in a satirical style that allows veiled attacks on contemporary political figures and practices" (Arthur, 197).

In French, the *utopie* may refer to the *utopie-mode* or the *utopie-genre*, the logic and social structuring of utopia, or utopia as a literary genre (Racault, 7-19). Frank Lestringant explains the varied etymological possibilities within the *utopie*: “Ou bien le *u-* d'utopie est le préfixe privatif. L'utopie alors est très exactement un non-lieu. Ou bien c'est le préfixe mélioratif *eu*. L'utopie, en ce cas, c'est le ‘lieu-où-tout-est-bien’” (Lestringant, 255-6). For my purposes, I identify three key definitions: first, the utopia as a perfected society; second, utopia as a place that does not exist; and, third, utopia as a literary genre; that is, a novel portraying a voyage to a utopian society.

The genre of utopia shares significant terrain with imaginary voyages; indeed, most of the imaginary voyages I examine also qualify as utopian novels. However, certain elements can set the two apart. Jean-Paul Sermain’s understanding of utopia as a genre reposes upon four qualifications, which are often absent from imaginary voyages.<sup>27</sup> The first qualification addresses content and tone: the utopia “est centrée sur l’évocation d’un état, de sa société et de son régime politique, qui tient davantage de l’exposé encyclopédique que d’un drame.” Secondly, the fictitious work is written in a complex and convincing way so as to “évoque ou plutôt crée un monde possible.” Thirdly, the utopia diverges from the imaginary voyage in that it prompts reflection, rather than merely excite the imagination of the reader; “l’univers utopique est opposé à ce qui définit celui du lecteur et sert d’abord à en faire la critique.” Lastly, Sermain underlines the guiding principle of utopia: whether the utopia “soit envisagée comme souhaitable ou dangereuse, c’est la raison qui est au principe de ce monde utopique, et, pour l’essentiel, c’est son rôle dans le domaine politique qui est concerné” (Sermain, 195). In short, all utopian novels are imaginary voyages, but not all imaginary voyages are utopian novels.<sup>28</sup> This distinction is

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<sup>27</sup> The definition he provides describes the ideal utopia. Not all works considered to be utopian fiction meet all of these qualifications perfectly.

<sup>28</sup> I make this distinction to mark that the terms “imaginary voyage” and “utopia” cannot quite be used interchangeably, although both terms frequently apply to the same text.

worth acknowledging. If imaginary voyages entertain, utopia may also formulate subversive social critique, denounce political figures, or decry corrupt social values to advance idealized alternatives.

#### MY APPROACH: GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN THE IMAGINARY VOYAGE

I evoke the relationship (and distinctions) between the utopia and the imaginary voyage because my approach to these texts interrogates the anxieties, and ideals upheld by the voyagers and the societies they discover. How the voyager reacts to the different dress, social organization, cultural practices, and marriage customs—be that favorably or disapprovingly—is just one way these texts grant insights into the voyagers' culture of origin. The ways these societies are mapped out reflect the priorities or concerns of the author and their cultural contexts; although these (distorting) reflections may be intentional or unintentional.<sup>29</sup> Within the nebulous categories of values, anxieties, and ideals, I focus specifically on those pertaining to gender and sexuality. I formulated my project to address what I identify as problematic gaps in scholarship for both the study of early modern gender and sexuality as well as the study of travel narratives.

The travel narrative (including the utopia and the imaginary voyage) discusses every aspect of the foreign society in exhaustive detail, discussing the political structures, education, agriculture, hunting, entertainment, religion, inventions, geography, flora and fauna, gender roles, dress, military, and more. Within these categories, scholars like Lestringant, Keohane, and Sargent overwhelmingly fixate on representations of politics, property, and religion—a logical approach, given the association between utopia and the formulation of social critique. However,

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<sup>29</sup> For instance, an imaginary voyage playing with the notion of space travel and a utopian society written as an alternative to Louis XIV's rule may approach the portrayal of political systems differently.

as my research took me through endless scholarship on utopia and imaginary voyages, I noticed that remarkably few scholars passed much if any time on the gender dynamics of these societies, despite the innovative or surprising ways these dynamics were portrayed.<sup>30</sup>

If the study of imaginary voyages and utopia neglects to sufficiently consider gender and sexuality, in turn, the inverse problem emerges in the study of early modern gender and sexuality. This field typically studies judicial, theatrical, poetic, religious documents,<sup>31</sup> and canonical literary texts,<sup>32</sup> but largely excludes imaginary voyages, utopia, and travel narratives. Per my observations, studies on imaginary voyages and utopias typically discuss issues of gender and sexuality in passing, if it all, with few exceptions,<sup>33</sup> even though these primary texts are consistently rich with messages about these topics. I am inspired by the approaches of scholars who incorporate unexpected sources (such as Seifert's usage of fairy tales, or Crawford's consideration of astrological texts) to reveal important facets of gender and sexuality in early-modern France that could not be found in conventional texts. My approach examines the insufficiently considered genre of the utopia and the *voyage imaginaire* for portrayals of gender and sexuality to investigate what these portrayals reveal about anxieties and ideals held by French culture.

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<sup>30</sup> I identify exceptions to this rule, which I discuss in my chapters. Lyman Tower Sargent and Lise Leibacher-Ouvrard are the two primary scholars that I identify as acknowledging the unique representations of gender and sexuality in utopia.

<sup>31</sup> Key examples of such studies which inform my research include Merrick and Ragan's focus on texts written by theologians, jurists, and doctors in *Homosexuality in Early Modern France*, and Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park's *The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature*.

<sup>32</sup> For example, I refer to the focus on authors like Montaigne or Marguerite de Navarre, such as in Lewis Seifert and Rebecca Wilkin's *Men and Women Making Friends in Early Modern France*.

<sup>33</sup> I acknowledge that articles such as Lise Leibacher-Ouvrard's "Fallacy and Deception: The Discourse of Equality in Denis Veiras' L'Histoire des Sévarambes" and Sylvie Romanowski's "Cyrano De Bergerac's Epistemological Bodies: 'Pregnant with a Thousand Definitions'" provide excellent studies of gender dynamics in imaginary voyages and utopias. That said, these are the minority, and if few articles provide such studies, even fewer books do.

This study naturally encounters a substantial obstacle: for some, speaking of sexuality in the early-modern period is problematic.<sup>34</sup> As Jonathan Goldberg notes in his *Queering the Renaissance*, “to follow Foucault à la lettre, the Renaissance comes before the regimes of sexuality, and to speak of sexuality in the period is a misnomer” (Goldberg, 5).<sup>35</sup> However, literature and letters from the early modern period contain evidence for what we now understand as markers of sexuality; that is, evidence for desire (heterosexual as well as homosexual), evidence for sexual behaviors and acts (such as courtship, reproductive sex, sodomy, and more), and euphemisms for all of the above. I agree with Todd Reeser’s argument in his *Moderating Masculinity in Early Modern Culture*, which states, “If, following Foucault, the ‘homosexual’ in the modern sense did not emerge as a historical figure per se until the nineteenth century, a protohomosexual coding still very divorced from ‘a type of life, a life form, and a morphology’ does exist in Renaissance culture” (Reeser, 193). So, while the concept of “sexuality” didn’t exist as it does in the twentieth and twenty-first century, a certain hegemonic heterosexual order nonetheless dominated, which was largely reflected in the literature of the time.<sup>36</sup>

To undertake my project of studying early modern sexuality, my methodology incorporates the approach theorized by David Halperin, which acknowledges the distinct attitudes and vocabulary that dictated representations of sexuality in contrast with those of today. He argued that scholars should “supplement [their] notion of sexual identity with a more refined concept of, say, partial identity, emergent identity, transient identity, semi-identity, incomplete

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<sup>34</sup> Objections largely point to Foucault’s work on the history of sexuality.

<sup>35</sup> I wish to signal that I do not use the terms “Renaissance” and “early modern period” interchangeably; I preserve the quotes but specify that I choose to work within the 17th and 18th centuries.

<sup>36</sup> Importantly, empirical evidence showing attitudes about non-heterosexual or queer couples can be found beyond literature, and in judiciary, medical, theological and scientific discourse (as seen, for instance, in Merrick and Ragan’s *Homosexuality in early modern France: a documentary collection*).

identity, proto-identity, or subidentity” (Halperin, 43). I extend this notion of diverse identities in my understanding of the word “queer,” which I employ to describe the behaviors and desires expressed in some of the imaginary voyages I discuss that exist outside of, in opposition to, or in a reconfiguration of heterosexuality. In Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s inclusive definition of “queer,” the word can mean anything within “the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone’s gender, of anyone’s sexuality aren’t made (or can’t be made) to signify monolithically” (Sedgwick, 8). In each of my chapters, I examine how sexuality is portrayed, ranging from the state regulation of sexual behavior, to expressions of desire that represent emergent identities connected to queer sexuality in imaginary voyages and utopian societies.

#### METHODOLOGY: PHYSICAL AND ALLEGORICAL VOYAGES TOWARDS UTOPIA

In addition to researching how dominant scholars of imaginary voyages theorized the development of the travel narrative and imaginary voyage, I undertook my own extensive research to investigate the genre’s breadth and diversity, to confirm or challenge existing scholarship. In my research at Yale University’s Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library and the Vanderbilt Wachs Collection, I studied a vast range of works qualifying as travel narratives and/or imaginary voyages, particularly those which contained visual representations of distant places (Appendix A). I limited myself to works featuring travel outside of Europe. This self-imposed limitation prioritizes representations of alterity: beyond the interest in seeing how Europeans portrayed the more distant realms they thought about, texts set farther from Europe can naturally get more imaginative and far-fetched in the kinds of societies they represent.

With the support of a Pichois research grant, I worked with travel narratives and related ephemera held at the Beinecke.<sup>37</sup> I focused on voyage accounts that featured exceptional visual and material enhancements, such as elaborate maps and engravings.<sup>38</sup> When reading these purportedly authentic voyage accounts, I consistently encountered the same key elements: the accounts featured navigational details such as latitude and longitude, weather, and detailed supply lists. Writers commented on the physical appearance of the indigenous populations encountered, how they hunted, whether they were aggressive or peaceful, and how they treated birth and death. Despite these commonalities, I noted that writers varied in the degree of detail provided as well as what facets of their voyages took precedent, a trend which would be echoed in the imaginary voyages I consulted.<sup>39</sup> I also studied works challenging the notion of travel narratives or imaginary voyages, to enhance my understanding of these genres and their scope.<sup>40</sup>

At Vanderbilt, I took advantage of the Wachs' Collection wealth of less-studied 17th and 18th century popular fiction to undertake a thorough investigation of the imaginary voyage as a genre and to identify relevant subcategories therein.<sup>41</sup> I also examined lesser-studied texts

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<sup>37</sup> I mention ephemera because I also worked with texts tangential to cartography and voyage accounts, such as a French geography game from 1650, which prompted players to undertake their own voyage around the world. Such materials hint at the intense French preoccupation with newly 'discovered' lands, which extended into leisure activities.

<sup>38</sup> The majority of texts I worked with would qualify as *relation de voyage*, the accounts of "real" voyages. Claude Buffier's *Géographie Universele*, Pierre Bergeron's *Voyages faits principalement en Asie*, and L. Langlès' *Voyages du chevalier Chardin en Perse, et autres lieux de l'Orient* provided examples of maps of known (and partially known) lands, and engravings depicting the societies of said lands.

<sup>39</sup> For instance, Dom Pernety's account gave minute details (such as how much fresh water was carried aboard, the kinds of fish they caught and how, and every article of clothing worn by the indigenous people encountered), whereas Schouten's voyage account prioritized dramatic descriptions of fights with sea monsters and pirates. These variations are important to note because they challenge my earlier assumption that travel narratives were thoroughly homogenous in style and tone. Although travel narratives follow a general model and discuss the same key subjects, I observed a greater diversity in how these accounts were communicated than my initial research led me to assume.

<sup>40</sup> Numerous texts push the boundaries of conventional travel writing by rendering travel banal (*Nouveau voyage autour de ma chambre* (1797) or completely impossible *Relation d'un voyage du pôle Arctique, au pôle Antarctique, par le centre du monde* (1721) (author unknown for both).

<sup>41</sup> Relevant subcategories that are either within or tangential to the imaginary voyage tradition include the *histoire*, *nouvelle*, *conte*, and *mémoire*, among others.

because they were highly useful to establishing stock utopian elements and getting an acute sense of formulas the genre followed (and occasionally diverged from). Although I consulted the collection's works by canonical authors such as Bernadin de Saint-Pierre, Graffigny, Montesquieu, and Voltaire, I deliberately sought out works that receive little-to-no scholarly attention.<sup>42</sup> The prevalence of imitations of or sequels to classic imaginary voyages suggested both opportunistic writers and an avid reading public for such texts.<sup>43</sup> I observed an abundance of texts that relied upon invented, exotified names and foreign places to draw an audience.<sup>44</sup> Still other works stretched the imaginary voyage into humorous and even libertine terrain.<sup>45</sup> While the majority of these forgotten works never have and may never see any additional scholarly attention, these works both solidified and expanded my understanding of the imaginary voyage. They displayed the same essential elements; for instance, the explanation of how the "editor" found these texts, the adventurous voyage, the description of the foreign society, and the return. These texts also demonstrated the influence of popular works through imitation. Furthermore, the sheer mass of imaginary voyages I encountered in this collection alone suggested that this genre was far more expansive than literary scholars may otherwise assume.

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<sup>42</sup> Certain works, like the Chevalier de Mouhy's *Laméki*s and Mercier's *L'an 2440* have been granted limited attention by imaginary voyage scholars. However, imaginary voyages by anonymous authors, pseudonyms (S.L. Rire), or authors like Le Noble, Loquet, or L'Affichard lack any scholarly mention.

<sup>43</sup> For instance, *Candide en Dannemarc, ou l'Optimisme des honnêtes gens* supposedly follows Voltaire's *Candide*, *Lettres d'Aza* is proposed as a sequel to Graffigny's *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*, and *Les Voyages de Cyrus* is an imitation of or homage to Fénelon's *Télémaque*; despite their lack of originality, readers appreciated the originals enough for there to be a market for spin-offs.

<sup>44</sup> In the 17th and 18th century imaginary voyage in France, nothing appears more exotic than the letter "z," as demonstrated by titles like *Mirzim, ou, Le sage à la cour, histoire égyptienne*; *Zambeddin, histoire orientale*; *Les Amours de Zeokinizul, Roi des Kofirans, ouvrage traduit de l'Arabe du voyageur Krinelbol*; and *Zulima*. As one may expect, these works were more concerned with evoking an exotified European fantasy of the Middle East or the 'Orient' than replicate voyage accounts to these places, even though such accounts were accessible.

<sup>45</sup> Bordelon, Laurent, *Le Voyage Forcé de Becafort Hypochondriaque* (1709) and Rire, S.L., *Les Aventures Divertissantes du Duc de Roquelaure, Suivant les Mémoires que l'Auteur a trouvés dans le Cabinet du Maréchal d'Huf* (1786) come to mind, with the latter containing vulgar illustrations to accompany equally scandalous stories.



However, my study of diverse texts in the Wachs and Beinecke special collections resulted in an impossibly large corpus, unrealistic to tackle in a dissertation. To engage in a meaningful study of gender and sexuality in French imaginary voyages, I limit myself to a shortened list of pertinent texts. My selection criteria were as follows: The works must have been considered widely-read, if not bestsellers in their time.<sup>46</sup> Each text must qualify as contentious or controversial.<sup>47</sup> A voyage (or series of voyages) to some utopian land must feature as a central aspect of the plot.<sup>48</sup> Finally, the narrative must explicitly articulate attitudes or ideals in the realms of gender and sexuality.<sup>49</sup>

As I identify representations of gender and sexuality in the imaginary voyage and utopia of the 17th and 18th centuries, I connect these representations to dynamic processes that I identify in each text. These processes can be understood as two simultaneous voyages, parallel processes leading toward utopia. Each text describes a physical voyage. This voyage is inscribed in the mythologies, theories, and cartographic representations of the space(s) explored. Each text also represents an allegorical voyage towards the ideals upheld by the utopian society. The allegorical voyage towards an ideal or ideals, I argue, is inextricable from anxieties and tensions ingrained in French culture. To verify my suspicions of when these ideals deviate from dominant norms, I engage with scholars on early modern gender and sexuality, including Seifert, Merrick, Ragan, Reeser, Crawford, Richardot, Leibacher-Ouvrard, and Sheriff. Additionally, as I identify

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<sup>46</sup> While “bestseller” lists did not exist as they do now, scholars are able to identify the relative influence of works based on their discussion among significant literary individuals, in dictionaries or encyclopedias, when printing information is available, and based on whether the books were translated or re-distributed in later editions.

<sup>47</sup> Indeed, the novel held a contested throughout the early modern period. However, because the utopia inherently implies the formulation of critique of the country of origin, these texts were often controversial or even banned. Libertine texts also qualify.

<sup>48</sup> By “utopian land,” I consider “utopia” as “the place where all is perfect” as well as “no place.”

<sup>49</sup> This can be seen in the depiction of desires, relationships, or gender roles in the utopia, or in the refusal or absence of any of these categories. The institution of marriage, wedding ceremony, social role of reproduction, and gendered jobs in the utopian society all qualify as concrete examples.

queer elements in these imaginary voyages and utopia, I also put these texts into dialogue with pertinent queer theory. Selecting the appropriate queer theorists was a challenge; I only wished to select theories that both permitted a more nuanced understanding of the primary text and could simultaneously benefit from the unique content provided by said texts.

## CHAPTER DESCRIPTIONS

Each of the utopian societies I analyze uphold, subvert, or reimagine deeply ingrained facets of society such as femininity, masculinity, and gender roles in distinct and noteworthy ways. Free from the restrictions of reality, key elements such as marriage, reproduction, and relationships can operate in singular and unexpected ways in these texts. These reformulations of conventions in the unique places between reality and imagination provide vital insights into the social contexts and values experienced by their authors (or “Editors”). Each chapter tracks different ideals and anxieties related to gender and sexuality, while also illuminating key trends and vital innovations in the imaginary voyage genre.

### *CHAPTER 1: UTOPIAN VOYAGES TO THE TERRE AUSTRALE: WRITING SOCIETY ON BLANK SPACES*

I begin my examination of imaginary voyages and their unique articulations of gender and sexuality with two of the most significant works of the French utopian tradition: Denis Veiras’ *L’Histoire des Sévarambes* (1677) and Gabriel Foigny’s *La Terre Australe Connue* (1676). Both are set in the *Terre Australe*, a non-space born from a combination of intersecting factors including mythology, theories about the world, failed exploratory voyages, and speculative cartography. These factors resulted in a societal preoccupation with the notion of a massive, inhabitable Southern Continent peopled with societies— or monsters. This combination of speculation and uncertainty provided the perfect setting for utopia; going forward, “Le modèle

utopique a trouvé son lieu géographique, le mythique continent austral, dont il ne s'écartera plus beaucoup désormais” (Lestringant, 290). The *Terre Australe* provided the perfect laboratory for thought experiments to facilitate explorations of alternate societies.

To initiate my consideration of exemplary imaginary voyages to utopia set in the *Terre Australe*, I first consider Denis Veiras’ *L’Histoire des Sévarambes*. Centuries of utopian studies uphold this work as the ultimate expression of the French utopian novel. Veiras’ novel contains all the essential plot elements for a utopian voyage, including a shipwreck followed by the exhaustive description of an imagined society perfected by the strict application of laws, and categorized by the abolishment of private property and state-mandated marriage and education. While many utopian scholars maintain that Sévarambe society guarantees universal wellbeing, the utopia has fallen under new considerations by feminist critique. As Lise Leibacher-Ouvrard demonstrates, the discourse of equality that scholars identify in Sévarambe society evaporates as soon as gender is considered. As is typically the case in classic utopia, the achievement of a robust, stable society relies disproportionately upon relegating women to subordinate roles, and this process goes to extremes in Sévarambes. To understand how this is achieved and why this is significant, I bring the text into dialogue with French feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray’s theory of female commodification in *Le Marché des Femmes* (1985), which discusses how women’s usage as exchangeable goods circulated among men is intrinsic to society’s functioning. While theoretical, I demonstrate how her text can be read as a guide to understand Sévarambe society.<sup>50</sup>

Utopia implies societal perfection by nature of its definition. This perfection, however, is achieved differently in each society. Sévarambe society appears to advance an ideal society made possible only through women’s subjugation, in order to moderate male sexual desire and assure

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<sup>50</sup> Despite this immediately apparent applicability, I cannot find any other instance of anyone bringing the two texts into dialogue. However, the connection to be made is highly pertinent for both feminist studies and utopian studies.

procreation. However, one unusual anecdote near the end of the work threatens the idealized social structure the imagined society reposes upon: *L'Histoire d'Ahimoné et Dioinistar*. Surprisingly, studies of Veiras' utopia give little to no attention to this striking story, and either ignore it entirely or reduce it to a meaningless anecdote. I address this gap in scholarship, as the contents of this story thoroughly challenge the conclusions scholars typically formulate about the novel. I argue that this story contradicts dominant understandings of *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* as a classic utopia; rather, *L'Histoire d'Ahimoné et Dionistar* comprises a cautionary tale opposing the ideals of classic utopia, nestled within a classic utopia.

In the second half of my chapter, I examine Gabriel Foigny's *La Terre Australe Connue*. Foigny's popular text also features a voyage interrupted by shipwreck, followed by the exploration of another highly structured society lacking private property, poverty, or illness. However, the protagonist and societies bear a striking difference to *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*: voyager Jacques Sadeur is a hermaphrodite, and the Austral society he encounters is peopled by hermaphrodites.<sup>51</sup> For today's readers, a society that completely reimagines gender may seem radically avant-garde, but in the early modern period, hermaphrodites held a unique status spanning systems of knowledge. To appreciate the unique roles played by the hermaphrodite in the early modern period, I engaged with specialists of hermaphroditism in the early modern period such as Daston, Epstein, Long, Park, Rothstein, Soyer, and Straub. By studying their work, I surmised that hermaphroditism was understood as an intriguing mythological or allegorical figure from Antiquity at best, or a medical abnormality, ungodly monstrosity, or oddity at worst.

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<sup>51</sup> I recognize that, currently, the term "hermaphrodite" is outdated and even offensive to some. However, I use the term to maintain congruence with the language of the text and time period in which it was written.

Beyond its status as a key text in the French utopian voyage tradition, Foigny's text is especially worthy of consideration because, against intersecting traditions of overwhelmingly negative connotations, hermaphroditism is portrayed favorably in *La Terre Australe Connue*. Considering the *Terre Australe*'s antipodal position, as the true world-upside-down, Foigny's project of reversal is well-situated. In Austral society, hermaphroditism is perfection, whereas non-hermaphrodites are monstrous. Furthermore, as Sadeur observers, the lack of gender roles or gendered hierarchies eliminates the problems these structures cause back home.

Given how this genderless society reverses categories of normalcy and monstrosity, I was prompted to explore and develop the notion of queer utopia to explain Foigny's utopia. My conception of queer utopia is inspired by José Esteban Muñoz's *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (2009). In Muñoz's conception of utopia, "Utopia is not a prescriptive; it renders potential blueprints of a world not quite here, a horizon of possibility, not a fixed schema" (Muñoz, 97). Adapting his theory to the possible worlds depicted in the imaginary voyages and utopia of 17th and 18th century France, only a few— like *La Terre Australe Connue*— incorporate a queer element rather than replicate hegemonic structures of acceptable performances of (binary) gender and (hetero)sexuality. Such worlds expand our current understandings of early expressions of queerness or queer identity.

As I investigated the queerness of Foigny's utopia, I identified two distinct queer utopia within his text. In one imagining of queer utopia, the Austral society eliminates gender, sex, and sexuality; the land lacks sexual desire and considers discussion of sex an unacceptable taboo. In the competition imagining of queer utopia, meanwhile, Jacques Sadeur experiences sexual desire across gender categories, lusting for his fellow hermaphrodites and for the women of neighboring countries. Therefore, my consideration of queer utopia is necessarily twofold. I

argue that *La Terre Australe Connue* articulates queerness via Sadeur's desire across gender categories and his craving to be accepted for his hermaphroditism. The Austral society, however, envisions a utopia that banishes gender as well as sex. The incompatibility of these two utopia suggests that the appeal of socially imposed utopia necessarily triumphs over an individual's desires for acceptance outside of normalcy and convention.

## CHAPTER 2: ACHIEVING THE UTOPIA OF IDEAL MASCULINITY WITH MODERATION

In my second chapter, I examine Fénelon's *Les Aventures de Télémaque* (1699), a work set in the age of Greek mythology. This imaginary voyage portrays Télémaque's experiences during the absence of his father Ulysses. Written at a time where French readers continued to avidly consume literary and cultural imitations of Greco-Roman classics, *Télémaque* immediately appealed to audiences. Furthermore, *Télémaque* was initially written as a didactic text for the duc de Bourgogne, but the work was leaked to the public when it was discovered to contain critique of Louis XIV's rule— which only bolstered the work's popularity.

While Télémaque undertook his voyages to find his father, unbeknownst to him, the gods' intervened, influencing the trajectory of his voyages to shape him into a ruler worthy of his idealized yet absent father. Over the course of his voyages, Mentor (truly the goddess Minerva in disguise) advised and guided him. Mentor not only led him towards ideal rule, but also steered him away from the negative examples of problematic rule they encounter in various kingdoms around the Mediterranean Sea. In this chapter, I examine the utopian and dystopian kingdoms Télémaque and Mentor encounter, where Mentor illustrates how the ruler assures the prosperity or misery of the populace. *Les Aventures de Télémaque* is especially valuable to my consideration of gender and sexuality in the utopia because it intentionally communicates ideals and anxieties regarding masculinity by depicting the qualities of an ideal king. In *Télémaque*,

both the allegorical and physical voyages to utopia are inextricably connected to ideal masculinity.

While reading, I was struck by the heavy prevalence of moderation in discussions of ideal rule. The persistence of moderation in Mentor's lessons prompted me to consider the pertinence of Todd Reeser's *Moderating Masculinity in Early Modern Culture* (2006). I demonstrate how the model articulated in Todd Reeser's *Moderating Masculinity*, in which ideal masculinity is synonymous with moderation, grants an uncanny degree of insight into *Télémaque*.<sup>52</sup>

Moderation, Reeser explains, lies between the two nonmoderate extremes of excess (as seen in the bellicose man) and lack (demonstrated by the effeminate man). The moderation-based model of masculinity is immediately apparent in the structure of *Télémaque*'s voyages and Mentor's accompanying lessons; during each voyage and each lesson, Mentor warns *Télémaque* against lacking or excessive masculinity and advocates instead for moderation.

The pertinence of Reeser's model of excessive, moderate, and lacking masculinity for *Télémaque* is enhanced when considering the broader context of masculinity in culture around the time Fénelon wrote it. Lewis Seifert and Rebecca Wilkin's "Men and Women Making Friends in Early Modern France" illustrates how ideal masculinity in Fénelon's time was largely expressed through *galanterie*, developed in the mixed-gender *salon* and indicated by a profusion of highly affected mannerisms dictating interactions between men and women. Mentor's lessons fundamentally oppose this model of behavior. Mentor instructs *Télémaque* to flee women, as they could tempt him into effeminacy, and condemns pretentiousness and superficiality. In this chapter, I argue that Fénelon valorizes this outdated model of ideal masculinity with utopian

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<sup>52</sup> The applicability of Reeser's model of ideal masculinity as the moderate center between excess and lack is in part so unexpected because his model described masculinity during the French Renaissance, yet *Télémaque* was published at the very end of the 17th century.

intentions. When confronting the dystopian consequences of Louis XIV's reign, the elaboration of a guidebook for moderate rule disguised within an imaginary voyage was Fénelon's way of attempting to enact a better future.<sup>53</sup>

### CHAPTER 3: MAPPING THE GEOGRAPHY OF QUEER UTOPIA IN L'AUTRE MONDE

In the wake of the Age of Exploration and cartography's increasing precision and accessibility, imaginary voyages had no shortage of spaces to portray. Despite this, authors continually sought to portray the next great unknown to continue to captivate audiences. My third chapter explores the next era of innovation in the imaginary voyage by examining Cyrano de Bergerac's *Etats et Empires de la lune et du soleil*, one of the first works of early science fiction in France. The Moon and other celestial bodies provided the next site of scientific speculation, myth, and fantasy. Bergerac's imaginary voyage is especially vital to my project because in addition to contributing to France's preoccupation with the plurality of worlds, his text also articulates an unparalleled articulation of romantic and sexual encounters between men, communicated in complex and glorifying terms.

Ample yet seemingly disjointed portrayals of desire between men appear frequently throughout *L'Autre Monde*. Scholars often dismiss these scenes as libertine shock-value or misread the scenes to downplay their queer content. However, my chapter demonstrates how the articulations of desire, intimate or sexual encounters, and relationships in *Etats et empires* are not only connected but reveal an ever-expanding rewriting of the essential categories of love and life itself. To elaborate upon the significance of queerness in Bergerac's utopia, I revisit Muñoz's

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<sup>53</sup> As I will explain in Chapter 3, Louis XIV's reign coincided with the consolidation of state power, but also extensive wars, famine, and poverty that resulted in great suffering and a high mortality rate among the common people.



notion of queer utopia. If Muñoz posited queerness as only existing upon the horizon, *L'Autre Monde* embraces this notion both literally and theoretically, upon the lunar horizon as well as far beyond the limitations of Bergerac's reality.

My consideration of queer utopia in *L'Autre Monde* begins with protagonist Dyrcona visualizing (and later, attempting) male pregnancy. While male pregnancy is partly deployed in the text as one of many instances of burlesque inversion, it also initiates a process of questioning and finally transcending the terrestrial boundaries of life and death through the male body and male intimacy. Then, I examine how Dyrcona's intimate relationship with the *démon de Socrate* defies the absolutes of corporeal limitations. In my reading of a death ritual for lunar philosophers, the intersection of death, sex, life, and love between men becomes both more explicit and revolutionary, as a complex anthropophagic and sexual ritual permits the beloved to live again. Bergerac's queer utopia reaches its highest expression in the *Arbres Amants* story. When two lovers die on the battlefield, their intertwined bodies transform into twin trees, whose fruits cause any couple who ingests them to experience an all-consuming passion for each other. I demonstrate how the *Arbres Amants* rewrite the origin story of love itself by idealizing love between men. Throughout *L'Autre Monde*, Bergerac deploys male love to reimagine procreation, romance, corporeality, and mortality. He grants this form of love glorious, utopian power in a time where sex between men could be punished by death, providing a rare, crucial articulation of resistance to the dominant and institutional powers that would otherwise eliminate it.

#### CHAPTER 4: THE UTOPIAN FUNCTION OF NEGATIVITY: ANTI-SOCIAL REFUSAL IN *LETTRES D'UNE PÉRUVIENNE*

In my fourth and final chapter, I consider another innovation in the imaginary voyage: the reversal of the voyage trajectory, as illustrated in Madame de Graffigny's *Lettres d'une*

*Péruvienne*. Overwhelmingly, scholarship on *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* maintains an overly restricted range of inquiry; Since Graffigny reverses the conventional voyage trajectory by depicting a Peruvian woman's journey to France and subsequent criticism of French culture, many scholars analyze questions of alterity and exoticism in the text. Additionally, largely because the work portrays a woman making the contentious choice of refusing marriage to a man to prioritize the pursuit of knowledge, many feminist scholars go to great lengths to proclaim the text a proto-feminist novel. While my understanding of Graffigny's popular novel is enriched by these approaches, I argue one aspect of the text remains neglected: the text's extensive articulation of negativity, or attitudes and behaviors categorized by criticism or refusal.

Scholars have yet to meaningfully discuss the fact that Zilia expresses extensive anti-social negativity throughout her letters and interactions. Refusal and retreat not only influence the conclusion of the novel; rather, the entire narrative is infused with it. Negativity and antisociality can be identified from the very beginning of the novel; when Zilia observes Spanish conquistadors plundering her Incan temple home, to her first forays into the customs of French court, to her increasingly fraught interactions with her French peers.

In this chapter, I examine how Graffigny's deployment of negativity initiates innovation for understandings of utopia. To do so, I incorporate Lee Edelman's polemic, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (2004). I utilize Edelman's theory because it articulates the unique power negativity holds in a way that closely aligns with the value of negativity as I see it illustrated in *Lettres*. Edelman identifies negativity and anti-sociality as powerful forces imbued with counter-cultural potential. Edelman's text controversially advocates for the rejection of "reproductive futurism," or, the dominant social norm that only values the conventional heterosexual family and the inevitable child, which deems any other organizing principle of

communal relations or existence unnatural. Rejecting reproductive futurism challenges the notion that bringing a child into the world grants an unbeatable promise of absolute fulfillment. Considering the deeply ingrained social values of children and family (now as well as in 18th century France), rejecting such values comprises a major act of defiance, sure to be met with backlash.

Negativity can enact resistance to dominant social structures, prevailing attitudes, and acceptable notions of lived experiences, and can create meaningful criticism of dominant values and norms. Scholars have already identified the explicit instances of social critique that Zilia formulates throughout her text; she criticizes French superficiality and materialism, how men behave towards women, and the shallow and inauthentic nature of French women. My approach goes beyond focusing on criticism alone, to valorize the larger project of negativity at work as initiating a new understanding of utopia. In my approach to *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*, I examine important sites throughout the text that best exemplify Zilia's radical negativity. *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* overlaps significantly with the utopian novel, as it features many of the plot elements conventional to such works. In a radical twist on the typical utopian text, however, *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* does *not* attempt to enact the utopian betterment of society by proposing a blueprint to ameliorate the problems Zilia identifies. Instead, the utopian betterment of the self is tenuously constructed in isolation, a pursuit she can only achieve through her continual anti-social negativity.

#### IMAGINARY VOYAGES: PERTINENCE AND POSSIBILITY

Given the robustness of the field of early modern gender and sexuality studies, one may question the value of expanding this scholarship to incorporate the imaginary voyage, but such texts offer a rich, albeit undervalued, portrayal of gender and sexuality in the early modern

period. Indeed, the imaginary voyage lacks the historical rigor of medical or judicial documents, and the hallowed status or artistry of canonical literature. Yet the imaginary voyage's status as a hybrid outcast lends the genre tremendous value. Because the imaginary voyage privileges the exhaustive description of the foreign society, scholars can expect to encounter discussions of gender roles and family institutions. Because the imaginary voyage necessarily portrays entirely invented societies, one can expect some degree of innovation in the portrayal of gender dynamics. Furthermore, as the utopia frequently employs inversion to formulate social critique, the resulting commentary on gender and/or sexuality necessarily provides insight into how these dynamics were perceived in the author's country of origin. Consider, too, the fact that many utopia were banned or published clandestinely for their controversial or libertine content. Given their contested status, such works contain especially interesting portrayals of interactions between men and women (or, perhaps, 'hermaphrodites') that could not and did not exist in state or church-approved literature. The study of gender and sexuality in the early modern period would be remiss to continue to neglect the imaginary voyage, and I endeavor to bring to light the diverse representations of gender and sexuality of the most influential imaginary voyages in the early modern French tradition.

## CHAPTER 1

### UTOPIAN VOYAGES TO THE TERRE AUSTRALE: WRITING SOCIETY ON BLANK SPACES

The French imaginary voyages of the 17th and 18th century saw tremendous creativity and variety in their settings, with depictions ranging from underground crypts in Egypt, to the South Pole, to the Moon and Sun. However, if this golden age of imaginary voyages can be categorized by a creative range of settings, authors held a disproportionate fixation with certain geographical regions. One such region was a conjectured land known by the French as the *Terre Australe*.<sup>54</sup> In fact, scholars of imaginary voyages and travel narratives such as Lestringant, Arthur, Dunmore, and Faussett have noted the relative dominance of texts set in the *Terre Australe* over other geographical areas.<sup>55</sup> Since any place could serve as a potential site for an imaginary voyage, why did so many choose the *Terre Australe* as their setting? What about this place captivated both writer and audience?

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<sup>54</sup> I refer to this place as the *Terre Australe* to mirror how the space is referenced in the French primary texts I use in this chapter, *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* and *La Terre Australe Connue*. However, this region was known by many other names. The *Terre Australe* (or Austral Lands) was also related to or confused with speculative lands such as *Terra Incognita*, *Terra Australis*, the *Antipodes*, *New Holland*, *Nouvelle Hollande*, *Hollandia Nova*, *Gonneville's Land*, *Arosca's Land* or the *Pais d'Arosca*, *The Land of Parrots*, the *Southern Continent*, *Magellanie*, *Australasie*, *Polynésie*, the *Monde Austral*, and still others (Sankey, "The Abbé Paulmier's Mémoires and Early French Voyages in Search of Terra Australis"). In addition, Bronwen Douglas identifies relevant place names associated with the *Terre Australe*, including the "*Antichthon*, *terra incognita* ('unknown land'), *Oceano Oriental* ('Eastern Ocean'), *Mar del Sur* ('South Sea'), *Mare Pacificum* ('Pacific Sea'), *Terra Australis* ('South land'), *Zuytlandt* ('Southland'), *Grand Océan* ('Great Ocean') and *Océanie* ('Oceania')" (Douglas, 179). This vast array of place names indicates the plethora of explorations undertaken and claims made by various nations and suggests the newness and uncertainty of this space whose borders and names shifted over centuries.

<sup>55</sup> See Lestringant, Frank. "Huguenots En Utopie, Ou Le Genre Utopique Et La Réforme (XVI e. *Bulletin De La Société De L'Histoire Du Protestantisme Français* (1903-), vol. 146, 2000, pp. 253–306; Arthur, Paul Longley. *Virtual Voyages: Travel Writing and the Antipodes, 1605-1837*. Anthem, 2011; Dunmore, John. *Visions & realities: France in the Pacific, 1695-1995*. Heritage Press, 1997; Faussett, David. *Images of the Antipodes in the Eighteenth Century: a Study in Stereotyping*. Rodopi, 1995.

Answering this question requires a consideration of the context surrounding the writing of imaginary voyages. Arthur argued that the region, also known as the Antipodes,<sup>56</sup> was an exceptionally popular site for imaginary voyages for three reasons:

First, the antipodes had come to stand for the lure of the unknown. Second, long-held associations of a terrestrial paradise in the southern region continued to offer a framework for imagining ideal societies in the antipodes. And third, even as exploration brought new knowledge, the antipodean world remained tantalizingly partly mapped and partly known, its ever-changing map full of gaps and holes and extrapolations (Arthur, xx).

While these reasons explain the enduring appeal of the *Terre Australe* for portrayals of adventures, this answer fails explain how the region made its way into public discourse in the first place, before authors chose the land as the setting for their voyages. Understanding the prevalence of imaginary voyages set in the *Terre Australe* means first understanding the society and conditions from which these texts emerged, which help to explain the significant obsession that both readers and authors had with this space. The *Terre Australe*'s popularity can be tied to how this speculative landmass became synonymous with the unknown. Understanding this development permits greater insight into how European perceptions of alterity belied deeper anxieties and fantasies. The complex intersection of dominant mythologies and theories, cartographic representations of these places, and the existence of (competing) voyage accounts from actual explorations converged in a compelling *mélange* of known and unknown.

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<sup>56</sup> The term “antipode” is a relative one, referring to the part of the Earth’s surface diametrically opposed to the point of origin. So, for the Northern Hemisphere, particularly Western Europe, the “antipodes” would be roughly where we now know Australia and New Zealand to be.

Geography played a significant role. In part, the *Terre Australe* captivated the imagination because this uncertain land lay at the fringe of reality, at the “final frontier” of European knowledge of the world. The heyday of the imaginary voyage, the 17th and 18th century, coincided with the conclusion of the Age of Discovery. A century previous, circumnavigations undertaken by the likes of Magellan (1519-1522) and Drake (1586-1588), among others, greatly expanded knowledge concerning the layout of the world. Despite these advancements, one glaring gap remained: “le mystérieux continent austral,” estimated to exist somewhere within the massive unexplored region below South America towards the Strait of Magellan, between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, between the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn (Duteil, 335). Until more was known, the area could be filled with *anything*— from fertile land, ice, monsters, unknown civilizations, untapped wealth; whatever else the imagination could propose. This tantalizing balance between an increase in knowledge about the world and enduring gaps partly explains the popularity of texts depicting the *Terre Australe*, although other factors played important roles.

At the height of obsession with the *Terre Australe*, a world of imagination and speculation emerged, in which seemingly incongruent elements such as monsters, maps, questionable travel narratives, utopia, authors, explorers, and social commentary merged around the possibility of another world, articulated in imaginary voyages. The notion of the *Terre Australe* granted writers a virtual laboratory to map out ideals onto a blank space. This is best demonstrated in the two most influential and popular imaginary voyages set in the *Terre Australe*, Denis Veiras’ *L’Histoire des Sévarambes* and Gabriel Foigny’s *La Terre Australe Connue*. The examination of different imaginings of society in this speculative world provide greater insight into the articulation of societal ideals in the realm of gender and sexuality during

the Early Modern period. A cursory introduction to the mythology, cartography, theories, and tangential voyage accounts of the *Terre Australe* provide necessary background details to appreciate the significance of the utopian societal dynamics of these antipodean thought experiences.

### MYTHOLOGY AND MONSTERS OF THE *TERRE AUSTRALE*

Mythology played a key role in explaining the enduring European interest in the *Terre Australe*. Certain myths that influenced conceptions about the world and the *Terre Australe* lingered despite significant advancement in the fields of cartography and science into the 17th century. Stories and depictions of monsters associated with the *Terre Australe* contributed to imaginative portrayals of this land. These myths, many inherited from Antiquity, filtered into various institutions of knowledge, to be eventually incorporated into imaginary voyages.

Mythology intersected with biology and geography. In Medieval Europe, the dominant understanding of geography was inherited from Antiquity, with the former Roman empire as the heart of civilization radiating from the Mediterranean Sea. From there, the known civilized world gradually disintegrated into the unfamiliar: “Plus loin, aux limites du monde, se tiennent des êtres et des peuples étranges, à la frontière de l’humanité ou de l’animalité” (Duteil, 62). Distant and unknown geographic regions were associated with monsters and human hybrids. The lack of knowledge of these distant realms did not impede attempts to represent these foreign beings. Tradition prioritized the serious cataloging and illustration of these supposed beings. One of the earliest known traditions of cataloging monsters and exotic animals began with author-unknown *Physiologus* (situated between 2 and 4 CE) and Pliny’s work on natural history (77-79 CE), with



many other catalogs following in this tradition.<sup>57</sup> According to Duteil, Pliny and his *Natural History* constituted one of the most significant sources for these catalogs (Duteil, 61).

Medieval Christianity later adopted and adapted this tradition of cataloging, with individuals such as Honorius d'Auntun developing symbolic associations with these monsters. Considering the role of the Church as a dominant authority regarding knowledge about the world, the religious assertion of the existence of such monsters added legitimacy to these myths. Here, the term “monster” could refer to exotic animals, mythical beasts, and even human-beast hybrids; “Au-delà de ces animaux symboliques existe toute une humanité composite” (Duteil, 64). As this tradition developed, certain monsters became associated with certain distant locales, including the *Terre Australe*.<sup>58</sup>

Fueled by mythological traditions, the *Terre Australe* grew to embody otherness and monstrosity. This reputation was enhanced by the speculative land's geography. The positioning of the *Terre Australe* in the Southern Hemisphere positioned the area to become an upside-down reality, forming a dialectical opposition as heaven to hell, North to South, order to chaos. Following this, if Europe, or even the Northern Hemisphere, was peopled with human societies and civilizations, the Southern Hemisphere was uncivilized and dangerous, inhabited by hybrids. Religious discourse enhanced this association further, aligning the notion of Hell as underworld with the notion of the Southern Hemisphere as under-world:

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<sup>57</sup> Monsters were frequently listed alongside ordinary animals in these catalogues. One such catalogue referred to the owl, aspic, unicorn, basilisk, gryphon, and plover in the same space, as if all of the animals were equally plausible. Sometimes, “exotic” animals were described alongside mythical creatures, like the elephant, lion, rhinoceros, pelican, turtledove, whale, and mermaid (Duteil, 62-63). Perhaps, for one confined to Europe, the mermaid was as inaccessible as the rhinoceros, so both were equally plausible or implausible creatures.

<sup>58</sup> In turn, the animals and monsters of these catalogs found their way into travel narratives, which granted them additional credibility. For more detail on the incorporation of mythical beasts and monsters into travel narratives, see the Introduction.

Terrifying monsters and semi-human creatures had traditionally inhabited the imagined underworld of hell throughout centuries of artistic representation in painting, sculpture and scripture. Through long-established mythologies, the undiscovered worlds of the southern hemisphere came to be associated with that underworld (Arthur, 19).

Thus, the *Terre Australe* became associated with extreme bodily oddities, deformation, and monstrosity (Arthur, 20). Arthur points to Hartmann Schedel's *Nuremberg Chronicle* (1493) as a well-known example condensing the anxieties associated with the underworld into illustrations of imagined beasts, such as "the 'Antipode' with feet facing the wrong way, the 'Sciapod' holding a giant foot head-high as a shield from the sun, and the 'Blemmyae' with no head at all, having a face positioned in the chest area" (Arthur, 21). The Antipode (Figure 1), the Sciapod (Figure 2), and the Blemmyae (Figure 3) provoke the imagination, recognizable as humanoid yet unsettling for their monstrosity.

The association with monsters and the *Terre Australe* helps explain the 17th and 18th century obsession with this area, as it excited anyone with a macabre fascination with the permeable line separating humanity from beastliness. Furthermore, monsters added an element of adventure and danger, helping to break up the monotony of typical navigational details. Often, these encounters with monsters proved fatal. In the anonymous work titled *Relation d'un voyage du pole Arctique, au pole Antarctique, par le centre du monde*, the narrator describes a fatal encounter with sea monsters near the South Pole that emphasizes the association with the Southern Hemisphere and monstrous danger. Three sea monsters attack their ships, and set upon the crew, "l'un le prit par la tête, & l'autre par les pieds, & tirant chacun de son côté avec une extrême furie, ils séparèrent bien-tôt ce misérable corps, dont les boyaux & le sang faisoient une

longue traînée dans la Mer” (Anon, 82-83). Such gory encounters were by no means uncommon across both believed-to-be-authentic *relation de voyage* as well as *voyages imaginaires*.<sup>59</sup>

### THEORIES OF THE *TERRE AUSTRALE*

As captivating as tales of terrifying monsters may be, human hybrids and sea monsters alone cannot explain Europe’s intense preoccupation with the *Terre Australe* in the 17th and 18th centuries. While the realm of mythology drew heavily from Antiquity to align the *Terre Australe* with monstrosity, other ideas developed concerning the layout of the Earth, and what might inhabit the last unknown part of the world. These theories prove formative for dominant (mis)conceptions about the *Terre Australe*.

As the *Terre Australe* was frequently portrayed as the opposite or inversion of European civilization, the rumored land saw contradictory portrayals. While depictions of the *Terre Australe* as the land of monsters and freaks cast the land in a negative light, others cast it as a utopia (Arthur, 21). Conceptions of the land as a monster-filled hellish underworld would be insufficient to captivate audiences or to motivate expeditions to find these lands, but the *Terre Australe* was also rumored to be an undiscovered terrestrial paradise. The writings of Albert the Great, Claudius Ptolemy, and Marco Polo, among others, suggested “that there was a land on the other side of the Equator, centered on the South Pole and endowed with fabulous riches” (Sankey 28-29), which helped inspire later utopian works set in the *Terre Australe*.

A yet-unexplored land provided the perfect habitat for enduring myths and evolving theories. If mythology provided a fantastic or frightening side to the *Terre Australe*, the theories of dominant thinkers strove to find reasonable, logical justifications for the existence of this

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<sup>59</sup> Monsters prove particularly prominent in Gabriel Foigny’s *La Terre Australe Connue*, one of the two texts set in the *Terre Australe* that I discuss in this chapter.

supposed southern continent, and crafted hypotheses for the nature of such a continent. Certain key thinkers and their theories held great power in justifying the existence of the *Terre Australe*, contributing to the European preoccupation with this land. While certain theories motivated expeditions, in turn, certain expeditions motivated the revision of theories. Dominant ideas regarding the *Terre Australe* date to Antiquity, which would be rewritten and reimagined in the Early Modern period, such as the theories of La Popelinière and Le Comte de Buffon.

Specialists of the *Terre Australe* trace the origins of a speculative massive southern landmass to various points in history. As Douglas explains, the emergence of the concept of a great southern continent evolved gradually across Antiquity, gaining traction with the support of diverse thinkers, including the Pythagoreans, Aristotle, Marcus Tullius Cicero, and Claudius Ptolemaeus (Douglas, 181). However, even if the Earth was understood as spherical, with the assumption that a great southern landmass logically balanced out the lands of the northern hemisphere, that didn't mean such a land was accessible. In fact, the antipodes were assumed to be unreachable due in part to their location in the "torrid zone" (Sankey, 28).

As Livingstone explains, theories regarding climatic zones influenced perceptions of whether the *Terre Australe* was or could be inhabited. According to a theory dating to Antiquity, the world was divided into several climate zones: the frozen climate at each of the poles, a torrid climate at the Earth's equator, and a temperate, habitable climate forming a desirable barrier between the arctic zones and the torrid zone. While the theory correctly correlated relative temperature in these climatic zones and proximity to the sun, the theory mistakenly assumed the torrid zone was impenetrable. This would not be disproved until the thirteenth century, when Portuguese sailors successfully navigated down and back along the coast of Africa without the sun burning them to death (Livingstone, 2). This theory was significant to conceptions of the

*Terre Australe* because the torrid zone separated Europe from the supposed Southern Continent. Once this obstacle was disproven, the land became further imbued with potential. Over the course of the transition from Antiquity into the Middle Ages, however, the *Terre Australe* regressed to an uncertain status.

By the Middle Ages, theories of the *Terre Australe* fell out of favor given their incompatibility with Biblical texts about the world. The New Testament could be read to ‘disprove’ the theory of an inhabited southern continent. The reasoning proceeds as follows: Jesus called upon his disciples to preach to all of humanity, around the world— but if the torrid zone barred travel from North to South, that would mean Jesus had issued an impossible task— and was therefore wrong. To resolve this conundrum, “from St. Augustine onward, the simple solution was to view the Antipodes as empty of people” (Livingstone, 3). Meanwhile, other texts advanced theories about the world that contradicted the possibility of a Southern Hemisphere, or even a spherical world. For instance, some revisited “the ancient idea that the world was a disk surrounded by water” to avoid contradicting Biblical scripture (Douglas, 181), or proposed the existence of two overlapping spheres, “one of land and one of water,” with “the two spheres as pressed against one another, the water soaking into the land” (Livingstone, 2). No *Terre Australe* would exist in either vision of the world.

Even after the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance, the theory of balanced hemispheres necessitating the existence of a great Southern Continent continued to be upheld by cosmographers (Duteil, 355). However, views of the *Terre Australe*— and the world itself— evolved dramatically when transitioning out of the Middle Ages into the Early Modern period, largely because of the drastic increase in voyages. Not only were there more voyages, but these voyages also went farther than ever before, and the accompanying increases in knowledge they

facilitated spurred yet more theories regarding the *Terre Australe*.<sup>60</sup> As developing theorizations shaped voyagers' expectations, so too did new experiences and explorations influence the ongoing development of theories about the *Terre Australe*.

La Popelinière and his theories demonstrate the dynamic interplay between voyages and theories. Towards the beginning of the era of exploration around the *Terres Australes*, in 1582, Lancelot Voisin, Sieur de la Popelinière advocated for France to turn their attention to the Southern Hemisphere, in the hopes of obtaining similar success as Spain had with America—that the *Terre Australe* would be France's "New World" as America was for Spain. La Popelinière initiated what would become a strong French preoccupation with the area. He exercised tremendous influence with the publication of *Les Trois Mondes*, in which he detailed the advantages of France discovering and settling the *Terre Australe* (Sankey, 42). La Popelinière's logic for exploring this area was in part grounded in the persisting theory which supposed the symmetry of the hemispheres and balanced proportion of land and water, "drawing on the geographical orthodoxy since the time of Ptolemy that the lands of the Southern Hemisphere must be of a size to counterbalance those of the North" (Gascoigne, 20).

While the theory furthered by La Popelinière suggested the symmetry of the hemispheres, another theory assumed the opposite. Le Comte de Buffon's *Théorie de la terre* (1749) suggested the asymmetricality of the hemispheres in terms of climate, ocean, and landmass. However, he ardently defended the existence of the *Terre Australe* (Sankey, 58). In this view, the landmass of the *Terre Australe* no longer had to equal that of the total landmass of the Northern Hemisphere.

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<sup>60</sup> The 16th century proved a dynamic time for increased awareness of the outside world. Douglas summarizes the most pertinent voyages in the Southern Hemisphere during this time: "The first heyday of Terra Australis encompassed the voyages across the Mar del Sur of Mendaña in 1567-69, Mendaña and Pedro Fernandez de Quiros in 1595-97, Quiros in 1605-06, Jacob Le Maire and Willem Corneliszoon Schouten in 1615-16, and Abel Janszoon Tasman in 1642-43 and 1644" (Douglas, 193-194).

With no certainty regarding the size or location of this land, new theories attempted to inform navigators of their proximity to the *Terre Australe*. Buffon promoted one such theory, which proved influential: “He concluded that the presence of ice at latitudes nearer to the equator in the southern hemisphere than in the northern hemisphere was a sure sign that the Austral Lands did in fact exist, because he believed that ice occurred in the ocean only when land was close” (Sankey, 58).<sup>61</sup> These competing theories about the nature of the world contributed to a fascination with the uncertain *Terre Australe*. In addition to these competing theories, another influential source of (speculative) information shaped perceptions and assumptions of the *Terre Australe*: cartographic representations of the world, and especially of the Southern Hemisphere.

#### CARTOGRAPHY OF THE *TERRE AUSTRALE*

Today, with satellite imagery-enhanced maps readily available, studying early maps of the Southern Hemisphere can be a comical experience, where the reader marvels at inaccuracies and incomplete lines tracing continents that trail off into the sea, with sea monsters lurking nearby. Now, the notion of a colossal inhabitable Southern Continent reads as absurd, but in the early modern period, a complex intersection of factors kept this notion alive. Certain maps illustrate the visual and spatial component that shaped mentalities and assumptions about the *Terre Australe*, in which a constant balancing-act between known, unknown, and wishful thinking led

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<sup>61</sup> This theory proved dangerous. When French voyager Kerguelen was granted permission and funding to explore the *Terre Australe*, he found only ice and wind. However, thanks to Buffon’s theory as well as ill-founded optimism, he believed he had to go farther inland, and reported more favorable conditions than what he observed in order to secure more funding. This led to two failed expeditions, a scurvy-ridden crew, and his inevitable disgrace. Back home, forced to admit the truly desolate nature of the land he explored in 1773, he was court martialled and jailed (Sankey, 66). Kerguelen’s misadventures demonstrate the consequences of competing theories and a hard-to-shake belief in the *Terre Australe* as an elusive paradise.

to the mapping of what was little more than empty space. This space seemed to imply room for a continent, but no such continent could be found.<sup>62</sup>

The final outlines of Australia (and the accompanying disproving of the *Terre Australe*) emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. McGregor points to Matthew Flinders' *General Chart of Terra Australis* of 1814 as the definitive map displaying now-Australia's final borders (Figure 4).<sup>63</sup> Earlier maps showed only incomplete, inaccurate, or imagined representations of what was assumed to be a landmass substantially larger than the reality (Australia, scattered Pacific Islands, New Zealand, and Antarctica). These maps contributed significantly to shaping perceptions of the *Terre Australe*. Simultaneous developments in the realms of cartography and printing led to enhanced knowledge about the world as well as improved access to this knowledge. European world maps' charting of continental coastlines improved from 1400 and 1550. Meanwhile, the development of movable type facilitated the reproduction of maps both new and old, which forged "stronger impressions on the popular geographical imagination" of the new publics who could access these maps (Phillips, 6). As the sole providers of visual representations of geography, cartographers held tremendous power in creating a visual narrative of the spaces they were mapping. This power was greatest when representing uncertain spaces, such as the *Terre Australe*.

In my consideration of cartographic representations of the *Terre Australe*, I examine a select range of European maps which convey essential trends and help to explain the unique hold this speculative geographical region held over the European imagination. Furthermore, these maps

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<sup>62</sup> When explorers and traders (namely the Dutch) became increasingly aware of Australia, which they deemed New Holland, people were still looking for and talking about the *Terre Australe*. "Finding" Australia did not immediately resolve the question of the Southern Continent. Moreover, "the Dutch East India Company had a secret atlas documenting its discoveries in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia" (McGregor, 2), including Australia, so access to knowledge of this part of the world was largely kept secret.

<sup>63</sup> Even as the western outlines of Australia began to appear on maps, cartographers continued to suggest the outlines of the *Terre Australe* as another continent further south.



portray the very characteristics of the *Terre Australe* advanced by the texts I discuss in this chapter, *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* and *La Terre Australe Connue*. The most compelling and revelatory maps display illustrative elements, incompleteness and empty space, and speculative mapping. I discuss the maps which best convey pertinent representations of the *Terre Australe* to enhance my later discussion of imaginary voyages' portrayals of the same land; the maps which demonstrate the vast uncertain spaces, or the rich decorative elements which show how beauty, adventure, and monstrosity further developed representations of the *Terre Australe*.

Certain maps visibly grappled with the struggle of representing a land whose outlines were only hypothesized, using incomplete lines or speculative suggestions to outline a continent. One of the earliest (and most speculative) maps referring to the *Terre Australe* is a Macrobian world map (Figure 5), in which a large mass titled *Temperata Antipodum Nobis Incognita* hovers above the word *Frigida*. This map thus represents zonal theory, with the world divided by climatically differentiated landmasses, portraying the world as a circle comprised of layered zones. From this point, maps could only gain precision.

Abraham Ortelius' *Typus Orbis Terrarum*, published in 1570 (Figure 6), provides a well-known example speculative cartography, loosely informed by supposed voyages, drawn with complete lines. The truly colossal *Terra Australis Nondum Cognita* takes up more space than *any* of the other landmasses. The mostly empty space within the outlines of the continent is striking. Perhaps to downplay this effect, and simultaneously give the viewer more information about this (false) continent, Ortelius made references to voyages to the area in a neat, tight script. Such voyages include those undertaken by Magellan, Portuguese exploration (given by the Latin "Lusitanis"), and Marc Paul Venitien, voyages which are explicitly referenced in the introduction to Gabriel de Foigny's *La Terre Australe Connue*, discussed in this chapter. This demonstrates

how voyages' influence upon perceptions of the outside world was amplified in cartography and literature.

Certain cartographers communicated rather than downplayed the uncertainty plaguing the Southern Hemisphere. Rather than draw out lines imagining the outlines of the *Terre Australe*, some maps showed outlines of the land which tapered off, deliberately left incomplete. In my investigation of the appeal of unmapped, unknown spaces to the writing of utopia, this form of map plays a pivotal role. Such maps invited artistic inspiration: "Generations of adventure writers, heroes and readers have been inspired by sketchy maps, both real and imaginary, which seem to invite their geographical fantasies" (Phillips, 1). Pierre du Val's 1677 map provides an example of such a "sketchy map," where the outline of the supposed *Terre Australe* trails off like an incomplete thought (Figure 7). Starting from the west, by the supposed *Terre des Perroquets*, the outline of the mythical Southern Continent ends abruptly in the *Mer des Indes*.<sup>64</sup> Even *Nouvelle Hollande* (recognizable now as the western coast of Australia) is incomplete. The map utilizes the massiveness and emptiness of the *Terre Australe* as a space to write more about the better-known parts of the world: Africa, Europe, and Asia.

The most speculative representation is found in Phillip Buache's map of 1739 (Figure 8). This map introduced a novel perspective of the world, depicting the world from underneath, as if one were looking upwards at the South Pole. Despite the greater knowledge of the Southern Hemisphere's geography by this time, partial and incomplete boundaries nonetheless snake across the map. I mention this map not only for the novel and advanced representation of the Austral Lands (that is, with Australia and Antarctica as distinct spaces), but also for the approach

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<sup>64</sup> I wish to signal the *Terre des Perroquets* because of a compelling association between the *Terre Australe* and birds. In *La Terre Australe Connue*, the Austral land is plagued by vicious, giant birds. This map's publication date overlaps with that of Foigny's text. A connection is more than plausible.

of literally seeing the *Terre Australe* as the world upside-down, a perspective which foreshadows the literary texts that sought to describe this world.

Another vital aspect of cartography of the *Terre Australe* helps explain the great preoccupation Europe held with this part of the world. While incomplete or speculative maps captured the imagination, provoking the reader to question just what (or who) could inhabit this massive uncertain space, certain maps attempted to illustrate the beings— be they monsters, explorers, or inhabitants— that surrounded or inhabited these lands. The mythological association of certain monsters with certain distant lands or seas filtered into cartography, with the added bonus of adding decorative and dramatic elements to maps. Abraham Ortelius' *Typus Orbis Terrarum*, published in Antwerp in 1570 (Figure 6), provides a stunning example.<sup>65</sup> This map features a sea monster, a giant winged fish, situated above the *Prom. Terre Australis*. Another sea monster (above the *Terra Australis*, underneath the *Mar di Indi*) has a long serpent-like tail ending in a whale-like tail, with front claw-like appendages, two spouts of water coming out from two blow-holes, eyes, and a large gaping mouth, with a ridge along its back. No monsters are on the landmass itself, suggesting that the monster-ridden sea comprises the greatest obstacle to reaching this rumored paradise. Similarly, the seas of Jodocus Hondius and Pierre Mariette's double-hemisphere world map of 1642 (Figure 9) teem with sea monsters and ships throughout the seas, many of which lie in proximity to the vast *Terra Australis Incognita*. On this map, the stark emptiness of the *Terre Australe* contrasts bizarrely with the dense, tight detail of the other continents—a shocking desert of ignorance compared to the relatively well-known world.

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<sup>65</sup> I also discussed this map earlier, in terms of the speculative representation of the *Terre Australe* as a massive landmass balancing out the land of the Northern Hemisphere.

Arguably, the most detailed example of a map of the *Terre Australe* depicting monsters was Gerard de Jode's 'Novae Guineae Forma, & Situs' (Figure 10), which was part of the 'Speculum Orbis Terrarum.' Sea monsters— some with wings, fearsome teeth, and even a merman and mermaid— fill the waters surrounding the land. On land, we see a serpent, a man hunting a dragon with his bow, and a gryphon. This map provides a rare example of monsters represented on both land and in the sea and makes the frightening suggestion that the land could be just as dangerous as the high seas, although the nearby ship suggests that monsters did not provide a sufficient deterrent to explorers. The abundance of monsters on this map demonstrates how mythology permeated diverse institutions of knowledge, including cartography.

Lastly, Pierre Desceliers' 1550 world map provides a vivid example of how illustration in the forms of flora and (monstrous) fauna were used to fill uncertain spaces, likely inspiring the monsters that appear in imaginary voyages set in the *Terre Australe* (Figure 11). In a unique approach to cartography, Desceliers' colorful, detailed world map requires the reader to rotate it 180 degrees, depending on if they want the words to be the right way up when looking at the northern or southern hemisphere. To look at the *Terre Australe*, one must turn the world upside-down, a representation which parallels how the *Terre Australe* is often described in utopian texts. The proposed *Terre Australe* forms a vast border along the bottom of the map. The *Terre Australe* of Desceliers' visions features vast mountainous and forested landscapes, societies housed in small huts, people, and creatures that resemble camels, elephants, birds, and sea monsters; displaying an unprecedented level of imagination and speculation by representing actual societies rather than a smattering of monsters and faraway ships. Europe's enduring and profound fascination with the *Terre Australe* cannot be explained alone by monstrous mythologies, evolving theories of the world, and maps of the Southern Hemisphere, although

each of these elements held roles in crafting competing, compelling portrayals of another world. One final element, the travel narrative, synthesizes these elements and amplifies the power that representations of the *Terre Australe* held in shaping European perceptions of a nonexistent yet captivating part of the world.

### THE *TERRE AUSTRALE* IN VOYAGE ACCOUNTS

Arguably the most substantial contributor to the continuous obsession with the *Terre Australe* was textual, initially in the form of voyage accounts or the *récit de voyage*, but also in the form of the *voyage imaginaire*.<sup>66</sup> While ongoing myths, expeditions, and the maps of these works provided powerful contributors to the European imaginary of the *Terre Australe*, the written descriptions were able to provide greater detail of the land that lay between myth and reality. Although they were generally presumed true, these accounts were more influential than accurate. These accounts shaped European perceptions of the *Terre Australe* and world at large as well as future generations of imaginary voyage novels. One especially influential account, that of Captain Gonneville, perfectly demonstrates both the tremendous power of the genre, as well as the dangers associated with the impossibility of verifying the descriptions he presented as fact. This work contributed to long-held misconceptions of the *Terre Australe*, and would inspire many doomed voyages, misguided investments, and broad public belief in a place that simply did not exist. Furthermore, his account— an unreliable yet captivating text— provides an important bridge to understanding how monstrous mythology, cartography, and voyage accounts converged in the two most popular imaginary voyages set in the *Terre Australe*.

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<sup>66</sup> For a detailed explanation of the *voyage imaginaire* and the *récit de voyage*, see the Introduction. An absolute distinction between the two kinds of texts is impossible, as a great degree of mutual influence and borrowing blurred the two genres beyond recognition.

The long-enduring French preoccupation with the *Terre Australe* as a valuable site to explore and exploit emerged from an unlikely pair: a little-known church figure, the Abbé Paulmier and the elusive Captain Gonneville. The Abbé Paulmier significantly influenced the French crown to fund expeditions to and eventually colonize the *Terre Australe* when he published his *Mémoires touchant l'établissement d'une mission chrestienne dans le troisieme Monde, Autrement appellé, La Terre Australe, Meridionale, Antartique, & Inconnuë*. It was written in 1664 and dedicated to Pope Alexandre VII. He argued for French involvement in the *Terre Australe* to increase national power and to spread Christianity.

Part of Paulmier's argument in support of French involvement in the *Terre Australe* was based on a favorable account of voyager Quirós in 1606, who helped put a (speculative) *Terre Australe* on the map. Quirós (along with explorers like Mendaña) followed an "Inca legend, that the ocean to the southwest harboured certain islands and a great southern *tierra firme* ('mainland', 'continent') which promised vast riches, new colonies and an untold number of heathens ripe for conversion and exploitation" (Douglas, 194).<sup>67</sup> Quirós' preoccupation with the land lasted from 1596 to 1615, during which he claimed the island of Espiritu Santo (now Vanuatu) for God, the Church, and the King of Spain in 1606 (Douglas, 194). An excerpt from the account of the voyage taken by Luis Vaez de Torres, who worked under Quirós, described this land as "very fertile" with "large rivers," inhabited by naked "black people" who "fight with bows, darts, and clubs" and "did not choose to have peace with us," and would not let the Spanish come ashore (Torres, np).<sup>68</sup> However, despite Quirós' desire to undertake a follow-up voyage to further explore the surrounding lands and islands, he was not granted permission or funding to do so.

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<sup>67</sup> This provides just one example of the intersection between mythology and voyages.

<sup>68</sup> Dalrymple, Alexander, translator: "Relation of Luis Vaes de Torres, Concerning the Discoveries of Quiros, as his Almirante. Dated Manila, July 12, 1607: A Translation, Nearly Literal, by Alexander Dalrymple, Esq., from a

Paulmier incorporated other “evidence” beyond Quirós’ favorable account to argue for France’s presence in the *Terre Australe*. The abbé stated that navigator Binot de Paulmier de Gonneville set sail from Le Havre for trade opportunities in the Spice Islands in 1503 but was blown off course near the Cape of Good Hope, a frequent landmark in imaginary voyages and travel accounts alike. The crew landed in an unknown region, where they stayed for six months. The voyagers managed to return to France with an indigenous person in tow: Essoméric, son of the chieftain Arosca. Despite an initial promise to return Essoméric to his native land, Essoméric stayed in France, married, and had children. Abbé Paulmier claimed to be his great grandson (Sankey, 44). Beyond the incorporation of Quirós’ account, then, the most influential aspect of Paulmier’s publication was “its argument that France already had a claim to these regions thanks to the exploits of Paulmier’s forebear, Binot Paulmier, Sieur de Gonneville, who, allegedly, had planted the cross in the Austral Regions back in 1504” (Gascoigne, 21).

Paulmier immortalized Gonneville as a key figure of the search for the *Terre Australe* by including an alleged excerpt from Gonneville’s travel account, which he insisted had been kept by the ship’s navigator (Sankey, 44). The inclusion of this supposedly authentic account granted his publication greater clout. In Paulmier’s *Mémoires*, he alludes to Gonneville in his Ch. 1, “*Des Terres Australes en general, & de leurs differens noms,*” and Ch. 2, “*De l’étenduë des Terres Australes, de leurs diverses découvertes, & de quelques autres particularitez qui les concernent,*” which also mention Magellan and Columbus, implying Gonneville had a similarly credible status. He called the *Terre Australe* “le pays de la découverte du Capitaine de Gonneville,” and claims to include “une Relation sommaire tirée de l’original” (Paulmier, 9). By

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Spanish Manuscript copy in his possession.” First printed in Burney's Discoveries in the South Sea. Part 2, p. 467. London, 1806. 4to.

way of this introduction, he then permits himself indisputable authorial license and proceeds to give a summary of Captain Gonneville's voyage.

The alleged Gonneville voyage account resembles imaginary voyages by including a dramatic shipwreck scene, in which “une longue & furieuse tourmente, laquelle luy fit perdre sa route ; & enfin le laissa pour l'abandonner à un calme ennuyeux dans une Mer inconnue” (Paulmier, 10).<sup>69</sup> After setting foot upon the *Terre Australe*, Gonneville and his men take stock of their surroundings, “pour remarquer les qualitez de cette Terre, & les mœurs de ses habitans, & ils l'avoient fait fort curieusement” (Paulmier, 11). However, with a convenient explanation that absolves Paulmier of needing to show this actual account, the ship and record were purportedly stolen by English pirates (Paulmier, 11-12). Despite this misfortune, Paulmier obtained a declaration providing key information about the *Terre Australe*, which helped to construct a narrative casting this land as a favorable site for future exploitation. The declaration states “que ce pays est fertile, & peuplé,” and explains that “leur rudesse & leur naïveté, ne seront peut-estre pas entierement desagrees,” suggesting the feasibility of civilizing the indigenous population (Paulmier, 11-12). Given the inclusion of elements like the shipwreck, the fantasy of the fertile and colonizable land, as well as the explanation of a pirate theft to explain the disappearance of the full account, it is difficult to deny the similarities between this text and a typical imaginary voyage account. However, the account was taken seriously.

Favorable timing partly explains the popularity and influence of Paulmier's account, as well as the willingness to accept this account as accurate. France's interest in the *Terre Australe* was connected to an ongoing international competition for new land: “The early years of Louis XIV's

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<sup>69</sup> Both Foigny's *La Terre Australe Connue* and Veiras' *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*, along with virtually every imaginary voyage I have encountered in my research, all feature a shipwreck as a segue into the exploration of a new land. I discuss these classic elements of utopian voyage novels in my introduction.



reign saw some renewed interest in the projection of French power into the Pacific as a way of catching up with its rivals” (Gascoigne, 21). France’s obsessive efforts to locate the nonexistent *Terre Australe* caused the country to “miss out” on obtaining land the way other powers like Spain, the Netherlands and Britain had.<sup>70</sup> While Captain Gonneville’s alleged discovery of a part of the *Terre Australe* took place in the 16th century, France’s motivation to rediscover and claim this rumored land continued well through the 18th century, at the cost of neglecting more promising opportunities (Sankey, 42). Captain Gonneville’s account played a significant role in France’s obsession with the *Terre Australe* alive, even in the face of mounting evidence disproving the existence of an inhabitable great Southern Continent.

The Gonneville account illustrates the problem of travel accounts, particularly those set in the *Terre Australe*, because it demonstrates the lack of gatekeeping or fact-checking to discern truth from myth. No known evidence or documentation of Gonneville existed prior to Paulmier’s writings, but these troubling lacuna “did not prevent Jean Paulmier from successfully planting the seed of a French perception that it had a stake in the uncharted Pacific” (Gascoigne, 21). Paulmier’s travel account held great power because it was written convincingly and showed readers what it wanted to see. Furthermore, accounts like these provided hints to the location of the *Terre Australe*. Paulmier asserted that Gonneville’s land lay “between the meridians of 60 and 80 (in relation to the Canary Islands meridian) and below the Cape of Good Hope, somewhere in the general area between the islands of Madagascar and Tristan da Cunha” (Sankey, 46). Henceforth, Paulmier’s call to action, supported by the incomplete Gonneville

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<sup>70</sup> See Sankey, Margaret. “The Abbé Paulmier’s Mémoires and Early French Voyages in Search of Terra Australis.” *Discovery and Empire: the French in the South Seas*, edited by John West-Sooby, University of Adelaide Press, South Australia, 2013, pp. 41–68.

account, served to strongly influence generations of (failed) expeditions in the 17th and even into the 18th century.<sup>71</sup>

The extensive publication of imaginary voyages set in the *Terre Australe* coincided with these voyages, meaning Gonneville's supposedly reputable account was taken seriously even alongside the popularization of fictitious ones.<sup>72</sup> Paulmier's Captain Gonneville even made his mark on cartography: Louis de Mayerne-Turquet's 1660 map depicts Gonneville's land (as the "Pais d'Arosca," east of the Cape of Good Hope), and Pierre Duval's 1677 map shows Gonneville's land as southwest of the Cape (Sankey, 46). Gonneville's account testifies to the great power of persuasion and inspiration held by travel accounts: this unverifiable account incited doomed voyages, (mis)informed the mapping of the *Terre Australe*, and misleadingly tantalized France with the possibility of new territory. Additionally, such travel accounts substantially influenced imaginary voyages (and vice versa), and these imaginary voyages hold the unique power of articulating blueprints for utopian societies, mapped out on the unknown spaces that so captivated the European imagination.

It would be naïve and fallacious to suggest the possibility of a smooth transition between travel accounts to imaginary voyages portraying the *Terre Australe*, due to the fraught relationship between fact and invention in any travel narrative. However, clear moments of departure mark where the imaginary voyage willingly distances itself from reality to engage in pointed social critique, a hallmark of utopian literature. Such moments invite study not just

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<sup>71</sup> In the 17th century, French explorers like Voutron and Beaujeu tried to find the land Paulmier described (Sankey, 49). Even into the 18th century, French voyagers such as Jean-Baptiste Charles Bouvet de Lozier, Marc-Joseph Marion du Fresne, Yves-Joseph de Kerguelen de Trémarec and Louis François Marie Aleno de Saint Allouarn also tried to find the *Terre Australe* (Sankey, 41). Bouvet was particularly influenced by Paulmier's account, to the extent that he searched extensively for the (nonexistent) complete account of Gonneville's voyage and accompanying documents, and even made efforts to persuade the East India Company, his employer, to support his furthering of the search for the *Terre Australe* (Sankey, 50).

<sup>72</sup> Two examples of fictitious accounts set in the *Terre Australe* are Veiras' *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* and Foigny's *La Terre Australe Connue*, both of which I discuss in this chapter.

because of what they reveal about the *Terre Australe* or other distant land, but especially about the author's country of origin. While imaginary voyages mark a tradition of imitating authentic voyage accounts to create portrayals of other worlds, those set in the *Terre Australe* are also imbued with the notion of inversion. Due to the *Terre Australe*'s unique positioning as the world-upside-down, this land provides the perfect setting to craft a society that subverts, inverts, or criticizes European society. Utopian alterity in the *Terre Australe* is unique, being signalled not only by great spatial distance, isolation, and antipodean positioning relative to European, but also by conveying another reality contradicting the real world (Racault, 33).

#### THE (AUSTRAL) WORLD, ACCORDING TO VEIRAS AND FOIGNY

In my exploration of imaginative textual representations of the *Terre Australe*, I concentrate on the two best-known and most-analyzed French imaginary voyages set there: Denis Veiras' *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* (1677) and Gabriel Foigny's *La Terre Australe Connue* (1676).<sup>73</sup> Both texts utilize the notion of the *Terre Australe* as the world-upside-down to manipulate notions of reality and normalcy to craft thought-provoking societies upholding distinct ideals. These ideals, while attributed to imagined societies, provide a distorted reflection that enables readers to better understand European society. What does the overlap between cartographic representations of an imaginary space and allegorical ideals reveal about European priorities? Which ideals are criticized or advanced? I investigate the distinct processes of mapping the *Terre Australe* in the utopia portrayed by Veiras and Foigny. I investigate how these

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<sup>73</sup> I discuss both Veiras and Foigny's text in this chapter in part to keep with tradition; for example, Arthur, Fitting, Leibacher-Ouvrard, Lestringant, Racault, Sankey, and Sermain, discuss the two together, while some also mention Tyssot de Patot's *Les voyages et aventures de Jacques Massé*, a less-studied text. Additionally, Foigny and Veiras' texts were the most popular imaginary voyages set in the *Terre Australe*. Furthermore, the texts are interesting to consider together for how gender and sexuality are portrayed in dramatically different ways in each.

authors fill the blank spaces of Austral land with distinct societies, and what priorities these societies hold in the realm of gender and sexuality. Each texts reveal simultaneous progressions towards utopia: the physical voyage, and the changes society takes to qualify as utopian.

*L'HISTOIRE DES SÉVARAMBES, A MAN'S WORLD*

Veiras' *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* opens with a lengthy prologue explaining how the purportedly authentic narrative was found, a strategy well-established in literary conventions of the time. Such a prologue fits within a larger tradition of attempting *vraisemblance*, defined by the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (1762) as the “apparence de vérité.”<sup>74</sup> The notion of *vraisemblance* maintained an elevated priority for literature (particularly the imaginary voyage) throughout the 17th and 18th century in France. For Morgan, *vraisemblance* did not necessarily seek to achieve a realistic portrayal of a real event, but to please readers (Morgan, 294).<sup>75</sup> In the imaginary voyage, *vraisemblance* is seen in how the work is introduced in a preface or “Au Lecteur” in which the author explains they are actually the editor, and then explains how they found the text. This fictional trick, as Chang explains, gave the “editor” space to navigate reader’s potential reactions, avoid misreadings of the text, and, especially in the 17th century, functioned as “a tool to circumvent the increasing dangers of publishing, of submitting a work to a reading public whose tastes the author could not fully anticipate or control, and whose critique the author could not easily avoid” (Chang, 333-334).

As the *Au Lecteur* section suggests, *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* was brought to the French public in a roundabout way. The protagonist, Captain Siden, wrote abundant notes over the

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<sup>74</sup> VRAISEMBLANCE. s.f., [1762] Le Dictionnaire de l'Académie française. Quatrième Édition. T.2 (Brunet, Paris, 1762)

<sup>75</sup> For more, see Morgan, Janet. “The Meanings of Vraisemblance in French Classical Theory.” *The Modern Language Review*, vol. 81, no. 2, 1986, pp. 293–304. JSTOR, JSTOR

course of over fifteen years describing his accidental voyage to and time spent in *Sévarambe*, a utopian land in the *Terre Australe*. He returns to Europe, near-mortally wounded. On his deathbed, he bestows his valuable travel accounts to the doctor and friend who treated him, who then entrusted the valuable documents to the “editor.” As the “editor” explains, “Cette histoire est dans une grande confusion; elle est presque toute écrite sur des feuilles détachées, & en diverses langues, qui auront besoin d’être expliquées, & d’être mises dans leur ordre naturel” (Veiras, 28), hence necessitating a competent editor before the narrative could reach the public.

Before Captain Siden, the prologue insists, “Plusieurs ont cinglé le long des côtes du troisième continent, qu’on appelle communément, les terres australes inconnues, mais personne n’a pris la peine de les aller visiter pour les décrire” (Veiras, 25). This affirms both the intense societal preoccupation with the *Terre Australe*, as well as the suggested heroism of protagonist Siden, who is described in terms that suggest notions of ideal masculinity, with a military background and a thirst for adventure. Siden is driven by “le violent desir que j’avois de voir d’autre pays que celui de ma naissance,” which developed from “un plaisir incroyable à lire des livres de voyages, des relations de pays étrangers, & à tout ce que l’on disoit des nouvelles découvertes” (Veiras, 35).<sup>76</sup> After the death of his parents, liberated from any obligations preventing him from pursuing his dream, he sets sail on a voyage to the West Indies in the pursuit of adventure and economic interests.

A violent storm blows the ship off-course. The crew survives, and Siden imposes emergency rule to maintain order. This initial imposition of rules and regulations signals a central tenet for understanding how Veiras depicts the voyage towards utopia: utopia is not achieved naturally, but rather through the ongoing application of laws destined to stamp out vices and threats to

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<sup>76</sup> In this *mise-en-abyme*, one observes the articulation of the complex interactions between travel account, imaginary voyage, reader, writer, and explorer (fictional or otherwise).

stability. After the crew achieves stability, Siden and his crew encounter the inhabitants of this unknown land, somewhere in the *Terre Australe*. The rest of the work details the crew and Siden's progression deeper into *Sévarambe*, with exhaustive descriptions of the society. In a format characteristic to classic utopian texts, the narrative describes everything from political organization, rules and punishment, religion, the land's history, and, most pertinently, gender dynamics.

While imaginary voyage novels typically spend a sizable portion of the narrative describing the society in detail, *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* features an exceptionally complex dynamic which has compelled many scholars to undertake a political analysis of this imagined society. Keohane, for instance, considers the society a “radical socialist absolutism” (Keohane, 588). Racault describes the *Sévarambe* society as a “système héliocratique,” “où le culte solaire fonde la légitimité d'un régime qu'on peut définir comme un absolutisme théocratique modéré par un système d'assemblées et de corps intermédiaires et encadré dans l'exercice du pouvoir par des lois fondamentales” (Racault, 33-34). As is largely the case in utopian literature, the articulation of new political systems is rarely an experimental thought experiment for its own sake, but rather can be traced to concerns about the author's politics back home. In fact, Racault argues that this system deliberately resembles Louis XIV's absolutism.<sup>77</sup> Sermain, however, proposes a futuristic interpretation; “Parce que le passé des Sévarambes ressemble à l'état actuel de l'Europe, le mouvement dramatique qui a conduit au monde utopique s'inscrit en pointillé entre le “parmi

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<sup>77</sup> In his own words, “le système héliocratique, associant comme le dit Veiras monarchie, despotisme, aristocratie et démocratie, aboutit à un absolutisme contrôlé appuyé sur une pseudo-légitimité religieuse dont le législateur sait qu'elle n'est qu'imposture, mais aussi qu'elle est psychologiquement nécessaire à l'exercice du pouvoir. Cette construction politique, nullement révolutionnaire, diffère finalement très peu de l'absolutisme louis-quatorzien, aménagé seulement dans le sens de la tolérance religieuse et encadré par des règles précises de fonctionnement: pour le protestant Veiras, seul un pouvoir fort peut garantir une marge de liberté de conscience, à l'intérieur toutefois d'une religion d'État à fonction politique assurant l'unité nationale” (Racault, 35). Thus, this utopia may not propose a blueprint for a better society, but rather, acts as a recognizable yet deliberately crafted mirror to reality.

nous” de Siden et le “là-bas” des *Terres australes*, transforme l’utopie en un but possible d’une histoire à venir de l’Europe” (Sermain, 211), be that future desirable or dystopian. Despite (if not because of) the great distance between Europe and the supposed *Terre Australe*, the work remained strongly grounded in the native country of the writer, albeit manipulated in a world upside-down.

The progression towards a perfect society through the application of laws comprises a central facet of Sévarambe society and reveals the uniquely Sévarambian notion of an ideal society. Unlike some utopian societies, in which the citizens are naturally perfect, the Sévarambe society requires ongoing correction:

La nature n’a rien de particulier pour les Sévarambes: ils sont nés avec le germe de tous les vices que nous apportons dans le monde; mais ce germe, étouffé dans sa naissance par la sage disposition des loix, ne peut prendre racine dans le cœur de ces peuples. C’est donc à la forme du gouvernement des Sévarambes qu’ils doivent leurs vertus (Veiras, 17).

In this “heliocratic” society (so named because the central religion worships the Sun), the “vice-roi du soleil” acts as the human interpreter of the Sun’s wishes, and dictates the laws meant to perfect this society. As is typical in utopian societies, “All goods and lands belonged to the state and officials had sole disposition of them” (Keohane, 589). Keohane adds that although the society is highly regulated and ritualized, a certain degree of personal, individual freedom prevented the society from being overbearing. He observes the way every aspect of life follows strict procedures, from clothing, to work, to meals, to significant life events and more, yet suggests a certain degree of freedom throughout these proceedings. For instance, Sévarambians could choose their trade, so long as they were competent. Some could even travel the world, so

long as they did so in disguise and returned with ideas that could benefit the society. Despite the existence of one official state religion, freedom of religious belief and debate was encouraged (Keohane, 590). In this interpretation of Sévarambe society, life appears structured but allows for basic personal freedoms. However, my interpretation differs, as the notion of “freedom” in the Sévarambe society is not only subjective, but highly gendered. The examination of these “utopian” laws reveals the ideals at the heart of this utopia, and what sacrifices are made to achieve it.

In the utopia of *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*, law assures social stability, and compensates for the moral failings of the ordinary humans that comprise society. However, these laws repose upon the commercialisation, exploitation, and objectification of women. To understand the intersection between the objectification of half of society and the achievement of ‘utopia,’ I incorporate Luce Irigaray’s *Le marché des femmes* (1985) which demonstrates how the current (and past) social order relies upon the commodification of women.

While *Le marché des femmes* has never been used to theorize utopian societies, her understanding of the intersection of social order and women’s subjugation facilitates a more profound understanding of how Sévarambe society functions, and the true cost of stability. Irigaray’s argument goes as follows:

La société que nous connaissons, la culture qui est la nôtre, est fondée sur l’échange des femmes. Sans l’échange des femmes, nous retomberions - dit-on - dans l’anarchie (?) du monde naturel, dans l’aléatoire (?) du règne animal. Ce qui assure donc le passage à l’ordre social, à l’ordre symbolique, à l’ordre tout court, c’est que les hommes, ou les groupes d’hommes, font circuler les femmes. (Irigaray, 167)



In short, society's gendered hierarchies endure because of the deep-seated fear that any other reality would constitute a return to chaos. Any semblance of order has only been assured, and could only continue to be assured, in a patriarchal system that controls women and restricts their ability to move through society.

While Irigaray's theorization of women as exchangeable commodities reads as more theoretical than literal, Sévarambe society presents a world where women are literally interchangeable, as demonstrated in a broad range of social customs. In fact, *Le Marché des Femmes* reads like a how-to guide to understanding Veiras' fictive society. By studying this alternate reality, readers enter a troubling thought experiment where women's subjugation directly ensures utopia, seemingly through every aspect of society. Analyzing how women are converted to merchandise to secure stability permits an enhanced understanding the anxieties within European society that contributed to the articulation of such a utopia. *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* portrays utopia not as an immediate absolute, but rather in degrees culminating towards the ideal city-state. As they venture further into the land, Siden and his men are told "Vous allez dans un pays, nous dit-il, où tout est plus beau & plus magnifique" (Veiras, 132). Therefore, the crew's physical voyage towards utopia unfolds alongside the allegorical voyage to utopia. Although countless instances throughout the text portray "l'échange des femmes" as the means to control society, three key points best illustrate men relegating women to subordinate roles to prevent anarchy and achieve utopia. I analyze the aftermath of the shipwreck, the crew's first foray into Sévarambe society, and a Sévarambe wedding ceremony as especially revelatory to understand the unique dynamics of gender and sexuality in the *Terre Australe* of Veiras' imagining.

The reader first encounters the strategy of exploiting women's oppression to improve society after a storm causes the crew to shipwreck, and the crew hastily makes camp somewhere in the *Terre Australe*. Once the crew achieves stability, they face a new problem. The crew was comprised of 307 men and only 74 women, for whom the men quickly found themselves competing. Unlike the men, the women made the voyage out of desperation:

Nous avons parmi nous plusieurs femmes... Quelques-unes d'elles étoient de pauvres femmes, que l'indigence & l'espérance d'avancer leur fortune avoient engagées d'aller aux Indes. D'autres y avoient ou leurs maris, ou des parens; mais la plupart avoient été tirées des lieux de débauche, ou avoient été séduites par des gens qui les avoient achetées pour peu d'argent (Veiras, 73).

This description suggests the women's precarious situation, particularly for those previously in sex work or sexual slavery. As becomes clear, these desperate or debaucherous women find themselves demonized as the instigators for the jealousies and quarrels that would escalate into violent conflict. Captain Siden identifies the starting point of their problems: "Ces femmes eurent de la complaisance pour les hommes, qui commencèrent aussi de leur parler d'amour" (Veiras, 74). Female sexual desire is thus declared a threat to stability, as the situation devolves into violent chaos. When one man discovers his lover had been secretly involved with another man, he stabs the other man and his lover with a sword and flees.

In response, Captain Siden decided that "tant que nous aurions des femmes parmi nous, elles seroient cause de quelques troubles" (Veiras, 78). His declaration simultaneously exculpates male violence and entitlement, and punishes not only on the deceitful woman, but women at large for tempting the uncontrollable force of male desire. He immediately imposes new societal regulations, which the men overwhelmingly approve; "L'économie de l'échange- du

désir - est une affaire d'hommes" (Irigaray, 173). This leads to the women being divided up amongst the men like provisions. The highest-ranking men would get a wife to themselves. The lowest-ranking men shared one woman among as many as ten men, with men of middle ranks somewhere in between (Veiras, 78).<sup>78</sup> This system, in which women are divided up like rations to ensure crew stability, foreshadows the treatment of women in Sévarambe, in which, although excessive male entitlement appears to pose the greatest threat, the burden of realizing stable society falls upon the women.

Another iteration of women's subjugation providing the means to ensure utopia occurs when a team of Siden's men voyage beyond camp to explore the surrounding land. There, they encounter the Sévarambes, who welcome them. The men are presented with fifteen young, similar-looking attractive women, and are told, "ce sont des esclaves, qui ne sont ici que pour vous rendre service" (Veiras, 107). The seemingly insignificant fact of their similar appearance echoes Irigaray's assertion that, in this economy, "chacune ressemble complètement l'autre. Elles ont toutes la même réalité fantomatique," nothing more than "échantillons du même travail indistinct" (Irigaray, 171).<sup>79</sup>

This societal custom of giving (male) voyagers (female) sex-slaves is grounded in the guiding logic behind the Sévarambes' laws and customs. These laws follow three main principles: "la première regarde la conservation de chaque particulier: la seconde, l'entretien dans un état heureux: & la troisième enfin, a pour but l'accroissement ou la multiplication de chaque espèce" (Veiras, 108). In this line of reasoning, (compulsory) heterosexuality is a pillar helping to uphold social order and wellbeing, so long as "chaque particulier" refers to men. The

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<sup>78</sup> This system is undone when the crew reaches the new society; the Sévarambes found this system abominable, and only a minority of the men choose to stay with their "assigned" wife.

<sup>79</sup> The notion of these women as *fantomique* invites a slippage into a word used similarly in the 17th century; *fantome* slips to *fantasme*, echoing the forced sexual nature of these women's duties as a male fantasy.

utopian ideal of social stability is in part achieved through the complementary of such coupling. In this logic, nature created males and females in each species to ensure *génération*,<sup>80</sup> “son ouvrage le plus noble,” with an added bonus; “mais pour rendre l’état de chaque animal encore plus heureux, & pour venir plus facilement à bout de son dessein, [la nature] a voulu attacher à cette union un plaisir, que nous appelons amour” (Veiras, 110). Siden’s men seem to ignore the apparent incoherence between justifying sexual slavery and celebrating the merit of sexual pleasure to ensure procreation. Because “les excès troublent la modération qui doit se trouver dans l’usage de tous les plaisirs,” the Sévarambe government decided “nous ne souffrons pas que personne soit ici sans femmes” (Veiras, 111). This wording defines “*personne*” as “*homme*,” a subtle but meaningful articulation affirming men’s value as individuals and demotes women to the role of subhuman being tasked with ensuring the well-being of humanity. “Moderation,” then, constitutes an important ideal at the heart of this society.<sup>81</sup> However, this seemingly neutral term, “moderation,” harbors different realities for women, as it requires their demotion to sexual objects tempering masculine desire.

The women wait to be selected by the foreign crew. Meanwhile, “nous nous consultâmes sur la manière dont nous choisirions nos femmes” (Veiras, 113), deciding to once again choose in function of their rank, with the lower-ranking men drawing lots for the remaining women. Irigaray describes how women-as-merchandise “passent toujours d’un homme à un autre homme, d’un groupe d’hommes à un autre groupe d’hommes” (Irigaray, 168); here, the passage becomes literal as the pairs go to their assigned private rooms for the night. The next morning,

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<sup>80</sup>*La génération* was how procreation was widely referred to in the 17th century.

<sup>81</sup> Moderation is a key term for considering Early Modern sexuality. In Reeser’s theorization, ideal Early Modern masculinity was defined as the moderate middle between excess and lack. Here, moderate masculinity and sexuality was controlled by delegating women to men. For more on this conception of moderation, see Todd Reeser, *Moderating Masculinity in Early Modern Culture*.

the men are informed that one of the officials “étoit allé tirer mes gens de captivité, voulant dire hors des bras de leurs maitresses” (Veiras, 114). In this bizarre inversion, the men become the unwilling captives, the female sex slaves the degrading captors. Furthermore, this system is further normalized in the slippage from calling the women “esclaves” to “maitresses.”

This society prioritizes maintaining male sexual satisfaction as a central tenet of ensuring social order, at the cost of subordinating women to the role of receptacles for sexual satisfaction. Later, Captain Siden explains that these slave women aren't even Sévarambian women, but foreigners. In explaining their “need” for sex slaves or concubines, one learns that these “slaves” are obtained by exploiting neighboring countries: “Pour subvenir au besoin qu'on a d'un grand nombre de ces esclaves, on a imposé un tribut d'enfans à quelques nations voisines, & on en achete des autres nations” (Veiras, 378).<sup>82</sup> In this societal paradigm, male desire is prioritized over the autonomy of others to the extent of justifying slavery. The Sévarambian path towards utopia continues to confirm this gendered hierarchy as the crew venture further inland.

After this first encounter, Siden and his crew advance to increasingly prosperous and beautiful cities, learning more about Sévarambe customs, and history. Along the way, Siden and his men observe a state-organized mass wedding ceremony. While classic utopian voyages tend to describe the institution of marriage, detailed descriptions of weddings are rare. Analyzing this scene is crucial, as the gender dynamics of *Sévarambe* are crystallized in the symbolic ceremony, roles, and regulations surrounding the institution of marriage. Because the utopia in the *Terre Australe* generally features the inversion (and critique) of author's culture of origin, analyzing

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<sup>82</sup> The Sévarambe land takes advantage of their relative stability, wealth, and military might to exploit weaker countries through this tribute process, as a way of allowing these countries to avoid conflict.

marriage in this utopian society simultaneously permits one to better understand the roles of marriage in French or European culture.<sup>83</sup>

Although marriage is obligatory, great pomp and formality surround the rituals. The young men (all twenty-one years old) and women (all eighteen years old) form two separate lines. In the women's line, a Great Priest interrogates each woman one at a time, asking "si elle vouloit être mariée," to which each reply 'yes,' "en faisant une grande révérence, & rougissant en même temps" in a display of both respect for the religion-state and appropriate virginal innocence. Meanwhile, another priest interrogates each of the young men in the same way, one at a time, without describing their affectual response to the question. Next, the priest returns to the first young woman he approached, "& lui demanda si elle vouloit épouser quelqu'un des jeunes hommes qu'elle voyoit de l'autre côté," and, following the affirmation that this was her intention, "il la prit par le bras, la mena au bout du rang des garçons, & lui dit de choisir un mari" (Veiras, 125-126). The men then agree to this proposition.

At first glance, this scene contradicts the impression that women occupy a subaltern status in *Sévarambes*; how could they be understood as merchandise circulated between men à la Irigaray, yet have the apparent upper hand in choosing a husband? Here, it's important to recall this is a ritualized ceremony, and despite the apparent spontaneity of selecting a mate on the spot, the couples typically know each other for 18 months and have been paired before the ceremony. Furthermore, "this apparent equality vanishes with marriage. The European narrator accepts too readily what is presented as a privileged treatment of a woman, her prerogative to select her own husband during the collective wedding run by a State Official" (Leibacher-Ouvrard, 89). This

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<sup>83</sup> For depictions of marriage ceremonies in 17<sup>th</sup>-century France to compare with the *Sévarambe* ceremony, read Turrel, Denise. "Les mariages de nuit : les rituels nuptiaux dans les villes du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Dix-septième siècle*, vol. 244, no. 3, 2009, pp. 523-533.

seemingly privileged treatment vanishes later, as the reader learns of the limited, precarious roles available to women. Indeed, even the proceedings of the ceremony after this initial illusion of agency quickly reaffirm women's true status as the equivalent of merchandise.

With this phase of the ceremony complete, the new couples exchange highly gendered vows. The bride-to-be asks her groom "s'il vouloit être son bon seigneur & son fidèle mari," with "seigneur" implying an inherent hierarchical component to their impending union (Veiras, 126). The groom responds "qu'il le vouloit bien, pourvu qu'elle voulût aussi l'aimer comme une chaste & loyale épouse doit aimer son époux" (Veiras, 126). Following the word's usage at the time, *chaste* means "Qui s'abstient du plaisir de la chair, ou qui n'en use que suivant la loy de Dieu," suggesting a nuanced difference in expectations; while the husband must be a faithful head of household, even the wife's permitted sexual interactions with her husband must fit within a narrow definition of acceptable physical intimacy.<sup>84</sup> After pairing the new couples, a problem emerges if there are any "leftover" women. These women have the option of becoming one of the senator's additional wives, or, they may participate in two more mass wedding ceremonies to try to find a husband. Again, an unequal gendered dynamic colors the ceremony: "And while the description never suggests that some males remain unmarried, it lingers on the desperation of the women left unmatched" (Leibacher-Ouvrard, 89).

After the long ceremony, "les nouveaux mariés marchèrent en ordre aux logis qu'on leur avoit préparés" (Veiras, 130), where they are expected to consummate their marriage. The proceedings for the wedding night are explicitly laid out, devoid of intimate privacy. Their assigned room looks out upon the street "& c'est-là qu'ils consomment leur mariage; mais on ne leur permet de coucher ensemble que de trois nuits une, pendant les trois premières années de

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<sup>84</sup> CHASTE- Le Dictionnaire de l'Académie française, 1694, t. 1 [1694]. While this definition was published nearly 20 years after *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*, this was the closest definition to match the time period in question.

leur union, & puis de deux nuits une jusqu'à leur vingt-huitième année; après quoi ils sont libres, & peuvent coucher ensemble quand il leur plaît" (Veiras, 320-321). The extent of regulation in every aspect of life goes beyond the realm of utopian efforts to improve society, into exaggerated absurdity. These regulations are so restrictive that one must question what Veiras meant to convey when articulating these rules— if he means to uphold this societal organization as an ideal, or to criticize exhaustive customs surrounding sexuality and marriage.

The next day, the wedding ceremony continues, but with no women present. The witnesses recount,

Nous vîmes venir vers le temple les jeunes hommes nouvellement mariés, portant chacun dans leur main une branche d'arbre longue & verte, où pendoit la couronne que chacun avoit le jour précédent, avec la guirlande de sa femme liés ensemble, d'un linge blanc tout ensanglanté, qui étoit une marque de la virginité des nouvelles mariées (Veiras, 130-131).

The sanguine symbolism provides a telling explanation of the wedding's significance, with the obvious markers of male virility and feminine virginity, submission, and absence. Considering Irigaray's analysis of the social expectations linking virginity to marriage permits a deeper reading of this ceremony. For her, the virginal woman is "pure valeur d'échange;" on her own, she does not exist. Her ritualized passage into marriage occurs "par la transgression d'une enveloppe: l'hymen," and, from that point onward, "La femme, déflorée, serait renvoyée à sa valeur d'usage et à son emprise dans la propriété privée. Soustraite à l'échange entre hommes" (Irigaray, 181). The public ceremony shunts women into the private sphere, their transformation into merchandise complete.



In Leibacher-Ouvrard's analysis of the Sévarambian wedding, she argues that "[t]his ceremony shows that once invested by the male principle, women are immediately de-materialized, symbolized, literally abstracted," in which they are "re-presented" by a bloodstain, and officially excluded from the political sphere (Leibacher-Ouvrard, 90). However, this reading implies women *were* once included, present, and more than a symbol of potential fertility or tool for male satisfaction. In the Sévarambe world, women always were interchangeable, possessing only the "valeur naturelle" and "valeur sociale" described by Irigaray.<sup>85</sup> After the ceremony, Siden and his crew continue to venture inland and observe Sévarambian society. Their observations reveal gendered social dynamics, further affirming women's objectification and exchangeability as necessary to the actualization of utopia.

A significant portion of Siden's description of Sévarambe explains marriage, procreation, and family life. These dynamics are highly revelatory of the priorities and anxieties that Veiras observed (and critiqued) in his own cultural context. Utopia and sex, as is apparent in this chapter and those that follow, are inextricably linked. Classic utopian texts overwhelmingly feature societies that obsessively prioritize reproduction to assure a robust population, a heightened effort to eliminate infidelity, and unconventional approaches to raising children.<sup>86</sup> In *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*, these elements feature an exceptional degree of regulation, since the enforcement of strict laws is understood to ensure a perfect society. Regulating sexuality through marriage is thus a key priority. Indeed, one of the first laws of the Sévarambe society is "[d]e faire valoir les loix du mariage & les faire observer aux personnes adultes, tant pour la

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<sup>85</sup> A woman's natural value refers to her capacity to give birth; her social value is that conferred upon her by men, limited to the roles of wife, mother, and prostitute (Irigaray, 180).

<sup>86</sup> For a further exploration of the intersection between women, utopia, and reproduction, see Sargent, Lyman Tower. "Women in Utopia." *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 10, no. 4, 1973, pp. 302–316 and Rudy, Kathy. "Ethics, Reproduction, Utopia: Gender and Childbearing in 'Woman on the Edge of Time' and 'The Left Hand of Darkness.'" *NWSA Journal*, vol. 9, no. 1, 1997, pp. 22–38.

propagation de l'espèce & l'accroissement de la nation, que pour éviter la fornication, l'adultère, l'inceste & d'autres crimes abominables, qui détruisent la justice & troublent la tranquillité publique" (Veiras, 274). These regulations are justified not only because they prevent social disorder caused by extramarital sex or other unacceptable expressions of sexuality, but also because they address concerns of population control, ensuring the next generation.

The assurance of a robust population provides an obvious element to creating utopia. In towns built by universally mandatory labor, fed by human-powered agricultural systems, and protected by armies, children are fundamental. For the Sévarambians, women's reproductive capabilities are thus granted the highest priority. In Sévarambe, a woman's life only has value when tied to a male life and producing more life. Women's greatest honor "est d'aimer leurs maris, & d'élever elles-mêmes plusieurs enfans à la patrie" (Veiras, 321). Any woman unable to uphold this expectation is held in contempt: "Les femmes stériles sont fort méprisées... L'unique moyen qu'ont les femmes stériles d'effacer leur opprobre, est de servir les malades, ou si elles sont habiles, de s'employer à l'éducation de la jeunesse" (Veiras, 321). In such a society, a woman's fate; "oscillates between two poles: honor through motherhood; shame through sterility" and "conscious refusal of child-bearing appears unimaginable;" she is a "woman-machine" rather than an individual (Leibacher-Ouvrard, 89). Alongside this conception of woman as machine, I also consider Irigaray's notion of woman as merchandise. Irigaray writes, "*La marchandise- la femme- est divisée en deux 'corps' irréconciliables: son corps 'naturel', et son corps valeureux socialement, échangeable*" (Irigaray, 176). While women's natural body is reduced to nothing more than a means of production, she cannot shake her socially relative value that keeps her vulnerable to her exchange between men.

While Irigaray's theorization of women as exchangeable commodities is understood as more theoretical than literal, Sévarambe society presents a world where women are literally interchangeable and continually at risk of being exchanged. Rather than permit or outlaw divorce, "Il est aussi permis à tous les hommes de changer de femme avec leurs concitoyens, pourvu qu'ils en conviennent tous deux" (Veiras, 377).<sup>87</sup> These "séparations" are particularly common among the officers, as they are permitted multiple wives and feel less attached to them, compared to the commoners with only one wife (Veiras, 377-378).<sup>88</sup> Women are only prized for their roles as wives and mothers, yet even those roles are threatened by the possibility of being replaced by a concubine. In accordance with the law, men "peuvent encore avoir autant d'esclaves concubines que de femmes mariées, mais cela se voit rarement. Les officiers inférieurs en peuvent avoir deux, & autant d'esclaves; mais les gens du commun n'en peuvent avoir d'une" (Veiras, 377). In keeping with the prioritization of procreation above all else, men are also allowed to take a concubine if their wife is sterile— "[e]t si l'esclave étoit stérile aussi, ils la peuvent changer pour une autre" (Veiras, 377). These exchanges, described in such blunt and businesslike terms, effectively equate women to merchandise. The merchandise-woman, as described by Irigaray, "*n'a donc de valeur que de pouvoir s'échanger*" (Irigaray, 172), which ensures her permanent precarity. In Sévarambe, utopia comes at a cost. Typically, utopia is realized through mandatory labor and the abolition of private property, but in addition to these elements, women bear the brunt of the burden. Although the society abolished monetary systems, they instituted an economy of women.

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<sup>87</sup> To clarify, this agreement occurs between the *men* exchanging wives, not between the man and his wife.

<sup>88</sup> The highest-ranking men in the society are permitted to have many wives— in some cases, up to twelve, with the vice-roi allowed an unlimited number (Veiras, 375). This reduces women to a physical consolation prize for men fulfilling their prestigious roles of service to the *vice-roi du soleil* and state.

When observing women's roles in society, Irigaray stated: "*Mère, vierge, prostituée, tels sont les rôles sociaux imposés aux femmes*" (Irigaray, 181). In the Sévarambe society, the path to utopia calls for the relegation of women to a similarly limited set of subservient positions: sex slave, concubine, wife and mother, or barren outcast—and the role is assigned to her rather than chosen. To attempt an apology in favor of the utopia suggested, this system does "solve" a number of societal problems. Forced procreation solves depopulation concerns. Compulsory heterosexuality framed within one narrow interpretation of marriage theoretically regulates sexual desire. This regulation prevents any unrest that would be provoked by infidelity. Mandatory coupling prevents the so-called "involuntary celibacy" of men unable to find a partner. Could the proposed solutions be worth the cost of personal freedom? Does Veiras suggest as much?

While Trousson explains that the conventional utopia is inherently restrictive despite proposing societal improvement,<sup>89</sup> Veiras intensifies this to an extreme degree. However, despite all of the laws and regulations controlling every aspect of physical and emotional intimacy meant to prevent disorder or inappropriate behavior, the text includes ample anecdotes providing exceptions where young couples still engaged in sexuality activity despite obstacles and risks.<sup>90</sup> In Sévarambe, "la rigueur des lois, la rareté des occasions, & le soin qu'on prend de marier

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<sup>89</sup> Trousson enumerates the restrictions most often described in utopian society, which seem to enslave rather than free the individual. Everyone is assigned housing, they must eat together, they must marry at a certain age, following which they must have a certain amount of children at a certain time, who are then raised by the state from a young age, there is no private property, and everything from working to loving to eating must happen at the right time (Trousson, 54).

<sup>90</sup> In one example, a brother and sister disguise themselves as each other, so as to sneak into the boys' and girls' lodging and sleep with their love interests. The sister dresses as her brother to spend the night with her boyfriend, and the brother dresses as his sister to sleep in the same bed as his girlfriend. Were it not for the reader's insight into the situation, the encounters read as same-sex desire, instead of siblings cross-dressing in order to cross gendered spaces.

bientôt les jeunes gens” seeks to ensure social stability, but the system exhibits signs of strain (Veiras, 337).

Instances of rule-breaking threaten the Sévarambe social structure, rendering it fragile. This fragility conveys pessimism and doubt in the feasibility of utopia and implies that the system imposed in Sévarambe is dystopian rather than utopian, particularly for women. This highly regulated society is *not* meant to depict an ideal, but rather serve as a provocative thought experiment demonstrating the futility of regulating something as irrational yet fundamental as desire and sexuality. The problem of utopia can be summed up as follows: “Séduisante et même fascinante, la solution utopique s’inverse en cauchemar sitôt qu’on la suppose réalisé” (Racault, 37). When reading *L’Histoire des Sévarambes*, the first four parts of the novel depict the complex workings of a society comprised of a hierarchical structure designed to incessantly oppress women, reducing them to sex objects or child factories, where their only hope of securing power is becoming one of many wives of one of the government officials.<sup>91</sup> In accordance with this description of Veiras’ utopian society, a logical conclusion would argue that *L’Histoire des Sévarambes* demonstrates how utopia can be reached by the vigorous application of education and laws, to construct a productive and upstanding society, at the cost of women assuming a subhuman status, commodified to pacify the (male) masses. However, this interpretation is threatened by an anecdote described in the fifth part of the work, which is virtually absent from scholarship on *L’Histoire des Sévarambes*.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Surprisingly, one exception exists: Women may hold a near-equal status to men if they serve in the Sévarambe army. However, the description of their service does not clarify if this exempts them from having to bear children, so this different status is likely temporary.

<sup>92</sup> *L’Histoire des Sévarambes* is written in five parts. The first two parts primarily describe the voyage of Captain Siden and his men. The third part is titled, “*Histoire de SÉVARIAS, législateur des Sévarambes, premier vice-roi du soleil, & celle de ses successeurs,*” the fourth, “*Des mœurs & coutumes particulières des Sévarambes,*” and the fifth, “*Cinquième et Dernière Partie.*”

A short story in this fifth section, *L'Histoire d'Ahimoné et Dionistar* introduces a female perspective, introduces resistance, and significantly destabilizes the patriarchal structure held up by women's subjugation. As my research found, scholars either ignore the anecdote entirely, grant the story little to no significance, or argue that the story supports the utopian project. Von Der Müll suggests that *L'Histoire d'Ahimoné et Dionistar* shows "que ces jeunes filles honnêtes avaient à souffrir, au temps où régnaient les prêtres de Stroukaras" (222) and only included this story about corrupt priest-leaders to evoke the "histoires scandaleuses qui couraient sur les prêtres catholiques à l'époque des persécutions contre les protestants" (203). Laursen and Masroori, for their part, take *L'Histoire d'Ahimoné et Dionistar* as one of many digressions that function "in order to maintain reader interest," and "can be read as implicit recognition of the fact that human nature will never be as virtuous as some may wish, but that a utopian social arrangement can survive even though the people spend some of their time on such intrigues" (xv). They read the tale as one of "heroic resistance" but suggest that "it did not change anything: the priests could construe heroic resistance as impious heresy" (xviii). Leibacher-Ouvrard, for her part, reads the story as "le grandiose martyr d'un jeune couple persécuté par des prêtres perfides sont autant d'éléments qui contrastent quelque peu avec la mentalité utopienne ambiante. La place de choix que ces épisodes réservent à la femme, et le piédestal sur lequel elle est subitement placée mettraient cette rupture de ton suffisamment en relief" (161-162). In her interpretation, then, "Il n'en reste pas moins que célébrer une femme idéalisée dans des digressions, c'est la marginaliser doublement" (162). I find each of these interpretations unsatisfactory, and necessitate a new reading that acknowledges the greater significance of the tale.

Before Sévarambe was ruled by Sévarias, the benevolent leader who welcomed Captain Siden, the land was ruled by Stroukaras. Stroukaras frequently used his absolute power as head of state and religious status (as son of the Sun) to manipulate his people. Overwhelmingly, his abuse of power was sexual in nature. If any young, beautiful girl caught his eye, he would command his priests to ask her parents' permission to send her to his temple. To persuade them to accept, he communicated his intentions perfidiously, instructing the priests to inform them "que le fils du soleil avoit jetté des regards favorables sur elle, & que, pour la rendre un vaisseau de sainteté, il daigneroit bien descendre du ciel pour s'unir à elle & cueillir la première fleur de sa jeunesse" and, if the family was judged sufficiently faithful and worthy, that he would "remplir la vierge d'un fruit sacré, qui porteroit la bénédiction du ciel à toute la famille" (Veiras, 443-444).<sup>93</sup> His machinations worked; families across the land sent their daughters away.

When reading of such a flagrant abuse of power, so seamlessly integrated into the state religion, the reader questions if this is an example of libertine excess intended to shock or excite the reader. However, additional details of other abuses under Stroukaras' rule convey instead a dystopian reality, with society too terrified to oppose the abusers. Stroukaras and his men were met with minimal opposition; Siden recounts, "les plus sages & les plus éclairés de la nation, quoiqu'ils connussent assez leurs impostures, étoient ceux qui s'y opposoient le moins & qui prenoient les premiers le parti de se taire, plutôt que de s'attirer leur haine & de s'exposer à leur cruauté" (Veiras, 446). However, this oppressive and abusive reign was significantly challenged and undermined by an unexpected force of resistance.

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<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, if she gave birth to a son, he would obtain the honorable status of priest, and if she gave birth to a girl, the girl would become saintly, and whatever man she married would be viewed as the Sun's grandson.

The story introduces two young lovers, Ahimoné and Dionistar, destined for marriage.<sup>94</sup> However, a priest falls in love with Ahimoné, and his desire carries consequences. If a woman catches the vice-roi's eye, he has first claim to her, after a priest has "tested" her virginity. The priest confronts Ahimoné's father "pour la demander, au nom de Stroukaras, auquel ils disoient qu'elle avoit le bonheur d'avoir plû" knowing this is the only way the priest can have access to her (Veiras, 450). The father stalls for time, and is given ten days to persuade (read, force) his daughter to accept. Devastated, the family processes the news.<sup>95</sup> Dionistar swears to massacre every priest he can find, and Ahimoné proclaims before her family and lover "qu'elle souffriroit les plus cruels tourmens, & la mort même la plus épouvantable, avant qu'elle consentît à une pareille infamie" (Veiras, 451). Although *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* contains objectificatory language towards women throughout, the language condemning the event directly acknowledges her objectification: "il falloit éluder les desseins des prêtres lascifs qui vouloient faire d'Ahinomé un instrument de leur détestable luxure" (Veiras, 451).

Rather than respect the religious authorities, the couple resolves to resist. Following a friend's suggestion, they decide to hide in a secret mountain cave. This decisive moment prompts Ahimoné to make the striking declaration that she will

se banniroit volontairement de la société des hommes, pour demeurer dans cet antre, & dans les lieux les plus affreux, pour éviter l'infame commerce des prêtres qui vouloient jouir d'elle sous un prétexte specieux de religion & de piété; qu'elle étoit donc prête de se

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<sup>94</sup> Surprisingly, the narrator describes Ahimoné's appearance in terms unconventional for the typical heroine: "Elle n'étoit pas extraordinairement belle; sa bonne mine, & son esprit, faisoient la meilleure partie de sa beauté" (Veiras, 448).

<sup>95</sup> It is important to mention the family's reaction of panicked horror to this event. In the first four parts of the book, we are only shown the rules and regulations, and occasional examples of those who break the rules and are punished. Here, the reader is granted a far more intimate and personal look at the everyday person's experience of these rules— and they do not appear to be well-received. Rarely does the utopian work reveal this perspective.



retirer dans ce lieu secret, pour y finir le reste de ses jours, quand même son amant n'auroit pas le courage de l'y accompagner (Veiras, 453).

This bold and independent proclamation contrasts sharply with the tone of the rest of *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*, a text devoid of named female characters, let alone one displaying such confidence, decisiveness, and agency. Elsewhere, the rare portrayals of women cast them as hysterical or foolish, as sex slaves, one-dimensional love interests, or unfaithful wives punished for their adultery. Overwhelmingly, women are objectified at best, demonized at worst. Yet here, Ahimoné's willingness to abandon the company of men (including her lover) to ensure her freedom from state-sanctioned sexual abuse conveys a compelling power, amplified as she takes concrete action against the corrupt society threatening her bodily autonomy. Her lover joins her, because it would be "honteux à un homme d'avoir moins de fermeté qu'une femme" (Veiras, 454).

As Ahimoné plans her retreat, the priest grows impatient and anxious. He fears Dionistar taking "la première fleur de sa virginité, sans quoi il ne se soucioit pas de la posséder," meaning he would be left "de profiter des restes dégoûtants de Dionistar" (Veiras, 454). This discourse echoes the priorities of the marriage ceremony, reiterating the social construction of virginity as tied to (if not the sole determinant of) a woman's value. The priest's competition with Ahimoné's lover creates a triangulation of power dynamics, in which another man's interest simultaneously renders her more valuable, yet precariously close to worthlessness. This situation closely echoes Irigaray's assertion that "la marchandise ne peut évidemment exister seule, mais il n'y a pas non plus de 'marchandise' tant qu'il n'y a pas *au moins deux hommes* pour échanger. Pour qu'un produit— une femme? — ait valeur, il faut que deux hommes, au moins, l'investissent" (Irigaray, 177). This system leaves no room for the merchandise-woman to

negotiate her own conditions in this exchange. The priest then takes Ahimoné to the temple, but upon her depart, she promises her lover to stay faithful, and “qu’elle mettroit le feu au temple du Bocage, au premier vent qu’il feroit, & que, si, dans ce moment, il la venoit secourir, avec ses amis, & favoriser leur retrait, elle iroit par-tout avec lui” (Veiras, 455).

Ahimoné stalls the inevitable as long as possible, but the night before her ceremonialized abuse, “elle résolut de mettre le feu au temple, & de mourir, plutôt que de consentir aux sales desirs de ces imposteurs” (Veiras, 457). In a rare display of female agency, she sets fire to her own bed and to other parts of the temple, where strong winds carry the fire throughout the structure. Many priests burned to death in their beds, and the rest fled naked into the nearby fields, shocked and frightened (Veiras, 457-458). Ahimoné fled unnoticed into the woods. When Dionistar and his willing friends arrive (under the pretext of fighting the fire), they kill every priest that crosses their path (458).

Ahimoné and Dionistar flee to their mountainous retreat, where “cette courageuse fille & son généreux amant” cement their relationship outside of government or religious authorization (Veiras, 460). This victory communicates multiple significations. Ahimoné’s bodily autonomy remains intact. Saluted as “courageous” (a word more often associated with ideal masculinity), she gains an unprecedented degree of independence and escapes the exchange market described by Irigaray. Furthermore, this moment instills a new form of utopia in this mountain cave: one free from obsessive structuring and women’s objectification. Despite their isolation, their relationship is described in ideal terms: “ils ne laissoient pas de vivre heureux dans leur solitude, puisque Dionistar faisoit consister tout son bonheur dans la jouissance de sa fidèle Ahinomé, & qu’elle mettoit toute sa félicité dans la possession de son cher Dionistar” (Veiras, 461). Their relationship dynamic flips traditional vows and gendered expectations: their relationship

develops outside of officially state-sanctioned marriage, Dionistar values her pleasure rather than enforces her chastity, and rather than submit to his rule, Ahimoné rejoices to possess him.<sup>96</sup> Their isolated relationship lasts years, and the couple bear several children.

However, the surviving priests refuse to end their search for the unforgivable rebellious woman. When the priests discover the secret hideout, the situation escalates into a violent standoff, but the couple stand their ground: “La généreuse Ahinomé, avec *un courage viril*, seconda merveilleusement bien son mari, & lui aida, sans se relâcher, à détruire tous ceux qui tentèrent la descente du lieu” (Veiras, 464-465, my italics). This insistence on Ahimoné’s masculine-coded bravery serves to underline the subversive and exceptional nature of her story and emphasizes her refusal of the submission her society imposes. Ahimoné’s refusal and escape would not be allowed to go unpunished, as her defiant survival provides an example others could follow. The couple are quickly surrounded and outnumbered, at which point they decide to die on their own terms, rather than fall into “la puissance de leurs ennemis, & de les braver en mourant, en leur reprochant leurs crimes & leurs impostures” (Veiras, 469).

The couple stand before their pursuers, calling for a peaceful audience of witnesses. Dionistar proclaims, “Nous vous confessons ingénument, ma femme & moi, qu’elle mit le feu à votre temple, & que j’assommaï de ma main plusieurs de vos compagnons” (Veiras, 472), but assert that they only did so because Stroukaras ruined their aspirations to marry and live ordinary lives. This accusation provokes an escalation in violence from the priests and their supporters, who move in to attack, undeterred by Ahimoné breastfeeding her small child.<sup>97</sup> The couple

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<sup>96</sup> See the vows from the wedding ceremony on page 38.

<sup>97</sup> This detail evokes an emotional response from the reader, giving a poignant representation of the ideal woman and mother, yet in a position of defiance and revolution. She’s described with the vocabulary of ideal masculinity, but also the feminine appeal of the mother of a small infant, exhibiting an intriguing combination of ideals across gender.

retreat, cut themselves to draw blood, and while displaying their bleeding limbs to the crowd below, set fire to a pile of wood beneath them. Ahimoné gives a final condemnation of the priest's corruption, "reprochant aux uns leur orgueil, leurs impostures & leur infame luxure," as well as urging the general population "à ouvrir enfin les yeux & à ne plus souffrir qu'on abusât de leur simplicité, pour les rendre les instrumens des vices & de l'ambition de ceux qui, sans autorité légitime, s'étoient rendus les maîtres de la nation" (Veiras, 475). With her final words, she proclaims that "la mort leur sembloit douce, puisqu'ils mourroient unanimement ensemble, comme avoient vécu" (Veiras, 475), and severs her children's and her own veins to end their lives. This final act of suicide reads as a dramatic performance embodying utopian desire. Suicide can be read as a utopian alternative in this scenario because Ahimoné negated her reality as an oppressed individual, and when her utopia on earth became no longer achievable, she left the world on her own terms.

This gory spectacle demonstrates how Ahimoné's agency disrupts the established normalization of women's subjugation permeating the book, overwhelmingly coded by the regulation and forced submission of women's bodies.<sup>98</sup> The story of a woman burning down an oppressive edifice of state-enforced gendered abuse, eventually killing herself and her children to escape an abusive regime significantly destabilizes the entire narrative's portrayal of women as passive motors of a social system or merchandise exchanged between men. Granted, this regime took place under Stroukaras, and Captain Siden visited during Sévarias' reign. However, disturbing similarities connect the two men and suggest a continuity of power abuse. Both leaders used illusions, clever rhetorical skills, and threats to convince the naïve inhabitants they possessed supernatural powers. Sévarias even hid a secret choir in a chamber to give the illusion

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<sup>98</sup> In fact, the story and tone differ to so great an extent that I question if this story was penned by a different author than the rest of the book.

of heavenly voices conferring him with absolute power. Stroukaras was portrayed as a tyrant and Sévarias as benevolent, but, as Sermain explains, “le lecteur s’étonne de retrouver chez le méchant ce qu’il a vu d’abord pratiqué par le sage” (Sermain, 209). Both leaders came to power by nefarious means, and both took advantage of a vulnerable populace.

This continuity of abusing ill-gotten power reveals a darker side to conclude the five-part utopian narrative: the apparent path to utopia calls for underhanded scheming and requires women to be reduced to the equivalent of exchangeable merchandise. Initially, the narrative implies that the imposition of rigid education, the enforcement of extensive laws, and the abolition of private property assures a peaceful, perfect society free from poverty, greed, or vice. However, the apparent ideal of utopian equality vanishes when one considers how this system disproportionately burdens women to ensure a stable population. Ahominé’s subversion of a degrading custom destabilizes this narrative and introduces a voice of dissent.<sup>99</sup> While all evidence suggested Veiras was constructing a blueprint for a better, more peaceful society, this act of rebellion shakes the reader’s assumption that the ideals prioritized by Sévarambe society was actually being advocated for. Ahimoné’s story invokes the possibility of an undercurrent of rebellion in the face of abusive rule disguised by religious authority and sets a precedent for future acts of resistance.

Therefore, rather than argue that Veiras’ *L’Histoire des Sévarambes* portrays an “ideal” society that achieved universal wellbeing through the imposition of a socialist system which simultaneously assured order by objectifying women into commodity, I consider the value of another interpretation. Veiras’ interpretation of utopia was never *meant* to succeed, or even uphold an ideal. Instead, as the reader observes the gradual revelation of a society under

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<sup>99</sup> This is noteworthy because, typically, the voyager-narrator alone makes commentary on the society. The subjects or citizens observed rarely engage in dialogue, let alone provoke revolt.

construction, they are forced to acknowledge the dystopian reality of a society guided by opportunistic and abusive leaders, upheld by subjugating half the population. The system, which reposed upon women being treated as sex slaves to keep women controlled and keep men sexually satisfied, was a tenuous one. As Siden and his men travel inland, everything appears to improve, and become more ordered and more beautiful, but such anecdotes reveal the cracks in a seemingly perfect, indestructible edifice. And that edifice could be burned down.

*L'Histoire des Sévarambes* provides but one of many articulations of utopian society out of the infinite possibilities presented by the uncertain, compelling blank spaces of the *Terre Australe*. The vast unknown granted authors near-absolute freedom in imagining fictitious societies. Although most utopias set in the *Terre Australe* stock utopian elements,<sup>100</sup> portrayals of society varied greatly where gender and sexuality were concerned. Where Veiras' *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* laid out a society reposing on a strictly enforced gendered hierarchy to assure "equality," the second work I discuss in this chapter, Foigny's *La Terre Australe Connue*, portrays a radically different society concerning gender dynamics and sexuality. In fact, Foigny's iteration of the *Terre Australe* fundamentally reconceptualizes the notion of gender entirely.

#### LA TERRE AUSTRALE CONNUE: SOCIETAL AND PERSONAL UTOPIA

Gabriel Foigny's *La Terre Australe Connue* was published in 1676, a year before *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*. The late 1670s through the early 18th century mark the intersection of the height of French interest in the *Terre Australe* and two dominant literary trends: one, writing utopias inspired by Thomas More's *Utopia*, and two, writing imaginary voyages dictating

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<sup>100</sup> As I explained in the introduction, stock components of utopian society included the abolishment of private property or even money, government-provided housing and food, regulated and mandatory work hours, and state-ran education for children from a young age.

maritime adventures inspired by voyage accounts.<sup>101</sup> Racault also credits both Foigny and Veiras' texts as marking the apparition of the utopian voyage novel in France (Racault, 25). As a result, the two novels exercised significant influence over subsequent utopian voyage novels, establishing the tone, format, plot devices, and style that became synonymous with classic utopian literature.

The introductory prefaces to both *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* and *La Terre Australe Connue* exhibit key parallels helping establish a tradition within the imaginary voyage genre. Foigny's work also utilized the literary strategy of *vraisemblance* to introduce the text and convey authenticity. In the *Au Lecteur* section, we learn Foigny is the editor, not the author. The *true* author, Jacques Sadeur, was on the verge of drowning after disembarking from an overseas voyage when Foigny rescued him. On his deathbed, the grateful Sadeur bequeathed him the extensive notes from his journey, which Foigny edited for clarity.

The *Au Lecteur* also echoes the European preoccupation with the tantalizing unknown presented by the *Terre Australe*. The editor enumerates famous efforts to "discover" the *Terre Australe*, citing the voyages undertaken by Magellan, the questionable Gonneville accounts, Paul Venetien's insular expeditions, as well as those of Fernandes Galego and Quirós— only to assert that *this* account finally provides the coveted details of the *Terre Australe*. By employing these techniques, this introduction lends intrigue and authenticity to the account, and also grants Foigny a safer distance from the work's content by proclaiming himself the editor and Jacques Sadeur the protagonist-author.

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<sup>101</sup> Leibacher-Ouvrard identifies Foigny's text as the first of "une série de récits du même genre paraissant brutalement sous Louis XIV, c'est un voyage imaginaire menant à une société utopique australe," alongside *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* (1677-79) by Veiras, and the *Voyage et aventures de Jaques Massé* (1710) by Tyssot de Patot, although Foigny's take on the *Terre Australe* was "un des voyages fictifs les plus lus du règne" (Leibacher-Ouvrard, 290).

Unlike Captain Siden, whose adventurousness and leadership suited the ideal male voyager, Sadeur was different, an outsider. Recounting his origins, Sadeur recalls he was “conçu dans l’Amérique, & je suis né sur l’Océan, presage trop assuré de ce que je devois être un jour” (Foigny, 33) — that is, he embodied alterity and was fated to travel the seas. At a young age, his parents died trying to save him from drowning, leading him to believe he brought death to any who tried to save him (Foigny, 40). Sadeur was also deemed different for being a hermaphrodite, or intersex person.<sup>102</sup> In Europe, he recounts how he is treated as a monstrosity and experiences rejection for his physical difference:

[les voyageurs] eurent pitié de moy, & me donnerent au soin d’une matrone portugaise, qui se trouva dans le vaisseau. Elle témoigna beaucoup de desir de me servir jusqu’à ce qu’elle eut reconnu que j’étois des deux sexes, je veux dire, Hermaphrodite. Depuis cette connoissance cette femme conceut tant d’aversion de ma personne qu’à peine pouvoit elle me regarder (Foigny, 41).

Fortunately, a kindlier Monsieur de Sare and his valet care for Sadeur, who would have succumbed to a fatal fever without their care. Regardless, Sadeur retains a deeply ingrained conception of his perceived monstrosity and difference.

As an adult, Sadeur overcomes his fear of the open seas, and undertakes a voyage, the description of which comprises the rest of the narrative. As the crew passes Madagascar, the essential turning point in any *voyage imaginaire* strikes: the catastrophic storm and subsequent shipwreck. As Trousson explains, scenes like these play a critical role in articulating the voyage to utopia. In order to reach the utopia, or “pays de nulle part,” the hero must be violently cut

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<sup>102</sup> In the work, Sadeur is referred to as a “hermaphrodite,” but in the current terminology to describe someone who has genitalia and/or secondary sex characteristics divergent from those of standard medical conceptions of biologically male or biologically female individuals, or individuals with some of both male and female genitalia, intersex would be the appropriate term.



from the security of the familiar, known world; “le héros y arrive-t-il toujours par le plus grand des hasards, et souvent après une tempête qui a entraîné son navire dans des régions ignorées,” conditions which are “indispensables pour expliquer les merveilleuses différences entre l’univers utopique et l’univers tout court” (Trousson, 55). Unlike *L’Histoire des Sévarambes*, only Sadeur survives the shipwreck, and only narrowly escapes multiple near-fatal encounters with giant monstrous birds. He finally encounters the Australians. The description Sadeur makes of the Austral lands and society furnish the rest of the narrative, giving a near-encyclopedic account punctuated by the occasional anecdote to add intrigue and to advance the plot.

At first glance, the Australian society as described by Sadeur is stereotypically utopian; there is no private property, the city features a highly geometric and uniform layout, work is mandatory, children are raised in common rather than by their parents, and every aspect of life is rigidly ordered. The people have no notion of poverty, disease, or suffering. The account itself reads as a typical imaginary voyage, with the male traveler’s voyage to a peopled land which he describes in detail, and leaves to return to Europe, where his account is published later by a friend (Arthur, 201). However, this apparently standard utopian society bears one significant difference from the others of its kind: it is entirely peopled by “hermaphrodites.”

Today, the notion of an entirely hermaphroditic society reads as unexpected and unique. However, such an employment of hermaphroditism was even more surprising in Early Modern France, due to attitudes and perceptions dictating gender and (a)normality. The “hermaphrodite” was ingrained in medical, scientific, mythological, and religious traditions—albeit with largely negative connotations. Especially in the 17th century, hermaphroditism interested the medical community, who debated “si l’hermaphrodisme constitue un cas anatomique recevable comme

tel, qui donnerait une réalité biologique à d'anciens mythes, ou s'il s'agit seulement d'une déformation organique sans effets psychologiques" (Dubois, 8).

As was the case with the link between the *Terre Australe* and monsters, 17th century perceptions of hermaphroditism were profoundly shaped by Greco-Roman mythology. For instance, Plato's myth of the androgyne (in which all humans began with two bodies merged at the back before they were separated and thus always seeking their other half) re-emerged as a popular leitmotif in literature.<sup>103</sup> Hermaphroditus, son of Hermes and Aphrodite, possessed both male and female characteristics, a mythological figure representing the intersection of male and female characteristics or effeminacy. The association of hermaphroditism with effeminacy is deployed negatively in Thomas Artus' *L'Isle des hermaphrodites* (1605), a satirical work mocking Henri IV's *mignons* by portraying them as feminine men.<sup>104</sup> In short, hermaphroditism constituted a source of fascination, but this interest was grounded in otherness, monstrosity, and even degeneracy.

However, rather than reflect the dominant mentalities of his time, Foigny positioned himself "à contre-courant d'une tradition médicale qui fait de l'hermaphrodite une monstruosité (depuis Aristote, Pline, Hippocrate ou Galien), et d'une tradition religieuse tout aussi négative" (Ronzeaud, XLIII).<sup>105</sup> By contrast, Foigny rewrites monstrosity as not only normalcy but perfection, leading the reader to question how else society may be rewritten in his utopian text, and what ideals are advanced. While the utopian society in *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*

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<sup>103</sup> In Furetière's dictionary, androgyne and hermaphrodite are used as virtually interchangeable terms, hence my slippage here. For an in-depth study of the significations of the terms "hermaphrodite" as well as "androgyne" in the context of their connections to myths, see Rothstein, Marian. "The Androgyne in Early Modern France: Contextualizing the Power of Gender" Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, New York.

<sup>104</sup> In Artus' work, hermaphroditism refers to bending gender roles and embodying or performing effeminacy, be that as an effeminate man or overly virile woman—without evoking actual sex organs or secondary sex characteristics.

<sup>105</sup> Ronzeaud provides this explanation in his introduction to *La Terre Australe Connue*.

institutionalized compulsory heterosexuality and gendered hierarchies that oppressed women, *La Terre Australe Connue* articulates a different form of utopia. With speculative maps, questionable voyage accounts, imagination, and an inherited tradition of mythology associating monstrosity with the *Terre Australe* as his only influences, Foigny chose to people his society with hermaphrodites as the norm rather than exception. How did this choice influence the progress towards utopia described in *La Terre Australe Connue*?

Two visions of utopia compete within *La Terre Australe Connue*, and illustrate how Foigny's imagined society reveals competing ideals in the realms of gender and sexuality. Sadeur possesses his own notions of utopia, distinct from those upheld in the *Terre Australe*. The Austral society features many of the components familiar to classic utopian societies.<sup>106</sup> However, unlike the society in *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*, in which the strict application of laws ensured utopia, the Australians already and always embodied utopia.<sup>107</sup> Racault interprets the text as "une relecture hérétique de la Genèse," in which "l'absolue rationalité d'un peuple non souillé par le péché originel puisque dépourvue de toute structure étatique" (Racault, 9).<sup>108</sup> To maintain their existing structure, they only need to exclude outsiders. As an imminently perfect society, no progress to utopia could be mapped out.

However, the perfection of the inhabitants of the *Terre Australe* poses two significant problems. In theory, the society proposed by Foigny holds undeniable utopian appeal: "Indemnes

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<sup>106</sup> For example, the Austral society has no concept of private property, the children are raised by the state, daily life is highly organized around work, recreation, and philosophical pursuits, and everyone experiences equality and wellbeing.

<sup>107</sup> While the society is described as imminent and perfect, it should not be understood as eternal. In fact, the origin myth of the Australians is explained in detail: a coupling between a serpent and a man lead to the man giving birth to hermaphroditic, immaculate children, who then inhabit the *Terre Australe*. Without significant adjustment or development, their society was always free from typical societal woes like crime, poverty, and illness.

<sup>108</sup> I disagree with Racault on one point: the Australe society does maintain some degree of state structure, as it possesses an army, individuals held responsible for the education of all children, and other roles. Even with these roles occupied by rotating groups of Australians, this still suggests structure, albeit a structure radically different from the norm in Europe.

du péché et de la dépendance liée à la séparation des sexes, les Australiens préadamites de *La Terre Australe Connue* peuvent vivre sans État dans la communion de tous avec la raison parfaite” —but perfection as an ideal poses an insurmountable expectation for flawed humans, thus rendering such a society impossible to reproduce (Racault, 35). Beyond the remote, hidden nature of the *Terre Australe*, two major obstacles prevent the most intrepid of voyagers from integrating into this society: the inhabitants are not only free from and intolerant of vice, but they, too, are hermaphrodites. Being a hermaphrodite, only Jacques Sadeur may undertake this journey to utopia. His progress to utopia is complicated by the competing ideals that advance or impede his ability to assimilate in Austral society. His hermaphroditism earns him unprecedented acceptance, yet his sexuality poses a problem for an immaculate population.

*La Terre Australe Connue* is a vital *voyage imaginaire* to consider for mapping out paths to utopia because, unlike the overwhelming majority of utopia of this time which tend to portray variations on conventional gender roles and hold heterosexuality as the norm, the society and the protagonist describing it reveal many elements which are useful to read as “queer.” To better analyze both the unique gender dynamics of the *Terre Australe* as well as Jacques Sadeur’s expression of sexual desire, I approach this text as an expression of queer utopia. To do so, an open and fluid understanding of queerness is necessary. I identify two distinct and incompatible expressions of queerness in the *Terre Australe*: the notion of a hermaphroditic society as a queer reimagining of a conventionally heterosexual society reposing on gendered hierarchies, and Jacques Sadeur’s experience of sexual desire as exemplary of queer desire *avant la lettre*.<sup>109</sup>

Where *L’Histoire des Sévarambes* provided a model of a highly restrictive society, particularly

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<sup>109</sup> By this, I evoke Reeser’s assertion that protohomosexual coding can be identified in Renaissance culture, and Halperin’s theorization of the emergent identity or transient identity related to queerness that scholars of historical time periods can identify, occurring before today’s notions of sexuality and sexual identity (See Introduction).

regarding gender and sexuality, Foigny's Austral society is free from gender roles. However, this freedom doesn't extend into the realm of sexuality, which poses a significant obstacle for Sadeur's efforts to voyage to (queer) utopia. Sadeur's efforts to integrate himself into this society results in tensions that prove revelatory for the study of gender and sexuality in the imaginary voyage of Early Modern France. *La Terre Australe Connue* is the only known imaginary voyage depicting a society that wholly lacks gender difference. What could a society without gender look like?

As soon as Sadeur gains entry to the Austral society, his narrative features a significant deviation from conventional travel narratives or imaginary voyages. In typical voyage accounts, the voyager never fails to describe the men and women of the other society— their appearance, their different gender roles, their relationship dynamics, and so on. These gendered descriptions and differentiations further concretize the notion of absolute difference between men and women both in Europe and abroad.<sup>110</sup> Gender difference and separation seems essential to the travel narratives of the 17th and 18th centuries; “L’histoire commence par le voyage qui sépare symboliquement le monde des hommes et le monde des femmes” (Stroev, 37). Men leave mixed society to undertake voyages, and then remark upon the differences separating men and women in foreign lands. In contrast, the Australians in *La Terre Australe Connue* provides the *only* known portrayal of an imagined society where gender difference is nonexistent and irrelevant.

Sadeur's description of the *Terre Australe* explains the myriad of ways an entirely hermaphroditic population results in a completely unique society. In a mind-bending case of

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<sup>110</sup> For example, an excerpt from Dom Pernety's *Journal Historique d'un Voyage fait aux Iles Malouïnes en 1763 & 1764, pour les reconnoître & y former un établissement; et de deux Voyages au Détroit de Magellan, avec une Rélation sur les Patagons*, (close to the supposed *Terre Australe*) describes the different roles of the indigenous men and women they encounter along their journey. The women plant, harvest, and prepare *manioc* and *cassave*, and take care of household duties. Meanwhile, the men hunt, fish, and ride horses (Pernety, 388).

inversion, the hermaphroditic Australians view themselves as perfect beings, and consider non-hermaphrodites (who they call *demi-hommes*) to be monstrous enemies.<sup>111</sup> Any alternative to hermaphroditism is intolerable, even within the borders of the *Terre Australe*: “Tous les Australiens ont les deux sexes: & s’il arrive qu’un enfant naisse avec un seul, ils l’étouffent comme un monstre” (Foigny, 84).<sup>112</sup> Sadeur is only granted access into the Australian society because they realize he is a hermaphrodite.<sup>113</sup>

However, Sadeur’s hermaphroditism secures him only a tenuous guarantee of their hospitality, as he is soon warned: “Mais comme c’est une coûtume inviolable parmi nous de ne souffrir aucun demi homme, & que nous les reconnoissons par le sexe & par les actions: bien que tes deux sexes te sauvent, tes façons de faire te condamnent: & il faut que tu les corrige pour prolonger ta vie” (Foigny, 87). To stay, he would need to resemble the Australians not only in body, but in spirit and in action. This proves particularly difficult for Sadeur because the Australians do not experience carnal desire or sexual love. Procreation is a mystery and taboo subject. The Australians are asexual, aromantic, philosophical beings who call each other “frères,” and their “family” consists of voluntarily chosen groups who choose to live together.

Beyond merely writing his observations, Jacques Sadeur’s involvement in Austral society prompts him to reflect on his own preconceptions regarding gender and the merit of patriarchal society. In a conversation with his mentor, referred to as “le vieillard,” the two discuss the familial dynamics in Europe and in the *Terre Australe*. Sadeur explains to the *vieillard* that “la

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<sup>111</sup> The Australians have two natural enemies: firstly, the monstrous birds that Sadeur combatted after his shipwreck (called Urgs), and all *demi-hommes*. The neighboring land of the *Fondins* is inhabited by *demi-hommes*, and the Australians also war with the Europeans who venture too near the *Terre Australe*. They call the Europeans *monstres marins*, *monstres inconnus*, or *demi-hommes marins*.

<sup>112</sup> As a child, Sadeur was similarly vulnerable to a society unwilling to tolerate his difference; he describes a woman who experienced such aversion at the sight of a two-sexed child that she refused to look at or hold him (Foigny, 41).

<sup>113</sup> While Sadeur fought and killed one of the monstrous birds, his clothes were torn to the extent that the Australian witnesses present were able to view his naked body.

mere & l'enfant étoient assujettis au pere.” This subjection was justified because, in his understanding, men initiated “le premier principe de la generation,” and the laws in place should logically favor “la cause premiere” (Foigny, 96). Given the lack of gender difference, the elder fails to understand the notion of the ‘father.’ Even with Sadeur’s attempted explanation, the *vieillard* refuses to accord the father a higher status or importance in procreation: “D’où donc que tu peux savoir que le pere agit premier que la mere? S’ils agissent ensemble, où est le premier? ... Si tout se passe chez la mere, pourquoi l’exclu-t-on d’être premiere?” (Foigny, 97). After all, he argues, pregnancy and birth would be impossible without the mother. The *vieillard* thus leads Sadeur to challenge his preconceived justifications for patriarchal authority. Sadeur acknowledges “qu’on traitoit avec trop de sévérité un sexe à qui toute la nature a tant d’obligations” (Foigny, 98). He reflects, “je me voyais forcé de croire que ce grand empire, que le mâle avoit usurpé sur la femelle, étoit plutôt une espece de tyrannie, que de conduite de Justice” (Foigny, 98).

This interaction marks a divergence from conventional voyage narratives: rather than make observations and judgements colored by one’s own cultural context, the voyager reevaluates his own gendered assumptions. In disputing the validity of patriarchy-based power imbalances, the text takes on radical queer potential. However, it would be fallacious to imply Sadeur’s transition into Austral society was consistently as smooth and enlightening as this interaction would suggest.

Sadeur’s journey to and through the *Terre Australe* exhibits repeated attempts to assimilate into this queer, utopian world. After all, this society not only appealed to Sadeur for the radical equality, prosperity, and simplicity assured by utopian ideals; it also represented the only place where his hermaphroditism assured his acceptance rather than rejection. However, his

desire for sexual interactions across genders sparks conflict for his hosts. Although Sadeur speaks rarely of his personal desires and goals, he communicates his wants or describes his actions in ways that convey the utopia he seeks to experience. At several pertinent moments throughout the narrative, Sadeur attempts to incorporate sexual interactions into his experience of the utopia of the *Terre Australe*, but ultimately fails. This utopia he repeatedly attempts to enact qualifies as queer because he seeks out sexual partners without limiting himself to gender, finding himself attracted to other hermaphrodites as well as women. However, his fundamental incompatibility with the asexual and aromantic Australe society leads to Sadeur's exclusion and even expulsion. Sadeur's attempts at sexual interactions violating the Austral society's intolerance of carnal desire demonstrate this incompatibility.

The problem of Jacques Sadeur's desire emerges early on, as he observes that Australians consider nudity to be the healthy norm. Nudity figures prominently in travel narratives, functioning as an exotic and erotic point of fixation for the male traveler. For example, Marco Polo's *Description of the World* consistently reports whether the people in the places he travels to are fully or partly nude. Related to this, travel narratives and imaginary voyages often feature the trope of the European voyager falling in love with (or being sexually attracted to) beautiful, scantily clad, "exotic" women.<sup>114</sup> *La Terre Australe Connue* queers these tropes, as Sadeur eroticizes, even fetishizes the Australian's nudity. He recounts, "Je parlois de leur nudité avec certains termes d'aversion; je voulus caresser quelque frere, & l'exciter à ce que nous appellons plaisir" (Foigny, 85). This interaction communicates his Eurocentric and Christian judgement of their nudity, yet this aversion is quickly surpassed by his erotic inclinations. His attempt to

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<sup>114</sup> This is particularly prominent in travel narratives to Tahiti and other parts of French Polynesia, where these islands are typically associated with sensuality and free love. For more on this trope, see Richardot, Anne. "Cythère Redécouverte : La Nouvelle Géographie Érotique Des Lumières." *Clio*, no. 22, 2005, pp. 83–100.



arouse and sexually pleasure one of the Australians constitutes a major *faux pas*, and nearly results in his banishment.

While all the *frères* of the *Terre Australe* love each other, their love is purely nonsexual, so this behavior was unwelcome. As the *vieillard* explains to Sadeur, “nous vivons sans ces ardeurs animals des uns pour les autres, & nous n’en pouvons même oïir parler... Enfin cela fait que nous sommes contents & que notre amour n’a rien de charnel” (Foigny, 95). In this society, sexual love functions as the dialectical opposite of the ideal of pure fraternal love. Above all of the other cultural differences Sadeur encounters, he struggles the most with understanding love or intimacy as divorced from sexual desire. Six months later, another episode demonstrates his inability to control his impulses, when “les caresses extraordinaires des freres me causerent quelque mouvement déréglé, dont quelques uns s’apperceurent, qui en furent si fort scandalisez, qu’ils me quitterent. C’est ce qui me causa la haine de tous” (Foigny, 137). His automatic biological response betrays his fundamental incompatibility amongst the Australians, furthering his alienation. Sadeur’s intentional and unintentional expressions of desire for the “hermaphrodites” of the *Terre Australe* serve as reminders that his queer utopia cannot exist anywhere— not even in this upside-down world ideal in every other way. However, he is unable to achieve any sexual intimacy with the inhabitants, as evidenced by his repeated failure and increasing degrees of isolation and distrust by the Australians. His physical otherness gains him access to the land, but not to the kind of relationships he desires with the inhabitants.

Sadeur seeks an opportunity for sex beyond their country’s borders. A critical moment demonstrating Sadeur’s incompatibility occurs when he begrudgingly participates in a battle is against the Australians’ sworn enemies, the *Fondins*, a nation of *demi-hommes*. He breaks into a *Fondin* home to escape the battlefield. There, he discovers two young women, who throw

themselves at his feet. Seemingly unphased by the obvious risks, he ignores his duty as well as Austral principles, and responds to them:

Ce fut alors que l'amour me transporta, & que les charmes de leurs visages & de leurs seins nus, me firent perdre & raison & connoissances. Je les relevay, & les ayã embrassées j'en pris une qui me donna la liberté. Mais à peine avois je commencé, que deux Australiens entrèrent & me trouverent sur le fait. Je vis bien par les traits de visage qu'ils firent paroître, que j'étois perdu (Foigny, 245-246).

After being caught in this compromising position, Sadeur faces serious punishment at the hands of his hosts. This serves as the final incriminating evidence in an ever-growing list of complaints against Sadeur, and the Australians call for his end.<sup>115</sup> They demand he commit suicide by ingesting a special fruit that brings on a peaceful death. Instead of accepting his punishment, Sadeur plans his escape, by way of giant bird. These monstrous birds serve as both the entry and exit points for Sadeur; initially welcomed as a savior for killing some of the birds, he leaves, disgraced, on the back of another bird he caught and tamed. This escape under duress cements his failure to reach utopia. After 35 years in the *Terre Australe*, at the age of 57, Sadeur journeys home, where he dies bestowing his accounts to the editor Foigny.

*La Terre Australe* portrays two competing notions of queer utopia. Austral society embodied utopia by way of immanent beings, naturally bent towards good deeds, generosity, and philosophical rigour, and repulsed by sexuality, with no gender dynamics to impede absolute equality. In the utopia Sadeur longed to reach, he could benefit from this society free from

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<sup>115</sup> The full list of accusations against Sadeur read as follows: "Les chefs d'accusation qu'on forma contre moy se peuvent reduire à cinq principaux, 1. que je n'avois point combattu, en preuve dequoy je n'avois produit aucune oreille des Fondins, 2. que j'avois temoigné de la douleur en la destruction de leurs ennemis, 3. que je m'étois joint avec une Fondine, 4. que j'avois mangé des viandes des Fondins, 5. que j'avois fait des questions malicieuses" (Foigny, 263). Instead of having sexual relations with the enemy, Sadeur's duty was to kill the Fondins, and take their ears as proof of lives taken.

disease, poverty, and suffering— *and* be able to engage in sexual interactions with whomever he desired, *homme* or *demi-homme*. Indeed, his journey home is punctuated with his regrets for the mistakes that led to his expulsion, and the knowledge that the island he was leaving was “infiniment commode” and that he would gladly have stayed there “sans danger, sans crainte, & même avec plaisir le reste de mes jours” (Foigny, 278). His failed utopian voyage communicate multiple layers of rejection; he was rejected from Europe for his hermaphroditism, and then from the *Terre Australe* for his sexuality.<sup>116</sup> Sadeur’s conflicting efforts to both assimilate into this society yet also express his own sexual desire coincides with Muñoz’ articulation of queer utopian longing. If the engagement in utopian longing qualifies as an escape, this escapism is imbued with radical potential and even transformation. Muñoz wrote, “escape itself need not be a surrender but, instead, may be more like a refusal of a dominant order and its systemic violence. Queer fantasy is linked to utopian longing, and together the two can become contributing contributions of possibility for political transformation” (Muñoz, 172). For Sadeur, however, his queer utopian longing necessitated his escape from the one place he thought himself free from the systemic violence of the dominant order and confirmed the impossibility of the utopia he hoped to find and experience.

*La Terre Australe Connue* both recycles and reimagines the connection between the *Terre Australe* and monstrosity. While the Austral society portrayed hermaphroditism as normal, even perfect, this resulted in only the inversion rather than elimination of monstrosity. Initially, the *Terre Australe* appeared to rescue Sadeur from a world that rejected him, yet the ending of the novel only further cements his monstrosity: “Sadeur, que sa bisexualité désignait déjà comme un

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<sup>116</sup> Interestingly, Sadeur was not rejected from the *Terre Australe* because of his diverse sexual preferences, but purely because of his repeated expressions of sexual desire which he failed to oppress. Back in Europe, we may assume his desires would have been met with a more nuanced rejection.

“monstre” au sein du monde réel, se retrouve objet de scandale et monstre encore parmi les hermaphrodites austraux, anatomiquement mais non spirituellement ses semblables” (Racault, 37). His moral imperfections barred him from the perfect Austral realm, but his physical imperfections assured his inability to live normally in his imperfect native Europe, although his death interrupted further rejection back on European soil.

While all utopia are by definition impossible, the reader generally has a sense that, on some level, the social changes and structures implemented could be reproduced, adapted into a blueprint for a better society. *La Terre Australe Connue* harbors no such illusions:

Indemnes du péché et de la dépendance liée à la séparation des sexes, les Australiens préadamites de *La Terre Australe Connue* peuvent vivre sans État dans la communion de tous avec la raison parfaite; mais cette perfection, dans tous les sens du terme inhumaine, n'est pas reproductible pour les enfants d'Adam que nous sommes (Racault, 35).

In examining the many paths to utopia mapped out across imaginary voyages, sometimes, the path to utopia remains incomplete. Sadeur's queer utopia proved to be impossible in his world and even in the world upside-down; it was as unrealizable as a society without men or women.

While the authors of *La Terre Australe Connue* and *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* both chose to set their utopian societies in the mythical *Terre Australe*, the two authors diverged in how they chose to fill the empty spaces of this land. Each work challenged existing conceptions of utopia while simultaneously providing a format for future generations of imaginary voyages.<sup>117</sup> In *La Terre Australe Connue*, the radically unique portrayal of a utopian society peopled by hermaphrodites permitted a hypothetical experiment of a world without gendered

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<sup>117</sup> By “format,” I refer to such elements as these: the “editor” explaining how they acquired the authentic account from the voyager to display *vraisemblance*, and then the plot itself, which features the shipwreck, entry into the utopian society, followed by the near-encyclopedic description of every aspect of the society, before the inevitable return to Europe.

hierarchies and sexual desire, while the unlikely protagonist Sadeur's experience as an outcast in both hemispheres hindered his own ideals relevant to his sexual desires. Sadeur breaks the archetype of the ideal male voyager. He is neither a conventionally bodied man, nor heterosexual, nor exceptionally brave or honorable. In *l'Histoire des Sévarambes*, a seemingly unshakable edifice of male authority and the objectification of women seems to propose an ideal society in which women pay the price of a peaceful, orderly society, yet this edifice is burned down by a woman.

In both works, the path to utopia initially seems apparent. For Foigny, a world without gendered hierarchy takes the utopia further beyond the typical eradication of poverty, illness, and suffering. For Veiras, the strict application of deliberate education and laws— while prioritizing male satisfaction— ensures a (nearly) vice-free society. However, in both cases, two individuals destabilize initial assumptions regarding the desirability of these ideals. From Sadeur's perspective, what ideal society could exclude something as human as desire? Or, for Sévarambe society, does the overbearing regulation of human desire destroy it? Both depictions of utopian societies draw attention to the question of desire and sexuality.

Passion, be that an “animalistic” desire to regulate, overcome, or pursue, qualifies as something the utopia must confront. This conflict between reason and passion appears to foreshadow a central preoccupation of the French Enlightenment. As Sermain explains, “L’impératif de la pure raison suppose un homme qui n’existe pas et dont le manque de passions, de ce que le 18e appelle l’énergie, et qui correspondrait à la libido, a des effets ruineux,” but “[l]e roman découvre la folie de ce discours moral et rationaliste” (Sermain, 223). The utopian voyage novel, particularly those by Veiras and Foigny, goes even further in this discovery by portraying the *society-that-doesn't-exist* visited by the *man-who-doesn't-exist*, only to

demonstrate the undesirability of an apparently ‘perfect’ society. In both works, the regulation or banishment of sexuality has serious consequences; in *Sévarambe*, a leader’s abuse of power incites a woman’s fiery uprising, and in the *Austral lands*, the protagonist is forced to flee when he proves himself unable to overcome his sexual desire. Although these two works are seen as quintessential examples of the utopian genre, they both uphold and destabilize what qualifies as utopian.

## CHAPTER 2

### ACHIEVING THE UTOPIA OF IDEAL MASCULINITY WITH MODERATION

In my previous chapter, I examined two journeys to distinct representations of utopia set in the *Terre Australe*. In Denis Veiras' *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*, Captain Siden and his crew encountered a society where a productive, vice-free utopia was made possible with the combination of the rigorous application of laws and education from a young age and the enforcement of rigid gender roles. In Foigny's *La Terre Australe Connue*, a similarly rigid utopian society regulated virtually every aspect of everyday life, but with one striking difference: being peopled by "hermaphrodites," the society lacked gender inequality. Both texts address the role of gender and sexuality in utopia. In *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*, gender roles ensure the continuation of society by reducing women to objects to procreate and satiate male desire. In *La Terre Australe Connue*, the erasure of gender difference and sexual desire results in a peaceful, flourishing society, but this society proved inaccessible for Sadeur.

As both texts portrayed gender and sexuality's place in society differently, the protagonist-voyagers each represented distinct expressions of masculinity. Captain Siden (*L'Histoire des Sévarambes*) embodied the role of the ideal brave explorer, whereas Sadeur (*La Terre Australe Connue*) was an unconventional protagonist, being a physical representation of both male and female bodies and exhibiting unheroic traits and controversial sexual desire. While continuing to explore the role of gender in utopia, I turn my focus to the intersection between leadership and ideal masculinity. In this imaginary voyage, young Télémaque undergoes extensive mentoring and trials to shape him into a man worthy of finding his father and ruling in a way that ensures utopia. What can the development of the archetypal male voyager and leader reveal about conceptions of masculinity in late 17th century France? With the

righteous king upheld as the means to ensuring utopia, what pressures and obstacles prevent a man from reaching this position?

In this chapter, I continue my examination of simultaneous allegorical and physical voyages to utopia in 17th and 18th century French voyage literature and explore a new notion of utopia: the utopia of ideal masculinity. While virtually every popular imaginary voyage from the 17th and 18th centuries portrays a heroic male protagonist, one text places an unprecedented level of emphasis on the perfection of the heroic man. François Fénelon's *Les Aventures de Télémaque* (1699) dedicates an entire narrative to the formative trials and adventures of Télémaque, with an unparalleled focus on how he and the men around him either embody or oppose the values and actions deemed integral to ideal masculinity.

Author François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon served as preceptor to the Duc de Bourgogne, grandson of Louis XIV, a post which granted him a coveted position at court (Sheriff, 110). His duty as preceptor prompted his writing of *Les Aventures de Télémaque*, which was initially (and officially) intended as a didactic text for the young Duke. More than a fictional work, *Les Aventures de Télémaque* was designed to teach the cultivated young man everything he needed to know, including fine arts, literature, history, Greco-Roman mythology and culture, politics, economics, and, most importantly, the values and proper comportment of a man of his station (Le Brun, 11). The didactic work belongs to the "mirrors for princes tradition," which provides explicit instruction and positive models for future rulers (and subjects) through fictional texts (Sheriff, 110). While the tradition began in the Middle Ages, it amplified in the seventeenth century, instructing noble youth while communicating gendered codes for behavior that helped define appropriate conduct for refined men and women (Seifert, 8). However, such texts (*Les*



*Aventures de Télémaque* included) overwhelmingly targeted young men; “l’éducation du prince se présentait comme une sorte de modèle idéal de l’éducation d’un jeune homme” (Le Brun, 13).

Initially, Fénelon fared favorably in court, and opportunities for further advancement soon came to him: “In 1693, a chair in the *Académie Française* came his way as a recognized author and cleric, and two years later the king awarded him the archbishopric of Cambrai, with titles of duke and prince of the Holy Roman Empire” (Sheriff, 110). However, Fénelon’s advantageous position proved short-lived, in part due to his religious convictions. Fénelon embraced Quietism, a religious movement deemed heretical by Church leaders. This contributed to Louis XIV banishing Fénelon from court in 1697 (Sheriff, 110).<sup>118</sup> However, Fénelon’s religious beliefs alone didn’t cost him his position. He was also an outspoken critic of Louis XIV, and Fénelon’s criticism assured both his downfall and his text’s popularity (Sheriff, 103).

*Les Aventures de Télémaque* soon proved too dynamic to remain in the hands of the Duke alone. Following rumors that the text contained virulent criticisms of Louis XIV, the text was leaked, clandestine publications multiplied, and national and international audiences clamored to read the work (Le Brun, 4). Following unauthorized publications of the text in 1699, Fénelon faced serious consequences. Louis XIV punished Fénelon by cutting his pension and position as tutor to the Duc de Bourgogne and banishing him from Paris and Versailles (Kantzios, 198).<sup>119</sup> After Louis XIV confiscated and banned *Les Aventures de Télémaque*, the work soared in popularity, securing it the equivalent of best-seller status, with over 550 editions and over 170 translations into various languages (Le Brun, 1). The work can be understood as doubly

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<sup>118</sup> For more on Fénelon’s practice of Quietism and how his religious beliefs and criticisms of Louis XIV converge in his writings, see Thompson, Benjamin, and Robert Lamb. “Disinterestedness and Virtue: ‘Pure Love’ in Fénelon, Rousseau and Godwin.” *History of Political Thought*, vol. 32, no. 5, 2011, pp. 799–819. *JSTOR*

<sup>119</sup> It is unclear how great a part Fénelon’s Quietist beliefs versus his thinly-veiled criticism of Louis XIV played a role in his banishment from court and loss of position as preceptor, although both sealed his fate.

important, as “the most popular literary work of the eighteenth century, but also an important point of reference in the political, pedagogical and theological discussions of pre-revolutionary France and beyond” (Kantzios, 190). *Les Aventures de Télémaque* only increased in popularity over time. After the death of both Fénelon and Louis XIV, the work was published again in 1717 in Paris, “avec privilège, approbation et dédicace au roi, une édition rigoureusement établie” (Le Brun, 10).

While Fénelon’s timely, subversive critique of Louis XIV largely assured the novel’s success, *Les Aventures de Télémaque* was also admired for its artistic and literary value. This was particularly impressive because the period spanning the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century overwhelming perceived novels as “vulgaire, immoral, dangereux.” To evade this perception, Fénelon proclaimed he desired his work be read as a poem in prose rather than a lowly novel, a desire shared by baroque writers of his time to elevate the novel to nobler heights (Coulet, 297). Spanning a range of genres, the text appealed to a broad audience. Coulet situated *Les Aventures de Télémaque* at the intersection of the *poème en prose*, the *roman philosophique*, and the *manuel d’éducation*.<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, the work was considered a *roman à clefs*, in which certain characters (kings, gods, goddesses) represent members of the royal court, including Louis XIV (Kantzios, 198-199).<sup>121</sup> While Racault situates the text “dans le champ d’intertextualité de la production utopique au tournant du siècle” (Racault, 40), Morel considers the work a *roman pastoral* (Morel, 306).

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<sup>120</sup> Coulet, Henri. “Le Roman jusqu’à la Révolution.” Tome 1. McGraw-Hill- Armand Colin. Lettres Françaises. 1967

<sup>121</sup> Le Brun adds that in the months following the book’s publication, “keys” to the book circulated. One such key, Gueudeville’s *Critique générale des Aventures de Télémaque* (1700) maintained that Louis XIV was represented by Idoménée, Sésostris and Pygmalion, Mme de Maintenon by Astarbé, and so on (Le Brun, 17).

*Les Aventures de Télémaque* can be enjoyed as a stand-alone text, but explicitly inscribes itself into Homer's *Odyssey*, in keeping with the work's purpose as an educational manual teaching the Duke about Antiquity (Le Brun, 18).<sup>122</sup> Kantzios situates the work within its Greco-Roman canonical origins:

In the opening of the *Odyssey*, Telemachus is shown living among the suitors, and, at the instigation of the goddess Athena, he visits Pylos and Sparta in the hope of receiving news about his father. But in Book 5 he disappears from the narrative, reappearing ten Books later to be reunited with Odysseus. During his long absence, Homer focuses on the wily king of Ithaca, while of Telemachus we know only that he is a guest in Sparta, until spurred on by Athena to return home. Fénelon uses this blank period to insert his own story by creating a hero who, contrary to Homer's inactive Telemachus, displays unusual initiative and roams the Mediterranean in search of his father (Kantzios, 191).

That said, Fénelon's work was more than an eloquent reworking of Greek myths translated into French; the novel engages in extensive innovation. While many scenes faithfully evoke earlier representations of Greek myths, Fénelon also makes significant alterations to serve his own purposes. These departures point to deliberate messages the author intended to convey, rather than merely echo earlier works and reformat them to please a late 17th century audience.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> The popularity of *Télémaque* is partly due to how the text sought to instill an appreciation for Antiquity, and promote greater familiarity with important Greek mythology (Le Brun, 18).

<sup>123</sup> For examples of how Fénelon significantly rewrote myth, see Kantzios' analysis of Fénelon's reimagining of the Underworld: Kantzios, Ippokratis. "Fénelon's Subversive Uses of *Aeneid* 6." *The Comparatist*, vol. 40, 2016, pp. 190–204. *JSTOR*, JSTOR), or Antonia Cor's interpretation of how and why Fénelon reimagines Minerva's shield not as Medusa's head, but rather scenes of war and peace: Cor, M. Antonia. "The Shield of Télémaque." *Romance Notes*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1982, pp. 17–21. *JSTOR*.

While *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* and *La Terre Australe Connue* both featured plot structures conventional to the *voyage imaginaire* tradition,<sup>124</sup> *Télémaque* takes a more selective approach, incorporating certain elements and avoiding others. For instance, *Télémaque* opts out of the conventional *Avertissement*, neither posing as an authentic text or attempting *vraisemblance*, as seen in *La Terre Australe Connue* and *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*. Rather than feature an accidental voyage to one undiscovered land, *Télémaque* is shunted across the Mediterranean Sea to a plethora of destinations, at the mercy of gods and goddesses. Over the course of his voyages, he learns lessons and gains experience in places mythical and real as he searches for his missing father Ulysses. In certain editions, *Télémaque*'s voyages have been mapped out, permitting the reader to better visualize his winding journey to find his father and become a worthy leader *en route* (Figure 12).

The plot covers extensive literal and metaphorical ground. An *in medias res* debut reveals a shipwrecked *Télémaque* and his Mentor (who is secretly goddess Minerva in disguise) washed up on Calypso's island. When Nymph Calypso urges *Télémaque* to recount the adventures that led to his arrival on her island, the reader gains background knowledge of the events leading up to their arrival. *Télémaque* explains that he and Mentor undertook their voyage to search for his father Ulysses, leaving from Sicily. Between Sicily and Egypt, they repeatedly endure capture, conflict, and enslavement, but continually manage to escape. Separated from Mentor, *Télémaque* is condemned to the desert of Oasis, flees, and travels on to Thebes, Tyr, and then Cyprus. Reunited with Mentor, the two travel to Crete so *Télémaque* may learn the laws of Minos. En

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<sup>124</sup> The conventional plot structure for a *voyage imaginaire* typically includes an introduction in which the author explains they are really the "editor" who "discovered" or was given these texts on the explorer's deathbed, then the story features the European voyager who joins an expedition, experiences a violent storm which blows the ship off course, then the inevitable shipwreck brings the protagonist to the new place (often an island). The rest of the work consists of an exhaustive description of the (utopian) society, from political structure to gender dynamics to education. The protagonist participates in the society and eventually leaves, typically dying soon after his return.

route to Ithaca (Télémaque's home), a supernatural storm destroys Mentor's ship, which leads to Mentor and Télémaque's arrival on Calypso's island. Thus the reader returns to the starting point in the narrative.

Over the course of their stay, Calypso falls in love with Télémaque. Venus engages Cupid to make Télémaque fall in love with Calypso, but he makes Télémaque fall in love with the nymph Eucharis instead. Mentor saves Télémaque from his enchantment and forces him to leave the island with him. A Phoenician ship rescues them, and as they attempt to go to Ithaca, Neptune steers them to Salente instead. After participating in various battles and negotiations with neighboring countries, Télémaque travels to the Underworld to search for Ulysses. While there, he witnesses the eternal punishment of evil kings in Tartarus, and the glory of righteous kings in the Elysian Fields, but fails to find Ulysses in either place. Returning to the land of the living, he fights so admirably in battle that he is offered the position of king, which he refuses.<sup>125</sup> He returns to Salente, where Mentor uses superior wisdom and leadership to transform the land into a utopia.<sup>126</sup> Mentor/ Minerva and Télémaque make one last stop on a desolate island, where Minerva finally reveals her true goddess form to the worthy Télémaque. They journey home to Ithaca, where Ulysses and Télémaque are finally reunited.

These many journeys served a deliberate purpose. As the omniscient narrator reveals, "Mentor, qui réglait tous les moments de la vie de Télémaque pour l'élever à la plus haute gloire, ne l'arrêtait en chaque lieu qu'autant qu'il le fallait pour exercer sa vertu et pour lui faire acquérir de l'expérience" (Fénelon, 412). The experience Télémaque gained shaped him into the ideal ruler, a righteous king like his father Ulysses. The objectives of undertaking voyages to

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<sup>125</sup> The Dauniens (one of many small warring factions depicted throughout the work) offer him the position of king.

<sup>126</sup> Another land that Mentor and Télémaque visit, *La Bétique*, is also described in utopian terms. A more extensive analysis of utopia in *Les Aventures de Télémaque* may consider this land as well as Salente.

reach the goal of embodying excellent leadership, as well as finding Ulysses and reaching Ithaca perfectly exemplify the notion of simultaneous physical and allegorical voyages to utopia. In the imaginary voyages to utopia of the 17th and 18th centuries, the utopia portrayed, and their accompanying ideals reveal the priorities, anxieties, and values of society, particularly with regard to gender and sexuality. *Les Aventures de Télémaque* clearly articulates ideal masculinity as a utopia, dedicating an entire suite of adventures designed to shape Télémaque into a worthy ruler. This voyage towards the utopia of ideal masculinity requires deliberate guidance; without this, Mentor/ Minerva explains, “on va comme un navire en pleine mer, qui n’a point de pilote, qui ne consulte point les astres, et à qui toutes les côtes voisines sont inconnues; il ne peut faire que naufrage” (Fénelon, 423). *Les Aventures de Télémaque* details the literal and allegorical shipwrecks a young man must navigate if he wishes to embody the values and wisdom of a king worthy of following Ulysses.<sup>127</sup>

*Télémaque* is replete with indications of what ideal masculinity looks like, yet the study of gender and sexuality in the Early Modern period have yet to mine this wealth of material. While scholars of *Télémaque* have dedicated their attention to depictions of war and economics,<sup>128</sup> religion and philosophy,<sup>129</sup> education,<sup>130</sup> and political or societal critique in *Télémaque*,<sup>131</sup> remarkably little scholarship directly and exclusively analyzes the gender

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<sup>127</sup> Some scholars reach different interpretations of Télémaque’s voyages. For instance, Trémolières identifies the “cycle guerrier” and the “cycle amoureux” as the two essential components of the narrative that shape Télémaque. See Trémolières, François. “Amour et gloire dans *Les Aventures de Télémaque*,” *Littératures classiques*, vol. 70, no. 3, 2009, pp. 297-313.

<sup>128</sup> Paul Schuurman, “Fénelon on Luxury, War and Trade in the Telemachus,” *History of European Ideas* 38, no. 2 (2012): 179-199.

<sup>129</sup> Thompson, Benjamin, and Robert Lamb. “Disinterestedness and Virtue: ‘Pure Love’ in Fénelon, Rousseau, and Godwin.” *History of Political Thought*, vol. 32, no. 5, 2011, pp. 799–819.

<sup>130</sup> Rosenkranz, Karl, and Anna C. Brackett. “Pedagogics as a System.” *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, vol. 6, no. 4, 1872, pp. 290–312.

<sup>131</sup> Kantzios, Ippokratis. “Fénelon’s Subversive Uses of *Aeneid* 6.” *The Comparatist*, vol. 40, 2016, pp. 190–204.

dynamics of this work in meaningful depth.<sup>132</sup> A dearth of scholarship considers gender in *Télémaque*, particularly regarding the unique portrayal of ideal masculinity.<sup>133</sup> As Fénelon's *Télémaque* fills in a gap in the ancient texts during Odysseus' disappearance, I endeavor to address this gap in scholarship, and initiate a conversation on how Fénelon portrays ideal masculinity through his popular revitalization of Greek mythology.

In order to consider the unique articulation of masculinity in *Télémaque*, I employ Reeser's theory of moderate masculinity. This approach grants an uncannily apt degree of insight into Fénelon's text. To understand masculinity in the Early Modern period, Reeser argues, one must consider the importance of moderation as a guiding principle. In his work, *Moderating Masculinity in Early Modern Culture* he studies "the highly gendered aspects of moderation, a virtue so gendered in fact that it becomes one of the defining notions of Renaissance masculinity" (Reeser, 13). Reeser proposes a model of Early Modern masculinity in which the ideal, that of moderate masculinity, lies between the two extremes of excessive masculinity and lacking masculinity. As Reeser explains, "Moderation cannot be defined in any abstract or concrete sense without first defining the extreme positions" of excess and lack (Reeser, 21).

Ideal moderate masculinity can *only* be understood in conjunction with the expressions of masculinity lying as far from the ideal as possible. Indeed, moderate masculinity only holds any meaning when juxtaposed against iterations of flawed or problematic masculinity. Understanding moderation requires diverse examples of immoderation, and "moderate masculinity requires forms of alterity for its definition," and "requires as many forms of alterity as possible to guard

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<sup>132</sup> Cor, M. Antonia. "The Shield of Télémaque." *Romance Notes*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1982, pp. 17–21 presents one exception, as she briefly refers to the androgyny or dual gender of Mentor/ Minerva.

<sup>133</sup> Meanwhile, an abundance of scholarship examines masculinity in Homer's *Odyssey*. See, for example, Van Nortwick, Thomas. *Imagining Men : Ideals of Masculinity in Ancient Greek Culture / Thomas Van Nortwick*. Praeger, 2008.

against the instabilities and tensions in this definition of male subjectivity” (Reeser, 22). This reliance on extreme positions to define the ideal conveys the fragility of ideal masculinity. Additionally, the inability to define the ideal without negative examples conveys the challenge of locating the ideal.

I employ Reeser’s theory because his model of ideal masculinity reads as if it were directly formulated to explain masculinity in Fénelon’s novel. Moderation is discussed in virtually every lesson on ruling, description of ideal kings, and is repeatedly positioned as an ideal to strive for. To demonstrate the astonishing prevalence of moderation in Fénelon’s text, I utilized the Voyant digital reading tool to provide quantitative evidence to this assertion.<sup>134</sup> I entered the entire text into Voyant to find how often the terms *modération*, *modéré*, and *modérer* appeared in the text. *Modération* appeared 37 times, *modérer* 12 times, and *modéré* 12 times, for a total of 61 occurrences of moderation or related term. To contextualize the value of moderation compared to other conventionally admirable “masculine” traits for a king, *vertueux* appears only 19 times, *courage* 87 times, *fidèle* 15 times, and *sage* appears 124 times. Although moderation is not the only valued virtue for ideal kings to embody, it appears often enough to warrant consideration, particularly considered in conjunction with the great importance Reeser assigns moderation to the formulation of Early Modern masculinity.

The remarkable complementarity between Reeser’s theory of masculinity and Fénelon’s adventurous voyage novel has not yet been suggested, yet I maintain a richer understanding of Early Modern masculinities is achieved by drawing the two texts into dialogue. I expand

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<sup>134</sup> When entering an entire text into Voyant, the tool identifies text-based patterns and word frequency. I used the version available on Wikisource (Fénelon’s *Aventures de Télémaque*, published in Paris, Librairie de Firmin Didot Frères, Imprimeurs de l’Institut, Rue Jacob, 1841). I read the original 1699 version alongside, and the texts scarcely differ, both showing an overwhelming emphasis on moderation.



Reeser's theory to analyze how the impossible ideal of perfect moderate masculinity is reached in Fénelon's utopian voyage novel, in which the appropriate embodiment of masculinity serves a central role in the protagonist's development as the future king of Ithaca. While Reeser's theory considers moderation as an ideal to aspire to and a model to understanding Renaissance masculinity, Fénelon's novel elevates the stakes of masculinity to a higher level. A moderate king can oversee a flourishing kingdom, whereas an effeminate or excessively bellicose king assures the ruin of his kingdom. Moderation or nonmoderation, then, hold the key to utopia or dystopia.

Just as Reeser's model maintains that ideal, moderate masculinity can only be understood in relation to extremes of excess and lack, I first investigate pertinent examples of lacking masculinity, then excessive masculinity. After establishing these extreme positions, I then turn to representations of moderate, ideal masculinity. I demonstrate this by analyzing key scenes of *Télémaque*, in which proper rule results in utopian conditions, and Télémaque evolves into a worthy future king. In my consideration of the simultaneous allegorical and physical voyages to the utopia of ideal masculinity, I consider how individuals' embodiments of excess, lack, or moderation shape the geographical spaces visited. Furthermore, I examine what these positive and negative examples reveal about masculinity in Early Modern France. What ideals, anxieties, and tensions lay within Fénelon's articulation of ideal masculinity? Did this vision of utopian masculinity reflect, subvert, or alter the dominant cultural values surrounding masculinity?

#### THE DANGER OF LACK: THREATS TO MASCULINITY ON VENUS' AND CALYPSO'S ISLANDS

Following Reeser's model, with masculinity's ideal moderate center lying between the extremes of excess and lack, I first explore representations and condemnations of lacking

masculinity in *Les Aventures de Télémaque*. Lacking masculinity spans a wide range of unacceptable traits and behaviors, including but not limited to weakness, laziness, and effeminacy. Within the broad concept of lacking masculinity, effeminacy constitutes the most substantial threat to ideal masculinity.

During the period Fénelon wrote *Télémaque*, the definition of effeminacy was inextricable from women. The 1694 *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* defines *effeminé* as “Qui tient de la foiblesse de la Femme,” with contextual examples including, “*Homme effeminé; coeur effeminé; mine effeminée; visage effeminé... C'est un effeminé*” (*Dictionnaire*, 444).<sup>135</sup> In this understanding, effeminacy criticizes and constrains both men and women. While used to describe men, effeminacy condenses women’s worst characteristics into failed masculinity. This unfavorable connection between effeminacy and women means that “effeminacy, in its satirical and moralistic modes, is an epiphenomenon of misogyny” (Seifert, 60). Because effeminacy implies comporting oneself as a woman, embodying ideal masculinity requires an ongoing suspicion of and distancing from women. Therefore, one element of *Télémaque*’s path to ideal masculinity requires that he learn how to avoid falling into the temptations of effeminate living, and avoid women.<sup>136</sup> In fact, avoiding effeminacy constitutes a recurring, significant priority throughout the text. In my Voyant Tools-based analysis of *Télémaque*, “effeminé(e)” occurs 11 times, always used in a negative context.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the polyvalent notion of effeminacy represented a plethora of undesirable and threatening traits. In *Homosexuality in Early Modern France*, Merrick and

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<sup>135</sup> *Effeminé, Effeminée*, [1694] Le Dictionnaire de l'Académie française 1694, t. 1 (Coignard, Paris, 1694).

<sup>136</sup> Fénelon’s anxiety regarding effeminacy and his need to educate against it echoes a pre-existing, well-established tradition. This concern is echoed across didactic texts, such as Erasmus’ work on educating young boys. In Reeser’s analysis of Erasmus’ text, he demonstrates how young boys are taught to avoid effeminacy (Reeser, 104-105). Note how Fénelon’s views aligned with those of 16<sup>th</sup> rather than 17<sup>th</sup> century writings.

Ragan identify effeminacy as a significant negative model for men, which could convey passivity, weakness, and even homosexuality (Merrick and Ragan, 171).<sup>137</sup> In this section, I unpack these traits to better articulate how Fénelon's *Télémaque* illustrates lacking masculinity in negative examples. Télémaque's struggles to resist the temptations of lacking masculinity are best exemplified by his experiences on Calypso's island and Venus' islands.

While the fact that the two key examples of immoderate, lacking masculinity take place on islands may seem coincidental, this insular setting is doubly significant, due to the association between utopia and the island, as well as certain islands' association with eroticism. Télémaque's frequentation of islands reflects a major literary tradition in 17th and 18<sup>th</sup> century utopian travel literature. Indeed, when choosing the setting for utopia, "Le plus souvent, on choisit des îles, terres isolées perdues au milieu des océans" (Trousson, 55).<sup>138</sup> Some of these utopias provide representations of ideal societies, whereas others are merely utopian in the sense of a *no-place* (Trousson, 55-56). Yet even beyond the utopian novel, French literature at large held a preoccupation with the island, which Sheriff identifies as *islomanie*. *Islomanie* "describes and locates both a sustained intellectual passion for islands as geographic, metaphoric, and fictive spaces as well as a contemporaneous preoccupation with them as sites of happiness and delight" (Sheriff, 18). *Ancien Regime* France's obsession with islands permeated philosophical, literary,

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<sup>137</sup> Interestingly, this negativity was tied to concerns about gender inversion. Therefore, masculine women served as a negative example to accompany effeminate men. Interestingly, Minerva (disguised as Mentor) could be read as a "masculine woman," thus subverting one side of gender inversion anxiety by providing a positive representation.

<sup>138</sup> In his introduction to Mercier's *L'an 2440*, Raymond Trousson notes a proliferation of utopia situated on islands, such as *L'Utopie de Thomas More* (1516), *La Nouvelle Atlantide* du chancelier Bacon (1626), *L'île de Caléjava* de Claude Gilbert (1700), *L'île de Naudély* de Pierre de Lesconvel (1703), *L'île des esclaves* (1725) et *l'île de la raison* (1727) de Marivaux, *L'île des femmes militaires de Rustaing de Saint-Jory* (1736), *Les Iles flottantes* de Morelly (1753), *Les Iles fortunées* de Moutonnet de Clairfons (1771), *L'île de Tamoé* chez Sade dans *Aline et Valcour* (1788).

and political spheres. However, it would be remiss to neglect the satirical edge of *islomanie*, which connotes social criticism and negative moral judgments (Sheriff, 18).<sup>139</sup>

Calypso's island and Venus' islands occupy a compelling liminal space straddling myth and reality. Calypso's island Ogygia was purely mythical but has been associated with the island of Gozo (Halliburton, 188). Across a broad range of travel accounts and literature, Venus' island has been associated with the Greek island of Cythere, as well as Tahiti (sometimes referred to as *La Nouvelle Cythere*) (Sheriff, 6). In *Télémaque*, the real-life island of Cyprus is said to be dedicated to the cult of Venus. Calypso's and Venus' islands can be understood as what Sheriff refers to as "enchanted islands." For Sheriff, enchanted islands serving as the geographical settings for utopia are uniquely poised to facilitate social commentary:

Far from being escapist reveries, representations of the enchanted island ... mobilized fantasy and directed readers and viewers to particular moral, political, and cultural identifications. Often the desired ends were those authorized by prevailing hierarchies, but at other times the enchanted island presented alternatives that rubbed against the grain of dominant ideals (Sheriff, 2).

Across his portrayals of the many sites Télémaque visits during his journeys, Fénelon oscillates between upholding and subverting dominant ideals and power structures. In the case of Venus' and Calypso's islands, these enchanted islands are deployed to represent the pleasing yet destructive danger of lacking masculinity, women, and effeminacy. Furthermore, these mythical spaces provide thinly veiled criticisms of French society.

Fénelon's choice of these islands to demonstrate the dangers of effeminacy carries significant geographical *and* erotic implications. In her work on the intersection of geography

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<sup>139</sup> This facet of utopia set on islands becomes pertinent later in the chapter, when I discuss how many of the places in *Les Aventures de Télémaque* are written to represent the French royal court of Louis XIV.

and sexuality in literature, Anne Richardot identifies the disproportionate alignment of island settings and eroticism (particularly on Venus's island). Venus' island captivated the visual and literary culture of late 17th and early 18th century France, seen as "islands of love, coquetry, or gallantry. Sometimes these islands were depicted in a positive light as sites of pleasure, love, and sensuality. At other times they were unveiled as debauched and morally dangerous" (Sheriff, 32). Such islands held a prioritized status in the "nouvelle cartographie érotique" (Richardot, 84).

For my analysis of the simultaneous geographical progression and allegorical progression towards ideals, geography's role holds a heightened pertinence on Venus's and Calypso's islands because of the correlation between islands and erotism in literature of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>140</sup> While libertine works portray these erotic islands in a favorable light, Fénelon portrays erotism between men and women as threatening to ideal masculinity.<sup>141</sup> Eroticism poses a problem for masculinity, as it can be linked to both lacking and excessive masculinity. In Katherine Crawford's *The Culture of the Sexual Renaissance*, she explains how "normative constraints articulated in Renaissance discussions of the sexual" granted a narrow range of acceptable masculinity for monarchs, between the two extremes of "childless, effeminate, hapless" and "promiscuous, manly, opportunistic," with both deemed problematic (Crawford, 195). Therefore, the erotic island poses great danger to young Télémaque. Here, I turn to the erotic, insular settings of Calypso's and Venus' islands to investigate how desirable women and

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<sup>140</sup> In short, an abundance of novels and plays portray European men's experiences among the lascivious, sexually voracious island women of certain locales such as Tahiti. For a more developed consideration of the writing of erotic islands in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, see Richardot, Anne. "Cythère Redécouverte : La Nouvelle Géographie Érotique Des Lumières." *Clio*, no. 22, 2005, pp. 83–100. JSTOR and Sheriff, Mary D. *Enchanted Islands: Picturing the Allure of Conquest in Eighteenth-Century France*. The University of Chicago Press, 2018.

<sup>141</sup> I do not imply that eroticism exists uniquely between men and women, especially given the connotation sometimes drawn between effeminacy and homosexuality. In Fénelon, however, erotism strictly occurs between men and women.

their enchanting islands constitute a threat to masculinity, particularly when such islands provide a tempting escape into a luxurious, effeminate lifestyle.

Télémaque's masculinity is first threatened when he and Mentor/ Minerva wash up on Calypso's island. Love-starved Calypso implores Télémaque to recount his adventures and becomes infatuated with him as he does so. This part of the story introduces the reader to three islands: Calypso's island, Venus' island (which can only be visited in a dream state), and Cyprus, an island dedicated to the cult of Venus. These female-dominated islands provide trials for Télémaque, testing his adherence to duty and ideal masculinity. He must encounter, resist, and resolve the danger of eroticism to continue his path towards the ideal of moderate masculinity.

At first glance, Calypso's beautiful island *seems* unthreatening, even utopian. The narrator describes the island's natural charms, with the perfect blend of refreshing zephyrs and sunshine, the charming sound of birdsong and brooks, and charming intimate spaces where "mille fleurs naissantes émaillaient les tapis verts dont la grotte était environnée" (Fénelon, 4). Despite this favorable description, Calypso and her island provide only a superficial utopia masking a deadly trap. The etymology of Calypso's name betrays her, evoking secrecy, deception, death, and even hell.<sup>142</sup> Calypso's apparent charms hide her dangerous nature; her seemingly paradisiacal island paves the way to perdition.<sup>143</sup> As Calypso becomes infatuated with Télémaque and intends to capture his heart, Mentor/ Minerva quickly identifies the dangers of Calypso's seductions, but struggles to counterbalance her powers. Calypso's desirability alone

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<sup>142</sup> Calypso translates to "hidden, hider" (perhaps originally a death goddess) from Greek *kalyptein* "to cover, conceal," from PIE root \*kel- (1) "to cover, conceal, save," which also is the source of English Hell" (OED). *Online Etymology Dictionary*.

<sup>143</sup> This theme of dystopian islands was not foreign to 17<sup>th</sup> century literature. As Seifert notes in his *Fairy Tales, Sexuality, and Gender in France 1690-1715: Nostalgic Utopias*, Mme d'Aulnoy's *L'Île de la Félicité* constituted a "dysphoric fairytale," so named for providing a unique twist on typical voyage-based tales by writing a pessimistic, unhappy ending.

poses only part of the danger, as she threatens to not only seduce Télémaque, but also present him with a gateway to effeminacy.

Calypso does not present an obvious threat; it is her seemingly innocuous, kind nature that renders her dangerous. After Télémaque and Mentor/ Minerva wash up on the shores of Calypso's island after their shipwreck, Calypso offers Télémaque fine clothes to replace his bedraggled garments. While Télémaque is eager to accept this gift, Mentor/ Minerva immediately criticizes him:

Est-ce donc là, ô Télémaque, les pensées qui doivent occuper le cœur du fils d'Ulysse? Songez plutôt à soutenir la réputation de votre père et à vaincre la fortune qui vous persécute. Un jeune homme qui aime à se parer vainement, *comme une femme*, est indigne de la sagesse et de la gloire: la gloire n'est due qu'à un cœur qui sait souffrir la peine et fouler aux pieds les plaisirs (Fénelon, 5-6, my italics).

Mentor/ Minerva thus aligns (ideal) men with glory and honor, and women with meaningless pleasure-driven interests. This positioning reveals that effeminacy (and by extension, women) have no place in the realm of ideal masculinity. This misogynistic correction reads as surprising coming from Mentor, as he is truly goddess Minerva in disguise. His admonishment, then, is additionally impactful coming from a woman; even the wisest of goddesses recognizes the harm of acting as a woman.<sup>144</sup>

Even on his guard against temptation, Télémaque falls victim to Calypso's flattery, evidently enjoying her attention as he recounts his adventures. Mentor/ Minerva disparages Télémaque for enjoying Calypso's audience, criticizing his storytelling as attention-seeking. Télémaque recognizes his mistake, and proclaims, "Non, non, le fils d'Ulysse ne sera jamais

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<sup>144</sup> I have yet to discover an article commenting on what I consider Minerva's internalized misogyny within *Télémaque*; this is another gap to fill in scholarship on the novel.

vaincu par les charmes d'une vie lâche et *efféminée*" (Fénelon, 6, my italics). Mentor/ Minerva thus criticizes Télémaque for acting like a woman for seeking to clothe himself in finery, and for seeking a woman's attention. This leads Télémaque to associate both acting as a woman and appreciating the attention of women as shameful behavior unfit for a glorious leader. In other words, effeminacy or lacking masculinity are unacceptable traits for a worthy son of Ulysses. Mentor/ Minerva forgives him but reminds him of the importance of maintaining moderation: "Je n'ai garde de vous reprocher la faute que vous avez faite; il suffit que vous la sentiez et qu'elle vous serve à être une autre fois plus *modéré* dans vos désirs" (Fénelon, 10, my italics). His reproach and subsequent warning communicate two lessons. Firstly, it's not enough to avoid behaving in an effeminate manner, but one must be expressly guided by moderation. Secondly, one need not and indeed cannot eliminate desires altogether, but must instead learn to moderate them.<sup>145</sup>

However, Calypso's island harbored other dangers. By the time Télémaque finishes recounting his adventures to Calypso, she has fallen in love with him and despairs for his reciprocation. Desperate, Calypso calls upon Venus to help her. Venus comes to her aid, with Cupid in tow. However, Cupid uses his arrows to make Télémaque fall in love with nymph Eucharis instead, enraging Calypso. Unaware he's been targeted by Cupid, Télémaque tries to justify his love for the seemingly modest Eucharis—but Mentor/Minerva identifies the precarity of lovelorn Télémaque's situation:

Le vice grossier fait horreur; l'impudence brutale donne de l'indignation; mais la beauté modeste est bien plus dangereuse: en l'aimant, on croit n'aimer que la vertu, et

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<sup>145</sup> This outlook reads as more pragmatic than the ideals advanced in *La Terre Australe Connue*, in which desire must be eliminated altogether.



insensiblement on se laisse aller aux appas trompeurs d'une passion qu'on n'aperçoit que quand il n'est presque plus temps de l'éteindre (Fénelon, 108).

Reading this, it would be tempting to assume Fénelon's outright opposition to love, which seems a defeatist and unpopular stance to take.<sup>146</sup> Fénelon did support love, but only in a very specific form, understood as pure or disinterested love.<sup>147</sup> Such love is "stripped of self-interest," exemplified by virtuous behavior "performed without either hope of reward or fear of punishment," and prioritizes others without reference to the self (Thompson, Benjamin, Lamb, 799). For Mentor/Minerva, Télémaque's love for Eucharis was dangerous, grounded in seemingly innocuous modest beauty rather than a disinterested, pure expression of selflessness. In the model of moderate masculinity where lacking masculinity constitutes a threat, lack is only permitted in the form of lacking self-interest. On Calypso's island, Télémaque learns he must not only avoid effeminacy, but even romantic love.

Embodying ideal, moderate masculinity leads to lofty rewards, such as glory, fulfilling one's duty, and earning respect for just rule. Meanwhile, grave consequences await those who forget moderation, and instead epitomize lacking masculinity. Télémaque's nonmoderate indulgence of his passion results in palpable physical changes: "Il était devenu maigre; ses yeux creux étaient pleins d'un feu dévorant; à le voir pâle, abattu et défiguré, on aurait cru que ce n'était point Télémaque. Sa beauté, son enjouement, sa noble fierté s'enfuyaient loin de lui" (Fénelon, 111). While he naturally looked the part of a future king, his deviation from moderate

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<sup>146</sup> Normally, I would argue against conflating the narrator with the author. However, *Les Aventures de Télémaque* was a specifically didactic text. Therefore, the text sought to convey the specific lessons the author deemed important for the education of a young nobleman.

<sup>147</sup> For more on Fénelon's views on "pure love", see Thompson, Benjamin, and Robert Lamb. "Disinterestedness and Virtue: 'Pure Love' in Fénelon, Rousseau and Godwin." *History of Political Thought*, vol. 32, no. 5, 2011, pp. 799–819. JSTOR

withers him. By failing to master his emotions, Télémaque is instead consumed by them, becoming a weak shadow of his noble self.

This change infuriates Mentor/ Minerva, as he declares he will leave this cursed island with or without Télémaque: “Pour moi, je pars, et je saurai bien sortir de cette île. Lâche fils d’un père si sage et si généreux, menez ici une vie molle et sans honneur au milieu des femmes” (Fénelon, 109-110). Echoing Reeser’s notion that the absence of virtue is related to effeminacy, we see here how lacking honor accompanies “mollesse” (Reeser, 66).<sup>148</sup> Not only does Mentor/ Minerva condemn Télémaque for giving in to effeminacy and lacking virtue, but to do so surrounded by women is especially shameful. Once again, women constitute an insurmountable obstacle to pursuing ideal masculinity. A disillusioned Calypso reiterates Mentor/ Minerva’s criticism, asking, “Comment ose-t-il se vanter d’avoir fait tant d’actions merveilleuses, lui dont le cœur s’amollit lâchement par la volupté et qui ne semble né que pour passer une vie obscure au milieu des femmes ?” (Fénelon, 111). Télémaque’s potential ideal masculinity, which would be represented by “actions merveilleuses,” is rendered null when he indulges his emotions and relishes the company of women. Through both Mentor/ Minerva and even Calypso’s criticism, we see that Télémaque’s love for Eucharis is not the greatest offence. Rather, the cumulation of his weakness, laziness, and impure passion intersect with all that he lacks; he lacks virtue, resolve, strength, and honor. While the stories he told Calypso conveyed his nobility, bravery, and adventurousness, such deeds could not be true of a man who sinks so low as to be surrounded by women. These offenses exclude Télémaque from the ideal; he has fallen fully into lacking masculinity.

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<sup>148</sup> A man’s lack of certain virtues, such as courage, is “coded as effeminate or feminine” (Reeser, 66).

Mentor/ Minerva and Calypso's shared disgust at Télémaque living among women may fit within the logic of Fénelon's fictive world, but the articulation of ideal masculinity as impossible in female company reads as bizarre when considered alongside another dominant expression of ideal masculinity in the late 17th and early 18th century. During Fénelon's time, women's company was not viewed as threatening to men's virtue, but as a natural and even necessary facet of a man's development. In fact, "the seventeenth-century moment of the civilizing process placed particular importance on heterosocial (male-female) relations" (Seifert, 10). Becoming a man *required* interacting with women, not avoiding them. Within this cultural norm, men relied upon women for their perceived superior sensibilities.

*Les Aventures de Télémaque* proposes a radically different civilizing process to becoming king, the ultimate position a man could hold. Mentor/ Minerva actively steers Télémaque away from interactions with women, particularly those of a romantic or sexual nature. Mentor/ Minerva condemned Télémaque for his inability to overcome his passion for Eucharis. Later in the work, even when Télémaque falls in love with the seemingly ideal and admirable Antiope,<sup>149</sup> daughter of Idoménée, Télémaque cannot be with her until he has fulfilled all other duties. Meanwhile, the dominant societal ideal back in France reads as diametrically opposed to such values. Rather than avoid women at all costs, "men were enjoined to seek out women's refining influence, through conversation and love. And this recurring imperative was a fundamental justification for men's participation in the mixed-gender salons that flourished throughout the century" (Seifert, 10). This necessity to distance oneself from women— even in seemingly

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<sup>149</sup> She is described favorably, but in a way that demonizes other, more typical women: "Quoiqu'elle ait soin de tout et qu'elle soit chargée de corriger, de refuser, d'épargner (choses qui font haïr presque toutes les femmes), elle s'est rendue aimable à toute la maison: c'est qu'on ne trouve en elle ni passion, ni entêtement, ni légèreté, ni humeur, comme dans les autres femmes" (Fénelon, 403).

innocuous settings like telling his story on Calypso's island— contrasts with 17<sup>th</sup> century *salon* culture.

At no point in the text is Télémaque encouraged to seek the company of women, and nothing implies Télémaque can stand to benefit from a mortal woman's influence.<sup>150</sup> Indeed, the work reveals little regarding ideal female comportment.<sup>151</sup> Even Minerva spends almost the entirety of the narrative as Mentor, a man, which complicates the notion of Minerva as a female role model. Furthermore, Mentor/Minerva is the central authority on achieving ideal masculinity, which seems to imply a woman (technically, a goddess) can embody ideal masculinity better than most male leaders themselves. One could argue this weakens masculinity, or, that women are condemnable unless they are highly self-effacing or appropriate masculinity to avoid the reprehensible flaws inherent to femininity. In Fénelon's representation of ideal masculinity, he cannot reconcile female company and admirable men; yet, in the society during which he was writing (which he criticized), the very opposite was true; men could not achieve true masculinity outside of women's company.<sup>152</sup>

Calypso's island, with all its women, nymphs, and effeminate indulgences, proves too dangerous for Télémaque to leave without divine intervention. The feeble Télémaque lacks the fortitude to leave Calypso's island of his own volition, being too attached to his lover Eucharis. Desperate, Mentor/Minerva flings hapless Télémaque into the sea, bestowing godly strength

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<sup>150</sup> As an immortal goddess, particularly one disguised as a man, Minerva is exempt.

<sup>151</sup> Antiope is only tolerated as her modesty and work ethic redeem her, but even then, Télémaque is instructed to keep his distance from her.

<sup>152</sup> That said, such interactions were not without risk. The coded interactions of the salon called for an apparent "submission" to women's desires or authority. If interactions with women in the salon provided the civilizing influence so beneficial to becoming a man, effeminacy still loomed: "But at the same time, the ostensible submission to women carried the marginalizing risk of effeminacy: bowing to women's taste could be- and was- perceived as becoming like women, as renouncing the dominant for the dominated position" (Seifert, 10).

upon him to help him leave the island. As Télémaque swims away, his all-consuming passion fades, and he returns to moderation.

One may wonder, then, the purpose of placing Télémaque in such dangerous situations with such high stakes. Could Mentor/Minerva's lectures not convey the same lessons without the risk? Mentor/Minerva explains that Télémaque never would have grasped the gravity of the dangers that violent passions pose had he not experienced them firsthand (Fénelon, 119-120). This experiential rather than purely theoretical pedagogical approach carries greater weight. Although these ordeals physically and emotionally drained Télémaque, they were deemed worthwhile, as evidenced by how Télémaque articulates how these experiences changed him. He declares, "Je ne crains plus ni mers, ni vents, ni tempêtes; je ne crains plus que mes passions. L'amour est lui seul plus à craindre que tous les naufrages" (Fénelon, 125). While the dangers evoked in voyage literature tend to take the form of dangerous sea monsters, wild tempests, or hostile natives, Calypso's island presented the more insidious threat of desire. While Télémaque can distance himself from an island, his ability to distance himself from his emotions requires a more intensive, ongoing, and internal effort.

Télémaque's trials on Calypso's island revealed the necessity for an absolute distance not only from women, but even from love, in order to embody the ideal masculinity of Fénelon's vision. While the insistence on moderation may lead one to assume that one may pursue love or even interactions with women in moderation, this is not the case. This is shown when Mentor/Minerva debriefs Télémaque after they fled Calypso's island, as he calls for a seemingly unheroic approach: he must flee love. In a statement that seems to contradict masculine courage, he exclaims, "Fuyez, Télémaque, fuyez: on ne peut vaincre l'amour qu'en fuyant. Contre un tel ennemi, le vrai courage consiste à craindre et à fuir, mais à fuir sans délibérer et sans se donner à

soi-même le temps de regarder jamais derrière soi” (Fénelon, 122). This reaction destabilizes preconceived notions of the behavior tied to ideal masculinity. One would assume Télémaque must defeat or conquer such threats, not run from them.

Furthermore, this approach is misguided when considering masculinity’s dependence on effeminacy. As Seifert explains, “effeminacy—along with femininity and other marginal masculine positions— is in fact crucial to any dominant masculine ideal. Effeminate masculinity must necessarily be evoked in order to give consistency and stability to its noneffeminate other” (Seifert, 59). However, effeminacy cannot be left alone, nor truly eliminated; “It must be evoked all the better to be rejected. But, of course, that process, by definition, can never be completely accomplished. The specter of effeminacy haunts the noneffeminate or “virile” ideal in order to this latter to exist” (Seifert, 59). Masculinity has no meaning without effeminacy and exists by rejecting effeminacy yet is always threatened by it. For Télémaque, this threat cannot be combatted, only continually evaded.

Mentor/ Minerva’s reaction to the temptations of Calypso’s island read as particularly surprising when considered in conjunction with similar encounters depicted in other imaginary voyages of its time. This resolution, resulting in Mentor/ Minerva and Télémaque fleeing without a fight, was highly unusual. In most Early Modern literature featuring the crafty, seductive enchantress who rules over the enchanted island, the male hero either kills, captures, or overcomes the woman to render her nonthreatening before continuing on with his adventures.

*Télémaque* rewrites this confrontation:

*Télémaque* changed the encounter between enchantress and hero not by recuperating Calypso but by presenting a conception of the ruler different from the image offered in other enchanted island narratives. Although Calypso represents the threat of effeminacy,

the power of enchanting women, and the dangers of indulging in luxury and guilty pleasures, she is abandoned rather than annihilated. Her powers remain intact when Telemachus is forced from the island (Sheriff, 106).

By writing Télémaque as leaving Calypso rather than fighting her, Fénelon advocated for a different articulation of masculinity. Rather than suggest Calypso was abandoned, however, I argue that the text suggests that Mentor/ Minerva recognized her (and the effeminacy she represents) as too great a threat to overcome. By urging Télémaque to flee rather than fight, Mentor/ Minerva presents a compelling facet of Fénelon's ideal masculinity. Fénelon's complex vision of masculinity depends on gendered hierarchies, and the emphasis on maintaining an absolute distance from the corrupting influence of women reads as misogynistic. However, he also valorized nonviolent solutions to threats to nonmoderate masculinity, rather than resolving conflicts through physical confrontations.<sup>153</sup>

Despite his newly gained confidence in his ability to overcome his passions, Télémaque finds his resolve is tested once again. After fleeing Calypso and her island, Télémaque and Mentor/ Minerva voyage throughout the Mediterranean Sea, observing a variety of both well-governed and ill-governed kingdoms on their way to Chypre. En route, Télémaque drifts into a dream state, where he meets the goddess Venus. As she rides above the clouds on a chariot drawn by doves, Télémaque is struck by "cette éclatante beauté, cette vive jeunesse, ces grâces tendres" (Fénelon, 60). She invites him into her empire, assuring him, "tu arriveras bientôt dans cette île fortunée où les plaisirs, les ris et les jeux folâtres naissent sous mes pas. Là, tu brûleras des parfums sur mes autels; là je te plongerai dans un fleuve de délices" (Fénelon, 60). Venus

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<sup>153</sup> This is in part influenced by his pacifist leanings. For more on Fénelon's acknowledged pacifism, see Léon Boulvé, *De l'hellénisme chez Fénelon* (Paris, 1897; rpt. Geneva: Slatkine, 1970), p. 171 and Cor, M. Antonia. "The Shield of Télémaque," *Romance Notes*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1982, pp. 17–21. JSTOR

thus issues a call to passive indulgence, an invitation to luxuriating in lacking masculinity. She urges him, “Ouvre ton cœur aux plus douces espérances, et garde-toi bien de résister à la plus puissante de toutes les déesses, qui veut te rendre heureux” (Fénelon, 60), urging him to trade masculine resistance for a headlong plunge into fantasy. Venus’s aggressive pursuit of Télémaque further asserts women’s threat to masculinity. While Calypso was subtly threatening, gently pushing Télémaque towards effeminacy to serve her own interests, Venus abandons subtlety in favor of the active pursuit of her desires.

Venus’ aggressive pursuit of Télémaque is especially revelatory for what this text communicates about masculinity and effeminacy, particularly when understood in terms of moderation, lack, and excess. Although women play an important role in defining effeminacy, Fénelon does not exclusively align women with lack. In keeping with larger trends ruling perceptions of gender in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, women’s role in defining moderation was unstable and mobile, dependent on shifting societal perceptions of female desire. Medical beliefs could align women with excess *or* lack. By following the assertions Zemon Davis makes in “Women on Top,” women’s desire could be understood in terms of excess. This was largely due to most physicians’ adherence to humoral theory, in which women were believed to be composed of cold and wet humors, the men hot and dry. Therefore, in accordance with 17th century medical belief, women’s “coldness and wetness meant a changeable, deceptive, and tricky temperament. Her womb was like a hungry animal; when not amply fed by sexual intercourse or reproduction, it was likely to wander about her body, overpowering her speech and senses” (Zemon Davis, 147-148). Elsewhere, however, women’s cold, humid nature could be aligned with frigidity, and lacking desire (Reeser, 38-39). Furthermore, while moderation is assumed masculine, “women are coded as inherently nonmoderate;” they may only be aligned with excess or lack (Reeser,



15). This means women can be doubly threatening to men and their masculinity; they can be read as gateways to effeminacy as well as sexually voracious. Where Calypso could be said to be the former, Venus qualifies as the latter.

Sexually voracious women like Venus figured prominently as both fantasy and threat in late-17<sup>th</sup> century and 18<sup>th</sup> century literature. In *Les Amazones des Lumières*, Stroeve fixates upon the trope of the sexually voracious woman, be that Venus, Amazon, or another enchantress. He ties the *femme fatale* (as site of both anxiety and sexual fantasy) to the cultural fad of gallantry: “La femme galante forme les hommes, en leur apprenant l’art de plaire, la femme savante protège les sciences et les arts et rivalise avec les meilleurs esprits, la maîtresse d’un salon gère l’opinion publique” (Stroeve, 30). Fénelon’s portrayal of Venus engages with this trend, falling on the side of anxiety rather than fantasy. Following Calypso’s failed efforts to lure Télémaque into her island to live effeminately, sexually voracious Venus and her invitation for Télémaque to enter her voluptuous kingdom presents another dangerous obstacle on his journey towards ideal, moderate masculinity.

Unable to resist her call, Télémaque enters Venus’s sensual paradise. Within the dream, Cupid joins Venus, and nocks an arrow to shoot Télémaque, but Minerva intervenes to deflect the arrow. The vulnerable Télémaque regards the two goddesses, drawing a comparison between ideal and treacherous femininity. Venus, he noted, possesses “cette beauté molle et cette langueur passionnée.” Minerva, however, exudes “une beauté simple, négligée, modeste; tout était grave, vigoureux, noble, plein de force et de majesté” (Fénelon, 61). Venus’ physical description suggests the languid stupor associated with sensuality, sure to draw Télémaque back into lacking masculinity. In contrast, Minerva’s physical description begins with notions of minimalist simplicity, even transparency, before transitioning to descriptions one would be more

likely to associate with masculinity. In this understanding, ideal femininity must be almost invisible, a minimal presence that ideal masculinity can overshadow. After Minerva deflects the arrow, Cupid flees, but he remains on Venus' islands. Despite Minerva protecting him, the assault on Télémaque's honor on Venus's island was far from over.

In this liminal space, between dreams and consciousness, between a mythical island and geographical location, establishing a stable, fixed point of moderation proves impossible to achieve in this shifting, unstable environment. Like Calypso's island, Venus's island initially *appears* utopian. This further portrays women as untrustworthy; in the only two realms ruled by women, both lands appear delightful but will destroy men. Venus' beautiful garden-like island attracts Télémaque, but Mentor/ Minerva warns him of the dangers that await him in this terrible paradise: "Fuyez cette cruelle terre, cette île empestée, où l'on ne respire que la volupté. La vertu la plus courageuse y doit trembler, et ne se peut sauver qu'en fuyant" (Fénelon, 61). Mentor/ Minerva's intervention reads as contradictory; how can fleeing danger be construed as an expression of courageous virtue? Doesn't fleeing demonstrate lacking masculinity? For Fénelon's version of masculinity, no. As seen on Calypso's island, ideal moderate masculinity *must* flee certain dangers. Retreat conveys strength rather than weakness. This also reveals a chink in the armor of moderate masculinity: even ideal masculinity can be conquered. Venus' and Calypso's islands show effeminacy and sensuality to be stronger than moderate masculinity. Such threats cannot be eradicated but only avoided.

Exiting the dreamscape of Venus' island and entering back into reality, Télémaque voyages onward to Chypre, whose inhabitants adore and worship Venus. He shares the journey with a group of Chyprians, who prove to embody lacking masculinity to an astonishing degree. The Chyprians enjoy immoderate pleasures such as getting drunk, singing bawdy songs, and

behaving suggestively. When a sudden and violent storm brews, these men prove useless in the face of danger. While Télémaque bravely intervenes and pilots the ship to safety, the “Chypriens abattus pleuraient comme des femmes” (Fénelon, 63). Effeminacy is further denigrated in this life-or-death scenario, as it becomes apparent these men would perish without the intervention of a man who resists the draw of an effeminate lifestyle. This scene provides another juxtaposition of ideal and lacking masculinity, aligning effeminacy with femininity and impotence in the face of peril.

Télémaque arrives in Chypre, a land portraying a troubling blend of utopian and dystopian elements. Sensually pleasing aspects clash with evidence of a poorly ruled kingdom. A thin veneer of desirability masking falseness or filth reveals the consequences of widely adopted effeminacy. The pleasant climate encourages laziness; the naturally fertile land grows wild and uncultivated (Fénelon, 63).<sup>154</sup> While the Chyprians are beautiful, desirable people, they are condemned as shallow. Télémaque’s critique falls particularly heavily upon the women, whose excessive focus on their appearance and ostentatious, performative dedication to Venus’s temple reveal their shallow natures. He notes their apparent beauty, grace, and joyful nature, but identifies them as inauthentic and therefore unappealing. Initially, he sees through their purely cosmetic appeal for what it really was; “l’art de composer leurs visages, leur parure vaine, leur démarche languissante, leurs regards qui semblaient chercher ceux des hommes.” When women approach Télémaque, he notes, “à force de vouloir plaire, elles me dégoûtaient” (Fénelon, 63-64).

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<sup>154</sup> The notion of specific climates prompting particular characteristics among inhabitants of certain spaces persisted as a compelling theory. While the Early Modern period demonstrates an adherence to this belief, this actually dates to Antiquity: “The Greek medical writers of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., the Hippocratic school, had argued ingeniously that most human customs and institutions were determined to a large extent by the environments in which the different nations lived” (Grafton, 41). For instance, hot climates were associated with laziness, poor work ethic, and voluptuousness. Montesquieu’s *L’Esprit des Lois* articulates a theory suggesting certain political systems in function of climate to maximize efficacious rule.

Faced with this superficial society, the reader assumes Télémaque will easily resist the hollow temptations of Venus's island. Indeed, Télémaque first enters the society "resolved against pleasure and intolerant of the effeminacy it brings" (Sheriff, 109). However, Télémaque gradually slips into temptation, and the slow corruption of his morals effaces Mentor/ Minerva's lessons. Télémaque reflects on this deterioration: "D'abord, j'eus horreur de tout ce que je voyais; mais insensiblement je commençais à m'y accoutumer. Le vice ne m'effrayait plus" (Fénelon, 65). Venus' idolizers eagerly clamor to absorb Télémaque into their lifestyle and accelerate his fall into effeminacy. Without salacious details regarding exactly what vices Télémaque engages in while pursuing the unlimited pleasure offered to him by Venus' followers, he recounts, "On n'oubliait rien pour exciter toutes mes passions, pour me tendre des pièges et pour réveiller en moi le goût des plaisirs" (Fénelon, 65). Appalled yet helpless, Télémaque feels his once-strong convictions fade into passivity. No longer capable of resisting vice and effeminacy, he develops instead "une mauvaise honte de la vertu" (Fénelon, 65). On Chypre, Télémaque experiences a malaise-inducing inversion of his values: virtue turns to vice, disgust to delight, moderation to lacking will.<sup>155</sup>

Télémaque recognizes how far he has fallen from the moderate ideal into effeminacy and voluptuousness. However, because he lacks control over his desire, he cannot save himself from his situation. Once again, Mentor/Minerva urges Télémaque to flee, but his fallen state requires divine intervention. Minerva lends him her strength, and he regains lucidity. Télémaque recounts his affective transformation. When indulging his most debased desires, he experienced "une joie

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<sup>155</sup> Utopia and dystopia frequently employ inversion to make striking comparisons with the fictitious society being portrayed and the author's country of origin. Here, Chypre provides an inversion of the ideal kingdom Fénelon envisions, categorized by shameful indulgence rather than noble righteousness. For a greater exploration of how utopia and dystopia utilize inversion, see Babcock, Barbara A. *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*. Cornell U.P., 1978.

d'ivresse et de trouble, qui est entrecoupée de passions furieuses et de cuisants remords," which poisoned his senses and spirit. When he regains his senses, he experiences "une joie de raison, qui a quelque chose de bienheureux et de céleste; elle est toujours pure et égale" (Fénelon, 67-68). This prompts a comparison between the sickly pleasure of effeminacy or lacking masculinity, and the pure joy resulting from embracing moderation. The tempting pleasures of effeminacy provide only short-lived satisfaction, while moderating one's desires and behaving virtuously assures a stable, enduring emotional state.

Thanks to Mentor/ Minerva's timely influence and superhuman power, Télémaque avoided the dangers of Venus's and Calypso's island. Although he temporarily succumbed to the temptations of a voluptuous and effeminate lifestyle on Chypre, he survived the ordeal and learned vital lessons in the process. He learned how to recognize and avoid lacking masculinity, gaining a heightened distrust of women, and a distaste for effeminacy. Even after these trials, more lessons lay ahead for Télémaque. Resisting lacking masculinity is only half the battle in achieving ideal moderate masculinity; Télémaque must also learn to avoid excessive masculinity.

Calypso and Venus' islands accomplished more than provide sites of temptation. They constituted a non-place with which Fénelon could associate the society he criticized. Calypso and Venus' islands are both mythical *and* real spaces; as with all the places represented throughout *Télémaque*, they depict the dynamics of Louis XIV's court on a larger, fictitious scale. On these islands, for instance, the indulgences and pleasures enabled on this island provide a parallel to the perceived sensual extravagance of Louis XIV's court.

While the islands are, to an extent, represented in a desirable way, they represent the corrupt decadence of the rule Fénelon was punished for criticizing. This was not an unusual strategy to take in voyage literature of Fénelon's time; as Sheriff explains, "Many early fictive

islands proposed in literature recreated the societies from which they emerged but did so in exaggerated ways for the purposes of critique, often taking aim at effeminacy, debauchery, and sexual transgression.” Calypso and Venus’ islands exemplify the “enchanted island where strong men became weak through wallowing in pleasure” (Sheriff, 34). Such islands held an enchanting yet condemnatory mirror to French society. By exaggerating the decadence and effeminacy of these islands, the effeminate island could both formulate critique of contemporaneous societies and depict the danger of masculinity and morality under threat.<sup>156</sup> Such islands provide portrayals of dystopia as well as “a warning about where degeneracy might lead” (Sheriff, 35). For Fénelon, then, the islands of Calypso and Venus provide beautiful yet corrupt societies illustrating the danger of submitting to desire, as well as two examples of sexual oases which threaten Télémaque’s integrity, quest, and masculinity.

#### KING PYGMALION AS THE EMBODIMENT OF EXCESSIVE MASCULINITY

As an extreme opposite of moderation, the notion of excess conjures a plethora of problematic behaviors or attitudes. A man may embody excessive greed for wealth, he may express sexual excess, be excessively bellicose, or have an excess of courage.<sup>157</sup> The 1694 *Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française* elaborates on the many possible expressions of excess as understood in Fénelon’s time: *l’excès* may refer to “Ce qui excède les bornes de la raison, de la

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<sup>156</sup> Ironically, Fénelon’s elaborate and visual style of writing accidentally provided pleasing depictions of the very places he meant to portray as problematic. While this meant the dystopias he described ended up seeming appealing, it also rendered the work enjoyable to read: “*Télémaque* focuses on a sovereign’s duties to his people, an issue of concern in light of Louis XIV’s policies. At the same time, giving pleasure was no less a strategy for Fénelon than it had been for Louis in hosting fetes that captured and captivated the court” (Sheriff, 106). Yet Fénelon’s goal was moral instruction: if pleased, a reader would theoretically be more liable to imbibe a didactic lesson” (Sheriff, 106).

<sup>157</sup> Curiously, sexual excess may be tied to homosexuality, even though effeminacy is associated with lacking masculinity (Reeser, 194). Even though Fénelon only discussed sexuality in terms of effeminacy or excess with regard to heterosexual couplings, since he worked with Greek myths, he may be assumed to have some awareness of the occurrence of same-sex male couplings in mythology. This ambivalence, in which male sexual desire may connote excess or lack, demonstrates the challenge in conducting a meaningful study of ideal masculinity.

bienseance, ce qui passe les mesures,” “Desbauche, dereglement,” or even “Outrage, violence.”<sup>158</sup> While Calypso and Venus’s feminine charms and pleasing islands represented the temptation of effeminacy or lacking masculinity, excess appears to be an overwhelmingly male problem in *Les Aventures de Télémaque*, particularly in Pygmalion’s kingdom of Tyr.

Télémaque voyages to Tyr, a prosperous trade city surrounded by vast forests and mountains. The city resembles a classic utopia, thanks to its hard-working citizens: “Les Tyriens sont industriels, patients, laborieux, propres, sobres et ménagers; ils ont une exacte police; ils sont parfaitement d’accord entre eux; jamais peuple n’a été plus constant, plus sincère, plus fidèle, plus sûr, plus commode à tous les étrangers” (Fénelon, 47).<sup>159</sup> However, when Télémaque converses with Tyrian inhabitant Narbal, he learns that the great city has fallen from its former glory under the damaging rule of king Pygmalion. Narbal explains, “depuis quelque temps, la gloire de Tyr est bien obscurcie. O si vous l’aviez vue, mon cher Télémaque, avant le règne de Pygmalion, vous auriez été bien plus étonné! Vous ne trouvez plus maintenant ici que les tristes restes d’une grandeur qui menace ruine (Fénelon, 48). As Télémaque learns, Pygmalion is a harmful ruler because he embodies excess in every way. On Calypso and Venus’ islands, Télémaque learned firsthand how failing to resist effeminacy and women’s affection would lead him astray. Here, in the city of Tyr, Télémaque observes the harmful consequences of the other extreme: that of excess.

While excessive masculinity contains a wide array of expressions (such as excessive sexual desire or an excessively bellicose, war-mongering style of leadership), Pygmalion’s rampant desire for power provides an outstanding testament to the danger of excess. Upon

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<sup>158</sup> EXCÈS, [1694] Le Dictionnaire de l’Académie française 1694, t. 1 (Coignard, Paris, 1694).

<sup>159</sup> Utopia from the Early Modern period valorize hard labor, as seen in both *L’Histoire des Sévarambes* as well as *La Terre Australe Connue*. Tyr is said to experience this success for welcoming all foreigners, valorizing hard work, upholding fair laws, and avoiding greed.

Télémaque's entry into Tyr, inhabitant Narbal warns him, "O Télémaque, craignez de tomber dans les cruelles mains de Pygmalion, notre roi" (Fénelon, 40). Pygmalion's insatiable desire for power pushes him away from reason and moderation and leads him to indulge irrational suspicions. This brings misery to Pygmalion as well as his subjects: "Pygmalion, tourmenté par une soif insatiable des richesses, se rend de plus en plus misérable et odieux à ses sujets" (Fénelon, 40). His greed-driven policies threaten to wreck irreparable damage on a once-flourishing economy. While Tyr's success stemmed in part from minimal government trade regulation, controlling Pygmalion intervenes at every level, imposing taxes, and driving away trade (Fénelon, 48-49). He gradually devolves into outright madness, becoming the paranoid victim of his own imagination and impeding his ability to rule whatsoever. Each night, rather than sleep, he moves constantly between thirty interconnected chambers, each guarded by an iron door with six massive locks, staying in a different one each night to avoid being murdered in his sleep (Fénelon, 41). In his incessant pursuit of power and accompanying delusions, Pygmalion loses himself in a Labyrinth of his own construction. While Télémaque's voyages and experiences guide him towards an ideal, Pygmalion's unimpeded free-fall into excess results in his self-imprisonment.

Although Télémaque avoids love, women, and effeminacy through first-hand experience, here, he learns to avoid excess through observation. He demonstrates his grasp of the dangers of excessive masculinity when he shares his impression of Pygmalion. He observes, "il possède tout ce qu'il peut désirer; et cependant il est misérable par ses richesses et par son autorité même" (Fénelon, 42). He recognizes Pygmalion's inability to appreciate his already-extensive wealth and power, which he endlessly seeks to increase.



Télémaque's criticism of Pygmalion's abuse of power and endless greed reveals the overlap connecting lacking masculinity and excessive masculinity. The extremes of excess and lack both involve the individual being guided by his passions rather than employing reason to moderate his desires. Pygmalion, Télémaque observes, "fait tout ce que veulent ses passions féroces; il est toujours entraîné par son avarice, par sa crainte, par ses soupçons" (Fénelon, 43), in a warped mirror of Télémaque's earlier inability to resist indulging his own desires on Chypre. Fénelon's conception of (ideal) masculinity, therefore, is inextricable from one's ability to rule himself before ruling others. A man's relationship to mastery and other men reveals if he acts with lacking, moderate, or excessive masculinity. Pygmalion, Télémaque observes, "paraît maître de tous les autres hommes : mais il n'est pas maître de lui-même, car il a autant de maîtres et de bourreaux qu'il a de désirs violents" (Fénelon, 42-43).

What, then, separates Télémaque's earlier freefall into effeminate desire from Pygmalion's inability to master himself? The distinction lies in the language describing the nature of these desires and passions. Pygmalion's desires lie not in sensual, physical pleasures, but are power based. He seeks to obtain power, rather than stimulation. The effeminate, lacking man allows others to please him and pleases others, whereas the excessive man pursues self-interested power— which can never be satisfied, only pursued further. Mentor/Minerva affirms the veracity of Télémaque's insights, and condenses their observations into a vital lesson: "Quiconque préfère sa propre gloire aux sentiments de l'humanité est un monstre d'orgueil, et non pas un homme: il ne parviendra même qu'à une fausse gloire; car la vraie ne se trouve que dans la modération et dans la bonté" (Fénelon, 196). Here, Mentor/Minerva creates a familiar

opposition between monstrosity and humanity, in which excess equals monstrosity, and moderation conveys humanity.<sup>160</sup>

Although temptress Calypso was left intact despite the threat she posed to Télémaque's masculinity, the violent and dangerous Pygmalion had no such luck. Indeed, a king as destructive as Pygmalion *had* to meet an unfortunate end to serve the didactic and critical purposes of the work. Pygmalion's downfall was assured by *femme fatale* Astarbé, in an ending that both condemns excessive masculinity and reminds Télémaque of the danger posed by women. She embodied fatal threats to ideal masculinity, ruled by excessive, corrupt desire. Her characteristics reinforce her (and women in general) as the male ruler's greatest menace: "Avec tant de charmes trompeurs, elle avait, comme les Sirènes, un cœur cruel et plein de malignité; mais elle savait cacher ses sentiments corrompus par un profond artifice. Elle avait su gagner le cœur de Pygmalion par sa beauté, par son esprit, par sa douce voix" (Fénelon, 52). Astarbé used her assets to secure greater power for herself, hiding her true intentions behind tempting charms. Pygmalion abandoned his wife to be with her, a choice which only sealed his fate. Pygmalion was thus doubly fated to meet his demise, "l'amour de cette femme ne lui était guère moins funeste que son infâme avarice" (Fénelon, 52-53). Here, the reader observes how any love (besides pure disinterested love) is dangerous and even deadly, particularly when it intersects with excessive desire for power.

Playing upon Pygmalion's excessive suspicion and jealous obsession with power, Astarbé leads him to believe that his sons are conspiring against him to steal the throne. She thus

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<sup>160</sup> As seen in the previous chapter, this dialectical opposition between humanity and monstrosity is indeed essential to the imaginary voyage genre, and intersects with the notion of inversion. In *La Terre Australe Connue*, Foigny flips the monstrosity/ humanity dynamic by peopling a society with hermaphrodites. Sadeur also must combat monstrous birds to enter Austral society, but uses one of the birds to flee the island. In *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*, only the application of strict laws guards humans against their animalistic, beastly nature. For instance, forced marriage and sex slaves supposedly prevent men from succumbing to their beast-like desire.

convinces him to put one of his sons to death, and to send the other far away, where he was later assumed to have drowned in a shipwreck. Despite his suspicions of all of his subjects, even his sons, he fails to recognize the greatest threat before him. Once again, love is to blame: “Ce prince si défiant était ainsi plein d’une aveugle confiance pour cette méchante femme: c’était l’amour qui l’aveuglait jusqu’à cet excès” (Fénelon, 130). Meanwhile, Pygmalion becomes so excessively suspicious of his subjects that he only eats food he prepared himself from his locked garden for fear of being poisoned. Astarbé outsmarts him, carrying both poison and antidote on her at all times. After fatally poisoning Pygmalion, she places herself and her lover upon the throne. This scene secures women as duplicitous, justifies Mentor/Minerva’s cautions against love and passion, demonstrates the fatal flaw of embodying excess, and provides a fitting end for the cruel king.

Fénelon portrays Pygmalion as the embodiment of excessive masculinity, incorporating this depiction of deleterious rule to fit within his larger didactic project and vision for ideal rule. By using compelling negative examples like Pygmalion, the greedy tyrant who meets an inglorious demise, Fénelon accomplishes more than craft a captivating narrative: “Ultimately, these political narratives are an educational tool; Fénelon intended to impress upon the Duc de Bourgogne that self-interested rule, whether in the form of tyrannical greed, exploitation, fear-mongering, pride, or bellicosity, is ultimately ruinous for both king and country” (Thompson and Lamb, 802). Note that all of these negative characteristics convey excess, rather than lack. By writing tyrannical leaders and their destructive reigns, “the self-destruction of egotistical princes and the suffering of their domains” serves as a dominant motif for Fénelon (Thompson and Lamb, 802). This strategy marries geography and gender, as a king’s embodiment of ideal or nonmoderate masculinity effectively transforms the landscape he rules over. Once a flourishing

trade port, Pygmalion's unhinged paranoia, excessive involvement in trade, and incessant hunt for anyone who may attempt a *coup d'état* (including Télémaque) threatens to send Tyr into a debilitating recession.<sup>161</sup>

However, the damage Pygmalion caused was not permanent. Fénelon's absolute condemnation of excess retains a glimmer of hope for redemption under a better leader; when Pygmalion dies, the empty throne opens the potential for a new, moderate ruler to right the wrongs incurred under excessive rule. Pygmalion's living son Baléazar, having survived the shipwreck, restores Tyr to her former glory. The Tyrian people adore their new king "à cause de sa douceur et de sa *modération*. Ses longs malheurs mêmes lui donnaient je ne sais quel éclat qui relevait toutes ses bonnes qualités et qui attendrissait tous les Tyriens en sa faveur" (Fénelon, 134, my italics). Pygmalion's greatest flaw was his excess, and Baléazar's greatest strength his moderation. Baléazar, having survived and gained wisdom from his many hardships, employed his knowledge and the guiding principle of moderation to assure utopia. This illustrates how an arduous physical (and allegorical) voyage can result in the utopia of ideal masculinity, and also prefaces the transformation Télémaque seeks to undergo.

Throughout the narrative, Télémaque observes how kings like Pygmalion squander their otherwise-perfect kingdoms by indulging in their excessive tendencies, be that a thirst for violent conquest or an obsession with accumulating power. The opposite extremes of lacking and excessive masculinity (represented by the cowardly sailors of Cyprus, or the jealous madness of Pygmalion) serve as cautionary negative models. These examples also prompt Télémaque— and the reader— to attempt to visualize a moderate center in contrast to these extremes.

Nonmoderate extremes serve as essential precursors to understanding moderation; "Moderation

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<sup>161</sup> Télémaque's brief stint in Tyr is particularly stressful, as he continually evades capture by the suspicious Pygmalion, who assumes Télémaque is there to steal his throne.

cannot be defined in any abstract or concrete sense without first defining the extreme positions” (Reeser, 21). That said, no clear center between the two extremes, no moderate ideal, can be visualized without a fictional model to resolve the tension between the extremes. While the extreme positions of excess and lack can be found in both fictitious as well as real models, the moderate center can be harder to articulate clearly.

In real-life examples, ideal moderate masculinity can only be defined by agreed-upon instances of excessive masculinity and lacking masculinity, with the ideal an uncertain balance between the two. This tension is well-illustrated by the example of two of Louis XIV’s royal predecessors, Henri II and Henri III. As Crawford demonstrates in *The Sexual Culture of the French Renaissance*, the two men provided equally problematic examples of excessive and lacking masculinity. While Henri III was perceived as overly effeminate and lacking in masculinity, Henri IV pursued an identity of aggressive heterosexual masculinity, which resulted in his being condemned as overly guided by sexual desire (Crawford, 22). The fine line a king must walk to avoid attracting judgement of his masculinity is dangerously thin. However, when a fictional work like *Télémaque* sets out to illustrate the comportment of the ideal king, moderate masculinity can be more neatly defined, thus unbounded by the restraints of reality. The otherwise-irreconcilable tension between lack and excess may be resolved in a more solid (albeit fictitious) model. *Les Aventures de Télémaque* portrays this otherwise-impossible moderate ideal and, by resolving the fraught tension between excess and lack, brings closure to the work. Only when Télémaque demonstrates his understanding of Mentor/ Minerva’s lessons may he complete his journey.

#### ACHIEVING UTOPIA: TÉLÉMAQUE’S FULFILLMENT OF IDEAL MASCULINITY

Over the course of his extensive voyages, Télémaque experienced firsthand the dangers and destruction that accompany lacking and excessive masculinity. Mentor/Minerva's extensive lessons, his observations, and first-hand experiences gradually steered him towards the moderate ideal. Télémaque demonstrates his progress towards ideal masculinity first when he travels to Crète to learn the laws of Minos.

As with Pygmalion, king Idoménée's flawed rule threatens an otherwise-desirable kingdom. Still, Crète is described admirably compared to aforementioned Chypre: "Autant la terre de Chypre nous avait paru négligée et inculte, autant celle de Crète se montrait fertile et ornée de tous les fruits par le travail de ses habitants" (Fénelon, 75). As Télémaque learns, such a utopia is achieved through deliberate education, the strict application of laws, valuing a robust and simple lifestyle, pursuing virtue and glory as the only source of pleasure, and despising wealth and shameful indulgences (Fénelon, 76).<sup>162</sup> Most importantly, the laws of Minos regulate not only the subjects, but also the king himself: "Il peut tout sur les peuples; mais les lois peuvent tout sur lui" (Fénelon, 77), in a system diametrically opposed to the one instilled by tyrant Pygmalion. The former king Minos is upheld as an admirable (but absent) model of how to ensure a successful society. Mentor/Minerva explains, "c'est par cette *modération* qu'il a effacé la gloire de tous les conquérants qui veulent faire servir les peuples à leur propre grandeur" (Fénelon, 78, my italics). However, such a favorable state cannot be guaranteed without the continued guidance of the moderate ruler, and Minos' death puts Crète's prosperity into jeopardy. His successor, King Idoménée, plunges Crète into uncertainty.

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<sup>162</sup> These elements read as highly characteristic of utopian literature from the 16th-18th century.

While King Idoménée is described as a largely admirable king, a moment of indiscretion sends Crète into a state of emergency. Returning from the siege of Troy, Idoménée faced a terrible storm on his way back to Crète. Fearing death, he promised Neptune to sacrifice the first man he saw if he may be spared from the storm. He survived, but the vengeful goddess Nemesis arranged for his son to greet him upon his return. The elder Sophronyme, interpreter of the will of the gods, provided Idoménée with a reasonable alternative to killing his son. Idoménée's promise was imprudent and went against nature; the gods wouldn't want to be honored by such cruelty. Instead, he suggested Idoménée sacrifice a hundred white bulls to Neptune (Fénelon, 79). Idoménée ignored this wise suggestion. Unable to master an excess of emotion and madness, Idoménée fatally stabbed his son, and then attempted to stab himself. Subsequently banished from Crète, Idoménée wandered through the Mediterranean, ultimately landing in Salente.<sup>163</sup>

Idoménée's banishment resulted in a power vacuum that threatened to destabilize this ideal society. Even in this society of laborious individuals, a kingdom without a king is unthinkable. The people of Crète assemble, and declare a competition to select the next ruler, judged by the wisest men of neighboring lands. They announce,

On a préparé des jeux publics, où tous les prétendants combattent; car on veut donner pour prix la royauté à celui qu'on jugera vainqueur de tous les autres, et pour l'esprit et pour le corps. On veut un roi dont le corps soit fort et adroit, et dont l'âme soit ornée de la sagesse et de la vertu (Fénelon, 81-82).

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<sup>163</sup> I discuss Salente as an example of perfect moderate rule. Idoménée attempts but fails to rule Salente with moderation, and Mentor/ Minerva takes over, providing a guide for achieving utopia through ideal rule.

Importantly, both “l’esprit” and “le corps” are valorized here, rather than only evaluating superior physical strength and skill in combat. Ideal masculinity requires yet calls for more than physical excellence. The ideal ruler must be as capable of reasoning with as triumphing over others.

While the competition evaluates both body and spirit, the physical component comes first, indicating expectations of physical strength as a gatekeeper of ideal masculinity. Both Mentor/ Minerva and Télémaque participate in the competition, in the interest of witnessing such a spectacle rather than trying to win (Fénelon, 82).<sup>164</sup> As the competition was designed as a test for the new king, it must also be read as a test of ideal masculinity. The physical component of the competition has three parts: *la lutte*, *la ceste*, and chariot racing. Although Télémaque wins each challenge, each opponent poses more of a challenge; if ultimate masculinity could be easily achieved, that would detract from the “ideal.”

Following these three victories, the people of Crète clamor to accept Télémaque as their king. However, the competition is not yet complete; a final trial awaits in the nearby woods, to test *l’esprit*. The challenge consists of three questions, delivered by the elders. The first question asks “qui est le plus libre de tous les hommes” (Fénelon, 87). Recalling Mentor/ Minerva lessons, Télémaque responds that the freest man is “celui qui peut être libre dans l’esclavage même... l’homme véritablement libre est celui qui, dégagé de toute crainte et de tout désir, n’est soumis qu’aux dieux et à sa raison” (Fénelon, 87). In other words, such a man neither embodies excessive emotion, nor allows himself to be ruled by his desires, an effeminate trait. Compared to the other men’s responses (a wealthy man, a man with no ties, a Barbarian), Télémaque’s

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<sup>164</sup> Recalling the didactic function of this text, the ceremony also informed the intended reader about Ancient Greek culture, customs, and mythology, as the competition features details reflecting popular sports and activities of the time (Le Brun, 20).



answer pleases the elders the most. The elders then ask, "Quel est le plus malheureux de tous les hommes ?" (Fénelon, 87). Again, Télémaque provides the wisest answer: "Le plus malheureux de tous les hommes est un roi qui croit être heureux en rendant les autres hommes misérables....Il est tyrannisé par ses passions; il ne connaît point ses devoirs (Fénelon, 87). When a man is unable to moderate his passions, he cannot rule or even live well. A king ruled by rather than ruling over his passions is the opposite of moderate.

The final question concerns ideal rule. Two kings are described: one, "un roi conquérant et invincible dans la guerre" and, "un roi sans expérience de la guerre, mais propre à policer sagement les peuples dans la paix" (Fénelon, 88). The men are asked which king is better, and why. Télémaque's response conveys his valorization of moderation, and harbors suspicion for excess: "[Si] vous comparez un roi qui ne sait que la guerre à un roi sage, qui, sans savoir la guerre, est capable de la soutenir dans le besoin par ses généraux, je le trouve préférable à l'autre. Un roi entièrement tourné à la guerre voudrait toujours la faire" (Fénelon, 88-89). The war-mongering king exemplifies excessive masculinity, but the peaceful king embodies moderation. The ideal king, Télémaque explains, is "juste, *modéré* et commode à l'égard de ses voisins; il n'entreprend jamais contre eux aucun dessein qui puisse troubler sa paix; il est fidèle dans ses alliances" (Fénelon, 89, my italics). The elders and participants all agree that Télémaque provided the best answers and possesses the wisdom as well as physical strength necessary to rule. He is offered the position of Crète's next king, which he declines out of respect for his duty to his father and to Ithaque, his home. Télémaque's resounding success in each of the challenges demonstrates that his voyages, experiences, and absorption of Mentor/Minerva's wisdom and teachings successfully shaped him to embody ideal masculinity.

Télémaque successfully demonstrated his physical and mental strengths, as well as a

profound understanding of the wisdom and restraint necessary to rule as a just king. However, as with the previous two sections, Fénelon's articulation of masculinity extends beyond the individual; it is inscribed upon the geography of the places such individuals rule over.<sup>165</sup> Therefore, in order to truly appreciate the full reach of ideal moderate masculinity, discussing Télémaque's personal achievement alone fails to illustrate the full reach of moderation's impact, how such rule ensures utopia. Ideal moderate masculinity holds individual importance, but also societal significance. The land of Salente illustrates how ideal moderate rule results in utopia, as seen when Mentor/ Minerva takes control over Salente to aid Idoménée.<sup>166</sup> However, Salente was more than an idle Fénelonian fantasy. Understanding this particular utopian society requires investigating the greater societal context surrounding Fénelon when he penned this text. Salente is France's utopian foil, Mentor/ Minerva's rule is the opposite of that of Louis XIV. How, then, did Louis XIV's rule and France's experience of this rule help shape Fénelon's articulation of utopian Salente?

Fénelon's *Ancien Régime* France could be described as a dystopian society. As Mentor/Minerva would surely note, the dystopian conditions were the fault of an immoderate leader: "By the time Fénelon was writing *The Adventures of Telemachus* (1693–4), the consequences of Louis XIV's policies had begun to turn the magnificence of his earlier reign into social and political decay" (Kantzios, 195).<sup>167</sup> Under Louis XIV's rule, the economy

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<sup>165</sup> For instance, Crète was characterized by individuals given over to effeminacy, so the land was described as unkempt and overgrown. Tyr also suffered under poor rule; the diminished economy tarnished the city's former glory, and inhabitants lived in constant fear of the tyrannical Pygmalion.

<sup>166</sup> Despite his immoderate behavior, Idoménée proves capable of redemption despite his proclivity towards excess: "He is first of all an infanticide king, the murderer of his own son; he becomes, in a second career, a bold sovereign, exaggeratedly attracted to the glory of arms and the taste for magnificence, before growing wise thanks to Mentor's lessons" (Starobinski and Peavar, 16).

<sup>167</sup> In his article (*ibid*), Kantzios elaborates on the flaws of Louis XIV's reign, from foreign policy, to the economy, to domestic affairs. For more on problems under Louis XIV's reign, see Bluche, François. 1990. *Louis XIV*. Translated by Mark Greengrass. New York: Franklin Watts, 1990.

slumped, after a prolonged and unsustainable period of expansion fell into stagnation (DeVries, 156). An age of magnificence and plenty gave way to “the depletion of resources and the economic hardship of the lower classes (Davis 112). France also experienced a staggering rise in crisis mortality: “between 1680 and 1719 crisis mortality accounted for one French death in 16” (Ò Gràda and Chevet, 709).<sup>168</sup> Additionally, the publication of *Télémaque* straddled two catastrophic famines: “In 1693/94 France endured a famine that resulted suited in a toll of well over one million deaths, or 6 percent of its population. Little more than a decade later, in 1709/10, another famine killed over half a million more” (Gradà and Chevet, 708-709).<sup>169</sup>

Beyond obvious catastrophic markers like deaths, French society experienced other major changes. The combined economic hardships and famine helped contribute to shifting patterns in relationships and family dynamics, evidenced by “significant reductions in the numbers of births and marriages” (Gradà and Chevet, 710). Beyond these catastrophes that frayed the social fabric, the moral fabric seemed similarly at risk. Under Louis XIV’s reign, leadership and power were increasingly acquired by wealth, rather than qualifications: “by the eighteenth century, almost all the posts in the French government were for sale, including those dealing with the administration of justice” (Berman, 5). Additionally, the extravagant luxury of Versailles symbolized moral degeneracy and excess, especially in the face of impoverished lower classes.

Against this chaotic backdrop categorized by obscene wealth, desperate poverty, and devastating famine, Fénelon’s text was reactionary and desperate in the face of dystopia. His short-lasting influence over the duc du Bourgogne was his only hope at instilling change. Given

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<sup>168</sup> “Crisis mortality” refers to “as excess mortality over the trend in years when excess deaths are at least 10 percent above trend” (Ò Gràda and Chevet, 709). For scope, England was experiencing crisis mortality of 1 in 35 deaths.

<sup>169</sup> This study found unfavorable weather, disappointing harvests, and wars to be largely responsible. Importantly, “[a]s with all famines, the victims were overwhelmingly the landless and the poor” (Gradà and Chevet, 709-710). Famine was also attributed to Louis XIV’s trade policies.

his limited options, positing a different iteration of both ideal masculinity and how to rule was Fénelon's way of advocating for a utopian future. Given the environment Fénelon observed beyond his writing desk, his emphasis on manual labor, agriculture, and family values in the ideal societies he visualizes reads as a cry to action in the face of disaster, rather than a fantasy of absolute social control. In response to the crisis unfolding around him, he posits the savior-like potential of moderate masculinity as the solution to the social and economic problems he observed.

Fénelon's clearest articulation of this solution is evident in Mentor/Minerva's rule over the land of Salente, in which the principles of moderation are implemented on a societal rather than merely individual scale. The specific regulation and organization of this new utopian society directly reflects and addresses the wrongs Fénelon perceived in Louis XIV's rule of France, as France's flaws are transformed into Salente's strengths and examples of fortitude. The specific ways Mentor/Minerva transforms Salente into the moderate utopia of his design also carry heavily gendered dynamics, which grant insight into how Fénelon articulated ideal masculinity as a solution to France's woes.

Mentor/Minerva and Télémaque arrive in Salente and visit Idoménée, the former ruler of Crète. Idoménée's previous excess led him to commit filicide, resulting in his banishment from ruling a powerful, prosperous nation. Reflecting on his mistakes, Idoménée directly acknowledges his inability to employ moderation as the greatest flaw in his rule: "que manquait-il à mon bonheur, sinon d'en savoir jouir avec modération?" (Fénelon, 167). However, his banishment, isolation, and many trials empowered him "à m'instruire et à me rendre plus modéré!" (Fénelon, 166). As recompense for his trials and in anticipation of his new moderate ruling style, Idoménée is given the opportunity to preside over the nascent kingdom of Salente.

When Télémaque and Mentor/Minerva arrive, they admire the utopian potential of this budding city: “Télémaque regardait avec admiration cette ville naissante, semblable à une jeune plante...Ainsi fleurissait la nouvelle ville d’Idoménée sur le rivage de la mer; chaque jour, chaque heure, elle croissait avec magnificence” (Fénelon, 159). Despite his great strides towards moderation, Idoménée’s continued imperfect leadership leads to threats of war, and Télémaque and Mentor/Minerva intervene to prevent rampant bloodshed and disaster.<sup>170</sup> Idoménée reveals himself incapable of ruling with moderation. The apparent veneer of perfection is betrayed by problematic leadership, which threatens the state: “Even though Salente appears outwardly magnificent — its public spaces are stately — it is actually deeply impoverished by Idomeneus’ adventurism” (Thomson and Lamb, 802).<sup>171</sup>

Realizing Idoménée’s immoderate rule will ruin Salente, Mentor/Minerva assumes control, and instigates changes to transform the land into the utopia of his vision. Salente functions as “une utopie en construction, qui ne deviendra véritablement utopie qu’au terme de l’évolution qui l’épure progressivement de son imperfection initiale” (Racault, 48). More than a utopia, this is also a vision of the redemption that France could achieve under a better ruler. As we may look to Mentor/Minerva as the central authority on ideal masculinity, a utopia of his design reveals how this version of ideal masculinity functions on a national level, how the individual translates to the societal, and how this style of rule guarantees utopia rather than dystopia.

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<sup>170</sup> At the first threat of war, against the Manduriens, Mentor/Minerva demonstrates that war can and should be avoided when possible. Fénelon’s ideal masculinity incorporates pacifism, while only excessive masculinity seeks glory. At the second threat of war, against the Dauniens, war is unavoidable. Télémaque experiences first-hand both the glory and horror of war, which further shapes him as a man.

<sup>171</sup> Thomson and Lamb add that these characteristics—a bellicose nature, irresponsible adventurism—are meant to represent aspects of Louis XIV’s personality and reigning style (*ibid.*, 802).

In Salente, Mentor/ Minerva's changes place particular emphasis on targeting problems ravaging France at the time. Economic stagnation disappears as Mentor/ Minerva ensures free commerce, eliminating taxes on imports. Trade flourishes, leading to economic prosperity, with outsiders flocking to Salente (Fénelon, 215). While Mentor/ Minerva imposes sweeping changes addressing virtually every aspect of society, he prioritizes the most pressing threats to stability. The famines, increased mortality, and decline in marriage and childbirth that plagued France are all resolved in this imagined society in an innovative manner: by facilitating marriage.

Conventionally, in the utopia, the regulation of marriage and the prioritizing of reproduction are essential to assuring and maintaining the ideal society. Therefore, Minerva/ Mentor's intervention in this realm is not unusual. In fact, Godin interprets the appropriation of sexuality as integral to utopia: "Depuis Platon, l'activité sexuelle avait été enfermée dans un réseau de réglementations destinées à canaliser les désirs personnels et à les placer au service de la communauté" (Godin, 67). However, Salente takes a novel approach, which appears to add rather than subtract freedoms by encouraging marriage.<sup>172</sup> If marriage is encouraged, the multiplication of Salente's subjects is assured (Fénelon, 222-223). This is accomplished as follows: "presque tous les hommes ont l'inclination de se marier; il n'y a que la misère qui les en empêche. Si vous ne les chargez point d'impôts, ils vivront sans peine avec leurs femmes et leurs enfants; car la terre n'est jamais ingrate" (Fénelon, 222-223). Eliminating taxes (and by extension, poverty) this assures a fruitful, pastoral society in which adherence to strict, traditional gender roles assures society's success. The children work in the fields, the mother keeps the home and prepares food for her family each night, which the husband treasures after a long day

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<sup>172</sup> This is innovative and uncharacteristic because, in many utopia, marriage is not so much facilitated but forced. In *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*, for instance, marriage was obligatory at a set age, and women could be exchanged or cast out if they were infertile.

of honest work (Fénelon, 222-223). Salente places this emphasis on the multiplication of families to ensure a robust agriculture-centric workforce, the secret to societal success.<sup>173</sup>

Mentor/Minerva establishes several additional reforms which only read as logical when situated within Reeser's conception of ideal masculinity as the moderate center between the extremes of excess and lack. This utopia cannot be assured by promoting agriculture and family values alone; if the subjects are tempted into excess or lack, social stability could be threatened. Mentor/Minerva imposes regulations that prevent both lack (interpreted as effeminacy) as well as excess (interpreted as unrestrained drive to obtain greater power or status) and promote moderate masculinity. Effeminacy remains a threat to be guarded against, as seen in the ban on "toutes les marchandises de pays étrangers qui pouvaient introduire le luxe et la mollesse" (Fénelon, 215), and "la musique molle et efféminée, qui corrompait toute la jeunesse" (Fénelon, 218). To mitigate the threat of excess, Salente's inhabitants may only wear the clothing assigned for their social condition, "car il est indigne que des hommes, destinés à une vie sérieuse et noble, s'amuse à inventer des parures affectées, ni qu'ils permettent que leurs femmes, à qui ces amusements seraient moins honteux, tombent jamais dans cet excès" (Fénelon, 217).<sup>174</sup> This rule theoretically prevents men from attempting to rise above their station, as well as prevent men and women from an excessive preoccupation with their appearance.

Every nonessential aspect of society was cut away, except for resources promoting ideal masculinity: "Au reste, la modération et la frugalité de Mentor n'empêchèrent pas qu'il

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<sup>173</sup> Although poverty and a declining population are addressed, this solution is not without problems. This vision of utopia limits the lifestyles available to its inhabitants. Women can only give birth and run a household. Men can only engage in trades, artisan crafts (excluding those tied to effeminacy), and work the land. One could argue such a narrow, traditional definition of gender roles is restrictive.

<sup>174</sup> A similar dynamic can be found in Veiras' *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*. In one of the earlier utopian societies, one of the leader's advisers suggests dividing society into distinct ranks, demonstrated by the colors worn by each rank.

n'autorisât tous les grands bâtiments destinés aux courses de chevaux et de chariots, aux combats de lutteurs, à ceux du ceste et à tous les autres exercices qui cultivent les corps pour les rendre plus adroits et plus vigoureux” (Fénelon, 220). Mentor/ Minerva thus valorizes activities encouraging young men to develop their strength and agility to fulfill the physical component of Fénelon’s definition of masculinity, protecting institutions that shaped the next generation of young men. Thus, three underlying factors shape Mentor/ Minerva’s approach to utopia: banning anything which could provoke effeminacy or lacking masculinity, preventing subjects from excess or pursuing greater power, and promoting institutions that embody a Fénelonian vision of moderate masculinity.

Mentor/ Minerva’s revisions quickly improve the society. If Fénelon’s recommendations for improving society couldn’t save France, he could at least visualize the societal changes he longed to bring about in the fictional realm.<sup>175</sup> Immediate results testify to Mentor/ Minerva’s superior mode of moderate governance: “Déjà la réputation du gouvernement doux et modéré d’Idoménée attire en foule de tous côtés des peuples qui viennent s’incorporer au sien et chercher leur bonheur sous une si aimable domination” (Fénelon, 228). The land prospers under the dutiful hand of the laborers, and stability is established. Even even the success of this transformation is communicated in moderate terms: “Tout était tranquille et riant; mais la joie était modérée, et les plaisirs ne servaient qu’à délasser des longs travaux: ils en étaient plus vifs et plus purs” (Fénelon, 228-229). While Fénelon lacked the power to bring about such a dramatic transformation in the chaotic, famine-stricken France of his time, this utopian vision provided a glimpse at how moderation could assure a stable, flourishing society.

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<sup>175</sup> One could argue that Fénelon’s text *did* have some of the influence he desired, albeit in the wrong time: “It is an irony that not long afterwards the book was completely rehabilitated: Louis XV, for instance, was praised as a new Telemachus, and Louis XVI was said to have been influenced by it” (Kantzios, 203).



After his many trials, Télémaque finally approaches the end of both his physical and allegorical voyage to utopia, having successfully proven his ability to avoid both lack and excess, as well as exercise moderation. Mentor/ Minerva confirms Télémaque's successes, and states Télémaque will serve as an admirable king, so long as he serves his people by example by inspiring "la justice, la sincérité, la crainte des dieux, l'humanité, la fidélité, *la modération*, le désintéressement" (Fénelon, 431, my italics). Judging him worthy, Minerva reveals her true form to Télémaque before he travels to Ithaca to be reunited with his father.<sup>176</sup> Mentor's wrinkles disappear, his eyes brighten blue, his beard vanishes. Télémaque recognizes a beautiful woman's face, "une majesté simple et négligée" (Fénelon, 438-439). The smell of ambrosia, her glow, the way she floats above the ground, and her shining lance, helmet and shield reveal her as the goddess Minerva. Fénelon places more emphasis on Minerva's revelatory moment than Télémaque's concluding encounter with his father because, despite the premise of the text, the culminating moment is not Télémaque meeting his father. Rather, it is Télémaque embodying the lessons he was destined to learn, and his journey towards embodying moderation and becoming a worthy king. As Mentor/ Minerva was Télémaque's guide and central authority on ideal masculinity, Minerva revealing her true form provides the culminating moment in Télémaque's journey.

In a serendipitous concluding statement by Minerva, the physical and allegorical journey are united and deemed complete:

Je vous ai mené par la main au travers des naufrages, des terres inconnues, des guerres sanglantes et de tous les maux qui peuvent éprouver le cœur de l'homme. Je vous ai

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<sup>176</sup> The reader may be surprised to see that this critical moment of reunion occupies only one line, more of an afterthought than a climactic finale. By contrast, much more attention is given to Minerva's transformation.

montré, par des expériences sensibles, les vraies et les fausses maximes par lesquelles on peut régner (Fénelon, 440).

Télémaque's journey to ideal masculinity, across real and mythological spaces throughout the Mediterranean Sea, the many trials and lessons that shaped his conceptions of ideal rule, concludes where it began in Ithaque.

Fénelon's unique vision of masculinity provides vital insight into the study of masculinity for how it both upholds and subverts dominant tenets of ideal masculinity in late 17th century France. This is seen in Fénelon's incorporation of what Reeser identified as a ternary model of ideal masculinity, with ideal masculinity at the moderate center between the two extremes of excess and lack. Importantly, this particular model of ideal masculinity was considered outdated before Fénelon wrote *Les Aventures de Télémaque*. Reeser discusses how moderate masculinity shifts post-Renaissance, replaced by a new model of ideal masculinity, in which the king serves "as an intermediary or a "mean" between heaven and earth and between mind and body" (Reeser, 266). With this new system in place, "the new model displaces the older one, which is becoming increasingly archaic in a new cultural context" (Reeser, 266). While this new model threatens to render my employment of Reeser's theory of moderate masculinity questionable to apply to a work written in 1699, Fénelon clearly remains loyal to the older model; *Les Aventures de Télémaque* is explicitly coded in terms of effeminacy, excess, and moderation. By setting his work in ancient times, Fénelon could depict ideal masculinities that didn't have to fit his surroundings. In fact, his depiction of ideal masculinity is *more* impactful when contrasted with the practices of masculinity that French society upheld as the norm. Reeser suggests "that this particular replacement of gendered sovereignty with a different kind of kingship is indicative of a larger cultural decline of the model of moderate masculinity itself at the end of the French

Renaissance” (Reeser, 266). This very decline, I argue, partly motivated Fénelon’s drive to uphold the model of moderate masculinity, to rehabilitate an ideal he saw as endangered and superior.

Fénelon’s ongoing insistence on embracing moderation and rejecting effeminacy and excessive masculinity constitutes a nostalgic and urgent desire to revitalize a lost but vital code of values. The work also rejected *gallanterie*, a major component of the expression of contemporary masculinity. Around the time of Richelieu and Louis XIV, *galanterie* played a significant cultural role, with the *gallant homme* an ideal to aspire towards in fine societies. Men could only achieve this ideal by associating with women: “Marked by artful, ritualized comportment, *galanterie*, was cultivated in the mixed company of men and women, especially the salon” (Schneider, 155). Rather than viewing women as essential for the path towards male refinement, *Les Aventures de Télémaque* portrayed women as threats to masculinity. Instead, ideal masculinity was only cultivated in exclusively masculine spaces (such as the competition in Crète and on the battlefield). This emphasis on exclusively masculine spaces also facilitated a rehabilitation of homosociality, rendering male-male friendship and mentorship appealing and healthy. The masculinity Fénelon advocates for provides no emancipatory potential for women; if anything, it advocates for more restrictive roles than those most women exercised in their time.

However, Fénelon’s vision of masculinity provides men with radical alternatives to contemporary embodiments of masculinity. Although part of Télémaque’s growth as a man took place on the battlefield, a significant part of his education revolved around learning how conflicts can be negotiated, mitigated, and even avoided. As seen on Venus’s and Calypso’s islands, Télémaque learns he must flee from certain threats (such as love and women) rather than stand

and fight them. Fénelon's iteration of masculinity advocated for a pacifistic approach to conflict, with violence only as a last resort. In some ways, the ideals Fénelon upholds read as misogynistic, but in other ways, his uniquely old-fashioned, pacifistic, and counter-cultural notion of ideal masculinity provides the study of Early Modern masculinity with a radically different approach to what makes a man. Masculinity thus takes on revolutionary, transformative potential, suggesting utopian possibilities connected to the guiding principle of moderation. Judging by the work's incredible success, his unconventional ideal resonated widely despite inconsistencies with the cultural context surrounding him.

## CHAPTER 3

### MAPPING THE GEOGRAPHY OF QUEER UTOPIA IN *L'AUTRE MONDE*

In Early Modern travel narratives, masculinity was as essential to the voyage as sails were to ships, although what ideal masculinity signified varied from one narrative to another. *Les Aventures de Télémaque* upheld an iteration of masculinity defined as the moderate center between the extremes of excess and lack. Télémaque learned to embody this ideal through trials and travels designed by the gods to shape him into the perfect man. In *Les Aventures de Télémaque*, embodying the utopia of ideal masculinity would result in a utopian kingdom, in the transformation from an internal to a physical ideal. Achieving this iteration of masculinity happened in exclusively male spaces, in which excluding intimacy with women and seeking the mentoring and perfect friendship of men assured success.<sup>177</sup> This vision of masculinity differed dramatically from the salon culture of the late 17th century, in which men's path to ideal masculinity developed via interactions with women. Here, however, the nature of this closeness between men and the impetus for distance from women is for a wholly different reason. In this chapter, the male protagonist Dyrcona also deliberately distances himself from women, and prioritizes perfect friendship between men, albeit with entirely different motivations. In *L'Autre Monde: États et empires de la lune et du soleil*, interactions between men remain integral to the utopia in question.<sup>178</sup> However, rather than condemn intimacy and sexuality as barriers to achieving the ideal, here, these elements constitute fundamental facets of Cyrano's utopia.

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<sup>177</sup> Women's company had to be avoided because women could tempt men into effeminacy or sexual immoderation.

<sup>178</sup> For the rest of this chapter, I refer to Cyrano's text as *L'Autre Monde. Les États et Empires de la Lune* and *Les États et Empires du Soleil* initially emerged separately, later published together as a complete work, then referred to collectively as *L'Autre Monde*. As Turner explains, "There are no original manuscripts in existence for either work. While there are three known manuscript copies of *La Lune*, for *Le Soleil* we only have the first printed edition, and this reveals to us that the second work was unfinished" (Turner, 754).

Cyrano de Bergerac's *États et empires de la lune et du soleil* diverges from the classic conceptions of utopia categorized by the highly structured and regulated utopia popularized by the likes of More, Campanella, and Veiras, which overwhelmingly featured both rigid urban planning as well as rigid (heteronormative) gender roles. While the text echoes conventional elements of the imaginary voyages (like the "shipwrecks" of his spaceships and an exhaustive description of Lunar society), his work portrays a chaotic and dynamic imaginary voyage through extraterrestrial realms that frequently surpass the imaginative (and moral) boundaries of the literature of his time. A dizzying combination of burlesque inversion, libertine satire, reformulations of Greek mythology, and innovative imaginations of male sexuality render the text essential to my consideration of how imaginary voyages illuminate understandings of early modern gender and sexuality.

As in *Les Aventures de Télémaque*, the setting of *L'Autre Monde* retains a strong tie to mythology. *L'Autre Monde* turns to the celestial realm, both connecting to and thinking beyond the dominant myths and mentalities connected to the Moon and other possible worlds. Understanding the early-modern mentalities and mythologies concerning the Moon and other worlds help in appreciating and introducing the unique artistic freedom and imagination that surrounded Cyrano's lunar utopia. The utopia imagines other ways of being, formulates key critiques of society, and provides a fresh perspective on gender and sexuality, all while incorporating escapist imagination, utilizing imaginary worlds to the full potential. Why would Cyrano choose the Moon as the primary setting for his utopia? In part, shifting trends in travel literature, Europe's increased preoccupation with regions beyond Earth, and developing scientific theories all intersected to render the Moon the next compelling site for imaginary

voyages. Beyond that, however, Cyrano's utopia was truly otherworldly, too radical or unconventional to be contained by Earth's atmosphere.

Overwhelmingly, travel literature in the Early Modern period coincided with ongoing voyages around the world. As seen with Veiras and Foigny's imaginary voyages to the *Terre Australe*, an intersection of factors such as enduring mythology, speculation, and ongoing attempted explorations of the mythical Southern Continent combined to form a tempting cocktail of mystery and fascination with a place that lay between myth and reality.<sup>179</sup> Before the *Terre Australe* was better-explored, the (un)inhabited continent inspired a wealth of imaginary voyages, often based loosely on travel narratives written by explorers. However, as the *Terre Australe* lost its mystery, the Moon provided an even more tempting site of speculation and imagination. In the world of imaginary voyages, each new era of discovery or exploration provokes an explosion of imaginative texts attempting to map out these new worlds; first the *Nouveau Monde*, then the *Terre Australe*. As cartography filled in the boundaries of the last unknown spaces of the Earth, the Moon represented the next logical site for speculation. The Moon was both more familiar than the *Terre Australe* and less accessible. The inaccessibility of the Moon and stars rendered the celestial realms more captivating: "The Moon and sometimes even the Sun of seventeenth-century impossible voyages exist across a limit no longer discoverable on earth, since voyages across the 'Burning Zone' (the region between the tropics, once imagined as uninhabitably hot)<sup>180</sup> had become almost commonplace" (Campbell, 2). Extraterrestrial realms represented the next stage of progression for the imaginary voyage. As

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<sup>179</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>180</sup> Prior to circumnavigation and exploration of the Southern Hemisphere, the world was conceived of as being comprised of zones- polar zones, temperate zones, and a central Torrid Zone thought to be too hot to cross- so, for a time, the bottom half of the world was thought to be an unreachable area (hence appealing for imaginary voyages).

European knowledge of other lands grew, thanks to travel narratives and ever-improving maps, so too did curiosity about space.

Fortuitous timing accelerated this curiosity: “The near-simultaneity or overlap of this voyaging literature with the new discoveries of astronomy may also have quickened interest in the plurality of planetary worlds” (Cressy, 980). While the average European would never visit the Americas or the Antipodes, they *could* view the Moon, even with the naked eye. However, many Europeans gained improved visibility of the moon in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. As Galileo Galilei developed and improved his telescope, the night sky could be observed with unprecedented accuracy.<sup>181</sup> The telescope enabled observations of countless never-before-seen celestial bodies by astronomers and lay-people alike. Selenographers like Hevelius utilized telescopes to craft improved maps that exposed the surface of the Moon in never-before-seen detail, these maps avidly consumed by the privileged public. According to Guthke, “the telescope quickly became not only a favourite toy with the educated classes, but also the symbol of the scientific proof of the plurality of worlds and extraterrestrial populations” (Guthke,176). Increased visibility of the celestial realms naturally led to heightened speculation, imagination, and anxiety regarding the Moon. By observing both known and previously unknown celestial bodies in unprecedented detail, starry enthusiasts moved towards a logical theory: perhaps there existed a plurality of worlds—even inhabited worlds like Earth.

The theory of the plurality of inhabited worlds proved both exciting and controversial. For instance, if other inhabited worlds existed, that could suggest humans weren’t God’s “chosen ones,” a notion which provoked great anxiety. If other (potentially superior) races populate the

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<sup>181</sup> For more on Galileo’s development on the telescope and how this development facilitated the elaboration of fictitious representations of the Moon and other celestial bodies, see Guthke, Karl S. “Nightmare and Utopia: Extraterrestrial Worlds from Galileo to Goethe.” *Early Science and Medicine*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2003, pp. 173–195. JSTOR



universe, did the descendants of Adam and Eve risk losing their status as God's privileged and beloved people? The concern provoked by this thought in part motivated the Church's rabid opposition of theories of the plurality of worlds (and later, Copernicus' heliocentric universe) (Guthke, 178). The Bible only describes God's creation of one world; therefore, the idea of a plurality of worlds would be heretical. This possibility instigated considerable debate.

Certain theologians thought of ways that Christianity could accommodate the theory of the plurality of worlds: "In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, St. Bonaventure suggested the possibility of God having created other worlds. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, William of Vorilong not only imagined plural worlds, but suggested these worlds were redeemed through Christ, and Nicholas of Cusa also suggested that inhabitants of a vast universe would have been created by God (Cressy, 964). However, Christianity traditionally and overwhelmingly considered the plurality of worlds to be blasphemous, inaccurate, and inconceivable. St Augustine, St Aquinas, and Lambert Daneau were some of many religious figures to oppose the plurality of worlds and maintain that only one world existed (Cressy, 965). Adaptations to the theory emerged, attempting to reconcile religion and astronomy. For instance, the problem of sin was suggested as a solution to maintain Earthlings as God's chosen children and central preoccupation.<sup>182</sup> While the theory of the plurality of worlds provoked great concern, it also saw overwhelming enthusiasm, as proponents of "New Astronomy" eagerly speculated about the nature of these other worlds, their inhabitants,

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<sup>182</sup> The problem of the plurality of worlds was resolved by supposing that if extraterrestrial humanities existed, if such peoples were free from sin, they would not need redemption. With Earth's humanity still sinful, they remain God's chosen ones and God's favorite because of and not in spite of their sin. Only Earth needed Jesus' salvation. The other, better inhabitants of these other worlds did not need divine intervention or special treatment- and would also not go to Heaven (Guthke, 181).

and their societies.<sup>183</sup> So long as theorists could convince their readers that their theories did not contradict appropriate Christian faith, they could proceed with their speculations unimpeded.<sup>184</sup>

The first half of the 17th century was a significant period for the Moon, as an unprecedented amount of scientific, philosophical, creative, and humorous texts discussed the Moon, which quickly became a popular *topos* (Cressy, 961). The explosive combination of public interest, access to better visualizations of the Moon, emerging astronomical theories, and the controversy of Church disapproval meant it was only a matter of time before the textual representations of the Moon emerged.<sup>185</sup> Rampant speculation about the plurality of worlds led to enthusiastic extrapolations based in science as well as imagination. This speculation resulted in the next great phase in travel literature: the writing of imaginary voyages to the Moon and to other planets. Numerous influential imaginary voyages to the Moon set the tone for visualizing the societal possibilities of this newly mapped place and helped inspire Cyrano's *L'Autre Monde*.

In Germany, Kepler's *Somnium* (1634) was an "imaginative modern work anchored in fact and rich in rational scientific theory" that provided a serious consideration of the possibility of flight to the moon, and a theorization of what life on the moon could look like (Christianson, 89).<sup>186</sup> Soon after, "England's lunar moment" came in 1638, tied to burgeoning interest in understanding planetary motion, and a desire to speculate about the cultural dynamics of lunar

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<sup>183</sup> "New Astronomy" refers to the radical advancements in astronomical knowledge spearheaded by Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Galileo, and Kepler. This included the advancement of ideas like the heliocentric model of the world and the plurality of worlds. For a more in-depth study of "new astronomy," see Martens, Rhonda. *Kepler's Philosophy and the New Astronomy*, Princeton University Press, 2000. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/vand/detail.action?docID=483569>.

<sup>184</sup> If they failed to mollify readers' concerns, however, they would have to publish their text clandestinely (Cressy, 963).

<sup>185</sup> In fact, Church disapproval may have only further fueled interest. The Roman Catholic condemnation of Copernicanism, for instance, may have only further provoked interest in the theory, particularly in Protestant Europe. (Cressy, 966).

<sup>186</sup> For an extensive study of Kepler's *Somnium*, see Christianson, Gale E. "Kepler's *Somnium*: Science Fiction and the Renaissance Scientist." *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1976, pp. 79–90.

and other extraterrestrial societies. The publications of John Wilkins, *The Discovery of a World in the Moone; or, A Discourse Tending to Prove, That 'Tis Probable There May Be Another Habitable World in That Planet* (1638) and Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone; or, A Discourse of a Voyage Thither, by Domingo Gonsales* (1638) set the tone for imaginary voyages to the Moon (Cressy, 962).<sup>187</sup> Lunar voyages blended a strong grounding in astronomical theories with highly imaginative ideas regarding transportation to the moon.<sup>188</sup> France joined the conversation soon after. In 1657, Pierre Borel's *Discours Nouveau Prouvenant la Pluralité des Mondes* emerged, Cyrano de Bergerac's *L'Autre Monde: États et Empires de la Lune et du Soleil* was published, two years after his death.<sup>189</sup>

Cyrano's contribution to lunar literature was partially indebted to his astronomical and literary predecessors. Storer, Cressy, Campbell, and Pioffet are but a few of the scholars who identified Godwin's text as a key source of inspiration for Cyrano.<sup>190</sup> In her introduction to *L'Autre Monde*, Alcover unearths an unlikely yet convincing source for the work's title and structure: Pierre Davity's "*Etats, Empires, Royaumes et Principautés du Monde*" (1637) (Alcover, CLXVI, my italics).<sup>191</sup> This classic example of an encyclopedic approach to describing foreign lands, clearly informed by an established tradition in travel literature (both *récit de*

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<sup>187</sup> Wilkins reissued his work with revisions and expansions, with his 1640 *A Discourse Concerning a New World & Another Planet*.

<sup>188</sup> Wilkins's work, for instance, was influenced by Copernicus' theories on planetary motion. In Godwin's text, protagonist Gonsales flies to the Moon aided by geese (Cressy, 968-9).

<sup>189</sup> In a relevant but later publication, Fontenelle's *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* (1686) contributed to the burgeoning trend of space-related texts. His work discussed dominant scientific theories regarding planets and space, but communicated as a conversation between a man and a noblewoman, thus rendering the information accessible to a wider audience.

<sup>190</sup> For an in-depth exploration of similarities and differences between Godwin and Cyrano's text, see Pioffet, Marie-Christine. "Godwin Et Cyrano : Deux Conceptions Du Voyage." *Dalhousie French Studies*, 39/40, 1997, pp. 45-57. JSTOR.

<sup>191</sup> Alcover elaborates: an educated man such as Cyrano would know of "géohistorien" Davity's works, an encyclopedic collection of knowledge on the known and speculated regions of the world, later expanded to include the celestial bodies. Davity held a significant role for many travel writers: "La dette de Davity envers les auteurs de récits de voyage est, bien entendue, très importante" (Alcover, CLXVII).

voyage and *voyage imaginaire* alike), informs Cyrano's detailed representation of the lunar society. Campanella's *The City of the Sun* also provided a key source of influence for Cyrano, as parodied portrayals of his utopia appear throughout *L'Autre Monde*.<sup>192</sup> However, Cyrano's text displays a great degree more complexity than merely adapting other's works.

Two distinct sections comprise *L'Autre Monde: Les États et empires de la lune et du soleil*: the first book (which I refer to as *Lune*) and the second (*Soleil*).<sup>193</sup> *Lune* begins on Earth, with the narrator Dyrcona<sup>194</sup> and his friends observing the Moon, leading him to suppose that the Moon may be an Earth, to whom Earth is but a Moon.<sup>195</sup> Obsessed with this notion, Dyrcona plans a voyage to the Moon, inventing a contraption powered by the evaporation of dew. This first attempt fails when he crash-lands in New France, which leads him to observe the rotation of the Earth.<sup>196</sup> He reaches the moon on his second try, using a rocket-powered machine.

Upon the Moon, Dyrcona crash-lands in the Garden of Eden. There, he interacts with several Biblical figures, which results in a blasphemous yet humorous parodying of numerous Biblical stories explaining how Elie, Enoch, Adam, and other figures reached the Moon's paradise.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> For more on Campanella's influence on Cyrano, as well a discussion of key utopian authors like More and Bacon, see: Fokkema, Douwe. "From Rational Eutopia to Grotesque Dystopia." *Perfect Worlds: Utopian Fiction in China and the West*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2011, pp. 49–82. JSTOR

<sup>193</sup> Allegedly a third book, *L'Histoire de L'Étincelle*, would make the work a trilogy, but Cyrano died before this goal could come to fruition. For more on this alleged third work, see Gossiaux, Pol. "La conclusion de L'Autre Monde: Conjectures sur une oeuvre perdue de Cyrano de Bergerac, L'Histoire de l'Estincelle." *Revue des Langues vivantes/ Tijdschrift voor Levende Talen* 34 (1968): 461-479, 589-615.

<sup>194</sup> Scholars vary in their choice of name for the narrator. Some don't name him, as the narrator is not named until *Soleil* (where he is referred to as Dyrcona, in an anagram of Cyrano De). Others refer to the narrator (as well as the author) as Cyrano, which I argue is a troubling conflation of two distinct figures. Given the continuity between *Lune* and *Soleil*, I refer to the narrator as Dyrcona for the entirety of *L'Autre Monde*.

<sup>195</sup> For a close-reading of the significance of the beginning of *Lune*, see Van Baelen, Jacqueline. "Reality and Illusion in L'Autre Monde: The Narrative Voyage." *Yale French Studies*, no. 49, 1973, pp. 178–184. JSTOR

<sup>196</sup> In a conversation with a French official, several other contentious topics are discussed; including the rotation of the Earth, but also heliocentrism, the plurality of worlds, the infinite nature of the universe, and the corruptibility and inevitable destruction of worlds and the Sun.

<sup>197</sup> At times, Dyrcona is a challenging narrator to situate or classify; his character "is as hard to pin down as is the setting—a libertine flake in early conversations with Elijah and Enoch, he is a prudishly pious Catholic in later debates with the demon of Socrates" (Campbell, 7).

While he converses with Enoch and John the Apostle, his heretical interpretation of Biblical stories leads to his expulsion from the Garden of Eden.<sup>198</sup> While exploring the lunar city, Dyrcona meets the Moon-people, the Séléniens. This point in the narrative resembles the conventional *récit de voyage* or *voyage imaginaire* by describing the foreign land and society in exhaustive detail (for instance, the languages, how the Séléniens eat by smell, lunar inventions, and more).<sup>199</sup> An unfortunate misunderstanding ensues when Dyrcona is mistaken for a monkey, and captured as the Queen's pet.<sup>200</sup> While caged as an animal, Dyrcona befriends a Spanish man,<sup>201</sup> and meets the *Démon de Socrate*, who becomes a significant intimate companion of his throughout *Lune*.

Dyrcona's voyages across the Moon are fraught with episodes of capture, imprisonment, absurd trials, and release.<sup>202</sup> Once liberated, he spends time with the *Démon de Socrate* and his philosopher friends, and they engage in vigorous scientific and philosophical debates regarding eternity, the function of chance, the senses, atoms, and more. Dyrcona gains greater insight into Lunar culture, which turns European customs upside-down. He learns that sons discipline disrespectful fathers, sex is banal rather than sacred, plants such as cabbages are understood as sentient, poetic verses function as money, and swords are replaced by bronze phalluses to symbolize life and prestige. He learns about the death on the Moon, which may be followed by burial, cremation, or an orgiastic, anthropophagic feast following a suicide. Suddenly, the Devil

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<sup>198</sup> For instance, Dyrcona suggests that the "snake" in the Garden of Eden was, in fact, Adam's penis.

<sup>199</sup> For an elaboration on both the monetary system and the languages on the Moon, see Goux, Jean-Joseph. "Language, Money, Father, Phallus in Cyrano De Bergerac's Utopia." *Representations*, no. 23, 1988, pp. 105–117. JSTOR

<sup>200</sup> Part of the confusion results from the fact that the Lunar people walk around on all fours, and consider walking around on two feet to be beastlike. The Lunar people assume anyone walking on two feet must be a monkey, or perhaps a bird.

<sup>201</sup> This man, who details his journey to the Moon with the aid of flying geese, is understood to represent Godwin's protagonist Gonzales.

<sup>202</sup> The trials are profoundly absurd in nature. At one point, Dyrcona is found guilty for arguing that the Earth is an Earth and not a moon, and later, a jury debates whether Dyrcona is a man or an ostrich.

himself arrives, interrupting a particularly heretical conversation, and drags Dyrcona down to Hell via Vesuvius.<sup>203</sup> *Lune* concludes as Dyrcona travels from Rome back to France, eager to share his stories.

*Soleil* begins with Dyrcona among friends. His novel, which recounts his lunar adventures, proves divisive: many love it, while others condemn the heretical content and accuse him of sorcery. This results in his imprisonment in a giant tower. However, his friends smuggle tools and materials, and he builds a new flying machine, escaping into space. He travels towards the Sun. He stops on a macule, which he observes give birth to a man, and travels onward.<sup>204</sup>

Dyrcona's journey across the Sun reads as a vivid, hallucinatory depiction of symbolic marvels. As Dyrcona observes, the Sun is comprised of two main parts: the luminous region which renders him transparent, and the shadowy region, where his body becomes opaque. The format departs from that of *Lune*; in place of the many philosophical conversations and parodies of utopian texts,<sup>205</sup> *Soleil* turns to Antiquity for inspiration. As Alcover notes, the flora and fauna are largely derived from Greco-Roman mythology, especially in the Plinian tradition. Cyrano applies his own flair to these myths: "Cyrano n'invente pas de nouvelles espèces: il poétise et/ou subvertit le matériau connu de ses lecteurs" (Alcover, 235). Apart from occasional instances of invention or parodies of other texts (utopian, mythical, or Biblical), *Soleil* primarily undertakes a rewriting of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Alcover, 236). Dyrcona observes a tree made of precious

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<sup>203</sup> In another ending to the book, "Les discours blasphématoires du Fils de l'Hôte disparaissent, et la grotesque apparition diabolique est remplacée par une conclusion entièrement différente, qui réintroduit, précisément, la figure du 'démon de Socrate;' dans le texte imprimé, c'est le démon lui-même qui aide le Narrateur à revenir paisiblement sur la Terre, à l'aide de la machine par laquelle il était arrivé" (Parmentier, 8). This ending is particularly compelling when considering the intimate relationship that develops between Dyrcona and the *démon de Socrate*.

<sup>204</sup> This bizarre birth, in which a small extraterrestrial mass gives birth to a man, provides one of countless instances of *L'Autre Monde* portraying unusual births. As I will elaborate, unusual pregnancy provides a vital aspect of how I approach *L'Autre Monde* as portraying queer utopia.

<sup>205</sup> For instance, Campanella's, Godwin's, and Plato's utopian texts can all be shown as sources of inspiration. To that end, *Soleil* does feature more parodies of such texts (notably Campanella's in the *Royaume des Amoureux* portion, but such examples are fewer in number than in *Lune*).

stones and metals, a spectacle where tiny men dance and converge to form a giant and meets the tiny nightingale who serves as their king.<sup>206</sup>

After his brief imprisonment and trial in the Kingdom of Birds, Dyrcona continues through the opaque regions of the Sun. There, he encounters a realm of living, speaking trees, the Oaks of Dodona, who teach him the famous *Histoire des Arbres Amants*, where two lovers transform into a pair of trees bearing magical fruit. Traveling onward, Dyrcona meets Campanella, and they explore the Sun together. While wandering, they meet a couple from the Kingdom of Lovers. In this society, an explicit parody of Campanella's utopia in *La Citta Del Sol*, teenage boys and girls are taught the ways of "love," where their forced and observed sexual encounters are heavily regulated and judged to assure procreation.<sup>207</sup> Dyrcona meets Descartes, but the book ends abruptly before Descartes can speak. This sudden ending is likely explained by Cyrano's untimely death.

Relatively little is known about Cyrano, save for a patchy biography accumulated thanks to documents, and complicated thanks to myths and legends. According to DeJean, this legendary status was largely the effort of a carefully cultivated identity on the part of Cyrano: "According to all accounts, Cyrano in real life created about himself a legend worthy of the hero of a novel," in which he "treated himself and was treated by his contemporaries as a fictional character" (De Jean, 233). It was largely during his time in the armed forces that he developed

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<sup>206</sup> *Soleil* recounts a story in which the (male) nightingale-man seduces a male nightingale, which could be said to provide another example of male homoerotics or queerness in the text. However, I focus primarily on the more humanoid beings than birds, although this relationship warrants commentary, and I have not found any scholarship discussing what appears to be a male-male sexual, romantic relationship.

<sup>207</sup> As in part demonstrated by this tangent, a pattern pervades Cyrano's depiction of sexual interactions. The sex between men and women (or males and females) is categorized by restraint and regulation. In contrast, sexual interactions between men tends to occur freely, unimpeded by restrictions, regulations, or punishment. This constitutes a deliberate effort on the part of Cyrano in his liberating queer utopia to align heterosexuality with the regulation and restriction seen in classic utopian societies, and homosexuality between men with freedom and pleasure.

his legendary status, largely for his uncanny skill in duels. He also may have befriended his friend Henry le Bret in the army. According to Alcover, Cyrano and le Bret both joined the régiment des Gardes together as cadets in the Carbon de Casteljoux company. After a musket injury in 1639 and a sword-induced wound in 1640, Cyrano quit the army definitively (Alcover, XXV).<sup>208</sup>

Following his career as a man of arms, Cyrano became more a man of words. Although Cyrano's frequent references to scientific and philosophical discourse in his texts reveal his intelligence, wit, and awareness of contemporary knowledge, his education was in fact incomplete. He had not yet finished his studies when he entered the army, and no record suggests he completed them afterwards, which barred him from a variety of careers (Alcover, XXXV). Despite this, he soon proved his intelligence. Beyond his prowess in combat, Cyrano was also known as a brilliant mind, who sought out brilliant company. Vilquin lists Cyrano as one of the "esprits forts, cultivés et rebelles, dont les écrits ont à la fois choqué et enchanté la haute société française du XVIIe siècle" (Vilquin, 13).<sup>209</sup> In addition to his rebellious nature, he also had a reputation for appreciating philosophy, evident given his circles of influence, including Gassendi and Hobbes as well as their respective peers (Reiss, 251).

Another significant site of speculation and commentary on Cyrano's life regards his personal life and status as a gay or queer man.<sup>210</sup> "Outing" anyone in the 17<sup>th</sup> century is

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<sup>208</sup> Later, he was treated for some "maladie secrète" that may have resulted in some degree of castration—some speculating it must have been syphilis, or a war wound with complications (Alcover, XXXVI).

<sup>209</sup> As Vilquin explains, this group was comprised of varying radical individuals. The most contentious were François de la Mothe Le Vayer fils, Pierre Gassendi, Gabriel Naudé, and Cyrano de Bergerac. Molière and Jean de la Fontaine also fit into this group, although they had a less contentious reputation (Vilquin, 13)

<sup>210</sup> This facet of Cyrano's biography is relevant to my approach to *L'Autre Monde*, which connects an abundance of homoerotic encounters and portrayals of love to the notion of queer utopia. While I do not wish to imply that an author's sexual behavior or proclivities bear an absolute influence on their writings, here, Cyrano's alleged homosexuality helps support reading *L'Autre Monde* as queer utopia by refuting the likelihood that certain encounters were merely homosocial rather than homosexual.



complicated, given the lack of terminology available. As Prévot explains, finding official proclamations of same-sex desire were near-impossible:

On ne trouvera à l'époque dans le *Dictionnaire* de Furetière ou dans celui de l'Académie française aucun terme qui se rapporte à l'homosexualité: ni 'bougre,' ni 'pédéraste' ni, bien sûr, 'homosexuel', ni même 'sodomite. La censure lexicologique du mot voudrait effacer la chose. La justice n'ignorait pourtant pas ce que l'on appelait communément 'le péché contre nature', et le droit condamnait avec sévérité l'homosexualité masculine et féminine (Prévot, 91).

Finding such evidence required careful readings, then, of personal letters and other writings. However, Cyrano left the most telling indications possible for his time. For instance, Alcover notes how Cyrano's friend Le Bret alluded to both the "dangereux penchant" of his friend as well as a disinterested attitude towards women, and Montigny's allusion to Cyrano's "état de vie irrégulier" (Alcover, XXXIV). Prévot's archival research among Cyrano's *Lettres Amoureuses* uncovered enough alterations, subtle equivocations, and incoherences to convince him of Cyrano's homosexuality.<sup>211</sup> Cyrano, Chapelle, and Dassoucy composed what Alcover called the "gay trio" until some unknown rupture dissolved their ties in 1650-1651 (Alcover, LIV).

While Cyrano's status as a philosopher as well as a lover of men may seem unrelated, these seemingly distinct categories could intersect in a particular way during the Early Modern period. Philosophical discussions could provide a space to explore non-normative or subversive ideas and behaviors. Although terms like "homosexuality," "gay," and "queer," wouldn't be used

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<sup>211</sup> For instance, in one *Lettre Amoureuse*, Prévot notes how Cyrano's initial phrase, "Mais je veux que les blonds, quand ils sont jeunes," is later corrected to read "les femmes blondes, quand elles sont jeunes" and, in another letter, the initial salutation to "mademoiselle de St. Denis" is immediately followed by "Monsieur" (Prévot, 88-89). Prévot also notes a flagrant inconsistency in gender agreement, where "la féminisation du destinataire est maladroite au point d'être incohérente" (Prévot, 90).

in their current sense until much later, philosophy was frequently aligned with sodomy. The affiliation between sodomy and the philosopher dates back to Socrates, with the phrase “Socratic love” as a euphemism for sodomy.<sup>212</sup> La Roux’s dictionary echoes this meaning, where “amour socratique” is defined as “Pour dire Amour d’homme à homme” (La Roux, 1750). As Merrick and Ragan point out, affection connoted as “philosophique” could refer to “the relations of Greek philosophers with other males, used since the sixteenth century, most commonly to modify love or sin, not usually defined in the dictionaries in this sense” (Merrick and Ragan, xv). Certainly, Cyrano’s presence in philosophical circles alone did not prove his homosexuality. However, acknowledging the intersection of philosophy and non-normative sexuality helps to understand his writing.

Although evidence of Cyrano’s dynamic, libertine, and even dangerous mind can be gleaned from a variety of his writings, the most influential and enduring example of this can be found in his *L’Autre Monde*, a text which can be described as imaginary voyage, science fiction, utopia, a smorgasbord of philosophical and scientific ideas, and baroque inversion.<sup>213</sup> As Romanowski explains, “Cyrano's identity is multiple: as satirist, as polemicist, and as defender of libertinism, materialism, heliocentrism, and hermetism. Such an enterprise relies on the power of the imagination that can be fully expressed only in fiction” (Romanowski, 425). Cyrano’s reputation

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<sup>212</sup> While philosophers and tolerant or favorable views towards sodomy permeated the Early Modern period, philosophers like Diderot and Voltaire debated whether sodomy went against nature. Kahan’s discussion of sodomy (an umbrella term referring to non-normative, extramarital, and non-procreative sexuality) in the Early Modern period and philosophy took place during his presentation, “The Sexuality of Philosophy,” on February 7, 2019 at Vanderbilt University. While engaging in sodomy and homosexuality are not interchangeable terms, he explained that these exclusively male, libertine, philosophical spaces were places where homosexual desire or acts and philosophy intersected.

<sup>213</sup> My notion of baroque inversion is influenced by Genette’s “L’Univers réversible” in which he articulates a dominant theme of the baroque world, “celui de la réversibilité de l’univers et de l’existence [,] thème familier à l’imagination baroque, qui s’est ingénieusement à transposer dans sa littérature les jeux de la perspective et les mirages en trompe-l’oeil” (Genette, 17). The duality inherent in reversibility imposes “[une] dialectique perplexe le veille et du rêve, du réel et de l’imaginaire, de la sagesse et de la folie, [qui] traverse toute la pensée baroque” (Genette, 18). Inversions and hallucinatory distortions of reality categorize Cyrano’s text.

fits when reading *L'Autre Monde*, his similarly radical and dangerous utopia.

The first edition of *L'Autre Monde* was printed (albeit with many omissions) by Cyrano's friend Henry le Bret in 1657, after Cyrano's death (Storer, 96). These omissions were largely motivated by anxieties regarding the presence of heretical, sexually explicit, and other inappropriate content. There are four known versions of the *L'Autre Monde* manuscript: the Paris, Munich, and Sydney manuscripts, as well as the original posthumous edition of 1657 (Alcover, CXVII). In her in-depth study of each of the surviving manuscripts, Alcover concludes "La version de [*Paris*], non seulement la meilleure mais aussi la plus radicale, se donne comme celle qu'on a voulu propager, comme tout le monde en convient aujourd'hui. C'est lui accorder par conséquent le statut de version-vulgate" (Alcover, CXLVII).<sup>214</sup>

As is frequently the case with utopian voyage novels, *L'Autre Monde* defies easy categorization, bridging a variety of literary traditions and incorporating an even broader scope of ideas and disciplines. Summarizing interpretations of *L'Autre Monde* requires a broad range of terminology; as Romanowski notes, *Lune* and *Soleil* "have been considered as critical and satirical (Mason), libertine (Chambers, DeJean, Spink), materialist and epicurian (Alcover, Laugaa), and hermetist (Gossiaux, Hutin, Van Vledder). Cyrano has been considered both as an epigone of Campanella and late Renaissance magical thought (Erba, Lerner) and as, sceptical and "modern," anticipating the eighteenth-century philosophers (Harth, Prevot, Spink, Weber)" (Romanowski, 414). Faced with such a daunting, complex range of interpretations, I focus on those most cogent to my engagement with the text: *L'Autre Monde* as a text worthy of consideration in terms of scientific thought, as a work of science fiction, as utopia, and as a

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<sup>214</sup>Thus, the text I quote is the Paris manuscript. All my quotes and references to *L'Autre Monde* come from Alcover's edition, widely considered to be the definitive version. See Cyrano de Bergerac, commented by Alcover, Madeleine. *Oeuvres Complètes: L'Autre Monde Ou Les États Et Empires De La Lune, Les États Et Empires Du Soleil, Fragment De Physique*. Vol. 1, Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2000.

satirical or humorous text.

Cyrano's text engages heavily with various scientific disciplines and schools of thought. Romanowski views Cyrano's project as a unifying combination of "the materialism of the atomists and the idealism of the animists and hermetics" (Romanowski, 416). Cyrano also appears to endorse various controversial astronomical theories dominating the Early Modern period by means of Dyrcona's "observations" that reveal a plethora of nascent astronomical theories, such as the Earth's rotation, Jupiter's satellites, Venus and Mercury's phases, and the existence of sunspots (Perfetti, 235). In Reiss' interpretation, the influence of scientific advancements and ideas can even be identified in the work's structure: "Following the Galilean model, the order of Cyrano's *Voyage dans la lune*, not to say its sequel the *Voyage au soleil*, is that of an uninterrupted series of experimental sequences" (Reiss, 288). His reading interprets Cyrano's works as an elaboration of the scientific progress of observation, forming, testing, and revising hypotheses.<sup>215</sup>

Given the evident scientific influence shaping Cyrano's narrative, *L'Autre Monde* also warrants consideration as a work of science fiction. The extraterrestrial setting, the erudite incorporation of influential astronomical theories, the abundance of spaceships, marvelous machines and bizarre inventions render the text an early but vital contribution to the literary tradition of science fiction.<sup>216</sup> *Lune* and *Soleil* merge "cosmic travel, libertin philosophizing, and a host of technological marvels," and can be looked to as "perhaps France's first true SF novels" (Evans, 255). While science fiction and utopia cannot always be considered interchangeable terms, *L'Autre Monde* also qualifies as a vital (and complicated) addition to the 17<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>215</sup> See Reiss, Timothy J, "Cyrano and the Experimental Discourse." *The Discourse of Modernism*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca; London, 1982, pp. 226–260. JSTOR

<sup>216</sup> For a developed consideration of the machines and inventions in *L'Autre Monde*, see MacPhail, Eric. "Cyrano's Machines: The Marvelous and the Mundane in *L'Autre Monde*." *French Forum*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1993, pp. 37–46.

utopia.

Importantly, the *L'Autre Monde* both *is* and *isn't* a utopia. While the work qualifies as utopia “because it represents an idealized alternative creation,” it also reads as a dystopia or anti-utopia “because it is based on a reversal of the harmony and symmetry characteristic of Utopian description from More to Rabelais” (DeJean, 235). By rejecting the conventional aspects of traditional utopia, particularly the hyper-structured society resulting in a peaceful society, the work qualifies instead as a “libertine utopia” (*ibid*).<sup>217</sup> The libertine utopia can elaborate upon non-normative sexuality in a radically different way than the conventional utopia.<sup>218</sup> However, when a utopia upends the very notion of utopia, the work is particularly challenging to interpret.

Given the complexity and absurdity of the text, readers struggle to identify value or meaning in *L'Autre Monde*.<sup>219</sup> Can —or should— Cyrano’s worlds be taken seriously? Such bizarre writing often results in scholars interpreting the work as merely a very complex and erudite but ultimately satirical work, that only mocks but lacks significant innovation. For Campbell, “The text is an endless set of writing possibilities, of opportunities to shock; it is structured by paradox rather than plot. But there is a consistent satiric edge” (Campbell, 8). Does a mere satiric edge suffice to give a work value? For Vilquin, even the utopian format fails to provide a blueprint for a perfect society, constituting instead the most suitable site for wild inventions, surrealistic imagination, upending of earthly hierarchies, and the negation of all truths. In this view, Cyrano only underwent this voyage “pour se libérer des chaînes de la rationalité et de la bienséance et

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<sup>217</sup> DeJean also notes the innovative, libertine, and unconventional narrative structure of the novel, being narrated in the first person.

<sup>218</sup> As such, libertine utopia such as *L'Autre Monde* are particularly vital for portrayals of gender and sexuality, as very few texts (especially utopia) portray anything outside of regulated, acceptable expressions of heterosexuality within marriage.

<sup>219</sup> In *L'Autre Monde*, the inversion of conventional society (like sons disciplining their fathers, or men walking on all fours) and other bizarre details (the inhabitants tell time using their noses as a sundial) qualify as some of the “bizarre” elements I evoke.

pour jeter à pleines mains le doute sur les orgueilleuses certitudes des Terriens” (Vilquin, 17). As the title implies, *L’Autre Monde* suggests “un monde autre, un monde extravagant, burlesque, envers et parodie du nôtre, et c’est aussi, puisque le narrateur y retrouve la paradis terrestre, un paradis ‘terrestre’ devenu lunaire, c’est-à-dire transformé avec les yeux des lunatiques (des fols, des extravagants), c’est-à-dire parodique” (Nedelec, 224-225). Indeed, Cyrano’s text reads as unsettling for failing to provide an obvious solution to social troubles and can leave the reader more confused than inspired.

By defying and reworking traditional travel literature tropes, *L’Autre Monde* qualifies instead as a “voyage humoristique.” Sangsue defines the *voyage humoristique* as the mirror opposite of the traditional voyage account. The classic voyager seeks to gain knowledge of a new place in every domain, from society to botany to language. In contrast, “Le voyageur humoristique, lui, ne se déplacera ni pour des raisons religieuses, ni pour la satisfaction d’un besoin de connaissance” (Sangsue, 1141). In such a work, motivations or justifications are challenging to identify; “Loin de rechercher le centre, le voyage humoristique se voudra au contraire excentrique, centrifuge, valorisant la dispersion, l’éparpillement, les destinations marginales” (Sangsue, 1142). Dyrcona’s journey certainly appears to resemble such a journey. Cyrano’s texts must be understood, however, as more than an amalgamation of philosophical and scientific thought, and more than a satirical and heretical refutation of religious beliefs and stuffy morals. While burlesque inversion and satire permeate the text, the work possesses deeper meanings that transcend what would otherwise be a clever yet hollow plot device. Such meanings may be uncovered by emphasizing an under-examined facet of the text: how *L’Autre Monde* portrays, elaborates, and glorifies male love and eroticism.

In my consideration of *L’Autre Monde*, I investigate how Cyrano’s libertine utopia can

complicate or inform dominant early modern conceptions around gender and sexuality. Already a remarkable work for providing otherwise-rare portrayals of male intimacy, the work makes forays into highly imaginative corporeal realms. Cyrano de Bergerac's *L'Autre Monde: Etats et empires de la lune et du soleil* provides a rare and vital illustration of a sexually liberated utopia in which radical male love provides the key to going beyond the absolute categories of life and death. I posit *L'Autre Monde* as an illumination of queer utopia, in that Cyrano's narrative provides an alternative reality where non-normative sexuality—in this case, free love between men— can be explored and expanded in ways unimaginable in the real world. The unique extraterrestrial setting facilitates new imaginings of the male body's capabilities, beginning with the notion of male pregnancy and evolving into loving relationships being liberated from death altogether. Not only does male love gain unprecedented visibility, but this love is glorified and radicalized. Importantly, the utopia in question is indissociable from queerness. The new possibilities Dycona's voyage discovers regarding love and life all fundamentally incorporate intimacy, eroticism, and love between men.

I identify the simultaneous voyages in Cyrano's *L'Autre Monde* as two entirely different, even contradictory voyages. In terms of physical voyages, Dyrcona's journeying can be best described as *errance*. His official impetus for his voyage was to investigate if the Moon were a world like ours, to which our world was but a Moon. However, on the Moon, his voyages tend to alternate between escaping imprisonment or following a companion, rather than a specific trajectory; "Cyrano's pattern tends to be confinement and expulsion" (Campbell, 11).<sup>220</sup> No evident personal agency dictates his voyage, his direction influenced by external events or other

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<sup>220</sup> This lack of intended destination and lack of apparently discernable trajectory differs from the overwhelming tradition of imaginary novel. While his work features multiple points of "shipwreck," his journey features far more wandering and far less of a clear direction than other works affiliated with the imaginary voyage.

individuals. Dyrcona's physical voyage lacks a clear path or destination.<sup>221</sup> However, I identify a clear progression in the allegorical journey towards queer utopia that extends far beyond Dyrcona's strange voyage. This journey begins with the suggestion of male pregnancy, an ever-evolving theme leading towards ever-expanding possibilities within the realm of the male body and male love, evolving towards transcending life and death altogether.

The utopia articulated in *L'Autre Monde* is indissociable from queerness. Intimacy, eroticism, and love between men constitute the very heart of the most daring and imaginative new possibilities articulated in the text. A work portraying male-male love— especially in a positive way— was both rare and dangerous in its time. Because of this, studying the queer dynamics of such a text provide an important alternative vision of homosexuality in early modern France, in contrast to overwhelming negative portrayals or absence.<sup>222</sup> Understanding the society surrounding Cyrano helps to contextualize and appreciate the significance of a queer utopia written in the Early Modern period.<sup>223</sup>

While the current discourse surrounding LGBTQ populations utilizes completely different terminology and is shaped by distinct mentalities and attitudes than would have been the case in the early modern period, that does not mean that one cannot seek to better understand the attitudes, contexts, tensions, and anxieties accompanying what qualified as acceptable

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<sup>221</sup> This could be tied to the fact that Cyrano died before he could finish an anticipated third work in the series, *L'Histoire de l'étincelle*. While it seems unlikely that a final, cumulating destination would occur, given the abrupt endings of books 1 and 2, we remain fundamentally unable to formulate sufficiently confident theories regarding the final destination, and what this place would reveal about Cyrano's utopia.

<sup>222</sup> For example, Thomas Artus' *L'Isle des Hermaphrodites* provides such a negative view, which aligns homosexuality (not directly named but heavily alluded to) with effeminacy, lacking masculinity, and an indulgent lifestyle.

<sup>223</sup> I include this to signal that as readers we must not take the risk of reading Cyrano's content through our modern eyes, with our current notions of homosexuality or queerness. Even though homosexuality and queerness still hold a contested status, still facing persecution or discrimination in many situations, the context in the early-modern period differs enough to warrant elaboration.



expressions of sex and desire versus the unacceptable.<sup>224</sup> Furthermore, even though sexual identity was not articulated in the way it was now, that does not mean this field of inquiry must be abandoned; “French sodomites and tribades did not describe themselves, and were not described by others, in the same way as modern ‘homosexuals’, but that fact in and of itself does not mean that they were not regarded as somewhat different from their contemporaries because of their sexual inclinations” (Merrick and Ragan, x). However, such individuals were not merely viewed as different; they were also treated as such, often with grave consequences.

Beyond ostracization or marginalization, participating in or portraying nonconformist, “unnatural” sexual desires in the 17th century was a high-stakes act. However, identifying just what qualified as non-normative sex requires understanding the notion of sodomy in Cyrano’s time. In their study of Early Modern French theological, legal, and medical texts that condemned sodomy as unnatural, illegal, and blasphemous, Merrick and Ragan explain that the term was “commonly applied the word to a variety of non-procreative sexual acts including masturbation, bestiality, homosexual or heterosexual oral or anal intercourse, and vaginal penetration of one woman by another” (Merrick and Ragan, 1).<sup>225</sup> Non-sexual characteristics, such as effeminate men or overly masculine women, could be denigrated as ‘sodomites,’ although not always.

Crucially, attitudes towards ‘sodomites’ were deeply unfavorable. As one may expect, religious concerns comprised a significant aspect of negative perceptions of homosexuality. Indeed, scriptural condemnations of sex acts between men constituted a significant justification for condemning homosexuality. Beyond that, however, an absence of faith could contribute

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<sup>224</sup> We can primarily identify the acceptable and unacceptable expressions of sexual desire where we see problematic compartments condemned. For instance, the effeminate man, the masculine woman, and the sodomite all functioned as figures to be mocked, isolated, feared, or punished under the dominant structure of compulsory heterosexuality. Even without official categories or modern discourse, we can still identify hegemonic versus subversive expressions of sexuality, even if it wasn’t understood as such explicitly.

<sup>225</sup> While women could (and did) engage in sodomitical acts, the majority of anxiety regarding sodomy was directed at men.

further to purportedly homosexual men being perceived as a greater threat.<sup>226</sup> Atheism and sodomy were frequently viewed as both interdependent and condemnable: “Les deux crimes sont d’ailleurs solidaires: la sodomie étant une pratique contre-nature, elle outrage Dieu au même titre que le blasphème et le sacrilège qui attentent brutalement à la majesté divine” (Rosellini, 1).<sup>227</sup> Therefore, Cyrano constituted a double-threat to the social order, for his atheism and what would now be considered his queerness.

Beyond hostile attitudes, men who desired or slept with other men risked dire consequences, as sodomy constituted a crime in France. Prévot explains the nature and origins of how this “crime against nature” would be punished: “Le droit français raffine: avant Saint Louis, la loi prévoit pour une première condamnation la perte des testicules; pour une seconde, la castration; à la troisième, le bûcher, mais vif. C’est, depuis 1270, ce dernier châtement qui est pratiqué” (Prévot, 91). Executions were rare, but still feared, so the threat of executions hovered in public consciousness. More men were executed for sodomy during the period spanning the Renaissance to the Revolution than during Middle Ages. Executions were not meant to be systematic but were carried out in the name of retribution and deterrence, occurring sporadically and strategically (Merrick and Ragan, 31). In 1661 (not long after Cyrano’s death), Jacques Chausson and Jacques Paulmier had their tongues cut out and were burned alive in a public execution, followed by Antoine Bouquet in 1671 (Prévot, 91).<sup>228</sup>

By contrast, Cyrano’s libertine universe was categorized by free love and a lack of judgement against intimacy between men. Indeed, the only punishments Dyrcona experiences

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<sup>226</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, I only focus on homosexual behavior or desire between men, as homosexual women’s experience differed significantly.

<sup>227</sup> Sodomy was not considered to occur exclusively between men or even same-sex couples. However, for the case of Cyrano, same-sex interactions between men operate as the central focus.

<sup>228</sup> The law and practice of execution for “sodomy” continued into the 18<sup>th</sup> century (*ibid*).

are grounded in comical misunderstandings, rather than persecuting behavior or desires.<sup>229</sup> The Moon and Sun can be read as utopian alternate realities, where expressions of queerness can thrive and expand rather than hide and risk punishment. The queer utopia can provide “a structuring and educated mode of desiring that allows us to see and feel beyond the quagmire of the present” (Muñoz, 1). Considering the overall attitudes of hostility and the threat of execution that “sodomites” faced in early modern France, the “present” warranted an escape, even if only a fictitious one could be realized.

The queer utopia provides “a moment when the here and the now is transcended by a then and a there that could be and indeed should be” (Muñoz, 97). The free pursuit of love between men without risk of judgement or condemnation, in Bergerac’s time, would have been unthinkable outside of a fictitious and even extraterrestrial realm. However, queerness itself contains an element of distance and futurity. For Muñoz, “queerness is always on the horizon...if queerness is to have any value whatsoever, it must be viewed as being visible only on the horizon” (Muñoz, 11). For *Cyrano*, this horizon held a literal interpretation, displaced to the Moon and the Sun. Dyrcona’s voyages took him to this horizon.

The scenes I discuss from *Lune* and *Soleil* are in no way neglected by scholars. However, I argue greater, as-of-yet unidentified underlying meanings unite the disparate scenes I analyze. I read these scenes as unique and crucial elaborations of queer utopia. Within the text, I analyze scenes discussing male pregnancy, Dyrcona’s relationship with the *Démon de Socrate*, the Philosopher’s Death ritual, and the *Arbres Amants* myth. I read these scenes as interconnected, vital points in the text building towards increasingly liberatory imaginings of queer utopia. Each scene creates new possibilities around male-male love and life itself, all exemplifying a flagrant

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<sup>229</sup> For instance, Dyrcona was punished for declaring the Moon to be a Moon and not an earth, and later, for being suspected of being an ostrich.

disregard for acceptable social conventions and even the categories of life and death. In this iteration of queer utopia, not only does the text facilitate numerous striking instances of queer interactions and relationships, but the work arguably stands out the most in terms of queer innovation in terms of male generation, of male parthenogenesis. The Moon and Sun's utopian spaces not only facilitate homosexual male love in unprecedented ways, but also rewrite the very ways that life originates and ends. I am not the first to link *Cyrano* and his text to homosexual practices and desires. However, I have yet to find a text that appreciates the fundamental queerness and utopian longing that pervades the text and elevates burlesque inversion towards something more meaningful which can provide much-needed insight into the (homo)sexual culture of early modern France as well as the study of queer utopia.

#### GENERATING POSSIBILITIES: MALE PREGNANCY IN *L'AUTRE MONDE*

The notion (and later attempt) of male pregnancy serves as the *point de départ* for how *L'Autre Monde* articulates the extensive reimagining the categories of giving life and transcending death, facilitated by ideal male love. When Dyrcona crash-lands in the Garden of Eden on the Moon, he learns about Achab (daughter of Noah) and her own journey to the Moon. During the great Flood, Achab swam to the Moon, and other women sought to follow her example. By introducing Achab, *Cyrano* thus affirms a link between women and the Moon. This connection between womanhood and the Moon evolves into an association between the Moon and pregnancy. In the universe of *Cyrano*'s burlesque inversion, female pregnancy is soon abandoned in favor of male pregnancy. Understanding this first connection—between women and the moon—requires considering medical beliefs and mythological traditions.

In Dauge-Roth's interpretation of Achab's journey to the Moon, she states, "It is no coincidence that in *Cyrano de Bergerac's* creation myth women are drawn to the moon in the

midst of the rising, churning waters of the Great Flood” (Dauge-Roth, 6). She argues that Cyrano presents Achab as a strong female character, providing a “vivid dramatization of feminine affinity with the moon” which “emblemizes the dialectic characteristic of the early-modern *querelle des femmes* in which the moon's influence on women figured as a site for the expression and negotiation of tensions over changing gender roles” (Dauge-Roth, 4). I disagree with this interpretation, as women hardly constitute a priority on Cyrano’s Moon. However, she rightfully identifies the early modern association between women and the moon, which provides a vital lens into how I read *L’Autre Monde*. The “*femme lunatique*” “appeared frequently in prose, poetry, theater, ballet, and popular iconography throughout the first half of the seventeenth century in France” (Dauge-Roth, 4).

Building upon foundational 17th century medical texts, Dauge-Roth shows how the uterus was believed to be affected by the Moon’s movements. Doctor Antoine Mizauld emphasized the connection between women and the moon, both characterized by dampness and cold. Even women’s menstrual period was modeled after and followed the phases of the Moon. The feminine Moon held authority over women and their reproductive capabilities, seen to control the woman and dictate everything from conception to lactation. In this belief system, “lunar, rather than solar, cycles determine the length of pregnancy” (Dauge-Roth, 8).

Pregnancy as well as sexual activity were tied not only to the moon, but the study of astrology in general. As Crawford explains, “astrology’s generative preoccupations made the universe, not just the Earth, devoted to heterosexual normativity expressed through fertility and generation” (Crawford, 74). This connection between the cosmos (especially the moon) and generation proves vital. Although Cyrano’s queer utopia portrays male rather than female pregnancy, the association between the moon and pregnancy remains important. Male pregnancy

also emerges from a cultural fascination with unnatural pregnancies, which Cyrano translates into an earnest expansion of the utopian possibilities of male-male love and male generation in *L'Autre Monde*.<sup>230</sup>

Surprisingly, male pregnancy was not an entirely novel idea in Early Modern France, although Cyrano adapts the concepts in novel ways. Men and women's bodies, along with their capabilities, were conceived of significantly differently than today. In *Menstruation and Procreation in Early Modern France*, McClive demonstrates that Early Modern conceptions of bodies, procreation, and menstruation were not rigidly bound to gender binaries. Her focus on menstruation demonstrates a medical (and societal) interest in the phenomenon of male menstruation, which she identifies within medical discourse and anecdotal evidence. Scholars such as Green, Pomota, and Finucci also confirm an Early Modern preoccupation with the notion of male menstruation. As menstruation signified the possibility of becoming pregnant, male menstruation signified the possibility of male pregnancy.

Laqueur's understanding of bodies differs, instead identifying a "one-sex" model in the Early Modern period. Following his model, "in the world of one sex, the body was far less fixed and far less constrained by categories of biological difference than it came to be after the eighteenth century" (Laqueur, 106). The one-sex body encapsulates a fluid economy in which bodily fluids such as blood, semen, and breastmilk were all related. While Laqueur does not discuss male pregnancy directly, he does suggest the Early Modern preoccupation with the phenomenon of male lactation as linked to this one-sex model. In this understanding, "in the one-sex fluid economy, strange or feminine men might lactate" (Laqueur, 106).

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<sup>230</sup> I use the term "generation" with the aim of using the period-appropriate terminology of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Crawford, Rosellini, Laqueur, and other early-modern scholars deliberately use the term "generation" rather than, say, "procreation."

In addition to discussing male menstruation or lactation, intersex or “hermaphroditic” (to use early-modern terminology) people also provided a popular subject of discussion, particularly when such people became pregnant. For all the interest in hermaphroditism, male menstruation and male pregnancy, only a limited number of anecdotes justified the significant societal preoccupation.<sup>231</sup> In a similar vein of inquiry, marvelous pregnancies constituted a subject of fascination: Claude Perrault depicts a “pregnant” pear in *Grossesses Merveilleuses*, the 1700 *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale des Sciences* discusses a rumor of a pregnant man, and notes cases of twins that “absorbed” or were “pregnant” with the other twin, and so on.<sup>232</sup> In short, Cyrano’s elaboration on male pregnancy did not emerge from a vacuum but was rather a highly imaginative elaboration on a subject of fascination, grounded in an early-modern obsession with the marvelous and monstrous. It takes little extrapolation to see how Cyrano could have expounded upon a cultural preoccupation with male lactation, male menstruation, or unusual pregnancies or births to arrive at the notion of male pregnancy. Cyrano’s radicalization of male generation, however, begins with an idea rather than action.

Cyrano introduces the notion of male pregnancy and generation as Dyrcona the protagonist and his friends observe the full moon. He states that he believes “que la lune est un monde comme celui-ci, à qui le nôtre sert de lune” (Cyrano, 6). As the night goes on, Dyrcona alone remains preoccupied with this idea; he recalls, “je demeurai gros de mille définitions de lune, dont je ne pouvais accoucher” (Cyrano, 7), in the first reference to male pregnancy.<sup>233</sup>

In Romanowski’s reading of Cyrano, male pregnancy provides a key point of insight into

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<sup>231</sup> “As with hermaphrodites, the cultural resonance of menstruating men far outstripped the number of actual recorded cases which were recycled in the medical literature” (McClive, 198).

<sup>232</sup> Tucker, “Unusual Pregnancies in Early-Modern Europe,” Oxford University (July 2012).

<sup>233</sup> According to Reiss, male pregnancy was a radical idea to see literary representation in this time: “After *New Atlantis* itself, [*L'autre Monde: États et Empires de la lune et du soleil*] are the first fictional evidence of the “masculine” birth” (Reiss, 260), although I argue the idea itself was not absent from public discourse.

understanding this work. Although our interpretations differ, we both begin at the same point. In her interpretation of the passage, she makes three observations:

This statement contains three odd aspects: 1. the narrator is male and pregnant; 2. he has a thousand definitions; 3. he is unable to give birth. The first, a pregnant man, shows a reversal, while the second shows that he is going beyond mere reversals, with no less than a thousand definitions. The third part indicates the inadequacy of language, as he is unable to give birth, to produce one definition, let alone a thousand (Romanowski, 416).

While I agree with Romanowski's initial interpretations of the narrator's significant proclamation, my understanding of the function of male pregnancy diverges from hers. In part, male pregnancy goes beyond mere reversal; it must be considered in conjunction with a specifically early modern sensibility regarding medicine, gender, bodies, and generation. This first suggestion of male pregnancy foreshadows a future point in Dyrcona's voyage, in which the idea of pregnancy transforms into an actual attempt.

While Romanowski reads Dyrcona's inability to give birth in a way to argue for Cyrano's portrayal of the body as epistemological,<sup>234</sup> I identify a greater significance behind this first mention of male pregnancy, one that connects the physical body to the untapped potential lying within male love, eroticism, and desire. While all these elements are in part shaped by early modern beliefs and discourse surrounding bodies and procreation, Cyrano nonetheless goes beyond these preoccupations to write new bodily capabilities and ways for (male) bodies to interact.

This theme of male pregnancy extends transitions from the theoretical into the physical

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<sup>234</sup> For Romanowski, Cyrano's inability to give birth signals "the close relationship between the body, knowledge, and statements about knowledge. The narrator's body, and all bodies, are intimately involved in the production of intellectual knowledge, for the body is not just a metaphor or representation, but a knower. It is, in short, an epistemological body" (Romanowski, 416).



dimension soon after Dyrcona's arrival on the Moon. Because the Moon is peopled by beings who walk on all fours, bipedal Dyrcona soon stands out as different. Given the ongoing project of reversal at play, Dyrcona is viewed as the monstrous Other, with the lunar beings aligned with normalcy and humanity. While the Sélénariens struggle to decide if Dyrcona is an animal, a monster, or a deformed human, a comical misunderstanding ensues: they decide he must be "la femelle du petit animal de la reine" (Bergerac, 52). The queen calls for his capture, and he finds himself locked in a cage with his "mate," the Queen's other "pet monkey." His "mate" is actually a Spanish man who flew to the Moon by way of giant birds.<sup>235</sup> The imprisoned couple become the new spectacle of the Court.

The two endure unbearable humiliation and mistreatment at the hands of their spectators, but bond over mutual interests to lessen their suffering, and compare notes on how they got to the Moon. The nature of their connection changes and intensifies following royal orders: "le roi commanda aux gardeurs des singes de nous ramener, avec ordre exprès de nous faire coucher ensemble, l'Espagnol et moi, pour faire en son royaume multiplier notre espèce" (Bergerac, 76). While Dyrcona repeatedly expressed his discontent and misery over being kept as an animal in a cage, he reacts quite differently to these new orders: "On exécuta de point en point la volonté du prince, de quoi je fus très aise pour le plaisir que je recevais d'avoir quelqu'un qui m'entretint pendant la solitude de ma brutification (Bergerac, 76). If the initial premise of male pregnancy was theoretical and purely comical, the idea quickly becomes more physical, with the

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<sup>235</sup> This Spanish man who flew to the Moon with the help of birds is widely understood to be an allusion to Godwin's protagonist Gonzales in *The Man in the Moon*. For sources providing a deeper exploration of the ties between these books, particularly reading Godwin's book as a significant influence on Cyrano's work, see Storer, Walter H. "Notes on Cyrano De Bergerac: A Mythical Translation of the *Histoire Comique... De La Lune*." *Modern Language Notes*, vol. 39, no. 2, 1924, pp. 96–98. JSTOR; Cressy, David. "Early Modern Space Travel and the English Man in the Moon." *The American Historical Review*, vol. 111, no. 4, 2006, pp. 961–982. JSTOR; Nédelec, Claudine. "Cyrano de Bergerac, entre science et fiction," *L'information littéraire*, vol. vol. 57, no. 1, 2005, pp. 20–27.; Campbell, Mary Baine. "Impossible Voyages: Seventeenth-Century Space Travel and the Impulse of Ethnology." *Literature and History* 6.2 (1997): 1. ProQuest.

understanding that Dyrcona is ordered to have sex with the Spanish man with the apparent objective of becoming pregnant. Furthermore, Dyrcona's reaction expresses an undeniable appreciation for sexual interactions with men. Even if the pretense motivating their actions are grounded in a startling misunderstanding, the narrator reveals himself an eager opportunist.

This mistaken assumption in which the lunar people take Dyrcona to be a female monkey results, at times, in erroneous or discomfiting interpretations of the scene. Campbell describes "the (degraded) presence in Cyrano's book of Domingo himself, presented here as the Queen's pet, understood by the Lunars to be a monkey" (Campbell, 7).<sup>236</sup> Campbell never clarifies if Domingo's presence is degraded because he is reduced to a monkey in a cage, because he is forced to become Dyrcona's procreative mate, or because he is ordered to instigate sex acts with a man, or some combination of these. In an even more perplexing and fallacious interpretation, Campbell declares that in this instance (and by extension, throughout the text) that "Cyrano's narrator is metaphorically and associatively gendered female" (Campbell, 12) and even refers to him later as "the female protagonist" (Campbell, 14). Campbell's reading of the protagonist as female grants unfair significance to one of many comical misunderstandings throughout the work; for instance, while a trial concludes that Dyrcona is an ostrich, Campbell does not proclaim the novel features an aviary protagonist. Instead, I argue that Dyrcona's maleness remains intact, and his compliance to the King's orders points to queer desire rather than a female identity. While the Spaniard's perspective is not described, the text describes Dyrcona's pleasure and comfort in the scenario, which is grounded in sexual proclivities rather than a feminine duty to bear baby monkeys. Dyrcona's enthusiasm confirms the queerness of this scene, letting the reader know he is willing to have sex with someone he knows to be a man and

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<sup>236</sup> Domingo refers to Domingo Gonsales, the protagonist in Godwin's *The Man in the Moone*.

even enjoys doing so. By positioning the pleasure from this encounter as an escape from his humiliating capture, male eroticism becomes a site of queer utopian escape from an undesirable reality.

Furthermore, his maleness is integral to the utopian notion of male pregnancy. Presumably, Dyrcona and the Spaniard know no fruits should come of their intercourse. However, their captors take the possibility of his becoming pregnant quite seriously, as the king and the queen frequently took it upon themselves to poke his belly to see whether or not it was at all expanding, as they had a great desire to have the baby monkeys for their entertainment (Bergerac, 88). This response introduces the possibility that men could, perhaps, become pregnant— at least on the Moon.

Thus far, the possibility of becoming pregnant constitutes the main significant development in the male body's capabilities. Furthermore, the scene undeniably portrays two men having sex— a bluntly communicated, rare expression of male-male sexuality typically unheard of in the utopian voyage novel. As Dyrcona's voyage progresses, the male body's capabilities extend and evolve, creating new meanings and possibilities tied to life—and death. A key development in this progression takes place when Dyrcona grows close to a remarkable individual, the *Démon de Socrate*, who introduces new ways of being, where corporeality contradicts the finality of death.

#### RUNNING WITH THE DEVIL: DYRCONA AND THE *DÉMON DE SOCRATE*

While the notion of male pregnancy provides a thematic *point de départ* for queer utopia in *L'Autre Monde*, the new myriad of possibilities associated with the body, love, and with life and death expands significantly when Dyrcona befriends the *démon de Socrate*, whom he meets

shortly after being mistaken for the Queen’s monkey.<sup>237</sup> As the *démon* explains, he was born on the Sun but had lived upon the Earth, serving as a companion to Epaminodas, Caton, Brutus, and others.<sup>238</sup> On a later trip back to Earth, the *démon* mixed with the likes of Cardan, Agrippa, Doctor Faustus, Campanella, La Mothe le Vayer, and Gassendi, among others.<sup>239</sup> The *démon* possessed strange powers, which humanity struggled to understand; “on nous appelait oracles, nymphes, génies, fées, dieux foyers ... incubes, ombres, mânes, spectres, fantômes” (Bergerac, 54).<sup>240</sup> This definitional confusion exists because of how the *démon de Socrate* occupies physical forms to appear to humans; he states, “Pour me rendre visible, comme je suis à présent, quand je sens le cadavre que j’informe presque usé ou que les organes n’exercent plus leurs fonctions assez parfaitement, je me souffle dans un jeune corps nouvellement mort” (Cyrano, 62). By occupying newly deceased bodies to continue existing, the *démon* challenges existing notions of corporality, life, and death.

The *démon* is not truly human, but phantom. His phantom nature enables him to pursue a unique form of relationship with Dyrcona, one which also evokes queer utopia. Significantly, as Parmentier explains, an orthographic slippage existed between *fantôme* and *fantasme* in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Parmentier, 37). This fantasy-phantom being is “polémique, provocateur, antidogmatique, et délibérément équivoque,” as “les fantômes/fantasmes sont chez Cyrano naturels, matériels, et anti-religieux” but, furthermore, the *démon* and his relationship with

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<sup>237</sup> I suggest that this name choice (of Socrates rather than another well-known philosopher) functions as a nod to sodomitical, same-sex desire, because “Socratic Love” was a euphemism for sodomy.

<sup>238</sup> The *démon de Socrate* was, in fact, a recurring figure discussed from Antiquity onwards, by the likes of “Hésiode, Thalès, et Héraclite.” Plutarch’s *Peri tous Sôkratous Daimoniou* also discusses the figure. Parmentier adds how this figure also appeared in the “le corpus néo-platonicien (Plotin, Jamblique, Porphyre, Proclus) fait du “démon” un jalon fondamental dans la chaîne continue de l’être” (Parmentier, 18).

<sup>239</sup> For Parmentier, these men were “des auteurs notoires mais disparates” (Parmentier, 1), and reaffirm the libertine theme of the text.

<sup>240</sup> In addition to the moon, demons held a special status of cultural fascination in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. See Robert Mandrou, *Magistrats et sorciers en France au xvii<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Pion, 1968, p. 552.

Dyrcona represent how “l’imagination du romancier s’oriente si facilement vers l’érotisme. Sans perdre sa force polémique, ni sa valeur réflexive, le système de l’allusion équivoque substitue à l’autorité du vrai la prolifération indéfinie des fantasmes subversifs” (Parmentier, 37). The démon and Dyrcona’s relationship constitutes only one among many subversive fantasies, which I argue are consistently tied to imagining new utopian possibilities tied to corporeality, life, and death.

The *démon*’s way of inhabiting bodies uniquely enhances the relationship that he develops with Dyrcona. While Dyrcona remains caged (as a pet monkey), the *démon* becomes a regular visitor. He entrances Dyrcona with profound philosophical conversations, and Dyrcona revels in these regular interactions: “Presque tous les jours le démon me venait visiter et ses miraculeux entretiens me faisaient passer sans ennui les violences de ma captivité” (Cyrano, 67). Gradually, their encounters go beyond mere discussions and become physical in nature. One day, an unexpected intimate encounter occurs:

...je vis entrer dans ma loge un homme que je ne connaissais point, qui, m’ayant fort longtemps léché, m’engueula doucement par l’aisselle et, de l’une des pattes dont il me soutenait de peur que je ne me blessasse, me jeta sur son dos où je me trouvai assis si mollement et si à mon aise, qu’avec l’affliction que me faisait sentir un traitement de bête, il ne me prit aucune envie de me sauver (Cyrano, 67).<sup>241</sup>

This simultaneous crossing-over into animality and casual male-male intimate interaction signals

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<sup>241</sup> A similar interaction occurs later in the text, among the *démon*’s philosopher friends: “... nous montâmes à la chambre pour nous coucher. Un homme au haut de l’escalier se présenta à nous, qui, nous ayant envisagés fort attentivement, me mena dans un cabinet...et mon démon dans un autre... Enfin nous nous couchâmes chacun dans notre cellule; et dès que je fus étendu sur mes fleurs, j’aperçus... ces trois ou quatre jeunes garçons qui m’avaient déshabillé à souper, dont l’un se mit à me chatouiller les pieds, l’autre les cuisses, l’autre les flancs, l’autre les bras, et tous avec tant de mignoterie et de délicatesse qu’en moins d’un moment je me sentis assoupir” (Bergerac, 71-72). These bedtime rituals suggest a queered version of the harem, in which young, beautiful women are replaced by young, beautiful men who provide an environment of voluptuousness and comfort.

a clear departure from conventional or acceptable earthly interactions with companions, journeying towards unfamiliar, novel sensual experiences. Here, Dyrcona experiences a blurring of otherness and sameness; he interacts with “un homme,” like him—albeit an extraterrestrial being.

This interaction illustrates a queer utopia: the voluptuous and delicate handling by a strange man enables him to overcome his anxieties of being imprisoned as an animal lies beyond any horizon of likelihood on the author’s home planet. Their interaction is portrayed positively, in terms of softness and sensuality. This pleasure is only overshadowed by Dyrcona’s concern for “his” *démon*; “Je m’affligeais cependant outre mesure de n’avoir point de nouvelles de mon courtois démon” (Cyrano, 67). This concern is soon resolved, as his “porteur,” an unfamiliar, young, and handsome man regards him, laughs, and embraces him before asking, “Quoi! ... vous ne connaissez plus votre ami?” (Cyrano, 67). The sensual nature of this assumed anonymous interaction, combined with the joyous realization that these sensations were initiated by “mon démon,” as he calls him, becomes more poignant when Dyrcona learns of the impetus for this change in form.<sup>242</sup>

Around when Dyrcona noticed the *démon* stopped visiting him, the *démon* discovered that the body he had been inhabiting was falling apart. The *démon* went to a lunar hospital, where he found a young man who had just died. Then, in an act both imitate and disturbing, the *démon* approached the corpse, as if he noticed sudden movement, and exclaimed the man was alive. Then, he says, “je m’inspirai dedans par un souffle” (Cyrano, 68). This penetration through breath results in the transference of the *démon*’s consciousness, and his old body falls back, apparently dead. Immediately after this, the *démon* explains, “je recouru promptement chez votre

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<sup>242</sup> I wish to draw attention to the fact that, in their initial interactions, Dyrcona describes him as “le démon” but now as “mon démon,” which I read as more than mere familiarity but also as signifying intimacy.

bateleur, où je vous ai pris” (Cyrano, 68). Importantly, his first act as a reincarnated man was to immediately seek the company of Dyrcona and alert him to his presence, suggesting his prioritization of maintaining their relationship.

Rather than fear a corpse-inhabiting demon, Dyrcona actively seeks to spend time with him, a desire for contact they share. While the physical form of the *démon de Socrate* changes throughout *Lune*, the demon and Dyrcona’s interactions remain coded by physical proximity. For example, he guides him by the hand (“il me conduisit par la main derrière le jardin du logis” (Bergerac, 54)), he serves as Dyrcona’s steed (“mon porteur à quatre pattes sous moi, et moi à califourchon sur lui” (Bergerac, 56), and they embrace for prolonged periods of time (“j’aperçus mon avocat qui me tendait la main pour m’aider à descendre. Je fus bien étonné de reconnaître, quand je l’eus envisagé, que c’était mon démon. Nous fûmes une heure à nous embrasser” (Bergerac, 78). While one could reduce these intimate interactions to expressions of dedicated friendship, the culmination of their shared affection, their prolonged embraces, and their shared desire to remain in contact can also be read as something more, particularly when considered in conjunction with the earlier sexual encounters between Dyrcona and the Spaniard.

These interactions blur the line between acceptable, ideal male friendship and concerning, dangerous sodomitical relationships. Here, I use “friendship” close to the way in which Bray discusses friendship in “Homosexuality and the Signs of Male Friendship in Elizabethan England.” He identifies the ways in which two dramatically different forms of male closeness—one acceptable male friendship, the other that of a sodomitical relationship—were only delineated by subtle distinctions. Both incorporated expressions of intimacy— even kissing or holding hands— but the latter form of relationship was condemned as unnatural.<sup>243</sup> Although the

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<sup>243</sup> See Bray in Goldberg’s *Queering the Renaissance*.

situation was not identical in France, Early Modern France saw a similar dynamic where ideal, perfect male friendship was idealized, but excessive intimacy, effeminacy, or certain behaviors provoked anxiety or even accusations of sodomy. Furthermore, the nature of these interactions introduces an ongoing intersection between male homoerotic interactions (including kissing), and defying conventional limits to life and death, integral to the unique dynamic of queer utopia developed in *L'Autre Monde*.

#### DEATH (AND SEX) AT A FUNERAL: THE PHILOSOPHER'S DEATH

Cyrano's ongoing celebration of male companionship deliberately reshapes the possibilities of intimate interactions within the framework of his utopia. As Dyrcona's journey continues, more explicit expressions of sensuality and sexuality within interpersonal dynamics continue to elaborate expressions of queer utopia. This queer utopia goes further the facilitation of male interactions by extending into fantastical re-imaginings of bodily capabilities, seen thus far in the evocations of male pregnancy and the ability to occupy different bodily forms to continually pursue a relationship. Pushing the body's capabilities within the realm of the imaginary prepares the reader for a journey further beyond the conceivable, in which corporeality, life and death, and male love combine utopian longing with shocking taboos, as seen in the Philosopher's Death ritual scene.

The *démon* introduced the notion of overcoming death to continue his relationship with Dyrcona, to prolong their *amitié*. Rather than say "companionship" or "love," I use "amitié" to encapsulate the rich ambiguity of the word, especially as it is used in the text. Consulting *Le dictionnaire de l'académie française* (1694), *amitié* can mean more than just "friend": "*Amitié, Se dit quelquefois pour amour... Amitiez au pluriel, signifie, Caresses, paroles pleines d'affection... Il se dit de la personne qu' on aime d' amour*" (1694). Defying death as the means to



prolong treasured relationships continues and gains complexity in this next iteration of utopian imaginings regarding the (non)absolutes of life and death, of new modes of generation. I consider the scene of the Philosopher's Death, a scene frequently discussed by scholars of Cyrano, yet consistently interpreted in ways that I argue miss the greater significance of the utopian reimagining of life and death operated throughout *L'Autre Monde*.<sup>244</sup>

On the Moon, when a philosopher senses he has passed his physical and mental prime, he gathers his friends to a feast to reveal that he will soon be ready to die. His friends help him decide if his time has indeed come. If so, they assemble for a final event before his passing. They fast for twenty-four hours and make a sacrifice to the Sun before entering the philosopher's room, where they all give their final embraces. The ritual begins, with the philosopher in the center on a bed:

...Quand ce vient à celui qu'il aime le mieux, après l'avoir baisé tendrement, il l'appuie sur son estomac, et joignant sa bouche à sa bouche, de la main droite qu'il a libre, il se baigne un poignard dans le cœur. L'amant ne détache point ses lèvres de celles de son amant qu'il ne le sente expirer; alors il retire le fer de son sein, et fermant de sa bouche la plaie, il avale son sang et suce toujours jusqu'à ce qu'il n'en puisse davantage (Bergerac, 139).

After the beloved and the dying man kiss, and he drinks his fill of the blood, the philosopher's other companions take the beloved's place one by one. They each join him on the bed and continue to drink the blood of the philosopher until everyone has partaken. After this is complete, several hours later, they bring in a sixteen or seventeen-year old girl for each of them, "et, pendant trois ou quatre jours qu'ils sont à goûter les délices de l'amour, ils ne sont nourris

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<sup>244</sup> Being an outsider, Dycona only learns of this ritual through his philosopher friends, but does not participate.

que de la chair du mort qu'on leur fait manger toute crue, afin que, si de ces embrassements il peut naître quelque chose, ils soient comme assurés que c'est leur ami qui revit (Bergerac, 139-140). The consumption of the flesh and blood of the beloved, ingested by his friends and then transmitted through their bodies into the young women they then have sex with, seeks to accomplish the goal of assuring the prolongation of their *ami*.

This shocking, gory, and complicated scene is frequently misread in scholarly discussions of *Lune*. She identifies the central components of the ritual— “kissing, bleeding, death, sex, procreation, and the eating of flesh” (Romanowski, 420) but our interpretations differ from there. For her, the passage provides “an example of the melding of both the atomistic and the alchemic traditions.”<sup>245</sup> In her reading, “all functions of the body are simultaneously put to the service of the transmission of knowledge” (Romanowski, 420). Although Romanowski identifies the blend of materialistic, alchemic, and atomistic traditions that pervade Cyrano’s text and this ritual, I argue her attachment to the notion of the epistemological body as central to *L’Autre Monde* results in neglecting the queer longing that pervades the scene.

In Romanowski’s summary of the scene, “they kiss him tenderly on the mouth *in a kind of love-making among men*” a confusing description given Cyrano’s abundance of unabashed references to more explicit male sex acts throughout the work (Romanowski, 420, my italics).<sup>246</sup> However, a confusing double-standard emerges when Romanowski explains the point in the ritual where “young girls are brought in, and they all make love” (ibid). This establishes a dissonance between *a kind of male love-making*, and *actual* lovemaking. The lovemaking and

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<sup>245</sup>In the atomistic tradition, particles of matter convey knowledge, and with regard to the alchemic tradition, the ritual transpires under the sign of the Sun. She adds, “and let us not forget that the philosopher is a standard representation of the enlightened follower and practitioner of alchemy” (Romanowski, 420).

<sup>246</sup>For instance, the scene where Dyrcona and the Spaniard attempt to procreate, which involves “a kind of love-making among men” that does *not* resemble kissing.

eroticism of the scene is confirmed only as soon as the scene is read as heterosexual, permitting the scene to be more easily read as a sexual encounter rather than a *kind* of such an encounter.

If the ritual was justified by the transmission of knowledge alone, why mention the role of the beloved? Instead, passionate love and a defiant refusal to accept the absolutes of death guide the ceremony, for the goal is for the beloved to live again, and to continue to be loved as when alive. The transmission of knowledge plays a role, but so does the transmission the soul and spirit of the beloved philosopher. While Romanowski's interpretation teases out the different philosophical and scientific traditions within Cyrano's work, this reading misses the significance of transcending death for the sake of love, specifically male love.

The (homo)eroticism of the scene proves problematic for many scholars to describe. Failing (or refusing) to acknowledge the role of male love is symptomatic in analyses of *L'Autre Monde* rather than exceptional, as many interpretations of the Philosopher's Death scene erase any hint at queerness or male desire. This inability (or unwillingness) to confront the queerness inherent to the scene further emphasises the necessity of valorizing this work as queer utopia, as male homoeroticism fails to be acknowledged in discourse analyzing the famously libertine text. Vilquin provides one such interpretation. He suggests that Cyrano pursues the idea that death results in the random distribution of atoms in Nature, an idea demonstrated in the Philosopher's death scene or "la belle morte," which he describes as "le suicide solennel, immédiatement suivi d'une sorte de recyclage de son corps et de son esprit par le biais de l'anthropophagie et de la copulation" (Vilquin, 20). This reading (and accompanying textual citation) carefully avoids quoting or discussing problematic terms like "celui qu'il aime le plus" and "amant," to favor a reading that still evokes cannibalism and sex but avoids acknowledging homosexual love.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> According to Alcover, the 1970s marked the point around which scholars began to question if maybe Cyrano wasn't attracted to women and may even be gay, but this was at a time that homosexuality was still viewed as a

The anthropophagic element also complicates readings of this scene, even when scholars confront the queerness of the ritual. Campbell refers to the scene as “Cyrano’s astonishingly sexy version” of depicting cannibalism in a relativistic sense, à la Mandeville or Montaigne.<sup>248</sup> Furthermore, the cannibalistic element renders the ritual especially difficult to situate when considering potential religious connotations: “Its closeness to the symbolism to the eucharist, however, makes it satirically usable for the different purpose of mocking European cultural arrogance” (Campbell, 8).<sup>249</sup> However, this scene accomplishes more than an inversion of the Eucharist or of descriptions of cannibalism from travel accounts. Indeed, this scene accomplishes far more than turning the world upside down: “The combination of murder, the kiss of the lover and the beloved, anthropophagy and procreative orgy has an energy of detail and hyperbole (*enargia*) that exceeds the needs of that topos” (Campbell, 8). Here, her acknowledgment of the terms “lover” and “beloved” confirm rather than the queerness of this complex scene.

Campbell’s interpretation of the scene comes close to my understanding of the ritual’s significance: “The desire this scene plays to is a homosocial desire for male parthenogenesis, for merging substances with the beloved man or men - a desire for losing individual boundary, even if it includes death, or emasculating contact with a woman” (Campbell, 9). Her reading acknowledges the great significance of prolonging the beloved’s life, as well as the tie to fantastical procreation in which women only serve as vessels to facilitate this crowd-sourced

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pathology (Alcover, CCII). The recent shift towards Gender and Sexuality Studies and Queer studies facilitates queer readings from which negative judgement or pathologizing may be absent.

<sup>248</sup> Campbell situates the discussion of cannibalism in the realm of ethnography: “The scene of cannibalistic feasting is already the master scene of ethnography, and in straight travel writing or accounts of exploration, whatever its particular nuances of context, it always means one thing: they (the Others) are not really Human” (Campbell, 8). While I challenge this interpretation, as one could only speak of proto-ethnography at this point, I do think this could certainly be a reference to the theme of cannibalism so integral to many voyage accounts, particularly of the New World. However, that must be considered only one aspect of the scene, overshadowed by the homoerotics.

<sup>249</sup> For more on portrayals of the Eucharist in Early Modern texts such as this one, see Lestringant’s *Une sainte horreur, ou, Le voyage en eucharistie: XVIe-XVIIIe siècle*.

male pregnancy. However, describing the desire as “homosocial” is problematic given the overt homoeroticism and passion of the scene. Reduction of the desire to “homosocial” instead of “homosexual” or “homoerotic” ignores the abundance of male-male love and sex that pervade *L’Autre Monde*. This is also surprising, given her initial proclamation of the scene as “sexy.”<sup>250</sup> Reducing the desire animating the ritual to “homosocial” risks suggesting the scene is only “sexy” for the presence of the women fulfilling roles as “pornographic objects” (Campbell, 8), and not for the male homoeroticism and desire driving the ritual itself.

The moment of the philosopher's death warrants particular attention, especially since the mechanics of his death are frequently misinterpreted.<sup>251</sup> In the original quote, the use of the reflexive verb, “il se baigne un poignard dans le coeur” confirms the act as a suicide rather than consensual murder. The suicidal element recalls Muñoz’s commentary on the intersection of queerness, the utopian, and suicide: “Queerness and that particular modality of loss known as suicide seem linked. And to write or conjecture about suicide as a queer act, a performance of radical negativity, utopian in its negation of death as ultimate uncontrollable finitude, and not think about what it symbolizes for a larger collectivity would be remiss” (Muñoz, 167). Suicide must not be considered inherently queer. However, the unique dynamics of the scene, in which the philosopher’s initial self-induced act of loss and the willing acceptance of death, followed by the cooperation of his closest companions, result paradoxically in his reincarnation. The sentiment motivating this ritual— the impossible desire to immortalize the beloved through unthinkable acts— is fundamentally queer as well as utopian. Additionally, the Philosopher’s

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<sup>250</sup> I refer to my earlier quotation of Campbell, where she describes the scene as “Cyrano’s astonishingly sexy version of this scene” (Campbell, 8), referring to an interpretation of a Mandeville or Montaigne-esque account of cannibalism.

<sup>251</sup> Furthermore, Campbell misreads the scene; while she states that “the one he loves the best stabs him while kissing him and inhaling his final breath” (Campbell, 8), Romanowski (correctly) reads that “He then plunges a dagger into his own heart, and one person after the other sucks his blood from the wound” (Romanowski, 420).

Death ritual extends bodily capabilities into inconceivable, utopian realms in which male generation is achieved through this cannibalistic orgy.

Understanding the significance of male generation in this scene, however, requires considering another facet of Early Modern thought: the medical or scientific context and accompanying beliefs that existed as Cyrano penned *L'Autre Monde*. The scene accomplishes much more beyond imagining a shocking, disturbing, and sexual scene just to provoke readers. Instead, the scene describes how to recreate the beloved; it involves both generation and reincarnation “with a specificity that smacks more of magic than of biology” (Campbell, 9). This scene can be better understood when considering what people did and didn’t know about procreation in Cyrano’s time. Scholars of *L'Autre Monde* have yet to thoroughly analyze how the work inscribes itself into the medical-scientific knowledge of the early modern period, but such an approach permits valuable insights into the ritual. My reading of the Philosopher’s Death ritual as grounded in medical-scientific theory does not downplay the queer utopian value of Cyrano’s text. It does, however, call to move away from the interpretations of the scene that read it as an inversion of New World cannibalistic scenes, or as a blasphemous sexualization of the Eucharistic scene, to move towards considering the value of reading the scene through the mentalities of Early Modern medicine, largely neglected by scholarship. This scene elevates the polyvalent characteristics of blood, creating a way to transcend death and prolong the existence of the beloved.

As Campbell explains, “The man made in this scene (written before Leeuwenhoek, in 1677, first saw sperm with the microscope) is made of blood, flesh, breath and affect, digestively transmuted into procreative fluid in the bodies of his male friends and placed, literally, in the matrices of healthy young breeder-females (Campbell, 9). The bizarre dynamics of the ritual do

more than provide a very impractical way to prolong the existence of their friend.<sup>252</sup> Around the time Cyrano wrote, semen was thought to be distilled blood (McClive, 202). Therefore, the notion of drinking blood as a method of transferring and generating the beloved into a new body, facilitated by this conception of seminal fluid, was simultaneously utopian yet ingrained in the medical beliefs of the time.<sup>253</sup>

These medical beliefs, regarding the unified properties of bodily fluids, actually extended back to the time of Galen. For Galen, women were considered variations of men rather than a distinct category; the vaginal cavity was an inverted penis, the ovaries like internal testicles.<sup>254</sup> The Galenic understanding of men and women informs Laqueur's conception of the one-sex body, in which bodily fluids were interrelated: "In the blood, semen, milk, and other fluids of the one-sex body, there is no female and no sharp boundary between the sexes. Instead, a physiology of fungible fluids and corporeal flux represents in a different register the absence of specifically genital sex" (Laqueur, 35). Therefore, semen and blood were, to an extent, interchangeable.

The Galenic notion of interchangeable, correlated fluids endured, still present in the 17th century. Cyrano's portrayal of this death-generation scene plays upon this correlation, and the men drinking their lover's blood could be read as their consuming his ejaculate (since the blood could be distilled into ejaculate within the body).<sup>255</sup> By extension, they not only symbolically but also quite literally re-created their lover in this ritual. Not just the blood-drinking, but even the

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<sup>252</sup> By "impractical," I mean this ritual deliberately avoids a more obvious approach; "the time-honoured way to provide offspring is more direct- the philosopher could have impregnated the girls himself before his artificial death" (Campbell, 9). However, such a scene would detract from the queer as well as utopian value of the ritual; such a logical approach has no place on the Moon. Furthermore, such an approach would mean the philosopher's friends or lovers would not have been involved in the process. By involving them on the most internal level, their very bodies aid in the prolongation of their beloved philosopher.

<sup>253</sup> Laqueur also emphasizes the value of blood for Early Modern beliefs, especially as tied to generation; even breast milk was thought to be distilled blood (Laqueur, 105).

<sup>254</sup> Laqueur, 26.

<sup>255</sup> Blood and semen were not only related, but fell within a specific hierarchy. In Early Modern medicine studies, male as well as female ejaculate "is made from the purest part of the blood, from the essence of life" (Laqueur, 38).

flesh-eating is tied to generation; “The complex network of interconvertibility implicit in the physiology of one sex... encompasses flesh as well as fluid” (Laqueur, 37). Therefore, when the male friends consumed the flesh of their beloved as well as drank his blood, they ensured that he could live again. With this knowledge, the scene takes on greater significance beyond providing an unsettling blend of carnage and sex; rather, it is a deliberate, productive, and generative scene that grants utopian possibilities to male love.

The enduring Galenic model of the one-sex body with interchangeable fluids, in which flesh and blood could be converted into semen, appears to explain the physical dynamics of the Philosopher’s Death ritual. However, Laqueur’s interpretation of Bakhtin’s notion of the grotesque body helps to elaborate the function of this ritual to greater significations. Bakhtin’s grotesque body is a body in the process of becoming or dissolving. This interim point blurs the dialectical opposition of life and death that experience such revolutionary changes in *L’Autre Monde*. As Laqueur explains, “The primary organs in this act of self-creation are those that conceive new bodies or more generally break the bounds of their host” (Laqueur, 121). Bakhtin focused on the penis and the bowels as the primary “organs,” responsible for “ingestion, elimination from all the orifices of the body, copulation, pregnancy, and dismemberment” (Laqueur, 121).<sup>256</sup>

Cyrano, I argue, takes the “act of self-creation” to a literal level, by displacing the woman to center on the male as the essential generative force, with the philosopher initiating the ritual and his friends consuming him to recreate him. Cyrano’s queer utopia expands upon copulation and pregnancy to hold men as the givers of life, an act that must be accomplished amongst other

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<sup>256</sup>This focus compliments Cyrano’s frequent phallic references throughout the text. This is seen, for instance, in the retelling of Edenic myth in which the “snake” that bites Eve is really Adam’s penis, or in the phallic bronze belts worn by the Sélénariens. For an exploration of phallic themes in *Lune*, see Goux, Jean-Joseph. “Language, Money, Father, Phallus in Cyrano De Bergerac’s Utopia.” *Representations*, no. 23, 1988, pp. 105–117



men. Bakhtin conceived of the grotesque body as both cosmic and universal, therefore especially in this extraterrestrial setting. In the Philosopher's Death ritual, dismemberment plays a vital role in copulation and pregnancy, for it is via the consumption (or dismemberment) of the Beloved that he may continue to live. The men's consumption of the flesh (and not the women's wombs) permit the Lover to live on.

With *Cyrano*, queer utopia exclusively occupies the extraordinary realm, and inverts or rejects the ordinary. The drinking and consuming of flesh to promote generation reflects Bakhtin's conception of the grotesque body; in this image of the body, "particular parts—especially blood—provide a link between generations, a bond between the death of an individual body and the continuance of the corporeal body social" (Laqueur, 121). While the word "grotesque" carries a negative connotation, it bears remembering the aesthetic of burlesque inversion that pervades through *L'Autre Monde*. The grotesque body is glorified, granted new levels of possibility, no longer a shameful thing to be hidden. The unflinching portrayal of the grotesque body, and the embracing of the male body as generative fulfill queer utopia.

The Philosopher's Death ritual stands out, not only for the grotesque and horrifying aspects, but for its unmatched portrayal of male love. Portrayals of male love and desire in the 17th century, if ever found, were overwhelmingly couched in terms of friendship and nearly impossible to distinguish as anything more.<sup>257</sup> Therefore, when discussing scenes that lend themselves to queer interpretations, such scenes deserve a reading that elaborate upon rather than neglect such content. The process of this ritual, with the final goal of male parthenogenesis to

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<sup>257</sup> That said, the notion of friendship carries a unique meaning in the Early Modern period. As Reeser explains in his analysis of Montaigne and La Boétie's relationship, "Male/ male *amitié* might incarnate moderate human relationships, but the living man's relation to the deceased friend risks articulating desire like the emotional elegiac for the lost friend, which threatens to express homoerotic instead of homosocial affection" (Reeser, 209). In the ritual, however, this threat is flaunted rather than mitigated, in an unbridled expression of homoerotic desire.

prolong the existence of the beloved, is fundamentally infused with queerness and queer utopian longing. Given the explicit references to the “amant” and the emphasis on (unconventional) acts to ensure generation, this scene must not be reduced to friendship. Instead, the ritual creates a new form of generation that not only celebrates male love but endeavors to make it eternal.

### LES ARBRES AMANTS: REWRITING LOVE’S ORIGIN STORY

While *Lune* features an abundance of queer utopian possibility, particularly regarding male intimacy and generation, the most striking and far-reaching depiction of queer utopia occurs in *Soleil*. A substantial portion of *Lune* featured philosophical discussion, the inversion of societal customs and conventions, and a smattering of queer encounters.<sup>258</sup> Meanwhile, *Soleil* contains far more mystic and symbolic imagery, engaging in a significant amount of borrowings from and rewritings of Greek mythology, especially Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (Alcover, 236). Dyrcona witnesses incredible spectacles, beautiful and marvelous landscapes, and encounters a spectrum of individuals (including Campanella), but the culmination of queer utopia doesn’t remain bound to interpersonal encounters, but rather in the depiction and elaboration of a living myth.

Over the course of his solar wanderings, Dyrcona finds himself in a forest of living, speaking trees. One of the tree-beings recounts the story of the mythic *Arbres Amants*. The tree points out “deux arbres jumeaux de médiocre taille, qui confondant leurs branches et leurs racines, s’efforcent par mille sortes de moyens de ne devenir qu’un” (Cyrano, 280). Dyrcona studies the plants and observes that “les feuilles de [toutes] les deux, légèrement agitée d’une émotion quasi

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<sup>258</sup> These acts are all connected. Importantly, Dyrcona consistently reacts favorably or neutrally: “le héros est soumis parallèlement à un traitement corporel qui s’étend du chatouillement caressant de beaux valets de chambre à une copulation sodomitique opérée en douceur. Plus tard il apprendra que, dans la lune, philosophie rime avec amour des mâles et que les pratiques homosexuelles y sont le lot de l’élite intellectuelle, des ‘sages.’ Absence de réaction négative à l’accouplement avec l’Espagnol et absence de remarques sur la relation du banquet funèbre au cours duquel les amants se livrent à une consommation doublement charnelle. Sans commentaires, en quelque sorte” (Alcover, CCIV).

volontaire, excitaient en frémissant un murmure si délicat, qu'à peine effleurait-il l'oreille, avec lequel pourtant on eût dit qu'elles tâchaient de s'interroger et de se répondre" (Cyrano, 280). The two trees seem to resemble two lovers, communicating and touching in a way only they understand. Dyrcona learns that these plants are the arboreal manifestation of "la fameuse amitié de Pylade et d'Oreste" (Cyrano, 281). By this point in the narrative, "le lecteur comprend qu'il s'agit de ce que certains appellent les *amitiés particulières*" (Alcover, 281). Recalling Bray's work on the ambiguities and double meaning of male friendship, this special *amitié* is taken to mean a homosexual couple.

Pylade and Oreste's relationship embodies ideal masculinity, represented in terms of heroic bravery on the battlefield.<sup>259</sup> In the heat of battle, Oreste searches for Pylade, to either gain glory for him or die in his presence. He finds his lover mortally wounded, and rushes into a desperate final embrace: "Enfin Pylade tomba sans vie; et l'amoureux Oreste, qui sentait pareillement la sienne sur le bord de ses lèvres, la retint toujours, jusqu'à ce que d'une vue égarée ayant cherché parmi les morts et retrouvé Pylade, il sembla, collant sa bouche, vouloir jeter son âme dedans le corps de son ami" (Cyrano, 281-282). This act seeks to transmit his soul into the beloved via the breath.<sup>260</sup> Oreste's desperate act displays the utopian desire to immortalize their relationship and save his beloved. His efforts also constitute a refusal of loss. Muñoz writes, "To accept loss is to accept the way in which one's queerness will always render one lost to a world of heterosexual imperatives, codes, and laws" (Muñoz, 72-73). Instead, Oreste refuses loss and bravely initiates new possibilities, demonstrating the unbounded potential of the Sun as utopian space.

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<sup>259</sup> This is surprising, when considered in contrast to other Early Modern associations between male-male desire and effeminacy. See the previous chapter for how homosexual men were connoted as effeminate, and the negative perceptions of effeminacy in 17th century France.

<sup>260</sup> The nature of this act, in which one's essence is transmitted by the breath, recalls both the way the *démon de Socarate* inhabits new corpses, as well as the lover's kiss at the start of the Philosopher's Death ritual.

What would normally comprise a tragic ending paves the way instead for a utopian, transformative, and fundamentally queer moment:

Le plus jeune de ces héros expira de douleur sur le cadavre de son ami mort; et vous saurez que de la pourriture de leur tronc, qui sans doute avait engrossé la terre, on vit germer par entre les os déjà blancs de leurs squelettes, deux jeunes arbrisseaux dont la tige et les branches, se joignant pêle-mêle, semblaient ne se hâter de croître qu’afin de s’entortiller davantage. On connut bien qu’ils avaient changé d’être, sans oublier ce qu’ils avaient été; car leurs boutons parfumés se penchaient l’un sur l’autre, et s’entr’échauffaient de leur haleine, comme pour se faire éclore plus vite (Cyrano, 283-284).

Distinct from the *Philosopher’s Death*, in which the beloved philosopher would live again but starting as a newborn, this scene further extends the utopian possibility of male generation by merging their beings—yet retaining their distinct mutual desires for each other—into two trees interwoven to the point of passing as one. Similar to the *Philosopher’s Death*, however, deceased flesh acts as the raw material for new life. As Pylade and Oreste share their dying breath, their love and mutual dependency transform into a symbiotic relationship, in a different physical form retaining the essence of their love.

Cyrano’s retelling of their story effectively reaches back and reclaims Greek myth and adapts it to his own purpose. This evokes a performance of queer utopian memory, which is “a utopia that understands its time as reaching beyond some nostalgic past that perhaps never was or some future whose arrival is continuously belated— a utopia in the present” (Muñoz, 37). While scholars such as Halperin confirm the presence (and culturally-specific normalcy) of male-male homosexuality in Ancient Greece, such interactions presented a problem in

Renaissance France.<sup>261</sup> Many conventional classic French retellings of Greek myths had to “erase” any queerness to respect *bienséance*.<sup>262</sup> Here, Cyrano does the opposite; telling this myth not only reclaims male love, but enhances the myth to serve the queer utopian purpose of valorizing, even glorifying male-male love.

If the story of Pylande and Oreste’s ended with their transformation into intertwined trees, the evolving theme of male love gaining the utopian potential of transcending fixed categories of life and death would already be fulfilled. Yet this story extends further into the utopian realm by rewriting the very origin story of love itself. The trees possess unique powers, an amorous counterpart to the Biblical Tree of Knowledge. These trees, these “amants bienheureux” produce magical twin apples. If one person eats the fruit of one tree, they fall madly in love with whoever eats the fruit of the other tree. The fruits make no distinction based on sex; two men, two women, or a man and a woman (or any imaginable pair) could all fall under their spell.<sup>263</sup> The trees quickly become a popular pilgrimage site for couples (Cyrano, 283). As the narrator describes the effects of these magical fruits, the story transitions into an *apologia* for perfect male love. However, the positive outcomes of the trees are followed by a cautionary tale depicting flawed couplings, the unfortunate consequences of the powerful forces

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<sup>261</sup> See Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*.

<sup>262</sup> Note especially Chapter 1, “The Renaissance of sex: Orpheus, mythography, and making sexual meaning” in Katherine Crawford’s *The Sexual Culture of the French Renaissance*. As the French Renaissance “rediscovered” texts from Antiquity, they encountered the problem of (male) homosexuality, and had to confront (read, erase) the sexuality of these texts to render them appropriate for the reading public. This was often done by rewriting certain love-centric stories as ideal friendship, for instance. Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*, Crawford states, provided easy to rework to serve religious purposes— so it is particularly important that *Soleil* is considered a rewriting of this very text.

<sup>263</sup> Rosellini suggests subtle distinctions in how the couples are described: “Le narrateur distingue lexicalement les diverses sortes de lien, nommant “amitié” l’affection des hommes entre eux, et “amour” celle d’un homme pour une femme et réciproquement, mais l’explication préalable ramène cette distinction à un effet tout extérieur de bienséance” (Rosellini, 34). However, I disagree. Homosexual male love is by no means hidden, but rather deliberately associated with ideal love; after all, the “bande sacrée” is referred to as the “amoureuse compagnie.” While the text asserts that “amitié” produces these great actions, this conflation of love and friendship portrays a form of relationship that touches both Antiquity and queer utopia by evoking male homosexual love. If anything, Cyrano intentionally creates a slippage between *amour* and *amitié* intended to provoke the reader.

infused in the fruits.

The fruits do more than make a couple fall in love; when eaten together, the fruits also impart gendered dynamics that reflect Oreste and Pylade's relationship. For instance, "quand le fruit de l'un des arbres était mangé par un homme, et le fruit de l'autre arbre par un autre homme, cela engendrait l'amour réciproque," but when a heterosexual couple eat the fruit, "elle engendrait l'amour, mais un amour vigoureux qui gardait toujours le caractère de sa cause; car encore que ce fruit proportionnât son effet à la puissance, amollissant sa vertu dans une femme, il conservait pourtant toujours je ne sais quoi de mâle" (Bergerac, 283). The fruits could also lead to dangerous consequences; no one was immune from the fruits' powers. Additionally, whoever ate more of the fruit would fall *more* in love with their counterpart. Despite the risks, word of the magical powers of the trees' fruit soon spread and attracted young crowds, eager to emulate the perfect *amitié* of Pylade and Oreste (Cyrano, 284).

As Dyrcona learns, these powerful fruits bestowed their magic upon famous partners from Antiquity: "On vit depuis ce temps-là des Hercules et des Thésées, des Achilles et des Patrocles, des Nisus et des Euryales; bref, un monde innombrable de ceux qui par des *amitiés* plus qu'humaines, ont consacré leur mémoire au temple de L'Eternité" (Cyrano, 284, my italics). When reading this scene, it is especially important to recall the "semantic ambiguity that had long surrounded the French word 'amitié,' which until the eighteenth century could also refer to an erotic or love relationship" (Seifert, 230). Beyond these commendable examples, one myth constitutes the crowning glory of male-male love facilitated by the trees.<sup>264</sup> A group of sages

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<sup>264</sup> This reference to the *Bande Sacrée* may provide a cheeky allusion to the sexual connotation of the verb "bander"— which, although "bander" could mean "lier avec quelque bande," or "faire opposer, faire soulever" (Richelet, 1680), the verb also held sexual connotations in the early modern period; in La Roux's *Dictionnaire comique, satyrique, critique, burlesque, libre et proverbial*, it can mean "sentir la resurrection de la chair humaine, être en humeur d'en découdre avec une femme, sentir des démangeaisons amoureuses, appeter l'union" (Le Roux, 1750). While I do not claim to know that a double-meaning is intended here, it would be remiss to neglect the possibility.

assembled Greek soldiers and lovers, who ate the fruit together, thus transforming “cette troupe d’amants” into a company, named “la Bande sacrée,” who composed “cette amoureuse compagnie” (Cyrano, 285).<sup>265</sup> Their company was uniquely successful: “chacun de ces braves au combat, pour garantir son amant, ou pour mériter d’être aimé, hasardait des efforts si incroyables, que l’Antiquité n’a rien vu de pareil” (Cyrano, 284-285).

This group’s reputation of exceptional bravery serves a distinct purpose: “Les louables actions ici énumérées avec tant de poésie constituent une superbe apologie de l’homosexualité masculine” (Alcover, 285). The *Bande Sacrée* provides the justification for displacing male-male love from reprehensible and unnatural to glorious and uniquely successful. While the literature of the 17th century overwhelmingly portrays queerness as unnatural, unlawful, and unutterable, these positive narratives provide a vital counter-narrative and constitute a daring site of resistance, in a reclamatory redeployment of Greek myths.

Following this ideal example, Dyrcona learns the stories of other couples who consumed the fruits and fell in love, providing the dystopian side of the fruits’ powers. Importantly, none of these dystopian couples are composed of men loving men, but rather permutations of every other kind of couple. This is no coincidence. Certainly, “Cyrano propose à ses lecteurs, sous la forme d’une fable d’une très grande poésie, une apologie sans précédent des amours masculines” (Alcover, CCV). However, the *Arbres Amants* myth goes further, illustrating an intersection between queer utopia and burlesque inversion. Not only does Cyrano position male *amitié* as heroic and glorious; he simultaneously portrays other forms of couples as monstrous and unnatural.

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<sup>265</sup> As Alcover notes, the *Bande Sacrée* could be traced to Ancient Greek history; for instance, Plutarque’s *Life of Pélopidas* grants a passage to this famous group of male lovers (Alcover, 285). Yet again, Cyrano revitalizes and redeploys Greek myths to create a uniquely glorifying portrayal of love between men.

Despite the infinite number of laudable acts carried out by the *Bande Sacrée*, the trees' fruits inadvertently caused some couplings described as "bien honteuses" (Cyrano, 286). The unfortunate couples represent familiar Greek mythology. While the glorifying description of the *Bande Sacrée* provided an earnest and favorable portrayal of male couples, the other descriptions frequently devolve into more burlesque, even raunchy descriptions. The fruits explain Myrrha and her father Cinyras' incest, as well as Pasiphaé's bestial coupling with a bull. Even Pygmalion and his marble statue of Venus appear; some of the fruit's juice permeated the marble, bringing it to life.

In other instances, Cyrano appears to significantly rewrite Greek myths to alter their erotic and queer dynamics. In the retelling of the myth of Echo and Narcissus, Narcissus accidentally eats both fruits, leading to an internalized homoerotic scene in which the fruit "excita toutes les parties de son corps à se caresser; son coeur où s'écoulait leur double vertu rayonna ses flammes en dedans; tous ses membres, animés de sa passion, voulurent se pénétrer l'un l'autre" (Cyrano, 290). Surprisingly, he even portrays a lesbian couple.<sup>266</sup> Cyrano reimagines the myth of Iphis and Ianthé, in a way that emphasizes the queer nature of their coupling.<sup>267</sup> Cyrano also erases Salmacis' rape of Hermaphrodite, who instead insists they each drink the juice of both fruits.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> This is surprising because, apart from the obvious example of Sappho from Lesbos), lesbian desire or love figures little into Greek myth compared to male-male or heterosexual love; furthermore, lesbian desire also figures little into well-known early modern texts.

<sup>267</sup> In the original story, Iphis was born to her poor parents. Knowing the girl would have no dowry and would be better-off drowned, the mother disguises her as a boy, with the help of the goddess Isis. Raised as a boy, her and girlfriend Ianthé fall in love, determined to be married. Despairing Iphis and her mother plead to Isis for help. Isis transforms Iphis into a man, so the two can be legally married. In Cyrano's version, however, the two women know each other as women, and the two women willingly eat the fruits anticipating the consequences. Iphis eats more of the fruit, which renders her more ardent; so much so, that she effectively turns into "ce qu'il faut être pour épouser une femme" (Cyrano, 288). In this version, the women begin as a lesbian couple, rather than posturing as a heterosexual couple—although the fruits do appear to alter this initial difference.

<sup>268</sup> Cyrano's retelling of myths doesn't only glorify male-male couplings, but also retells certain myths in ways that erase certain problematic aspects. Alcover elaborates on this incident to connect to a larger project of "fixing" myths: "Dans les Métamorphoses d'Ovide, Salmacis s'empare d'Hermaphrodite par un viol (IV, v. 270-410). Cet exemple, plus que tous les autres, montre le dessein délibéré de Cyrano de disculper au maximum ses protagonistes" (Alcover, 292).



Hermaphrodite and Salmacis converge into a turbulent, queer new version of being defying any fixed notion of gender: “Hermaphrodite s’absorba dans Salmacis, et Salmacis se fondit entre les bras d’Hermaphrodite. Ils passèrent l’un dans l’autre, et de deux personnes de sexe différent, ils en composèrent un double je ne sais quoi qui ne fut ni homme ni femme” (Cyrano, 291). Their union echoes an overarching project of reimagining generation, in the form of procreative hermaphroditism; “Ce double je ne sais quoi gardait pourtant son unité; il engendrait et concevait, sans être ni homme ni femme; enfin la nature, en lui, fit voir une merveille qu’elle n’a jamais su depuis empêcher d’être unique” (Cyrano, 291-292). The original love of Pylade and Oreste transcended death and transformed into new life, facilitating the emergence of new forms of being and loving. This queer utopia facilitates not only male love, but also completely destabilizes personal boundaries and gender. Rewriting ideal love and relationships while devalorizing normative relationships facilitates new generative energy in a way Cyrano could only imagine outside of the limitations of earthly society.

On Earth, the families of these lovers grew upset when lovers eagerly gave all their wealth and property to their “ami.” These families burned down the trees, in a violent act of retaliation that lends itself to signify the destruction of free love, with unlimited eroticism or desire burned down by those unable to handle societal upheaval. The simultaneous alignment of Earth with loveless dystopia and the heavens with an optimistic (queer) utopia follows: “Ainsi l’espèce étant perdue, c’est pour cela qu’on ne trouve plus aucun ami véritable” (Cyrano, 294). However, as the trees burned, falling rain calcified in the cinders, solidifying into complementary metallic stones, thus explaining the origin of magnets.<sup>269</sup> Throughout each transformation, Pylade and Oreste

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<sup>269</sup> The play on “aimant” (loving) and “aimant” (magnet) abounds throughout *Lune* and *Soleil*, rendering this moment poignant and cyclical. Importantly, this connection builds off of definitional ambiguity of the word *amitié*; some definitions of *amitié* incorporate magnetism; “*Amitié*, Se dit fig. de la simpatie qui se trouve naturellement entre de certaines choses, soit dans les vegetaux, soit dans les mineraux.” (Le Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française,

“aspirent encore tous les jours de s’embrasser” (Cyrano, 295), in a magnetic depiction of utopian possibility as well as a happy ending. After all, this (queer) couple survived all. Their love endured beyond their deaths upon the battlefield, and even survived the violent conflagration caused by outsiders who resented the impractical, transformative love caused by their coupling. Oreste and Pylade’s utopian relationship endured in the form of an unbreakable attraction, both literal and metaphysical. In a cosmic continuance of the significance of the couple, even the magnetic poles of the Earth are explained by Pylade and Oreste’s love.

Cyrano’s articulation of the *Arbres Amants* myth undertakes the articulation of queer utopia on multiple levels. The *Bande Sacrée* glorified male-male love. The diverse couplings facilitated by the fruit imagined new forms of being and loving that defied all conventions of gender and desire. Beyond that, “la norme amoureuse se déplace de l’hétérosexualité à l’homosexualité” (Rosellini, 34).<sup>270</sup> In this iteration of inversion, love between *different* rather than the same sexes are aligned with monstrosity.<sup>271</sup> I hesitate to claim that these stories function to challenge the idea of perversion altogether, or to argue against any love as being against nature. However, one can nonetheless assert that Cyrano’s rewriting and unifying of Greek myth proposes a new origin myth of love itself. Perfect, utopian love was born from two men, with all other iterations of novel, admirable, or terrible love born from their union. Although the trees were born out of Oreste and Pylade’s desire for their love to transcend death, their love also enacted the generation of every imaginable possibility in the realm of love and desire, the most expansive queer utopia imaginable. Oreste and Pylade displace Adam and Eve as the original couple, and utopian male love get its time in—or on—the sun.

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1694). Attraction could be said to provide a unifying theme throughout the work—that is, male attraction.

<sup>270</sup> This displacement echoes the inversion undertaken in Foigny’s *La Terre Australe Connue*, in which hermaphroditism is established as the norm, and non-hermaphroditism as monstrosity.

<sup>271</sup> Rosellini, 34.

Cyrano's *L'Autre Monde* engages in an ongoing pursuit of absolute freedom. While Vilquin's reading of Cyrano ignores queer elements altogether, I do agree with his assertion that "La liberté, l'amour et l'amitié sont bien les seules valeurs [que Cyrano] ne tournera jamais en dérision" (Vilquin, 14). While freedom remains elusive for Dyrcona, in his recurring pattern of imprisonment and expulsion, the true utopia in *L'Autre Monde* goes beyond personal freedom. Instead, the text visualizes the liberation of men's interactions and love, new ways of inhabiting bodies and generating life, and the possibility of overcoming the previously immutable categories of life and death.

Muñoz states that "[queer] utopia is not simply about achieving happiness or freedom; utopia is in fact a casting of a picture of potentiality" (Muñoz, 125).<sup>272</sup> Here, the casting of potentiality goes beyond imagining Dyrcona's freedom to engage in sensual, erotic practices with other male beings— although that aspect deserves recognition. Potentiality extends the reach of queer utopian longing into the mastery of life itself, from the moment of generation to the refutation of death as absolute. The notion of male pregnancy, beginning as an idea, becomes an attempted act (in the Queen's pet incident), and develops into a complex reimagining of how even death cannot limit loving relationships between men. The *démon de Socrate's* capabilities to occupy new bodies to prolong his relationship with Cyrano introduced the possibility of defying death, and Philosopher's Death ritual portrays a collective effort to prolong the spirit of the beloved through the transmutation of flesh. Finally, in the *Arbres Amants* scene, the purest form of love transforms dying lovers into new trees of life, becoming a new creation myth for love itself, in all its glories and accidents.

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<sup>272</sup> By potentiality, I refer to latent capacities or qualities of what could be, in a fundamentally utopian sense. Casting potentiality, in the context of *L'Autre Monde* or other queer utopia, means illustrating a vision of what could be, and thus by depicting it, brings this utopia to the visible horizon.

*L'Autre Monde* should be read as anything but a typical utopia. Cyrano's no-place is anything but safe or certain; on the Moon and Sun, constant disruptions and displacements replace security or order. Yet this turmoil is a productive or generative turmoil, particularly with regard to how the work directs queer narrative and subversive sexualities. However, the radical realities envisioned proved too dangerous for their time; "L'étrange message de Cyrano se perd dans une culture plus soucieuse de se protéger du danger de vivre que de s'exposer à des bouleversements, fussent-ils brillants de promesses" (Carré, 65). Cyrano's queer utopia may have lacked the recognition or appreciation it deserved in its time, censored or sanitized in early editions. Today, however, his worlds can be retroactively valorized as rare, poignant imaginings of queer utopian longing. It is possible (and important) "to recruit the queerness of past historical periods not in order to justify one or another partisan model of gay life in the present but rather to acknowledge, promote, and support a heterogeneity of queer identities, past *and* present" (Halperin, 16). Cyrano's diverse portrayals of male love elucidate our limited capacity to imagine what homosexual love, behavior, and desire may have looked like— at least, in the utopian realm— in 17th century France.

However, Cyrano's text doesn't just portray homosexual or homoerotic desire; rather, "la force qui *dynamise* ces récits inclassables est l'amour de Cyrano pour les mâles: c'est ce déplacement premier qui provoque tous les autres" (Alcover, CLXV-CLXVI). The all-encompassing inversions of science, philosophy, and morality of *L'Autre Monde* can be traced back to the starting point of liberating male love. The articulation of queer utopia in *L'Autre Monde* must not be divorced from the hostile social context in which it was written, in which sodomy was condemned as unnatural, punishable by death. Cyrano's depictions of male eroticism accomplish more than provoke or excite the reader; "Il ne s'agit plus de promouvoir la

sodomie, mais de faire valoir la relation homosexuelle en la dégageant de la condamnation morale qui pèse sur elle” (Rosellini, 36). Despite having to consider his imagined worlds as incomplete at his death in 1655, he nonetheless left behind worlds full of queer utopia, particularly rich for their abundant celebrations of the sensory, the beautiful, the transcendent, and the corporeal— all pushed to extremes that challenge the most creative of imaginations.

The queer utopia evoked in Cyrano’s work must be understood as more than a diverse array of love or erotic encounters with men. Rather, his work was infused with “une homosexualité si radicale qu’avant d’en devenir le chantre apaisé, il a tout renversé sur son passage” (Alcover, CCVIII). In other words, the work advances radical queerness. Here, I do not only utilize the term “queer” as an all-encompassing term for non-normative sexualities and gender identities, but “queer” as the raw power of those who reject oppressive social conventions outright. I refer to “queer” as the active and ongoing resistance against hegemonic institutions like compulsory heterosexuality or gender norms, even when doing so risks grave retaliation. *L’Autre Monde*, in other words, visualized the spirit of queer utopia before the concept could even be articulated. For Cyrano, a far-flung *terre incognita* was insufficient to articulate his utopian vision. If Muñoz posited the horizon as the site for queer utopia, Cyrano could visualize queer utopia’s horizon on the Moon or the Sun—but not on Earth.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE UTOPIAN FUNCTION OF NEGATIVITY: ANTI-SOCIAL REFUSAL IN *LETTRES D'UNE PÉRUVIENNE*

In the previous chapter, the voyage towards utopia advanced by movements of expansion and inclusion in Bergerac's *États et empires de la lune et du soleil*. New ways of loving and the rare glorification of men loving men provided a novel imagining of queer utopia. In this chapter, however, Graffigny's utopia charts an opposite trajectory of movement. Rather than expanding outward, this utopia retreats inward, by degrees of refusal rather than inclusion. Despite considerable between Bergerac and Graffigny's utopia, the structuring strategy of reversal ties these two texts together, and both texts reimagine conventional utopia to define new ways of being. In a world categorized by burlesque reversal, Cyrano's Moon turned the world upside down. Graffigny's *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* employs reversal by flipping the trajectory of the conventional voyage to utopia, where the European (male) voyager travels to a foreign land. Instead, Incan princess Zilia unwillingly travels from the Incan civilization in Peru, to encounter the "new world" of Enlightenment-era France.

While the previous chapter centered on radical expressions of (male) sexuality in Bergerac's utopia, this chapter considers a text which rejects and seeks to move beyond sexuality altogether. The public's reaction to each text suggests that both inviting *and* rejecting sexuality are unacceptable. Both Graffigny and Bergerac's texts experienced a degree of public backlash, albeit for different reasons. Bergerac's text warranted censorship and stirred up controversy in part for writing desire and intimacy between men, as well as for abundant heretical and crude content. In turn, Graffigny's text shocked readers for its unexpected and unconventional ending,

crafting a novel conclusion refusing romantic (or sexual) love. If Bergerac's protagonist was condemned for his intimacy, Graffigny's protagonist was condemned for her lack thereof.

The plot of *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* recounts firsthand the travels and experiences of Zilia, a young and naïve Incan princess. Initially, she lived an isolated yet privileged existence as a Virgin in the Temple of the Sun, betrothed to prince Aza. When Spanish conquistadors arrive to plunder and pillage the Incan kingdom, Zilia's world comes to a violent end. The conquistadors massacre everyone around her, steal gold from the Temple, and kidnap Zilia. En route to Spain, a French ship intercepts them, taking both Zilia and the stolen Incan treasures. While aboard the ship, one of the French sailors, the *chevalier de Déterville*, takes a marked interest in her.<sup>273</sup> Upon their arrival in France, he introduces her to a noble court in Paris. From there, her letters to Aza recount her adjustment to French society. These letters engage in a range of philosophical, proto-sociological, and critical musings on the noble French society surrounding her. When some of the treasures taken from Peru come into Zilia's possession, she discovers unexpected possibilities tied to her new, powerful status as property owner.

Zilia's creator, Madame de Graffigny, also experienced near-powerlessness for much of her life, but a combination of talent, a keen skill for networking, and perseverance provided a way forward. Although Madame de Graffigny would become "the world's most famous living woman writer" from 1750-1758,<sup>274</sup> her trajectory to the writing table was compelling and challenging. While she held an enviable status as a member of the provincial nobility, a combination of marital problems, persisting poverty, and an uncertain status greatly hindered not only her path to success, but her stability. Soon after her marriage to François Huguet, he revealed himself as an abusive, alcoholic, and irresponsible husband, beating her and gambling

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<sup>273</sup> From this point on, I refer to *le chevalier de Déterville* as "Déterville."

<sup>274</sup> Showalter, XV.

away their wealth. After his imprisonment for domestic violence and their failed reconciliation, Madame de Graffigny obtained a legal separation from him, although she could not remarry.<sup>275</sup> Her condition improved somewhat when Huguet died; “[w]idowhood was in many ways the most desirable social status a woman could attain in eighteenth-century France” because widows were “neither dependent on the consent of a father to marry, nor forbidden by law and honour to listen to a suitor” (Showalter, 21). Graffigny gained a position at the ducal court of Lorraine (under the duc de Lorraine François III). However, when the Treaty of Vienna (1738) sought to end the Polish Wars of Succession, Stanisław Leszczyński received Vienna, to be returned to France upon his death. This dissolved the court and with it Graffigny’s position.<sup>276</sup>

In her precarious status, Graffigny found herself forced to live with acquaintances or in convents, until she finally signed a lease on her own place in Paris in 1742. Obtaining her own space granted her the ability to invite houseguests and host her own salon, a critical transitional point for Graffigny’s career.<sup>277</sup> Her salon permitted her to develop vital contacts like Maupertuis, who facilitated her entry into Parisian high society, or the abbé Pérau, who involved her in writing and publishing.<sup>278</sup> She also found herself better able to pursue her interest in becoming a professional writer, a dream she held since at least 1733.<sup>279</sup>

Beyond writing letters, Graffigny’s first major foray into writing occurred “in connection to a literary circle, the “société du Bout-du-Banc,” where she was involved in collective writing, corrected manuscripts and fleshed out sketches of tales that were devised by others” (Hilger,

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<sup>275</sup> Showalter, 15-17, 20.

<sup>276</sup> Howells, 38-39 and “Francis I.” Britannica Online Academic Edition 6 May 2019. Web. She also risked losing her father’s pension for his military service (Showalter, 32).

<sup>277</sup> Showalter, 32-67.

<sup>278</sup> Showalter, 53-55.

<sup>279</sup> Showalter, 128.



73).<sup>280</sup> Writing constituted more than a hobby, as Graffigny also utilized her editing and writing skills to secure financial means for herself. After her divorce, she sought to make a living as well as finance her move to Paris, where she could better pursue a literary career. She worked with Abbé Pérau, reading manuscripts for publishers, proofreading, and editing (Hilger, 74).<sup>281</sup> Beyond editing and collaborative writing, Graffigny invested an ever-increasing amount of time and energy into her own literary projects, penning her *Nouvelle Espagnole*, *La Princesse Azerolle* (published in *Cinq Contes de Fées*), and continually attempting to write plays for *La Comédie Française* and *La Comédie Italienne*. For Graffigny, writing comprised an enduring passion and priority; “From the mid-1740s until 1758, the year of her death, she was never without some literary endeavour on her writing desk” (Showalter, 144). Until 1747, Graffigny’s life was overwhelming categorized by precarity, debt, and unstable living situations. However, in 1747, the publication of *Lettres* dramatically improved her situation, and cemented her status as a talented writer and charming, witty host.

After the first edition of *Lettres d’une Péruvienne* became available to the public, ten more editions followed almost immediately. Just over a year later, in 1748, additional editions hailed from publishing houses in Lausanne, Paris, and Amsterdam, and translations in English emerged in London and Dublin.<sup>282</sup> By all indications, “lacking sales figures and bestseller lists, the *Lettres*

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<sup>280</sup> This “société” was the salon of Jeanne Quinault, star of La Comédie Française, co-hosted by the comte de Caylus. Caylus would administer prompts, and the participating writers would work collaboratively, often reading and critiquing each other’s works. Sometimes, the group released their work to the public (Showalter, 87-91).

<sup>281</sup> Coincidentally, she helped edit Junquière’s *L’Elève de Minerve, ou le Télémaque travesti, en vers* in 1742, in a surprising connection to *Télémaque* (Showalter, 131).

<sup>282</sup> These multiple cities of publication and the multiplication of editions are significant when considering the unique challenges of publishing a novel in late 18th century France. In accordance with the order of the chancellor, novels were officially banned, and the office regulating book trade gave no official permissions to novels. Novels were even denied tacit permissions, which would deny the novel official status but prevent police investigation. Novels still made their way to France, printed in less restrictive countries and smuggled in, or printed clandestinely. Graffigny tried but failed to obtain a permission for *Lettres* (Showalter, 151). A woman known as the “widow Pissot” agreed to publish a small number of copies of *Lettres*. Pissot published a second edition, disavowed by Graffigny. The next edition was published by Duschene, with Graffigny’s consent (Smith, 347).

*d'une Péruvienne* met with immediate and resounding success” (Showalter, 152). In only fifty years, forty editions in five different languages were published (Mercier, 9). By 1836, a total of 147 editions, translations, and adaptations can be identified (Rosset, 1106). *Lettres* was not only famous, but infamous, listed on the Vatican’s *Index librorum prohibitorum* for the novel’s unorthodox religious ideas (Showalter, 260). Her success won her new acquaintances, allies, and patrons, and enabled her to host her own influential salon, frequented by writers, philosophers, scientists, and other important individuals like Cassini, Diderot, Marivaux, the duc de Richelieu, jeune Crébillon, Rousseau, Fontenelle, and more.<sup>283</sup>

For a text of only forty-one letters, Madame de Graffigny’s *Lettres d’une Péruvienne* is a complex amalgamation of genres and ideas, packed into an engaging narrative. Scholars of *Lettres d’une Péruvienne* identify borrowings, innovation, and hybridity in the text. The diverse genres evoked in the text reflect dominant literary trends inherited from the 17th century, further developed in the 18th century. In Brignoli’s view, the text combines characteristics of the *roman de mœurs*, the *roman sentimental* and the *roman d’apprentissage* (Brignoli, 60). For Showalter, Zilia’s unique status as Peruvian princess facilitates the text’s hybridity: “À la fois amante et philosophe, étrangère et écrivain, Zilia est au centre d’un texte qui réunit et dépasse deux traditions d’écriture, le roman sentimental et le recueil de lettres d’un voyageur étranger” (Showalter, 39). The work is also understood as “a philosophical tale in sentimental disguise” (Bostic, 3). Graffigny’s unique text blends the imaginary voyage, utopian novel, epistolary novel, sentimental novel, and philosophical novel. This blend of elements results in a truly original text, in terms of both format and theme (Showalter, 39).

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<sup>283</sup>Even international visitors (particularly from England and Germany and Switzerland) knew to frequent Graffigny’s salon if they appreciated Enlightenment philosophy and clever company of quality (Showalter, 264).

Yet for years, the text lay forgotten. Only recently has feminist criticism sought to address and rectify *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*'s reputation as more significant than "a charming sentimental work by a woman author, at best an unoriginal imitation of Guilleragues's Portuguese or Montesquieu's Persian letters" (Dobie, 99). While popular, the *roman sentimental* genre held an inferior status, a categorization belying gendered discrimination against women writers of the time. Reducing works by Graffigny and her contemporaries to sentimental fiction inevitably juxtaposed them unfavorably against the supposedly superior genre of philosophical novels, considered a masculine domain (Bostic, 3).<sup>284</sup> However, Graffigny's work engaged deeply with Enlightenment ideals, and this effort was reflected by the text's reception. For instance, *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* is discussed in the *Enlightenment Encyclopédie* (Sicard-Cowen, 249). Rosset adds that the book was also cited in the *Dictionnaire universel des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, (Rosset, 1112). Considering dictionaries and encyclopedias' respected status as sources of knowledge and reason in their time, this inclusion communicates the works' influence and status.

*Lettres d'une Péruvienne* was especially popular for providing an exceptional example of an increasingly popular form of writing. In fact, "most novels written by women and men as well in the eighteenth century are epistolary in form" (Roulston, 31). While Graffigny's adherence to popular forms and subjects of writing could be considered pandering, "modeling one's own writing on what was fashionable and well-accepted was safer than radical innovation, especially for a woman author attempting not to provoke professional critics at the beginning of her literary

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<sup>284</sup> This dialectical opposition of women's sentimental novel/ masculine philosophical novel appears in the common critique of *Lettres* as "a pale imitation of Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes*," (Bostic, 3). In fact, Graffigny thought little of Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes*, which she once referred to as "un ramassis de mauvais rien[s] mal cousus ensemble." The source came from Graffigny's letter (nr. 97), dated February 26, 1739, is addressed to her longtime correspondent François-Antoine Devaux (1985:1:346) (*ibid.*, 3).

career” (Hilger, 65). Furthermore, Graffigny’s adroitness at embedding her critique of women’s limited position in society within this philosophical, epistolary novel enabled her to disseminate her ideas to a wide audience, particularly other women, in the Enlightenment era (Hilger, 65).<sup>285</sup>

As with the sentimental novel, this genre was skewed towards women; “A disproportionate number of all epistolary novels were the work of women, and of the novels women wrote, a disproportionate percentage were epistolary” (MacArthur, 18).<sup>286</sup> This percentage reflects gendered social norms across 17th and 18th century France dictating that it was a given that women possess “a natural gift for letter-writing” (MacArthur, 18). As letter-writing was an acceptable, common form of communication for women, it followed that personal letters could be transformed into fictional letters, and then compiled into stories. Women’s supposed predilection for letter-writing suited them favorably; “As the epistolary style moved away from the formal rules of rhetoric that distinguished its Renaissance and Classical incarnations, women were suddenly at the forefront of this unpolished, conversational, and authentic writing” (Roulston, 31). However, if the (conventionally feminine) genre of the sentimental novel was often devalued, a similar problem occurred with the epistolary novel, which was criticized as “faulty or limited” in part due to “the form’s resistance to closure” (MacArthur, 2).

Despite these limitations, however, *Lettres d’une Péruvienne* attracted remarkable readership, in part for the work’s capability to integrate a variety of genres. To fully appreciate

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<sup>285</sup> Graffigny was trapped within what Hilger called the “paradoxical confinement” of women of a certain status who wrote to improve their financial condition. As such, she made the “strategic move of finding a crack in the walls of the literary establishment consists in drawing on well-established novelistic genres without completely subscribing to their premises” (Hilger, 74). Graffigny both adhered to and distinguished herself from a variety of popular genres to reach an audience.

<sup>286</sup> MacArthur takes this analysis further, and suggests that women were partly drawn to the epistolary novel because it reflected their “desire to escape centralized power structures, with their accompanying fixed meanings, and to a desire to leave the outcome of lives (particularly women’s lives) perpetually open” (MacArthur, 18). This opinion warrants consideration while exploring the unique plot of *Lettres*.

the complex appeal of *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*, I argue the work must also be considered as an imaginary voyage, similar to the texts discussed in previous chapters. Graffigny's novel inscribed itself into the flourishing literary tradition of marrying alterity, voyages, and novelistic intrigue: "By the time Graffigny wrote her novel, travelers' accounts of their encounters with other cultures were a common literary topos, whether in the form of historical or proto-anthropological relations of Europeans discovering new peoples, or of fictions of foreigners observing French culture" (Vanpée, 135).<sup>287</sup> Unlike the sentimental or epistolary novel, the philosophical voyage narrative was a traditionally male genre. Therefore, Graffigny's adaptation of employing a foreign female voice constitutes an important innovation— not to mention her reversing the direction of the voyage, going instead *from* the New World *to* Europe (Rutler, 2). Additionally, unlike the imaginary voyages discussed in previous chapters, which often read like a captain's log or encyclopedic-esque description of a foreign country, Graffigny uses only letters to communicate the voyage and observations made therein, which lends both greater personality and realism to the narrative.<sup>288</sup>

The exceptional amalgamation of genres within *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* inspires a range of scholarly interpretations. If scholarship on classic French utopia (*La Terre Australe Connue*, *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*) largely features approaches characteristic to the field of utopian studies (such as the political, historical, and economic aspects of these texts) rather than identifying dynamics pertaining to gender and sexuality, the same could not be said of *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*. In part, I attribute this to the fact that *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* features both a

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<sup>287</sup> While such a tradition can be traced to Antiquity, with works like Ovid's *Heroides*, the novelistic practice of imaginary voyages and storytelling in exotic settings re-emerged and burgeoned in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Bostic, 3).

<sup>288</sup> The incorporation of letters to communicate narrative engages in realism. For instance, by putting effort into employing dates, place names, and invented character names that all suggest real-life individuals, epistolary novels "gesture toward a "real" world outside the novel" (Simon, 29).

female author and a female protagonist. Until relatively recently in the studies of (canonical) French literature, it was indeed rare to see any text written by a female author, particularly from the 17th and 18th centuries.

In light of this, scholars and critiques largely consider *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* from the field of feminist studies, women's studies, or gender studies.<sup>289</sup> The overwhelming majority of approaches to *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* consider the work's value as *écriture féminine*, or how the work exemplifies feminism (Altman, Bostic, Hilger, Howells, Miller, O'Neal, Rutler, Sicard-Cowen).<sup>290</sup> Often, this feminist-inspired approach intersects with considerations of alterity and anti-imperialism, given Zilia's Peruvian origins (Dobie, Douthwaite, Keita, Roulston, Sherman, Vanpée). Other readers center on the strong Enlightenment ideals permeating *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* (Bostic, Fraisse, Goodman, Lloyd). Many scholars draw connections between Graffigny's life and Zilia's experiences (Howells, Sicard-Cowen).<sup>291</sup> Zilia's struggles with communication (such as her transition from tying *quipos* to writing, or her experience of learning French as a second language) compels scholars to examine questions of linguistics, writing, and communication (Brignoli, Dobie, Ferrand, Rosset, Sherman). MacArthur examines how the genre of the epistolary novel informs closure in *Lettres*.<sup>292</sup> Others consider the economic and material facets of the novel, especially important given the role of artifacts from Peru for Zilia's ties to her home (Simon, Thomas).

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<sup>289</sup> For instance, an entire section of Jonathan Mallinson's book, *Françoise de Graffigny, femme de lettres: Ecritique et réception* features readings of Graffigny as a feminist.

<sup>290</sup> Typically, scholars undertake a feminist reading identifying the significance of a woman refusing to accept the repression and objectification a woman of her station would typically experience.

<sup>291</sup> I consider this approach reductive or simplistic, potentially robbing the (female) author of authorial innovation.

<sup>292</sup> MacArthur examines both Graffigny's *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* and Mme de Charrière's *Lettres écrites de Lausanne* as two works that wrote unconventional narratives that disrupted acceptable behavior or endings for women. For more, see MacArthur, Elizabeth J. "Devious Narratives: Refusal of Closure in Two Eighteenth-Century Epistolary Novels." *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 21, no. 1, 1987, pp. 1–20. *JSTOR*.

For my approach, I begin by continuing the line of inquiry I employ in earlier chapters, examining what voyages to both physical and allegorical utopia can reveal about gender and sexuality. However, I am not the first person to identify simultaneous voyages in *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*, and thus must narrow my approach further. For instance, Bostic identifies Zilia's phases of transition during her voyage journey from Peru to France and ties this progressive geographical displacement to her progress towards enlightenment or reason, demonstrated by light. Bostic considers how Zilia changes climates changing from one world to another and examines Zilia's shift in her narrative as well as priorities and perspective, noting "Zilia's gradual turn away from the sun that is Aza, toward the sun of reason" (Bostic, 6). Sherman also identifies simultaneous voyages in the novel, where forcibly uprooted Zilia "undertakes both geographical and internal wandering," wherein the plot, the narrator, *and* the novel remain fundamentally nomadic in nature (Sherman, 271). Thomas traces simultaneous voyages to a progressive loss of identity and growing instability, with Zilia's identity increasingly torn between the new culture and her attachment to Aza and the Inca (Thomas, 58).

While my understanding of Graffigny's popular novel is certainly enriched by these approaches, I argue one aspect of the text remains blatantly neglected. When reading *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*, Zilia undeniably expresses an astonishing amount of anti-social negativity. Although refusal and retreat influence the surprise conclusion of the novel, the entire narrative is deeply infused with it. From the very beginning of the novel, when Zilia observes Spanish conquistadors plundering her Incan temple home, to her first forays into the bizarre and foreign customs of French court, to her ever-complicating interactions with her new French companions, Zilia overwhelmingly expresses emotions and behaves in ways that read as profoundly negative and antisocial. In the mapping of simultaneous voyages to utopia, I consider a new direction:

retreat. This retreat is both physical (as Zilia retreats to her personal “utopia”) and emotional (as Zilia seeks to escape the norms dictating ideal masculinity, femininity, and the family). The utopia Zilia seeks to establish is also fundamentally grounded in negativity. I delve into this negativity, which I believe holds greater importance than Zilia’s eventual refusal of marriage, although that aspect plays a key role. To explore this negativity and derive a greater meaning from *Lettres d’une Péruvienne*, I turn to Lee Edelman’s polemic, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, published in 2004.

Edelman and Berlant define negativity as “the psychic and social incoherences and divisions, conscious and unconscious alike, that trouble any totality or fixity of identity” (Berlant and Edelman, vii). Negativity carries power, as it can enact “a resistance to or undoing of the stabilizing frameworks of coherence imposed on thought and lived experience” (Berlant and Edelman, xii). In this interpretation, negativity is understood as defiant struggle and counter-cultural action, a weapon of marginalized communities. Just as Leo Bersani asked the anti-social question, “Should a homosexual be a good citizen?” (Bersani, 113),<sup>293</sup> I ask, Should the kidnapped Peruvian woman be a good citizen? Must a woman be a good citizen? What if she is anti-social, and, rather than become a good citizen, she critiques and even rejects society? Anti-sociality refuses to shy away from accusations of one’s incompatibility with or perceived threat to society, but instead reclaims and embraces this position and transforms it into one of subversive power. While I do not claim *Lettres d’une Péruvienne* as a queer text, queer theory’s

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<sup>293</sup> He asked this question during the intense push for LGBTQ acceptance into social institutions like marriage, adoption, military participation, and other markers of being a “good citizen.” Rather than cave into the “rage for respectability,” he pushed to valorize the very incompatibility and difference which typically marginalizes the queer community: being an outsider and a rebel, existing outside of and even in opposition to conventional signs of being a “good citizen” (Bersani, 113).



articulation of negativity and the spirit of these questions grant a thought-provoking *point de départ* for understanding Zilia's value.<sup>294</sup>

Beyond recurring instances of Zilia formulating social critique and seeking to enact retreat, her most significant demonstration of negativity lies in her rejection of an essential tenet of society: she refuses marriage. This act of refusal acts as the culmination of a spirit of anti-sociality that pervades the text. Her refusal of marriage, and therefore family, and therefore children, directly aligns with Edelman's theory of negativity because it rejects what he refers to as "reproductive futurism." Reproductive futurism refers to the dominant, all-encompassing social norm that valorizes a very narrow form of existence, categorized by the "absolute privilege of heteronormativity" which upholds the conventional heterosexual family and the inevitable child as the ultimate source of fulfillment. Resisting reproductive futurism involves rejecting the deeply ingrained, near-universal value of children as the ultimate goal of society, and challenging the idea that bringing a child into the world grants "unmediated access to imaginary wholeness" (Edelman, 10).

Rejecting reproductive futurism frees the individual to pursue other forms of meaning and existence. In this chapter, I explore how Zilia's anti-social negativity positions her to establish her own utopia available outside of reproductive futurism's tyranny. Initially, Edelman's call for "a relentless form of negativity in place of forward-looking, reproductive, and heteronormative politics of hope" (Halberstam, 823) seems to directly contradict traditional utopia's promise for a better society and future. However, negativity proposes new terrain to explore. Negativity can

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<sup>294</sup> In the search for "queer texts," I look to texts portraying desire, behavior, or object choice outside of or challenging dominant heterosexual norms. Zilia's choice to remain single rather than marry a man and form a family *does* challenge heterosexuality and patriarchy, although that argument would be for another project.

fundamentally redefine utopia by exploring ways of being outside of conventional notions of society.

My consideration of *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* as a study in negativity corresponds with the simultaneous mapping of the text in conjunction with conventional tropes in utopian voyage narratives. This can be identified at these key moments: the beginning where the “editor” introduces the narrative; the voyager’s point of departure; the journey and shipwreck; then, the first encounter with the Other and subsequent all-encompassing description of this new society and culture; and the (often fatal) return to the land of origin. At every turn, Graffigny acknowledges these stages, yet reworks or inverts them to serve her own narrative priorities. She inverts the trajectory of the utopian voyage, she upends the conventional marriage plot, and destabilizes the European/ Savage dichotomy.

In a nod to the utopian voyage tradition, social criticism lays at the heart of *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*'s intrigue and appeal. If Zilia began as a naïve Virgin of the Temple of the Sun, her voyages and drive for knowledge permit her to formulate critique, and her commitment to reason positions her to reject societal expectations and envision a new utopian space. In a radical twist on the classic utopian text, *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* does *not* attempt to enact the utopian betterment of society by proposing a blueprint to ameliorate the problems Zilia identifies.<sup>295</sup> Instead, the utopian betterment of the self is tenuously constructed in isolation. I argue that reading *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* as an innovative text within the broader tradition of the imaginary utopian voyage helps illuminate the unique, radical nature of the anti-social negativity that Zilia embodies and expresses.

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<sup>295</sup> This seemingly anti-utopian refusal to propose the means to bettering society mirrors the anti-social negativity Edelman articulates in *No Future*, demonstrating the pertinence of Edelman's theory to my innovating reading of *Lettres*.

Graffigny forges her first *homage* to the imaginary utopian voyage in the *préface*, which provides the reader with helpful background information about the Incan empire. When considering the explosion of epistolary and/or voyage novels associated with the 18th century, one may wonder, why the *Peruvian* letters? This choice stems in part from Graffigny's proximity to Voltaire.<sup>296</sup> Sicard-Cowen argues that Graffigny's *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* "rewrites" Voltaire's play *Alzire, ou les Américains* (Sicard-Cowen, 252).<sup>297</sup> This is supported by the preface, in which Graffigny directly evokes Voltaire's tragedy as a "model" as well as "one of the first authoritative accounts of Inca cultural identity" (Sicard-Cowen, 252). This source of inspiration purportedly influenced her more than Peru itself.<sup>298</sup>

If Voltaire sparked her initial interest in Peru, Graffigny undertook deeper research on Peruvian history and culture before taking up her pen. Her *Introduction Historique* references Garcilaso de la Vega, son of an Incan princess and a Spanish *conquistador* lieutenant from the sixteenth century, who wrote extensively on the Incan empire in *Royal Commentaries of the Incas* (Bostic, 3).<sup>299</sup> The knowledge she gained from this reading granted Graffigny greater authority in her depiction of Peru. However, scholars identify problematic aspects of Garcilaso's

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<sup>296</sup> Graffigny frequented Voltaire. During the winter of 1738-1739, she stayed at Cirey at the residence of Mme du Châtelet, Voltaire's companion (Rosset, 1124). This time birthed a scandal of sorts, in which some of Graffigny's letters were allegedly rewritten to paint the author in a negative light. For more on this scandal, see Showalter, English. "Graffigny at Cirey: A Fraud Exposed." *French Forum*, vol. 21, no. 1, 1996, pp. 29-44. *JSTOR*

<sup>297</sup> While Voltaire's play influenced and even inspired *Lettres*, I argue Graffigny's work diverges too dramatically to be considered a rewrite. For a more in-depth comparison of the two, see Sicard-Cowan, Helene. "Francoise de Graffigny's self-fictionalization in *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*." *The Romantic Review*, vol. 100, no. 3, 2009, p. 249+. *Literature Resource Center*

<sup>298</sup> According to Rosset, "Ni le Pérou en tant que tel, ni les Incas n'intéressaient vraiment la romancière" (Rosset, 1124). However, Showalter disagrees: "She regarded the Inca civilisation as a society after her own heart, a utopia where the ills she had suffered—poverty, loneliness, betrayal—were unthinkable." (Showalter, 143).

<sup>299</sup> Howells elaborates; "Graffigny first encountered Garcilaso's remarkable work in the old translation by Jean Baudouin, first published as *Commentaire royal* (Paris: Augustin Courbe, 1633), then with stylistic revisions as *Histoire des Yncas* (Amsterdam: Jacques Desbordes, 1715), which she probably used in its more recent republication under the same title but with a new 'Discours Preliminaire' (Amsterdam: Jean Frederic Bernard, 1737). Subsequently she must have consulted the new condensed version, entitled *Histoire des Incas*, by T.-F. Dalibard (Paris: Prault fils, 1744), which she draws on directly in the *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*" (Howells, 43).

portrayal of Incan culture, then amplified in Graffigny's novelistic interpretation. Garcilaso's origins granted him clout, as he claimed he recounted stories from his maternal ancestry (Rosset, 1110). However, some cast doubt on the accuracy of his writings.<sup>300</sup> Whether Garcilaso's text was accurate or engaged in imperialistic permutations of reality, one must nonetheless acknowledge that Graffigny displayed a rare if not unprecedented concern for research. Graffigny's *Préface* and letters were peppered with in-text citations, with footnotes pointing to various passages in Garcilaso's text.<sup>301</sup>

That said, her work should not be considered an authentic portrayal of Peruvian culture from a feminine perspective. Such questions of accuracy are emblematic of a greater trend in 17th and 18th century travel literature, echoed in earlier chapters. Numerous scholars criticize Graffigny's idealized—and problematic—portrayal of Incan culture. Douthwaite identifies how Graffigny's portrayal of Incan culture both idealizes and neglects Incan culture; she idealizes the culture as peaceful and naively simplistic, yet ignores the spirit of empire-building, hierarchized society, and aggressive ambition (Douthwaite, 110). These misrepresentations held consequences for Graffigny: “Le manque d'exactitude dans l'évocation de l'univers inca vaudra du reste à Mme de Graffigny bien des critiques” (Rosset, 1124). However, I argue that these problems of inaccuracy were more of a universal flaw in imaginary voyage writing than an isolated incident indicative of

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<sup>300</sup> “Le livre fondateur de Garcilaso sera même qualifié de “roman insensé” par Cornélius de Pauw dans les *Recherches philosophiques sur les Américains* en 1773. Exposant fermement sa théorie relative à la prétendue “dégénération” des Indiens d'Amérique (tant septentrionale que méridionale), de Pauw affirmait que l'image flatteuse de la civilisation inca était l'œuvre de la vanité des Espagnols qui s'étaient appliqués à magnifier l'importance de leurs conquêtes; elle résultait aussi des descriptions partiales, voire imaginaires de Garcilaso” (Rosset, 1110).

<sup>301</sup> Such a concern for (assumed) historical accuracy was absent from the texts examined in previous chapters. For instance, none of the other texts analyzed use footnotes.

Graffigny's ignorance.<sup>302</sup> Both imaginary voyages and travel narratives commonly blended fact and fiction, oscillating between accurate and imaginative portrayals of foreign lands (Arthur, 4).

Graffigny's efforts to ensure accuracy was eclipsed by a more pressing concern endemic to imaginary voyage literature: the desire to provide a *believable* voyage account. Graffigny labored to "promote verisimilitude, while also appealing to the eighteenth-century vogue for exotic settings, fired by explorers' and missionaries' accounts of distant cultures," (Bostic, 3). This effort prioritized *vraisemblance*, which could take diverse forms such as incorporating navigational detail, referring to real-life voyages, or including researched descriptions of the foreign land. This is best seen in the *Préface*, which generally communicates the historical context and biographical details of the traveller and narrator.<sup>303</sup> There, the supposed "editor" (the author) explains how they came across the manuscript, which they either discovered or received as a gift from the traveller, and then took great pains to organize, edit, and even translate (Arthur, 8). Such efforts engage in what Arthur calls "narrative disguise" (Arthur, 203). Graffigny inscribes herself in this tradition in her *Préface*, but with her own original touches. Not only does Graffigny undertake the typical "editor" role, but the text takes the form of letters from one imagined individual to another, rather than travel accounts penned by one imagined voyager shared by the "editor." In a further degree of complexity, Graffigny explains how Zilia initially

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<sup>302</sup> For instance, Fénelon's *Télémaque* displayed "Aucune recherche du réalisme géographique ou historique; les sociétés décrites appartiennent à différentes époques et, excepté pour le tableau de l'Égypte, inspiré de Diodore de Sicile et d'Hérodote (sans doute relayés par le Discours sur l'histoire universelle de Bossuet), Fénelon ne s'est guère soucié de l'exactitude des détails: Chype n'a d'autre titre que son nom, qui la place sous l'invocation de Vénus, à être présentée comme l'île de plaisirs" (Racault, 40). The lack of faithful research or concern about accurate representation was more the rule than the exception in imaginary voyages.

<sup>303</sup> In Arthur's study of imaginary voyages, he identifies the general aspects of the preface, "which sets out, sometimes in laborious detail, the historical context in which the work is said to have been written. This can include meticulous biographical details, including of the traveller's extended family, as well as navigational information" (Arthur, 8).

recorded her voyage through the Incan tradition of tying knotted threads or “quipos,” allegedly used to communicate her narrative.<sup>304</sup>

## DEPARTURE: TORN FROM UTOPIA

After the *Préface*, the utopian voyage typically portrays the heroic adventurer’s departure from home, towards unknown lands. Graffigny flips this trajectory, situating the protagonist in her native Peru rather than Europe. Described as an ideal society, Zilia’s Peru evokes classic elements of utopia. The diligence of the Incas, their feats of engineering, all fulfill the qualifications of a utopian society; they are “civilized- industrious, technologically advanced, and equitable” (Thomas, 57). The fertility of the land and construction of beneficial infrastructure are thanks to the wise leadership of Mancocapac, who “avait rendu sacrée la culture des terres; elle s’y faisait en commun, et les jours de ce travail étaient des jours de réjouissance,” called for the construction of canals to distribute “la fraîcheur et la fertilité,” aqueducts, and roads, all of which were done “à force de bras seulement” (Graffigny, 105). The Incan people are described as peace-loving.<sup>305</sup>

In typical utopian societies, women are restricted to subservient roles, and *Lettres* appears to echo this tradition. Certain women hold a special status, as Virgins in the Temple of the Sun.<sup>306</sup>

From birth, girls destined for this purpose are set aside in the Temple, “et y gardaient une

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<sup>304</sup> In actuality, *quipos* as narrative recording technology is a fallacious interpretation of what was actually a technique used to record numeric data or quantities. Zilia, as a princess and Virgin of the Temple of the Sun, would not likely have used *quipos*. For a linguistic and historical consideration of *quipos* see Rosset, François. “Les Nœuds Du Langage Dans Les Lettres D'une Péruvienne.” *Revue D'Histoire Littéraire De La France*, vol. 96, no. 6, 1996, pp. 1106–1127. JSTOR.

<sup>305</sup> This portrayal may be questionable: “Graffigny's narration also idealizes Incan culture by ignoring “some of the most striking details of the Inca Empire— its grandiose expansionist ambitions, rigid sociopolitical hierarchy, and bellicose spirit—to convey the impression of a peace-loving, consensual, primitive society” (Douthwaite 1992,110)” (Simon, 79)

<sup>306</sup> A similar dynamic is seen in *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*.

perpétuelle virginité, sous la conduite de leurs Mamas, ou Gouvernantes, à moins que les lois ne les destinassent à épouser des Incas, qui devaient toujours s'unir à leurs soeurs, ou à leur défaut à la première Princesse du Sang, qui était Vierge du Soleil” (Graffigny, 104). As the Virgin of the Sun, Zilia was admired and elevated for her position, yet lacked the power to make her own decisions so long as she held this status. These women were protected to extreme extents; if a man entered their home, they would be put to death (Bernand 35; Garcilaso 199). However, these intense regulations could also harm them; if a woman fell in love with a ‘mortal’ and lost her virginity, “she was buried alive and her lover was hanged. If the man was already married, the Inca also ordered the man's wife, children, and entire family to be killed, as well as all members of his community and their animals” (Bernand, 39).

All of these elements— the utopian society, the willing prioritization of hard labor to ensure fertile land, the lack of vice, and the portrayal of a sheltered yet treasured woman, all describe the kind of society the European male voyager would travel to in the *voyage imaginaire*. Instead, the utopia of the Incan empire functions to give insight to Zilia’s background and the values she carries with her. This utopian world also functions as a point of comparison when she enters France, reaffirming the degree to which French society constitutes a dystopian experience for Zilia compared to the ideal Peru. However, the utopian kingdom of Zilia’s origin was *too* appealing to be left intact.

Typically, the narrative of an imaginary voyage begins with the protagonist’s willing departure to seek economic gain and/or adventure. This trope sees significant revision in Graffigny’s iteration. Indeed, a hunt for wealth and glory motivates a voyage, but not hers.’ They wreak havoc on the Incan temples, leaving carnage and destruction in their wake until they notice the gold adorning every surface of the temple, and turn their attention to pillaging. The

Spanish greedily eye the abundance of wealth of the Incan kingdom: “les jardins du Temple du Soleil, où les arbres, les fruits et les fleurs étaient d’or,” Les murs du Temple revêtus du même Métal; un nombre infini de Statues couvertes de pierres précieuses, et quantité d’autres richesses inconnues jusqu’alors, éblouirent les Conquérants de ce Peuple infortuné” (Graffigny, 103).<sup>307</sup> They capture Zilia and force her violently from her home. Here, the narrator begins as a captive rather than willing explorer. Instead of suffering and surviving the typical shipwreck, the heightened danger occurs before Zilia even reaches the sea.

The utopia of Zilia’s Peru had to be constructed in order to be destroyed, as this destruction served to initiate the voyage (away from, yet towards) utopia, and facilitate a rupture within Zilia’s world that provokes her first instance of refusal. Where she once knew tranquility, beauty, and luxury, Zilia recounts her experience of an apocalyptic event:

Les pavés du Temple ensanglantés, l’image du Soleil foulée aux pieds, des soldats furieux poursuivant nos Vierges éperdues et massacrant tout ce qui s’opposait à leur passage; nos *Mamas* expirantes sous leurs coups, et dont les habits brûlaient encore du feu de leur tonnerre; les gémissements de l’épouvante, les cris de la fureur répandant de toutes parts l’horreur et l’effroi, m’ôtèrent jusqu’au sentiment (Graffigny, 110-111).

Here, Zilia’s first act of refusal occurs beyond her will; so great is the shock of violence that she faints. The trauma of witnessing a brutal mass murder and witnessing her home torn apart permanently imprints itself in Zilia’s mind; she recounts, “Jamais son souvenir affreux ne s’effacera de ma mémoire” (110).

To prompt greater sympathy from the reader, her unceremonious entry into the outside world occurs on the day of her wedding. Instead of gaining status, glory, and affection as the

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<sup>307</sup> This portrayal of wealth echoes the El Dorado depicted in Voltaire’s *Candide*, where gold holds a different cultural value than that held by Europeans.



wife of Prince Aza, Zilia witnesses the Spaniards invade the “exclusively female space of the ‘temple du Soleil’” which they plunder, and they “eventually lay hands on her and drag her through the temple gates, through which she should have emerged as a bride” (Roulston, 312). A more personal violation is implied when Zilia refers to “mes ravisseurs” (Graffigny, 109), and she recounts her horror when “Ces impies osèrent porter leurs mains sacrilèges sur la fille du Soleil” (Graffigny, 111). Zilia’s privileged and sheltered existence was suddenly shattered, with her first impression of the outside world colored by destruction and violence.

This devastation facilitates Zilia’s trajectory towards another New World. Torn from utopia, Zilia’s voyage begins, transported unceremoniously across Peru to a Spanish ship, then setting sail for Europe. French sailors intercept the ship, taking the plundered treasures—and Zilia—for themselves. Onboard the French ship, Zilia feels isolated and despondent.<sup>308</sup> She still doesn’t know if her would-be husband Aza is alive or not, although she continues to record messages for him with her *quipos*. Even though the (French) reader supposes Zilia is safe among the (French) men, she lacks this knowledge. A combination of hopelessness after her traumatic experience, her uncertainty of her current situation, and her separation from Aza culminate into a downward spiral of negativity, as she recounts, “je regardai avec indifférence la fin de ma vie que je sentais approcher” (Graffigny, 120). She attempts suicide. However, her French captors intervene; “La vigilance de mes Surveillants a rompu mon funeste dessein, il ne me reste que la honte d’en avoir tenté l’exécution” (Graffigny, 128). By referring to them as her “supervisors” rather than her “rescuers,” Zilia expresses negativity rather than acceptance or gratitude for their intervention.

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<sup>308</sup> Not knowing what a “ship” is exacerbates her confusion and fear.

Surprisingly, few scholars discuss Zilia's suicide attempt. However, Zilia's suicide attempt is significant because it marks a tangible action stemming from her evolving negativity, first initiated by the conquistador's violent interruption into her utopian existence. In Sherman's reading, Zilia's suicide attempt expresses "her ambivalence by projecting fear of death onto the figure of Aza, whom she can then generously pity as she pities and fears for herself. Then she can decide to live for him; and because she feels herself fused or absolutely identified with him," which creates a doubling, representing both death and rebirth (Sherman, 275). I disagree with this interpretation, because Zilia's profound negativity and desire to refuse life itself appear to outweigh her feelings of obligation to Aza, who she wasn't sure survived. Her suicide attempt marks her first moment of refusal, in which she attempts to refuse life itself in response to traumatic events. Seeing her society destroyed, she responded with an internalized rather than externalized act of destruction.

Following her suicide attempt, Zilia grows to recognize a pattern of care and concern from the Frenchmen, particularly Déterville. Graffigny employs Déterville as Zilia's guide to the "exotic" culture of France.<sup>309</sup> The presence of the necessary guide echoes a conventional trope in utopian voyages. Over the course of the voyager's exploration of utopia, the protagonist is often guided or mentored by an older, wiser figure. Captain Siden had Sévarias, Sadeur had *le vieillard*, Télémaque had Mentor, and Dyrcona had the *démon de Socrate*.<sup>310</sup> As seen with other works, the guide fulfills an essential role in introducing the voyager to the foreign culture. In the case of Zilia, the moment of introduction to French society instigates further negativity.

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<sup>309</sup> To a lesser degree, Déterville's sister Céline also serves as a guide to Zilia.

<sup>310</sup> An unlikely tie connects Dyrcona and Zilia; one could argue that both experienced a romantic or even sexual tension with their mentor, as Captain Déterville persistently (and unsuccessfully) courts Zilia throughout the work.

## FIRST ENCOUNTERS: ZILIA AT COURT

In every classic imaginary voyage, the intrepid voyager must experience the first encounter the foreign Other, and Zilia is no exception. These first encounters can be fraught with danger and violence. Such trials grant the intrepid voyager entry into the foreign, ordinarily secretive culture.<sup>311</sup> These initiatory moments are often charged with tension, and Zilia's first introduction to French society proves no exception.

In Zilia's first foray into French society, Déterville presents her to the court of nobles. Rather than introduced as an equal, she is shown off like an exotic animal in her Peruvian dress to invasive observers.<sup>312</sup> This introduction reveals the "exoticist intentions of her French hosts and guests" (Sicard-Cowen, 259). Placed at the center of attention against her wishes, Zilia recounts her feelings of violation and discomfort. These feelings augment when her hosts violate her personal boundaries and blatantly objectify her. A young woman first approaches her, and Zilia recounts how "après m'avoir tournée et retournée autant de fois..., après avoir touché tous les morceaux de mon habit avec une attention scrupuleuse," she beckons a young man to approach her (Graffigny, 147). He then undertakes a minutieuse inspection of her, visually undressing her and judging her as one would a rare exotic bird. Initially, a combination of her manners and her perceived vulnerability make it such that "je n'osais m'opposer à leur volonté; mais ce *Sauvage téméraire... ayant eu l'audace de porter la main sur ma gorge*, je le repoussai avec une surprise et une indignation qui lui firent connaître que j'étais mieux instruite que lui des lois de l'honnêteté (Graffigny, 147, my italics).

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<sup>311</sup> The utopia is typically and necessarily hard to reach. Utopia in the *Terre Australe* exist in uncharted spaces on maps, the El Dorado of *Candide* was protected and hidden within towering mountain ranges, and the Moon was the most inaccessible of them all. Here, ironically, France is not only accessible, but actively engaged in efforts to find and conquer these special spaces.

<sup>312</sup> This moment is reminiscent of Dyrcona's treatment on the moon, where he is mistaken for, captured, and treated as an animal. In both situations, the protagonists are treated as less-than-human, and harassed by their spectators.

The language of this encounter mirrors similar treatment at the hands of her Spanish captors (“*Ces impies osèrent porter leurs mains sacrilèges sur la fille du Soleil*”), demonstrating that she experienced both encounters as uncivilized, inappropriate violations of her personhood. The signaling of the “savagery” of the French (*ce Sauvage*) provides another instance of inversion, where the woman from the supposedly wild New World exerts greater judgement and comportment than the supposedly civilized European. Zilia pushes back, despite being outnumbered, in an unfamiliar situation, and lacking sympathetic allies. She thus refuses the passive subjugation at the hands of her hosts expected of her. In an additional attempt at refusal, Zilia attempts to leave, indignant at her mistreatment, but Déterville stops her, indicating it would be rude to do so. This treatment makes Zilia profoundly aware of her difference and incompatibility with this society. Following this tense first encounter, she also leaves with a sense of superiority for her greater sense of uprightness.

Her experience of otherness exacerbates her desire to refuse or escape from this society and is only further compounded by her experience among other women. One would expect the shared experience of womanhood to constitute a bridge between their cultures. Instead, gender appears to exacerbate the differences between Zilia and the French. While she expresses overall discomfort being shown off as an exotic animal, she appears most affected by the derisive, judgmental gaze of the women. She recalls, “L’étonnement général que l’on témoigna à ma vue me déplut” (Graffigny, 136). Their initially furtive gazes devolve into “les ris excessifs que plusieurs jeunes filles s’efforçaient d’étouffer...lorsqu’elles levaient les yeux vers moi.” The women’s laughter “excitèrent dans mon coeur un sentiment si fâcheux, que je l’aurais pris pour de la honte, si je me fusse sentie coupable de quelque faute (Graffigny, 136-137). Following this affective development, Zilia’s anti-sociality negativity evolves after these interactions. Her

experience of undeserved discomfort and shame initiate Zilia's "pointed and virulent attack on Parisian women" (Thomas, 59), in which she expresses her anti-social negativity by criticizing those around her.

Furthermore, this initial moment of shame and othering destabilizes Zilia's identity. From that point on, she dresses as a French woman to hide visual markers of her Peruvian identity to evade negative attention. Inwardly, she retains her identification with her lost Incan empire, which simultaneously "enables a powerful dis-identification with her own gender," demonstrated by how she continually emphasizes "her difference from, rather than her similarity to, the women she encounters" (Roulston, 316). In trying to resemble the very women she seeks to distance herself from, increasing tensions continue to justify her anti-sociality.

Although Zilia suffers from the objectification she experiences at the hands of other women, she too engages in the objectification of other women. This is seen by how she condemns French women for their apparent homogeneity: "Toutes les femmes se peignent le visage de la même couleur: elles ont toujours les mêmes manières, et je crois qu'elles disent toujours les mêmes choses" (Graffigny, 151-152). By taking this stance as the outside "observer of beauty," Zilia effectively rejects attempts to be "reduced to an undifferentiated object of beauty," only to reduce these other women to objects of beauty. Meanwhile, she seeks to resemble them, all while criticizing their obsession with resembling each other. Her "resistance to being objectified" marks her difference and critiques the structure in place, but rather than enact an emancipatory solidarity with women, it refuses to engage in "a dialogue with her own gender" (Roulston, 321). She affirms and furthers the hierarchical inferiority women occupy, rather than seek to change it. When she later endeavors to liberate herself from this position of inferiority, she seeks to do so alone, and does not attempt to liberate other women. This stance,

intentional or not, belies Zilia's narcissistic sense of superiority as well as her condition of alienation. Her anti-sociality, however, embraces rather than fights her alienation.

Reviled distaste appears to color Zilia's observations and commentary on women. While scholars like Rutler read the text as radically feminist, or instigating a sisterhood grounded in female solidarity, Zilia's tone overwhelmingly communicates particular negativity towards women.<sup>313</sup> She writes, "Je n'ai point vu des Sauvages si orgueilleusement familiers que ceux-ci. *Les femmes surtout me paraissent avoir une bonté méprisante qui révolte l'humanité, et qui m'inspirait peut-être autant de mépris pour elles qu'elles en témoignent pour les autres, si je les connaissais mieux*" (Graffigny, 147, my italics). While communicating an overarching judgement of the French's lacking manners, Zilia singles out women as a distinct category, and situates herself as superior to their pettiness. She condemns women's apparent contempt for each other, while once more sharing the same condemnatory, judgmental behavior against women. Indeed, as Howells notes, *Lettres* is feminist "au sens plus large où il révèle l'intériorité et se penche sur les problèmes d'une femme" (299), but the qualification may not be extended much farther than that.

While the conventional male voyager is automatically granted a universal and neutral position, "Zilia is haunted by her own femininity" (Roulston, 316). Paradoxically, her womanhood facilitates her ability to identify women's poor treatment yet prevents her from seeking solidarity with these same women. Here, Zilia's letters hold no emancipatory potential for women nor opportunity for feminine solidarity; rather, Zilia only seeks to remove herself and judge from a distance. Zilia's anti-social negativity drives her to reject assimilating into society, because doing so would assure her subjection within this world. Her deliberate lack of

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<sup>313</sup> See Rutler, Tracy. "Liberté, Égalité, Sororité: The Regime of the Sister in Graffigny's 'Lettres D'une Péruvienne.'" *French Forum*, vol. 39, no. 2/3, 2014, pp. 1–15

identification with women motivates her drive to anti-sociality and negativity, and her identity continually develops into an antagonistic force opposing the society around her.

Zilia remains restricted in her capabilities to enact an anti-social retreat; with her Incan home destroyed, she lacks the agency to leave the French court. At this stage, she only has her *quipos* to record her thoughts and experiences, which she uses to express her anti-social negativity. Writing her letters to Aza appears to constitute a means of refusing interactions with those around her, to seek out the initial utopia she was forced to abandon while trying to maintain ties to Aza. However, critics debate whether this letter-writing was truly for Aza, or a cleverly disguised escape for Zilia alone. Brignoli suggests that Zilia wrote for herself, as a way of creating an autonomous identity and seeking self-sufficient solitude (Brignoli, 59). Howells argues that Zilia addresses Aza as a mere formality, done to disguise what is essentially a self-contained exercise (Howells, 41).<sup>314</sup> As of yet, her only means of escape consists of furtively hiding to craft her letters, which read more as anti-social diatribes than plaintive love letters as time passes. However, she actively works to find new means of escape, her negativity unsatisfied by letter-writing alone.

Zilia develops another essential means of escape as she learns how to read (and write) in French. Learning French provides Zilia with a means to lessen her dependency on Déterville, who mediates and controls her understanding and experience of French culture. Moreover, she gains the ability to interpret rather than merely observe her environment; “For Zilia, learning French is a way of achieving autonomy and independence...It is a form of mastery, finally, that will enable the shift from the discourse of romance to that of cultural criticism” (Roulston, 315).

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<sup>314</sup> Howells proves this by pointing out that when Zilia runs out of *quipos* to record her narrative, she writes in French, which Aza would not understand. Therefore, from that point on (if not sooner), Zilia really writes for her own sake.

This independence is vital to negativity, as one cannot refuse interpersonal interactions or society without a certain degree of knowledge and agency. This independence is vital to negativity, as one cannot refuse interpersonal interactions or society without a certain degree of knowledge and agency; one must know what one rejects and why and be able to refuse what one aims to reject.

A defining part of the utopian novel features the narrator's "[s]ubstitution du description au narratif, désindividualisation du narrateur réduit à un rôle de témoin non impliqué, développement organisé en fonction d'une sorte de 'table de matières,'" all characteristic elements of the "tableau utopique" found in More, Foigny or Veiras (Racault, 45). Zilia echoes this tradition, as she describes all the typical aspects of society one typically would in a travel narrative: religious practices, marriage customs, dress, interpersonal dynamics, economy, education, and values of the foreign culture. However, Zilia implicates herself further than the average traveller by incorporating her own critique into her observations. As Zilia's French rapidly improves and she becomes better acquainted with the nuances of social interactions, she grows less awestruck and increasingly disillusioned by what she deems an ultimately superficial culture.<sup>315</sup> She continually and increasingly expresses a need to escape this dysfunctional society, and her anti-social negativity continues to evolve. Her negativity becomes particularly evident in her consideration of education in French noble society.

## THE (MIS)EDUCATION OF CÉLINE DE DÉTERVILLE

Across imaginary voyage accounts, the voyager rarely fails to discuss how the foreign society educates their populace. Utopian education is typically differentiated by gender, therefore

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<sup>315</sup> This change in her observations is accompanied by a shift in her manner of writing; Brignoli also observes "la diminution progressive du langage symbolique de la part de la protagoniste au fur et à mesure qu'elle assimile la culture française" (Brignoli, 62).



highly revelatory with regard to anxieties around gender. Here and elsewhere, education imposes gender difference and roles from an early stage. For girls, education generally functions to prepare them for marriage, gendered labor, procreation to assure the healthy population of the utopia. Overwhelmingly, education in the utopia/ dystopia pushes women into subservient positions under men. Education comprises a pillar of utopian society, holding the lofty goals of assuring the moral uprightness and utilitarian values of each generation.<sup>316</sup> Indeed, Zilia's experience of education in Peru echoed these values, in which "La modestie et les égards mutuels étaient les premiers fondements de l'éducation des enfants; attentifs à corriger leurs premiers défauts, ceux qui étaient chargés de les instruire, arrêtaient les progrès d'une passion naissante, ou les faisaient tourner au bien de la société" (Graffigny, 105). By contrast, Zilia's description of education in France is tinged with judgment rather than admiration.

In both the Incan and French societal paradigm, the child carries tremendous weight, imbued with utopian value. Here, Edelman's conception of reproductive futurism intersects with utopia. Utopia is understood as synonymous with a superior future, and the child is heralded as the embodiment of futurity. Society is, therefore, unable to "conceive of a future without the figure of the Child," and the child is fundamental to any fantasy of the (utopian) future (Edelman, 11). Utopian societies overwhelmingly prioritize reproduction because children provide the future's workforce, soldiers, and subjects. Society upholds the child as the key to futurity and to fulfillment.

However, as Zilia observes the role and education of children, particularly girls, she sees that the weight and value assigned to children hold different utopian potential from what she

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<sup>316</sup> See, for instance, *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*, *Utopia*, *Télémaque*, *La Citta Del Sol*, for utopian societies that privilege education as a primary means to combat vice and promote civic virtue. *New Atlantis*, *L'an 2440*, and *La Terre Australe Connue* take education to another level, with scientific research and experimentation as priorities in education.

experienced in Peru. Zilia observes the role children serve in French society; she notes, “Dans le premier âge les enfants ne paraissent destinés qu’au divertissement des parents et de ceux qui les gouvernent” (201). Here, children comprise an essential part of social life; they serve as evidence of a successful marriage, they serve as a way to continue on the noble line, and they provide entertainment. Such priorities comprise a vital aspect of a fundamentally superficial society. The notion of children educated and shaped into sources of entertainment for their parents is diametrically opposed to Zilia’s understanding of education as forming children “au bien de la société” (Graffigny, 105). In her consideration of education in French society, Zilia focuses primarily on the education of girls. In her interpretation, their faulty upbringing is partially responsible for the flaws of French society. Indeed, while Zilia appears to hold contempt for women, her views are complicated, grounded in a deeper critique of the society that formed these women. Zilia even finds herself implicated into the French “education” system, which grants her an insider’s perspective and provokes further attempts of anti-social refusal.

Zilia’s incisive critique of the gendered dynamics in French society maps out the trajectory of a French woman’s life. Beginning at birth, Zilia identifies a state of near equality, in which women are born “avec toutes les dispositions nécessaires pour égaler les hommes en mérite et en vertus.” However, men destabilize this equality as women come of age; “Mais comme s’ils en convenaient au fond de leur coeur, et que leur orgueil ne pût supporter cette égalité, ils contribuent en toute manière à les rendre méprisables, soit en manquant de considération pour les leurs, soit en séduisant celles des autres” (Graffigny, 203). (French) women, then, could be men’s equals, until society ruins them.<sup>317</sup> From these equal origins, the true culprit appears to be their education and upbringing, rather than their nature.

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<sup>317</sup> This marks an intriguing stance within a broader debate in the writing of utopian societies, which debates whether are people born equal, good, honorable, perfect, and society corrupts them, or if people are born corrupt,

If Zilia condemns women for their superficial nature and obsession with appearance, she traces this to their training: “Régler les mouvements du corps, arranger ceux du visage, composer l’extérieur, sont les points essentiels de l’éducation. C’est sur les attitudes plus ou moins gênantes de leurs filles que les parents se glorifient de les avoir bien élevées” (Graffigny, 202). The priorities within this form of education hint at the society being created, and the values it holds.<sup>318</sup> Graffigny doesn’t attribute French women’s misguided priorities to any innate hostility or weakness in men or women; rather, these flaws are the result of an injurious approach to education (Rosset, 1122). This stance echoes the utopian belief that laws and education can ameliorate society to compensate for human nature’s inevitable failings.<sup>319</sup>

Girls, Zilia realizes, are raised this way to become suitable wives. In this society, the ideal wife is desirable yet as artificial as the ornaments and gardens surrounding her. Ideal femininity is constructed as a challenging balance one must strike between contradictory values, as the woman is “simultaneously constructed as natural and artificial, or rather as naturally artificial, as if artifice were part of her nature.” In such a value system, “there is no place for the female subject outside these codes of artifice” (Roulston, 319). Echoing the tradition of discussing marriage customs in utopian voyage texts, Zilia traces a girl’s trajectory, beginning with her early education, to her passage from the home of her father, to her future husband.

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and only laws can fix them. Foigny’s pre-adamite society needs no perfecting; they are born equal and perfect. Yet Verias’s imagined society sees humans as born flawed, yet correctible via the strict application of laws. Graffigny, on the other hand, provides no evident utopian blueprint to fix French society. The Incan kingdom embodied utopian society, but the Spanish destroyed it. In this decidedly negative move, society cannot be perfected. Thus, an individual retreat from society is the only option, as Zilia demonstrates.

<sup>318</sup> Classic utopia similarly objectify women by overwhelmingly relegating them to similarly limiting roles, expected to give birth. One could debate which system provides better (if any) options to women. Arguably, the end goals are the same, despite the different means to this end.

<sup>319</sup> This utopian belief that laws and education can perfect society can be found in *Télémaque*’s observations of Tyr (Fénelon, *Télémaque*) and in the approach to education and rule in *L’Histoire des Sévarambes* (Veiras).

Young girls are devalored from the beginning. Zilia notes, “C’est dans cette ignorance que l’on marie les filles, à peine sorties de l’enfance.” From there, young girls’ situation scarcely improves; “Dès lors il semble, au peu d’intérêt que les parents prennent à leur conduite, qu’elles ne leur appartiennent plus.” Then, once married; “La plupart des maris ne s’en occupent pas davantage.” As Zilia observes, these unfavorable conditions could be corrected; “Il serait encore temps de réparer les défauts de la première éducation; on n’en prend pas la peine” (Graffigny, 203). In the French system, girls pass as property from their disinterested parents to their equally disinterested husbands. Zilia’s interpretation reveals that in her worldview, men are positioned as responsible for girls’ education— first their fathers, then their husbands. This paternalistic belief stems from the fact that Aza took it upon himself to educate Zilia.<sup>320</sup> Drawing out the broader implications of this belief, one must hesitate to align Zilia with feminist emancipation. As evidenced by her understanding of girls’ education, her criticism of women’s failings remains grounded in the belief that men could and should repair the flaws she identifies.<sup>321</sup>

To her consternation, Zilia too finds herself implicated in the system of feminine education. In French society, girls and women are either prepared to be married, or are married. If they find themselves between these two states, they are relegated to the convent. Soon after her arrival in France, Mme Déterville places Zilia and Déterville’s sister Céline in the convent. This experience in the convent grants Zilia a closer look at how girls are educated and brought to

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<sup>320</sup> A certain nuance must be employed in tackling the fact that Aza uncharacteristically supported Zilia’s pursuit of knowledge. Rosset overemphasized his influence: “L’irruption d’Aza dans la vie de Zilia marque une étape fondamentale de la maturité, comme si la jeune fille prenait soudain conscience de la puissance créatrice de sa propre subjectivité” (Rosset, 1119). It would be problematic to imply that a man (given the amount of critique allocated towards men throughout the novel) should be given credit for Zilia’s sudden subjectivity. He may have encouraged rather than prevented such a journey, but this same journey was advanced elsewhere (such as by reading books, for instance).

<sup>321</sup> I recognize that these mentalities remain firmly grounded in the time and social context in which they were written. However, I point out these instances in the text because feminist criticism tends to neglect them, as they complicate feminist readings of the text.

religion.<sup>322</sup> Her observations suggest that girls lose rather than gain knowledge in the convent: “Le culte qu’elles rendent à la Divinité du pays, exige qu’elles renoncent à tous ses bienfaits, aux connaissances de l’esprit, aux sentiments du coeur, et je crois même à la raison, du moins leurs discours le font-ils penser” (Graffigny, 157). Not only does Zilia give a damning dismissal of the supposedly sacred function of the convent, she also reveals a depersonalized contempt for the women she meets there as lacking spirit, heart, and even reason. In short, they hold no worth or interest to her.

Zilia’s deeply held desire to gain knowledge, along with her anti-social desire to escape from these reason-deprived women drives her to voraciously read every written work she can find. This virtual voyage from mundane life to new worlds of knowledge grants her respite, even pleasure; Zilia writes, “Je ne puis t’exprimer, mon cher Aza, l’excellence du plaisir que je trouverais à les lire” (Graffigny, 160). Writing provided Zilia with one means of escape and enabled her to transmit her negativity into text). Zilia’s investment in her letters to Aza diminish, becoming shorter, less satisfying, and increasingly formulaic from tired repetition as she turns towards her interests in reading and reason. This echoed by imagery “increasingly focused on the light of knowledge” (Bostic, 6).<sup>323</sup> Reading, however, permits a superior retreat for Zilia. This act transforms her anti-social negativity into the productive and self-serving pursuit of learning. As she gains reading competence, she expresses, “Aussi ne trouverai-je plus de plaisir que dans cette nouvelle et singulière étude. Je voudrais vivre seule, afin de m’y livrer sans relâche”

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<sup>322</sup> The convent accomplished more than “educating” young women. As Zilia learns, the convent could also be a place to stow away women to prevent them from threatening social stability. Céline, for example, is put away by her mother “afin de rendre son fils aîné plus riche” (Graffigny, 157).

<sup>323</sup> Bostic goes further in this reading into the dynamics of light in *Lettres*; Aza was her first “sun,” but the next “sun” Zilia devotes herself to, a more enduring source of illumination, is the sun of reason or the Enlightenment. See Bostic, Heidi. “The Light of Reason in Graffigny’s *Lettres D’une Péruvienne*.” *Dalhousie French Studies*, vol. 63, 2003, pp. 3–11. JSTOR.

(Graffigny, 151).<sup>324</sup> This suggests the possibility of a reality where pleasure exists outside of the inevitable heterosexual couple, where a woman could live alone and dedicate herself fully to a pursuit purely for herself. Such an existence may seem like a utopian, impossible desire in her societal paradigm, but her articulation of the desirability of such a reality brings her closer to achieving it. Indeed, if her interactions in French society exhaust and frustrate her for their virtueless superficiality, writing and reading restore her in the dull convent: “Rendue à moi-même, je crois recommencer à vivre” (Graffigny, 155).

Zilia’s critique of French women parallels her ever-growing drive to pursue her own self-motivated education and pursuit of enlightenment, a seemingly impossible pursuit in this environment. She condemns women’s limited intelligence and capacity to carry on a conversation; she finds that women only talk of their families and of their romantic interests, rather than sophisticated intellectual thought (Graffigny, 157 and 202). The reader expects Zilia may identify with the women living in the convent; after all, she too was once protected in the Temple as the Virgin of the Sun for a sacred purpose.<sup>325</sup> Instead, Zilia finds these women intolerable: “Les Vierges qui l’habitent sont d’une ignorance si profonde, qu’elles ne peuvent satisfaire à mes moindres curiosités” (Graffigny, 156-157), and dismisses them like a pile of uninteresting objects. These passages lack sympathy, compassion, or liberating tendencies from Zilia. Indeed, it seems unthinkable to proclaim this text a feminist manifesto for feminine solidarity and emancipation, although many do.<sup>326</sup> Rather, this text exudes anti-social distancing

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<sup>324</sup> This confession foreshadows the retreat Zilia will make at the end of the novel.

<sup>325</sup> Bostic argues that Zilia does identify with these women on some level; she argues, “Zilia comes to understand that women in French society receive no better treatment than the cloistered Virgins of the Sun” (Bostic, 8). However, I am not convinced that Zilia experiences the convent as analogous in terms of limitations. Nor did she express contempt for the fellow Virgins of the Sun.

<sup>326</sup> For instance, Altman, Bostic, Dobie, Hilger, Howells, Miller, O’Neill, Rutler, and Sicard-Cowen provide feminist readings of *Lettres d’une Péruvienne* in ways that I argue overly downplay instances of what resembles internalized misogyny.

and efforts of isolation, particularly from women. Indeed, apart from Déterville's sister Céline and mother Mme Déterville, there are no named female characters.<sup>327</sup> While Zilia deliberately develops her own identity and subjectivity through her ongoing pursuit of knowledge, she continues to see the women around her as one-dimensional. The triviality she experiences as a woman in France extends into the quotidian, beyond the convent and into the court.

### DAY-TO-DAY DUTIES IN THE FRENCH COURT

The typical utopian society organizes each day around labor destined for the betterment of society.<sup>328</sup> Labor is mandatory, yet never resented, as the social benefits are felt by all. As Zilia effectively identifies, French noblewomen indeed have duties which dictate the structure of their days, although they lack the same utility:

Les devoirs que nous rendons, consistent à entrer un jour dans le plus grand nombre de maisons qu'il est possible pour y rendre et y recevoir un tribut de louanges réciproques sur la beauté du visage et de la taille, sur l'excellence du goût et du choix des parures, et jamais sur les qualités de l'âme. (Graffigny, 196-197)

Absorbed into this world, Zilia finds herself obligated to fulfill these duties.<sup>329</sup> These duties benefit neither society nor the individual. In fact, these futile rituals harm women. This ongoing circulation of women ensures that their value remains relative; that is, as one woman is praised, she is absent elsewhere, and when she leaves, her compliments lose value, replaced immediately by mockery. These visits also expose her to how men treat women. She faults the contradictions

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<sup>327</sup> Zilia's handmaiden is referred to as her "China," but that is a title rather than personal name.

<sup>328</sup> For example, in *La Terre Australe Connue*, the day is organized into three parts: one part for thinking, debate and scientific research, one part for physical labor, and one part for physical exercise and entertainment.

<sup>329</sup> Although she (begrudgingly) participates, she does so with the aim of better understanding these customs, so she may better subvert or even refuse them altogether. As she continues to learn French, she becomes better equipped to not only observe but also study the habits and customs that motivate the cult of superficiality she identifies.

between supposed gallantry and real mistreatment men dole out. She denounces the duality inherent in their behavior towards women, “l’inadéquation foncière entre les principes de la politesse, les gestes de la galanterie, le ‘respect imaginaire’ et, d’autre part, le mépris, la tromperie, les outrages que les hommes ne cessent de faire subir aux femmes” (Rosset, 1122). Her rejection of French men echoes her criticism of superficiality.

In this system, the relative value of these exchanges of pleasantries shift constantly, and stability is impossible, representative of woman’s instability in society at large. (Thomas, 59). Given this shifting scale of woman’s (de)valued state, Zilia finds absence preferable to an unstable, degraded presence. Zilia’s unwillingness to engage with enthusiasm in this system may be linked to the greater implications such engagements would hold; she begins to recognize how Déterville’s actions seek to “introduce her into this pattern of feminine devaluation ... If Zilia were to accept Deterville's advances, as a woman she would enter into the economy exemplified by the social visit” (Thomas, 60).<sup>330</sup> Her anti-social negativity overpowers the social pressure to conform to and perform these duties. Zilia’s indignation for these pointless “devoirs” draws from her upbringing and deep-set values regarding duty in the form of hard physical labor to ensure the construction of public works like aqueducts and roads—not exchanging empty compliments. At every opportunity, she retreats from these pointless exchanges to write to Aza, in “letters” which increasingly read less as correspondence and more as diatribes against the artificiality, frivolity, and cruelty she observes among the French nobles. Yet the marvels of hard labor achieved in Peru pale compared to what she observes in France.

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<sup>330</sup> Thomas suggests that Déterville’s attempts to claim Zilia as lover or fiancée would “undermine the original and originating value system in which she is the spouse of the Sun,” but since the Temple was destroyed, this initial value system is in jeopardy. Zilia’s refusal of Déterville is officially justifiable due to her tenuous link to Aza, but as she doesn’t know if he survived, her refusal stands on shaky ground.



Despite her distaste for the social institutions she observes, the marvels of engineering demonstrated by the luscious garden's fountains and fireworks displays and the ornate golden furnishings decorating interiors impress her. However, her initial awe moves to disgust when she realizes the falseness of all she sees:

Les meubles que je croyais d'or, n'en ont que la superficie, leur véritable substance est de bois; de même ce qu'ils appellent politesse cache légèrement leurs défauts sous les dehors de la vertu; mais avec un peu d'attention, on en découvre aussi aisément l'artifice que celui de leurs fausses richesses (Graffigny, 160).

Realizing her admiration was based on false pretenses, she gradually identifies the pleasing yet misleading superficiality surrounding her at each level. Yet Zilia does not only criticize this superficiality; she also notes the underlying inequality tied to this spirit of consumerism and luxury (Rosset, 1122). She notes the transformation she experiences: "je passe de l'admiration du génie des Français au mépris de l'usage qu'ils en font" (Graffigny, 188). Initially, Zilia marvels at the fireworks, landscaping, and fountains, the embodiment of "aristocratic excess;" in fact, "Zilia's admiration lies precisely in the superfluity of the superfluous" with the focus on "pure aesthetic pleasure." However, her admiration is short lived, as "[t]he superfluous becomes that which makes France both a civilized nation and an ethically ambivalent one" (Roulston, 316).

In observing social organization and daily life in France, Zilia identifies a troubling blend of meaningless labor, stunning yet superfluous ornamentation, and moral bankruptcy, the opposite of the utopian Incan empire. In her experience, the combination of shared property and labor with a benevolent ruler assured universal prosperity. Yet in France, she observes two extremes of "magnificence apparente" and the "misère réel" of beggars (Graffigny, 159). Her shock and disgust move her to write, and her negativity manifests itself in her letters to Aza.

Zilia describes the defective French rule: “Au lieu que le *Capa-Inca* est obligé de pourvoir à la subsistance de ses peuples, en Europe les Souverains ne tirent la leur que des travaux de leur sujets; aussi les crimes et les malheurs viennent-ils presque tous des besoins mal satisfaits” (Graffigny, 159).

## MARRIAGE, COURTSHIP, AND OTHER DYSTOPIA

Beyond the stark inequality she observes tied to wealth, or the absurdity of pointless “duties,” she observes moral bankruptcy in a different social institution: marriage. In consulting classic utopian voyage texts as well as travel narratives, the all-encompassing depiction of the foreign society almost always includes a discussion of their institution of marriage, and often depicts a wedding ceremony.<sup>331</sup> This idealized ceremony radiates utopian values, such as the prioritization of reproduction and a commitment to the utilitarian maintenance of a stable society, and typically ritualizes and crystallizes gendered expectations for the new couple. The utopia often reconceptualizes marriage, by allowing for divorce or the exchange of wives, and strict punishment for infidelity.<sup>332</sup> Examining utopian weddings and marriage can be highly revelatory for the study of gender and sexuality because they communicate both the existing as well as the ideal state of these matters. Sargent argues that “Studying past images of desirable futures... is almost always instructive because of what it tells us about how people have felt the life of their time could be improved,” including the roles allocated to women (Sargent, 302).

Overwhelmingly, the utopia provides male author’s perspectives of “what roles and status

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<sup>331</sup> I discuss the wedding ceremony as well as unique dynamics of marriage in *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* in Chapter 2. Foigny’s *La Terre Australe Connue* provides a rare example where marriage *doesn’t* play a role.

<sup>332</sup> For instance, More’s *Utopia* allows for divorce, *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* allows for the exchange of spouses, and so on. Importantly, this tends to take the form of men “trading” their unsatisfactory wives, with women consistently the disadvantaged party.

women should have in a good society” (Sargent, 302). Here, however, the altered dynamic of a woman author prompts further reflection of what problems are identified, and if any alterations are suggested.

The ideal role for women is best articulated in the society’s vision of marriage.<sup>333</sup> *Lettres d’une Péruvienne* echoes the characteristic description of a wedding ceremony, although Zilia perceives France as dystopian. Not only does Zilia observe and critique a wedding ceremony, she even finds herself implicated in the courtship rituals typically preceding marriage.<sup>334</sup> As the novel opens with catastrophe on the intended day of Zilia’s wedding, the reader is attuned to (thwarted) marriage from the beginning. This disaster sets the tone for *Lettres*, one which refuses to portray an ideal wedding. Where popular contemporary works like Marivaux’s *Le Jeu de L’Amour et du Hasard* (1730) appropriately closes with a wedding, *Lettres* begins (and ends) by disrupting and criticism the very institution of marriage.<sup>335</sup>

Much to her dismay, Zilia finds herself carted to the French countryside to attend Céline’s wedding.<sup>336</sup> The wedding ceremony and celebration sprawl across three days of bacchant festivities. She recounts the “jeux insipides” and “gaieté violente” of the celebrations,

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<sup>333</sup> In Sargent’s analysis of women and the utopia, “Classical eutopians either abolish the family and make women fairly equal (Plato and Campanella) or maintain the family and make women definitely inferior (More and Bacon and most utopias since 1850)... The negative utopia, or dystopia, often shows women as equal, thereby indicating that this equality need not bring about the good society” (Sargent, 302).

<sup>334</sup> The plot element of the voyager finding themselves romantically implicated is not new. For instance, a romantic union takes place between voyager in native in *Lamékis* (Chevalier de Mouhy) and in *La Découverte australe par un homme volant, ou Le Dédale français* (Rétif de la Bretonne). In *L’Histoire des Sévarambes*, many of the men marry local women, who have children with them.

<sup>335</sup> While *Le Jeu de L’Amour et du Hasard* was a comedic play and *Lettres* an epistolary novel, I nonetheless signal this because Graffigny was also a playwright, working on sentimental comedy *Cénie* at the same time as *Lettres*. *Cénie* does end appropriately, with a wedding. This can indicate that a deliberate circumventing of expectations was at work. Graffigny knew *Lettres* should end with a wedding, yet she evaded this at the start and end of the work.

<sup>336</sup> Zilia is especially resentful of attending the wedding because, at this point in the text, Zilia is given (back) some treasure from the Temple of the Sun, which she arranges into her own temple. She suffers to be torn from this personal utopia: “Avec quelle violence et quels regrets ne me suis-je pas arrachée à ma solitude! À peine eus-je eu le temps de jouir de la vue des ornements précieux qui me la rendaient si chère, que j’ai été forcée de les abandonner” (Graffigny, 185). Her miniature Temple functions as a form of retreat, a haven for her anti-social negativity.

and participates as little as she can (Graffigny, 185). A more detailed account of ceremony proves impossible; still in the process of learning French, Zilia finds herself overwhelmed and overstimulated, only able to regard the lavish costumes and decorations *or* listen to those speaking around her (186). Zilia's initial observation of the mutual love and reciprocity of commitment expressed during the ceremony are revealed as performative and short-lived. She cynically decides, "il semble qu'en France les liens du mariage ne soient réciproques qu'au moment de la célébration, et que dans la suite les femmes seules y doivent être assujetties" (Graffigny, 204). Furthermore, her choice of wording (*assujetti; subjected*) conveys negativity, aligning marriage with punishment.

At first glance, however, the married woman appears to gain independence: "Une jeune femme libre dans son appartement, y reçoit sans contrainte les compagnies qui lui plaisent" (Graffigny, 203). Yet this apparent liberty is illusory; the wife is left to her own devices because she lacks the intelligence or capability to do anything beyond entertain guests. Zilia notes how women manage to spoil this narrow degree of freedom, by easily falling into temptation and having affairs (Graffigny, 203). From this perspective, Zilia blames women for the position they find themselves in. From that point, a woman's position only becomes more abstract: "Sans confiance en elle, son mari ne cherche point à la former au soin de ses affaires, de sa famille et de sa maison, Elle ne participe au tout de ce petit univers que par la représentation" (Graffigny, 203). Illusionary representations categorize everything, even the wife's participation. Meanwhile, Zilia notes, "Un mari, sans craindre aucune punition, peut avoir pour sa femme les manières les plus rebutantes... Il est autorisé à punir rigoureusement l'apparence d'une légère infidélité, en se livrant sans honte à toutes celles que le libertinage lui suggère" (Graffigny, 204).

Zilia faults both men and women for their distinct failings in marriage, although she identifies men's greater degree of (undeserved) power, and faults them for abusing their position.

Zilia's interpretation of the gendered dynamics between men and women remains grounded in notions of difference and hierarchy, evident in how she discusses marriage.<sup>337</sup> In a rare break from her usual critique from a distanced position, she implicates herself with other women, stating, "Docile aux notions de la nature, notre génie ne va pas au-delà." To adjust for these perceived failings, "nous avons trouvé que la force et le courage dans un sexe, indiquait qu'il devait être le soutien et le défenseur de l'autre, nos Lois y sont conformes" (Graffigny, 199). Zilia thus situates women unfavorably in a gendered hierarchy, rendering women dependent on men's better judgement and competence. In France, however, "loin de compatir à la faiblesse des femmes," men neglect or mistreat women at every level of the social strata, hiding behind a veneer of a "respect purement imaginaire, toujours suivi de la plus mordante satire" (Graffigny, 199). This articulation of fundamental gender difference imposes upon men the duty to defend women and protect them from their flaws. Such a perspective conveys a classic utopian view of ideal gender dynamics.<sup>338</sup>

Zilia's ideal conception of ideal gender dynamics clash with what she observes beyond the wedding ceremony she observes and into the marriages that follow. She identifies two problematic kinds of husbands: those who "laissent suivre à leurs femmes le goût qui les perd, sans être les plus coupables," and those who "entraînent leurs femmes dans le dérèglement, ou par dépit ou par vengeance" (Graffigny, 204). Zilia effectively identifies how France's

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<sup>337</sup> Therefore, I hesitate to proclaim *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* a feminist text. If feminism is grounded in men and women's equality, then maintaining a gendered hierarchy is counter-productive. Her text can be understood as a work of proto-feminism, in which women's mistreatment is certainly identified, albeit still couched in the belief that a gendered hierarchy must govern society.

<sup>338</sup> Were Zilia's letters to end here, patriarchal hegemony would remain unchallenged; however, Zilia's personal choices increasingly move her outside of this model as her anti-social negativity progresses.

patriarchal societal structure causes many of the problems she pinpoints; she tells Aza that “l’autorité est entièrement du côté des hommes,” therefore, they are “responsables de tous les désordres de la société” (Graffigny, 204). This placing of blame grants further insight of Zilia’s sense of what role men should serve with regard to women. Her language upholds a paternalistic duty for men to govern their wives. Men cause these societal problems because they fail to properly survey their wives or protect them from dangerous vices— not because they fail to grant them an equal standing. Zilia’s critique leaves patriarchal authority intact. Rather than call for equality, she only asks for better men.<sup>339</sup>

Zilia’s relationship with Déterville complicates her view of men. By viewing women as inherently docile, weak(er), and lacking the strength and courage of men, she appears to imply that women necessarily depend on men. However, as the narrative progresses, her beliefs appear to shift— partly because she fails to identify a man able to act in the way she believes men should. Although Déterville initially appears to provide an exception to the rule, Zilia’s assumptions were grounded in naiveté., Zilia’s progressive efforts to educate herself lead to her developing the intelligence and self-assuredness necessary to exist without relying on male strength or privilege, and to identify troubling flaws in Déterville’s supposedly chivalrous character. Zilia’s progressive shift away from a superficial society towards embracing anti-social negativity as utopia can be tracked alongside her gradual rejection of Déterville. By rejecting Déterville, she also rejects marriage and children.

Zilia’s criticisms belie a negative view of men, yet the reader is repeatedly led to believe she finds an exception in the *chevalier* Déterville. Abundant textual clues suggest that Zilia will welcome rather than resist Déterville’s advances. She declares he is “le seul humain qui ait eu

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<sup>339</sup> That said, she only holds on to this vision of men’s duty to women for so long. By the end of the work, her retreat from society altogether shows she has abandoned this model.

pour moi de la bonté sans interruption” and admits “l’habitude de le voir s’est tournée en besoin” (Graffigny, 145). She even tells Aza of the joy that Déterville’s presence gives her: “Je crois, mon cher Aza, qu’il n’y a que la joie de te voir qui pourrait l’emporter sur celle que m’a causée le retour de Déterville” (165). Such a declaration implies Déterville rising in her esteem, to the point of threatening Aza’s claim to her heart.

From a romanticized perspective, such proclamations read as indicative of a future union. However, as Graffigny reveals additional facets of their relationship dynamic, Zilia’s proclamations read as increasingly symptomatic of Stockholm’s Syndrome.<sup>340</sup> Her exclamations of gratitude and attachment can also be read as indicative of the situation Déterville has orchestrated by bringing her to court. She positions Déterville as her hero (“Je voyais mon Libérateur, le seul appui de mes espérances” (165)), yet Déterville fabricated an environment in which Zilia’s alterity and precarity mean she cannot help but depend on his goodwill. Graffigny repeatedly misleads the reader into assuming the novel will close with the satisfactory, acceptable ending of Zilia’s marriage to Déterville.<sup>341</sup> After all, such an ending would respect literary conventions and the rules of *bienséance*.<sup>342</sup> Ongoing clues suggesting Zilia will wed Déterville deceive the reader by resembling a romanticized ideal, only to be revealed as performative and possessive attempts to rob Zilia of her autonomy.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> While suggesting Zilia experiences Stockholm’s Syndrome may seem dramatic, it’s worth recalling the reality of her situation; she has been captured, taken from her home, and transported to a foreign country where she has no bargaining power or chance of escape. She may be cared for, but she is still a captive.

<sup>341</sup> For Zilia, Aza rather than Déterville is “the object of her affective pursuit,” (Dobie, 272). However, Déterville’s persistence, as well as the destruction of the Incan empire, lead the reader to find a union with the Frenchman more likely.

<sup>342</sup> Two acceptable endings would fit within these conventions: Zilia either married or dead. Instead, the final letter depicts Zilia as living alone, single. With this ending, “Graffigny posits a new way of imagining not only endings but also female existence” (Thomas, 68).

<sup>343</sup> Graffigny’s deception makes an ironic nod to Zilia’s condemnation of the falseness of French society where appearances mask a different reality. Déterville appears chivalrous and exceptional, but his charms only seek to manipulate Zilia into accepting his advances.

While a woman's assumed and inevitable progression towards marriage conventionally begins with courtship, Zilia's alterity and language barrier could impede *or* facilitate this first stage. In an indication of Déterville's troubling rather than romantic nature, he begins courting Zilia before they even land in France. As the only woman on board, Zilia's inability to understand French placed her in a position of precarity. To address this, Déterville takes a questionable approach to "teaching" her French. Zilia recalls: "Il commence par me faire prononcer distinctement des mots de sa langue. Dès que j'ai répété après lui, *oui, je vous aime*, ou bien, *je vous promets d'être à vous*, la joie se répand sur son visage, il me baise les mains avec transport" (Graffigny 132). These "French lessons" amount to Déterville attempting to shape Zilia into a parrot, a vessel for his exotic fantasies.

By shaping their interactions, he forces Zilia to partake in "a kind of verbal masturbation or subjection, pleasurable for Déterville, meaningless for Zilia" (Thomas, 60). This moment foreshadows the dynamic of the future relationship Déterville aims to achieve, with Zilia deceived into fulfilling a role that serves only him. The infantilizing futility of this uneducational exercise places Déterville in a paternalistic role, destroying any possibility of equality between them.<sup>344</sup> This first warning sign excludes Déterville from his status as an idealized exception, showing him to be problematic as any other man.<sup>345</sup> The scene also contains additional levels of significance when considering that Zilia later translates her own *quipos* into French; "Therefore, what was initially a scene in which the colonizer, Déterville, had full narrative control is reconfigured as a parody in which Zilia, the colonized, uses the colonizer's language to

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<sup>344</sup> Graffigny crafts a disconcerting twist on conventional utopian trope where the European navigator learns the native language (*L'Histoire des Sévarambes, La Terre Australe Connue, États et empires de la lune et du soleil, Lamékis*, etc). This is a rare point where the traveler attempts to learn the language, and truly wants to, but their vulnerability is taken advantage of for the profit of the "teacher".

<sup>345</sup> As Zilia's primary point of contact with French society, Déterville's efforts to possess her places her in a precarious situation.



undermine the process of seduction” (Roulston, 315).<sup>346</sup> When Zilia recalled this moment a second time, she identified the futility of this exchange.

Graffigny continues to provide glimpses that complicate Déterville as the perfect male suitor, which destabilize conventional notions of what the idealized, romanticized man looks like. If *Télémaque* provided a guide to perfect masculinity for men, *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* maps out contradictory views of ideal masculinity for women. This sets up a tension that Graffigny refuses to resolve, but instead positions Zilia to reject altogether. However, in part due to her status as captive, wealth-less, foreign woman, she finds herself vulnerable enough to risk being implicated in the very institutions she goes to such great lengths to criticize. By seeking to possess and exotify Zilia, Déterville personifies this risk. His actions sit uneasily between romantic and heroic or controlling and manipulative, best exemplified by his repeated gift-giving to Zilia. Through the eyes of French society (and reader), these actions signify romantic courtship, indicative of an impending union. In Letter XV Zilia (mis)interprets Déterville's charity. Every time he pays her a visit, he gives her a gift or trinket (mirrors, jewelry, precious stones, or scissors).<sup>347</sup> Through Zilia's eyes, however, gift-giving is a generous act and show of goodwill, akin to the Incan tradition of giving tribute to someone of a certain status (Graffigny, 149). She expresses her enjoyment at collecting these new items, fallaciously assuming these gifts must be intended for her would-be husband, Aza. She fails to initially recognize this foreign economy of gifts as investments towards Zilia's emotional or sexual obligation, in part because of her cultural origins in a utopian society lacking the notion of property. This further

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<sup>346</sup> Sicard-Cowen reads this scene differently, identifying hints of anti-imperialist discourse: “In the political cultures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this rhetoric, in which amorous seduction takes the place of brutal subjection, was a typical ideological tool used by French royal emissaries in the newly conquered eastern territories” (Sicard-Cowen, 255).

<sup>347</sup> The giving of trinkets bears troubling resemblance to the actions of colonizers, manipulating indigenous populations into trusting them by giving gifts that hold little value back home.

inscribes *Lettres* within the utopian voyage and travel narrative tradition, in which the proto-anthropological observer makes educated assumptions about the meaning motivating observed behaviors made by foreigners.

While Zilia interprets such gifts as markers of respect, an underlying structure of economy and gendered obligation motivates these gifts. In actuality, Déterville's strategic generosity "moves to acculturate Zilia through the accumulation of a particularly strong form of cultural capital, obligation" (Thomas, 61). Thomas grounds this interpretation in Mauss' anthropological theories on the cultural significance of gift giving, and the interplay between three obligations: "the obligation to give, to receive, and to repay" (Thomas, 61).<sup>348</sup> In French culture, Déterville's gift-giving reads as more strategic than romantic.<sup>349</sup> Furthermore, his gifts are anything but arbitrary, intimately connected to the female body. Therefore, "By associating the gift with the female body ("on en passe aux oreilles, on en met sur l'estomac, au col"), the implied return is also linked to that body (Thomas, 61). This intended return to the (woman's) body aims first for physical possession, but also at the potential for more lasting consequences like marriage and children. Such a reality would only amplify and concretize the dynamic of obligation between Zilia and would-be husband Déterville.

These gifts, imbued with symbolic weight, function as delayed transactions. Given with the expectation of reciprocated affection, his gifts seek to make Zilia his mistress or fiancée. However, neither role tempts her, and she refuses either title. After her prolonged exposure to French culture and observations of courting and a marriage ceremony, Zilia sheds her initial

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<sup>348</sup> For more on Mauss' anthropological theories of exchange, see Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. Ian Cunnison (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1967). See also Jacques Derrida, 'Given Time: The Time of the King,' *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 2 (1992): 161-187.

<sup>349</sup> One particularly problematic instance of Déterville's "gift-giving" occurs while Zilia is in the convent, in which he "gives" her a large trunk full of treasure plundered from the Incan kingdom. She expresses gratitude for his supposed generosity, but this was merely the return of ill-gotten goods to one of the few survivors of the traumatic invasion.

naïveté, and identifies the “generalized economy of libertinage in which women are exchanged among men like objects” (Thomas, 62).<sup>350</sup> The culture shock Zilia experiences extends to the troubling intersection between economy and (hetero)sexual relations. The accumulation of Déterville’s hospitality, courtship and gift-giving all lead the reader to form the premature conclusion that he and Zilia will end up together. However, despite these indications baiting the reader, Graffigny dismantles the idealized portrayal of Déterville as a chivalrous suitor. In an essential imaginary voyage trope, the voyager-protagonist exudes ideal masculinity; he is strong, brave, and above all, rational.<sup>351</sup> Yet Graffigny inverts this dynamic, positioning Zilia as rational and Déterville as overly emotional. This positioning exacerbates Zilia’s negativity, culminating into the rejection that serves as the final tipping point before her permanent retreat from society.

For the majority of the story, Zilia’s pre-existing engagement to Aza justifies her rejection of Déterville. She articulates her rejection of Déterville by evoking her emotional ties: “le sentiment que j’ai pour Aza est tout différent de ceux que j’ai pour vous, c’est ce que vous appelez amour” (Graffigny, 166).<sup>352</sup> After repeatedly and tactfully turning down his misguided attempts to woo her, his persistence forces her to blatantly discourage him (“j’ai de l’amour pour Aza, parce qu’il en a pour moi, et que nous devons être unis. Il n’y a là-dedans nul rapport avec vous” (Graffigny, 166)). In light of Zilia’s increasingly blunt responses, Déterville’s persistence

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<sup>350</sup> What Thomas calls “the economy of Western libertinage” proposes a less-stable model of women’s relative value than “the eternal union of Inca civilization,” but outlasts the Incan kingdom (Thomas, 62).

<sup>351</sup> Télémaque (*Télémaque*) and Captain Siden (*L’Histoire des Sévarambes*) demonstrated the ideal masculinity of the typical utopian voyager.

<sup>352</sup> Ironically, Déterville contradicts her, suggesting that she must not understand the concept of love as he does and blames her refusal of him on her apparent ignorance. However, the ignorance of which he accuses her didn’t stop him from experiencing great satisfaction at making her repeat “je vous aime” earlier in their relationship.

reads less like romantic chivalrousness and more like unwanted harassment or an inability to pick up on obvious social cues.<sup>353</sup>

Beyond Zilia's enduring (albeit dubious) attachment to Aza, a fundamental difference in values prevents her from experiencing romantic attraction the same way as Déterville, let alone reciprocate his persistent attention. Exasperated, she systematically disassembles the faulty foundation propping up the ill-conceived relationship he continually forces:

...Vous n'êtes point de ma Nation; loin que vous m'ayez choisie pour votre épouse, le hasard seul nous a joints, et ce n'est même que d'aujourd'hui que nous pouvons librement nous communiquer nos idées. Par quelle raison auriez-vous pour moi les sentiments dont vous parlez? (Graffigny, 166-167).

This exclamation is significant because here, rather than rely upon her love for another man, Zilia grounds her rejection in reason, enumerating the reasons for their fundamental incompatibility. For Zilia, her understanding of ideal romantic love is predicated upon a certain degree of sameness and mutual comprehension; beyond mere attraction, there must be communication, shared cultural values, and time to grow together. Having experienced such a relationship with Aza, Déterville's understanding of love reads as an inauthentic imitation.

Despite her varied appeals to reason, Zilia fails to persuade Déterville, who only prioritizes enacting a sexual fantasy inherited from traditions of *romans d'aventures* and *galanterie* where the dashing *chevalier* woos and triumphs over the exotic woman.<sup>354</sup>

Meanwhile, Zilia's negativity permits her to see their relationship for what it is: she was an engaged woman, torn from her home, who was cared for by one of her captors, with whom she

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<sup>353</sup> The notion of sexual harassment didn't exist then as it did now; still, the way Zilia continually tries to deter Déterville in ever-more specific language clearly communicates she resents this attention and seeks for it to cease, in a way that mirrors how harassment might be received.

<sup>354</sup> Indeed, many readers were keen for such an ending, too— which I address when I discuss rewrites of *Lettres*.

can only communicate as of recently. From her perspective, romance would be impossible in her situation. Furthermore, she took her commitment to Aza seriously, in keeping with her (superior) morals; she could not simply supplant these feelings when someone new (and radically different) approached her. The already-limited power of Zilia's refusal remains tenuously respected only because a man (Aza) stands in the way. This masculine (and therefore valid) obstacle bars Déterville's path until the very last cluster of letters, at which point Zilia's refusal must stand alone.

Following ever-increasing rejection, Déterville's chivalrousness wears thin, and his true nature emerges. Any illusion of ideal masculinity evaporates as he exclaims, "Que ne m'en a-t-il pas coûté pour résister aux occasions séduisantes que m'offrait la familiarité d'une longue navigation! Combien de fois votre innocence vous aurait-elle livrée à mes transports, si je les eusse écoutés?" (Graffigny, 167). Déterville's outburst reveals that he sees himself as heroic for managing to not overpower Zilia while aboard the ship. Meanwhile, Zilia was unable to communicate with him, lacked sexual experience, had recently suffered traumatic treatment at the hands of the Spanish conquistadors, and that her "innocence" and "naivety" tempted him to overcome his "discretion." For Déterville, his laudatory ability to delay his urges obligates Zilia to indulge him; he was entitled to her inevitable submission. In a final effort to manipulate her, he presents two consequences; her acquiescence, or his demise; "Si vous n'êtes point touchée d'un respect si tendre, je vous fuirai; mais je le sens, ma mort sera le prix du sacrifice" (Graffigny, 167). Here, the situation's obvious power imbalances and the manipulative nature of his argument weakens Déterville's identity as a chivalrous figure as he attempts to posit Zilia as his would-be murderer if she refuses to indulge his desires.

These interactions between Déterville and Zilia provide a rewriting of gendered expectations regarding emotion versus reason. Even if Zilia previously implied women were the weaker sex, she frequently shows herself to be more rational than Déterville. She begins to see Déterville as less exceptional, and more emblematic of the flaws she identifies on a societal level. Instead, Zilia embodies the role of the ideal rational “masculine” voyager better than Déterville, by demonstrating her unshakable commitment to reason and control over her emotions.<sup>355</sup> In Letter 23, she urges Déterville to overcome his feelings for her. Déterville resists: “...faut-il encore vaincre des sentiments que vous avez fait naître? Le pourrai-je?” to which Zilia responds, “Oui... cet effort est digne de vous, de votre coeur” (Graffigny, 194). The willingness and ability to overcome strong emotions reveals a new facet of negativity, in which the retreat from illogical emotional states constitutes a stoic utopia of reason.

The accumulation of Zilia’s rejections result in “the implosion of the romantic tale,” with her resisting rather than complying with recognizable social signals of acceptable heterosexual relationships (Roulston, 314). Zilia refuses a marital union altogether because she is “keenly aware of the loss of female power in European marriage,” especially after her prolonged observations of French relational dynamics between men and women (Rutler, 6). In Rutler’s interpretation, Zilia was especially aware of the power she would lose with a French man because she experienced relatively superior treatment with Aza, who facilitated her access to knowledge, rendering her nearly his equal (Rutler, 6). Rutler extends her line of reasoning by

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<sup>355</sup> This instance where a woman proves better capable of mastering her emotions and prioritizing reason is particularly compelling when recalling the gender dynamic of *Télémaque*. Télémaque learned how to become the ideal (male) ruler, to embody bravery, moderation, and reason from Mentor. Mentor was secretly the goddess Minerva. Here, then, we see two popular works tied to the imaginary voyage and utopia genre where a woman (secret or visible) proves to naturally embody reason.

suggesting that a marriage to any man other than Aza “would result in a loss of power and would relegate her to a maternal role, reproducing a race to which she does not belong” (Rutler, 6).

However, this interpretation rests securely within the very logic Zilia seeks to escape. Such interpretations reveal the necessity of an approach grounded in anti-social negativity. Zilia never expresses a desire for children, even with Aza, at any point in the text, so this emphasis on reproduction is troubling. Emphasizing Zilia’s refusal as motivated by her unwillingness to reproduce “a race to which she does not belong” rests within the logic of reproductive futurity decried by Edelman. Rutler’s assumption of Zilia’s inevitable transition into a maternal, reproductive role proves that society (then *and* now) remains unable to “conceive of a future without the figure of the Child” (Edelman, 11). In this logic, Zilia doesn’t reject Déterville for her own motivations. Instead, her rejection is displaced to prioritize an absent but future child. Such reason grounds Zilia’s refusal in a reproductive-minded paradigm. This staunch adherence to the belief in Zilia’s inevitable child shows that entering into heterosexual marriage and bearing children “has come to embody for us the *telos* of the social order and come to be seen as the one for whom that order is held in perpetual trust” (Edelman, 11). My approach challenges the notion that Zilia’s refusal of Déterville can only be explained by an adherence to refusing an intercultural union. Instead, I argue Zilia’s rejection of Déterville operates outside of a child-dominated mentality, seeking to escape rather than negotiate this structure. In doing so, she seeks an existence outside of and in defiance to any subaltern position.

Zilia continually communicated her unwillingness to indulge Déterville, seeking to establish a tenuous refusal of marriage. However, her continued affectionate correspondence to Aza signalled the possibility of Zilia marrying if the two could be reunited. For the reader, Zilia’s continued affection for a man implied her entering into the institution dominated by Edelman’s

Child. However, a new development severs this last connection. Aza survived the Spanish attack and managed to journey to Europe. However, soon after his arrival, he converted to Catholicism and fell in love with someone else.<sup>356</sup> While this new tragedy devastates her, this event also provides necessary change in circumstance for her to pursue an absolute retreat.

Her letters to Aza provided a tenuous link to her home, to her origins, to a society, to men, to relationships—but with this link severed, she was alone and free. Any reason to postpone the total embodiment of negativity vanished. Although Aza’s betrayal initially pushes Zilia into an emotional crisis, her characteristic negativity becomes productive as she pursues a new lifestyle: “En sortant de la longue et accablante léthargie où me plongea le départ d’Aza, le premier désir que m’inspira la nature fut de me retirer dans la solitude” (Graffigny, 219). Tellingly, her first desire is to retreat, and reject everything and everyone she deems unworthy of her time. In this solitude, she writes, “j’y trouve des secours contre le désespoir que le monde et l’amitié même ne m’auraient jamais fournis” (Graffigny, 219). This preference for solitude to company exemplifies her anti-social negativity, a utopia that directly contradicts the notion of utopia as society.

Initially, Zilia grounded her negativity in relation to her existing relationships to Aza and her Incan home. Her desire for Aza permitted her to displace her antisocial drive to the socially acceptable practice of letter writing. She based her rejection of French society by comparing her own Peruvian society as superior. She justified her rejection of women’s limited gender roles because Aza treated her better. Even her rejection of Détéville was primarily explained by her existing love for Aza, although she articulated additional elements grounded in their fundamental

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<sup>356</sup> When Aza converted to Catholicism, he adopted the belief that marriage between brother and sister or cousins was morally wrong. This resulted in his inability to continue desiring union with Zilia, as their familial ties rendered their relationship unacceptable. He fell in love with a Spanish woman, ending Aza’s assumed love for Zilia.



cultural and linguistic differences. In essence, her negativity was indissociable with relationality, which prevents it from being truly anti-social. However, this point of rupture marks a transformative moment. Now, with not only Peruvian utopia destroyed, but even her last link to her past permanently severed, she could no longer direct her antisocial negativity towards Aza. From then on, she could embody it more authentically. Owing nothing of herself, she finds a new life in anti-sociality, and her progress towards her new life reveals the true (anti-social) utopia of *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*.

### ACHIEVING ANTI-SOCIAL UTOPIA

Graffigny's most striking and significant break from the imaginary voyage tradition occurs towards the end of the "voyage." Typically, the world-weary travel departs from the foreign utopian land (willingly, as seen with Veiras' Captain Siden, or, to avoid death, as seen with Foigny's Jacques Sadeur). The voyager cannot stay in the desired land and must return to Europe; this is how the texts eventually reach the fated hands of the Editor, and later the reading public. Instead, Zilia retires to a different sort of "utopia," a no-place within France yet on the distant margins of French society. This final retreat serves as the culminating utopia of *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*. This stage in Zilia's journey also provides a final elaboration of Zilia's anti-social negativity, in which her ever-developing efforts at retreat and refusal culminate in Graffigny's oft-commented and controversial ending.

While Zilia repeatedly made moves to reject the society for which she held such disdain, she was limited in her ability to do so.<sup>357</sup> Not only was she a woman and a foreigner, but she also lacked wealth. However, an unexpected event removes these barriers to her much-desired retreat

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<sup>357</sup> Her negativity-fuelled retreats were limited to reading and writing.

from society. In Letter 27, Zilia receives a trunk full of treasures that had been pillaged from her home Temple, which rightfully belonged to her. This moment introduced to possibility of Zilia obtaining wealth, solving her initial concerns over property (“Je n’ai ni or, ni terres, ni industrie” (Graffigny, 159). Furthermore, this scene marks the first point where she attempts to create a space entirely for herself that reads as a precursor to her later retreat. She arranges the various gold idols, a throne, and other beloved artifacts, creating a sort of nostalgic utopia for her own enjoyment. Roulston reads this moment of curation as Zilia creating something between a museum diorama and a shrine: “Here, Zilia's original cultural space and scenes from her old life are reconstructed as an extravagant museum piece, a shrine that both invokes and displaces the original “temple du Soleil”...[T]his new temple functions as a representation, as image rather than substance. Zilia's house, in fact, is a house filled by artifice, in which the treasures of the cultures she has passed through are framed as ideal artifacts” (Roulston 323-324). However, I argue against interpreting her small temple as artificial, but rather representative. Artificiality implies outright falseness, but the nostalgia and anti-sociality motivating her curation of the miniature temple are authentic. In Simon’s reading of the same moment, “For Zilia, the objects set in the diorama of her Temple room gesture toward a past that is at once temporally and spatially distant, but also destroyed forever” (Simon, 36). This act of rearranging a new Temple space constitutes a utopian performance of nostalgia, casting a miniaturized version of her past, but transformed into a new space, where only she resides, instead of existing as one of many women serving a sacred purpose.

Initially, negativity was Zilia’s only weapon and primary coping mechanism. Negativity permits marginalized members of society “to resist the social conditions of their devaluation” (Berlant and Edelman, xii), which in Zilia’s case, was the exotification and ostracization she

experienced as a foreigner, and the further oppression she experienced as a woman. However, with an important change in status, Zilia's critique and rejection can move outside rather than solely within the society she abhors. Her condition further improves in Letter 35, as Céline and Déterville take Zilia to a charming countryside cottage. There, she is presented with a contract, which she signs. An excited Céline exclaims, "cette terre et cette maison vous appartiennent" (Graffigny, 208).

The moment of Zilia's transformation into a property owner prompts a dramatic range in interpretations. For Hilger, Déterville played an essential role in facilitating Zilia's acquisition of private property. Therefore, whatever independence she gained by obtaining a home still signals necessary dependency on men (Hilger, 74).<sup>358</sup> However, as Simon argues, because Zilia's new home was paid for with the gold that Europeans plundered from the Incas when they abducted Zilia, her change in status should be understood as a step towards justice, rather than an act of kindness by Déterville (Simon, 32). Zilia rightfully regained should belong to an Incan. If, until now, Zilia was reduced to an exotic object (which would be exacerbated in a marriage to Déterville), Roulston argues that she instead "borrows the markers of male cultural dominance and domesticates them, reducing them to the parameters of her own home" (Roulston, 324). However, as property owner, she no longer borrows or adapts; she owns. As an owner, she may shift into a position of freedom to pursue anti-social negativity more fully.

Empowered by the knowledge that this home is hers, "tout ce qui s'offrit à mon passage me parut prendre une nouvelle forme" (Graffigny, 209); the flora more beautiful, the house more charming, the furniture more luxurious. Her typical affective disposition of judgement, disillusionment, alienation or isolation fades. For the first time, she experiences a new emotion,

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<sup>358</sup> In this reading, then, the ending is "less unrealistic for her readers" because if Déterville is to thank, that shows that "the independence which a woman could reach was only an incomplete one" (Hilger, 74).

“une ivresse de joie, qui ne me permettait pas de rien examiner” as she runs through the home. This joy increases when she enters “une assez grande chambre entourée d’un grillage d’or, légèrement travaillé, qui renfermait une infinité de Livres” (Graffigny, 209). The possibility to escape into infinite books gives Zilia an unprecedented pleasure and satisfaction. Where the dominant value of reproductive futurism as described by Edelman promises fulfilment in the futurity of a child, Zilia discovers a greater and more permanent source of satisfaction in her new library and the promise of solitary study. She thus presides over her own utopia: a no-place inscribed both within and outside of French society, a hybrid space filled with artifacts of her life recreating a Temple of the Sun in the French countryside bought with gold treasures plundered from her home.

However, Zilia’s intention to shift from the suffocating manners of the court to quiet solitude was met with resistance. In a society so dictated by etiquette, formalities, and clear hierarchies, Zilia’s efforts to create her own private utopia were anything but welcome, especially as she did so without a husband.<sup>359</sup> While Céline and Déterville interpreted Zilia obtaining the home in terms of how it would enhance their relationship, Zilia saw it as an opportunity to escape from French society. If the siblings perceived this move as a way of better incorporating Zilia into their society by elevating her status and closing the hierarchical distance between them, she defied their expectations, instead using her new status as property owner to more completely distance herself from the society Déterville and Céline wanted to integrate her into. Even as a property owner, Zilia occupied an unstable status that society hastened to correct.<sup>360</sup> Céline confronts Zilia, representing the great social anxieties stemming from the threat posed by an

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<sup>359</sup> An antisocial retreat would likely have been easier if undertaken by someone of a different social standing (e.g., a wealthy man).

<sup>360</sup> Indeed, Zilia’s ability to live independently as a property owner was exceptional for her time, apart from the case of widows (Simon, 33).

unmarried woman. Writing to Déterville, Zilia muses, “Peut-être la fastueuse décence de votre nation ne permet-elle pas à mon âge, l’indépendance et la solitude où je vis; du moins toutes les fois que Céline me vient voir, veut-elle me le persuader” (Graffigny, 220). Despite these external pressures, Zilia remains steadfast in her convictions. Zilia writes that Céline “ne m’a pas encore donné d’assez fortes raisons pour m’en convaincre: la véritable décence est dans mon coeur” (220). For Zilia, outside factors cannot trouble her own notion of decency, reason, and truth. Truth, writes Edelman, holds value “in the stubborn particularity that voids every notion of the general good” (Edelman, 6).<sup>361</sup> In the court, the ‘general good’ resembles dysfunctional families undermined by superficiality, men disrespecting women, children raised as entertainment, and the desire to seem wealthy and beautiful. For Zilia, her closely held values supplant ‘general good,’ rejecting acceptable artifice for defiant solitude.

Céline pressuring Zilia to conform to a more acceptable lifestyle stems from a constructed notion on (feminine) decency predicated on women’s (a)morality. In Céline’s understanding, a woman’s decency can only be certain in a convent or under the rule of a husband. Déterville also pressured her to abandon this improper social status, albeit with ulterior motives. With Aza no longer constituting a credible obstacle for Déterville, he pursues Zilia as relentlessly as before, although she continues to reject him; she states, “C’est en vain que vous vous flatteriez de faire prendre à mon coeur de nouvelles chaînes” (Graffigny, 221). No longer able to justify her rejection of Déterville by her ties to Aza, she reveals that she associates love or marriage with bondage, and marriage with imprisonment. From her new position outside of the Temple of the

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<sup>361</sup> In the original quote, Edelman referred to “truth and queerness.” However, in the present context, truth alone suffices, as Zilia’s understanding of uprightness even outside of marriage stands in opposition to society’s notion of how a woman may comport herself.

Sun, outside of the convent, and outside of the restrictions of courtly social obligations, Zilia's willing entry into any form of restricting relationship would be unthinkable.

Initially, Zilia *does* attempt to enact a compromise rather than complete retreat from society, by trying to stay friends with Déterville and Céline. Soon after gaining her new status as property owner, she proposes an intellectual exchange with Déterville, in which "Déterville will teach her about the sciences and the arts, and Zilia will help him develop his virtue" (Bostic, 9). Instead of accepting a position of inferiority *vis-à-vis* Déterville, she seeks to expand her opportunities to gain knowledge beyond mere books, to exploit Déterville's aristocratic upbringing.

Earlier in the text, Zilia's observations and worldviews considering the gendered hierarchy and dynamic between men and women were grounded in men's obligation to protect or educate women, her proposal of new interpersonal interactions moves towards greater equality. Many read her proposition of a new mode of existence as utopian and radical. For instance, Rutler identifies a utopian spirit in Zilia's efforts to escape gendered categories, suggesting she lives in a utopian "void...coded neither as masculine nor feminine" (Rutler, 13). Sherman shares a similar optimism, suggesting that "the replacement of passion by friendship" draws out new boundaries typically denied to women, creating a new role outside of daughter/ wife/ mother where they would otherwise be "violated, colonized, and used" (Sherman, 272). Indeed, she tries to escape these roles, develop her own identity, and create a new reality.<sup>362</sup> But this implies Déterville would suddenly respect Zilia's attempt to secure autonomy—despite the innumerable points in the text where he continually pursued her romantically. A pessimistic yet necessary skepticism is necessary here. The utopia she attempts to create is significantly radical, but

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<sup>362</sup> Virtually all scholars of *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* reach such conclusions, and interpret what Zilia attempted to do as successful and fixed.

tenuous. Her status as property owner theoretically freed her from dependence on men, but no textual evidence suggests he will suddenly respect Zilia. A truly negative reading of *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* must be all-encompassing; Zilia's negativity drove her to reject society, marriage, and the family, but textual evidence points indicates little likelihood of her utopia remaining any more intact than the Temple of the Sun, her original utopia.

The letters from Déterville and Céline trying to deter her from embracing her solo existence reveal the tension between the ideals and anxieties held by Zilia and her peers. In France, ideal femininity develops in a claustrophobic Panopticon, mediated by men but primarily regulated and observed by other women. A single woman who neither gives nor accepts compliments or criticism, who is neither protected nor deceived by men, threatens “decency” by escaping public eye. Ironically, the single woman is assumed to be sexually voracious and indecent, yet it is the very upstanding nature of Zilia's incorruptible morals and deliberate refusal of any romantic or sexual interactions that drive her retreat from society towards her private utopia.

In Céline and Déterville's societal paradigm, dominant social beliefs would hold that marriage and children grant fulfillment and a future, and regard solitude and isolation as unnatural, even threatening. In the paradigm of reproductive futurism, an existence without a baby is an existence without a future. Zilia's choice to pursue knowledge in isolation and to reject Déterville shocked peers and readers alike because of the broader implications her refusal signifies. Her choice evokes “the fatal lure of sterile, narcissistic enjoyments understood as inherently destructive of meaning and therefore as responsible for the undoing of social organization, collective reality, and, inevitably, life itself” (Edelman, 13). Operating within this

logic, Zilia's disinterestedness wasn't merely unconventional; it was deeply unsettling.<sup>363</sup> Zilia not only negates her own future, she also refuses to contribute to society's future in a recognizable, universally acknowledged way. Therefore, her apparently selfish interests threaten social stability.

However, scholars tend to neglect or contort this moment of Zilia's sweeping rejection, betraying a systemic unwillingness to acknowledge the anti-social nature of her retreat. Mercier reduces Zilia's refusal to her unwillingness to "trahir son peuple et les lois ancestrales des Incas" (Mercier, 196), placing excessive emphasis on her past rather than her present conflicts and interests. For Rutler, Zilia's refusal of Déterville as husband and efforts to build friendship constructs "a new, egalitarian family based on sibling-like relationships, inventing a new role for the woman—that of the independent, enlightened sister" (Rutler, 2). Rutler calls this new way of being "a family based on friendship," reimagining aristocratic alliances by creating "a more egalitarian family" (Rutler, 6). I disagree with the appellation "family" as this would ape the conventional family Zilia actively seeks to reject. While Zilia does achieve autonomous female subjectivity and "creates a female presence apart from conventional modes of family" (Rutler, 2-3), I only find textual evidence that Zilia does so in her own interests, not with the intention of creating a new space for other women, and certainly not within the paradigm of the "family" model she alikens to prison.

Indeed, scholars may want to hail Zilia as a subversive feminine heroine advocating for a sisterhood grounded in Enlightenment principles, who "rejects the narcissistic tendencies of the brother who denies all desires but his own, in favor of a common desire for individual liberty"

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<sup>363</sup> Zilia's refusal created shock waves both within the novel (in the form of Céline and Déterville's inability to approve of her decision) and beyond the universe of the novel (as seen with readers outraged by the ending of the work). I discuss the latter in the next section, which deals with rewrites of the text.



(Rutler, 5). Instead of upholding such an interpretation, I argue that *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* is especially compelling *because* of Zilia's self-motivated, even narcissistic tendencies and desire for (personal) individual liberty, as well as her ever-mounting attitude of refusal with regard to the gender roles and social norms that she criticizes. Rather than shy away from words with negative connotations like "narcissistic," I argue that such words hold tremendous value for *Lettres*. Given the scarcity of female authors in the French canon, a great deal of pressure may motivate often far-reaching claims seeking to establish Zilia as a hero for womankind, who refused to engage in masculine self-interestedness. However, I argue there is also fundamental worth in daring to read Zilia as acting in her self-interest, of rejecting society purely to suit herself. She appears narcissistic for refusing the honorable self-sacrifice inherent to serving a husband and raising a family, in favor of pursuing her own intellectual interests. Her narcissism is individualistic and groundbreaking for appearing at a time where a woman behaving in such a way was scandalous and threatening. For Zilia, refusing Déterville (and therefore courtship, marriage, the husband, the family, and the child) in favor of pursuing individuality and knowledge positions her to enact her ideal. *Lettres* can and will continue to be read as feminist and emancipatory, but scholars could benefit from analyzing the negativity and self-interestedness within Zilia's refusal, as these facets complicate understandings of character development, innovations in the writing of protagonists, and even notions of ideal femininity.

If Céline and Déterville struggled to accept Zilia's solitude and independent status, Graffigny's readers especially resisted this *dénouement*. In part, "The suspense or irresolution eighteenth-century readers perceived at the end of the novel was brought about by Zilia's "unstable" civil status" (Thomas, 69). The anxiety provoked in and beyond the novel reveals that ideal femininity could not exist in isolation. Graffigny introduces a threatening new ideal, which

“articulates a desirable fantasy of female autonomy and not a narrative of entombment” (Roulston, 324). When faced with this unconventional and seemingly unresolved ending, readers expressed everything from dissatisfaction to outright contempt, which then escalated into backlash. For instance, “Contemporary readers immediately critiqued the novel’s unconventional ending, suggesting that Graffigny change the *dénouement* to conform more to the novelistic conventions and verisimilitude of either marriage or death for its heroine” (Vanpée, 135).<sup>364</sup> When readers realized Graffigny would not comply to their pressures, some penned alternate endings to *Lettres d’une Péruvienne*, “with the more acceptable and expected closure of romantic resolution,” and even tried to pass off these endings as having been written by Graffigny herself (Vanpée, 135-136). In less than two years of *Lettres*’s publication, two false sequels were published, and another in 1797 (MacArthur, 8).

The way these rewrites or sequels reimagine Graffigny’s ending reveals the anxieties an unmarried, independent, and anti-social woman provoked, as well as the ideals dictating ideal heterosexual interactions and femininity.<sup>365</sup> In the first sequel, anonymously published in 1748, Déterville gets the “last word,” and, despite a conclusive ending, resolutely suggests Zilia’s amicable feelings for Déterville will turn romantic and lead to their union (MacArthur, 8-9). Lamarche-Couront wrote another sequel, published in 1749. In this iteration, titled *Lettres d’Aza*, Aza (the “author”) reveals the rupture between Aza and Zilia was due to a misunderstanding, not infidelity. The two are reunited, and the final letter reveals their plan to marry (MacArthur, 9).

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<sup>364</sup> If readers struggled to see Zilia experience any ending besides marriage, even Graffigny grappled with this problem. Even in 1745 Graffigny envisioned a marriage ending for Zilia, but literary convention was causing her to have a writing block; “Having portrayed Aza as the lover and the loved one, she would violate the reader’s expectation of a character’s consistency if she made him betray Zilia. And Zilia, too, would violate propriety and moral orthodoxy if she transferred her love from Aza to Déterville. In the end, Mme de Graffigny found a way for Zilia to retain her emotional integrity, by offering Déterville friendship but not love” (Graffigny, 148).

<sup>365</sup> Ironically, if *Lettres d’une Péruvienne* refused to provide a blueprint for an improved society, these rewrites eagerly suggested blueprints for correct performances of femininity.

This work resolved the impossibility of accepting an ending featuring only a woman, and no husband, family, or possible child. A third sequel, by Morel de Vinde (1797), portrays Zilia's marriage to Déterville. These endings, with suggested or actual marriages, reveal that "it hardly matters who Zilia marries, as long as she marries someone" (MacArthur, 9). Furthermore, in each of these rewrites, "the male characters recapture the right to speak, and Zilia accepts her allotted place of subjugation in society" (MacArthur, 9). The authors of these rewrites weren't content to merely marry Zilia to a man; more importantly, they wanted to situate her firmly within the gendered hierarchy that she sought to remove herself from. As Sherman notes, the ending (in either version) troubled readers, so they wanted to alter it, "to reinsert it into codes or narratives that were familiar and safe" (Sherman, 278). The various rewrites of *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* accomplished exactly that.

As much in response to the popularity of her books as well as an indication of her commitment to her ending, Graffigny later penned an expanded edition of *Lettres*, where, "although she added three new letters to the 1752 edition of the text (letters 29, 30, and 34), she left her conclusion untouched, underlining her adherence to it" (Roulston, 324). This bold commitment to her plot is particularly striking given Graffigny's precarity as a woman author who was, to an extent, dependent on her readers for survival.<sup>366</sup> Both Graffigny and Zilia, then, asserted crucial negativity in their staunch refusal to bow to societal pressures, and should be remembered for doing so.

When reading works influential works penned by women, there's a temptation to hunt for early sites of positive action illuminating moments of female empowerment long before the

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<sup>366</sup> At the same time, her new edition was also born out of financial concerns; recalling how her first edition released by the widow Pissot resulted in only twelve copies, "the main reason to revise the novel was money," as she could negotiate a more favorable publication deal in the light of the novel's great popularity (Showalter, 276). That said, her adherence to her original ending reveals the convictions accompanying her financial interests.

emergence of feminism as we know it now. With so few female authors in the French literary canon, one hopes to claim these works as proto-feminist novels. For instance, Bostic reads *Lettres* as a socially critical work that “illustrates the symbolic separation between women and power, fueled by the masculine coding of religious belief, custom and reason.” She also considers the novel to be “a work of positive possibility” that “shows that women are rational and may become philosophers” (Bostic, 10).

However, I argue the work holds great power and significance when considering the possibilities unearthed by negativity rather than positivity. Interestingly, Howells also identifies negativity, albeit with a different approach and different conclusions. He writes, “L’histoire de Zilia, où je crois entrevoir le myth personnel de sa créatrice, est d’un pessimisme profonde” (Howells, 310). From there, he suggests one may find feminism “dans l’expression des rêves inassouvis d’une femme” (310). However, I call for a reading that shifts the central focus from the many vital feminist readings of *Lettres*, to seriously consider the value of an interpretation grounded in negativity. Yes, Zilia created a new space that contested a realm only inhabitable by a male presence. But negativity can hold as much power as positivity and creation, especially when it refuses the denial or wishful thinking that may accompany positivity.

To appreciate a new and vital facet of *Lettres*, I call to bring together the seemingly incompatible notions of negativity and utopia. The classic utopian literature of the 17th and 18th century hold a noble goal, to craft an alternative societal blueprint to systematically repair the flaws that human nature brings upon humanity. These utopian novels serve a positive function, undertaking the intellectual labor of proposing a new world that claims to right many wrongs, even if they go to extremes to do so. However, negativity introduces a new dynamic in the study of utopia, by questioning the need for the reinforcement of some positive social value as

justification (Edelman, 6). Zilia's actions refuse society, rather than attempt to change and improve it. No positive social value can be found in her private utopian retreat. However, negativity's value "resides in its challenge to value as defined by the social, and thus in its radical challenge to the very value of the social itself" (Edelman, 6). This is why arguments to claim *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* as an emancipatory feminist text for women tend to fall short; Zilia does *not* try to assert a new role for women in society. When her Peruvian utopia was destroyed, only fragments to build a utopia for one remained. Putting hope in creating superior society "would only reproduce the constraining mandate of futurism," which would negate any real progress (Edelman, 4). Paradoxically, by rejecting hope, futurity, and society as a whole, one may reject "the insistence of hope itself as affirmation, which is always an affirmation of an order whose refusal will register as unthinkable, irresponsible, inhumane" (Edelman, 4). Through this rejection, Zilia opened the possibility for a future that would not replicate the harms she identified and allow for the articulation of new ways of being.

This approach makes for a less uplifting reading. However, regarding *Lettres* with a focus on negativity provides an important expansion within the study of utopia, particularly considering the ways in which utopia uncovers attitudes regarding gender and sexuality. Zilia rejects society, she rejects conventional relationships; it stands to reason that she also rejects utopian hope, or any fraternal or sisterly belief in the possible amelioration of (hu)mankind. Indeed, we may find more comfort in reading the conclusion of *Lettres* as "optimistic," with the interpretation that "given the necessary educational opportunities and material conditions, women may make a place for themselves within the philosophical project of Enlightenment" (Bostic, 10).

While Zilia's utopian retreat does importantly seek to enact such a reality, this reading fails to account for the precarity of her retreat, and the inaccessibility of the conditions required to

obtain it. Instead, however, I maintain the importance of a more troubling reading inspired by queer theory and negativity. The anti-social thesis “resides in its brutal rejection of the comforting platitudes that we use to cushion our fall into mortality, incoherence, and nonmastery” (Halberstam, 823). For Zilia, assimilating into the superficial, hollow roles limited to French noblewoman would assure her a greater degree of comfort than any alternative. Her efforts to educate herself constitute a confrontation against nonmastery, and her journey of learning to read and write in French fight against the incoherence she was first thrust into, yet she cannot fully shrug off the precarity of her situation. However, the precarity accompanying her rejection is worth more than the false promise of fulfillment guaranteed by marriage, the family, and assimilating into societal expectations. By seeing this as an early work where someone (a woman, no less) rejects society, rejects hope, rejects reproductive futurism, rejects romantic love, and so much else, readers can gain greater insight into the complexity of writing and ideals of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>367</sup>

*Lettres* can (and indeed should) be read to for indications of how Graffigny (and others) criticized French society and gender roles. However, it can also provide something new. *Lettres* develops a vein of thought where society and relationality itself are condemned as irredeemable, and proposes an antisocial utopia as the only solution. *Lettres* already made a striking impact as a work that took men’s (mis)treatment of women to task, that questioned what women stood to gain from marriage, and refused the assumed satisfaction or stability of marriage. But scholarship can and should go further. Zilia’s social criticism was also accompanied by a “selfish” rejection of reproductive futurism, the narcissistic self-interestedness to motivate an individual pursuit of knowledge that didn’t seek to fix society. Graffigny articulated an antisocial

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<sup>367</sup> Indeed, beyond my overarching prioritization of identifying ideals, *Lettres* also proposes the notion of rejecting ideals and embracing negativity.

worldview in the unlikely protagonist of an innocent, exiled Peruvian woman. Efforts to identify additional writings that evoke an anti-social aesthetic of negativity long before their time can further illuminate understandings of the attitudes and social criticisms of the times in which they were written, and the alternate utopia such an aesthetic renders possible.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

Under the broad umbrella of the *voyage imaginaire*, the varied texts depicting voyages to the *Terre Australe*, Calypso's Island, the Moon and Sun, and the Incan kingdom all grant unique insight into the gendered values and expectations held by 17th and 18th century France.

Paradoxically, these depictions allegedly portraying distant cultures reveal much more about anxieties and ideals surrounding men and women's place in French society than about the places they purported to describe. When reading such texts as a 21st-century reader, one cannot help but wonder: Who were these utopia really for? This question drove me to investigate how the unique dynamics of these utopia can inform our understanding of the societies from which they emerged.

One could also question the validity of studying a genre with such a fraught relationship to truth and invention, lacking the artistic reputation of canonical literature, so formulaic a format, such a bizarre relationship between "Editor" and traveler, and such variety in spaces represented. However, these seeming weaknesses grant the genre great strength and value, primarily regarding the greater liberty this unique genre affords the author. Most importantly for the scope of this dissertation, the imaginary voyage granted authors near-unlimited freedom in representing sex and gender in more frank or imaginative ways than could be possible elsewhere. While sex can be a difficult, even impossible subject to broach in conventional canonical literature dictated by *bienséance*, the narrative disguise allowed by imaginary voyages and the safe distance of faraway imagined societies granted authors greater freedom in exploring taboo subjects under the veil of proto-anthropological inquiry.



Beyond this greater freedom of expression granted by narrative disguise and looser restrictions, utopian societies let authors do more than reimagine sex and gender; the utopia by definition prompts the articulation of ideals, unimpeded by the inconvenient restrictions of real society that prevent significant social change. Because such texts were almost always published clandestinely or in neighboring countries, the intersection of banned texts and explorations of sexuality and gender indicates the great value such texts hold for further study. If scholars are willing to suspend the challenge of reading imaginary voyages, which can be dizzyingly confusing for their blend of fantasy and reality, they may study otherwise-inaccessible explorations of ideals and taboos related to sex and gender that cannot exist in conventional, canonical literature.

Beyond the appeal of studying the uniquely bizarre worlds of 17th and 18th century French imaginary voyages, I am driven to address two apparent gaps in scholarship. I identify these gaps in two places: in the study of imaginary voyages and utopia, and in the study of early modern gender and sexuality. My research holds value for contributing substantially to an as-of-yet underdeveloped dialogue between these fields. Utopia and dystopia continue to compel academics, yet their studies remain overwhelmingly restricted to studying political and economic dynamics, considering how certain imaginations of utopia illuminate proto-socialist societies, or how abolishing the notion of private property imagined how to solve problems experienced in the country of the author's origin. Increasingly, scholarship broaches previously ignored subjects such as women's role in the utopia (Leibacher-Ouvrard, Pohl), or reproduction in the utopia or dystopia (Sargent), but such scholarship remains in the minority despite a wealth of material with an abundance of possible implications out waiting to be explored and analyzed.

The study of gender and sexuality during the 17th and 18th centuries continues to thrive as a dynamic, interdisciplinary field developing ever-improving understandings of what gender roles, marriage, and sexuality looked like. However, I argue that the field could expand further and benefit from considering unconventional, overlooked sources. While documents such as legal, medical, and religious texts provide concrete insight into societal dynamics in France, there is still great value in discussing texts that constitute several degrees of abstraction from reality. Imaginary voyages provide a strange hybrid between reality and fiction, and in these non-spaces, sexuality and gender can also exist as strange hybrid; dynamics may reflect or fully flip reality, but traces of the original remain. My dissertation enacts a call to explore the palimpsestic nature of imaginary voyages, to embrace the confusion of borrowings between authentic travel narratives and imagination as a productive *mélange* that provide a rare space for authors to broach taboo topics, fulfill fantasies, write worlds that embrace impossible ideals on a societal scale, and more.

Furthermore, my research is significant because it considers texts that, while they may often be neglected by the canon today, were all incredibly influential and popular in their time and for years after their first publication. If a work was knowingly influential, voraciously read, imitated, and if readers went to great efforts to obtain clandestine versions, one can surmise that the gender dynamics, the portrayals of sexuality, and the ideals within reached a broad audience. It would be remiss to continue to neglect such works, even if their bizarre hybridity can be unsettling. While the content of imaginary voyages is frequently designed to captivate and entertain audiences, it also upset them, as was the case with *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*; the unconventional ending shocked and upset many readers yet retained popularity edition after

edition. The ideals within would have resonated with some, and unsettled others, but always provoked some degree of reflection.

My first chapter initiated my inquiry by exploring a quintessential site of imaginary voyage in the French tradition: the *Terre Australe*, where geography, mythology, and voyage accounts played a vital role in creating a singular yet highly variable space for authors to stage their own imaginings of utopia. The *Terre Australe* was unique for its unparalleled history in terms of speculation and imagination. Centuries of writers, readers, cartographers, and scholars remained preoccupied with a place that was ultimately revealed as vast waters and a smattering of islands rather than a massive, fertile continent. Because the *Terre Australe* was both captivating and nonexistent, the imagined voyages to these spaces had only questionable travel accounts to imitate, and authors were thus liberated to go to greater imaginative heights than they could when portraying better-known places.

After explaining how mythologies, theories, cartography, and (questionable) voyage accounts positioned the *Terre Australe* as the ideal setting for imaginary voyages, I examined Foigny's *La Terre Australe Connue* and Veiras' *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*, two of the most important and popular French imaginary voyages set in the great Southern Continent. I studied how these texts portrayed their visions of utopia and brought to light what each narrative reveals about gender and sexuality through writing the ideal society. In each text, idealized iterations of gender and sexuality in the utopia also point to the authors' formations of social critique of France as well as the anxieties governing gender dynamics. When consulting scholarship on Veiras' utopia, I was led to anticipate a rigid society perfected by rules adapted from a variety of cultures around the world, resulting in a proto-socialist utopia governed by an enlightened yet absolute ruler. Indeed, the society stamped out vices and ensured social order through the

enforcement of rules extending into every facet of life, but I encountered more instability and resistance to the state's absolute rule than scholars like Keohane and Lestrinant acknowledge.

Examining Veiras' utopia through the lens of gender dynamics, I found that Sévarambe laws were especially preoccupied with gender roles and appropriate or inappropriate sexual practices. In the society of Veiras' imagining, diverse social norms persistently relegate women to the status of goods for exchange and relies upon the subjugation of women to assure order. Although the utopia theoretically instill equality, gendered practices abound; the state allocates female sexual slaves to visitors, oversees a highly symbolic mass state wedding ceremony to facilitate women's transition out of the public sphere, punishes infidelity through public shaming, and implements laws governing family life and children to women's disadvantage. The structural makeup of state institutions combined with cultural practices and norms ensure women's objectification and commodification.

These unfavorable dynamics prompted me to consider the unexpected yet profound applicability of Luce Irigaray's *Le marché des femmes* as a theoretical text to bolster my consideration of the economic logic of subjugation that plays out in Sévarambe. Sévarambe society brings Irigaray's elaboration of a market of women as exchangeable goods to life, from the interpersonal to societal level. Irigaray's text, when put into dialogue with *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*, demonstrates that gendered hierarchies served a very deliberate purpose; they ensure a stable and functioning society at the expense of women's individual liberty and bodily autonomy. The nature of Sévarambe laws also reveal sexuality to be a major threat to utopian stability; stable society can only be achieved by heavily regulating and harnessing sexual relations to only serve the population-related demands of the society. Although Sévarambe laws restricted both men and women, a disproportionate burden fell upon women, effectively reducing

them to vessels for childbearing and satisfying men's sexual appetites in controlled settings designed to moderate men's sexual appetites.<sup>368</sup>

Sévarambe society established a seemingly unshakable edifice of patriarchal control over women's bodies, suggested both a deep-seated anxiety related to sexuality as well as an unwillingness to conceive of women as subjects deserving of rights equal to those of their male counterparts. However, I identified a severely under-discussed anecdote towards the end of five-part work that threatens to destabilize the entire subjugation-based social structure and suggests its fallibility.<sup>369</sup> *L'Histoire d'Ahimoné et Dionistar* recounts how young woman Ahimoné burned down the temple housing the religion-state authorities that would have subjected her to a forced sexual relationship with corrupt leader Stroukaras. Importantly, the tone of the narration admired and defended rather than condemned her. As Leibacher-Ouvrard readily identified, social organization in *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* relegates women to subservient positions, dehumanizes them, and lacks any feminine redemption. Within a book largely devoid of developed female characters or female agency, set in a social structure that only values women's ability to reproduce to ensure a large workforce, Ahimoné's story should be understood as deliberately unsettling and threatening to the utopian ideals communicated throughout the work.

In accordance with the majority of scholarship on *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*, it seems unthinkable to proclaim this work as anything other than a classic utopian text because the style

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<sup>368</sup> In Sévarambe culture, men's sexual desires are held as natural and normal, and meeting their sexual needs are considered a state-given right. This right is assured by suspending women's own rights to autonomy, by reducing them to sexual slaves or wives.

<sup>369</sup> While the anecdote is virtually undiscussed, several scholars briefly discuss *L'Histoire d'Ahimoné et Dionistar*. Van Der Müll sees the tale as running parallel to rumors of incriminating scandals involving Catholic priests. Laursen and Masroori suggest the tale is but a digression inserted to maintain readers' interest nor qualify as a nod to the persisting flaws of human nature despite the strict laws and structure of utopia. Leibacher-Ouvrard interprets the story as one of many digressions that constitute moralizing tales that reinforce the utopian societal ideals. I explained how each of these interpretations are lacking in depth and fail to acknowledge the radical significance of this anecdote so unlike the others.

and faithful inclusion of stock utopian elements (such as the shipwreck and encyclopedic-esque description of every facet of the foreign society) fit the classification perfectly. However, the tone and content of Ahimonné's story prompts me to consider *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* differently. For starters, the text can be looked to as a demonstration of how strict rules and regulations relegate women to an inferior position to ensure the sustained growth of the population. Beyond that, however, I argue the anecdote within provides a cautionary tale of the problems and consequences of when leaders of utopian society abuse their position. With the overall narrative designating women to a limited role and denies them bodily autonomy, Ahimonné's violent resistance appears to challenge the logic and ethics of a society reposing on gender hierarchies. Such gender hierarchies reveal deep-seated anxieties about women's sexuality as the potential undoing of social stability, necessitating regulation resulting in these hierarchies.

*L'Histoire des Sévarambes* is far from the only text to instill gendered hierarchies, restrict women to roles related to childbearing, or hold anxiety about sexuality's threat to social stability. Since so many other classic utopia (More's *Utopia*, Campanella's *La Citta del Sol*, etc.) feature strict gender hierarchies and laws that disproportionately burden women with tampering male lust, it can be challenging to imagine utopia structured any differently. However, another book written only a year apart from *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* challenged the seemingly omnipresent logic of patriarchal society, by eliminating not only gendered hierarchies, but gender altogether.<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> In my other chapters, I primarily consider one imaginary voyage rather than two. I made an exception for this first chapter. I did this largely because scholars frequently examine *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* and *La Terre Australe Connue* together; since the two texts were published a year apart, were both popular and influential imaginary voyages, were set in the *Terre Australe*, and both exemplify the classic utopian voyage. These texts are especially worthy of consideration for how dramatically they differ with regard to portraying gender roles and sexuality.

When discussing Foigny's *La Terre Australe Connue* in the second half of the chapter, I once again experienced dissonance with my expectations of the text built on scholarship compared to what I encountered therein. When I read that *La Terre Australe Connue* depicted a society of 'hermaphrodites,' I reasoned that since the text seemingly challenged conventional notions of gender, it would also challenge norms governing sexuality. In a sense, this is both true and untrue; Austral society avoids sexuality altogether, as the Australians experience no sexual desire and sex is a taboo subject. As both scholarship and my own research confirmed, the Australians were thoroughly 'sanitized' beings who experienced no sexual desire or lust and did not menstruate or produce excrement. From my own perspective, I struggled to reconcile the seemingly radical and progressive abolishment of gender with the puritanical aversion to sexuality. In considering this society that eliminated gender, I was prompted to proclaim the Austral society a queer utopia (inspired by the notion as used by Muñoz), but the treatment of sexuality in the society made this problematic.

I found that I could apply the notion of queer utopia to the text if I distanced myself from only considering the asexual Austral society, and broadened my perspective to examine the protagonist, Jacques Sadeur. While words like 'bisexual' and 'pansexual' did not exist in Foigny's time, the text nonetheless portrays Sadeur experiencing desire for both women and the hermaphroditic 'frères' and trying to act on said desires.<sup>371</sup> If Austral society evaded the challenges posed by subjects experiencing desire, Sadeur felt desire fully, across gender categories, and actively sought to act on his desires. Where Austral society failed to fulfill the queer utopia I hoped to find, Jacques Sadeur provided promising terrain to explore.

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<sup>371</sup> I recognize that sexual orientation and sexuality, with the current terms accompanying these notions, did not exist in the way it does now. However, that does not mean that scholars cannot or should not analyze the sexual behaviors and desires expressed by individuals in the early modern period, as these expressions can be identified as precursors to current conceptions of (queer) sexualities.

I identified two iterations of queer utopia in *La Terre Australe Connue*: firstly, the queer utopia exemplified by a genderless yet sexless society, and, secondly, the queer utopia sought by Jacques Sadeur, a society in which he could pursue sexual encounters beyond socially acceptable norms. Sadeur's ideal of the liberty to pursue intimacy across gender clashed fundamentally with Austral society's ideal of peace and stability unsullied by lust and resulted in Sadeur's expulsion from this preadamite utopia. Initially, Sadeur experienced the Terre Australe as a haven, where his difference or monstrosity (as a hermaphrodite) was instead normalized, celebrated as physical perfection. However, his sexual desire was incompatible with Austral society's intolerance of sex, and he was unable to realize his own ideal—the freedom to pursue sexual interactions across gender boundaries. The genderless Australian society remained intact. Furthermore, this society holds unique value as the only known iteration of utopia that neither exacerbated nor inverted gender hierarchies but eliminated them altogether. This is especially significant for scholars of gender and sexuality in an age where gendered categories are increasingly questioned, where nonbinary, agender, and genderqueer identities emerge despite a resolutely binary society. Indeed, when such identities are marginalized or devalued, the ability to point to a 17<sup>th</sup> century utopia peopled by beings that embody both male and female characteristics can act as an anchor to past identities rethinking the gender binary and prove that reimagining gender and sexuality is hardly a phenomenon of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Instead, the challenging and rewarding work of questioning gender binaries has been underway for much longer, albeit in forms distinct from the study of gender and sexuality today.

When considering the extensive mythological, theoretical, and cartographical traditions shaping European conceptions of the *Terre Australe*, one could expect two imaginary voyages to the same land written only a year apart to possess much common ground. To an extent, this was



true. Both *La Terre Australe Connue* and *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* featured voyages thwarted by storms and resulting in catastrophic shipwrecks. Both works provided truly exhaustive depictions of every aspect of a utopian society, from the highly regulated daily schedule, the lack of personal property, to the state-organized education of children. Both works depict the protagonist's return to Europe. Yet beyond these stock utopian elements, the works differed dramatically when considering gender and sexuality. *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* featured restrictive gender hierarchies, while *La Terre Australe Connue* eliminated gender categories altogether. In the imaginary voyages of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, other geographical zones inspired travel narratives that frequently adhered to narrower ranges of sexual tropes.<sup>372</sup> However, these two narratives diverged in the ideals communicated by their articulations of gender and sexuality. That said, both societies betray anxiety around sexuality, as both were designed to eradicate sexual encounters; Sévarambe society outlawed extramarital sex and even regulated sexual encounters and their frequency within marriage, while Australian society regarded sex as taboo and unacceptable in any situation.

Both *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* and *La Terre Australe Connue* advanced utopian societies, and thus advanced societal-level ideals. However, I also found it important to consider the individual-level ideals developed in these narratives. I posited utopia as not only limited to geographical locations, but also as the embodiment of individual characteristics. By considering utopian ideals on a societal as well as individual level, utopian voyages can further expand our understandings of 17th and 18th century gender and sexuality in terms of societal as well as individual ideals; for instance, by articulating ideal masculinity. In *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*, laws provided the means to achieve a utopian society. However, in my second chapter, *Les*

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<sup>372</sup> For instance, as Mary Sheriff demonstrates in *Enchanted Islands*, travel narratives set in Tahiti overwhelmingly portray an attitude of liberated libidos, with sexually uninhibited women tempting European male travelers.

*Aventures de Télémaque* upholds that the king either assures or destroys utopia—not mere laws. His power to organize, protect, and change society, while framed in terms of admirable or destructive leadership, is ultimately determined by how the king embodies masculinity. Therefore, ideal masculinity is upheld as the key to utopia. Every utopian voyage develops ideal masculinity on some level, but the articulation of ideal masculinity can look radically different from one work to another. These different portrayals of ideal masculinity are also highly revelatory, as similarities or incongruencies with dominant models of masculinity can reveal tensions or fragility within masculinity at large.

Early modern texts that revisit Greco-Roman mythology like *Les Aventures de Télémaque* naturally prompt a consideration of ideal masculinity, because such texts were deployed in an era that upheld Antiquity as a source for superior art and literature, meant to be imitated and admired. Fénelon's *Télémaque* is uniquely valuable for a study in masculinity because it largely defies expectations contemporary norms dictating masculinity. When read alongside studies of masculinity in the time period in which the text was written, *Télémaque* frequently contradicts ideal male behavior, from how men should interact with women to how leaders should wield their power. If *Télémaque* fit appropriately within what scholars write on masculinity and societal codes shaping interactions between men and women at the time, *Télémaque*'s interactions would be coded by the ideals of *galanterie*. Mentor wouldn't have instructed young *Télémaque* to flee from interactions with men and women. *Télémaque* wouldn't have had to put off courtship or marriage, and he likely would have held different priorities and would been given radically different mentorship. Even his impressions of the lands he visited and which leaders should be admired or admonished contradicted the values of Fénelon's time.

Because Télémaque wasn't mentored to uphold *gallanterie*, his values stand out as ill-adapted to the society from which the author crafted his text. Télémaque Mentor repeatedly iterated the importance of avoiding if not outright fleeing interactions with women and urged him to displace courtship and marriage until a suitable time after earning glory and establishing peaceful reign. Mentor aligned women with love and lust, and portrayed all three as dangerous, sites of temptation certain to lead men into effeminacy. Indeed, effeminacy constitutes a major source of anxiety in the work. Given the officially didactic purpose of *Télémaque*, one can deduce that a proper young nobleman's education must explicitly steer him from the fatal flaw of effeminacy. On the other extreme, Mentor also portrayed bellicose, power-hungry men as problematic and antithetical to successful rule. By instructing Télémaque to pursue perfect leadership, Mentor guided him to avoid both effeminacy and megalomania.

Across these lessons on leadership, one unexpected quality stood out: *la modération*. At the heart of essentially every lesson, piece of advice, or ideal dictated by Mentor, moderation was key. The notion of moderation stood out to me in part for how it failed to align with the characteristics aligned with *gallanterie*, but also for how moderation advances ideal leadership and masculinity that closely resembles Reeser's work on moderation as a central ideal for masculinity in the Early Modern period. For Reeser, ideal masculinity was categorized by striking a moderate center between the nonmoderate extremes of excessive and lacking masculinity. This was both significant and unusual because Reeser focused primarily on the role of moderation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, yet *Télémaque* was first published in 1699. I argued that this temporal incompatibility is indicative of Fénelon's nostalgic idealization of an earlier model of masculinity, preceding *gallanterie*. Bringing Reeser's model of excessive, moderate, and lacking masculinity into dialogue with this popular didactic voyage novel permits a deeper understanding

of how Fénelon sought to instill values that he believed would result in superior rule, and a superior France.

I demonstrated how *Télémaque* engaged in multiple forms of voyage or displacement: not only did Télémaque undertake extensive voyages to seek his missing father Ulysses, the text transported readers back to Ancient times, and upheld an outdated set of ideals dictating masculinity. By setting the work in Antiquity, in a hybrid Mediterranean region blending real with mythological islands, and sufficiently distant from France, Fénelon could more easily deploy values and priorities that substantially contradicted those held in his more immediate cultural context. This complex intersection of displacements further demonstrates how the imaginary voyage is so useful to the study of gender and sexuality; by not only allowing but encouraging geographical and temporal displacement, authors are granted greater liberty in visualizing societies that may differ dramatically from the familiar or even acceptable.

The trajectory towards ideal masculinity in *Télémaque* accompanies a young man's guided progression towards the ultimately kingly comportment. The physical voyage Télémaque undertakes to search for Ulysses accompanies an allegorical voyage towards ideal masculinity. Not only does he overcome various challenges and obstacles along his journey to demonstrate his courage, but he also witnesses examples of disastrous kingly rule, or problematic masculinity. Télémaque was not only guided to utopia, but more significantly through dystopia, by stopping in realms such as Venus's island, ruined by lust and effeminacy, or Pygmalion's devastatingly paranoid rule over Tyr. These unsavory rulers served a greater purpose beyond negative examples; importantly, figures like Pygmalion also provided not-so-subtle representations of actual French rulers, especially Louis XIV. Because of this, the ongoing critique of problematic masculinity was indissociable from the critique of poor rule, and indissociable from commentary

on real-life leadership problems suffered by the French people. Therefore, the ideals and critiques within constituted more than abstract writings meant for entertainment and education; they were grounded in pressing real-life concerns despite their fanciful setting.

As I demonstrated, the examples of poor rule mirrored major social problems Fénelon observed in his own time, including famine, decreased birth rates, economic stagnation and eventual depression, along with other dystopian realities. Fénelon could not tackle these problems singlehandedly. However, he was able to use his position as tutor to elaborate and instill the value of moderation, in the hope of inspiring future leaders to transform France into a utopia like Salente. Here, the imaginary voyage held tremendous utopian potential, by criticizing problematic leadership, advocating for superior wielding of power, and providing better models for the next generation of leaders. The imaginary voyage also acts as a valuable time capsule illustrating competing ways of embodying masculinity; in this case, against *gallanterie* and in favor of *la modération*. My reading of *Télémaque* is particularly valuable to the study of gender and sexuality in the early modern period because it illustrates the necessity of looking at historical understandings of the ideals guiding gender and sexuality as fluid rather than rigid. These ideals shift alternately move away from, adapt, or return to dominant models over time.

In both *Télémaque* and *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*, (male) sexuality poses a problem that the utopia can only restrict, but never fully resolve. In *La Terre Australe Connue*, lust and desire were fundamentally incompatible with Austral social values, and even procreation remained deeply mysterious and taboo. In *Télémaque*, women were viewed as an obstacle barring men's path to embodying the characteristics of an ideal ruler, and sexual desire was viewed as the way to effeminacy and voluptuousness. A gap in my research remained; I still needed to discuss male sexuality and wanted to find a text that was willing to do so directly— a utopia that would neither

outlaw nor displace lust or desire but elaborate upon it. I found such a utopia in *Etats et empires de la lune et du soleil*, in which male (homo)sexual desire was neither denied or punished but was rather embraced and expanded to startling new realms.

*Etats et empires de la lune et du soleil* holds significance on multiple levels, acting not only as an illustration of male desire but also as a vital representation of a fundamental shift in the geographic spaces represented in the imaginary voyage tradition. Cyrano de Bergerac's text emerged in the wake of scientific breakthroughs, where the development of the telescope enabled greater speculation on the possibility of the plurality of worlds and inspired a multiplication of creative and speculative representations of such worlds. Given the new terrain for imagined societies, I (rightfully) assumed that the portrayal of gender and sexuality in the imaginary voyage could take an original direction when set in space rather than on Earth. The utopia of Cyrano de Bergerac's imagining deviates from a puritanical aversion to sex, turning instead to explore avenues of possibility that reach far beyond the horizon of possibility of French society, and even Earth itself.

Abandoning earthly limitations altogether, the Moon and Sun granted further freedom and creativity in the portrayal of sexuality in ever-expanding examples of defying conventions and limitations. Cyrano de Bergerac's *Etats et empires de la lune et du soleil* is often discussed as exemplifying burlesque inversion, as a work that flips the world upside-down and, in so doing, questions or mocks societal conventions, religion, philosophy, and more. While these interpretations are vital to understanding the work, I believe the work holds greater significance for the study of gender and sexuality beyond these interpretations. While I am not the first scholar to identify hints of Cyrano's unique employment of sexuality, other scholars' discussions of sexual scenes reduce them to isolated comical or shocking anecdotes or misread them

altogether. In my reading, I argued that male homoeroticism plays a far greater role. Love between men constitutes a vital life-force, acting as a *fil conducteur* that guides the reader through ever-expanding degrees of freedom and love between men.

My new reading of Bergerac's utopia connected diverse and seemingly disconnected instances of homoeroticism into one multifaceted yet united narrative and revealed how these distinct moments progressed from increasingly exceptional interpersonal interactions to the very origin of love itself, as seen with the *Arbres Amants* tale. While *Lune* and *Soleil* are often reduced to humorous, satirical, or absurd texts, an uncharacteristic earnestness pervades throughout the depictions of loving or sensual interactions between men and male-coded beings. Initially, the protagonist's interactions with men read as pleasurable, yet isolated. In actuality, *Etats et empires de la lune et du soleil* deployed male homoerotics on a broader, even universal scale. Indeed, apart from comprising a vital initiatory text for France's science fiction tradition, the most compelling and original contribution this work made was in portraying truly original ways of men expressing their friendship, love, and lust for each other.

I examine sites of male intimacy, sensuality, and overt sexual encounters. I consider the intimate relationship between Dyrcona and the *démon de Socrate* and the mating scene between Dyrcona and the Spaniard during his captivity as an initiatory consideration of queerness exploring notions like male pregnancy and new imaginings of intimacy. However, these interactions only set the scene for more radical encounters. Going forward, scenes like the Philosopher's Death ritual mobilized male love to transcend not only unsatisfactory earthly social norms, but even death itself. Male love reaches unprecedented utopian potential in the under-analyzed sequel to *Lune, Soleil*. Cyrano's portrayals of love between men redeploys Greco-Roman myths, restores them to their former homoerotic glory, and reimagines them on a

surprisingly inclusive scale that establishes male-male love as the true ideal. I revisit Muñoz's conception of queer utopia once more, given the unique applicability this notion holds when applied to lunar utopia. Muñoz's theorization of queer utopia as only possible upon the horizon takes gains a more literal interpretation with *Cyrano*, portrayed beyond the celestial horizon on the Sun. If homosexual conduct could still be criminalized by the death penalty in France, the Moon and Sun were startlingly free by comparison. Even when faced with the constraints of imprisonment and absurd legal trials, the protagonist continually managed to escape and discover increasingly emancipatory ways that men's love could live on— not only beyond the limitations of heterosexual social norms, but even past the confines of life and death.

The utopia examined in my first three chapters were rich in material granting extensive insight into gender roles, desire, and masculinity, but had major shortcomings in terms of women's representation. Where were women's voices? Women in the utopia were overwhelmingly relegated to the roles of obligatory child-bearer, wife, sex slave, or threatening temptress, although Ahimóné provided an exception. However, each of the works I discussed failed to truly employ a woman's point of view or discuss utopia in her own words. Because of the many obstacles hindering women's contributions to literary publications as well as enduring sexism in the establishment of a literary canon, few texts qualified as highly popular and influential imaginary voyages written by a woman. However, Madame de Graffigny's *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* provides a vital exception to a culture that systematically relegated women to the margins of literature.<sup>373</sup>

In addition to granting rare insight into women's perspectives and social critique, Graffigny's text holds additional value for how she altered conventions in the imaginary voyage

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<sup>373</sup> In future expansions of my research, I intend to analyze additional works that articulate portrayals of gender and sexuality in the utopia from a woman's perspective beyond this one text.



to reverse the trajectory, with the protagonist traveling to rather than from France. In my fourth chapter, then, my consideration of the primary text integrates the value of this innovation in the imaginary voyage tradition, which reverses the typical voyage trajectory to instead describe a foreign traveler's exposure to (and critique of) French society. At times, *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* appears to mirror elements of classic utopian voyage texts, with women relegated to a subordinate role, acting as little more than vessels for childbirth. However, the persisting lack of female characters is advanced, albeit minimally. In *Lettres*, a woman (a foreigner, no less) takes the role of the protagonist providing an exhaustive description of the foreign society. However, protagonist Zilia provided more than descriptions; she also formulated extensive critique of the perceived superficiality of French society by comparing court life to her own experiences in the utopian Incan kingdom. However, even Graffigny's text retains certain shortcomings regarding female representation, although these problems prove rich for further discussion.

Compared to the other texts I examine, *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* received substantially more scholarly attention. Furthermore, many books and articles examined gender dynamics, femininity, and marriage, in contrast to the minimal discussion of these elements for other works. However, I noticed that such considerations of Graffigny's text took a similar approach; Zilia's rejection of marriage to Déterville as a feminist act. While Zilia's acts are certainly restrictive, the limiting focus on Zilia's refusal as feminist fails to account for her complicated and often contradictory views regarding women and their roles in society. In my approach to *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*, I prioritized bringing neglected yet crucial elements of the text to life: I continued to examine the dynamics of gender and utopia, but extended my focus to center on how these elements are colored by what I identify as Zilia's negativity.

In addition to reversing the voyage trajectory, *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* further diverged from the tradition of imaginary voyages to utopia in that it refused to provide a blueprint for an improved, utopian society. Where imaginary voyage texts typically utilize the utopia to articulate ideals in terms of gender and sexuality, here, flipping the typical voyage trajectory enabled the formulation of social critique rather than idealization of a speculative land. Rather than explore utopia, Graffigny initiates an exploration of what would happen if societal ideals were revealed worthless, and society itself irredeemable. While I found Zilia's arguably proto-feminist actions compelling and highly significant for her time, I identified an under-explored yet vital aspect of the text: the negativity that permeates not only her incisive social critique, but also her actions, relationships with others, and her motivations.

Faced with the need to supplement conventional approaches to *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* steeped in feminist critique and gender studies, I sought to incorporate theory that enabled me to actively investigate the unexpected intersection between utopia and negativity. To do this, I turned to Edelman's work on negativity and queerness, where he valorizes negativity as a subversive, radical mode of expression. While Edelman's *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* provided me with ample material to consider the utopian qualities of negativity, I simultaneously found that *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* provides an underutilized text that provides ample material for studies of negativity, including the one I undertake.

Analyses of *Lettres* overwhelmingly fixate on the pivotal moment where Zilia rejects Déterville, yet, as my reading demonstrates, Zilia rejects much more than marriage, more than procreation. Isolating her rejection to this moment fails to account for her attitudes, behaviors, and thoughts that express negativity throughout her letters. She attempted to reject life, she rejected society, she rejected assimilating to the expectations tied to her gender, she rejected the

drive to identify with those around her, and she rejected feminine solidarity. A deep-seated attitude of negativity motivated these rejections, and only accumulated before reaching its ultimate expression when Zilia enacts her absolute retreat in her French countryside home among her books. One minor obstacle bars a study valorizing the utopian potential of negativity: negativity carries unfavorable connotations. However, Edelman's valorization of the subversive power of negativity demonstrates the utopian potential of rejecting social expectations (like marrying and having children) to make space for other, freer modes of existence. When put into dialogue with Graffigny's imaginary voyage, Edelman's notion of negativity transforms the attitude from pessimistic to radical. I maintain that the concept of negativity is vital to appreciating the text, and furthermore, deserves consideration as part of what marks *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* as a key text of the 18th century. Zilia's all-encompassing anti-social negativity defies so many seemingly fundamental parts of the human experience; the optimism of romantic relationships, the promise and hope suggested by children, the purported social benefits of friendships. In so doing, she destabilizes the seemingly absolute social expectations and values dictating marriage and children as the only fulfilling, even conceivable existence for a woman, and illustrates alternate horizons of possibility outside of the hollow social promises decried by Edelman.

Despite my confidence that my project contributes to ameliorating persisting gaps in scholarship, I nonetheless have recommendations for future research, as these gaps should continue to be filled. My greatest frustration in undertaking my initial research was the realization that, despite the mountains of imaginary voyages and travel narratives that I read, there were so many more out there that I wouldn't have time to read and that weren't being studied. I knew these works could contain truly radical portrayals of gender and sexuality. After

all, when the imaginary voyage genre became too popular and too many aspiring authors attempt their own versions, less artful iterations were inevitable. However, I resent that some works deserve discussion, yet may not earn the attention they deserve. For example, the Chevalier de Mouhy's *Lamekis, ou Les voyages extraordinaires d'un Egyptien dans la Terre intérieure, avec La découverte de L'Isle des Sylphides* was an astoundingly imaginative text featuring subterranean worlds, physical transformations, strange love stories, and mind-blowing distortions of reality— but the massive eight-part book remains largely undiscussed, and was not significant enough to be warranted worthy of discussion in an already-large dissertation. For future research, there is no shortage of texts that could further illuminate understandings of the complexity of imaginary voyages and what the study of gender and sexuality could gain from the study of such texts.

To push my line of inquiry slightly further, I propose an additional, unconsidered value of the imaginary voyage. I posit the imaginary voyage to utopia as a precursor to what can now be considered the study of gender and sexuality. Certainly, the utopia is frequently thought of as a thought experiment for testing out alternative political structures or ways of configuring society. However, I argue that the formulation of utopia also constitutes an early form of gender studies or sexuality studies. Doubtless the format evolved considerably before it would resemble the articles, essays, and books by the scholars currently upheld as key thinkers about gender, desire, femininity and masculinity, and sex. Yet Foigny's genderless utopia and Bergerac's extraterrestrial exploration of liberated sex and intimacy between men, for instance, deserve greater credit than mere imaginative novels speculating about distant realms. Such texts undertook significant work in not only demonstrating a nuanced understanding of the gender hierarchies and roles of sex in their own cultures, but also displaying the ability to conceive of

alternate configurations of interactions between genders, different roles for sex and reproduction, and even rethinking gender itself. Imaginary voyages to utopia should be considered precursors to the postmodern study of gender and sexuality and hold great value for their early contributions to the field. Essentially, my study does not truly bridge the gap between the distinct fields of study of imaginary voyages or utopia and the study of gender and sexuality. Instead, my study reveals that these fields were once, in a sense, unified; one function of the imaginary voyage was to study, rethink, and portray gender and sexuality in innovative and thought-provoking ways.

In conclusion, I reiterate the value of considering the imaginary voyage as a beneficial tool to better understand the societal contexts from which they emerged. Such works can inform virtually every facet of a society by portraying subjective, idealized versions of legal institutions, marriage, interactions between men and women, and so much more. While such works may be dismissed for being neither fact nor fiction, or for being more of a popular phenomenon than true literature, I argue that these grounds for dismissal are part of the works' very value for certain lines of inquiry. Where fact, fiction, anxieties, and ideals intersect, the values of a society become more apparent. Additionally, when we know these works were widely read, we may trust these works both reflected and may even have influenced society. Their portrayals of gender and sexuality reached a wide audience, and it would be irresponsible to ignore such sources in favor of strictly 'factual' or canonical documents. A better understanding of gender and sexuality in the 17th and 18th century helps illuminate attitudes towards institutions like marriage and the family. As such institutions held (and continue to hold) central roles in society, it bears turning our attention to sites where these institutions were contested, subverted, altered, or even eliminated.

APPENDIX A:

TRAVEL NARRATIVES IN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

YALE BEINECKE RARE BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS LIBRARY

Author unknown, *Relation d'un voyage du pôle Arctique, au pôle Antarctique, par le centre du monde*, 1721

Author unknown, *Nouveau voyage autour de ma chambre*, 1797.

Bergeron, Pierre, *Voyages faits principalement en Asie dans les XII, XIII, XIV, et XV*, 1575-1637

Buffier, Claude, *Géographie universele [!], exposée dans les différentes méthodes*, 1729.

Champlain, Samuel de, *Voyages de la Nouvelle France occidentale, dicte Canada*, 1567-1635

Chardin, John, Sir, L. Langlès, *Voyages du chevalier Chardin en Perse, et autres lieux de l'Orient*, 1643-1713

Gallet, Pierre. *Voyage d'un habitant de la lune, à Paris, à la fin du XVIIIe siècle*, 1803

Pernety, Dom. *Journal Historique d'un Voyage fait aux Iles Malouïnes en 1763 & 1764, pour les reconnoître & y former un établissement; et de deux Voyages au Détroit de Magellan, avec une Rélation sur les Patagons*, 1769.

Schouten, Willem Corneliszoon, *Journal, ou, Description du merveilleux voyage de Guillaume Schouten*, 1619

WACHS COLLECTION, VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Author unknown, *Candide en Dannemarc, ou l'Optimisme des honnêtes gens*, 1769.

Author unknown, *Le Sacré de Numa ou Égérie: Histoire trouvée dans les ruines d'Herculanum*, 1775

Author unknown, *Le Temple de l'Hymen*, 1759

Author unknown, *Mirzim, ou, Le sage à la cour, histoire égyptienne*, 1782

Author unknown, *Zammedin, histoire orientale*, 1769

Bernadin, Henri de Saint-Pierre Jacques, *Paul et Virginie* and *La Chaumière Indienne*, 1788

Bordelon, Laurent, *Le Voyage Forcé de Becafort Hypochondriaque*, 1709

Crébillon, Claude-Prosper Jolyot de, M. de La Beaumelle, La Beaumelle, Laurent Angliviel, *Les Amours de Zeokinizul, Roi des Kofirans, ouvrage traduit de l'Arabe du voyageur Krinelbol*, 1746

Godard d'Aucour, Claude, *Bien-Aimé. Allégorie. Imprimé d'un coup de baguette par la Fée de la Librairie, dans les espaces imaginaires*, 1744.

Gorgy, *Nouveau Voyage Sentimental*, 1785

L'Affichard, Thomas, *Le Voyage Interrompu*, 1737.

La Morliere, Charles Rochette, *Angola, Histoire Indienne, Ouvrage sans vraisemblance*, 1751

Le Noble, M. *Zulima*, 1703

Loquet, Marie-Françoise, *Voyage de Sophie et d'Eulalie au Palais du Vrai Bonheur*, 1789

Mercier, *L'An Deux mille quatre cent quarante, rêve s'il en fut jamais*, 1773.

Mme de Graffigny (and others), *Lettres d'une Péruvienne, Par Mme de Graffigny; Suivies de celles d'Aza*, 1822

Montesquieu, (and others?), *Lettres Persanes* and *Lettres d'une Turque*, 1731

Mouhy, chevalier de. *Lamékis, ou les Voyages extraordinaires d'un Egyptien dans la terre intérieure, avec la découverte de l'île des Sylphides*, in Garnier, Charles, *Voyages Imaginaires, Romanesques, Merveilleux, Allégoriques, Amusans, Comiques et Critiques. Suivis de Songes et Visions, Et des Romans Cabalistiques*, Tome 20, 1787.

Ramsay, M. *Les Voyages de Cyrus*, 1727

Rire, S.L., *Les Aventures Divertissantes du Duc de Roquelaure, Suivant les Mémoires que l'Auteur a trouvés dans le Cabinet du Maréchal d'Huf*, 1786.

Tavernier, J. B., *Recueil de Plusieurs Relations et Traitez Singuliers et Curieux de J. B. Tavernier*, 1679.



APPENDIX B:

PHD READING LIST

PRIMARY TEXTS: EARLY MODERN PROSE

16TH CENTURY

Montaigne, *Essais*

Marguerite de Navarre, *l'Heptaméron*

Des Périers, *Les Nouvelles Récréations et joyeux devis*

François Rabelais, *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*

17TH CENTURY

Perrault, *Contes de ma mère l'Oye*

D'Aulnoy, *Contes des Fées, suivis des Contes nouveaux ou Les Fées à la mode*

Murat, *Les Contes de fées*

La Bruyère, *Les Caractères*

Furetière, *Le roman bourgeois*

Mme de Lafayette, *La Princesse de Clèves*

Scarron, *Le roman comique*

Honoré d'Urfé, *L'Astrée*

Madeleine de Scudéry, *Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus*

Segrais, *Les Nouvelles Françaises*

Rosset, *Les histoires mémorables et tragiques de notre temps*

18TH CENTURY

Prévost, *Manon Lescaut*

Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*

Mme de Tencin, *Mémoires du comte de Comminge*

Lesage, *Gil Blas*

Laclos, *Les liaisons dangereuses*

Crébillon, *Les heureux orphelins*

Voltaire, *Candide*

Restif/ Rétif de La Bretonne, *Le paysan perverti*

#### SECONDARY TEXTS: EARLY MODERN PROSE

Balmas, *Histoire de la Littérature Française: De Villon à Ronsard: XVe-XVIe siècles*

Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance*

Coulet, *Le Roman jusqu'à la Révolution*

Crawford, *The Sexual Culture of the French Renaissance*

Ferrand, *Livre et lecture dans les romans français du XVIIIe siècle*

De Jean, *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France*

Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality*

Lestringant, Rieu, Tarrete, *Littérature française du XVIe siècle*

Lever, *Le roman français au XVIIe siècle*

Merrick + Ragan, *Homosexuality in Early Modern France*

Pichois, *Littérature Française vol 3: De Montaigne à Corneille 1572- 1660*

Pichois, Pomeau, Ehrard, *Littérature Française vol 5: De Fénelon à Voltaire*

#### PRIMARY TEXTS: SCIENCE FICTION, UTOPIA, QUEER LITERATURE

##### 16TH CENTURY

Rabelais, *Le Quart Livre*

La Popelinière, *L'Histoire des histoires, avec l'idée de l'histoire accomplie. Plus le dessein de l'Histoire nouvelle des François and Les Trois Mondes*

Jean de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil*

Jacques Cartier, *Voyages au Canada*

Thevet, *Les Singularités de la France Antarctique*

17TH CENTURY

Cyrano de Bergerac, *L'Autre Monde (États et empires de la lune et du soleil)*

Fontenelle, *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes*

Foigny, *La terre australe connue*

Denis Veiras, *L'Histoire des Sévarambes*

Fénelon, *Télémaque*

Sorel, *L'histoire comique de Francion*

Thomas Artus, *Les Hermaphrodites, ou Isle des hermaphrodites nouvellement découverte, avec les mœurs, lois, coutumes et ordonnances des habitants d'icelle*

18TH CENTURY

Mercier, *L'An deux mille quatre cent quarante, rêve s'il en fut jamais*

Prévost, *Cleveland*

Mme de Graffigny, *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*

Mouhy, *Lamekis ou les voyages extraordinaires d'un Égyptien dans la Terre intérieure. Avec La découverte de l'isle des Sylphides*

Montesquieu, *Lettres Persanes*

Voltaire, *Micromégas and Zadig*

Diderot, *Les bijoux indiscrets*

Restif/ Rétif de la Bretonne, *La Découverte australe par un Homme Volant, ou le Dédale français*

Tyssot de Patot, *Jacques Massé*

SECONDARY TEXTS: SCIENCE FICTION, UTOPIA, QUEER LITERATURE

Arthur, Paul Longley, *Virtual Voyages: Travel Writing and the Antipodes, 1605–1837*

Evans, Arthur B, *Science Fiction in France: A Selective Bibliography of Secondary Materials*

Genette, *L'Univers révisible (Figures I)*

Gove, Phillip, *The Imaginary Voyage in Prose Fiction*

Greenblatt, Stephen, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*

Lestringant, Frank, *several articles*

Merrick, Jeffrey, *Homosexuality in French History and Culture*

Montrose, Louis, *The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery*

Muñoz, José Esteban, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*

Pratt, Mary Louise, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*

Reeser, Todd W. *Moderating Masculinity in Early Modern Culture*

Rupp, Leila J, *Sapphistries: A Global History of Love Between Women*

Seifert, Lewis C. and Rebecca M. Wilkin, *Men and Women Making Friends in Early Modern France*

Shapin, Steven, *The Scientific Revolution*

Todorov, Tzvetan, *Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*

Whitehead, Neil, *Historical Writing about Brazil, 1500-1800*

APPENDIX C: FIGURES

MAPS AND IMAGES

Figure 1

Antipode

Author unknown, Arnstein Bibel, “Antipode mit 9 Zehen aus der Arnstein-Bibel von 1172.” *Wikimedia Commons*, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017

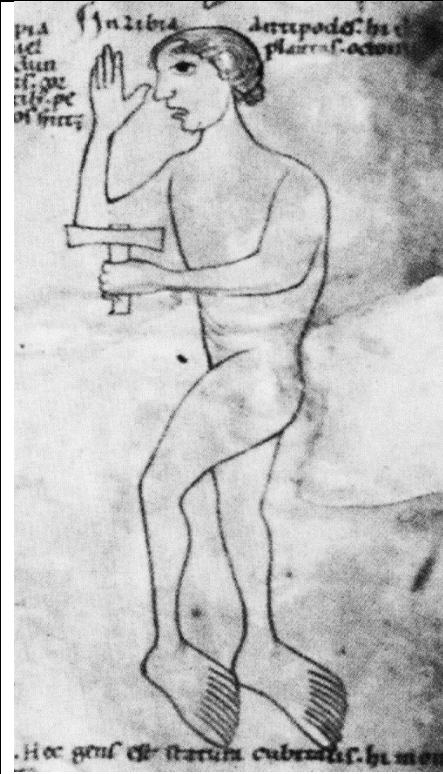


Figure 2

Sciapod

Schedel, Hartmann. “Woodcut from the Nuremberg Chronicle, 1493.” *Wikimedia Commons*. Michel Wolgemut, Wilhelm Pleydenwurff, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006



Figure 3

Blemmyes

Jodocus, Hondius and Walter, Raleigh, “Brevis & admiranda descriptio regni Guianae, avri abundantissimi, in America (1599).” *Wikimedia Commons*, Hondius, Jodocus, 1563-1612 (engraver); Hulsius, Levinus, - 1606 (printer); Sir Walter Raleigh (author). August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016.



Figure 4

Flinders, Matthew. “General chart of Terra Australis or Australia [cartographic material]: showing the parts explored between 1798 and 1803 by M. Flinders Commr. of H.M.S. Investigator.” *Wikimedia Commons*, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

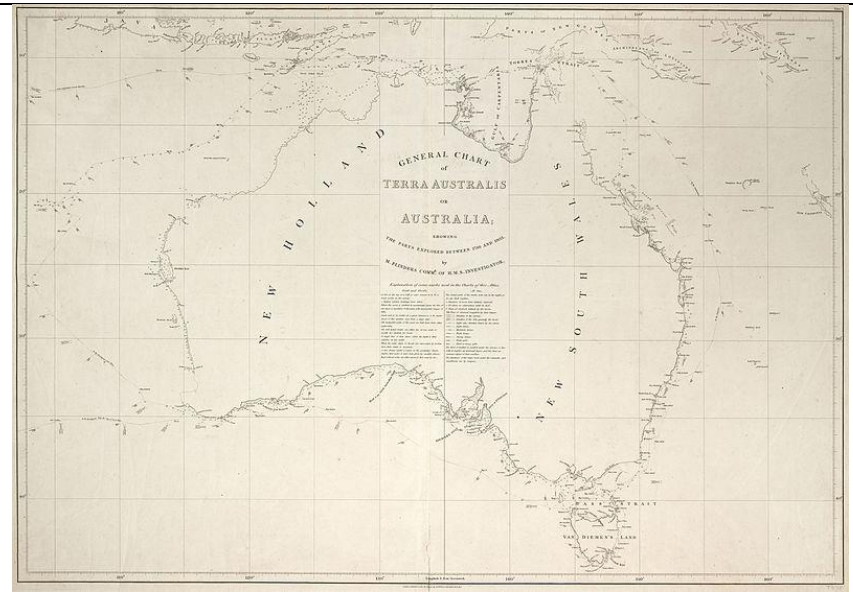
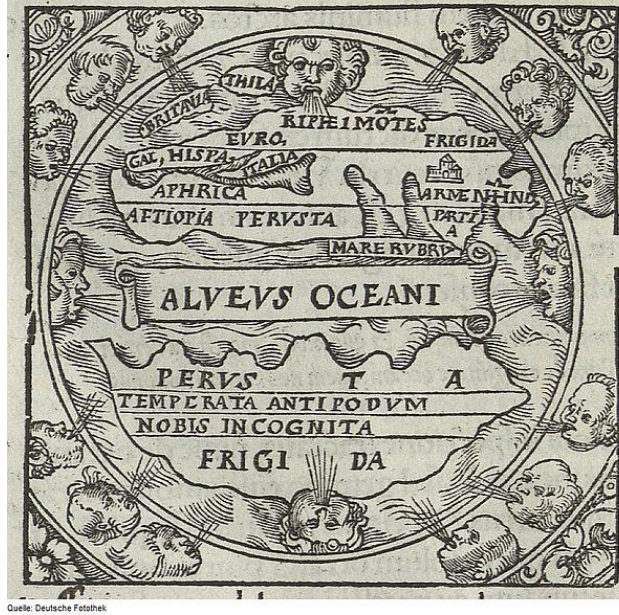




Figure 5

Marcus Tullius Cicero, Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius, "Erde mit Meeren und Windsystemen: Geographie & Astronomie & Erde & Windsystem & Ozean (1526)." *Wikimedia Commons*, April 10, 2009.



Quelle: Deutsche Fotothek



Figure 6



Ortelius, Abraham, "Typus Orbis Terrarum (1570)." *Wikimedia Commons*, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018.



Figure 7

Du Val, Pierre. "Terres Australes par P. Du Val...(1677)." *Wikimedia Commons*, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019







Figure 9

Jocodus Hondius and Pierre Mariette, "Nova Totius Terrarum Orbis Geographica Ac Hydrographica Tabula (1642)." *Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.*



Figure 10

De Jode, Gerard, "Novae Guineae Forma, & Situs (1593)," *Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.*

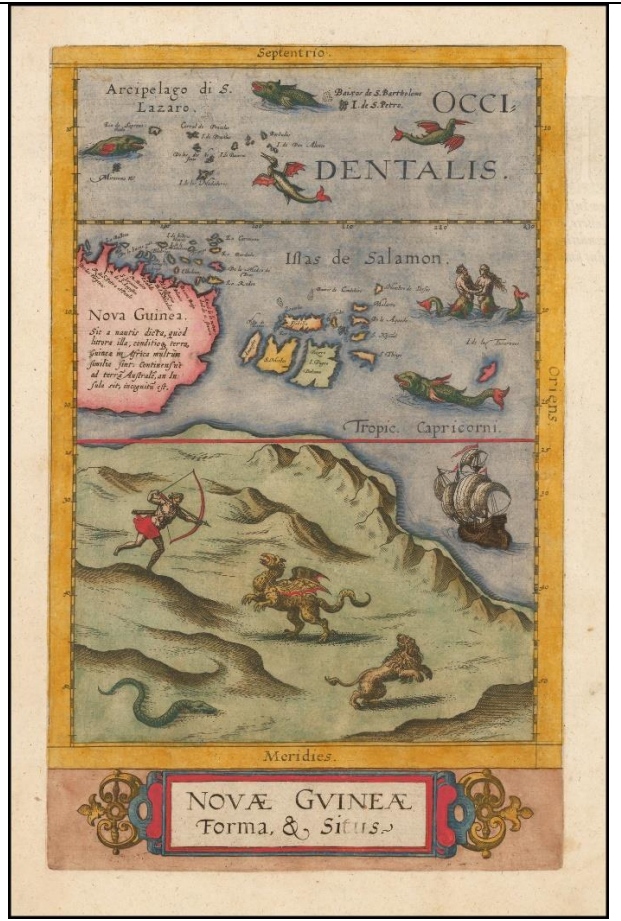
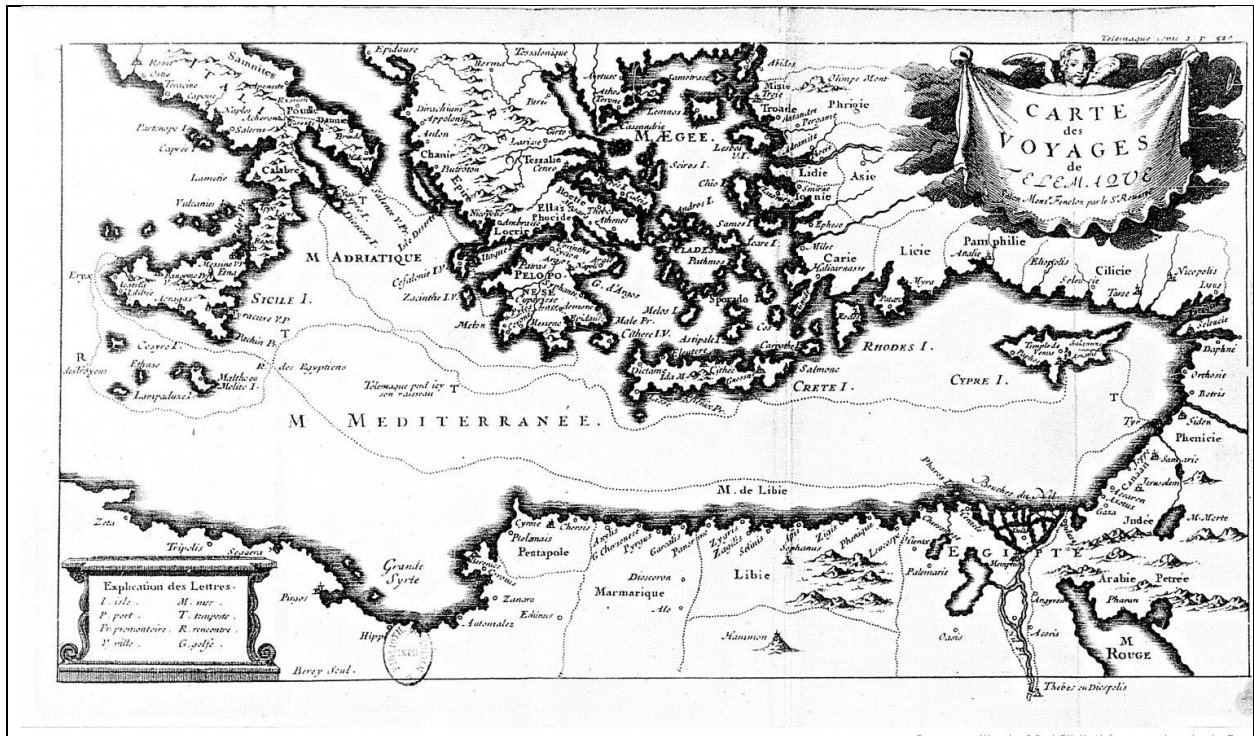




Figure 11

Desceliers, Pierre. "Map of the World (1550)." *Wikimedia Commons*, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 12

Bonnart, Jean-Baptiste-Henri, “Carte des Voyages de Télémaque (1717).” *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

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