Utopianism in Eighteenth-Century Ireland

Deirdre Ní Chuanacháin

Submitted to the University of Limerick in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Supervisors: Professor Tom Moylan and Dr. Michael Griffin

Submitted to the University of Limerick April 2013
Abstract

Deirdre Ní Chuanacháin

Utopianism in Eighteenth-Century Ireland

The utopian propensity, the impulse to a better world, is found throughout human culture. However, its expression is necessarily historically and culturally variable. The leitmotif on which utopianism in Ireland is based has an extensive and varied pre-history to be found in travellers’ tales, the oral tradition of the Celtic Otherworld and in the early vision poems which reached their apotheosis in the political *aisling* of the eighteenth century. Moreover, in the political realm, the vision of a nation, lost or not yet won, resonates in speeches, songs, manifestos. The emergent utopianism of the eighteenth century is predicated on both memory and reflections of the past as well as on visions for the future. These memories and reflections have been imagined and re-imagined in many different cultural forms, both in texts and in social practice. They move from dialogue to satire, from *aisling* to polemic, from visions of a golden age, to an imagined Eden far away to realistic discourses of improvement, self-reliance and patriotism. This thesis explores these varieties of utopianism in eighteenth-century Ireland. Based on what is recoverable and what has been recovered to date, I argue that a distinct utopianism emerged in the early decades of the eighteenth-century based on the improving visions of the Dublin Society. The imperative to improve, the interface between the languages, Irish and English, between the cultures of the Catholic and Protestant communities, and between colonial and anti-colonial writings permeate the spaces of eighteenth-century Irish utopianism. Utopianism, beyond all the definitional difficulties, is basically a process, one that is continually being reworked. The philosophy of Irish utopianism of the eighteenth century matured steadily during the subsequent centuries and contributed, I suggest, to the formation of an identifiably modern society in Ireland.
Acknowledgements

I cannot thank enough Professor Tom Moylan; his interest in my work and his advice on everything from source material and utopian studies to approaching difficult aspects of the subject matter were second to none. I also want to say a special thank you to Dr. Michael Griffin who was always ready with advice – and always with a sense of encouragement and erudition. During my research I spent many hours at the Cork City Library, the Special Collections Departments of University of Limerick and University College Cork, and in the reading room of the Royal Irish Academy. I wish to thank all the staff in these institutions, especially Ken Bergin, Pattie Punch, and Pauric Dempsey. I am grateful to the staff of University of Limerick, Dr. Joachim Fischer, Dr. David Coughlan, Dr. Michael Kelly, Niamh Lenahan and the Postgraduate Office and Lawrence Cleary of the Writing Centre who were always ready with advice and support. Thank you also to Éamonn de Búrca of de Búrca Rare Books for all his help and interest. One of the pleasures in doing a project such as this is the time spent with fellow utopians discussing, questioning and debating. A special thanks to Lyman Tower Sargent who, while researching his own subjects, managed to find material pertaining to mine on occasions also. We blazed an email trail and his advice and interest in my studies has been of enormous help to me. And a special thanks to my examiners Professor Tadhg Foley and Professor Vince Geoghegan. Finally I want to thank Seán Blake for living with Irish Utopianism for a number of years now and to my special brother Brian Ó Cuanacháin for all the happy times we share. Buóchas mór dhaoibh go léir.
AUTHOR’S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own and was completed with the counsel of my supervisors, Professor Tom Moylan and Dr. Michael Griffin of the School of Languages, Literature, Culture and Communication, University of Limerick. This work has not been submitted to any other higher education establishment.

Signed:

Deirdre Ní Chuanacháin  

17/ 04/2013

Professor Tom Moylan  

17/ 04/2013

Dr. Michael Griffin  

17/ 04/2013
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract i
Acknowledgements ii
Author’s Declaration iii
Table of Contents iv
List of Figures v

Introduction – The Utopian Propensity 1

Chapter 1: Improving Visions: The Dublin Society and George Berkeley’s New World Utopia 54

Chapter 2: “To the limits of the Lunar World”: Extraterrestrial Voyages and Utopia 129

Chapter 3: Dark Caverns: Samuel Madden’s Futurism 190

Afterword 245

Bibliography 253
List of Figures

Figure 1: Vignette from title page of *Alciphron*, Vol. 1 (1732). 112
Figure 2: Vignette from title page of *Alciphron*, Vol. 2 (1732). 112
Figure 3: Dean Berkeley and his Entourage – The Bermuda Group (Dublin). 115
Figure 4: The Bermuda Group (Yale). 116
Figure 5: Dean Berkeley Pointing. 118
Figure 6: Portrait of Bishop Berkeley. 118
Figure 7: Plan for “the City of Bermuda Metropolis of the Summer Islands”. 119
Introduction

The Utopian Propensity

There is a way I am fain to go
To the mystical land where all are young,
Where the silver branches have buds of snow.
And every leaf is a singing tongue.

Ethna Carbery. ¹

It is indeed the Land of Youth-
And maiden’s truth I’ve ever told-
No joy or bliss I’ve promised thee
But thou shalt see this land doth hold!

Micheál Coimín. ²

At low tide we might wade out to an island,
Hy-Brasil, the Land of Youth.

Paul Muldoon. ³

Tá Tír na nÓg ar chúl an tí,
Tír ánaimn trí na chéile.

Seán Ó Riordáin. ⁴

In a pamphlet entitled A Dialogue Between Dean Swift and Thomas Prior, Esq. – In the Isles of St. Patrick’s Church, Dublin, On that Memorable Day, October 9th, 1753, a conversation between the late Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) and Thomas Prior (1681-1751) allegorises the impoverished and melancholy circumstances of contemporary Ireland.⁵ While Swift’s indignation and satire had savagely exposed moral vices and intellectual pretensions, Prior and his contemporaries, moulded by a spirit of nationalism, had transformed their tangible and worthwhile efforts into the
formation of the Dublin (subsequently Royal Dublin) Society. The pamphlet’s exhortations in the final pages reveal Swift and Prior as disparate characters while foregrounding the sometimes ambiguous representations of utopia in eighteenth-century Irish utopian writing in English. Prior’s utopian vision for improving Irish society, his hopeful vision of a better society, is tempered by Swift’s baleful pessimism on the state of his country:

Here is a fine Bundle of Hopes for a Man in Despair to live comfortably on! But pray now Tom, have you done reckoning up all your mighty Projects to make Ireland another Utopia? I am almost at the End of my Patience, for to say Truth, Tom, the List of the Ships in Homer’s Iliad is not more tedious. (64)

Swift’s ghostly nocturnal perambulations through the aisles of the cathedral where he had formerly presided as Dean, result from his discomfort about the present state of Ireland. Such discom большение 　　keeps him from his eternal sleep; it is, he observes, “my Country keeps me walking! Why who can lie still? I don’t believe there are many ghosts now, that have any share of understanding or any regard for Ireland, that are to be found in their graves at midnight” (3). Swift recounts that he had been ‘earthed’ for eight years but worry about the state of Ireland has caused him unease and led to his nightly ramblings. In addition, the ghost of Thomas Prior was similarly to be found walking the aisles of St. Patrick’s; he describes his having slept for months like a dormouse until thoughts of Ireland entered his head; his distress strengthened and caused him to awaken. Swift recounts that when he gets into a certain train of thought or as he puts it, “considers the present situation of our Country, it makes me as uneasy in my coffin as a rat shut up in a trap” (3). Swift is as perplexed about the state of Ireland as if he were still alive and living in the
Deanery. Furthermore Prior, grieved at the ill circumstances of Ireland, concludes “that the World seems resolved they shall never mend; and, I think so, by their treating all true patriots in the most unhandsome manner. This is as mad a measure, as imprisoning the physicians in an epidemical sickness would be” (4). Prior is concerned about the treatment of patriots in Ireland, that their zeal and motives are suspected. Prior clearly sees himself as having formerly been such a living patriot and says he could not have avoided writing what he wrote because he always maintained the hope of doing good by his pen. Prior had published two pamphlets in 1729 which might claim to be companion tracts to Swift’s Drapier’s Letters (the first of which was published in 1724).

While Swift fought for what he believed to be just and right with irony and outraged indignation, Prior wrote factually, assuaging bitterness, and suggesting a reasonable plan for the readjustment of the blighted economic condition of the country. His first pamphlet, Observations on Coin in General with Some Proposals for Regulating the Value of Coin in Ireland, concerns the problems relating to the scarcity of small coin in Ireland. The conditions arising from this shortage are succinctly described by Prior, and quoted by his biographer Desmond Clarke:

It is certain that at present we are far from having a sufficient quantity of Halfpence, which we are very sensible of in all our Domestick Dealings, wherein we labour under great difficulties for small change in Copper Money. This Scarcity is a general complaint all over the kingdom, and throws poor people into distress, disabling them in a great measure from carrying on their small dealings with one another, and their grievance is heightened by an absolute want of Farthings, of which we have hardly any in the Kingdom. (15)
Prior, in this pamphlet, goes further than offering a solution for the dearth of small coin; he deals in detail with the condition of all types of money extant in Ireland. Not only was there a severe shortage of copper coin but also a shortage of silver and gold, due, in part, to the depressed economic state of the country, the lack of parity between English and Irish money which came from the same mint, and, as Prior points out, landowner absenteeism. He writes on the theory of money and its relations to international trade, sets down tables of assay, comparative coin values, and deals with Newton’s reports on minting. He strongly supports the setting up of an Irish mint, and advocates at least a limited parity of coin values between Ireland and England to offset the apparent trafficking in gold and silver coins between the two countries, arising from the disparity in values.

Prior’s second pamphlet, published in the same year and perhaps more well known, is his *A List of the Absentees of Ireland and the Yearly Value of Their Estates and Incomes Spent Abroad with Observations on the Present State and Condition of That Kingdom*. Prior’s *List of Absentees* and his observations on conditions in Ireland is one of the most important pamphlets of the period. It was a courageous step to write and publish it as it pilloried his own class and many of his friends. It exposed the negatives in the economic, political, and religious circumstances in Ireland. Charles Ford, a friend of Swift’s, objected strongly to the pamphlet and to being classified in Prior’s *List of Absentees* as among those “who live constantly abroad and are seldom or never seen in Ireland” (qtd. in Clarke 16). The *List of Absentees* ran through many editions and was continually brought up to date; an enlarged edition was printed by Faulkner in 1783, thirty-two years after Prior’s death. In a foreword to the 1732 edition of the work, he renewed his appeal for a tax on absentees. We get some concept of Prior’s idea of patriotism in the paragraph
wherein he charges the absentees with a distinct lack of it. “The love of one’s country,” he writes, “is seldom found in any remarkable degree, but in those who live long in it, agreeable to the intentions of Nature, which disposes all men and other creatures to a fondness for those places in which they live” (qtd. in Clarke 19). Here, then, Prior’s work during his lifetime coexists with his ghostly concerns in 1753, where he speaks of a life spent in the service of his fellow citizens, the concern for whom has followed him beyond the grave. He observes: “I profess I writ whatever I publish’d, barely for the Joy I had in doing some service to my Country, and with so little a view to reputation, that I would have done it, if there had been no such thing as Fame in the world” (4) and he continues: “I troubled the world with a deal of Tracts on publick subjects; and, I thank Heaven, my heart is as little asham’d of it, now I am dead, as I was proud of it when I was living” (4). He argues that he saw writing as an absolute necessity, a moral obligation toward the well-being of what he calls the “most neglected Nation under Heaven” (5). He notes that he had received rebukes from those with whom he had disagreed. Meanwhile, Swift claims that over one hundred pamphlets had been written against him full of both vitriol and scandal, indeed enough to fill a library.

Swift explains his philosophy as “to do Good in an evil world. I don’t see anything very desirable in the greatest talents, or in the largest affluence of fortune, unless they are in some measure employed in the Publick Service, and if they be, it truly dignifies them” (5). When Prior comments that all the bile directed towards Swift must have been a wounding grief to his ‘generous Mind’ (5) Swift responds that this made no impression on him, “What harm did all their ribaldry do me? I Neither eat, nor drunk, nor slept the worse for it” (5). He confirms that he “wrote for Truth and Reason, for Liberty, and the Rights of my Country and Fellow-Subjects;
and it gave me Joy, to see the Minions of a Court, and the Slaves of Power, stare at the dextrous boldness of my Pen” (6-7). His perceived absence of preferment or advancement in the Church did not bother him, but gave him an enlarged power of doing good while he saw “so many bad men pass for good; so many fools for wise; so many ignorants for learned; and so many knaves for honest, and rewarded accordingly, that I was rather provok’d, than mortified” (7). Prior concedes that he thought when he died that his country was left “in a very improving way, and on the mending hand, by my writings and my constant labours in its service, and had I liv’d a little longer, I would have wrote some Tracts, that would have prevented some distresses, which I hear, are likely to fall heavy on her” (9). In a satirical mode Swift concludes that Ireland was also in a tolerably improved way when he died “I have heard indeed, from the Ghosts of some half-starved silk-weavers, and some manufacturers of Irish woollen goods that died of hunger and poverty, that I---d was vastly improved, as to the elegance of taste in her gentry, as to eating and drinking” (9).

Prior points out that he had seen several considerable improvements in the country which had given him to say she was on “the mending hand” (14). He notes improvements such as advances in the linen trade; he refers to the increase in the number of acres sowed with flax-seed, and in the number of spinners who manufacture it. Swift agrees but argues that caution is required: “are there no fears to balance these growing hopes, and mighty prospects?” (17). Prior mentions the Dublin Society and its Premiums:

they gave Premiums, to heighten the Manufacture and Dying of our Woollen Cloths; of our Silks, and our Velvets; of our Blankets; of our Worsted; of our Cottons; of our Coffoys; Buffs, Lutherines and Fustians; of our Stockings, and
our Carpets, with surprising success: In our Husbandry they did wonders also; as to Wheat and Barley; as to Liming, Marling, and Sanding of Land; as to planting of hops, draining of bogs; as to raising Liquorish, Saffron and Madder. (19) They raised the manufactures of our finest hats, to a surprising degree; and they did the same by our window glass, and made so great a progress in our paper business, and building of mills for carrying it on, as if they had got the mines of Peru, or the industry of China, to assist in their undertakings. (19)

Swift concludes that “all the Dublin Society did, was to show what we wanted, and to set an example, of what might be done, to help our dreadful ailments” (23). He believes these ideas are doomed due to the impoverished funds of the Dublin society and tells Prior “you might as well expect to work miracles, and to feed thousands like our Saviour, with a few loaves, as to retrieve a Nation” (23). He views Prior as a projector, cheating himself with his own dreams. However, Swift’s fears for the future prosperity of Ireland are based on his concerns about the factions that divide its countrymen. The first great division among them are the disputes on spiritual matters, among Protestants and Catholics. What alarms him is that this causes an indisposition to unity and mutual affection by which means the country of Ireland is lessened in its strength because of the divisions which exist within it. He uses a corporeal analogy to make his case: “while we seem to drag like a Man in a palsy one half of our Body after the other, which ought to co-operate with it” (52).

Prior believes that such a situation can only be resolved when their Catholic neighbours get priests with better principles who will not have, or pass on, the “inhuman prejudices” (53) towards Protestants. Swift believes that this will be difficult to achieve as the Catholics in his opinion retain their superstitious
pilgrimages, nunneries, yearly Lents, and weekly fasts which, as he argues, in the words of the prophet “eat up the sins of the people, keep them very low, and unable, as well as unwilling to join us in serving the Nation” (53). Apart from these circumstances, Swift refers to what he calls “another ill-omened circumstance to our welfare […] the terrible Parties and Factions among Protestants” (53) which will, he believes, add further difficulties to what he calls Ireland’s “natural infirmities” (53). Indeed, he quotes from verses he says he wrote while residing in England in the last four stormy years of Queen Anne’s reign; he claims he never had them printed, and they are on the topic of High and Low Church, and Swift believes they could be applied to Ireland on this occasion:

For as two sawyers in a pit,
   Toiling a massy Beam to Slit,
   A like their Skill and Prowess show,
   While one draws High and t’other Low.
   So WHIG and TORY, BRITAIN tear
   Asunder, and her strength impair.
   While Factions all their Arts renew,
   To cut the Nation into Two. (53)

Even then, Swift shows how divisions and factions, both in religion and in politics, simply serve to impair a nation’s strength. Prior, in defending the Dublin Society aims to show how its strength has not been impaired by either divisions or factions but strengthened by the fact that people will join together in pursuance of the public good:

I allow all this would hold true, if the great and admirable effects of the Society’s Premiums, did not make it highly probable, that I should have
prevailed with several of our worthiest Countrymen, to have assisted so great
and so successful an Undertaking. When Men see they have it in their Power,
if they will join together, to deliver their Country from all its calamitous
distresses. (62)

Prior suggests that he would in general have doubled the premiums and indeed in
some of the most important improvements and manufactures he would have trebled
them; faster progress would therefore have been made in a few years if the skill and
industry of people had been given every incentive. It brought joy to his heart to see
the enlarging and improving of tillage, the encouraging and heightening of old
decaying manufactures, and the setting up of new ones and extending the strength
and force of the Society. He would have brought over foreign workmen of all trades
and professions; he would have set up glass manufacturing of all kinds near
collieries. He would have established earthen-ware production, and if possible have
brought over skilled workers in that trade from Birmingham. He would also have
wanted to see improvements in silk and thread bone-lace, and in the paper and sugar
business in Ireland.

To this end, we find Swift’s response, as quoted at the beginning of this
chapter, the “mighty projects to make Ireland another Utopia” are not in Prior’s
view to be chided and ridiculed. He insists on recounting the success of the Dublin
Society, particularly regarding the advances in silk manufacturing and tapestry, and
saying he would have, among other things, encouraged salt-works and ship-building
and fisheries. He admonishes Swift, saying frankly: “I never saw or heard any
eminent proofs of your extraordinary skill as a politician, except a vast crowd of
pamphlets; and what are they but the mere cobwebs of politicks” (66). Prior avows
that Swift was a good patriot but too much the politician, and that if only his
political secrets had become known he would have been revealed as a Jacobite. Swift rejects this, leading Prior to quote some words he had written previously, contending that they could be applied to Swift “with all the Graces, all the faults of Wit, You both adorn’d and blemished all you writ” (67). To ease the wrath of Prior, Swift offers a proposal which he hopes will assist him in laying aside his resentment about Swift’s admonishing his schemes and he says he will lay forth a clearly utopian spirited plan which “if it ever comes to be embraced, will make Ireland one of the fortunate islands” (68).

As Swift saw it, the Dublin Society should not be dependent on private contributions for its funding, and parliament should resolve to provide financial assistance and ultimately Societies should be founded in every county, or at least in every considerable county. As Prior accepts Swift’s sentiments he notes that many would look on such plans of theirs “as Dreams and Visions” (21) but that “the active and virtuous, and the disinterested, know their real worth, and wish and labour, to have them spread as widely and as forcibly among Men” (21). And so, both Swift and Prior urge a renewal of Ireland through the improving visions of the Dublin Society and recognise the great need for an infusion of utopian perspectives in contemporary political practice. Their conversation ends as a curate and three elderly women are lighting candles for the morning service causing both Swift and Prior to return to their uneasy rest.

The author of this pamphlet ventriloquises the voices of Swift and Prior, to portray the economic, cultural and political interests of these eighteenth-century characters with their differing visions of how contemporary Ireland could be improved. However, through the figures of Swift and Prior, he does reveal how visions for a better society arise from the conflicts, crises, and hopes of the society
from which both the author and those he ventriloquises emerge. This pamphlet’s publication coincides with a rich phase of utopianism in eighteenth-century Ireland. *A Dialogue* captures some of the disparate elements of Irish utopian writing in English: satire, improvement, patriotism, national feeling and the wider colonial, anti-colonial, political and religious concerns. The aim of this thesis is to fill the lacuna in our knowledge of utopianism in eighteenth-century Ireland. It is essentially a work of recovery, or re-discovery, of literary works and documents that have remained obscured from view or whose histories are ambiguous.

As I began to draw the threads together a picture of eighteenth-century Ireland was revealed, especially at the interface between the languages, Irish and English, and between the Catholic and Protestant communities and their respective cultures, between colonial and anti-colonial writings. But if we are to comprehend the societal significance of utopianism in eighteenth-century Ireland, some guiding principles are required: first, to establish what utopianism means, and, secondly, to identify the common factors that drew these works together. In the case of the former, the dominant traditions in British, European and American utopianism have been recognised and they are equally useful in the Irish instance. The later eighteenth-century stages of Irish republicanism were a repository for French, American and English influences, while also containing elements of ancient Gaelic culture. The radical utopianism of the Society of United Irishmen’s *Northern Star* newspaper, with its recurring references to James Harrington’s *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656) as an exemplar, heralds that confluence of the international and the national. To identify the common factor that drew these works together is more complex—many had similar points of reference emerging out of eighteenth-
century political and cultural contexts, the genesis of which began, as I observe, much earlier in Irish historical life.

To that end, in what follows in this introductory chapter I focus on specific definitions and discussions on utopianism. Then, I apply them in context to pre-eighteenth-century Irish utopian forms. These include the tradition of the *aisling* or vision poetry, narratives around the journey to and *topos* of Hy-Brazil, the Celtic Otherworld of the Land of Youth (Tír na nÓg), and the seventeenth-century drama *Hic et Ubique, or, the Humours of Dublin*. In the following chapters I consider eighteenth-century Irish utopianism through its diverse manifestations in literature, and in notions of improvement with important links to a wider intellectual and cultural network in Britian, Europe and beyond. This thesis concludes that the trajectory of the utopian propensity in eighteenth-century Ireland sustained an impressive body of literature, and that practical visions of improvement were firmly in place. Thus, it must develop further our understanding of the contribution of utopianism to the formation of an identifiably modern society in Ireland.

The Context of Utopia

In his seminal introductory essay in the field of utopian studies, “The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited,” Lyman Tower Sargent offers a broad definition of utopianism as the process of …“social dreaming.” In his words, utopia is the:

story of the men and women who dreamed of a better life for all of us and of those who tried to create that better life. It is also the story of those who had differing dreams and conflicts among them. And it is the story of the
fainthearted who were afraid to dream... and feared the dreams of others.

(“Three Faces” 1)

Sargent continues his description as he says that “social dreaming” includes “the dreams and nightmares that concern the ways in which groups of people arrange their lives and which usually envision a radically different society than the one in which the dreamers live” (“Three Faces” 3). In The Concept of Utopia, Ruth Levitas continues in this direction telling us that “utopia is about how we would live and what kind of a world we would live in if we could do just that... utopia is then not just a dream to be enjoyed, but a vision to be pursued” (my emphasis) (1). While Sargent encapsulates the visionary, yet contested, quality of utopianism, Levitas highlights the element of agency. She argues that utopia’s function is not solely to express desire, but rather to enable “people to work towards an understanding of what is necessary for human fulfilment, a broadening, deepening and raising of aspirations in terms quite different from those of their everyday life” (122).

Further, in Marxism and Form, Fredric Jameson argues that the utopian propensity has become an increasingly self-aware process of knowing and intervening in the world. The utopian process begins with a “stubborn negation of all that is” and moves to maintain “the possibility of a world qualitatively distinct” from the one in which we live (111). Thus, the utopian process is always concerned with humanity’s movement toward a horizon, rather than its actual arrival at a pre-determined place set by a utopian agenda. Indeed, Jameson regards utopia as a process: it does not deliver a new reality but rather the imaginative means to envisage new social possibilities. And so, utopia may prefigure a not yet known or lived reality; utopianism is positive only if it keeps open the possibility of future change. He stresses that most attempts to imagine utopia reveal its own
impossibility of existing in the world as it is. He argues that “utopias have something to do with failure, and tell us more about our limits and weaknesses that they do about perfect societies” but he also stresses the importance of continuing the attempt. 6 Sargent has identified all three major ‘faces of utopia’ that is, the three principle directions of utopianism, firstly, utopian social thought or philosophy, secondly, utopian practice which includes utopian communities, utopian experiments or practical utopias now generally called intentional communities, and thirdly, utopian literature and textual expression. As a specific definition of an intentional community Sargent’s view is that it is:

a group of five or more adults and their children, if any, who come from more than one nuclear family and who have chosen to live together to enhance their shared values or for some other mutually agreed upon purpose. (Introduction 6)

While there are over twenty words or phrases that have been used to characterise intentional communities, 7 it is Sargent’s position that intentional community is the best of these terms because as he puts it “it specifies the fewest preconditions and has no political or other prescriptive content” (“Theorizing Intentional Community” 54). Timothy Miller’s definition of intentional community includes the following:

1. The group in question must be gathered on the basis of some kind of purpose or vision, and see itself as set apart from mainstream society to some degree. Intentional communities are not simply group living situations; they are group living situations that have specific purposes and offer alternatives to societal business as usual….

2. The group must live together on property that has some kind of clear physical commonality to it….
3. The group must have some kind of financial or material sharing, some kind of economic commonality….

4. The group must have a membership of at least five adults, not all of whom are related by blood or marriage, who have chosen voluntarily to join in common cause. ("A Matter of Definition" 7)

Furthermore, Sargent gives specific definitions of the categories of utopian literature, utopia, eutopia, dystopia, utopian satire, anti-utopia, and critical utopia:

Utopia - a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space.

Eutopia or positive utopia - a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better that the society in which that reader lived.

Dystopia or negative utopia – a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which that reader lived.

Utopian satire – a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as a criticism of that contemporary society.

Anti-utopia – a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as a criticism of utopianism or of some particular eutopia.
Critical utopia – a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as better than contemporary society but with difficult problems that the described society may or may not be able to solve, and which takes a critical view of the utopian genre. (“Three Faces Revisited”
9)

Levitas identifies three aspects of utopia: content, form, and function. These, taken individually or collectively, can combine to provide a definition of utopia. In the first approach to defining utopian content, the focus is on what constitutes the ‘good society’. As a general definition this is beset with difficulties, due to the diversity of opinions about what constitutes a desirable state and how it is to be attained and maintained. The second way of defining utopia in terms of form centres on utopia as a literary genre – particularly as prose narrative which Thomas More’s (1478-1535) *Utopia* of 1516 is seen as inaugurating. The primary feature of this genre is its analysis of the good society, often through the trope of a fictional journey to another place or time, with the narrative being composed like a tour. The visitor is thus guided around the places of the new society before returning home to tell what he or she has observed and learned. The visitor’s experiences may also be woven through a utopian narrative to reveal aspects of the society’s laws, social relations and organisation. However, defining utopia solely as a literary form is too restrictive, for as Tom Moylan argues “it does not account for the entire range of utopian manifestations” (*Scraps* 85). While content and form are of undoubted significance in our understanding, function represents for Levitas the best basis for an adequate definition. The focus here is on what utopia is for and how it works for particular purposes. Levitas’s discussion centres on whether utopia enables or negates
social change, and how it does this. Utopias might be seen as ideals that lead change in a particular way or utopias may be viewed as fantastical, escapist or compensatory, drawing attention away from the negative state of existing social or political conditions. As Levitas posits, neither content, form or function can in themselves provide an adequately stable means for defining utopia, as they vary. While each has important elements, individually they are limited and unable to account for the complexity of utopian thought and changes in its historical and geographical manifestations.

Levitas, drawing on a term used by commentators on William Morris, identifies “the education of desire” as the central issue that defines utopia. (Concept 7). Thus, desire moves beyond the limitations of facets of the present, seeking spaces and worlds that are qualitatively different from what already exists. Such desire can take many different forms, and have differing content and functions. Rather than searching for a sole definition based on one of these categories, a more inclusive approach harnesses them and recognises how they may change and interconnect. Within this framework Levitas offers a definition of utopia which “recognises the common factor of the expression of desire. Utopia is the expression of the desire for a better way of being” (Concept 8). Fátima Vieira finds that “utopia is a programme for change and for a gradual betterment of the present” (Cambridge Companion 23); in this way it functions as a means towards “political, economic, social, moral and pedagogical reorientation” (23). In his essay “Remembering the Future,” Vincent Geoghegan uses the term ‘utopianism’ in a broader sense to describe “the human need and capacity to create a desirable environment; a conscious and unconscious rearranging of reality, usually involving an imagined future” (53).
“In the strictest sense of the word, utopia came into being at the beginning of the sixteenth century”: thus Roland Schaefer begins his introductory essay in *Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World*. While Schaefer emphasises the history of utopia as beginning with More, Sargent has presented utopia in a broader sense and traces the presence of utopianism throughout history. While More coined the word ‘utopia’ the idea already had a lengthy and complex history. Utopias have been discovered that were written before More created the word. The term ‘utopia’ is a hybrid, meaning ‘eu-topia’ (good place) or ‘ou-topia’ (no place). More’s state is not a eutopia, the good place, but utopia, nowhere. More presents us with a significantly better society, not a perfect one as it is often incorrectly identified. His work describes an imaginary, ideally ordered island state somewhere in the New World, that is, someplace in that corner of the world then being opened up to colonial trade and conquest.

And so, More had set a pattern for subsequent utopian narratives in presenting it as a report from a traveller, Raphael Hythloday (who had just returned from the island of King Utopus) who functions as the intermediary between the reader’s familiar world and the new realm of possibilities offered by the dawning of the global world. As an advisor to his King, More was, not unlike his contemporary in Florence, Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), one of a generation of thinkers who effectively were creating modern political theory. More, concerned about the injustices of his day, opened up political analysis, by way of the popular literary form of the travel narrative reporting on the nature of society in those imagined other worlds across the seas. Thus, More imbues travel writing with a political purpose. Although influenced by Plato’s *Republic*, More’s use of the framing device of the travel narrative not only allowed him to speculate on utopian alternatives that
resonated with the imagined community of England, but also the work, portrayed as a “simple” fantasy, a fictive narrative, protected him (at least for a while) from censure by the Crown.

More’s Utopians are “shrouded in ambiguity” which nearly five hundred years of analysis and interpretation has yet to dispel (Manuel and Manuel Utopian Thought 5). Ambiguity is central to More’s text, as much criticism has recognised. So, Swift’s likening of his own Houyhnhmns and Yahoos in Gulliver’s Travels to those utopians of More is essentially an ironic aside, as Chlöe Houston maintains, “to remind us that ambiguity and irony have always been a feature of the utopian mode of discourse” (Utopia, Dystopia or Anti-Utopia? 425). Moreover, many utopias are, as Sargent points out:

like a photograph or a glimpse of a functioning society at a moment in time
containing what the author perceives to be better and designed to break
through the barriers of the present and encourage people to want change and
work for it. (Introduction 104)

The utopian mode of discourse found in the literary utopia has been addressed by, among others, Darko Suvin and Kenneth M. Roemer. They provide definitional frameworks on one of Sargent’s ‘three faces’ – the literary utopia. For Suvin:

Utopia is the verbal construction of a particular quasi-human community
where sociopolitical institutions, norms, and individual relationships are
organised according to a more perfect principle than in the author’s
community, this construction being based on estrangement arising out of an
alternative historical hypothesis. (Metamorphoses 49)

Sometimes, then, the literary utopia offers an “alternative location radically
different in respect of socio-political conditions from the author’s historical
environment” (Metamorphoses 41). For Suvin, “utopias are verbal artifacts before they are anything else” (Metamorphoses 39). Even so, Moylan points out that, as a literary artifact, “it is not a static picture of perfection but rather a dynamic representation of human relations in motion, not perfect but better than what can be found in the author’s world” (Scraps 76). From Suvin’s perspective, the focus of utopia lies in encouraging new ways of thinking about Society or to stimulate those who are oppressed to resist. Suvin has called this form of thinking “estrangement” (as it comes from the Russian formalist Victor Shklovsky and the German Marxist Bertolt Brecht), and he draws on Brecht’s description to advance his point: “A representation which estranges is one which allows us to recognize its subject, but at the same time makes it seem unfamiliar” (Brecht, quoted in “Poetics” 374). Suvin’s work on literary form presented estrangement as a fundamental aspect of both science fiction and utopia and he highlighted the bond between these two literary forms. For him, science fiction is “a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author’s empirical involvement” (“Poetics” 375). As Lucy Sargisson remarks with respect to the term more generally, “estrangement” contains a number of cognate terms, each related to distance and difference:

The modern word “estrangement” combines the old French estranger (modern equivalent: étranger) and the Latin extraneare. Etymologically, then, estrangement evokes the stranger and the extraneous, the unknown and the outside. (“Strange Places: Estrangement, Utopianism and Intentional Communities” 394)
Within utopian studies, estrangement is used according to Suvin’s definition. At a most basic level, utopias need a certain estrangement. Fictional utopias, for example, are set apart and distanced from the present. They are set apart in time or in space in the “no-place” where they present visions of a better world. As Geoghegan writes:

The classical utopia anticipates and criticises. Its alternative fundamentally interrogates the present, piercing through existing societies’ defensive mechanism – common sense realism, positivism, and scientism. Its unabashed and flagrant otherness gives it a power which is lacking in other analytical devices. By playing fast and loose with time and space, logic and morality, and by thinking the unthinkable, a utopia asks the most awkward, most embarrassing questions. (*Utopianism and Marxism* 1-2)

Here, then, is estrangement. From its no-place, the “*ou*” of utopia, utopia recounts a story. Distanced from reality the utopian visions thus imagined are potent because they are estranged. Roemer defines the literary utopia as:

A fairly detailed narrative description of an imaginary culture – a fiction that invites readers to experience vicariously an alternative reality that critiques theirs by opening intellectual and emotional spaces that encourage readers to perceive the realities and potentialities of their cultures in new ways. If the author and/or readers perceive the imaginary culture as being significantly better than their ‘present’ reality, then the work is a literary eutopia (or more commonly, a utopia); is significantly worse, it is a dystopia. (*Cambridge Companion* 79)

Again, by way of definition and contextualisation, Northrop Frye views the utopia as a “*speculative* myth; it is designed to contain or provide a vision for one’s social
ideas” (Varieties of Literary Utopias 25). As Frye observes, “the utopian writer looks at his own society first and tries to see what, for his purposes, its significant elements are. The utopia itself shows what society would be like if those elements were fully developed” (26). Frank and Fritzie Manuel have noted that “every utopia, rooted as it is in time and place, is bound to reproduce the stage scenery of its particular world as well as its preoccupation with contemporary social problems” (Utopian Thought 23). However, as Sargent observes:

Since writers of utopias keep inventing new forms for the presentation of their ideas, any definition must have somewhat porous boundaries, and contemporary utopias do not all look like what we previously called a utopia. In particular, they are more complex, less certain of their proposals, and intended for flawed humanity. (Introduction 6)

Though this thesis aspires to provide a broadly comprehensive overview of the emergence of utopianism in eighteenth-century Ireland, the picture it paints is essentially connected to these definitions.

The Prehistory of Utopianism in Eighteenth-Century Ireland

Utopia in the form of a desire for a better future has been a marked feature of early Irish literature, with its Celtic Otherworld and Christian Heaven. This utopian anticipation can be understood as the production of hopeful visions of a better society. Such hopeful visions are articulated through texts and social practices. They can take many forms. In the Irish context, mostly, although not exclusively, they are presented through the literary realm of the utopian novel and poetry; in the political realm through songs, manifestos, speeches and through eighteenth-century
improving societies; in the lived tradition of nineteenth-century communal enterprises and the early twentieth-century development of the national co-operative movement. It is not surprising that such a utopian propensity exists in a variety of forms and milieux. Thus, architecture, songs, visual images, proclamations, speeches, and policies exist alongside the many instances of lived utopianism, from religious and secular communities to political movements. It has also been a consistent aspect of Irish-language literature, most notably poetry, since the seventeenth-century when the Gaelic order collapsed under the weight of the Tudor Conquests. This collapse marked the growing ascendancy of English power and the loss of Irish sovereignty with its attendant political, cultural and linguistic implications. The sermon, the political pamphlet, the speech from the dock, the manifesto, the rhetorical denunciation: these are among the literary modes of the lived utopian culture in context.

Utopian longing, while evident in much Irish seventeenth-century poetry, reaches its apex in the development of a new genre in the literature, the *aisling* or vision poetry of the eighteenth century. The word *aisling* means vision; and as Daniel Corkery argues in *The Hidden Ireland* “the vision the poet always sees is the spirit of Ireland as a majestic and radiant maiden” (128). Before the *aisling* became recognised as a distinct genre, there were vision-poems in the Irish language, and in many of them the self-same spirit of Ireland appears and utters her distress and her hopes. The use of the word in its newer technical sense may date from Aodhagán Ó Rathaille (Aogán O’Rahilly) (c. 1675-1729) (and exemplified in his poem, simply titled, ‘An Aisling’), who first makes the vision the *spéir-bhean* (literally, sky-woman), bewail the exile of the Pretender: it was Ó Rathaille who connected the *aisling* type of poem with the Jacobite cause. In the *aisling* the poet’s emotion is
represented by displacement. The poet falls asleep and a beautiful maiden, the ‘spéirbhéan’, usually identified directly or indirectly as Ireland, appears to him and tells of her suffering and the major changes that have taken place in her fortunes. She will be cured with the return and restoration of her lover, identified as the Stuart king.

The eighteenth-century political *aisling* is a recasting of a motif that has a long history in Irish literature. Traditionally in early Gaelic society the Irish chieftains are portrayed as being the spouses of their land and the spirit of the kingdom is invariably female. With the demise of the native Irish nobility in the seventeenth century the plight of Ireland became personified in the womenfolk, the wives, mothers, sisters who were left behind. The sorrow of these individual women awaiting the return of their husbands and lovers became fused in the emergent eighteenth-century *aisling* where a sorrowful Ireland looks abroad for the return of her rightful leaders whilst suffering greatly at the hands of boorish strangers who were controlling her country in their absence. The Irish rulers awaited were generally those of the native stock who had departed at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Traditionally, the poetry ends in despair paralleling the dislocation and dispossession suffered by the poets and their patrons or promises a return to the former state which will be restored on the return of the Prince. As Joseph McMinn has noted, the *aisling* is “an unusual combination of the political, the religious and the erotic”, which includes “religious allegory, in the form of a miraculous apparition of female beauty, and directs the longing towards the political hope of the Pretender’s restoration” (25-6). The utopian impulse in this poetry manifests itself, in Breandán Ó Buachalla’s formulation, as a form of millennialism:
The prophetic message foretold the return of the natural order: the rightful king on his throne, the native aristocracy restored to their ancestral lands, the Catholic Church re-established, the rehabilitation of the native intelligentsia. But the restoration of the rightful king was not a goal in itself, it was the mechanism by which more universal changes would be brought about and from which would flow the realisation of the millennial dream….In Irish political literature, as in other cultures, millennialism constituted the main structure of meaning through which the contemporary events were linked to an exalted image of an ideal world; it provided a set of images in which people could express both individual and collective needs. (“Irish Jacobitism and Irish Nationalism” 109)

Ó Buachalla’s succinct connection of the exalted image of an ideal world providing a store of images for both individual and collective modes of expression provides a clear link to the utopian propensity of the aisling tradition. The utopianism manifested through this tradition harkens toward such an ideal world. Such individual and collective needs occur and recur in aislingi, centred on nostalgia, on remembrance. Nostalgia, as originally defined and diagnosed in the seventeenth century, was a highly distinctive expression of longing: a painful desire to return home, from the Greek algos (meaning suffering) and nostos (meaning home). Nostalgia came to define the sad mood originating from the desire to return to one’s native land. Such longing was certain to find its way into seventeenth and eighteenth-century Irish-language poetry given the dislocations occasioned by colonialism. For, “going home” for Gaelic poets and their patrons, having been dispossessed and dislocated would mean an ending of the processes of colonialism. Even so, while the aisling was the primary genre of Irish Jacobite
verse, it could also be an aesthetic object in itself, not merely the means to an assumed end. This, perhaps, is captured by Sean O’Faolain in his account of a visit to Killarney in 1940. He captured the link between the ‘real’ landscape and the stimulus it provides to the individual imagination receptive to creating an Aisling. As he phrases it, in the early morning light:

Killarney reveals itself in a form of transfiguration, and it was most often at such an hour of early morning that the old poets suffered the dreams, apparitions, or ecstasies which formed an entire separate class of Gaelic poetry, known as Aislingi, or, Visions, poems whose theme is always the same – Eire visiting the poet in the guise of a Sybil prophesying the freedom of her people. (An Irish Journey 127)

Writing on the Aisling tradition, Corkery observes that the aislingi were the popular songs of the period so they were part of the oral tradition. While in Kerry, about two miles from Dingle during the summer of 1915, he records:

I heard an old illiterate woman break suddenly into one of them, changing, however, not without a twinkle in her eye, a word here, a name there, to make the poem fit in with the fortunes of the Great War in its early phase. (The Hidden Ireland 135)

And so, Corkery captures the pliable mode of the aisling. As a distinct part of the oral tradition it may be subverted and recast, as in Corkery’s anecdote, as a commentary on the emerging dystopian narrative then unfolding through the Great War. In many respects, the aisling, the journey to and topos of Hy-Brazil (also O’Brazeel) with its medieval origins in St. Brendan’s immram, Navigatio Brendani and the inspirational quality of the Celtic Otherworld as expressed in the mythology of Tir na nÓg (The Land of Youth) are central to an understanding of the Irish
eighteenth-century utopian imagining.\textsuperscript{13} Perhaps the most well known example of the latter is the Irish language poem \textit{Laoi Oisín ar Tir na nÓg} or \textit{The Lay of Oisín in the Land of Youth} composed by Micheál Coimín (c.1688-1760) anglicised as ‘Comyn’ or ‘Cummin’, an Anglo-Irish Protestant landowner and a native of County Clare. It is called \textit{Laoi Oisín} partly because Oisín is the hero of the story and partly because he is also presented as the narrator. It is written in the language of one of the better educated Munster poets of the middle of the eighteenth-century who drew on the older legend and traditions the story embodied. It became so associated with the poet that it is sometimes known as ‘Comyn’s Lay’. The date of the poem may be given approximately as 1750.\textsuperscript{14} Indeed, it is likely that Coimín would have been familiar with the utopian visions of the classical writers of Greek and Roman mythology and the many permutations of \textit{The Elysian Fields} and \textit{The Islands of the Blest}.\textsuperscript{15}

For more than a hundred years this poem existed only in manuscript, copies of which would have passed from hand to hand, and in this way and also by widespread oral transmission it spread to the neighbouring counties of Kerry, Galway, Mayo, to all the western counties of Ireland and even, it is generally thought, to Western Scotland. The poem was not printed until 1859 due to the difficulties in getting work in the Irish language published. It was first published with an introduction by Brian O’Looney for the \textit{Irish Ossianic Society}. This was followed by the publication of other versions down through the years. Coimín’s poem was ultimately the major textual source of Yeats’s “The Wanderings of Oisín” a long dramatic lyric in three parts, which was published in 1889. However, during the course of the hundred years of its unprinted existence, circulated in manuscripts and in oral recitation, the poem could not fail to be altered, added to and adjusted. Some of the versions known orally in the counties of Galway and Mayo,
for instance, differ greatly from the first printed edition.

The story in outline is this. One day while Finn and his Fenians are hunting around Loch Lein, one of the Lakes of Killarney, the beautiful landscape is described. As translated from Irish:

It was a summer’s morn and a mist hung o’er
The winding shore of sweet Loch Lein,
Where fragrant trees perfume the breeze
And birds e’er please with a joyous strain. (13-16)

In a moment of transfiguration reminiscent of O’Faolain’s words on Killarney which I have quoted earlier, (see p.26) a lady of great beauty suddenly appears, riding a white steed and coming apparently from the sea:

Her milk-white steed was of worth untold
Nor bridle of gold did the charger lack-
A saddle all covered with purple and gold
Lay bright to behold on the steed’s proud back. (41-44)

She speaks to Finn, and tells him that she has travelled from the Land of Youth, she has heard of the fame of his son Oisín, and declares her love for him, and wants him to go with her to *Tír na nÓg*, and in a clearly utopian mode Niamh recounts the delights of the distant land of youth. It is a place of abundance, filled with music and undreamt of stores of gold where endless life, beauty and strength abound. It is the

Delightful land beyond all dreams!
Beyond what seems to thee most fair-
Rich fruits abound the bright year round
And flowers are found of hues most rare. (105-108)

Oisín consents to go to Tir na nÓg and their journey begins. In lines that bring to mind John Winthrop’s (1588-1649) statement that the Puritans came to the New World to build a ‘city upon a hill’, Oisín on his own journey to a ‘new world’ recounts “we saw in our path strange sights, Cities on heights and castles fair” (193-194). Upon reaching the Land of Youth, Oisín finds an ideal place, where he lives for a long time until he yearns to visit Erin again. Niamh consents to let him go, warning him not to dismount from his horse when he returns to Erin, as he will never be able to come back to the Land of Youth. Oisín upon returning to Erin is amazed to find that he has been away for three hundred years, and he is grieved to find that his father Finn and the Fenians are no more. He resolves to return to the Land of Youth. In an attempt to help some workmen move a stone and perhaps to show his great strength, he is thrown from his horse and after falling to the ground becomes a blind, old man and mortal once more. He is fated never to see the Land of Youth again.

In its representation of the Celtic otherworld there is both a utopian and a Christian element. It is an eighteenth-century description of the old Irish Elysium, known by diverse names—the oldest of which appears to have been Magh Meall or the Pleasant Plain; another, being Tír an mBéo or Land of the Living. In the nineteenth century this Irish Elysium became a theme for songs and poems. In the Celtic otherworld Tír na nÓg represented the distant ideal land of the ever-young. While Hy-Brasil became a Celtic version of the Atlantis myth it was also depicted as an earthly paradise of eternal happiness. In particular, redolent of utopia, Tír na nÓg and Hy-Brazil are frequently seen as imaginative projections of a new place or state.
Like More’s island, this place is sealed off from the present, lying in another space and time as the embodiment of a social and political ideal. Thus, the ambiguity of the word is maintained as it refers to a better place that is nowhere or is elusive in the present known world.

As a genre of utopian imaging of the Celtic Otherworld the voyage to, and topos of, Hy-Brazil occurs and recurs in Irish utopianism. Swift would most likely have adapted the tradition of Hy-Brazil in his Gulliver’s Travels (1726) as it is in the tradition of imaginary travel and shipwreck. In his earlier work A Tale of a Tub (1704) Swift writes of a ‘great’ Philosopher of ‘O.Brazil’ who had devised a nostrum to assist the composition in one small portable volume a universal system “of all Things that are to be Known, or Believed, or Imagined, or Practised in Life” (101). It is not surprising that almost everyone is familiar with the legend of Atlantis, the paradise that was said to have been overwhelmed by the sea during a violent seismic disturbance. Although a Mediterranean legend, the legend of Atlantis has similar themes in Celtic folklore. The most famous of these is O’Brazeel (also O-Brazil or Hy-Brazil from the Irish Uí Bhreasail) a physical embodiment of the Celtic Otherworld. Bresal was a mythical High King of the World, and the island of Bresal was reputedly where he held his court every seven years.

Belief in O’Brazeel lay deep in the popular culture of people along the Irish coast. It was generally thought of as a submarine island or a phantom island shrouded in fog. But once every seven years, the veil of fog would lift, and an enchanted sunken island with mountains, verdant pastures filled with sheep, and gleaming cities would all rise to become visible. It became variously Tír fé Thoínn (The Submarine Country), Má Meala (Plain of Honey) and Tír na mBúadha (Land
of Talents). It became, as Thomas J. Westropp (1860-1922) writes, quoting lines written by Sir David Wilson in his The Lost Atlantis (1892), “an imaginary island of Brazil that flitted about the maps of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with ever-varying site and proportion, till it vanished” (35). It was not a reef or a shoal, but a mist or mirage “sprung from the sea without root” (35). From the fourteenth century Hy-Brazil appears on several European maps. So far as we know, it first appeared on the map of Angellinus Dalorto of Genoa made in the year 1325. It appears as a disc of land of considerable area, set in the Atlantic Ocean in the latitude of southern Ireland. It disappeared from cartographic records in 1865.

Westropp recounts Roderic O’Flaherty’s story of one Morough Ley who in August, 1668 was at Irrosainhagh, to the north of Galway bay. He was carried off by two strangers to O Brasil for two days, and was then brought back to Seapoint, near Galway, hoodwinked. He had been given a medical book which was not to be opened for seven years. Westropp says that he had personally seen the island three times. The last sighting occurred during the summer of 1872:

It was a clear evening, with a fine golden sunset, when, just as the sun went down, a dark island suddenly appeared far out to sea, but not on the horizon. It had two hills, one wooded; between these, from a low plain, rose towers and curls of smoke. My mother, brother, Ralph Hugh Westropp, and several friends saw it at the same time; one person cried that he could see New York”!

Westropp is extremely credulous about the actual existence of Hy-Brazil and also of Morough Ley’s account of his visit to it, which in many ways seems a contradiction of the trope of Hy-Brazil as an imaginary projection. However, in 1663, just five years before Ley’s account, Richard Head began his eclectic literary contributions
to utopian drama and to the lore of Hy-Brazil. Head (c. 1637-86) was a poet, novelist, miscellaneous writer and bookseller, son of a clergyman, most likely Richard Head (Hedde), who was killed in the rebellion of 1641. His comedy *Hic et Ubique; or, the Humours of Dublin* was privately performed in 1663.¹⁹ *Hic et Ubique* presents Dublin as a utopian space for English émigrés, a neutral space, superior to London. However, Head satirises this English fantasy with reminders of “present” actual Dublin, what Christopher Wheatley terms “a crowded landscape peopled with inconvenient relics of a messy history who decline to be written out of the story” (16). And so, the émigrés are required to adapt and begin the tenuous movement from “nationless utopia toward an Irish identity” (16). Phantastick, one of the English immigrants in Dublin in *Hic et Ubique*, tries to impress Mrs. Hopewell:

I liv’d in *Utopia* three months, where no English Man before durst venture, the Dukes only daughter taking notice of my super-excellent qualifications, as likewise the exact simetrical proportion of my body, fell so deeply in love with me, that I was necessitated to satisfie her desires, to save her life. And to save mine (the Duke being informed of what was done) there being no shipping in the harbour, I was fain to put to sea in a Wash-bowl, and the only sayl I had, was the fore part of my shirt. (28-29)

The fantasy is multi-layered, but the core illusion is Phantastick’s attractiveness to women. *Hic et Ubique* (the name of a character) chastises Phantastick’s sailing outfit with a typical double entendre: “A yard I grant him. But what did a do for want of a mast[?]” (29). Thus, the utopian fantasy is denigrated as unattainable because of impotence, which Wheatley argues “figuratively suggests the inability of utopian dreamers to achieve completion” (20). Yet in Dublin, at least in the
beginning, Phantastick lives in utopia. Questioned by another character, Contriver about this, he responds, “The Duke of Utopia lives not merrier that us; we eat, drink, and sleep, without the least care; for our hearts are so continually oil’d by good liquor, that they are antidoted against sorrow” (23). Elsewhere, Head portrays London itself as a financially impoverished dystopia in comparison to the perceived utopian space of Dublin:

Phantastick  First then, Houses and Shops are so dear in London, that some Shopkeepers are forc’d to sell their wares in the Country.

Hic  I believe so, and their wearing-cloaths too.

Phantastick  The Mercers and Booksellers are deeply in law about the fee-simple of Ludgate, O ‘tis disputable which shall carry it. As for Newgate that’s to be let. (3)

Head, who was himself a successful bookseller in London, had become bankrupt from gambling and as a result he moved to Dublin. Essentially he is satirising the English adventurers who think Dublin is likely to be better than London, despite the realisation of the very real “present” Dublin. Utopia, if not discovered, can be created. The character Contriver is a projector, a speculator who views Ireland as fertile ground for get-rich-quick schemes:

The bogs lie near the Mountains, which will afford me earth enough to dam’em up: but first Ie lay a foundation of hurdles, such as Dublin is built on, to support the Masse of Earth. So it shall be; tis as clear as a Mathematical Demonstration. The benefit that will redound hereby, will be triple. First a vast quantity of unprofitable Acres made arable, next a discovery (it may be) of gold and silver Mines, which the barrennesse of the Mountains demonstrate: and lastly metamorphosing a mountainous into a Champian Countrey. Here’s
the worst on’t, I shall loose my name by’t. The King will confer on me little lesse that the Title of Duke of Mountain, Earl of Monah, or Lord Drein-Bog.

(23)

Thus, Conriver’s improvements require the erasure of the known landscape, creating a renovated Ireland. His entirely fictitious paper scheme leads to his being conferred with ridiculous titles. While Ireland is an unlikely place to achieve wealth, the mythically utopian space is replete with the opposing forces of Catholic and Protestant, settler and native, of the feudal and the mercantile which serve to problematise the utopian space. In a movement from the emerging, less than utopian space of Dublin, Conriver expands his utopian projection “This very day did I find in an old Map, O Brazeel with its height” (24). Such commentary anticipates Head’s subsequent satirising of English adventurers who in their search for the unattainable O Brazeel instead reach Montecapernia, the ‘mountain of goats’ which represents Ireland in his The Western Wonder: or, O Brazeel (1674).20 Head and his companions set off for the utopic island visible of the west coast of England. Head is in this account searching for an island revealed to him in a dream, which, in a style prefiguring the later genre of the Aisling, occurs when he

fell asleep in a Summers afternoon, and dream’d I saw an Eagle unnaturally great, soaring in the Air; whilst I was wondering at his greatness, he immediately stoopt, and took me up within his talons, and flew away with me with incredible celerity over mountains and valleys, and at length brought me to the sea-side: where having rested a little while, he took me up again, and carried me to an island; and having set me down, vanished. (5-6)

He finds himself in a place of abundance full of “all the delicates Nature is capable to produce, which are too many here to enumerate. The verdant Fields, and pleasant
Groves, were not to be parallel’d; but no sign where any Corn was sown: whatever grew, came up spontaneously without the labour of the hands” (6). Having seen this ‘paradise’ (7) his guide tells him that the isle “was under the power of the Prince of the Air, and had been so for many years; but the time is near at hand it shall be so no longer” (7). Head is amazed at this, and as his guide vanishes the former eagle returns to him and once more takes him up in his talons. He brought him back to his habitation and then Head awakes. He pondered on his dream and decided it must be O Brazeel he had seen and he was its discoverer. He informed a friend of his experience and he agreed to provide a vessel of some thirty tons so that they could set out to find the island of O Brazeel.

And so, they set sail on October 9th, 1672. At sea for days, their ship sprung a leak and they took to a lifeboat, and on a dismal night wandered the sea until they saw a light to which they rowed. They were rescued by the crew of a larger ship which quickly became shipwrecked on Montecapernia. Head recounts it is divided into two parts, South and North, and “there is so great a difference in the manners and language of both places; the South understanding the North, for the most part, as little as the English do the Cornish” (21). Though the natives are pleasant: “it is a thousand pities the People are so sloathful, being given to no manner of Industry, Husbandry, or any other useful improvement” (32). Religion is also addressed, and the lack of it, or at least of Protestantism causes Head to see this as the root of the natives vices. As he phrases it, “Many notorious Vices are among them, which they look upon to be things of another complexion; and this I believe proceeds from their ignorance in Religion” (34). It is, as Wheatley has noted, the presence of Irish Catholics in the landscape that distinguished the real from the utopian; the real Montecapernia from the utopic and ultimately unattainable Hy-Brazil. Head’s
disenchantment with the inhabitants of Montecapernia ultimately evokes a colonial register, in seeking the island of Hy-Brazil and finding Monecapernia, he shows that the phantasmal island is reflected solely through the purview of his colonial gaze. The presence of the Irish distinguishes Montecapernia from O Brazeel, the real from the utopic. As Michael Griffin argues: “The difference between Montecapernia and O’Brazile is essentially the difference between Ireland real and Ireland ideal, as Head sees it”.21

The subtitle of Head’s *O-Brazil, or the Inchanted Island*, (1675) is, interestingly, *A Perfect Relation of the Late Discovery and Wonderful Dis-Inchantment of an Island on the North of Ireland: With an Account of the Riches and Commodities Thereof Communicated by a Letter from London-Derry, to a Friend in London*. William Hamilton of Londonderry relates how, in 1674, a Captain John Nisbet of Killybegs, in County Donegal had filled several vessels with butter, tallow, and hides and sailed to France. On his return trip he brought back French wines. When near the coast of Ireland on the return passage, and just as the sun was rising, he happened upon the coast of a phantom island filled with cattle and horses. They explored the island, and with night approaching they built a fire to ward off the cold, which drew out the inhabitants. They had been shut up in a castle by the diabolical and demonic powers of a great Negromancer who had cursed the island. But the spell of enchantment had been broken [by fire] so they were free from imprisonment, and the island would forever be more visible. Captain Nisbet sailed back to Killybegs with gold and silver that they were given to spread the news of their remarkable discovery of O’Brazil, an O’Brazil ultimately attained and liberated.
The editor of Manus O’Donnel’s *A Voyage to O’Brazeel* (1752), a submarine island, asserts that the work is a:

a literal translation of an old *Irish* manuscript, which came accidentally into my hands: I found the story both improving and surprising, and therefore concluded that I would do my country an acceptable Service in translating it.

(3)

This is a familiar device in eighteenth-century literature. The idea of an impartial editor, translating a late sixteenth or early seventeenth-century Irish language manuscript, adds verisimilitude or the appearance of access to what could be called the language’s secret treasures. As the editor is unable to date the text he conjectures that it was written sometime during Queen Elizabeth’s reign, when, “the Reformation was in its infancy” (3). O’Donnel’s voyage is pseudonymously anthologised in the *Ulster Miscellany*, a 386-page anthology of prose, verse and drama published without identifying the editor, authors, printer or place of publication in 1753.22 Michael Griffin and Brendán MacSuibhne have noted that The Miscellany is a “mixed political bag of mid-eighteenth-century Patriotism. The contributors are loyal to the constitution in church and state” (119). O’Brazeel is depicted as bathed in a miraculous submarine light with its domed roof of water repelled by oaks that must be kept constantly burning. It is, as the editor notes, a version of Milton’s ‘cave within the Mouth of God’ (6) from Book 6 of *Paradise Lost* ‘where light and darkness in perpetual round/Lodge and dislodge by turns, which makes through Heaven/Grateful Vicissitude, like day and night’ (A Voyage 6). The light is needed for working the land, but if there were no night “those men of an evil and covetous Mind; would give no rest or ease, either to themselves, their servants or cattle” (7). But for the inhabitants of O’Brazeel this problem does not
arise due to “their dependence on the Almighty Providence, their Love and Charity to their Christian Brethren, and their Tenderness and Compassion even for the brute part of creation, guard them from all excesses that way” (7).

The O’Donnels’ adventures in O’Brazeel began one morning during the reign of Elizabeth. Bryan O’Donnel, owner of a considerable farm at Cloughaneely, north-west Donegal, went for a walk by the seashore. When he did not return his family sent a servant to look for him. The servant returned having found no trace of him. They believed that he had fallen into the sea, while some local lore concluded that he had been carried away by the fairies. A month after his father’s disappearance Manus O’Donnel was walking by the sea and was “surprised to see my father coming towards me with a cheerful countenance” (15). They walked together until they came to a boat at anchor. His father said they would go out to sea as he had something to show him and he asked Manus to fetch fire, he ran to a cabin and got some burnt turf which he brought to the boat.

They rowed out to sea and Bryan said he would sink the boat. He bored a hole in the bottom of the boat, the water came rushing in, then he kindled the oak stick which burned like a candle. Although the boat was sinking no water came in over the sides. Instead it stood like a wall on each side and formed an arch over their heads like a vault. They went deeper and came to a place of magnificent light, when they reached an appropriate depth, he began to sail the boat with the stick. When he held it at the head of the boat, the water fled from it and receded towards the stern, and so pushed the boat into the vacuum ahead of it. Soon they reached an open sea although they were still under water, which arched over the submarine sea like a canopy. Then in the distance Manus saw an island, the island of O’Brazeel. On reaching the “most delicious country” (9) they came ashore and walked to a
farmer’s house. The farmer greeted them treating them to two glasses of excellent liquor and a genteel dinner. Bryan explained that Manus was his son and that he was the stranger who had been at the governor’s house the previous month. Bryan explained that the governor had allowed him to bring his son to the island and the farmer then accompanied them to the governor’s house where they were greeted with a warm welcome.

Manus thought that he was in “fairyland, and nothing but enchantments round me” (19). The governor arrived and told them the story of the island, how it came to be a submarine island and how they could repel water from the sinking island by burning oak. In the evening the governor detailed the laws, religion and governance of the island. As the governor spoke about religion, he says to the O’Donnells’ “you saw our public worship, it is pure and simple” (54). Bryan O’Donnel replies that “I think you stripped religion too bare; it looked naked wanting those ornaments and dress which all Christians use” (54). The governor responds that they had not stripped it but preserved it as they had found it. He notes, “The Church came out of the hand of Christ and his apostles, as our first parents did out of the hands of their creator naked and innocent” (54-55). The governor states that they have no use for dress or ornament and they are very careful in religious matters to guard against anything that can lead to superstition or idolatry. As he says they do not use these things unless they see a possibility of their doing good, which, in a direct comment to the Catholic O’Donnells’ he says “is not the case of these vestments, signs and ceremonies which are used amongst you” (55). After some more discussion, the governor gave them a document, A Summary of the Christian Faith, which they were allowed to take with them when they left. They wanted to stay but the governor insisted that they go to where they could do most good.
Upon leaving Bryan O’Donnel said to the governor that “he and the rest of the inhabitants of O’Brazeel, should always claim his love and gratitude” (64). They left, and returning home by the same way they came, soon reached the Irish shore. Upon his return to Ireland, Manus O’Donnel notes: “I thought our case like that of Adam and Eve when they were forced to leave their paradise. However, I took up this firm resolution, that I would always strive to come up to the same perfection and virtue that was so visible among these excellent people” (64). In O’Brazeel, the Catholic O’Donnells’ uncover a submarine Protestant colony, and in so doing reveal their anti-colonial stance, a stance also maintained by Manus O’Donnel from the beginning where he notes “we have too many instances of the cruel barbarity of conquerors in our times, who have laid waste whole countries, destroying the bodies of the inhabitants” (9).

As Sargent argues, utopianism was an important part of the process of colonisation.23 As depicted, O’Brazeel is a Protestant settler colony, and in a link with Sargent’s analysis is an example of the situation he describes where “most settlers wanted to improve their own lives and some had a specific utopian vision in mind” (Colonial and Postcolonial Utopias 200). As such, O’Brazeel, as depicted in A Voyage, is a place of plentitude which has been bestowed upon the inhabitants because of their pure and simple faith. The island’s origin myth begins when the apostle Matthew was preaching among the Britons and Irish, his companion was Joseph surnamed Justus. When they were in the county of Donegal, they crossed over to the island of O’Brazeel which as the governor notes “at that time lay off the western coast of that county about seven or eight leagues, as may be yet seen in some of your old maps of Ireland” (20). When Matthew left the island of O’Brazeel, Justus remained behind to be teacher and pastor to the people. And as he notes “by
this man’s preaching and practice, the whole island were so firmly rooted and
grounded in, the love of God and virtue, that their lives and properties were nothing
in comparison to their hopes of a happy futurity” (20). The island became known as
the island of saints. At that time the island was very poor and many of the
inhabitants were “obliged to go over into Ireland for work and the necessities of
life” (22). As a result they became tainted with the vices of the mainland and so
began to “fall off from that purity and strictness of life, which they had hitherto
preserved pure and unsullied” (22). Such corruption was destroying the island so the
heads of the families decided to pray publicly to the Almighty three times a week,
“that he sink their island, and themselves into the ocean, rather than suffer their
virtue to be defaced with the corruption of the Irish vices” (22).

One day as they came out of church where they had been praying, they saw
a man on horseback coming towards them. He carried with him a large wallet or bag
containing a great quantity of acorns. He told them that their wish would be granted
if they could ensure that they would first divide the lands of the island equally
among the families, and the mountain in the middle of the island would be held in
common by all and would be known as Mount Horeb. All this was to be done within
eight days during which several of the inhabitants, tainted by sin, left the island due
to their lack of faith. On the eighth day the horseman returned and the acorns had
grown into large stately oaks. He asks them to cut down as many of the oaks as
would kindle four large fires on the side of Mount Horeb above the woods, at equal
distance. Fires were also to be kindled in their homes of the same timber. It was
revealed that the island would not be fixed to the solid earth but floating on the
surface of the water like a heavy log of timber. He asked them to dig a deep hole of
a considerable breadth in the bottom of a pond. They did this until they pierced through to the sea underneath, and as water rushed through, the island began to sink.

As the island descended into the water, instead of running in upon the land, it formed a glorious vault or arch over their heads and the island sank to its present depth. It was underwater and cut off from the vices and luxury of the terrestrial world. The soil of the island which had been unsuited to self-sufficiency was transformed into a better quality and was to be blessed and receive all the beauty of the primitive world. At this point the horseman dissolved into a diffusive light, then this light came to perpetually adorn the “happy island” (25). According to Griffin and MacSuibhne, this outcome “accords to a utopian trope of millennial deliverance” (124). The island and its inhabitants, thus saved, bask in the reflected light of the prophet which permanently illuminates them and which according to the governor is “like that which accompanied the Israelites in the wilderness; it illuminates us, but is obscure darkness to others” (27).

The people are industrious and involved in trade, they export to Ireland and bring home money and any other goods they need. No man may marry before he is thirty years of age, or any woman before she reaches twenty-five. Only one child is allowed to possess land, and another gets a portion this relates to the two eldest children, who are therefore to be called proprietors, having a fortune either in land or money, although the land always goes to the male child, if the two eldest are of different sexes. The parents are obliged at the time of their own marriage to set aside money to live upon in their retirement, because they have to part with their lands when their eldest child reaches thirty years of age. Only a certain class, either landowning or monied, may marry. All others, belonging to a class known as
younkers, are sent to become tradesmen, seamen, monks, teachers or public servants.

A Voyage’s primary concern is the prospect of people of different religions living together in one state. The O'Donnels are reluctant to leave, and Manus O'Donnel’s opening words in A Voyage shows that their journey to the Christian paradise of the Saints, a paradise which had been almost lost but was regained, evoked a desire to ensure that it was protected from unwanted colonisation, as in his opening lines “tho’ I am going to give the world an account of a most delicious country, and a happy people, it is not with a view of stirring up any enterprising prince or general to go and conquer it” (9). According to Donald S. Johnson, O’Brazeel was “the garden of the Hesperides, west of Ireland, where the sadness of life could be escaped” (114). Johnson also judges it the site where “Christian writers created from this pagan island a land of truth for those of the Faith” and to them, O’Brazeel was variously a Land of the Promise of the Blessed, an earthly paradise or a faraway Eden (114).

Meanwhile, the narratives of Richard Head stand at the interface between late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century utopian writings. In his Hic et Ubique, a dramatic comedy, the utopic space of Dublin as envisioned by the English émigrés, is in marked contrast to the perceived dystopian space of London. This utopic scene allows the contrasting mores of native and settler, Catholic and Protestant, feudal and mercantile to be played out and allegorised. As Wheatley puts it, “utopic space allows a vantage point from which neither the traditional interpretation of Ireland as colonised victim, nor the revisionist view of Ireland as simple reflection of the larger European aristocratic society, is excluded; rather, the interplay between the positions is dramatized” (17). Ultimately, the utopic space of
Dublin does not exist: the only utopic space remains the private stage in which it was performed, it was acted privately not in the space of the public theatres, licensed by Charles II, but in a private room, ultimately serving to highlight the gaps in the present reality between England and Ireland, and the myriad factors that clutter the would-be utopia. Head’s O’Brazeel texts are political, and they are both culturally and politically anglocentric. In *The Western Wonder* he comments on Irish Catholicism but his views are from a colonial perspective, and are suffused with an uncritical exposition of colonisation. Head’s utopianism is indicative of a utopianism of the coloniser. In transplanting Sargent’s views on colonisation to seventeenth-century Ireland, Head’s O’Brazeel texts could be read as an important part of the process of colonisation.

While Manus O’Donnel’s *A Voyage* is closer to the Gaelic narratives of Hy-Brazil, both the editor and the O’Donnells affect an anti-colonial stance. O’Brazeel was a paradise which had almost become lost due to the corrupt vices learnt in Ireland but it was saved, and became if not a paradise lost then for a short time a paradise in abeyance and found again. It is a Protestant colony but one which its Catholic visitors want to see protected from potential conquerors and preserved as a paradise, an imaginary model of benign social practice. Moreover, *Laoi Oisín ar Tír na nÓg* represents in a traditional style the fabled Celtic Elysium, as opposed to the other modes of literary composition practised by Coimín’s contemporaries such as *Aislingi*, satires, burlesques or occasional poems on contemporary political or local events. And so, in a traditional style he evokes the inspirational qualities that converge around *elsewheres* as evocations of Irish literary utopian expression. *A Dialogue*, with which I opened this chapter, demonstrates the many improving visions of Prior and the Dublin Society, and emphasises the need for practical
utopianism against the background of the distressed state of contemporaneous Ireland. *A Dialogue* and *A Voyage*, both published in 1753, combine fundamental aspects of eighteenth-century utopian imagining, firstly, the discourse of improvement and secondly, the imaginary projection of the voyage to and the *topos* of, O’Brazeel as a locus for addressing emergent history in colonial Ireland. All of the works discussed in this introduction were created between 1641 and 1760 a period during which, as Toby Barnard writes:

Commentators looked for and found different Irelands: a kingdom, a province, a collection of provinces, congeries of settlements of varying vintages, a near and ancient colony. Depending on the perspective of the viewer, it was portrayed as an unexploited El Dorado, grim Golgotha where the bleached bones of settlers, soldiers and natives attested to the repeated efforts to establish stable English communities, or an Eden forfeited by the transgressions of the occupants. Apprehensions and aspirations were projected into the landscape, so that contradictory descriptions resulted. These Irelands were not all imagined. (12) 24

Here, then, Barnard foregrounds the disparate and ambiguous perspectives on Ireland yet the themes and threads of eighteenth-century Irish utopianism, as presented in the following chapters, engage with many of these viewpoints.

While Plato and More imagined alternative ways of organising society, in Chapter 1, “Improving Visions: The Dublin Societies and George Berkeley’s New World Utopia”, I look at those eighteenth-century Irish modes of imagining alternative ways of organising society. I focus on the origins and philosophy of the early philosophical societies, and particularly of the Dublin Society, which is one of two that originated in the seventeenth or eighteenth-century which has survived in a
continuing history up to the present, the other being the Royal Irish Academy. These societies originated during a dynamic phase in associational life in eighteenth-century Ireland. It is important to view these societies in a wide context with linkages to developments in Britain, the American colonies, France and elsewhere. I contend that these societies amount to a practical demonstration of utopianism and indeed, in certain instances, of patriotism. It has been argued that the Dublin Society harnessed a public sphere alongside, but distinct from, the formal political realm of parliament, the functioning of the Dublin administration and municipal corporations. In expanding upon the connections between Ireland and the wider world I focus on George Berkeley’s life which is marked by differing utopian causes. However, I emphasise his utopian Bermuda Project (1722-1731) and its legacy, and his subsequent work of practical philanthropy The Querist as a clear exploration of what might constitute a utopia.

In Chapter 2, “‘To the limits of the Lunar World’: Extraterrestrial Voyages and Utopia”, I explore utopianism as expressed through works of satire based on extraterrestrial and lunar narratives. In the tradition of utopian fiction the travellers discussed depart from a real place to visit the imagined place and return home. Such utopian satires provide a strong narrative device and offer in Suvin’s sense an estranged space from which to comment upon contemporary society. These utopian projections are often shown to allegorise the conflicts and crises of the society from which the respective authors emerge. The chapter provides a critique of the variegated nature of these extraterrestrial narratives, offering results as diverse as a prognosis for the renovation of Ireland, the locating of a utopian commonwealth on the moon, and a comprehensive vision for a Plato’s Republic recast in the limits of the lunar world.
In Chapter 3, “Dark Caverns: Samuel Madden’s Futurism”, I focus on the historical and political context out of which Madden’s innovative Memoirs of the Twentieth Century emerged as a work of utopian satire focused on an imagined future society allied with the inaugural time-travel utopia. I aim to locate Memoirs within the context of Madden’s crucial role in the development of the Dublin Society and also as a fictive representation of much of his concerns as expressed in his practical and pragmatic utopian documents written in relation to the Dublin Society about both its survival and its future.

This thesis aspires to provide a broadly comprehensive overview of the emergence and existence of utopianism in eighteenth-century Ireland. Centrally, I argue that utopianism has an extensive and varied pre-history to be found in St. Brendan’s immram, the oral tradition of the Celtic Otherworld, in the early vision poems which manifested into the wider genre of utopian imagining through the Aisling, and the narratives of Hy-Brazil and Tír na nÓg. The emerging utopianism of the eighteenth century coalesced around both reflections on the past and visions of the future. The “Backward Look” (as Frank O’Connor called it in his book of the same name) remained a feature of Irish literature for an extended period. Some writers mourned the passing of a golden age. Meanwhile, others looked forward with clear visions based on societal improvement, and political and cultural progress.

Irish utopianism is multifaceted from the imagined mythic, textual and cartographic provenance of Hy-Brazil, to manifestations of the Celtic Otherworld and the utopic quality of Tír na nÓg. To the instances I examine in the eighteenth century of the Dublin Society and its imperative to improve, Berkeley’s utopian project and his practical philanthropy, and the literary representations of utopian satire and futurism. It is a utopianism which is variously colonial and anti-colonial.
It encompasses the writings of widely known writers such as Swift and Berkeley juxtaposed with the literary and scholarly milieu of Irish speakers at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and their network for disseminating literature and manuscripts throughout the country allied to the utopian ethos of Irish language scholarship in Dublin. I argue that eighteenth-century Irish utopianism moves between colonial and anti-colonial viewpoints, from dialogue to satire, from *Aisling* to polemic, between remembrance and futurism, between imagined otherworlds and Eden’s far away to discourses of improvement, self-reliance and patriotism. Viewed in this light, despite their distinct features, they provide important insights into the nature, appeal and operation of utopianism in eighteenth-century Ireland.

Endnotes


4 This excerpt is from the Seán Ó Ríordáin’s poem “Cúl an Tí”.

Tá Tír na nÓg ar chúl an tí,

Tír álainn trínachéile.
It translates as “Tír na nÓg is at the back of the house”. An Ulster or Connacht translator might render the poet’s words in the second line as “A lovely through-other country”. The poet is speaking about the back of his own house where he lived in Inniscarra in County Cork. For my purposes, I see a move in this poem toward a connection between the concept of the actual space of home and the possibility that the utopian imagination can find in such a space a celtic otherworld or a utopian vista. For the complete collection of Ó Riordáin’s poetry, see Na Dánta edited by Seán Ó Coileáin with illustrations by Seán Ó Flaithearta.

5 The author of this pamphlet is unknown. The reference to that Memorable Day, October 9th, 1753, is curious. Swift died on October 19th, 1745. It could be possible that the date on the pamphlet is a misprint and that the author was actually referring to October 19th. And so, this would mean that the Memorable Day referred to in the title is October 19th, 1753, the eight anniversary of Swift’s death. Swift had a long association with St. Patrick’s Cathedral—he had been appointed Dean in 1713, a position he held until his death in 1745. While Swift was buried in St. Patrick’s, Prior was buried in the local churchyard in Rathdowney, (former Queen’s County) County Laois. A monument was erected to him in Christchurch Cathedral in 1756, with an epitaph inscribed by George Berkeley. It was appropriate, that the sculptor of the monument should have been J. Van Nost who from the earliest years of the Dublin Society was associated with its successful efforts to develop an Irish school of sculpture.


7 These terms are intentional community, intentional society, communal society, cooperative community, practical utopia, commune, withdrawn community, enacted community, experimental community, communal experiment, alternative society,
alternative lifestyle, communitarian experiment, socialist colonies, collective
settlement, mutualistic communities, communistic societies, utopian society,
utopian experiment, communal utopia, utopian settlement, and elective community.
For discussion of intentional community, see Sargent’s “Theorizing Intentional
Community in the Twenty-First Century.”

8 For more on ‘the education of desire’ see Ruth Levitas “Educated Hope: Ernst
9 See Vincent Geoghegan “Remembering the Future.” Utopian Studies 1.2 (1990):
52-68.

10 For commentary on Roland Schaer and Lyman Tower Sargent’s essays in The
Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World, see Zhang Longxi “The Utopian

11 For references on criticism of the ironies of More’s text, see Chlőe Houston
“Utopia, Dystopia or Anti-utopia? Gulliver’s Travels and the Utopian Mode of

12 On nostalgia, see William Fiennes, The Snow Geese, especially 122-3.

13 Hy-Brazil is English orthography for Uí Bhreasail (the descendants of Bresal or
Bresail). On the University College Cork website CELT, the Corpus of Electonic
Texts, an online resource for Irish history, literature and politics
www.ucc.ie/celt/index.html the name Bresal appears thirty times, the first being
from AD 435. I also found records of the name Breasail and the Uí Breasail clan
(AD 536). For an explanation of the name and analysis of accounts in Irish folklore,
see Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, “The Mystical Island in Irish Folklore”, in Patricia Lysaght,
Séamus Ó Catháin and Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, eds., Islanders and Water-Dwellers
(Dublin, 1999). 247-60. Also see Donald S. Johnson, Phantom Islands of the

14 The edition I use is the revised text, literal translation, new metrical version, notes and vocabulary of Laoi Oisín ar Tír na nÓg by Micheál Coimín, edited by Tomás Ó Flannghaile. London: City of London Book Depot (Dublin: M.H. Gill & Son, 1896).

15 On Elysium and the Islands of the Blest, see Frank and Fritzie Manuel, Utopian Thought in the Western World, especially 75-78 and Claeys and Sargent The Utopia Reader 12-13 (in particular).

16 On the association between utopia and the city, see Lewis Mumford, ‘Utopia, the city and the machine’, in Manuel, Utopias and Utopian Thought, 3-24. On John Winthrop and a ‘City upon a hill’, see Sargent “Colonial and Postcolonial Utopias.” in The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature 206.

17 The medical treatise to which Westropp alludes is known as The Book of the O’Lees or The Book of Hy-Brasil and is held among the medieval manuscripts collection of the Royal Irish Academy. It is written in Irish with some Latin. It contains a translation from Latin into Irish of a highly organised medical treatise, with 44 tables which outline details of diseases. The manuscript was bought for the academy from the O’Lee family, hereditary physicians to the O’Flaherty’s and the name ‘P. Lee’ is inscribed on page 47. In the course of the seventeenth century a member of the O’Lee family told a ‘wild story’ of his having been transported to the enchanted island of Hy-Brasil and having obtained supernatural knowledge of medical cures which he recorded in his book. The unusual appearance of the book convinced some of the validity of his story. The digitised manuscript can be viewed
online at www.isos.ie or in the special collections section of the Royal Irish Academy at www.ria.ie


19 See Richard Head, Hic et Ubique; or, the Humours of Dublin (London: printed by R.D. for the Author, 1663). For more on this, see Christopher J. Wheatley, Beneath Íërne’s Banners: Irish Protestant Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century (Notre Dame, IN 1999), 15-28. Michael J. Griffin “Offshore Irelands; or, Hy-Brazil hybridized: utopian colonies and anti-colonial utopias, 1641-1760.” Enemies of Empire. (Dublin: Four Courts, 2007), especially 134-136.

20 See Richard Head, The Western Wonder: or, O Brazeel, an Inchanted Island Discovered; with a Relation of Two Ship-wracks in a Dreadful Sea-storm in That Discovery. To Which Is Added, A Description of a Place, Called Montecapernia, Relating the Nature of the People, Their Qualities, Humours, Fashions, Religion, etc. (London, 1674), 1-17.

21 See Michael Griffin, “Offshore Irelands; or, Hy-Brazil Hybridized: Utopian Colonies and Anti-colonial Utopias, 1641-1760”, 135.


Improving Visions: The Dublin Societies and George Berkeley’s New World

Utopia

There shall be sung another golden age,
The rise of empire and of arts,
The good and great inspiring epic rage,
The wisest heads and noblest hearts.

George Berkeley, “On America” ¹

Whether, as others have supposed an Atlantis or Utopia, we also may not
suppose an Hyberborean island inhabited by reasonable creatures?

George Berkeley, ‘The Querist’ ²

Early Life and Intellectual Background
(1685-1713)

George Berkeley, in a clearly utopian mode, asks ‘whether, as others have supposed
an Atlantis or Utopia, we also may not suppose an Hyberborean island inhabited by
reasonable creatures?’ His question encapsulates the utopian trajectory of his work.
It was posed in The Querist (edited by Samuel Madden and first published in 1735),
in which Berkeley, in the role of an observer, asked a series of questions on the
paradoxes of Irish political, social and economic life.³ Commenting on Berkeley and
The Querist, Richard Warburton, one of the founders of the Dublin Society, said “it
is well worth attending to by the Irish nation. He is indeed a great man, and the only
visionary that I ever knew that was”.⁴ The Querist emerged from the same impulse
as Berkeley’s Proposal for a college to be located in the New World some ten years
earlier and his plan for “the City of Bermuda, Metropolis of the Summer Islands”.

54
It was an impulse predicated on a desire for a better life, the improvement of society, and social and economic well-being. Berkeley’s utopian impulse moves from his early efforts at improvement in Ireland to the New World, and comes to rest in *The Querist*, as he again aims to improve his own society back home.

Berkeley came to attribute all the ennobling characteristics of the earthly paradise as it had been traditionally imagined since Greco-Roman antiquity to his largest utopian projection, the Bermuda Project. His early intellectual life gives an insight into his latent and later utopianism: a utopianism manifest most notably in his participation in the early Dublin Societies. It is interesting to note how Berkeley’s practical philanthropy and politics co-exist with the philosophical dreams of More and Bacon, and with his own vision of an Ireland and the New World turned to utopia. Tracking Berkeley’s utopianism from Ireland to the New World and back again thus begins in the early years of his life.

Ireland’s most famous philosopher was born in (or near) the town of Kilkenny on March 12th, 1685. His early years were spent at Dysart Castle, overlooking the river Nore, two miles from Thomastown in Co. Kilkenny. His father was of English descent, from Staffordshire, although little is known of the early life of his parents. Berkeley saw himself as Irish, or what we would now call Anglo-Irish. In 1696 he was enrolled in the Duke of Ormond founded grammar school, Kilkenny College, then called the Eton of Ireland. It was formerly the school of Jonathan Swift and William Congreve (1670-1729). Berkeley’s entry is recorded in the Kilkenny School register: ‘George Berkley, Gent: Aged 11 years. Entered the Second Class, July 17: 1696’. In the same year, Thomas Prior also became a pupil of the college. Although Prior was some years Berkeley’s senior, a friendship developed between the two boys that was destined to last a lifetime. Berkeley
remained a pupil for four years; but here, too, we have little information, although we may assume that he showed early signs of ability since he was entered in the second class. We learn from Prior’s biographer Desmond Clarke that the boys were taught the “Classics, Hebrew, Poetry and Oratory”; discipline appears to have been very strict and school rules harshly enforced. Berkeley’s youthful promise is noted in one recorded incident from this period. During July 1699, he and some friends explored the nearby cave of Dunmore, and he later wrote a detailed account of the visit and read it in the chapel of Trinity College, Dublin on January 11th, 1705. In this essay, while describing the ‘formidable darkness that fills the hollows of this capacious cavern’ (Works, iv. 259), he refers to crystallization and petrifaction, and to the theories of René Descartes (1591-1650) and John Woodward (1645-1728). The cave of Dunmore has been described by many travellers, but Berkeley’s description seems to have been written earlier than any other. The essay can be read as an example of Berkeley’s latent utopianism. Herein, he draws on the memory of his visit six years earlier, giving a description of the drops of clear water, or as he puts it “the noise of these falling drops being made somewhat augmented by the echo of the cave, seem to make an agreeable harmony amidst so profound a silence” (Works, iv. 257-64).

Berkeley’s vivid description of the cave of Dunmore recalled from memory does not at first appear to evoke any element of utopianism. However, midway through the essay he imbibes the utopian, as he notes:

in short, here you may see whatever you can possibly imagine, whether men, beasts, fishes, fruits, or anything else. Now, though as much be confidently reported and believed of our cave, yet, to speak ingeniously ‘tis more than I could find to be true: but, on the contrary, am mightily tempted to think all that
curious imagery is chiefly owing to the strength of the imagination; for like as we see the clouds so far comply with the fancy of a child, as to represent to him trees, horses, men, or whatever else he’s pleased to think on, so t’is no difficult matter for men of a strong imagination to fancy the petrified water stamped with the impressions of their own Brain, when in reality it may as well be supposed to resemble one thing as another. (*Works*, iv. 264)

In referring to the strength of the imagination, the dreams or nightmares which foreshadow Berkeley’s interpretation and description of the subterranean world of the cave, a utopian spirit emerges. It comes to reside in the liminal and imaginative landscape, as the melancholy vault becomes the metaphorical space out of which the utopian or the dystopian may emerge.⁶

Berkeley’s utopianism emerged more fully as his academic life continued. At age fifteen, he was matriculated to Trinity College on March 21st, 1700. His official contact with the College lasted until 1724, when he was appointed Dean of Londonderry. It was between 1707 and 1713 that his connection with Trinity was at its closest and most productive. The title pages of his three most influential books, printed in 1709, 1710, 1713—describe him as ‘George Berkeley, M.A. Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin’. The Provost for nearly all this time was the celebrated Peter Browne, afterwards Bishop of Cork, the author of two works much talked of in their day: *The Procedure, Extent, and Limits of the Human Understanding*, 1728, and *Divine Analogy*, 1733. Berkeley took his B.A. in 1704. He then remained in the College and seems to have been a member of at least two College societies.

Berkeley’s minor mathematical works, *Arithmetica and Miscellanea Mathematica*, are from this period. The latter, published in Latin in 1707, includes
his *De Ludo Algebraico* which sets out his idea for an algebraic board game. Through these mathematical publications, Berkeley may have hoped to strengthen his chances of obtaining a College Fellowship. His opportunity came in 1706 when a vacancy arose. Berkeley, then, as Joseph Stock his early biographer records, "sustained with honour the very trying examination, which the candidates for that preferment are by statutes required to undergo" and was admitted to Fellowship on June 9th, 1707 (2).

During the years 1706 to 1709, Berkeley was working on his immaterialist philosophy, for which he is best known. He coined the term “subjective idealism” to emphasise his view that matter did not exist, for he regarded it as unknowable. It is arguable that his immaterialist philosophy provided the conceptual framework for the utopian character of his Bermuda project. We can see this work in two private notebooks, which have been preserved and are in the British Library. They were first published in 1871 by A.C. Fraser—who called them Berkeley's *Commonplace Book of Occasional Metaphysical Thoughts*. They have been re-edited about four times and are now generally called the *Philosophical Commentaries*. The two notebooks comprise nine hundred entries or notes, many in the form of questions or pithy sentences, sometimes of an enigmatic nature. The *Commentaries* range over nearly every topic of the three philosophical classics which Berkeley published between 1709 and 1713, although there is much in the *Commentaries* which Berkeley never published. The *Commentaries* allow us to see the influences on Berkeley's thinking. This is relevant in Berkeley's case since his three early works contain few references to the writings of other philosophers. However, it is evident from them that he was inspired by the work of John Locke (1632-1704) and Nicholas Malebranche (1638-1715). Locke's *Essay Concerning Human
Understanding (1690) had, as J.V. Luce has established, been put on the course at Trinity College very soon after its publication in 1690 (2). More than any other book, ‘the Philosopher’s Bible’ as it is sometimes called, assumed the role of authority in matters philosophical. As David Berman puts it, “without Locke’s Essay there would hardly have been a Berkeley, Brown, Hutcheson, or Burke; at least, they could not have been the philosophers we know them to be” (Berkeley and Irish Philosophy 80).

However, Berkeley’s philosophical horizon was not confined to contemporary writers of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. He was also responding to ancient writers, drawing inspiration from Plato, Aristotle, and other classic philosophers. While Locke and Malebranche seem to be influences on Berkeley’s thought, it is important to see his work in both an international and indigenous context. The international context would include the work of Plato (whom Berkeley is supposed to have called his favourite author), Aristotle and Isaac Newton (1642-1727). The indigenous context includes the local Irish influences on Berkeley’s thought: William Molyneux (1656-98), Robert Molesworth (1656-1725) and John Toland (1670-1722). This sixty-year period of creative Irish philosophy took place within the complex historical context of Ireland in its colonial phase.

Berkeley’s adjustment in his self-identification has been noted by Thomas Duddy: “while a student at Trinity College he referred to the Irish as ‘natives’, which indicates that he did not identify with them and did not see himself as Irish in any sense that might confuse him with his unreconstructed neighbours” (126). But a few years later, in his philosophical notebooks, Berkeley was using phrases like ‘we Irish’ and ‘we Irish men’. Duddy argues that Berkeley uses these phrases “as a way of emphatically dissociating himself from the ‘English’ philosophy of Locke” (126).
As Berkeley puts it, “there are men who say … the wall is not white, the fire is not hot etc. We Irish men cannot attain to these truths” (Works, i. 47). Denis Donoghue has suggested that by the phrase ‘We Irish’ Berkeley “meant only those upper-class Protestants who depended on social prestige and talent rather than on land and power, adding that these men—such as Molyneux, Swift, and Berkeley himself – were often provoked into sentiments that could be mistaken for those of modern nationalism” (17). The ‘mistake’ may, according to Duddy, have to do with “the fact that the sentiments in question are moral sentiments, and are duly expressed in the language of entitlement, rights, and justice” (128). Tellingly, however, Berkeley in making a case for his own class, as Donoghue argues, is implicitly making a case for all, including the Catholic peasantry.

After Berkeley received his coveted Fellowship, he published a short paper, ‘Of Infinities’, which he read in what appears to have been his philosophical debut to the Dublin Philosophical Society on November 19th, 1707. Two months later, on January 11th, 1708, he delivered a sermon (his first extant) in the College Chapel on the afterlife. In February 1709, he was made a deacon. In the following year he was ordained, although in somewhat peculiar circumstances. Berkeley was now established in his college career, as lecturer in Greek, Hebrew and Divinity. He was preparing for the publication of his first two major books, An Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision (Dublin, 1709) and A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge (Dublin, 1710). Neither book, and particularly not the Principles was well received. Berkeley’s friend Sir John Percival (1683-1748), wrote to him from London in August 1710:

…I did but name the subject matter of your book [the Principles] to some ingenious friends of mine and they immediately treated it with ridicule, at the
same time refusing to read it...A physician of my acquaintance undertook to
describe your person, and argued you must needs be mad, and that you ought
to take remedies. A Bishop pitied you that a desire and vanity of starting
something new should put you on such an undertaking. (qtd. in Rand
Correspondence 80)

Berkeley’s next work, Passive Obedience (Dublin, 1712), contains his primary
views on moral and political philosophy. His next project was a rewriting of his
immaterialist position. He believed that his Principles had been rejected partly
because of style and presentation, and so he recast the work in the Three Dialogues
between Hylas and Philonous (London, 1713). While the Three Dialogues are more
elegant and accessible, and can be almost read as pure literature, they must give way
to the Principles as the authoritative statement of his philosophy. The Principles, as
we have it, is only the first part of a work which was to include at least one and at
one time two other parts. Even in the second (1734) edition of the Principles, the
last authorised by Berkeley, ‘Part I’ is still displayed in the text. Concerning the
second part, Berkeley told a correspondent in 1729 that he had "made considerable
progress in it; but the manuscript was lost about fourteen years ago, during my
travels in Italy, and I have never had the leisure since to do so disagreeable a thing
as writing twice on the same subject" (Works, ii. 282).

Berkeleys’ career falls into three phases, each marked by a utopian cause or
motivation. In the first phase (1709-1713), he developed his immaterialist
philosophy, a philosophy which he hoped would reform philosophy and lead
humanity to a radically theistic or spiritualistic view of the world. This phase of
philosophical idealism began while he was still a student and concluded with the
publication of the Three Dialogues in 1713 when he was twenty-eight years old.
The second phase spans the years from 1713 to 1735, the year in which the first part of *The Querist* was published. The second phase, the middle period, which includes the timespan of his utopian Bermuda Project, sees Berkeley in among other places, London, Oxford, Paris, Turin, Naples, Rome, Florence, Newport, Rhode Island, Boston, London and Dublin. This is by far the most active period of his life, when he meets many of the leading figures of his day and arguably makes his most overtly utopian contribution. The third and final phase spans the years 1735 to 1753, his later middle and old age, when among other things as Bishop of Cloyne in East Cork, he promoted a medicine called tar-water which he believed would cure or alleviate all physical ailments, a phase of medical idealism.

**The Dublin Society and its Antecedents**

In many ways, Berkeley and his ideas epitomise the overall utopian idealist trend in eighteenth-century Irish philosophy. He was joined in this by others such as Thomas Molyneux and Thomas Prior during what David Berman calls Ireland’s “one golden age of philosophy” (*Berkeley and Irish Philosophy* 150). The context for this utopian trend emerges first in the late seventeenth century through the founding of two philosophical societies in Trinity College, Dublin. It was from this communal approach to the advancement of knowledge that the Dublin philosophical societies were launched between the years 1683 and 1707. The tradition was ‘philosophical’ in the broad sense of the term as it was understood at that time. The project took the form of meetings once a week for the communication and discussion of papers. This intellectual initiative was carried into the Royal Dublin Society, founded at a meeting in Trinity College on June 25th, 1731, and it had a later embodiment in the
Dublin University Philosophical Society formed again in 1853. This tradition stemmed from Francis Bacon (1561-1626) author of the utopian work *New Atlantis* (1627), which stated his grand design for re-calibrating science with utility as its main aim, evoking the ideal of the new union of science and Christianity.

The Baconian method called for the systematic collection of data by observation and experiment. The progress of knowledge was a co-operative enterprise in which a range of information could be gathered and discussed by like-minded people with a view to promoting humanity’s domination over Nature. Knowledge, in short, could be power. This institutional and intellectual process first began in England before taking root in Ireland. The Royal Society of London had its beginnings in the English Civil War, which engulfed much of Britain in the middle of the seventeenth century. In 1640, two years before the onset of Civil War, several individuals calling themselves “natural philosophers” began holding regular meetings in private homes and taverns. These meetings continued in an erratic fashion during the troubled civil war period, and often centred on Gresham College, to which many of them were connected. By 1658, life under Cromwell’s Commonwealth had compelled the natural philosophers to suspend their meetings. Events began to move swiftly in 1660, with the end of the Commonwealth and the restoration of the Stuart monarchs. Meetings resumed, a Society of Philosophers was founded, and in December 1660, they obtained the patronage of King Charles II. Among the first Fellows of the society were Christopher Wren, John Wallis, Robert Boyle and Robert Hooke.

The years immediately following 1660 were productive ones: the Society in London found formal accommodations at Gresham College, began a library, and in 1665 published its first volume of *Philosophical Transactions*. The Royal Society
itself had antecedents in an Oxford Society founded in 1651 and also in London’s Gresham College, which dated back to 1596. The founders of the Society were conscious of their debt to the early continental academies, those scientific societies in Europe which existed long before the foundation of the Royal Society. One of the earliest had been the Accademi dei Lincei established in Rome in 1601. Perhaps the most important and influential, however, was the Academia del Cimento, which flourished in Florence between 1657 and 1667. In France too there had been several scientific groups. From the first entry in the Journal Book of the Society, dated November 28th, 1660, it is clear that the debt to those early European scientific academies was acknowledged by Society members. It was hoped that some way be found to hold regular meetings in order to debate subjects similar to the manner in other countries, where there were voluntary associations of men in academies for the advancement of all aspects of learning.

Of course, despite these wider linkages the society advanced independently and obtained its second charter from Charles II in April 1663, when it first adopted the title of ‘The Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge’. The English society was unlike some of those on the continent, which were frequently subsidised by wealthy patrons, in that it was obliged to provide its own finance. The aims of the society, as expressed by Robert Hooke, were:

To improve the knowledge of natural things, and all useful arts, manufactures, mechanick practises, engines, and inventions by experiments (not meddling with divinity …). To examine all systems, theories, principles, hypotheses, elements, histories, and experiments…practised by any considerable authors
ancient or modern. In order to the compiling of a complete system of solid
philosophy for explicating all phenomena produced by nature or art. (qtd. in
Lyons 41)

In this development, we can see the spirit of the new science focused in a capital
city, and working along with a minority group in the university to produce an
important institutional advance. The pattern was to be the same in Ireland, but the
formal emergence of an organised Dublin Society was delayed upwards of twenty
years. The time-lag was hardly surprising. Ireland was much poorer and less well
organised than England and the country had suffered very severe disturbance during
the Cromwellian period. After the Restoration, though, Dublin began to experience
a period of rapid growth, with the city population trebling from about 20,000 to
60,000 during the reign of Charles II.

In 1683, Dublin-born William Molyneux became, in his own words, “the
first promoter” of the Dublin Philosophical Society. Its genesis however began
some years earlier. In 1678, Moses Pitt, a London bookseller, launched an ambitious
project for an English atlas which he hoped would match the great Dutch atlases of
Jannson and Blaeu. The project which was for a complete work of eleven volumes,
with all maps and written descriptions of all the countries then known, was
submitted to the Royal Society. The scheme was approved and a committee of
seven fellows, headed by Sir Christopher Wren, was appointed to supervise it. The
committee was later replaced by a board of directors of which Hooke was the most
active figure, and finally Hooke acted as sole supervisor. Molyneux became one of
the original subscribers – one of the few from Ireland – and in 1682 he undertook to
gather the Irish material for the atlas.
Molyneux wrote to John Flamsteed, the Astronomer Royal, whom he had already visited at Greenwich observatory. He asked for the longitude of London and other places, for as he puts it, quoted by his biographer J.G. Simms:

I must let my worthy friend understand that I am set upon writing the descriptive part of Ireland for the atlas and design to give it to Mr Pitt; for the maps I hope to procure those of Sir William’s Petty’s survey, but his charts want both longitudes and latitudes, which I intend to put to them before they be re-engraved. (34)

Pitt was presumably satisfied with Molyneux’s qualifications for the work. A list of sixteen queries was drawn up. They covered a wide variety of subjects: the soil and its products – animal, vegetable and mineral, rivers and lakes, population, towns, trade, history and any curiosities of art or nature or antiquity. The queries were printed up in a leaflet which was made available gratis at a Dublin bookseller’s and may have been sent to a selection of would-be contributors. The answers were to be sent to Molyneux’s house in Dublin, and it was stated that a group of gentlemen in Dublin would meet weekly to examine any material submitted by Molyneux. The meetings were held in Trinity College, and a leading part in them was taken by then provost, Narcissus Marsh, who was himself a subscriber to the English atlas. In May 1682, Marsh wrote to Archbishop Michael Boyle of Armagh who noted that, as quoted by Theodore Hoppen, “we are now (a club of us who meet every week in the college) upon the design of giving an account of Ireland to be printed in the new atlas” (21). Among those whom Molyneux approached for information were his brother-in-law, Sir William Domville, who gave him a description of the Queen’s County (Laois), and his cousin, Nicholas Dowdall, who gave an account of
Longford. Molyneux did not confine his inquiries to his own Protestant community but sought out representatives of the other Irish tradition. One of his correspondents was Roderic O’Flaherty (1629-1718) who had studied both classical and bardic learning and whose family estate in County Galway had been confiscated after Cromwell’s victory. O’Flaherty produced a substantial account of West Connacht, which many years later was published under the title *A Chorographical Description of West or h-Iar Connaught, Written A.D. 1684*. In this work, O’Flaherty writes with enthusiasm of his native region, praising its climate and its wealth of natural resources. As I have pointed out in my introductory chapter O’Flaherty also provides a link to the narrative of Morough Ley’s supposed voyage to Hy-Brazil.

Molyneux drew on accounts gathered from all his correspondents to draft the description of Ireland for the atlas. However, his labour was in vain, as the *English atlas* was brought to a sudden halt after the publication of four volumes covering the northern part of continental Europe. Moses Pitt was arrested for debt in London and the scheme collapsed, with only four of the eleven projected volumes having been published. At this juncture Molyneux burned all that he had written. However, he kept the correspondence which he had received, hoping that some day the projected atlas would be continued. Molyneux’s correspondence with O’Flaherty and his descriptions of West Connacht led to a lasting friendship and to the development in Molyneux of an interest in early Irish history. Molyneux was later to assist in getting O’Flaherty’s magnum opus *Ogygia* printed. As Molyneux wrote to his brother:

I have in my hands and do suddenly intend to send them over the first part of the *Ogygia*. I think, indeed, ’tis not contemptible, and that is enough to be said
of anything relating to the profound antiquities of country, concerning which little has yet been said that would not raise scorn in a reader. (qtd. in Simms 37)

Molyneux, as a student of law in London after he left Trinity in 1675, mentions how already as an undergraduate in Trinity College he had spent most of his time reading the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society, and the works of Descartes, Bacon, and Gassendi. It is therefore hardly surprising that as a young Baconian he would engage in the atlas project with his enthusiasm for natural philosophy. After the ending of the project Molyneux wrote:

In the October of 1683 I began to busy myself in forming a society in this city, agreeable to the design of the Royal Society in London. I should not be so vain as to arrogate this to myself, were there not many of the gentlemen at present [1694] listed in that society, who can testify for me, that I was the first promoter of it, and can witness how diligent I was therein. The first I applied to…was…Dr St George Ashe, who presently approved of the undertaking, and assisted heartily in the first efforts we made in the work. I first brought together about half a dozen, that met weekly in a private room in a coffee-house,…merely to discourse of philosophy, mathematicks, and other polite literature, as things arose *obiter*, without any settled rules or forms. But our company increasing, we were invited by the Rev. Dr. Huntington, then Provost of the College, to meet in his lodgings; and there we began to form ourselves in January 1684, and took on us the name of the Dublin Society.7

Thus, it was while working on collecting material for the atlas that Molyneux began to focus on forming a society in Dublin similar to that of the Royal Society in
London. It seems highly probable that the general work on the atlas, and in particular the weekly meetings to consider progress, suggested to him that this would be a suitable opportunity to establish such a society. He was encouraged by a cordial letter from Dr. Plot, secretary of both the Royal Society and the Oxford Society, assuring him that both societies would welcome the establishment of a similar society in Dublin. Molyneux referred to his new society as a Conventio Philosophica, that is, a Philosophical Assembly, using ‘philosophical’ to cover the pursuit of knowledge in general; but the assembly soon began to place special emphasis on the new science that it was primarily designed to further. The Society engaged in correspondence, particularly with the Royal Society of London. In January 1684, it was recommended that the group be officially known as ‘The Dublin Society for the Improving of Naturall Knowledge, Mathematicks and Mechanicks’. The work of the Society went busily ahead, with no less than 159 papers produced in its first period from 1684-1687. Considerable attention was devoted to medical topics, and a wide range of scientific problems was investigated. On the technological side, papers were read on topics such as land transport, navigation, and ballistics.

The range of the Society’s interests may be judged from the following examples. In January 1686, George Ashe gave an account of a new solid fuel he had invented, one consisting of a mixture of clay and coal dust. A paper by Narcissus Marsh on acoustics was notable for its coinage of the term ‘microphone’, which here appears for the first time in scientific literature. In May 1684, a long discussion took place on problems connected with ‘keeping a diary of the weather’. Molyneux studied the tides in Dublin Bay, and was in correspondence with the Astronomer Royal in England about the times of high water. We have a vivid description by
Molyneux of his ‘fleet of ships in little models of about one and a half to two feet long, of all kinds, more than the King of France’. Surveying the operations of the Society, it is probable that, as Irvin Ehrenpreis puts it, “we shall discover a remarkable range of subjects foreshadowing episodes or images in Swift’s writing: astronomical researches which anticipate Laputa …a toy fleet like the one Gulliver would steal from Blefuscu”(79). As Gulliver in Blefuscu says:

The Blefuscudians, who had not the least Imagination of what I intended, were at first confounded with Astonishment. They had seen me cut the Cables, and thought my Design was only to let the Ships run adrift, or fall foul on each other: but when they perceived the whole Fleet moving in Order, and saw me pulling at the End, they set up such a scream of Grief and Despair, that it is almost impossible to describe or conceive. (51)

Gulliver returns with the fleet to Lilliput and after three weeks ambassadors from Blefuscu arrive in Lilliput to sue for peace.

All of this brisk and varied activity was interrupted in April 1687, the month of James II’s Declaration of Indulgence (or the Declaration for the Liberty of Conscience). It was comprised of two proclamations issued by James II, granting broad religious freedom in England and suspending penal laws enforcing conformity to the Church of England. It allowed persons to worship in their own homes or chapels. The Declaration was greatly opposed by Anglicans in England and their Episcopalian counterparts in Scotland because it did not appear to guarantee that the Anglican church would remain the established church. The Indulgences were voided when James II was deposed in the Revolution of 1688.
The rising tension that followed the Declaration put an end to further meetings, and the Society went into abeyance during the events that culminated in the Battle of the Boyne in July 1690. However, when peace was restored, the Society was revived, with its second lease of life commencing in a meeting on April 26th, 1693. The Society had become well known and respected in Dublin and managed to attract two archbishops, five bishops, a dean, the Provost of Trinity College, and five fellows of that institution, as well as three peers, the son of an earl, a baronet, four knights, seven physicians, and three judges. Forty-nine persons had joined by the end of 1693. Also on the roll of members was Bartholemew Van Homrigh, Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1697, and father of an even more famous daughter, Swift’s ‘Vanessa’. As Hoppen states “his membership is perhaps evidence of a growing interest in the Society’s affairs among Dublin’s mercantile class” (176). The Society was soon writing to renew its links with the Royal Society, and making ambitious plans for compiling a natural history of Ireland. Nineteen papers survive from this second phase, four of them dealing with the Giant’s Causeway. The Society was still functioning in April 1697, four years after its revival, but its regular meetings seem to have lapsed by the summer of that year.

The third Dublin Society, or the third phase of the Dublin Society’s activity, was closely connected with the enterprising Trinity undergraduate, Samuel Molyneux (1689-1728) son of William, who entered the College in 1705. He was a close friend of George Berkeley, who gave him private tuition, and later corresponded with him on philosophical matters. Berkeley’s early Miscellanea Mathematica (1707) is dedicated to him. Molyneux decided to revive the Society his father had founded. Some of the papers contributed show the practical interests of the Society. Thomas Molyneux wrote on coal mining in Ireland, and Berkeley
contributed two papers. The third Dublin Society lasted less than a year. Meetings had ceased by August 1708, and in the following year Samuel Molyneux left Ireland for good. We know that Berkeley was involved in the operation of two philosophical societies in Trinity in the year before the revival of the Dublin Society in 1706. Largely, members met each week to discuss some part of the new Philosophy; at this time Berkeley’s philosophical preoccupations would have covered Descartes and Locke.

Through the Dublin Philosophical Societies, a framework was built which forms part of the pre-history of the RDS. This led to the emergence of an important link between the interest in science and improvement on the one hand, and Irish independence on the other. In this linkage we can locate the basis for the general utopian vision of eighteenth-century Ireland. In the year of his death, 1698, William Molyneux published a book that caused a stir: it was called, *The Case of Ireland’s Being Bound by Acts of Parliament in England, Stated*. Grounding his thesis in natural justice, Molyneux made a strong case for the complete independence of an Irish parliament. He was familiar with the damage inflicted on the Irish economy in general, and on the wool trade in particular, by British legislation. In effect, Molyneux raised the banner of Home Rule, and was the first to do so.

On June 25th, 1731, fourteen men met in the rooms of the Philosophical Society in Trinity College and unanimously agreed to form a Society, to be called the ‘Dublin Society for Improving Husbandry, Manufactures and other Useful Arts’; the word ‘Sciences’ was added to the title at a subsequent meeting in July 1731. The fourteen men present were Judge Ward, Sir Thomas Molyneux, Thomas Upton, Dr. Stephens (who chaired the first meeting), John Pratt, Richard Warburton, Rev.
Dr. Whitecomb, Arthur Dobbs, Dr. Magnaten, Dr. John Madden, Dr. Lehunte, Mr. Walton, Thomas Prior and William Maple. The second meeting of the founders was held a week later under the chairmanship of Thomas Prior who was requested to draw up the rules for the regulation of the Society. The founders of the Society were of Anglo-Irish stock, second and third generation Irish born. The gathering of the founding members had a strong Trinity flavour. Of the fourteen names, nine (and possibly ten) were TCD graduates, and two, Rev. John Madden and John Whitcomb, were Fellows. Judge Michael Ward, a member of the Irish Parliament for County Down, was one of the group of parliamentarians whom Primate Boulter described as being “on the Irish side” (qtd. in Meehan and Clark 1).

Sir Thomas Molyneux, a brother of William, was a professor of physics, a scientist, a Fellow of the Royal Society and a friend of Boyle, Newton, Dryden, Evelyn, and Locke. Arthur Dobbs while a member of the Irish Parliament was successful in carrying through an Act for planting trees and enclosing waste land. He advocated an improved system of land tenure and favoured a relaxation of the penal laws against Catholics and Dissenters. Later in his life, Dobbs was active in promoting the search for the Northwest Passage, and in 1764 was appointed Governor of North Carolina, where he died in 1765. William Stephens was a physicist and physician attached to the Royal Hospital in Kilmainham as well as Mercer’s and Steevens’ hospitals and was the author of a number of botanical books. Lehunte was also a doctor with some large estates in Wexford and was recognised for his charitable and philanthropic enterprises. He was also a Member of Parliament. A fourth member of the Irish Parliament was Richard Warburton, a landowner, noted for his interest in tree planting and land improvement. Pratt, Walton and Upton were also large landowners, and Thomas Upton was a Member
of Parliament. Alexander Magnatan (or MacNaghten) was a well-known Dublin physician who gave a considerable amount of his time and fortune to alleviating distress among the impoverished of the city.

Two clergymen of the Established Church were among the founders: Rev. John Madden (brother of Samuel Madden), Vicar of St Ann’s and later Dean of Kilmore and John Whitecombe (or Whetcomb) a Fellow of Trinity College, Bishop of Clonfert, then of Down and Connor and later still Archbishop of Cashel. The two most dedicated founders of the Society were Thomas Prior and William Maple. Prior is generally recognised as the prime mover in the Society and was its most active promoter. Prior was a lawyer, landowner and friend of Berkeley, Swift and Lord Chesterfield. He was active in the founding of the Lying-in Hospital, and was a founder member of the Physico-Historical Society. His writing included *A List of Absentees of Ireland...with Observations on the Present Trade and Conditions of That Kingdom* which was published in 1729. It was widely criticised and considered subversive in its content. Prior was critical of the absentee landlords, not only publishing their names and incomes but demanding a tax on all incomes moved abroad. (See p. 4)

Maple, after Prior, was the most tireless supporter of the Dublin Society: he acted as Registrar from its foundation until his death in 1762. By September 1731 a committee consisting of Prior, Whitecomb, Pratt, Stephens and Dobbs had drawn up a plan of projects, distributed throughout the country. It is evident from the earliest records of the Society that its main priority was to increase the amount of land under tillage by reclaiming boggy and marsh ground, and to encourage the planting of trees for forest as well as hops and fruit production. On December 18th, 1731, the ‘Rules for the Regulation of the Dublin Society’ were adopted to enable the Society to carry out its aims and objectives. The rules provided for the election of new
members after the first hundred people had subscribed to the objectives of the Society and made provision also for the election of a president, vice-president, two secretaries, a treasurer, curator and registrar, as well as a standing Committee of twenty-one members.

By the end of the second year of the Society’s existence, progress had been made on furthering the aims of the Society. A number of papers on drainage, the cultivation of hops, the improvement of flax growing, direction for planting and growing clover, rye grass, manuring, the cultivation of broccoli, saffron and a dissertation on dyeing were written into the minute books. In order to provide a practical approach to the subject of planting, improving the quality of soil and carrying out experiments a plot of land was leased in the neighbourhood of Ballybough. The dissemination of information to the public was improved in December 1736 when it was decided to publish a paper each week in the Dublin Newsletter on some aspect of husbandry or other useful arts. It soon became known as the Dublin Society’s “weekly observations”. In the first few months of its existence it was agreed that Jethro Tull’s (1674-1741) work, Horse-Hoeing Husbandry, should be printed for use in Ireland. Tull’s work had had a major effect on English agriculture by introducing a hoe which drilled the seed in rows. With its compelling combination of theory and practice it was the first in its field to advocate a mechanical alternative to traditional methods of tillage. The first Dublin printing appeared as a ‘specimen’ or summary version under the title, The New Horse-Houghing Husbandry in 1731. Aaron Rhames, who was appointed first printer to the Society, printed the work, and two thousand copies of it were distributed throughout the country. The Society continued its keen interest in matters relating to agriculture. A New Method of Draining Marshy and Boggy Lands was the first paper read and discussed at a meeting of the Dublin Society in September 1731.
Over the years, Prior and his associates of the Dublin Society also aimed to encourage the industrial life of the country, as well as modern methods in agriculture. This tendency was powerfully advanced with the publication of Berkeley’s *The Querist*. Prior and Berkeley were but two of many public-spirited individuals who looked to the Dublin Society for help and guidance in the economic rehabilitation of the country. Commenting on this A. A. Luce, in *The Life of George Berkeley*, writes: “He and Prior and Madden, and later Chesterfield had wide and lofty aims; they fostered the fine arts, as well as the useful arts and crafts; they encouraged agriculture and manufacture in many branches...they encouraged the palpable spirit of invention and improvement” (qtd. in Clarke 32-33). Although the Society had attained a measure of importance and was exerting an influence on public opinion, its work was hampered by a lack of funds. It was at this stage that Dr Samuel Madden, a Church of Ireland clergyman, landowner and author of the 1733 utopian work *Memoirs of the Twentieth Century*, became the first patron of the Society. Some years earlier Madden had started a scheme of premiums for students at Trinity College. In 1738 he published his *Reflections and Resolutions Proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland*, a work which mirrored many of the aims and objectives of the Dublin Society. He was aware of its work and was a member by 1733. Prior describes him “as worthy and as useful a member of his country as I know in it” (qtd. in Meehan and Clarke 6). He was aware of the financial situation of the Society when he wrote his ‘Letter to the Dublin Society on the Improving of their Fund’ which was published anonymously in 1739. To augment the funds of the Society, Madden suggested an appeal should be made to wealthy men and if a sum of £500 could be raised or guaranteed he would personally contribute an annuity of £130. He also suggested the Society should establish an experimental garden, encourage new manufactures and aim to procure a royal charter.
In making his offer of an annual annuity of £130, Madden suggested that when the necessary monies had been raised or guaranteed, the fund should be allocated in premiums as follows: £30 for practical experiments in agriculture and gardening, £50 for the best invention in any of the liberal or manual arts, £25 for the best picture and £25 for the best statue produced in Ireland. He also suggested that he would use his influence to raise more funds and was able to report in 1740 that subscriptions received by him for promoting arts and manufactures amounted to almost £900 per annum. With such a sum of money available to it, the Dublin Society in 1740 published an advertisement promoting the fact that a system of awarding premiums was being initiated “to promote such useful arts and manufactures as have not hitherto been introduced, or have not yet been brought to perfection in this kingdom” and “they intend to encourage by premiums, annual contributions, or other methods, any persons who are well skilled in such arts and manufactures, and will carry them on in the best and most skilful manner” (qtd. in Meehan and Clarke 7). In order to achieve this, the Society requested that “gentlemen and others who are conversant with husbandry, trade, or manufactures, and wish well of their country, will favour them with their company and advice, that they may be better enable to judge what improvements are proper to be encouraged, what encouragements are convenient and in what manner they may best be applied for the benefit of the country” (qtd. in Meehan and Clarke 7).

A special committee was appointed to attend at the Parliament House every Thursday to meet with those willing to give their ideas and to offer suggestions as to where the premiums may be best distributed. The first premiums were adjudged in January 1741 when a number of claimants presented their entries, these included: artificial leather, spinning cotton, twilled stockings, earthenware, stonework,
sculptures, engines for scutching flax and a surveying instrument. By 1745 premiums were awarded for a wide variety of agricultural and manufacturing ventures as well as paintings and sculptures. In the area of manufactures, encouragement was given to brewing, linen, lace and paper-making. With regard to agriculture, premiums were offered for a wide variety of projects especially for afforestation, tillage and land reclamation. The success of the premiums can be seen from the fact that the list of premiums offered in 1746 occupies four or five written pages but by 1766 the list takes up twenty-six pages in the minute book and covers a variety of projects including land and mountain reclamation, afforestation, cereal and crop production, bee-keeping, fisheries, livestock breeding, the manufacture of iron, steel, wool combs, stockings, gloves, bone lace, felt hats, wheel carriages and draining land. In all, more than £3,000 had been offered in premiums, a substantial increase from that initially suggested by Madden. In 1790, the Irish Parliament made an annual grant of £5,000 to the Society, £300 of which was to be used for the provision and maintenance of a botanic garden. This allowed the Society to fulfil its aim to unite science with agriculture and husbandry and to promote education in science in the founding the Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin in Dublin.

A strong utopian precedent and tradition was therefore built up through these early Dublin Philosophical Societies, both inside and outside the walls of Trinity College. As J.V. Luce argues, a key feature of these early philosophical societies is not simply their formal organisation but their motivation. As he puts it:

I refer to the growing concept of Ireland as a historic nation quite distinct from England, though owing allegiance to the British Crown. Such a nation, it was felt, was entitled to its own autonomous Parliament through which its leading citizens would be able to protect and further its interests. (5)

I would argue this motivation forms the intellectual background to what was to
evolve into Berkeley’s Bermuda Project, providing him with the possibility of realising an autonomous region in Bermuda, distinct from if not wholly independent of the British Crown. The early Dublin Philosophical Societies and the Dublin (subsequently Royal Dublin) Society and later the Royal Irish Academy clearly represent, a utopian propensity, in late seventeenth and early eighteenth century Ireland. The societies offered an emergent space, a forum in which innovative ideas and speculations could be discussed and implemented. Through it all was a concern for the improvement of Irish society. This did not occur in isolation but was part of a wider trend that existed in continuous relation to the entire society. The members of these societies were aware of contemporary work in science, aware of what was happening in the Royal Society in England, and engaged with current thinking.

The palpable spirit of invention and improvement, while cognisant of international trends and writings, was, I believe, an indigenous Irish utopian trend. It had at its core, the remit of improvement, of bettering society, of experimentation, of advance. The Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski (1927-2009) writing of the range of the word utopia, notes how a word that:

Emerged as an artificially concocted proper name has acquired, in the last two centuries, a sense so extended that it refers not only to a literary genre but to a way of thinking, to a mentality, to a philosophical attitude, and is being employed in depicting cultural phenomena going back into antiquity. (131)

Kolakowski, in noting the extension in the range of meanings of utopia, has captured the essence of what the early societies, culminating in the founding of the Dublin Society, comprised: a way of thinking, a mentality, a philosophical attitude which coalesced around practical and visionary patriotism, liberalism, nationalism, aiming for the ultimate transformation of everyday life. At a distance of over two centuries, we can view this new direction as a utopian propensity presented by those
who may never have thought of themselves as utopists. The early Societies and the Dublin Society epitomise Raymond Williams’s notion of a “structure of feeling” which comes to characterise the lived experience or the quality of life of a particular time and place. Williams chooses the term ‘feeling’ to emphasise, as he puts it, “a distinction from more formal concepts of ‘world-view’ or ‘ideology’” (132). ‘Structure’ relates to elements of consciousness and relationships, in a living, ongoing and interconnected continuity, elements which can be viewed as a ‘structure’: “as a set, with specific internal relations, at once interlocking and in tension” (132). A “structure of feeling” as the lived culture of a particular historical moment thus suggests a common set of perceptions and values shared by a particular generation.

The utopianism of the Dublin Societies, and the generation of people surrounding them, can be seen as an emergent “structure of feeling” as these intellectual Societies were committed to notions of improvement, with important links to a wide intellectual stratum flourishing in Britain and Europe. It was a patriotic structure of feeling, emerging in the Swiftian culture of Dublin in the 1720s and 1730s. In subsequent years, as Griffin puts it, “Swift’s savage indignation gave way, ultimately, to a more romantic form of patriotism: more credulous perhaps, but with a unifying potential reflecting the general will of an emerging public sphere” (Enemies of Empire 131). This patriotic structure of feeling coalesced around the emerging public sphere and, by the later century, included an Irish republicanism which was influenced by France, America and England juxtaposed with aspects of Gaelic culture. The utopian radicalism of the Society of United Irishmen’s Northern Star newspaper, launched on Monday, January 2nd, 1792, with its many references to James Harrington’s republican utopia The Commonwealth of Oceana (1656) as a paradigm, is an example of that confluence.
of the national and the international. However, in advance of such late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century utopian radicalism, Berkeley, Prior and Percival sought to galvanise a sense of identity and nationhood or as Hone and Rossi put it:

Berkeley indeed seems to have conceived himself and his young friends as the leaders of a nation about to be reconstructed. This nation would have its philosopher in the author of the *New Principle* (Berkeley), its economist in Prior, its arbiter of taste and manners in Sir John Percival. (30)

Of course, the nation to be reconstructed had to be forged out of the context of colonialism, and the emerging utopianism of Berkeley and others can only be understood in its eighteenth century colonial context.

**The Bermuda Project**

(1722-1731)

After Berkeley left Ireland in early 1713, he arrived in London and soon became acquainted with the literary elite: meeting Irish-born Richard Steele (1672-1729), the editor of *Tatler*; Joseph Addison (1672-1719) co-founder with Steele of *The Spectator* (1711-1712); Alexander Pope (1688-1744); and John Arbuthnot (1667-1735). Berkeley’s introduction to these men was through his writings; although he may have been introduced to others by Swift, with whom he had become friendly in Ireland. The two men had a great deal in common: they attended the same school and university; they were both Anglican clergymen and writers. Swift, who was then at the height of his political powers, gave Berkeley more substantial assistance. In his ‘Journal to Stella’ on April 12th, 1713, Swift writes:

I went to Court to-day on purpose to present Mr. Berkeley, one of your Fellows of Dublin College to Lord Berkeley of Stratton. That Mr Berkeley is a
very ingenious man, and a great philosopher, and I have mentioned him to all
the ministers, and have given them some of his writings; and I will favour him
as much as I can. (Works iii. 147) 

In calling Berkeley a ‘great philosopher,’ Swift had in mind a moral quality, the
love of wisdom raising Berkeley above the dross of self-seeking humanity.
Berkeley came to London partly with the intention of publishing his Three
Dialogues, which he did in May 1713, by which time he was involved in another
literary enterprise. Following the demise of Tatler, Steele had started a new
periodical, The Guardian, for which he enlisted Berkeley’s assistance. Steele was,
like Swift, a most important shaper of public opinion in England. In the first
collected edition, published in 1714, Steele states that "Mr. Berkeley of Trinity
College in Dublin has embellished [the work] with many excellent arguments in
honour of religion and virtue” (Works vii. 173).

Berkeley discussed many topics in his Guardian essays, among them the
afterlife, education, and religion, including the Christian idea of God. By all
accounts he was the third biggest contributor, Steele and Addison being the first and
second. In October 1713, he left for Sicily as chaplain to Lord Peterborough. His
appointment had been brought about by Swift and it lasted about ten months. This
developed Berkeley’s taste for travel. After a few months in France, where he may
have met Malebranche, he travelled to Italy. He returned from the Continent to
London in late 1714, during uncertain times. The death of Queen Anne had plunged
Britain into political turmoil, and it was not clear if an attempt would be made to
bring back the exiled Stuart Pretender, or whether the Act of Succession would be
maintained. The Tory leader, Henry St John (1678-1751), with whom Berkeley was
acquainted, was conspiring with the Stuarts. However, at this stage Berkeley had
little or no sympathy for the Jacobites, issuing a vigorous pamphlet, Advice to the
Tories who have taken the Oath (London, 1715), in which he called upon the Tories to honour the Oath of Allegiance to King George I.

In 1716, Berkeley hoped to receive preferment for a position in St Paul’s Church on North King Street in Dublin, a preferment he did not, in the end, get. He then left on his second Continental tour. He went as a tutor to St. George Ashe. This tour was more extensive than the first and lasted four years, during which time he gained a wide appreciation of the arts, particularly architecture, an interest which would show itself in his plan for the city of Bermuda and in, among other things, the house he would have built on Rhode Island. Was it a coincidence that Berkeley chose to call his projected college “St. Paul’s” to replicate the loss of the Irish St. Paul’s with the far more ambitious St Paul’s Bermuda? (See p. 83) By 1724 he had obtained the Deanery of Derry, but by then he had turned his life towards Bermuda.

In 1721, Berkeley published An Essay Towards Preventing the Ruine of Great Britain, a tract on the moral, social, and religious corruption of Britain. Berkeley attacks the free-thinkers, and the tone of his essay was explained by the "miseries the nation was plunged into by the fatal South Sea scheme in 1720" (Stock 11). He was depressed as a result of the social corruption brought to light after this failure of the South Sea Company in its gigantic speculations connected with British trade in South America. Englishmen had just come through a roller-coaster journey of speculation known as the South Sea Bubble, and its bursting left both reputations and fortunes depleted. This gigantic fraud was accompanied by many lesser ones. As the financial crash also left England with social instability as private gain ranked ahead of public good and was a symptom of larger social discontent, Berkeley noted:

We have long been preparing for some great catastrophe. Vice and villainy have by degrees grown reputable among us; our infidels have passed for fine gentlemen, and our venal traitors for men of sense, who knew the world. We
have made a jest of public spirit, and cancelled all respect for whatever our laws and religion repute sacred. The old English modesty is quite worn off, and instead of blushing for our crimes we are ashamed only of piety and virtue. In short, other nations have been wicked, but we are the first who have been wicked upon principle. (Works, vi. 84)

As Hone and Rossi observe, “it became a fashion in London to descant upon the corruption of Europe: polite society professed to desire nothing better than to escape from its complex frivolities to the virtues of the simple life” (131-132). As a counterpoint to this, Alexander Fraser avers, “America filled the imagination of one to whose vision was disclosed a spiritually prosperous future for mankind amidst new surroundings” (343). As an alternative site for this new direction in society, Bermuda offered the best option for Berkeley’s proposed college, and at this juncture it was favoured by an interesting stroke of fortune. ‘Mrs Hester van Omry’, he writes to Percival on June 4th, 1723,

    a lady to whom I was a perfect stranger, having never in the whole course of my life to my knowledge, exchanged one single word with her, died on Sunday night. Yesterday her will was opened, by which it appears that I am constituted executor the advantages whereof is computed by those who understand her affairs to be worth three thousand pounds, and if a suit she had depending be carried, it will be considerably more. (Correspondence 207-208)

The will, which had originally been in favour of Swift, had been altered on May 1st, 1723, and in it she divided her property between Berkeley and Robert Marshall of Clonmel. John Percival congratulated Berkeley on his good fortune in a letter dated June 30th, 1723, but cautioned him to secure the protection and encouragement of the government in funding his Bermuda project. In addition to the legacy which he
calls a “providential event,” Berkeley’s career prospects improved (Correspondence 208).

Having returned to Ireland in 1721, Berkeley had sought the position of Dean of Dromore, with the right of appointment claimed by Dr. Lambert, the Bishop of Dromore. The result was a prolonged legal case in which he was unsuccessful. Rumours of a probable vacancy in the Deanery of Derry seemed to offer a more favourable chance of success than that of Dromore. After three years, he secured the Deanery, “the best Deanery in this kingdom”, Percival exulted, “said to be worth £1,500 p.a.” (Correspondence 217). The legacy and the Deanery alike could have provided the philosopher-dean with the basis for a future that was orderly, rational, cultivated and calm. Yet, they were clearly not seen as a means of enriching himself. At this point in the history of the world, and in the decline of Great Britain, a quiet deanery represented for him not so much an anchorage as a port of embarkation. For Berkeley, a royal charter and private subscriptions remained to be secured to facilitate and promote his Bermuda Project.

The actual utopian moment of travel started when he set out for London in September, 1724. He was undoubtedly emboldened by a letter of commendation dated September 3rd, 1724, which Swift, then in Dublin, had written to Lord Carteret (1690-1763) who had been appointed to succeed the Duke of Grafton as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Berkeley’s first biographer, Stock, includes this letter in his Works of George Berkeley. As he puts it, the letter “deserves a place here, both because it contains a number of particulars of our Author’s life, and is besides a proof, as well of the friendly temper of the writer, as of his politeness and address” (68-69). As Stock observes, the letter gives an account of Berkeley’s life while illuminating Swift’s willingness to garner support for him. However, it also reveals the utopian aspect of Berkeley’s proposed project.
In the first paragraph, Swift gives a concise summary of Berkeley’s life, his philosophy, his positive influence on others, such as Dr. George Smalridge (1663-1719) of Lichfield, (a contemporary of Joseph Addison and a well-known figure in London in Queen Anne’s day). He then describes Berkeley’s travels through Europe and his success in becoming Dean of Derry:

There is a gentleman of this kingdom just gone for England. It is Dr. George Berkeley, Dean of Derry, the best preferment among us, being worth £1,000 a year. He was a Fellow of the University here; and going to England very young, about thirteen years ago, he became the founder of a sect called the *Immaterialist*, by the force of a very curious book upon that subject. Dr. Smalridge and many other eminent persons were his proselytes. Dr. Berkeley spent above seven years in travelling over most parts of Europe, but chiefly through every corner of Italy, Sicily, and other islands. When he came back to England he found so many friends that he was effectually recommended to the Duke of Grafton, by whom he was lately made Dean of Derry. (*Works*, iv 344-345)

In the second paragraph of the letter, Swift refers to Berkeley’s Bermuda project: “I am now to mention his errand. He is an absolute philosopher with regard to money, titles, and power; and for three years past has been struck with a notion of founding a University at Bermudas, by a Charter from the Crown”. Swift continues: “He shewed me a little tract, which he designs to publish; and there your Excellency will see his whole scheme of life academico-philosophical, of a College founded for Indian scholars and missionaries”. Swift asserts that he had attempted to dissuade Berkeley from his scheme: “I discouraged him by the coldness of Courts and ministers, who will interpret all this as impossible and a vision”, he then asks Lord
Carteret:

either to use such persuasions as will keep one of the first men in the Kingdom
for learning and virtue quiet at home, or assist him by your credit to compass
his romantic design; which, however, is very noble and generous, and directly
proper for a great person of your excellent education to encourage. (Works, iv
344-345)

Tellingly, Swift, while supporting Berkeley as an eminent person, does not overtly
support or dismiss his ‘romantic design’. He is aware that it may appear quixotic,
impossible, a vision, the typical range of negative responses to a utopian scheme.
The ‘scheme of life academio-philosophical’ is presented by Swift as Berkeley’s
singular (utopian) vision. He therefore provides a letter of commendation for
Berkeley whilst withholding his own thoughts on the Bermuda Project.

For several reasons, Berkeley seems to have lost hope in the Old World and
was looking towards America. And so, his reflections on the corrupted state of
society in the old world as evidenced by the South Sea Bubble had caused him to
turn with eagerness to the more unsullied condition of men and affairs which he
believed to exist across the seas. It was in the early months of 1722 that he
formulated his plan for a missionary and arts college in Bermuda, a plan which was
to fill his life for the next ten years. We first learn of the project from his letter to
John Percival of March 4th, 1723, which reads:

It is now about ten months since I have determined with myself to spend the
residue of my days in the island of Bermuda; where I trust in Providence I
may be the mean instrument of great good to mankind. Your Lordship is not to
be told that the reformation of manners among the English in our Western
Plantations, and the propagation of the gospel among the American savages,
are two points of high moment. The natural way of doing this is by founding a
College or Seminary in some convenient part of the West Indies, where the English youth of our Plantations may be educated in such sort as to supply the churches with pastors of good morals and good learning – a thing (God knows) much wanted. (Correspondence 203-204)

And so, this letter, which predates Swift’s to Lord Carteret by six months, contains the kernel of Berkeley’s utopian vision. Firstly, he notes that it is about ten months since he had decided to spend the remainder of his days in Bermuda. He identifies his desire to be ‘the mean instrument of great good to mankind’. He acknowledges that Percival will already be aware that the propagation of the gospel among the American ‘savages’ and the reformation of behaviours among the English in the New World are points of concern. Through his proposed founding of a college or seminary, society would be improved, as English youth would be educated in morals and religious affairs to supply the churches with pastors. In addition:

In the same Seminary a number of young American savages may be also educated till they have taken the degree of Master of Arts. And being by that time well instructed in the Christian religion, practical mathematics, and other liberal arts and sciences, and early imbued with public-spirited principles and inclinations, they may become the fittest instruments for spreading religion, morality, and civil life among their countrymen, who can entertain no suspicion or jealousy of men of their own blood and language, as they might do of English missionaries, who can never be so well qualified for that work. Some attempts have been made towards a college in the West, but to little purpose, chiefly I conceive for want of a proper situation wherein to place such college or Seminary, as also for want of a sufficient number of able men well qualified with divine and human learning, as well as with zeal to prosecute such an undertaking. As to the first, I do think the small group of
Bermuda Islands the fittest spot for a college on the following accounts.

(Correspondence 204)

Furthermore, in the seminary, American natives could be instructed in the Christian religion, in the liberal arts and sciences and then could spread their learning among their own people. Berkeley lays out his vision and names the proposed location for the implementation of it. He highlights his need for support and for men of zeal to be part of the undertaking. His vision moves from the personal to the pragmatic. His utopia is based on the remote geography of Bermuda but needs the beneficence of others to become real.

In the same letter Berkeley recounts why he chose Bermuda, namely, because it was nearly equidistant from all the other American colonies, and had trade with them all. As with many utopian settings, Bermuda provided an abundance of the necessary provisions of life. It was secure from attack, and its people were characterised by their simplicity of manners. Then, too, there was the benign climate of Bermuda:

the summer refreshed with constant, cool breezes, the winters as mild as our May, the sky as light and blue as a sapphire, the ever green pastures, the earth eternally crowned with fruits and flowers. The woods of cedars, palmettos, myrtles, oranges, etc., always fresh and blooming. The beautiful situations and prospects of hills, vales, promontories, rocks, lakes and sinuses of the sea. The great variety, plenty and perfection of fish, fowl, vegetables of all kinds, and (which is in no other of our Western Islands) the most excellent butter, beaf, veal, pork and mutton. (Correspondence 205)

As Berkeley argues:
half a dozen of the most agreeable and ingenious men of our college are with me in this project. And since I came hither I have got together about a dozen Englishmen of quality and gentlemen, who intend to retire to these islands to build villas and plant gardens, and to enjoy health of body and peace of mind. (Rand Correspondence 205)

Berkeley concludes that the gentlemen who would accompany him on this journey may find, in fact, “whatsoever the most poetical imagination can figure to itself in the golden age, or the Elysian fields” (Correspondence 206). In a subsequent letter from Daniel Dering in Dublin to his cousin John Percival, dated March 5th, 1723, after he had also received a letter from Berkeley on his Bermuda plan, he writes how Berkeley had spoken of “restoring the golden age in that corner of the world” (Correspondence 207). And in a letter dated February 6th, 1724, Percival writing to his brother Philip on Berkeley’s plan said that he knew “not why in time that little spot may not become the Athens of the world, since the persons who intend to go are men every way qualified to raise learning to as high a pitch as we know it was in that of Greece” (Correspondence 225).

In his correspondence around this period, the early days of his Bermuda Project, Berkeley uses language which is clearly utopian. This inflection is also used by the Percival brothers and Dering in their letters to Berkeley and in their correspondence amongst themselves. In his allusion to the golden age, Berkeley is connecting with the utopian dimension of the classic myths, most notably the creation myths of the golden age and the earthly paradise. As Sargent observes, “such myths from ancient Greece and Rome, Sumer, and early Judaism were central to the development of western utopianism” (Introduction 13). The most famous depiction of a golden age in the past is that of the Greek poet Hesiod (eighth
century B.C.) who wrote of a golden race, who own Olympus as a dwelling place “all good things were theirs, for the fruitful earth unstintingly bore unforced her plenty, and they, amid their store enjoyed their landed ease which nothing stirred loved by the gods and rich in many of herd” (133).9

The version of the golden age that passed down into the Middle Ages was that of the Roman author Ovid (43 BCE to 17/18 CE). Hesiod had focused on abundance, a joyful life, an easeful death while Ovid wrote of freedom from law courts and absence of war. He notes in Metamorphosis:

In the beginning was the Golden Age, when men of their own accord, without threat of punishment, without laws, maintained good faith and did what was right. There were no penalties to be afraid of, no bronze tablets were erected, carrying threats of legal action, no crowd of wrong-doers, anxious for mercy, trembled before the face of their judge: indeed, there were no Judges.10

Berkeley, in alluding to the myths of a golden age, forms a clear thread of connection from those traditions before More’s Utopia to the future. The Bermuda project would thus restore a golden age in “a region whose idyllic bliss had sung, and from which Christian civilisation might radiate over the Utopia of a New World with its magnificent possibilities in the future history of the human race” (Works iv. 343), but, to be sure, this would be a future utopia. This utopia, hewn from the golden age of the past, in a flight from the present corrupted western world, consequently becomes both an alternative space and a promised land.

Until 1728, four years after the date of Swift’s letter, Berkeley lived in London, negotiating and otherwise promoting his Bermuda enterprise. The project captured the imagination of diverse figures. Berkeley spoke before a sceptical audience at the Scriblerus Club, and Hone and Rossi recount that when he spoke about his project
“the company were struck dumb and after a pause, simultaneously rose and asked leave to accompany him to the plantations” (132). In Dublin, a few irreverent sceptics, unimpressed by the promise of healthy climes and sapphire-blue skies, found the whole idea mad and chimerical. Even before any public announcement had been made on the project, Dublin wits, having heard of the Dean’s intent, found a target for ridicule. As Edwin S. Gaustad relates late in 1723, a young girl was sent around to Berkeley’s rooms in Dublin to present him with some verses:

The Humble Petition of a beautiful young Lady
To the Reverend Doctor B-rky-y
Dear Doctor, here comes a Young Virgin untainted
To your Shrine at Bermudas to be Married and Sainted;
I am Young, I am Soft, I am Blooming and Tender,
Of all that I have I make you a Surrender;
My innocence led by the Voice of your Fame
To your Person and Virtue must put in its Claim:
And now I behold you I truly believe,
That you’r like Adam as I am like Eve:
Before the dire Serpent their Virtue betray’d,
And taught them to Fly from the Sun, to the Shade:
But you, as in you a new Race has begun,
Are Teaching to Fly from the Shade to the Sun;
For you in Great Goodness your Friends are Persuading
To go, and to live, and to be wise in your Eden.
Oh! Let me go with you, Oh! Pity my Youth,
Oh! Take me from hence let me not loose [sic] my Truth;
Sure you that have Virtue so much in your mind,
Can’t think to leave me who am Virtue behind,
If you’ll make me your Wife, Sir, in Time you may fill a
Whole Town with your Children and likewise your Villa;
I famous for Breeding, you Famous for knowledge,
I’II Found a whole Nation, you’ll Found a whole Colledge;
When many long Ages in Joys we have Spent,
Our Souls we’ll resign with utmost content:
And gently we’ll Sink between Cypress and Yew,
You lying by me, and I lying by you.\(^{11}\)

This broadside parodies Berkeley’s proposed plan for a college in Bermuda. It succinctly juxtaposes the presence of the untainted young maiden with Berkeley’s own vision of Bermuda, pure and untainted, free of the corrupted practices of the old world. The maiden representing Eve, and Berkeley portrayed as Adam, are presented as potential cohorts, a resultant union of their intellectual and physical fecundity poised to propagate the new world. It does, however, create an interesting collocation between ‘nation’ and ‘college’. This broadside is approximately dated by Philip Percival’s letter to his brother John in Dublin on November 9th, 1723, where he writes:

I believe you are no stranger to Dr Berkeley’s inclination for the Island of Bermuda, and for want of news I here send you some verses, which a little nymph about five or six years old, dressed all in flowers and myrtle, surprised him with at his chambers. (*Correspondence* 214)

Percival assures his brother that Berkeley on receiving his visitor who had answered any questions he posed in French and in ambiguous terms “began to mistrust it was
some French child designed to be left on his hands, and got his hat and made the best of his way down stairs” (Correspondence 214).

Berkeley’s Proposal

The ‘little tract’ referred to by Swift was first published in London in 1724 under the title A Proposal for the Better Supplying of Churches in Our Foreign Plantations, and for Converting the Savage Americans to Christianity. Berkeley’s Proposal outlines his vision for a college in Bermuda and how it was to be funded and founded. He acknowledged that several representatives of the Church had not been found wanting in propagating the Gospel in foreign parts. They had combined into societies for that very purpose, most notably The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, founded in 1701 by Thomas Bray. In the opening paragraph, Berkeley argues:

It is nevertheless acknowledged that there is at this day but little sense of religion, and a most notorious corruption of manners, in the English Colonies settled on the Continent of America, and the islands. It is also acknowledged that the gospel hath hitherto made but a very inconsiderate progress among the neighbouring Americans, who will continue in much the same ignorance and barbarism in which we found them above a hundred years ago. (Works, iv 346)

Berkeley thought it expedient, in the first place, that a constant supply of worthy clergymen should be available for the project and, in the second place, for propagating Christianity among the ‘savages’. Hitherto, the clergy sent over to America had proved “very meanly qualified both in learning and morals for the
discharge of their office” (Works, iv. 347). In this project Berkeley seems to be
propagating his own spiritual utopia, fashioned from the failings in the current
situation. His proposed college or seminary is to be based in Bermuda on the island
“once thought to be enchanted and hold special magic powers” (Johnson xvi).

As envisaged, the college would achieve two ends: the first was that the
youth of the English Plantations might be fitted for the ministry; and “men of merit
would be then glad to fill the churches of their native country, which are now a
drain for the dregs and refuse of ours” (Works, iv. 348). The second was that “the
children of ‘savage’ Americans, brought up in such a Seminary and well instructed
in religion and learning, should make the ablest and best missionaries for spreading
the gospel among their countrymen” (Works, iv. 348). The young students of the
college would be educated thoroughly in religion and morality and also in “a good
tincture of other learning; particularly of eloquence, history, and practical
mathematics; to which it may not be improper to add some skill in physic” (Works
iv. 349). Having publicly presented his idea for the college in Bermuda with its aims
and goals, Berkeley makes his appeal for a Charter for the college:

If his Majesty would graciously please to grant a Charter for a College to be
erected in a proper place for these uses, it is hoped a fund may be soon raised,
by the contribution of well-disposed persons, sufficient for building and
endowing the same. (Works, iv 349)

A postscript was added to the edition of the Proposal published in 1725 noting that
the Charter had been granted, and that Berkeley was to be President of the college
aided by nine Fellows, the three Fellows named in the charter are William
Thompson, Jonathan Rogers and James King of Trinity College, Dublin. In the
Proposal, Berkeley gives his reasons for choosing Bermuda as the location of his
college. The island was equidistant from most of the main colonies; it had a good climate, and a rocky coastline that would protect the college from pirates; and, although there was a good supply of essential provisions, since the island produced no enriching commodity, the teachers of St. Paul’s would not be tempted to become traders. Finally, the present inhabitants are presented as contented and innocent, free from avarice and luxury.

Success was rapid for Berkeley’s promotional efforts after he arrived in London in 1724, at Government level, as Hone and Rossi note, a patent was passed for erecting a college in the island of Bermuda, for “the propaganda of the Gospel among the Indians and other Heathens on the continent of America, and constituting Dr Berkeley, Dean of Londonderry, principal of the said college” (136-7). It is possible that the real reason why Berkeley’s plan found acceptance in London, even among politicians, was perhaps the need to create a utopian counterweight to the Jesuit propaganda in the New World and also to prepare the ground for a successful expansion of English rule, since the broadening of Empire was something which Berkeley himself had promised. Since the Proposal, unlike Berkeley’s initial letter to Percival, was a public document it included a public appeal, or to be sure, several appeals, to nationalist pride, to phobias on Roman Catholicism and to prospective financial contributors. In the spirit of Richard Hakluyt (c.1552 or 1553-1616) a century and a half earlier, Berkeley declared that the fate of the empire might rest upon the encouragement of this design, for if colonies should fall under the influence of other nations then Britain’s wealth and “so considerable a branch of his Majesty’s revenue” (Works iv. 356), would also fall. Likewise, following Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas (1575-1626), Berkeley reminded his readers that “the Protestant religion hath of late years considerably lost ground, and America seems
the likeliest place wherein to make up for what hath been lost in Europe” (Works iv. 356). If the correct method (namely, that described in the Proposal) be not taken, then Spain in the South, and France in the North “may one day spread the religion of Rome, and with it the usual hatred to Protestants, throughout all the savage nations of America” (Works, iv 356).

Berkeley made it clear that “the honour of the crown, nation and church of England” depended on the success of his Bermuda project (Works, iv 357). If achieved, Berkeley argues, his project “will cast no small lustre on his majesty’s reign, and derive a blessing from heaven on his administration, and those who live under the influence thereof” (Works, iv 357). Here, then, Berkeley juxtaposes the colonial expansionist agenda to his utopian Bermuda Project. If successful it will benefit the crown, nation and the Church of England. Berkeley, in envisioning his utopian seminary within the macrocosm of the colonial, is an exemplar of the nexus of colonialism and utopianism. However, the permission to found his college was not enough. It also needed financial support if it was to become a reality. Berkeley opened a public subscription, which reached £3,400 with John Percival contributing £200 and Robert Walpole the same amount. In May 1726, the House of Commons asked King George 1 to grant funding to the Bermuda College, to be derived from the sale of the isle of St. Christopher which had been ceded to Britain by the treaty of Utrecht. The sum agreed for the College was £20,000. Berkeley writes to Percival from London on May 17th, 1726:

Your Lordship hath every way been so good a friend to St. Paul’s College in Bermuda, that I think it my duty to acquaint you with the success which hath of late attended it, the Commons of Great Britain having last Wednesday voted an address to His Majesty that he would be pleased to make such grant
out of lands of St. Christopher’s for the endowment thereof as to him shall seem proper. The point was carried in a full house with but two negatives, and those pronounced in so low a voice as shewed that the persons who gave them were ashamed of what they were doing. (Correspondence 231)

At this point, Berkeley had had the necessary response which would allow his Proposal, a utopian document, to become a reality in the establishment of his college. This pragmatic utopia complemented Berkeley’s poetic representation of the new world as utopia in ‘America; or the Muse’s Refuge: A Prophecy in Six Verses’.

‘Westward The Course Of Empire…’

The influence of the “New World”, as more than a geographical fact, was to become one of the driving metaphors of the western literary imagination, supplying a rich vein of poems, plays, songs, and fiction. Berkeley’s poetic representation of the new world as utopia is found in ‘On America; or the Muse’s Refuge: A Prophecy in Six Verses’. His lines appear at once both as a poem and a prophecy. It is unclear as to when the verses were composed. Berkeley, writing from London, enclosed them in a letter to Percival dated February 10th, 1726. The letter is replete with details about potential benefactors for his Bermuda project, and Berkeley concludes with the following: “you have annexed a poem wrote by a friend of mine with a view to the [Bermuda] Scheme. Your lordship is desired to shew it to none but of your family, and allow no copy to be taken of it” (Correspondence 230). Despite disavowal of authorship, it appears that Berkeley is the poem’s author, and tellingly it appears it was composed at least two years before he left England for America. One reason for Berkeley’s caution regarding copies was that his “prophecy” regarding America
was of course, not yet a finished product. When he finally published the poem a quarter of a century later (in his Miscellany, 1752), he had, in the intervening years, made several changes. In its final and more familiar form it is as follows:

The Muse disgusted at an age and clime
Barren of every glorious theme,
In distant lands now waits a better time
Producing subjects worthy fame:

In happy climes, where from the genial sun
And virgin earth such scenes ensue,
The force of art by nature seems outdone,
And fancied beauties by the true.

In happy climes, the seat of innocence,
Where nature guides and virtue rules;
Where men shall not impose for truth and sense
The pedantry of courts and schools;

There shall be sung another golden age,
The rise of empire and of arts,
The good and great inspiring epic rage
The wisest heads and noblest hearts.
Not such as Europe breed in her decay-
Such as she bred when fresh and young,
When heavenly flame did animate her clay,
By future poets shall be sung.

Westward the course of empire takes its way,
The four first acts already past:
A fifth shall close the drama with the Day-
Time’s noblest offspring is the last. (Works, vii. 373)

To be sure, accounts of the New World as a desirable place preceded Berkeley’s poem. “Westward, like the Sun,” John Dryden had written at the turn of the century, and Edmund Waller too had written in 1645 of Bermuda in his poem “Battle of the Summer Islands”:

So sweet the air, so moderate the clime, None sickly lives, or dies before his time. Heaven sure has kept this spot of earth uncurst To show how all things were created first.13

America was new in both senses of the word: new in relation to geological and human time, and new in relationship to European observers. America was still, in John Locke’s celebrated phrase, “in the beginning” and had seemed at first sight to live in the golden age of its own.

America connects with the established poetic tradition of the New World idyll. Noah Porter, speaking at Yale College on March 12th, 1885, on the two-hundredth birthday of Berkeley, notes that Berkeley’s “well-known lines, though evincing little poetic genius, are the sober expression of his enthusiastic aspirations and his hopeful faith” (29). The poem’s utopian impulse is manifest as it crosses
from the matter-of-fact, (‘The Muse, disgusted at an age and clime’ representing a
decayed Europe, into the world of the imagined where ‘in happy climes’ ‘there shall
be sung another golden age’) to the golden age of which Ovid spoke, now
refashioned and recreated anew. And so, the utopian frisson of America is
predicated on what is imagined. Berkeley envisions a New World utopia suffused
with genial sunshine and a bountiful landscape whilst containing the possibility of
producing ‘the wisest heads and noblest hearts’. This New World idyll is juxtaposed
throughout with the representation of a decayed and corrupt Europe, yet a Europe
which once was as the New World ‘fresh and young’.

Although America predates the first usage of the word ‘dystopia’ in 1747,
Europe as represented in America stands as a dystopia to the New World utopia.
The best of Europe is past. Another golden age can only unfold in the New World,
and its unfolding will see ‘the rise of empire and of arts’. Unlike the traditions of
utopias from Eden to the Aisling portrayals of Ireland, this imagined golden age is
located in the future, a time of which ‘future poets’ will write. Significantly,
Berkeley’s America represents a key shift from a squandered golden age in
Europe to the imagined and future New World utopia. The ‘traveller-philosopher,’
wrote Joseph-Marie Degerando in 1800, “now sails to the farthest corners of the
Globe, travels, in fact, along the roads of time. He travels in the past. Every step he
takes is a century passed. The Islands he reaches are for him the cradle of human
society” (131-132). Berkeley is such a ‘traveller-philosopher’. As prophetic muse,
he harkens for Ovid’s golden age, seeing it as a refuge, by moving into the past as
Degerando suggests, to awaken the possibility of another golden age in the future.

It is not that anything about Berkeley’s lines is especially original in point of
language or technique, but they do strike a utopian tuning fork and immediately a
whole orchestra of possibility may have stirred a contemporary reader or listener. In his *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man*, David Berman has considered much of the content of *America*, particularly the line ‘the four first Acts already past’ (117). He draws on a sermon given by Zachery Pearce (1690-1774) who had been personally involved in gathering subscriptions for the Bermuda project. Pearce’s refers to Isaiah 49:6, which proclaims ‘salvation unto the end of the earth’. Pearce argues that this ‘prophecy’ is to be fulfilled in America. Berman looks at the similarity between Pearce’s sermon and Berkeley’s poem, and he uses Pearce’s sermon as a key to understanding the ‘Acts’ mentioned in the poem. He suggests, drawing on the biblical source of Pearce’s sermon, that the ‘Acts’ mentioned in the poem are the different phases in the spread of Christianity. Thus, Christianity “was published at first in Judaea, from whence it spread to Samaria, and other Parts where the Jews dwelt…till at last…St. Paul, by the Direction of the Holy Spirit, began to apply himself to the Gentiles…’(Berman 117). We seem to have here the three Acts, and the fourth would be the establishment of Christendom in Europe. The fifth Act, then, was to be the general conversion of America, the close of the religious drama. This may not be the only interpretation of Berkeley’s enigmatic last stanza, but he gave us little help in his letters of the period, in his publications, or indeed in the letter of 1726 when we first learn of the poem. Berman’s interpretation seems apt: Berkeley’s *Proposal* of 1724 is a pragmatic utopian document and it is complemented by the visionary *America*, a poem and a prophecy for the future spread of Christianity’s spiritual empire.
Berkeley’s American Sojourn

In the years 1727-1728, Berkeley found himself in a difficult position. The cause of the trouble was the College’s double source of prospective revenue. The sum of £5,000 had been privately subscribed, a large sum, but, unsupplemented, almost useless without the parliamentary grant. As A.A. Luce puts it:

had Berkeley been depending solely on private subscriptions or solely on the grant, he would not, I believe have sailed when he did. His prospective colleagues and his close friends did not want him to go; but some of the subscribers, not understanding the position about the Treasury grant, could see no reason why a start should not be made, and doubts were beginning to be expressed about Berkeley’s intentions. So he set sail for the West to satisfy the subscribers; he left in a “private manner” to avoid the opposition of his associates in the enterprise. (99)

Writing to Thomas Prior, Berkeley said he would proceed, “privately,” to set out for America, to lay the foundation for his “Utopian Seminary,” and to await the fulfilment of promises made and hope cherished (Works, viii. 189). Berkeley sailed on the privately commissioned Lucy (Captain Cobb, Master) from Gravesend in September 1728. He was bound for Rhode Island, accompanied by his wife Anne Forster Berkeley; Miss Handcock, a travelling companion of his wife; Richard Dalton of Lincolnshire, who was to remain in America; John James of Bury St. Edmunds, who later succeeded to the baronetcy and returned to England; and John Smibert, an English artist who was to become the first trained portrait painter in America and who remained there until his death in 1751. Smibert was meant to teach art and architecture at the Bermuda College.
Why should Berkeley sail for Rhode Island with a view to establishing a college in Bermuda? Part of the answer is that his home preferments were to lapse, in accordance with the terms of the Charter, eighteen months after his landing in Bermuda. Thus, if he had gone directly to the island, he would have had to vacate his deanery within a year. It would have been improvident to have taken such a risk until it became certain that the promised government grant would be paid. Another part of the answer is that Berkeley all along meant to purchase an estate on the mainland to supply provisions to Bermuda, thus, encouraging trade between the island and the continent. In a letter to Berkeley in April 1729, Henry Newman (1670-1743) adds as a postscript: “if you should be induced to pitch your stake in New York Government there is an island called Fisher’s Island of which Mr. Winthrop is proprietor, who I believe would give you a good tract of land toward encouraging your settlement there” (qtd. in Rand, *American Sojourn* 15-16).

Leaving England to take up temporary residence in Rhode Island showed too that Berkeley was in earnest in his project. At the same time he would be in a convenient location to travel to Bermuda when the funds were received.

Berkeley and his fellow travellers landed in Virginia early in January 1729 after four months at sea. He was received, as he writes to Percival on February 7th, 1729, with many honours bestowed by the governor, William Gooch, and the principal inhabitants. They had a ten-day stay in Virginia. John James and Richard Dalton chose to make the rest of the journey overland; and Berkeley, his wife, Miss Handcock and John Smibert sailed on up the coast to Newport, their original destination. They finally arrived at Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island on January 23rd, 1729. Though not a bishop, Berkeley as dean of Derry was the highest-ranking ecclesiastical dignitary to visit up to that point. Apart from his status as an
Anglican, Berkeley was something of an international celebrity as much of his philosophical work would have preceded him. Wilkins Updike, in his *History of the Episcopal Church in Narragansett*, speaks of the friendship between Daniel Updike and Berkeley. Daniel Updike’s son Lodowick recalls:

when as a boy, his father used to take him to hear Bishop Berkeley preach at Trinity Church, in Newport, where he pretty constantly officiated during his residence in the colony. Like all really learned men, the Dean was tolerant in religious opinion, which gave him a great and deserved popularity with all denominations. All sects rushed to hear him; even the Quakers, with their broad-brimmed hats, came and stood in the aisles. (76)

This anecdote of Lodowick Updike shows the regard in which Berkeley was held during his years in Rhode Island. A retrospective examination of this narrative from our later perspective shows how Berkeley’s visit blended in with a utopian folkloric memory long after his visit had ended. Occasional mention of Berkeley is made in contemporary memoirs of New England life, such as those of the Updikes. His friends are named as including the Honeymans, the Hammonds, the Babcocks, Governor Robinson, the Mumfords and James MacSparran. Berkeley purchased a farm a few miles outside of Newport; he had the sturdy two-story house on the land rebuilt and called it Whitehall. On April 11th, 1729, he wrote to Bishop Martin Benson of Gloucester: “I do not think I could be so useful in any part of the world as in this place” (*Works*, viii. 194). In a letter to Thomas Prior on March 9th, 1730, Berkeley says “I live here upon land I have purchased and in a farmhouse I have built in this island. It is fit for cows and sheep and may be of good use for supplying our college in Bermuda” (qtd. in *American Sojourn* 20). From this letter it
would appear that Berkeley bought land in Rhode Island as an investment in order to supply provisions to Bermuda when the time came.

Berkeley spent nearly three years in America, and at some point he had begun to doubt the wisdom of placing his college in Bermuda and thought it may have been possible to situate his college in America. A.A. Luce suggests that this change of direction came about through Berkeley’s friendship with Henry Newman. He is almost forgotten now, but he was the main London agent for the Bermuda project and most of Berkeley’s American business passed through his hands. Before Berkeley sailed from Gravesend to America, Newman had written eight letters to acquaintances in America, introducing Berkeley to two of his travelling companions, James and Dalton. Newman speaks in general terms of Berkeley’s plans, making no mention of Bermuda, but the letters show that Berkeley was definitely bound for Rhode Island and meant to use it as a base before erecting his college. Newman wrote to Governor Jenks of Rhode Island (1727-32) on August 28th, 1728:

Hon. Sir: Having long since known your character and when you were in London the honour of some acquaintance with you, I take leave to recommend to your patronage and advice the Rev. Dr. Berkeley, Dean of Londonderry, whose zeal for the service of religion and humanity has exercised him so far as to induce him to undertake a voyage to America, in hopes of being instrumental to making the Gospel of Jesus Christ more known that it has been hitherto among the natives of the continent. He hath obtained a patent from our most gracious King for erecting a school or college for such purpose…John James and Richard Dalton, Esq., gents of honour and fortune are so good as to accompany the Dean in his setting out upon this
design...They have travelled through the most polite parts of Europe, and if they arrive with you will have the pleasure of communicating their experience to the uncultivated parts of America. (qtd. in American Sojourn 13-14)

It was through his friendship with Newman that Berkeley learned about the politics and history of New England, for example of Connecticut and her century-old dispute with Rhode Island. He came to know of Rhode Island, as yet without a College but, as Luce puts it, “high in favour with the home authorities, unique among the Plantations for her enlightened principles of civil and religious liberty; of Newport with her beautiful situation and genial climate, at that time a rival to New York in importance” (102). Indeed, Newman had written to Berkeley shortly after his arrival in Rhode Island:

I believe you are now satisfied that if you had made a short voyage to America before you had published your proposal you would have very much altered your scheme; but I hope you will have it in your power to rectify your first project in whatever it was amiss, and that your friends here may easily obtain a royal licence for such alterations as may be recommended by you. (qtd. in A.A. Luce 102)

Despite Newman’s advice, Berkeley did not have the power to rectify his position in order to establish his college in America rather than in Bermuda. After all, the royal charter had been granted for the establishment of the college, and all support and all funding was directed towards that end. Berkeley had hoped that by crossing the Atlantic and securing a possible source of supplies for the College in Bermuda he could convince the Treasury of the feasibility of the project and have the funds which were promised released to him. When Berkeley began, as Luce argues, to tentatively solicit for a transference of the College from Bermuda to Rhode
Island, his chance of getting the grant faded. As Luce observes, “every argument for Rhode Island was against Bermuda and therefore against the Bermuda grant” (102). While on Rhode Island, Berkeley spent the bulk of his time writing his biggest book, *Alciphron*, in which he defends Christianity against the free-thinkers. By 1731, criticism was beginning to grow about Berkeley’s Bermuda project, from among others Thomas Bray (1656-1730). Bray was an Anglican clergyman and briefly commissary to Maryland, one of the founders in 1699 of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), and in 1701 of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG). Berkeley had joined SPCK early in 1725 and the SPG upon his return from America. To many of the patrons of Bray’s two societies, Berkeley had made his own financial appeal when he set about seeking funding for his Bermuda project. However, Bray’s biographer H.P. Thompson notes that his subject came to criticise Berkeley’s plan. Bray saw, as Thompson relates, the whole scheme as unpractical:

> The Bermudas were by no means the idyllic islands pictured by Berkeley, but rough and impoverished. It would be difficult to persuade Indian lads to go there- they would not even go to the “Brafferton” hostel specially provided for them at William and Mary College – and if they did, they would be so denationalized that their tribes would not have them back, nor would they wish to return. (92-93)

All this and more Bray sets out, suggesting instead his own plan to form settlements on the Indian borders, where carpenters, farmers, and tailors would show the natives the crafts of civilisation, while clergy and schoolmasters would teach them the Christian faith. Percival, in his *Journal* of March 10th, 1731, from which Rand quotes, speaks of a Dr. Downs, Bishop of Down who had sent “an impertinent letter
to the Dean requiring him to come home, and calling his scheme idle and simple” (275). In the winter of 1730-1, the final blow came to the Bermuda project in the form of Sir Robert Walpole’s (1676-1745) message relayed through Edmund Gibson (1669-1748), Bishop of London, informing him that the promised grant would never be paid. The details are provided by Stock, Berkeley’s biographer:

After having received various excuses, Bishop Gibson…(in whose diocese all the West Indies are included) applying to Sir Robert Walpole, then at the head of the treasury, was favoured at length with the following [?] answer: ‘If you put this question to me’, says Sir Robert, ‘as a minister, I must and can assure you that the money shall most undoubtedly be paid as soon as suits with public convenience: but if you ask me as a friend, whether Dean Berkeley should continue in America expecting the payment…I advise him by all means to return home to Europe, and to give up his present expectations’. (23)

Berkeley returned to London in October 1731 dejected but not beaten. Indeed, his return signalled a new creative period. The importance of the Bermuda project is reflected in Berkeley’s writings of 1732-5, most of which were aimed against free-thinking in religion, for this, Berkeley believed, had undermined his planned college. In a letter dated March 10th, 1731, he writes, “What they foolishly call free thinking seems to me the principal root or source not only of opposition to our College but of most other evils in the age” (Works, viii. 212). Berkeley was to allude to his disappointment in the two title-pages of Alciphron (present in the 1732 editions), each of which has a vignette (see Figures 1 and 2). In the first volume’s vignette, Berman argues that “Berkeley links the abandonment of his project with the abandonment of God. He does this by means of an open, spouting fountain, to the right of which there are three labourers digging a cistern”(106). The meaning of
the vignette becomes clearer from one of the mottoes beneath it, a quotation from Jeremiah 2:13: “They have forsaken me the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water”. On one level, Berman argues, “the vignette symbolises the rejection of God and religion by the free-thinkers or, as Berkeley prefers to call them, following Cicero, ‘minute philosophers’, against whom Alciphron was written” (106). This message seems to be reinforced by the vignette’s second motto, taken from Cicero’s De Senectute 85:

‘But if when dead I shall be without sensation, as some minute philosophers think, then I have no fear that these philosophers, when they are dead, will have the laugh on me’. At another level, the fountain vignette represents the abandonment of Berkeley’s Bermuda project by the English Government and by those who had formerly supported it but had ceased to do so. The link between this vignette and a pivotal passage in his 1724 Proposal is central:

> to any Man, who considers the divine Power of Religion, the innate Force of Reason and Virtue, and the mighty Effects often wrought by the constant regular Operation even of a weak and small Cause; it will seem natural and reasonable to suppose, that Rivulets perpetually issuing streaming through all Parts of America, must in due time have a great Effect, in purging away the ill manners and Irreligion of our Colonies, as well as the Blindness and Barbarity of the Nations round them: Especially, if the Reservoir be in a clean and private Place, where its Waters, out of the Way of any Thing that may corrupt them, remain clear and pure; otherwise they are more likely to pollute than purify the Places through which they flow. (Works, vii. 358)

Here, then, Berkeley identified his proposed college with ‘a Fountain, or Reservoir of Learning and Religion’. This identification can also be seen in the ‘Bermuda
Group’ paintings which have been collated and reproduced in a book entitled *Images of Berkeley* (see Figures 3 and 4). The paintings contain in the background ‘rivulets … issuing from a fountain or reservoir…’, which must stand for Berkeley’s Project. The vignette and the *Proposal* both convey Berkeley’s hope for a spiritual and moral cleansing hewn from a New World Utopia. By 1732, Berkeley’s project has been “absolutely abandoned”, not only by Walpole but also by former supporters of the plan, among them Robert Clayton (1695-1758). In a letter dated March 2nd, 1730/I, Berkeley speaks of ‘this continued delay’ which has ‘made those persons who engaged with me entirely give up all thoughts of the College…So that I am absolutely abandoned by every one of them’ (*Works*, viii. 212).
Fig. 1. Vignette from title page of *Alciphron*, vol. 1 (1732)

Fig. 2. Vignette from title page of *Alciphron*, vol. 2 (1732)
In the second vignette, the seated figure is, Berman argues, that of Robert Walpole; “by refusing to pay the £20,000 granted by Parliament, he was chiefly responsible for defeating Berkeley’s project” (108). Here again we have two mottoes printed beneath the engraving. The first is from Hosea 12:7: ‘The balances of deceit are in his hand’; the second is from Plato’s Cratylus 428 D: ‘The worst of all deceptions is self-deception’. Thus, the first vignette symbolises the abandonment of Berkeley’s project; while the second depicts some of the force which defeated it; and both identify the free-thinkers, the target of Alciphron, whose infidelity Berkeley describes as ‘an effect of narrowness and prejudice’ (Alciphron vi. 11).

Berkeley’s identification of his college with ‘a Fountain, or Reservoir of Learning and Religion’ can also be seen in the visual legacy of the Bermuda project, notably, in two paintings by John Smibert, each generally known as ‘The Bermuda Group’. One of the paintings, dated c.1730, the smaller of the two, is in the National Gallery in Dublin (Fig. 3). The second dated c.1739 is in Yale University Art Gallery (Fig. 4). While nearly indistinguishable to the casual viewer, there are many obvious though subtle differences between the two paintings. The smaller painting features full length figures of Berkeley and of the man seated to the left, who is probably John Wainwright, Berkeley’s friend and patron, later Baron of the Exchequer in Dublin. The Transylvanian carpet tablecover of a medallion and split-leaf border pattern is shown in full. The other individuals portrayed are: Mrs. Anne Berkeley and their first child Henry; Miss Handcock; standing behind the two women is John James of Bury St. Edmunds; behind Wainwright is Richard Dalton of Lincolnshire, who was to remain in America; in the background is John Smibert, retiring and unobtrusive. Smibert had met Berkeley in Italy, probably in 1720. They met again in London, and Berkeley often stayed with him in Covent Garden. He was meant to teach art and architecture at
the Bermuda College. There are subtle differences between both paintings in the use of colour, particularly in the colour of Dalton’s coat, in the position of Miss Handcock’s hand, and in the finished details. The first painting also contains, in the background, rivulets issuing from a fountain or reservoir, which must surely stand for Berkeley’s project. Miss Handcock is pointing at something: her gesture seems symbolic, rather than merely naturalistic; her left arm and hand are held seemingly awkwardly, and in pointing to the background she is pointing to the purpose or goal which drew them to America. Thus, the painting depicts the Proposal’s extended water image, evoking Berkeley’s hope for the spiritual and moral cleansing of the New World. In the later painting on the larger canvas Miss Handcock’s hand is lowered and seems to have moved away from the image in the background, perhaps, an artistic assertion of the failure of their proposed Bermuda project.
Fig. 4.
The subtle differences between the paintings may relate to the dates when they were painted, the larger canvas painted circa 1739 is representative of a Bermuda Project which was unsuccessful, signified by the positioning of Miss Handcock’s hand. Scholars view the smaller painting of the Bermuda group which they date from late 1729 (the boy Henry was not born until June 1729) to sometime in November 1730, as a sketch that preceded the larger one.

Beyond all question, Berkeley’s 1724 Proposal was flawed. The main thrust of the plan, as the lead title made clear, was “the better supplying of churches in our Foreign Plantations”, but leading out of the vision of a new world utopia, a Christian social order, a learned and virtuous ministry. These were the ultimately unattained goals. If the Bermuda Group painting of 1730 represents the project as hopeful possibility, two other portraits of Berkeley encapsulate the project as a distant prospect and in stormy retrospect. In ‘Dean Berkeley Pointing’ c. 1728 and painted by John Smibert, (Fig. 5) Berkeley is pointing to a rocky island which could signify Bermuda, and hence his project. On the island there appears to be running water, the recurring symbolic motif which Berkeley first introduces in the Proposal. In the subsequent portrait of Berkeley dated May 1733 by an unknown artist, (Fig. 6) the ship on the stormy sea is undoubtedly meant to symbolise Berkeley’s journey to America and his Bermuda Project. The book that Berkeley holds is entitled Voyage to the Indies. The painting represents the Bermuda Project in retrospect both in its date and aspect, and effectively in the panoply of visual images of the Bermuda Project extant marks its end.
Fig. 5.

Fig. 6.
Berkeley’s New World Utopia

The City of BERMUDA
Metropolis of the Summer Islands.

PLAN OF THE CITY OF BERMUDA

Fig. 7.
In islands men placed their ideal states…to reach felicity one must cross water.

(Donald S. Johnson 91).

As Zhang Longxi puts it, “if at the most basic level, the idea of utopia suggests the vision of an alternative and better society beyond reality, then, it already implies some degree of discontent with the status quo” (1). Berkeley’s Proposal of 1724, a utopian document in the form of an extended speculative essay, harnessed such a vision predicated on the actual location of Bermuda. The intellectual basis of his Proposal and his subsequent Plan of the City of Bermuda emerged from strong discontent with the status quo in Europe (Fig.7). The connection between the exploration of the New World and utopian thinking were over two centuries old by the time Berkeley and his supporters hoped to fund and found a college in Bermuda. The Proposal as a speculative document includes descriptions of the as yet non-existent intentional community. It is both utopian and pragmatic. Utopian in its critique of Europe, and pragmatic in its immediate aims, and its need to secure government sanction and funding. Berkeley’s utopia presents a narrative space specifically designed to serve a cultural purpose offering a retreat from the corrupt past and a vision of the future predicated on the propagation of the Gospel, in a Christian utopia in the New World. However, something more than a Christian interest may have inspired Berkeley in his Project. Hone and Rossi argue that Swift was incorrect in saying that Berkeley loathed ‘power’ as they put it, for “as a youth he had dreamed of becoming the philosopher of a resurgent nation, and had to that end associated himself with the young of his college, like Prior and Madden” (134).

In Bermuda, in a ‘flight from the world’, Berkeley could mould and direct a community. He could establish an ideal state, where his philosophy, his economics, his views on architecture would prevail. Berkeley’s preparations extended to
drawing-up ‘a plan of the city of Bermuda’, metropolis of the Somers’ Islands’.

The plan survived but, unlike the Proposal, it was never presented to Parliament. Out of his classical imagination, Berkeley drew a symmetrical plan of the city. The main street extends into a square with a steeple at its centre, at the further end a church is skirted by open porticos. Behind the square, there are two triangular spaces, one containing a theatre, the other an Academy of Architecture, Sculpture and Painting. At the edge of the City, the fish and herb markets are connected by the ‘walk of death’ as the cemetery forms the boundary line of the metropolis, backed by groves of cypress trees. The houses along the main street and on either side of the square have gardens from which doors open out into public parks and groves. The College itself stands on a peninsula, a quarter of a mile from the city. Berkeley’s plan was developed, I believe, to stand not only as a symbol of the ‘New City of Bermuda’ but to contribute to the creation of an ideal Christian society that would provide all the prerequisites of complete happiness and fulfillment. For Berkeley, his college in Bermuda integrated into a whole city plan seemed to enable a retreat from Europe, a re-configuring and re-locating of self and society in a New World Utopia.

The connection between utopia and the city has been traced by Lyman Tower Sargent and by historian and architectural critic Lewis Mumford back to the Ancient Greeks, who thought of the ideal state and political community as a city. Plato (428/27-348/47BCE) in his Republic projected his ideal commonwealth in the spatial form of an ordered city-state. Mumford proposes that these influential visions of the city were not products simply of Hellenic speculation but rather that they reflected earlier ties between utopia and the city which had been realised in the archetypal ancient cities in Egypt and Mesopotamia. In those societies, according to
Mumford, the city actually was utopia; it was the very first utopia, it was created by a king acting in the name of a god, and being established as a sacred place, through the building of a temple and surrounding walls, with an intrinsic relation to the cosmic order. It was this connection between the royal, the religious, and the cosmic that clearly differentiates the city from other kinds of settlement. As Mumford puts it, “the city itself was transmogrified into an ideal form – a glimpse of eternal order, a visible heaven on earth, a seat of life abundant – in other words, utopia”(13). The dualism of the utopian elements in Berkeley’s Bermuda Project manifested, firstly, in the Proposal and, secondly, in his plan for the city of Bermuda. His city as utopia existed within the broader narrative of the establishment of an intentional community. Berkeley set out a personal vision of time and space, an imaginative projection of a newly planned city. Like More’s island, this place is closed off from the present, lying in another space and time as the embodiment of a Christian and aesthetic ideal. This quality can perhaps be seen more clearly in the context of geographer David Harvey’s call in Spaces of Hope for a “dialectical utopianism” (182). He argues for a utopianism that is informed by the combination of transformative vision and pragmatic action. Here, then, Berkeley’s project, while predating Harvey’s term, can be read as an eighteenth century instance of it.

Regardless of the outcome, opinions have differed, and will differ, about the Bermuda project. According to A.A. Luce, “Berkeley’s Bermuda Project is a topic of perennial interest” (97). He tells of a letter written in 1851 by the Rev. W.C. Dowding to Primate Lord John Beresford, asking him to be patron of a scheme for “the revival of Berkeley’s College in Bermuda” (97). This is a curious request, but nonetheless showing something of the interest which Berkeley’s project still generated over a century after it was first proposed. To be sure, to some the
Bermuda project was a piece of quixotic folly. Hone and Rossi, concluding that Berkeley never founded his Platonic republic, called it an “escapade” (164). Others have viewed it as a scheme sound in principle but thwarted by lack of funding and a decline in initial support.

Perhaps the true analysis lies in the *via media.* Bermuda could not have become “the Athens of the West”, for distance was an insuperable problem. Bermuda is almost six hundred miles from the nearest point on the mainland. If Berkeley’s geographical information was at fault, then he may not have realised the distances involved. A contemporary review of a book on Bermuda in Jean Le Clerc’s *Bibliothèque Choisie* places the islands of Bermuda about “soixante lieues de terre” (A.A. Luce 107). If Berkeley had access to this information, he might have come to think of Bermuda as not much further from America than the roughly sixty miles from Dublin to Holyhead in Wales. He could have seen his College as a Trinity College in the West, near, but not too near, the constraints of the mainland. Berkeley’s plan for his platonic republic eventually faded. His *Proposal* emerged out of discontent with the Old World, as he looked hopefully to the New World as he expressed poetically in *America.* As the Manuels observe, “utopia is a hybrid plant, born of the crossing of a paradisiacal, otherworldly belief of Judeo-Christian religion with the Hellenic myth of an ideal city on earth” (*Utopian Thought* 15).

Berkeley’s *Proposal* and his plan for the city of Bermuda represent such a hybrid plant, with its utopian seminary set in an ideal city. His city plan is the most Irish facet of Berkeley’s utopianism. If he saw himself and friends such as Thomas Prior, Samuel Madden and John Percival as leaders of a nation about to be reconstructed, then the city plan could be construed as a vicarious attempt at nation planning, set in the located elsewhere of Bermuda and predicated on his personal vision. This
utopian energy becomes analogous to a displaced rebellion, with an ideal city unrealised in Bermuda but potentially realisable in a future Irish utopia. Overall, Berkeley’s utopianism is more complex than at first appears. In *The Querist* (1735), he is clearly exploring the idea of what might constitute a utopia even if he is not writing one. And so, Berkeley’s mismapping of utopia in Bermuda comes to rest in the practical philanthropy of *The Querist*, his utopianism finds a home in the endless set of possibilities for the transformation of everyday life.

Tracing the development of the emergence of a utopian propensity in eighteenth-century Irish culture is ongoing. However, William Molyneux and his early plans for an atlas of Ireland, the early Societies before the Dublin Society, the Dublin Society itself and its pursuits in agriculture, arts, science and industry through the eighteenth century and beyond, and Berkeley’s vision for Bermuda and his subsequent practical philanthropy in Ireland reveal Irish utopianism of the period as diverse, hybrid and evolving.

Endnotes

1 This is stanza four of George Berkeley’s poem ‘On America; or the Muse’s Refuge: A Prophecy in Six Verses’. It was enclosed in a letter from Berkeley to John Percival in February, 1726. (See pages 230-231, *Berkeley and Percival—The Correspondence of Berkeley and Sir John Percival*).

2 This is Query 313 from the first part of Berkeley’s *The Querist*.

3 *The Querist Containing Several Queries Proposed to the Consideration of the Public* originally appeared in 1735 as an anonymous publication. A continuation designated as “Part II” was issued in 1736, and a further instalment, “Part III” in 1737. In 1746 Dean Gervais “could not find one in the shops, for my Lord
Lieutenant [Lord Chesterfield], at his desire,” Works (ed. Fraser, 1871), vol.iv, 247. It is possible that this circumstance encouraged Berkeley to print a second edition of The Querist in 1750, with some few queries added and many omitted. In 1752 Berkeley included it in the Miscellany of his own writings.

4 On Richard Warburton’s comments made in 1750, see Noah Porter’s ‘The Two-Hundred Birthday of Bishop George Berkeley: A Discourse Given at Yale College on the 12th March 1885’ (55).

5 This reference is taken from page 9 of the Catalogue of Manuscripts Books and Berkeleiana exhibited in Trinity College, Dublin on the occasion of the Commemoration of the bicentenary of the death of George Berkeley held on 7th-12th July 1953 in the Royal Irish Academy. See also footnote 11.

6 The use by Henry Lewis Younge (b. 1694) in his Utopia: or, Apollo’s Golden Days (Dublin: Ptd. by George Faulkner) in 1747 of the word dystopia spelled as ‘dustopia’ used as a clear contrast to utopia is the earliest usage of the word dystopia I have noted. The poem was reprinted in The Gentleman’s Magazine and Historical Chronicle 18 (September 1748): 399-402 with the word spelled “Dystopia” on pages 400 and 401 and with a footnote on 400 defining the word as “an unhappy country”. On the contrast between the two versions see V[esselin] M. Budakov, “Dystopia: An Earlier Eighteenth-Century Use.” Notes and Queries 57.1 (March 2010): 86-88. See also Kenneth M. Roemer, “Clearing up “Dystopia.” Utopus Discovered (April, 2010): 2-3.

On April 12th, 1713, Swift brought Berkeley to the Court of St. James where he presented him to Lord Berkeley of Stratton, who in February 1700 has appointed Swift as Vicar of Laracor, in the diocese of Meath. Henceforward, Swift and Lord Berkeley remained best acquaintances. Interestingly, Lord Berkeley of Stratton was a distant kinsman of George Berkeley, see Hone and Rossi 5. ‘My Lord [said Swift on this occasion] here is a fine young gentleman of your family. I can assure your Lordship, it is a much greater honour to you to be related to him, than it is to him to be related to you’ (Hone and Rossi 89).


The broadside bears neither a date nor a place of publication; drawing on the contemporary correspondence, however, it was probably printed in Dublin in 1723. It is quoted by Gaustad in his George Berkeley in America 29-30. Gaustad notes the Reverend Dr. Berkeley’s purported response to the “beautiful young lady’s” petition:

Dear Miss, I thank you for your kind surrender,

I doubt not but you’r Soft, and young and Tender,

As for your Dex’trous Faculty of Breeding,

Your Species seldom fail of well succeeding:

Since Eden once was lost by Woman’s base Device,

Who’d bring a Woman to his Paradise?
I live an Easy, Sweet, and Graceful Life,

My Study, my Companion, my books, my wife. (30)

The broadside was exhibited among the manuscripts, books and Berkeleiana in the library of Trinity College Dublin on the occasion of the commemoration of the death of George Berkeley held from July 7th—12th, 1953. See also footnote 5. In the Catalogue for the exhibition it is noted that T.E. Jessop “records that a broadsheet in the British Museum gives the R’vnd Dr B-kl-y’s answer to the young ladies petition”, 26. Also see Philip Percival’s letter to his brother dated November 9th, 1723, in Rand The Correspondence of Berkeley and Percival 213-15. Percival relates that as the visitor “was perfectly unknown to him and came alone, he had various conjectures in his mind what this meant; and upon asking her several questions, which she still answered in French and in ambiguous terms, he at last began to mistrust it was some French child to be left on his hands, and got his hat and made the best of his way down stairs”. (214)

12 The second edition, revised was printed in Dublin in 1725. A postscript announces the grant of a charter, and gives a list of persons to whom subscriptions should be sent. It is the only one of the three editions mentioning the proposed College in the title as A Proposal for the Better Supplying of Churches in Our Foreign Plantations, and for Converting the Savage Americans to Christianity, by a College to Be Erected in the Summer Islands, Otherwise Called the Isles of Bermuda. The third edition, printed in London in 1725 was the same in content as the second edition, but with the shorter title of the first edition.

“To the limits of the Lunar World”: Extraterrestrial Voyages and Utopia

What about my writing a ‘City of the Moon?’ Would it not be excellent to describe the cyclopic mores of our time in vivid colors, but in doing so – to be on the safe side – to leave this Earth and go to the Moon?

Johannes Kepler. ¹

To behold an island in the air, inhabited by men, who are able (as it should seem) to raise or sink, or put it into a progressive motion as they pleased.

Jonathan Swift. ²

Early Colonies in Space

So far, I have identified a utopian propensity in eighteenth-century Irish culture. The more realistic utopian projections of Berkeley and the founders and supporters of the early Dublin Philosophical Societies and the Dublin Society co-existed within a milieu where literary works of utopian satire also emerged as an integral fictive facet of eighteenth-century Irish utopianism. While Berkeley and the Dublin Society worked towards a utopianism of improvement the satirical extraterrestrial and lunar narratives by writers such as Jonathan Swift, Murtagh McDermot, Margaret King Moore (Lady Mount Cashell), Francis Gentleman and others, provided a more imaginative register from which to criticise and challenge contemporary society.³

In The Power of Satire, Robert Elliott argues that “Satire is notoriously a slippery term, designating, as it does, a form of art and a spirit, a purpose and a tone” (8-9). His use of the term, he argues, “depends upon context and qualifying terms to convey the relevant sense of satire intended at any given time” (9). In developing the link between utopia and satire, Sargent refers to the function of some
utopias “to hold the present up to ridicule and, in doing so, many utopias use a
typical tool of satire, exaggeration” (Introduction 24). He has particularly defined
utopian satire as presenting “a non-existent society described in considerable detail
and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous
reader to view as a criticism of that contemporary society” (“Three Faces Revisited”
9). Northrop Frye speaks of a utopian satire as “one in which social rituals are seen
from the outside, not to make them more consistent but simply to demonstrate their
inconsistency, their hypocrisy, or their unreality. Satire of this kind holds up a
mirror to society which distorts it, but distorts it consistently” (39).

The intertextual hybridity of utopia and satire provides the framework for
eighteenth-century Irish authored extraterrestrial voyages. Both Gentleman and
Swift wrote satires, and it is useful to note how they defined this mode within the
context of their eighteenth century world. In 1772 Gentleman, writing (under the
pseudonym of Sir Nicholas Nipclose, Baronet) in The Theatres: A Poetical
Dissection, says “If Satire is a useful species of writing, it can only deserve that title
by being keen” (5). Swift, in the preface to his A Full and True Account of the Battel
Fought Last Friday Between the Antient and Modern BOOKS in ST. JAMES’S
LIBRARY (1697), says “Satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally
discover everybody’s face but their own, which is the chief reason for that kind of
reception it meets in the world, and that so very few are offended with it” (172). As
well, the author of a pamphlet entitled The ANTISATYRIST. A DIALOGUE. To
Which Is Prefixed, A Short Dissertation on Panegyrick, and Satyr (1750), argues “as
for Satyr, it is a sort of Wormwood, infused, sometimes in ordinary Ale, and
sometimes in choice White-wine: but, at the best, it is a disagreeable Medicine, fit
for none, but squeamish, disordered Stomachs” (4-5). Gentleman and Swift evoke a
satiric mode which is both keen and benign in their individual critiques of
contemporary society. Taken in Robert Elliott’s sense ‘in context’, such satire comes to merge with the utopian. Utopia is, as Nicole Pohl writes, “inseparable from the imaginary voyage” (53).

While voyages within the earth and beyond to the limits of the lunar world occasion expressions of utopian desire, lunar voyages, popular since Lucian and Plutarch’s *The Face of the Moon* further challenged the boundaries of the cosmos, they were not located in another place on earth but offered new sites for utopian alternatives. The new discoveries in science combined with the format of a journey to another world facilitated critical commentary on the known world and provided a large but “safe medium to criticise contemporary society” (Pohl 54). It is not surprising that this distinctive body of literature on cosmic voyages is satirical. While cosmic voyages are both “imaginary” and “extraordinary,” they contain an essential difference, as Majorie Hope Nicolson puts it, “since they lead not to the outposts of civilisation upon our maps, but away from this earth to some other world, usually in the heavens,”(7) thereby stretching the scale of human imagination and possibility. To better understand their provenance, it is helpful to link cosmic voyages of the eighteenth-century literary tradition to earlier texts. Utopias and cosmic voyages share a long connection. For two thousand years, the moon has been peopled and explored through humanity’s imagination. Lunar travel had long been an earthly dream. For centuries, philosophers, scientists, satirists, dreamers considered the possibilities and merits of undertaking trips to the moon. Peter Leighton’s *Moon Travellers* carried the subtitle *A Dream That Is Becoming a Reality*. As Leighton observes, “the world, educated by now as to the prowess of Russian and American scientists and technicians, is ready to accept as only a question of time that men will be following the monkeys, dogs and rabbits into space and that their first destination will be the Moon” (5). Leighton cites
Professor Chlebzevitch of the Soviet Union who commented that “at the turn of this century journeys to and from the Moon will become a routine business, the Moon will be just the seventh continent of our world and men will be mainly concerned with exploiting its mineral wealth” (13). While the first has long since been attained, the second remains elusive, and journeys to the moon have yet to become a ‘routine business’. Yet, Leighton in foregrounding these points is following in the trajectory from which a particular utopian tendency emerges, the point at which the imaginary journey may become real. From 1600, literary utopias based on extraterrestrial worlds became increasingly prominent. This, as Frank and Fritzie Manuel have observed, occurred “when moon travel dependent upon breaking through the gravitational pull and attaining a state of weightlessness for most of the journey became a theoretical scientific possibility” (22). Indeed, the possibility of life on the moon was considered by Johannes Kepler in Somnium published posthumously in 1634. Kepler created a voyage to the moon as a mixture of fantasy and realism. With Kepler, we are not in Utopia or Arcadia but on the telescopic moon itself. Our guide is a scientist. In this way Kepler’s Somnium differs greatly from other cosmic voyages. As Nicolson notes:

Non-scientific writers spent their originality chiefly upon inventing ingenious means for getting to the Moon and on descriptions of the voyage. Their moon-worlds often prove conventional Utopias or mere convenient vehicles for satire on political and social customs in this world. Kepler, on the other hand, bent his efforts to describing the moon-world as Plutarch had presupposed it, as the telescope had shown it. (46)

The influence of Somnium continued into the nineteenth century. There are reminiscences of its moonscape in Jules Verne’s From the Earth to the Moon (1865) and in H.G. Wells’s The First Men in the Moon (1900). Kepler succeeded in
transforming the ancient Lucianic literary tradition into the modern scientific moon voyage. The *Somnium* was therefore familiar to all subsequent writers of cosmic voyages during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Moon travel was adaptable; it could combine science, fantasy, and even theology, as the creation and manner of life of extraterrestrial beings allowed scope for utopian invention. As Brian Aldiss argues:

Kepler established no utopias there. But utopias were still being built. A confusion of wonderful voyages with utopias is of long standing; once a writer has got his travellers to his obscure region on Earth, or to another world, or to the future, he must find something for them to do, and on the whole writers divide fairly sharply between those who have their protagonists lecture and listen to lectures and those who have them menaced by or menacing local equivalents of flora, fauna, and Homo Sapiens. (69-70)

Such utopian invention permeated the contour maps of the literary voyage landscapes created by John Wilkins, Francis Godwin and lesser known Irish writers such as Murtagh McDermot, Francis Gentleman (1728-1784) and Margaret King Moore (1771-1835). The utopian visions created by these eighteenth-century Irish authors share the common factor of a journey to another world. Ultimately, they are discovery narratives, evoking the alternative space of the distant sphere. To be sure, in certain details, both McDermot’s and Gentleman’s narratives share a connection with, among others, Wilkins and Godwin. Bishop Wilkins in *Discourse Concerning a New World and Another Planet* (1640) describes a chariot: Gentleman’s narrator Sir Humphrey Lunatic in his *Trip to the Moon* (1764) also speaks of a triumphal chariot or chair. Humphrey Lunatic meets with Wilkins while he is in the lunar world. Godwin’s character Domingo Gonsales in his *The Man in the Moone* (1638) comes to connect in Nicholson’s analysis with Swift’s *Gulliver’s*
Travels (1726). As she puts it, speaking of Gonsales on the moon,

As he remained among them, however, Domingo discovered, as do all travellers to Utopia, degrees and differences among lunarians as among men in this world. Many passages here anticipate Gulliver’s Travels. Domingo, the mortal, found himself classed among the least of the lunarians as Gulliver found himself among the Yahoos, since one’s social status in Godwin’s moon-world depended in part upon his height and stature, in part upon his ability to bear the varied kinds of light Domingo found in the moon. (81)

Godwin’s Gonsales starts his journey to the moon from “the island of Tenerife one of the Canaries, which is famous through the world, for a hill upon the same called el pico, that is to be discerned and kenned upon the sea no less that ten leagues off” (13). Ninety years later, McDermot while climbing the same hill, is enveloped by a whirlwind and transported to the moon.

Space, Dystopia and “A Voyage to Laputa”

Jonathan Swift in a letter to Charles Ford on August 14th, 1725, says: “I have finished my Travells, and I am now transcribing them; they are admirable Things, and will wonderfully mend the World” (Correspondence 87). The Travels were published as Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World by Benjamin Motte on October 28th, 1726. A Letter from Capt. Gulliver to his Cousin Sympson first appeared in the 1735 edition and is dated April 2nd, 1727. The name Sympson may allude to William Symson, the pseudonymous author of A Voyage to the East Indies (1715). The letter opens:

I hope you will be ready to own publicly, whenever you shall be called to it, that by your great and frequent Urgency you prevailed on me to publish a very
loose and uncorrect Account of my Travels; with Direction to hire some young
Gentlemen of either University to put them in Order, and correct the Style, as
my Cousin Dampier did by my Advice, in his Book called, A Voyage round
the World. (Swift 5)

Unlike Lemuel Gulliver the putative cousin William Dampier was a character in
real life. Born near Yeovil in Somerset in 1651, Dampier was a privateer, one of
those brave but none-too-scrupulous adventurers who equipped themselves with
ships and set off to make as much money as they could. He charted large sections of
the Australian coast, and amassed a large botanical collection. Dampier noted all the
weather patterns he saw, and the ocean currents he experienced. He died in 1715,
but as late as 1922 the science journal Nature described his charts of the Pacific
Ocean as “containing as much information about the winds in the Pacific as any of
the modern works on the same subject” (McWilliams 28). Undoubtedly, Dampier
caught the attention of Swift: William Le Fanu records that he owned a copy of the
third edition of William Dampier’s A New Voyage Round the World 1698 (16).

If Dampier’s work influenced Swift in his writing of Gulliver’s Travels, it is
also possible that Swift was influenced by Robert Boyle (1627-1691). Swift could
well have owed the idea for Gulliver’s Travels to Boyle’s Occasional Reflections on
Several Subjects, Whereto Is Premis’d a Discourse about Such Kind of Thoughts
published in London in 1665. Boyle therein says that he had:

thoughts of making a short romantic story, where the scene should be laid in
some island, of the southern ocean, govern’d by such rational Laws and
Customs as those of Utopia, or the New Atlantis; and in this Country he would
introduce an observing Native, that upon his return home from his Travels
made in Europe should give an account of our countries and manners under
feign’d names, and frequently intimate in his relations, (or in his answers to
questions that should be made him), the reasons of his wondering to find our customs so extravagant and differing from those of his country. For, more I imagine, that by such a way of proposing many of our practices, we should ourselves be brought unawares to condemn, or perhaps laugh at them; and would at least cease to wonder to find other Nations think them as extravagant as we think the manners of the Dutch and Spaniards as they are represented in our travellers books. (350-1)

It is interesting that Boyle makes reference to More and Bacon, two utopian writers whose work influenced Swift in writing Gulliver’s Travels. Gulliver refers to Utopia directly in the letter to his Cousin Sympson:

If the Censure of the Yahooos could any Way affect me, I should have great Reason to complain that some of them are so bold as to think my Book of Travels a meer Fiction out of mine own Brain, and have gone so far as to drop Hints, that the Houynhnhms and Yahooos have no more Existence than the Inhabitants of Utopia. (Swift 7)

And in Bacon’s New Atlantis, Swift found his analogue for Gulliver’s ‘Voyage to Laputa’. Bacon had followed the course of More’s Utopia but differently, as A.L. Morton argues:

Bacon, unlike More, was not concerned with social justice. He, too, was a Humanist, but by the beginning of the seventeenth century Humanism had run cold: hence, the difference between Utopia and New Atlantis is not so much a difference of content as a difference of purpose, a shift of interest and a lowering of temperature. (80-1)

A ‘Voyage to Laputa’ is uniquely Swift’s own extraterrestrial journey. As Majorie Hope Nicolson argues, at one level,

Swift’s island of Laputa is a flying chariot, harking back to the devices of
Godwin and Cyrano, to Lana’s Canoe and Gusmão’s Passarola. From another angle, the ‘Voyage to Laputa’ is a voyage to the moon, a conspicuous departure from other adventures of Gulliver, all of which take place in the terrestrial world. (190)

As the ‘Voyage to Laputa’ begins, there is nothing to suggest that this journey is to become a conspicuous departure from the other adventures of Gulliver. At first, it follows the style of the others. Gulliver sets out on August 5th, 1706, there is a storm at sea, and the ship is overtaken by pirates. Gulliver is set adrift on a solitary journey:

as to myself, it was determined that I should be set adrift, in a small Canoe, with Paddles and a Sail, and four Days’ Provisions, which last the Japanese Captain was so kind to double out of his own Stores, and would permit no Man to search me. I got down into the Canoe, while the Dutchman standing upon the Deck, loaded me with all the Curses and injurious Terms his Language could afford. (145)

Gulliver had taken his geographical location about an hour before the pirates boarded the Hope-Well and found he was in “the Latitude of 46N and of Longitude 183” (145). These co-ordinates would place Gulliver in the Northern Pacific, south of the Aleutian Islands. After drifting among islands, on the fifth day he settled on an island, on a perfectly clear day, and the sun became obscured by the sudden appearance of an inhabited extraterrestrial world:

A vast Opaque Body between me and the Sun, moving forwards towards the Island: It seemed to be about two Miles high, and hid the Sun six or seven Minutes, but I did not observe the Air to be much colder, or the Sky more darkened, than if I had stood under the shade of a Mountain. As it approached nearer over the Place where I was, it appeared to be a firm Substance, the
Bottom flat, smooth, and shining very bright from the Reflection of the Sea below. I stood upon a Height about two Hundred Yards from the Shore, and saw this vast Body descending almost to a Parallel with me, at less than an English Mile distance. I took out my Pocket-Perspective, and could plainly discover Numbers of People moving up and down the Sides of it, which appeared to be Sloping, but what those People were doing, I was not able to distinguish. (146)

Following the example set by his predecessors, Gulliver took out his “pocket-perspective” gradually, the ‘Flying Island’ came closer, so he could observe what people were doing: “the Reader can hardly conceive my Astonishment, to behold an Island in the Air, inhabited by Men, who were able (as it should seem) to raise, or sink, or put it into a Progressive Motion, as they pleased” (146). Gulliver’s actual journey above the terrestrial world begins as he is drawn up to the ‘Flying Island’:

they made signs for me to come down from the Rock, and go towards the Shore, which I accordingly did; and the flying island being raised to a convenient Height, the Verge directly over me, a Chain was let down from the lowest Gallery, with a Seat fastened to the Bottom, to which I fixed myself, and was drawn up by Pullies. (147)

Laputa hovers over the larger island of Balnibarbi over which the King of Laputa also presides. On alighting, Gulliver is surrounded by a crowd of people whose “outward Garments were adorned with the Figures of Suns, Moons, and Stars, interwoven with those of Fiddles, Flutes, Harps, Trumpets, Guitars, Harpsicords, and many more Instruments of Music, unknown to us in Europe”(148). When brought for an audience with the King, Gulliver notes: “Before the Throne, was a large Table filled with Globes and Spheres, and Mathematical Instruments of all kinds”(149). The Laputans have what Gulliver calls contempt for practical
Geometry thought to be servile and vulgar, and he remarks that:

they are very bad Reasoners, and vehemently given to Opposition, unless when they happen to be of the right Opinion, which is seldom their case. Imagination, Fancy, and Invention, they are wholly strangers to, nor have any Words in their Language by which those Ideas can be expressed; the whole compass of their Thoughts and Mind being shut up within the two forementioned Sciences. (152)

The key sciences were Mathematics and Music, but the Laputans also possessed a strong disposition towards news and politics as they were “perpetually inquiring into Public Affairs, giving their Judgements in matters of State; and passionately disputing every inch of a Party Opinion” (152). They lived under continual Disquietudes,

never enjoying a Minute’s Peace of Mind; and their Disturbances proceed from Causes which very little affect the rest of Mortals. Their Apprehensions arise from several Changes they dread in the Celestial Bodies. For Instance; that the Earth by the continual approaches of the Sun towards it, must in course of Time be absorbed or swallowed up. That the Face of the Sun will by Degrees be encrusted with its own Effluvia, and give no more Light to the World. That, the Earth very narrowly escaped a brush from the Tail of the last Comet, which would have infallibly reduced it to Ashes. (153)

The Laputans are so perpetually alarmed “with the Apprehensions of these and the like impending Dangers, that they can neither sleep quietly in their Beds, nor have any relish for the common Pleasures or Amusements of Life” (153). Visitors to Laputa notice that the inhabitants have their heads inclined either to the right or to the left, with one eye turned inwards and the other constantly looking up towards the zenith. As they are constantly absorbed in intense speculations, they require a
physical stimulus to speak or pay attention to the discourse of others. This has given rise to the custom whereby the rich employ certain servants, called flappers or *climenoles*, who carry bladders filled with small stones or dry peas. With these they gently strike the mouth of the speaker and the right ear of his intended listener. They also apply flaps to their masters’ eyes to prevent them from walking into obstacles or bumping into other people.

In the centre of the island, there is a chasm about fifty yards in diameter, from whence astronomers descend into a large dome, which is known as the *Astronomer’s Cave*, or *Flandona Gagnole* (a near anagram of London, England), situated at a depth of some hundred yards beneath the upper surface of adamant: “The place is stored with great variety of Sextants, Quadrants, Telescopes, Astrolabs, and other Astronomical Instruments” (156). Swift however was less concerned with the external features of his flying island than with the principles by which it flew. This in part was contingent upon one “mineral”, adamant. In the *Astronomer’s Cave*, Gulliver views a loadstone of prodigious size, resembling a weaver’s shuttle: “this Magnet is sustained by a very strong Axle of Adamant passing through its middle upon which it plays, and is poised so exactly that the weakest Hand can turn it” (156). By means of this loadstone, the island can rise and fall, and move from one place to another. By these motions the island is conveyed to different parts of the monarch’s dominions and presides over the terrestrial world of Balnibarbi and its metropolis, the city of Lagado. The Astronomers spend the greater part of their lives observing the celestial bodies, which they do with the assistance of telescopes the strength of which far exceeds those available in the terrestrial world. This advantage has allowed them to extend discoveries much farther than astronomers in Europe.
It is through the creation of the flying island of Laputa that Swift examines the contemporaneous relationship between Ireland and England. The Laputans rule over the distressed inhabitants of Balnibarbi who are constantly on the cusp of rebellion. The Laputans are often tempted to lower their island over the Balnibarbians, destroying them forever:

If any Town should engage in Rebellion or Mutiny, fall into violent Factions, or refuse to pay the usual Tribute, the King hath two Methods of reducing them to Obedience. The first and the mildest Course is by keeping the Island hovering over such a Town, and the Lands about it, whereby he can deprive them of the Benefit of the Sun and the Rain, and consequently afflict the Inhabitants with Death and Diseases. And if the Crime deserve it, they are at the same time pelted from above with great Stones, against which they have no Defence but by creeping into Cellars or Caves, while the Roofs of their Houses are beaten to pieces. But if they still continue obstinate, or offer to raise Insurrections, he proceeds to the last Remedy, by letting the Island drop directly upon their Heads, which makes a universal Destruction both of Houses and Men. However, this is an Extremity to which the Prince is seldom driven, neither indeed is he willing to put it in Execution, nor dare his Ministers advise him to an Action, which as it would render them odious to the People, so it would be a great Damage to their own Estates, which lie all below, for the Island is the King’s Demense. (Swift 159-60)

The King can suppress rebellion in his lower realms in a variety of ways. He can keep the island hovering over a dissident town, thus depriving it of the benefits of sun and rain. He can, if necessary, attack rebels with large stones. As a last resort, he can drop the island of Laputa on them, thus causing total destruction. The latter method is considered ill-advised for not only would it increase the unpopularity of
the king and his ministers, but it would also damage and destroy royal property. The Kings have always been reluctant to allow the island drop directly upon the inhabitants of Balnibarbi because, as Declan Kiberd argues, “this may signal a reluctance to imperil the English monarchy and constitution by an outright military repression of the other kingdom” (93). The rebellion sparked in the second city of Lindalino (a play on Dublin), where citizens use magnetic towers to foil the path of the flying island, can be construed as a version of the Wood’s halfpence affair, “this Incident broke entirely the King’s Measures and (to dwell no longer on other Circumstances) he was forced to give the Town their own Conditions” (162). Swift’s involvement in the defeat of Wood’s halfpence coincided with his work on *Gulliver’s Travels*. It arises in allegorical form in five paragraphs that describe the rebellion of Lindalino against Laputa.⁴

After seeing all the curiosities of the island of Laputa, Gulliver is happy to leave and so travels to Balnibarbi and the Metropolis of Lagado. In Lagado he finds “the people in the streets walked fast, looked wild, their eyes fixed, and were generally in Rags” (164). Of the countryside he says “I never knew a Soil so unhappily cultivated, Houses so ill contrived and so ruinous, or a People whose Countenances and Habit expressed so much Misery and Want” (164). In conversation Gulliver learns that about forty years earlier, certain persons had gone up to Laputa and after five months came back with “a very little smattering in Mathematics, but full of Volatile Spirits acquired in that Airy Region” (165). These people had “procured a Royal Patent for erecting an Academy of PROJECTORS in Lagado” (166). In this Academy, the professors discuss new rules relating to agriculture, building, new instruments and tools for all trades and manufactures, where

one Man shall do the Work of ten; a Palace may be built in a week, of
Materials so durable as to last for ever without repairing. All the fruits of the Earth shall come to Maturity at whatever Season we think fit to choose, and increase an Hundred Fold more than they do at present, with innumerable other happy proposals. (166)

Gulliver visits the Academy of Projectors at Lagado, a research institute staffed by ‘projectors’ working on schemes for the material benefit of the country. The projectors work upon schemes for extracting Sunbeams out of Cucumbers and an Astronomer had undertaken “to place a Sun Dial upon the great Weathercock on the Townhouse, by adjusting the annual and diurnal Motions of the Earth and Sun, so as to answer and coincide with all accidental Turnings by the Wind” (169). An architect had uncovered a new method for building houses, by beginning at the roof and working downwards to the foundation. Another project comprised a scheme for abolishing all words which was seen as a great advantage in terms of health and brevity:

For, it is plain, that every Word we speak is in some Degree a Diminution of our Lungs by Corrosion, and consequently contributes to the shortening of our Lives. An Expedient was therefore offered, that since Words are only Names for Things, it would be more convenient for all Men to carry about them, such Things as were necessary. (172)

The projectors are involved in schemes for improvement which are not, it appears, based on real needs. As Thomas Duddy puts it, “it is a world in which there is learning without understanding, knowledge without wisdom, rationality without reasonableness, and enquiry without responsibility” (161). They believe themselves to have worthy or ‘improving’ ends. Ultimately, they fail to provide realistic and practical solutions to real problems. Their schemes appear absurdly impractical: or, as Duddy puts it, “they demonstrate the ignorant utopianism of the academicians,
especially their contempt for natural processes and the laws of nature” (162). Swift’s satirising of all the curiosities of the Academy of Lagado may be seen within the broad context of his long-held aversion to “New Science”.

The Academy at Lagado thus connects with or is influenced by Bacon’s *New Atlantis* (1662) and also with the early Dublin Societies before the RDS. Bacon is the link connecting More with Swift. As Bacon wrote, “our method is continually to dwell among things soberly…..to establish forever a true and legitimate union between the experimental and rational faculty” (qtd. in Morton 82). Swift in *Gulliver’s Travels* unifies this experimental and rational faculty. The information which Bacon gives us about the political and economic organisation of Bensalem shows that *New Atlantis* belongs to the history of science as much as to the history of utopia. Bacon’s profile of the members of the House of Solomon resembles Swift’s Academy of Projectors, dedicated as they are to “enlarging of the bounds of human empire, to the effecting of all things possible” (3). The House’s scientific research has led to the development of submarines and flying machines; streams, cataracts and windmills are used to provide energy. Caves deep beneath the buildings are used for the production and preservation of metal, while high towers have been built for astronomical and meteorological observations and experiments. “Perspective” houses are devoted to experiments in optical science and to the production of telescopes, microscopes and other optical devices. Acoustic experiments are carried out in the “Sound” houses, which also manufacture musical instruments like the violin-piano and devices to reproduce natural sounds. The people of Bensalem can, for example, acquire knowledge of any language within a matter of months. In Bensalem there is “also a mathematical-house, where are represented all instruments, as well of geometry as astronomy, exquisitely made” (21).
Similarly, in Laputa’s Astronomer’s Cave “the place is stored with great variety of Sextants, Quadrants, Telescopes, Astrolabs, and other Astronomical devices” (Swift 156). As Boyle had referred to Bacon and More, the influence of Bacon and More also permeates “A Voyage to Laputa”. Having left Balnibarbi, Gulliver journeys to Glubbdubdrib, the Island of Sorcerers or Magicians, where he can choose anyone from among all the Dead from the beginning of the World to the present time and command them to answer any questions he should wish to ask them, only on condition that his questions be confined to the times in which they lived. Swift places Thomas More as the only modern among the group, which includes Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Caesar and Brutus. In a long conversation, Brutus tells Gulliver “that his ancestors Junius, Socrates, Epamimondas, Cato the Younger, Sir Thomas More and himself, were perpetually together: a Sextumvirate to which all the Ages of the World cannot add a Seventh” (Swift 182-3).

Almost a century and a half after Gulliver’s Travels was published, Richard Whately (1787-1863) Archbishop of Dublin from 1831 to 1863, in his “Lost Leaf of Gulliver’s Travels”, alludes to a newly discovered manuscript of Gulliver’s Travels, containing a passage which had not previously been published, and which appears to have been lost. Gulliver makes a return visit to the Academy of Projectors. He meets with many of the projectors he had formerly seen. As before they are engaged in multifarious schemes, he found “the one who was engaged in petrifying the hoofs of a living horse, the one who was extracting sunbeams from cucumbers, the agriculturist who was employing swine as plough-men, and the breeder of naked sheep, all very much as I had left them” (320). The professor who previously had devised a machine for composing books, was now intent on a scheme which he considered to be of far greater importance, “the constructing of a machine for performing the most abstruse calculations as accurately as the most expert
arithmetician” (321).

Gulliver engages with many projectors working on medical projects, including one “who was contriving a composition which would have the effect of rendering the human body insensible to pain, so that a man might undergo the amputation of a limb or any other such operation, without feeling the slightest uneasiness” (325). However, he hears of a scheme which he views as still more beneficial to mankind, if it could succeed. A projector proposed to “stop the ravages of one of the most dreadful kinds of pestilence that ever afflicted the human race, a painful, loathsome, and most dangerous disease, spreading by infection from one to another, raging like a fierce conflagration, and threatening to depopulate whole regions. His plan was to infect his patients, while yet sound in health, with a kind of venom obtained from the body of a cow”, (325) and this would produce, the projector believed, a very slight and mild form of disease, which could have the effect of strengthening the constitution against the most dangerous diseases. Gulliver finds it a strange notion to counter a disease with a disease; but the projector appeared to have no doubt as to its success. Gulliver also found newly invented telescopes much greater in size than those he had seen previously and he was assured that several new planets have been discovered, and a great number of small ones. The astronomer could “distinguish any object on the moon as large as a good-sized gentleman’s house” (326).

Among the political projectors, Gulliver found one who greatly interested him with his description of a scheme for the humane reformation of criminals. He proposed “that any one convicted of an assault and robbery, should receive the sentence of a long term of imprisonment and hard labour, but should be well fed and lodged, should do only a moderate amount of work, and should be released long before the end of the term, and left at liberty, with money in his pocket” (326). It was expected that this leniency would elicit gratitude from the prisoner and
“awaken all the good feelings which had been latent in his breast, and thus produce a reformed character” (326). Gulliver asks the projector what had been the result of the experiment so far and the projector admitted that, in most instances, “the first use that the released criminal made of his liberty was to commit some fresh outrage” (327). He hoped, however, “that in time this humane and generous proceeding would bring criminals to a better mind” (327).

Gulliver’s journey to Laputa, and in particular his visit to the Academy of Lagado, may be predicated on Swift’s long held disavowal of the “New Science”. Swift attacks such science in most of his work, as in A Tale of a Tub (1704) where he writes of the intention to erect a large Academy where members “are to be disposed into the several schools of this Academy, and there pursue those studies to which their genius most inclines them. The undertaker himself will publish his proposals with all convenient speed” (50). He proposes among others a school of swearing, a school of critics, a school of hobby-horses, a school of spleen. In satirising the experimenters Swift not only seems to satirise the ‘new science’ or ‘bad science’ but also its presentation in utopian terms. This parallels with Salomon’s House in New Atlantis, where objects of genuine amazement in Bensalem appear as objects of parody in Laputa.

Swift’s satirising of the projectors and their impractical schemes for improvement clearly finds a real-life parallel in Irish life: namely, in the Dublin Philosophical Society founded in 1683, and in the Irish associational life in the four decades after the Glorious Revolution, where a small community of learned individuals devoted themselves to scientific and intellectual pursuits. As the founding of the Dublin Society in 1731 was subsequent to Gulliver’s Travels, we do not know how Swift would have portrayed its work, but it seems that he is using the utopian realist ideal to satirise modern science. The utopian ideal of
improvement and betterment is thus challenged in an explicit parody where ‘bad science’ is inert, the antithesis of progress, of improvement. It is the antithesis of the utopian ideal itself. However, Whately, in having Gulliver revisit the Academy of Projectors in his “Lost Leaf,” reclaims the utopian amongst those schemes, identifying those which are ultimately for the betterment of humanity, most notably in the areas of medical science and social justice.

Utopia is inseparable from imaginary journeys, and in his projection of an imaginary world, Swift provides an exposition and critical analysis of social facts. To assist the process of comparison, utopias provide us with a guide who, as Peter Ruppert observes, “explains the marvellous transformation in utopia to a startled visitor who represents the author’s society” (8). This then is an exercise in what Suvin calls “cognitive estrangement”. Moving from the known world the reader is presented with the alternative world of the text while remaining tangentially and critically connected to the known world.

As a utopian satire, Gulliver’s Travels defamiliarises and thereby illuminates existing societal standards, values, and norms. For Suvin, the critical impact of the literary utopia lies in the capacity to distance or to make strange existing social relations and point towards better ones. The estrangement effect defamiliarises extant values and practices. Swift produces an estrangement effect in Gulliver’s Travels as it “both defamiliarises a familiar world and seeks to acquaint the reader with a strange, uncanny, and fantastical world” (Ruppert 16). Cognitive estrangement thus defines what is potentially the most pertinent effect of the utopian fiction discussed in this chapter. In Swiftiana Charles Henry Wilson, writing in 1804, captured the cognitive estrangement invoked by Swift in Gulliver’s voyages to Lilliput and Brobdingnag in a way that is also relevant to Laputa:
For the whole of the two voyages to Lilliput and Brodingnag arises one general remark which, however obvious, has been overlooked by those who consider them as little more that the sport of a wanton imagination. When human actions are ascribed to pygmies and giants, there are few that do not excite either contempt, disgust, or horror; to ascribe them therefore to such being was perhaps, the most probable method of engaging the mind to examine them with attention, and judge of them with impartiality, by suspending the fascination of habit, and exhibiting familiar objects in a new light. The use of the fable then is not less apparent, than important and extensive, and that this use was intended by the author can be doubted only by those who are disposed to affirm, that order and regularity are the effects of chance. (73)

In Laputa, Swift is “exhibiting familiar objects in a new light”: the flying island representative of England, and Balnibarbi as Ireland. Swift’s Laputa is a negative utopia. It is for Gulliver a dystopian space, a space which he is happy to leave. As he puts it, “having seen all the Curiosities of the Island, I was very desirous to leave it, being heartily weary of those people” (162). The inhabitants are a “people under continual Disquietudes, never enjoying a Minute’s Peace of Mind” (153). They are so perpetually alarmed that “they can neither sleep quietly in their Beds, nor have any relish for the common Pleasures or Amusements of Life” (153). Swift and many other “improvers” of eighteenth-century Ireland envisaged a complete transformation of the Irish landscape and infrastructure. Yet none of their projects had been brought to perfection. Swift and his contemporaries observed a polity on the brink of collapse. Ironically, their assertions of the country’s extreme poverty and the parlous state of its institutions were only outnumbered by the ingenious and
hare-brained schemes they proposed for its transformation from a floundering state into a wonderland affording unlimited gratification of political and economic desire. Swift’s flying island presages the need for the renovation of Ireland, through the ‘making new’ of a dystopian space. He challenges ‘improvers’ and projectors to take their heads out of the clouds. As Swift wrote: “these voyages were intended as a moral political romance; to correct vice, by shewing its deformity, in opposition to the beauty of virtue; and to amend false systems of philosophy, by pointing out the errors and applying salutary means to avoid them” (Swiftiana, 1: 171-2). Thus, Swift’s flying island, fundamentally satirical, provided an estranged space to comment on contemporary society, providing a series of cautions and warnings about modern times, and through its estrangement effect offered the possibility of the renovation of Ireland.

Murtagh McDermot’s A Trip to the MOON. Containing Some Observation and Reflections, Made by Him During His Stay in That Planet, upon the Manners of the Inhabitants. (1728)

Gulliver’s Travels inspired many imitations as Sargent phrases it, “Gulliver’s Travels gave rise to an entire subgenre of literature, loosely known as Gulliveriana, in which a traveller visits one or more countries inhabited by speaking animals or odd humans” (Utopia Reader 141). Welcher and Bush have noted that “of the more than sixty such responses published in the eighteenth century, about eighteen are direct imitations of Gulliver, attempting to reproduce something of its style, intent, and design. Four of the imitations have settings in outer space” (v). Two of these Irish-authored works are by Murtagh McDermot (1728) and Francis Gentleman (1764/1765). Their design, and their references to Swift place their work among
Gulliveriana, but their moon settings distinguish them from all other Gulliveriana. McDermot’s *Trip to the Moon* appearing within two years of *Gulliver’s Travels*, was the first Gulliverian imitation of the eighteenth century. It is Irish in terms of its origin, its narrator, its terrestrial setting in that McDermot tells us that he set sail from Dublin and returned to it at the end of his voyage. The work was published as *A Trip to the Moon by Mr. Murtagh McDermot Containing Some Observations and Reflections, Made by Him During His Stay in the Planet, upon the Manners of the Inhabitants.* No records have turned up of an actual author of that name at the time.

The name, while not unrealistic, is particularly appropriate; the surname is right for one associated with northern Irish counties, and McDermot in his narration tells us he is from the north of Ireland. The name Murtagh appears in a Gulliverian pamphlet, *The Asiniad: A Second Satire upon a Certain Wooden-man Revived by the Pseudonymous Martin Gulliver* (1730). In this short mock-heroic satirical poem,

Murtagh! A dull Dog, empty-pated,

Murtagh! successless and ill-fated.

Murtagh is the servant of Ventoso. Ventoso has made a presumptuous expedition to the moon; his name, meaning “windy” could derive from McDermot’s having been transported to the moon by a whirlwind. The subtitle of *The Asiniad,* “A Second Satire upon a Certain Wooden-Man Revived” (referring to a carved wooden statue on Essex Street in Dublin, then the publishing district) may connect with a 1721 pamphlet written “By Dr. Sw-ft,” *The Blunderful Blunder of Blunders,* which dwells at some length on “the Wooden Man in Essex Street.” These possible links may be deliberate and may be clues to the authorship of all three works – or they may not. Nonetheless, the author or authors of the Martin Gulliver pamphlet must have had a knowledge of McDermot and his *Trip to the Moon.*

151
Whoever Murtagh McDermot was, he had his *Gulliver* well in hand as he wrote *A Trip to the Moon*. The Dedication of the work is “to the Worthy, Daring, Adventurous, Thrice-renown’d, and Victorious Captain Lemuel Gulliver” (90) and it embraces Swiftian humour in its location, being “a Dedication in the Rear” as McDermot puts it:

Shall a Poet find a Patron, and not a Lunatick? Let it not be said, *Gulliver’s* alive, or the *Laputians* had e’re now crush’d us, by coming down to mourn him; yet his Lustre dazzles; he cannot be conceal’d: His Fame rings loundly in the Moon: To Clods of Earth I tell it. (90)

Like Gulliver, McDermot is diverted to a fantastical place by a natural phenomenon, a whirlwind. He learns the local language. Although the lunar language, which is unpronounceable and indecipherable, resembles Houyhnhnm speech. He is an acute observer and recorder. He has the same blend of curiosity, conceit and naivete as Gulliver. McDermot is both traveller and narrator of his story. His moon voyage took place in June 1718. He first identifies his family, education and occupation as background to his narrative. He decided to turn sailor and set out from Dublin to embark on a journey, joining Captain James Anderson and his crew on the *Runner* and they set sail for the Canaries. On arriving at Tenerife, he writes:

On the 12th of August following, we arriv’d at *Tenerife*, being driven thither by stress of Weather, for our Design was to land at *Palma*, to take in sugar; we got in *Santa Cruz* Bay, which is to the North East of the Island, and rode in 17 Fathom of Water. The Storm continued for some Days after we had providentially cast Anchor; during which Time, my Curiosity and Rashness prompted me to ascend the *Peak*. (6)
The following morning, McDermot began his ascent of the mountain peak, and from there a whirlwind arose and transported him to the moon. He records:

After I had been rais’d from the Mountain, I was carried at such a rate for a while, that I almost lost my Breath; the Force of the Whirlwind gradually abating, my Passage became more easy, till I came to a Place of Resting. This was a Space between the Vortices of the *Earth* and *Moon*. Where the Attraction of neither prevail’d, but the contrary Motions of their Effluvia destroy’d one another. (9)

Almost certain that he would die during the course of his journey; McDermot nevertheless reaches the moon and is rescued from his distress by the Lunarians:

I was quickly remov’d into the Sphere of the *Moon’s* Attraction, more than I intended; for two thirds of my Body being attracted by the *Moon*, the rest soon follow’d, so that I was carried with incredible swiftness, which still increase’d my fall towards that Planet. It was my good Fortune to fall into a Fish-pond, which our sharp-sighted Philosophers mistake for a Part of the Sea, and call it *Sinus Rorum*; but I hope they will not be so bold as to deny what I say, since they all confess that they never were there. (11)

Drawn from the fishpond by the King’s fishermen, he is brought before the King. His guide Tckbrff advises him that the King “was an absolute Monarch, was an ambitious Tyrant, he was one that never troubled himself about the Good of his People; but if ever their Interest interfer’d with his even unlawful Diversions, it was entirely neglected; he was a great Lover of Pleasure, and of every thing that was new, which he was pleas’d to call polite Learning, (tho’ he was often fond of, and encourag’d the greatest Absurdities)” (16). McDermot speaks freely with the King and gives him an account of the traditions of his terrestrial society, including
explaining to him as well as he could “the Difference between Whig and Tory, Protestant and Papist, and told him with what Zeal every Man maintain’d that Opinion which he embraced thro’ Ignorance, Prejudice, or Interest, with daring to examine his Principles by an infallible Rule, lest he should see any Reason for renouncing that Error he was so fond of” (21-22). McDermot, a sharp observer of the lunar inhabitants, notes that the

Generality of them were kind and affectionate to each other, which produced in them an Openness of living, whereby they held all Things in common. When they went abroad, they left their Homes open, and knew not what a Lock was. It was usual with them to assist each other in their private Concerns, without the Expectation of any Reward, other than the little kindness, it required. (82)

Here McDermot’s account, despite his earlier information that the King was a tyrant, evokes a utopian commonwealth. The inhabitants are kind and affectionate to one another and all things are held in common. On finding such a society McDermot believed that he was “settled for life” (83). Tellingly, while McDermot lauds lunar society Tckbrff believes that McDermot’s homeland was a better place. He believes that only honest men lived in Ireland; and he wants to be among them, believing that “the King and the People are so blended, that it is impossible for the one to subsist without the other” (21). McDermot’s response is that his people are the most refractory and rebellious in the entire solar system. McDermot, while writing a Gulliverian imitation, thus diverges sharply from Swift on the possibility of a utopian society. Swift, in “A DISCOURSE Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the SPIRIT,” lists “Utopian Commonwealths” with such fanciful objects of human longing as the philosopher’s stone, the elixir of life, and the
s quar of the circle as products of mankind’s “fanatic enthusiasm” (Prose Works, 1: 174). McDermot, however, locates a utopian commonwealth on the moon, and in an echo of Plato also manages to find the Philosopher’s Stone in a subterranean cavern with philosophers and poets working at anvils and spinning sonnets, odes and epigrams. However McDermot’s utopian commonwealth is contradictory, for after all the lunar King is a despot and a tyrant willing to enslave his people. Read in this manner McDermot’s work can be more readily apprehended. His utopian projection as an imaginary voyage allegorises the potential conflicts and rebelliousness of his homeland. The tryannical facets of lunar society can, dystopically, emblematise his own society, while those clearly utopian elements of lunar society represent what his terrestrial world might emulate. The Lunars were, he discovers, followers of the Pythagorean doctrine:

Whatever they practis’d, they confidently affirmed that they had his express Command for, or else they made him to mean Things as they serv’d their Interests by giving his Thoughts a new Turn, and by making their Comments upon his Writings as authentick as what they were design’d to explain. (38)

McDermot’s most original idea in A Trip to the Moon incorporates Pythagoreanism. One sees the suitability of this doctrine as a moon religion, with its theory of transmigration, its interest in astronomy and music of the spheres, and its general eighteenth-century reputation as an enthusiastic sect. In his Preface, McDermot alludes to transmigration to add verisimilitude to his own account of his transportation to the moon. He speaks of those who deny that transmigration of souls from one body to another is possible. He posits that it is possible as Pythagoras argues for souls to pass from one body to another, and so asks if it is probable that transmigration of an inhabitant from one planet to another may not
also occur. He brings the most convincing argument for it, as he puts it, “I went, I saw, I return’d” (3). He learns on the moon that Pythagoras had been there and had transformed himself into, among other things, a baliff, a hangman, an emperor and a lawyer. He finally set himself up as a philosopher and calls himself Pythagoras. The Lunars embrace all the Pythagorean categories: transmigration, asceticism, geometry, objects in temples, and ultimately worship of Pythagoras rather than the gods. McDermot then juxtaposes them with features of Catholic teaching, such as the doctrine of purgatory, fast and abstinence, reliquaries. He expands on this difference between the Lunar Philosophers and their earthly fellows:

I will not take upon me to say that all the Philosophers which we had upon Earth were first in the Moon, tho’ I have been often tempted to believe it, from the Conformity of the Opinion of several earthly Philosophers to those religious Sects in the Moon; for I observ’d that there were Platonicks and Cynicks there: The former affected magical Transports, and pretended that they kept a Courier constantly to bring them Intelligence from Heaven. (44)

McDermot knew the traditions of contemporary science. He uses terms such as “effluvia” (studied by Boyle) and “Vortices” (used in Cartesian cosmogony and Isaac Newton’s gravitational theory). He refers to comets, moon maps, and Hume’s ideas on causality and Descartes’ psychology. In using these terms, McDermot highlights experimental science, and his utopian commonwealth on the moon is the imaginative landscape in which science and society can cohere. Such experimental science, including the use of gunpowder, was to be the basis for McDermot’s mode of transport in returning to earth. Whereas Gulliver was desirous to leave both Laputa and Balnibarbi as quickly as possible, McDermot contemplates living semi-permanently on the moon and spends two years there: “Hitherto I had liv’d as
happily as I could expect at such a Distance from mine own Country; and now I began to think seriously of settling in the Moon for the Remainder of my Life” (58). Nonetheless he constructs a device made from a network of wooden tubs and a long trail of gunpowder and does return to earth. This apparatus “has sometimes been described as the first description of rocketry as a means of inter-planetary travel” (Loeber and Loeber, Guide 811). His mode of propulsion, a whirlwind and gunpowder, come from Lucian (c.120-c.200) and from Savinien Cyrano de Bergerac’s Histoire comique des états et empires de la lune (1656). He recounts his preparations for the journey:

I design to place myself in the middle of ten wooden vessels, placed one within another, with the outmost strongly hopped with iron, to prevent its breaking. This I will place over 7,000 barrels of Powder, which I know will raise me to the top of the Atmosphere. I should here observe, that there were several mountains out of which they dug Gun-Powder, which was made fit for use, as salt is on the Earth, by exposing it to the intense heat of the sun in some parts that are very near the equator. The mountains were called Pfefwhhbz or the Devil’s Warts. But before I blow myself up, I’ll provide myself with a large pair of wings, which I will fasten to my arms in my resting-place; by the help of which I will fly down to the earth. (84)

McDermot’s fictive construction of a network of wooden tubs and a long trail of gunpowder could indeed be the first description of rocketry as a means of inter-planetary travel.

In Guinea after retuning to the earth, he finds a ship captained by “a very civil Gentleman, one Mr. Jacob Broome” and joins his crew and sets sail for England (89). On board, McDermot gives an account of his voyage to the moon and
finds that the Captain exempts him from the work of a common sailor and makes him his companion so he could converse with him about his extraordinary travels. Arriving in London on September 12th, 1720, Broome gave McDermot money to cover his onward journey to Dublin on the condition that he would publish his adventures. After arriving in Dublin on September 27th, McDermot learns that his friends had since travelled to the North of Ireland. As he puts it, “Thither I follow’d them, being sufficiently tir’d with Rambling; and there I resolved to spend the Remainder of my Days in Quiet” (89-90).

When McDermot published his *Trip to the Moon*, he wanted it, as Swift did with *Gulliver’s Travels* to have some verisimilitude. He viewed his journey as venturing forth on behalf of his countrymen to gather information on their behalf, or as he observes:

I went, I saw, I return’d; I ventur’d my Life many times for the Information of my Countrymen, who, I hope, will shortly by their own Ingenuity, confirm what I have said. There is one Objection against this Piece, which I think ought to be remov’d. It may be said, that the Author never has been in the Moon, since he relates very little but what is observable among us, for he talks of Plays, Coffee-Houses, Balls, Ladies, Tea, Intriguing, Pythagoreans, and other Things, which may be easily apply’d to our selves, and are in use among us. To this I answer, First, That to condemn a Man without Sufficient evidence, is contrary to our Irish statutes, neither can such Evidence be bad, till some Body arrives from the Moon, who I am sure will bear Witness to all I have set down. (2-3)

McDermot adds a codicil to his work: in an Advertisement where he draws on a story he had read in *Dickson’s Newsletter*, he notes: “Reading, June 5th, 1727.
Yesterday a whirlwind took up into the Air, near 100 Yards from the Ground, four Hay-Cocks in a Field near this Town, each weighing 200 Pound, and carried them to another Place half a Mile off” (94). McDermot’s championing of this story clearly aims to add to the plausibility of his own utopian projection. If a whirlwind could cause four cocks of hay to be transported beyond half a mile, is it not possible that a whirlwind, albeit a larger one, could transport a man, such as himself from the top of a mountain to the moon? McDermot remains conscious that “some may imagine my being in the MOON to be only a mere Dream; but why one should not be as likely as the other, I shall leave it to the Judgment of the Reader after he has read the Foregoing TRIP” (94). Ultimately he realises that his Trip to the Moon can provide varieties of reader feedback, belief that a fantastical journey could have occurred or was merely a dream or fanciful tale. A Trip to the Moon is a jeu d’esprit laden with references to contemporaneous technical and scientific advances. In the imaginary geography of the moon, McDermot finds a liminal landscape in which to discourse on science, learning, politics, religion, customs and manners. It is fundamentally a work of utopian satire, a homage to Lemuel Gulliver and the Laputans, and it remains a work of proto-science fiction, combining scientific knowledge and the world of the imagination in an eighteenth-century Irish context. McDermot, therefore, combines satire and science in a utopian projection which locates a utopian commonwealth on the moon. He creates a topos wherein his image of the utopian journey functions as an estranged pre-vision of what Ireland could become.
Francis Gentleman, playwright and essayist, was born on October 23rd, 1728, in York Street, Dublin, the son of a British army captain. The details of his early life and ancestry are obscure, but it is known that he was educated at the grammar school in Digges Street, Dublin, from the ages of ten to fifteen. In 1749 he was cast by Thomas Sheridan (1719-1788), manager of Dublin’s Smock Alley Theatre, as Aboan in Thomas S sourtherne’s (1660-1746) Oroonoko, and afterwards in minor supporting roles. He then unexpectedly inherited £800 from an uncle in the East Indies, which was, according to its beneficiary, reduced by three-quarters by his lawyers. This event was to establish a pattern of thwarted expectations, financial insecurity, and debt which would continue for the rest of his life.

After this loss, he left for London and embarked upon his career as a man of letters. In 1751 Gentleman published his adaptation of Ben Jonson’s Sejanus, the first of many revisions of Jonson, Shakespeare, and others, in line with the tastes of eighteenth-century audiences. Around this time he also wrote a tragedy, Osman, which was produced in Bath in 1754. He produced a considerable body of literary and theatrical criticism and he developed a peripatetic career as a supporting actor, moving between London, Scotland, and the north of England, and, finally, Dublin, over the next three decades. Gentleman’s most significant work, however, was on criticism: The Dramatic Censor, which was published in two volumes in 1770. Addressing the increasingly literate theatregoing public of the late eighteenth-century, these volumes were a theatre-goer’s guide. The key figure for Gentleman
was the actor David Garrick (1716-1779), with whom he had been associated since 1751, and whose self-identification with Shakespeare he enthusiastically endorsed. Gentleman was fulsome in his praise of the actor, and *The Dramatic Censor* is of special interest for its accounts of Garrick’s major Shakespearian roles, including Macbeth, Romeo and Richard III.

In his two-volume work *A Trip to the Moon* (1764/1765), Gentleman uses the pseudonym *Sir Humphrey Lunatic*. As Welcher and Bush have noted, the first printing of a play by Gentleman, *The Modish Wife, A Comedy* (1775), carries an introductory essay which is called “A Summary View of the English, Scots, & Irish Stages,” but it is mainly an autobiographical sketch. The author says that some little while after his play was first produced in Chester in 1761, he went and settled for four years in an agreeable and reasonable markettown, about twenty miles from *York*, called *Malton*....During my residence here, I wrote a thing in two volumes called a *Trip to the Moon* which had uncommon praise in that part of the world, and was not severely treated by those critical dictators, the Monthly Reviewers, yet the success of that publication was no way considerable. (Gentleman 6)

This is Gentleman’s sole reference that we know of so far to claiming *A Trip to the Moon* as his own work. While he draws on literary antecedents such as Savinien Cyrano de Bergerac, (1619-1655), he remakes the motif of the moon voyage as a vehicle for his critical and visionary ideas. His experiences with lawyers, patrons, his work on fables, his composition of an opera, and his many years as an actor all contribute to this work. Gentleman’s narrator Sir Humphrey Lunatic alludes to Bergerac and notes:
I form’d great expectations from a piece which once fell into my hands, called Bergerac’s *Voyage to the Moon*; the title indeed gave me particular pleasure as I hope to find somewhat very extraordinary in the contents; yet was I vastly deceived for tho’ there are strong marks of Genius in that production, upon the whole I could discover nothing very interesting; however the thought of a journey to the Lunar World struck very deep, and all calculations, all my wishes, were ever after assiduously employed on the effecting such a jaunt.

(15-16)

Here, then, Gentleman draws a direct thread of connection to an earlier lunar narrative. He has Humphrey Lunatic read Bergerac’s work and it sets the tone for his own journey to the lunar world, *A Trip to the Moon Containing an Account of the Island of NOIBLA. Its Inhabitants, Religious and Political Customs* by Sir Humphrey Lunatic. Noibla is an evident reversal of Albion and *A Trip to the Moon* opens with a glossary of 43 words and phrases from the Noiblan language. Gentleman, as a dramatist, introduces his glossary as he would the dramatis personae of a play. The Noiblan language reveals its English origins through a series of anagrams *Noibla – Albion, Nodnol* the capital city of Noibla is an anagram of London and *Notlam* the island’s spring of purification is named after Malton near York where Gentleman lived for a time. After introducing the glossary, Sir Humphrey, in the style of Lemuel Gulliver, gives an account of himself and his family. It contains an account of his ancestors from the time of the first Baronet of his family:

Though the following piece is not of a biographical nature, the Author thinks it necessary to give some short account of himself and his family, that thereby
forming a kind of acquaintance with his readers, they may pursue their journey
together through the Lunar World with more cordiality and pleasure. (1)

He then describes the Lunatics as a “considerable family, ever since England was
England” and describes how “to make a complete detail of genealogical particulars,
would be a work of insufferable proximity and ostentation; wherefore the Author will
only revert to his Great Grandfather, the first Baronet of his part of the family; and
proceed from him in a direct line, without regard to several other distinguished
collateral branches” (2). Humphrey Lunatic’s biography of his ancestor Sir
Whimsical Lunatic and his father, also Sir Humphrey, reveals that they had always
questioned public affairs. Sir Whimsical is remembered as one who might have
been eminently advanced in the State:

but, like a true LUNATIC, being fond of opposition, and distaining to run with
the stream long, he began to find fault with the conduct of Public Affairs;
openly declaring that the plan of PLATO’S REPUBLIC, with some
Alterations and Amendment of his own, would be the only sure Foundation
for our National Happiness. (5)

And so, Sir Whimsical provides a link to classical Greece and to the earliest work
we now call a utopia and thus evinces his own desire for a much better society in his
own time. The senior Sir Humphrey is remembered as one who had been involved
in politics for thirty five years, and as part of a strong opposition had been the main
cause of removing a dozen ministers of state “most of whom he thought honest till
in office” (12). However, the present Sir Humphrey has decided to find a different
means of immortalising his name and embalming it for posterity. He has studied the
whole planetary system, and he hopes that his trip to the moon will show “that he
deserves as exalted a place in the Rolls of Fame, as any LUNATIC

163
that ever made a figure in life” (13-14). Humphrey Lunatic’s journey to the lunar world occurred during a period of sleep:

Slumber instantly fell up on me, and from thence, I dropp’d into a profound sleep. How long this soft semblance of Death remained upon me I cannot say; but imagine Reader, if thou cans’t, my surprise, and let me add some terror also, when upon waking, I found myself seated in a kind of Triumphant Car, surrounded by a great number of human figures, not one of which I had the least idea of yet all showing many marks of respect, and murmuring out an extraordinary kind of joy. (17)

His journey to the lunar world differs from McDermot’s. McDermot is transported by a whirlwind from the top of a mountain in Tenerife to the moon, however, Lunatic tells us that at the end of May, while taking a nightly walk of contemplation, he climbed a hill whose top was shaded by trees. There was a great silence, broken only by the lulling notes of a nightingale. He came upon a vale beside a stream “skirted by a venerable Grove, whose branches, as SHAKESPEAR has it, were silvered by the MOONSHINE’S watry beams; that Planet having then filled its Orb with most unusual Lustre, wrapped up in pleasing Melancholy, Slumber insensibly fell upon me, and from thence I dropp’d into a profound Sleep” (16-17).

Lunatic’s journey to the lunar world is therefore only realised in the dream-world of deep sleep. Drawn from the place where he had slept, he was taken “to the limits of the lunar world” (20). His destination is the island of Noibla, “the most favoured spot of all this Lunar World” (27). His host and guide on the journey to Noibla informs him that his being chosen for the trip was “an operation not a little facilitated by some sympathetic pamphlets thou hadst in thy pockets” (21). They
included “three of WHITEFIELD’S SERMONS, half a dozen North-Britons, and as many schemes for paying off the National Debt by Jacob Henriques” (21). Thus, Humphrey Lunatic’s transportation to the lunar world was far from arbitrary; for he was selected on the basis of the political and social beliefs he held in the terrestrial world. George Whitefield (1714-1770), the evangelist, produced some 18,000 sermons during the course of his lifetime. From the time of his ordination in 1736 he delivered many sermons throughout England, Scotland and Ireland. It is therefore possible that Gentleman heard such sermons and subsequently incorporated the reference to Whitefield into A Trip to the Moon. During his sojourn on the island of Noibla, Humphrey Lunatic is introduced, as in the typical utopian tour, to many aspects of society, such as the Noiblan laws, the manner of elections, food, the management and education of youth.

Sir Humphrey thus concludes: “it is a country much to be admired, and a people in many points highly deserving imitation” (14). For example, when he first arrived in the city and was brought to the NOTLAM, or SPRING of PURIFICATION, he drank from the holy spring and was sprinkled with water, while a maiden uttered the words “may content ever dwell here, and social happiness be the reigning Principle”(24). This rite of purification was effected to instil both wisdom and virtue, but it clearly registers a utopian element as through undergoing such a purification process the individual would become wiser and more virtuous as the society as a whole would, as the Noiblan maiden states, be a place where social happiness would be a reigning principle, a holy commonwealth. The works of religion, however, are not sold there, for they do not have currency. Thus, the coin they have is “but social intercourse and mutual regard” (25). Humphrey Lunatic had wanted to make a payment in coin after the rite of purification
ceremony, but his Noiblan guide admonishes him and says that among them there is
no envy or discord as he says “after that could’st thou imagine any Regard would be
paid to such Dross as Gold? Did we want to introduce Flames among our Fields,
Dearth among our Cattle, Dissentions among our Families, Bloodshed into our
Cities, Diseases into our Bodies” (25).

The guide took some pieces of gold from Lunatic’s purse and he held them in
each hand and addressed the multitude in a clear utopian mode:

Behold, my Friends and Brothers of the Island of Noibla, the most favoured
spot of all this LUNAR WORLD, behold, ye Sons of natural and untainted
Liberty, the Fiend who, having got Footing on the Terrestrial Globe, rules
every Government and every Individual, of all Sexes, Ages, and Degrees; for
the Sake of Bits like these, dug, by half-fed Slaves, out of the Bowels of the
Earth, to pamper Pride and Luxury; thousands and ten thousands march into
the bloody Field of War, hung round with the most destructive Weapons of
Cruelty, to mutilate and butcher their Fellow-Creatures; for these their Clergy
pray; their Lawyers wrangle; their Physicians kill: For these Fathers and their
Sons, Mothers and their Daughters, Brethren and Sisters, run into the most
uncharitable Dissensions: Gilded with these, Vice claims Respect while thread
bare Virtue stands shiv’ring and helpless at the unhospitable Doors of Luxury
and Pride. (26-27)

Here, the Noiblan speaker views his own society in utopian terms which echo
More’s utopian narrative. This is the most favoured spot in all of the cosmos. The
inhabitants are viewed as pure, untainted and he compares life on Noibla to life on
the terrestrial globe. Each is represented in dystopian terms as a place where
avarice, luxury and vice reign. It has become corrupted by the evils wrought by
money and gold. The speaker offers a critique of the social evils of luxury and pride which have infected the terrestrial land and makes a call to reason: “Oh Reason, where is thy Power? Mount, mount for Shame thy Throne, nor longer abdicate thy judgement-seat, lest usurping Passions create universal and incurable Confusion” (28). If reason is to be the salvation of the dystopian terrestrial world, by contrast he continues to portray Noibla as utopia. It is free of gold, of luxury and pride which he views as fatal influences and a bane to social happiness. Tellingly, he notes:

No Blood stains our Fields; no Fears shake our Peace; that Religion is Gratitude, no interest; that Inclination, moderated by Prudence, joins every Couple here; that Sons, when arrived in Discretion, enjoy equal advantages with their Fathers, whom therefore they never wish to bury; that such Failings as we have amongst us cannot either be hid or rendered less shameful by such tinsel covering; that here no Tongue will move, no Virgin yield her Honour for mercenary Bribes! (29)

Through a series of micro-narratives facilitated by his guide, Lunatic thus gives an outline of many aspects of Noiblan society. Among them is an account of the legal practices on Noibla. In the House of Justice or REQUECEX, laws are enforced on all matters relating to the administration of the city of Nodnol. The island is divided into one hundred districts, each under a city and each under the guidance of a magistrate called NAMREDAL, who sits each week to adjudicate on complaints. He refers for direction to a Body of Law which was drawn up in “a plain concise style, without the intricacy and incumbrance multiplied, which serve only to explain away the sense and diminish the force of the original design” (32). He has the power to summon a council of citizens to assist him. If the NAMREDAL is displaced as incapable, he is deprived of his rights as a citizen and banished to the mountains of
Neroma. Once a year all the NAMREDALS of the Island meet and consider the
general state of the inhabitants; disputes are resolved and six citizens from each
district enter into a minute inquiry of every NAMREDAL’S administration during
the year. He is either given an honorary certificate or rendered incapable of that
office ever after. The honour and respect of the citizens are the rewards for their
labour. The office of the NAMREDALS is the only office of pre-eminence “all
other CITIZENS being upon an equal footing” (34).

In the rearing of children, the guide asserts that the method of treating children
is very different from that of Lunatie’s world: they are reared “to become Sparks to
animate Virtue, not Flames to destroy it” (40). A few days after its birth, a child is
taken from its mother and given to the care of some other woman:

who may, by corrective, constitutional qualifications, alter the child’s natural
defects; if he is born of a Mother cold and phlegmatic in her Disposition, he is
put to one of a sanguine Habit; and thus the contrast is observed in other cases,
so that a due Temperament is formed from the earliest. (40)

Young people are sent to the SNOISSAPANS, or public schools, where professors
are rewarded solely in exemptions from other offices and avocations, so that “each
person knows the Sphere he is to move in, and is solely answerable for his Conduct
in it” (42). The pupils are instructed in the principles of morality, the tenets of
religion, social duties and the laws of the Island. Each individual learns “how to
conduct himself in private and social, and, by the last, in a political Capacity; from
this Method he becomes his own Divine, his own Lawyer, his own Magistrate” (43).
Because they do not trade with any other country, or amongst themselves, “the Arts
of Trade, and consequently Fraud, are unknown” (43). What are called in the
terrestrial world “polite accomplishments” (43) are looked upon on Noibla as
useless and “pernicious superfluities, since they not only engross much time, but also afford great occasion to Vanity” (43).

Sir Humphrey then, develops another line of commentary by way of his accounts of earthly personages who have been taken up to Noibla. The transported person of Bishop John Wilkins plays a central part as host and guide to Humphrey Lunatic. His A Discourse Concerning a New World and Another Planet: The First Book, The Discovery of a New World; or, A Discourse Tending to Prove, that ‘Tis Probable There May Be Another Habitable World in the Moone had been published in 1638. Wilkins, a NAMREDAL, greets our narrator as “Brother of the nether Globe” (57) and recalls how he arrived on Noibla:

Tho’ to all Appearance I died, and was laid in Earth with the usual solemnity yet the strict, unwearied attention I had paid to the LUNAR WORLD, obtained me a Translation to this happy spot, where I have continued ever since in Ease and Respect, without a wish to gratify, a fear to perplex, or any visible decay. (58)

Other transported inhabitants of Noibla include Alexander the Great, Peter the Great of Muscovy, Cardinal Wolsey, Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth, Oliver Cromwell, Caesar, Pompey and Cato. In a Dantesque gesture, these former inhabitants of earth are punished or rewarded according to their actions on earth. Henry VIII, for example, who “has brought with him hither all his Spirit of RELIGIOUS REFORMATION; it still remains so active and impetuous that he never lets our AVOZENS (priests) alone; who hear him indeed; but as often laugh at the vain Effects of Innovation, to the no small Mortification of his Pride” (67) Cardinal Wolsey “that puffed-up mushroom of Fortune, in return of his most exhorbitant insolence, is here reduced to the office of keeping the Ruvenal (the square): that is,
sweeping it every day and toll the Elkinitan before the citizens dine” (77). Queen Elizabeth is allowed precedence of all females in NODNOL and would have been chosen for the Magistracy; “but for the Caprice of having sacrificed a Favourite to ill-grounded Resentment or Jealousy, and the Cruelty of having even agreed to the Execution of so amiable a Princess as her Sister of SCOTLAND” (69). Humphrey Lunatic also gives an account of what he calls “several of the Literati transferred from Earth to the Moon” (79). In the artistic and literary life of the island Homer presides over epic poetry in Nodnol, assisted by Virgil and Milton. Francis Bacon, John Locke and Isaac Newton are vested with the superintendence of all philosophical transactions. Tacitus and Clarendon preside over History. In Drama, Shakespeare is dignified with the title of Delineator of Nature and is head of the Theatre or ESTRALAM, although his work is as critically examined and reviewed as one who had never written before. Joseph Addison was “admitted as a good man than a great Poet, on account of his Integrity, his zeal for Morality and Religion while he was on Earth, has been naturalised a CITIZEN, and enjoys the post of Secretary to the NAMREDAL” (98). Through Addison’s intercession, Swift is appointed his assistant. Swift however, does not enjoy any NOIBLAN Privileges because it had been proved that

he paid more Attention to Politics than Divinity; that Ambition not Piety was his ruling Principle; that he ever took more Delight to censure that commend; that he anatomised Characters with as little Remorse as Surgeons do Bodies; and that he was guilty of unheard of Cruelty in regard of Vanessa. (98)
Solely through Addison’s interest and his avowal that Swift “had done many extensive and well-appropriated Charities” (99) was Swift admitted. However, despite admission to Noibla, the Dean’s situation is indifferent:

for his Pride ill brooks so subordinate a State, and his perverse Nature is mortified at the Tranquillity he sees around him; he never enjoys any Satisfaction, unless he meets some of his Countrymen wearing Badges of their Vice or Folly; and then, DIOGENES-like, he gratifies his malicious Temper with cynical Sneers and biting Sarcasms. (99)

Humphrey Lunatic further learns that Alexander Pope has been accepted on Noibla; while Ben Johnson had been excluded because of “first, his abominable Principles bordering on theism; and next, his Ingratitude to SHAKESPEAR, either of which was sufficient to shut him out” (97). Johnson has been banished to ERISHNOVER (the mountain of blood) where “he drags on a tedious and despicable Existence” (97). Pope, while well regarded by Homer, is seen as having “a shameful Envy of his Contemporaries” (97), and wears a laurel wreath mingled with sprigs of nightshade and is “almost continually tormented with the jests and Railery of COLLEY CIBBER, BEAU NASH, AND JOHN RICH, late Manager of Covent-Garden THEATRE” (97). Lawyers and clergy above the degree of curate are allowed on Noibla. While acknowledging that abuses can occur within the press, the “LIBERTY of the Press, however it may be abused (and no human institution is perfect) ought to be most carefully preserved, as an unreserved Monitor to KING, STATESMEN, AND PEOPLE” (82).

A Trip to the Moon includes a moral, philosophical and ideological interrogation which is the nexus of this utopian satire. Gentleman describes a non-existent society in great detail, thereby critiquing and criticising contemporary, namely, English society. Through his use of anagrammatic
placenames, he uses the Island of Noibla as a mirror to Albion. Through the voice
of his Noiblan guide, the island of Noibla is presented as a place of invariable
felicity, a utopia. This is counterpoised against the dystopian space of his own
terrestrial world. The narrative is then strengthened as these Earth-bound
characters are translated to the island of Noibla to be challenged and
reformed. This utopia is both open and dynamic, for the open-endedness is wrought
from the narrator’s and citizens’ questioning of the core of utopia itself. Through
the persona of Wilkins, the awareness of the limitations of Noibla is stressed:

There is a general and amiable tranquillity here but then it is founded upon
principles which entirely restrain progressive knowledge; all here think
themselves sufficiently wise, sufficiently happy; they seek to know no more
that they are already acquainted with, nor to possess any Thing better than
what their Fathers have enjoyed: This will appear to you a mental lethargy,
and undoubtedly it is such; but many advantages accrue from such mode of
thinking. (203-204)

Humphrey Lunatic adds a commentary on his own thoughts:

When alone a vast variety of ideas crowded upon each other in my
imagination; First, my unaccountable conveyance to the LUNAR WORLD,
surprising and inconceivable in its Nature; next that peculiar and kind
reception I had met in it; the novelty of those ceremonies I had gone thro; the
happy situation, the tranquil equality of the people I had, as it were, dropp’d
among; with many other circumstances which do not now occur; moreover I
felt some degree of uneasiness, that I knew not how I was to return, nor when,
nor if at all; but sleep, like a kind friend, came to my assistance, and, by its
oblivious influence closing up the Eye of memory, relieved me from those
Anxieties which my new and extraordinary situation had occasioned. (149-50)
And so, Humphrey Lunatic confirms the utopian nature of the lunar society: the
happy situation and equality of the people is a realisation of his ancestor Whimsical
Lunatic’s vision of such a society in the style of Plato’s Republic as the foundation
of national happiness. In closing the first volume of his travels, he speaks of “this
extraordinary Progress”, the “kind Readers, after conversing and travelling so far
together, I hope on friendly terms, you think it fit that for a while at least, we should
part: if you are inclined to accompany me any farther in this extraordinary Progress,
I shall attend your Call, and in the mean time I bid you heartily farewell” (204-05).
The second volume of A Trip to the Moon was published a year after the first
volume in 1765. Gentleman’s use of the island of Noibla again provides a frame for
his literary and political thoughts.

Humphrey Lunatic, at the beginning of volume 11 of his Trip to the Moon, refers back to the reception given to his first volume:

FELLOW-TRAVELLER according to Promise I have again met you, in
order to continue our Tour, and I doubt not but the same Degree of good
Humour, the same Flow of Spirits, the same commendable Curiosity on your
Side, and the same friendly Disposition to gratify it on mine, will render our
farther Progress both pleasant and profitable. Before we set off, however, let
me express my Hope that you will not prove like a learned and ingenious
Critic upon my former VOLUME, who declared a general Approbation of
the Matter and Conduct, were it not that he deemed the Ascent of a Mortal to
the Moon impracticable. (11, 1)
Gentleman does not tell us who the critic of his former volume was; but his second volume provides an ample frame for his thoughts, digressions, fragments and musings. He includes a sequence on the drama of Shakespeare which coheres with Gentleman’s own biography as he had adapted several of Shakespeare’s plays. In an extended scene, a drama takes place in the Noiblan language with the audience entertained by Addison with a piece called ‘Temple of Virtue’ while Bolingbroke presented a dramatic revue called ‘The Europeans’. According to Noiblan custom, all citizens are actors by turns and every author introduces his own work. Addison introduces his work, and the narrator remarks on the difference between Addison’s terrestrial persona and his changed persona on the island of Noibla “for he, who could never utter any Thing declamatory in the other World, having, by Custom, cast off that childish Diffidence, or perhaps irrational Pride, which closed his Lips there, is now become one of our most eloquent and most powerful Speakers” (11, 98). Gentleman’s use of anagrams, foreign words, digressions and observations is indebted to the pattern of Gulliverian narratives. As I have noted, in his first volume, Gentleman has Swift act as Addison’s assistant. In the second volume he gives a satiric evaluation of *Gulliver’s Travels*. He states, referring to Henry Fielding’s (1707-1754) *Pamela*, that

> We may say of her Life, as a learned Bishop did of JONATHAN’S Gulliver, that the Story was well enough, but must be a confounded Lye; and that the Book ought to be burnt by a Jury of Females, as Locke’s *Essay on Human Understanding* was by the Convocation of Oxford, for tending to confuse and mislead with impossible principles. (11, 85)

The extended dramatic performance thus draws Humphrey Lunatic’s narrative to an end. The audience parts and the dramatic performance and the volume ends:
There remains no Room for the Criticisms that passed between QUEEN ELIZABETH, SHAKESPEAR, and Sir HUMPHREY upon the Dramatic Action of NOIBLA, which gave Occasion to many Strictures upon that of our World. – Much curious Matter also, of various Nature, is left untold, and many kingdoms of the Moon are yet unvisited. (11, 212)

Both volumes of A Trip to the Moon are fundamentally satirical, providing a work which allows Gentleman to fashion a lunar utopia in the tradition of Gulliveriana. Each of his techniques, degrees of intelligibility and ambiguity, anagrams, added letters is part of the Gulliverian mode. As well, he presents Swift in both volumes and Gulliver himself, it could be argued is also represented in the reprised character of Sir Humphrey, serving as the naïve narrator commenting on the world he visits. In a creative inversion Gentleman uses his personal antipathy to Swift to propel his portrayal of both Swift and Gulliver’s Travels in his Trip to the Moon, whereby directly or indirectly, it is Swift that he is copying.

A Trip to the Moon is rooted in its time and place and reproduces the stage scenery of a particular world. The island of Noibla acts as both a redemptive and retributive site. The roll-call of the ‘remarkable personages translated from Earth’ (52) who are treated on Noibla according to their follies and foibles on Earth ensures that Gentleman’s mirror reflects an English society clearly through the prism of his own worldview. Gentleman, in the distant space of Noibla, has created a hybrid work which draws on the combined traditions of medieval dream-vision formulas, early lunar voyages and the satire of Swift.
The anonymous work entitled *A History of the Customs, Manners, and Religion of the MOON. To Which Are Annexed Several Specimens of LUNAR POETRY; And the Characters of the MOST DISTINGUISHED PERSONAGES* (1782) also stands as a creative and critical utopian satire of its time. The author opens with an account of the character of Ilphinzingo and his imaginary voyage to the moon:

The 390th Revolution of Saturn was accomplished, corresponding by the present calculation of time with the year 521 from the building of the Imperial City of Ahilkildyhou, when the great Ilphinzingo was born; this appears from the authentic monuments now preserved in the Archives of the Sacred Castle of Zablemunrow; the only remains now existing of that ancient and once deemed immortal City, formerly the Pride of the Monsemugian Empire and the Admiration of the World; it was situated on the most inaccessible part of that vast chain of mountains, by mortals called mountains of Moon, but by the immortal Genii Belgalzafin. (7-8)

Ilphinzingo is admired by mankind because he has discovered an easy and pleasant way of journeying through the wide expanse of the heavens “floating through the downy undulations of soft ether to Orbs before unknown to human eye; far beyond our Stars and planetary Worlds” (9). In this voyage Ilphinzingo “visited many worlds, and not only planted colonies in some, but even wrote accurate Accounts of his Travels and observations made in forty five thousand different Orbs of which many are now lost and others sadly mutilated” (9-10). The author explains that “the following genuine, authentic and interesting history of the Moon has, however,
escaped the Wreck of Time, and is now preserved entire in the Archives of the Sacred and renowned Castle of Sablemunrow as an immortal monument dedicated to the memory of the great Ilphinzingo” (10). In this lunar voyage, Ilphinzingo is transported to the moon on board a flying machine called the *Butterfly*:

I embarked on board the Charming *Butterfly*, well man’d – equip’d and furnished with every thing necessary for a six Months Voyage: we extended our pinions from the lofty Top of Orlorn Pike with a favourable Gale, and soon got clear of the cloudy atmosphere which surrounds the Earth, and crossed the wide ethereal Ocean, and arrived in the confines of the Lunar World round which I resolved to make a circuit and discover the variegated face of that Planet. (11)

Having performed a circuit of the Moon, he lands in Titty, one of the fortunate islands. He sees the lunar inhabitants in the roads and in the fields, singing, dancing, and running to and fro. Their dress consisted of Feathers of a monstrous size, stuck very close on a Cap of conic form, which covered the Head – from thence downward to their knees, the fore Part of their Body like a bristled Porcupine, was embellished with Steel Spikes of about 18 inches in Length, equal to about eight of our Measure: Behind they trailed vestments of purple fringed with Gold; the rest of their Form was habited as usual, with this Difference, that the Dress was black, which I understood to be the orthodox colour of the Country. (14-15)

Beginning what emerges as a utopian report, Ilphinzingo finds the natives to be perfectly harmless. He makes his way to the city and is addressed by a Magistrate, whose language he does not understand and who leads him into the King’s presence who at that time was taking a ride round the palace on a wooden horse, supported on
the shoulders of two great orang-utangs. During his stay on the moon he makes a
visit to three temples. In the Temple of Oliboli, he finds “a Branch of Gold, in the
center of which is a small chair ornamented with brilliant diamonds and covered
with a canopy—here the High Priest took his seat” (23). In the Temple of Althuhi, he
finds a “superb monument of Lunar Grandeur erected on a rising ground in the
center of the City; the Portal looks towards the rising Sun, the Façade is of
burnished Gold supported by five hundred Columns of Emeralds; a thousand
different Statues of Amethysts appear in the Niches” (26). At the Temple of
Quawquaw, he finds a burial ground, where malefactors were executed and interred.
The space was surrounded by “the melancholy Yew” (32). The walls which
surrounded the entrance were decorated with human bones where “nettles and the
deadly night-shade hung a dreary gloom; mangled limbs and gibbeted malefactors
lined the porch” (32).

Ilphinzingo then discovers the labyrinth of wisdom. Inside the labyrinth, in yet
another link to the scientific and improving societies of the author’s own world, he
finds the most learned men of the kingdom “in close dispute concerning the most
important Truths: I accosted the Philosopher Tantahaw whom I found walking
alone; his countenance was lively tho’ by a continued thoughtful Habit it had
lengthened into Solemnity; being Presupposed with his philosophic Mien” (50).
Together, they discuss the Arts and Sciences, particularly, astrology, astronomy,
architecture, botany, building, biography, chemistry, embalming, equity and much
more. Ilphinzingo, surprised by the philosopher’s universal knowledge, was told
that the attainment of knowledge was by no means so difficult. Indeed there were
many academies and universities on the moon. As he puts it, there are:
North in the Moon, some hundred miles from the metropolis, Academies and Universities where all possible science is taught in a few months at a very cheap rate, but those schools are only frequented by the most necessitous persons, on account of the length of the journey—the inclemency of the climate and the savage manners and dialect of the Inhabitants; but above all what prevents persons of consequence from attending them – is a disorder universal in that country. (51-52)

The students who do not make the journey can send a letter to the Chief Northern University enclosing ten small pieces of Gold, like to medals, with a man’s head on one side and some National Hieroglyphics on the Reverse; in return for this he receives from the University a small writing on skin, with an Hieroglyphic Impression annexed to it, on a waxen Body: instantly the students become in possession of all the effectual—beneficial and efficient branches of literature, and may practice as a Professor in any science. (52-53)

Thus, in the Labyrinth of Wisdom, the most learned men of the lunar world gathered. Ilphinzingo’s curiosity was roused when he saw a man strangely dressed “carefully shrinking from our approach” (86) and trying to conceal himself among the crowds. Tantahaw, the philosopher, told him that he was one of the most celebrated wits of the age whose downfall has come about as a result of the potency of his satire directed against distinguished personages. He observes that the wit had “turned the edge of his Satire against several first rate Personages, who thought their distinguished Situation would amply justify an Excess of Folly and Vice, and impose Silence on the Tongue and Pen of Man—his downfall was decreed” (86). This most celebrated wit can only allude to Swift, here, banished to the moon
because of the keenness of his satire. Ironically, this figure’s existence in the
author’s highly satirical work negates somewhat the purpose of his banishment, as
his chosen medium of satire continues to exist. Tantahaw recounts that when
‘Swift’s’ downfall was decreed no man willingly came forth as his accuser.
However, a woman who had grown enormously rich through a series of crimes and
prostitution, and whose vices the wit was said to have satirised, accepted a bribe and
levelled “a scandalous charge” (87) against him. Tellingly, others who had felt the
sharpness of Swift’s satire joined in the cry for his punishment. The “unbefriended
Wit” (87) was then sentenced as the author puts it “to wear that ridiculous Garb,
which is a Fool’s Dress, and to pass a Year in the Gallery of Fools; this being
deemed the most severe Sentence which they could pass on a Man of Learning, Wit
and Judgement” (87).

Prior to the passing of his sentence, ‘Swift’ had applied for a licence for a
play of his to be performed before the public; however, his request was refused and
‘Swift’ wrote a lengthy letter in response. He asks to be allowed to enjoy the fruits
of his labour and feels he should not be punished because a capricious individual
has levelled charges against him. He requested that he be allowed to continue in the
service of the public and asserts “I never profited by flattering their Passions, or
falling in with their Humours; as upon all Occasions I have exerted my little
Powers, as indeed I thought it my Duty, in exposing Follies” (90). ‘Swift’ argues
that he never lost credit with the public, because they knew he was motivated by
principle, and that he never received any reward or protection from any other than
his public.

The author, in describing his lunar society, finds as in the previous lunar texts a
safe medium from which to criticise contemporary Dublin life. The lengthy title of
the work, I would argue, refers to Dublin itself, as its customs, manners, religion
and characters of certain distinguished personages are re-configured on the moon.
The moon setting provides that safe distance from which to hold the present up to
ridicule. In his introduction, the author, speaking of the Church, refers to “the mitred
Heads of that respectable Body being now so totally immersed in Politicks, and the
promoting of their own private Interests, that they cannot even find Time for the
Discharge of the Duties of their Function” (5-6). This sets the tone for his
assessment of clerical politics throughout the work. The first verse of a poem
presented to Ilphinzingo on the moon, entitled The DECISION, could be said to
make a direct connection with a Dublin prelate John Cradock (also Craddock) c.
1708-1778, the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin from 1772-78:

To Zaman’s bosom Crabbock sped
By Fate untimely taken;
To court the honours of the Dead
A crowd of High Priests came. (37)

The poem is based on those who present themselves for preferment to succeed
Cradock as Archbishop. Cradock’s successor as Archbishop of Dublin was
English-born Robert Fowler, who served from 1779 to 1801 and developed a
reputation as an absentee prelate. Although not directly referred to in the poem it is
probable that the author is referring to him:

Whilst round his Vulture Eyes he cast,
To find if an Hibernian dare
Look for Preferment and he there (41)
And will “hold “D--b—n in Commendum. (44)
The author of this utopia-in-minature has Ilphinzingo embark on an imaginary voyage, a ‘grand tour’ of the heavens where the cultivated plains and rocky mountains “exhibited a scene at once enchanting and novel” (12). The putative ‘gallery of fools’, ‘the conventicle of fanatics’, ‘the porch of tattlers’, ‘the hall of justice’ amongst others represent facets of the characteristics of earthly inhabitants, their vices, foibles, inventiveness, satire and tranquility. In this brief utopian projection, the journey to the lunar world allegorises contemporary life, as the author holds a mirror up to Dublin society. This mirror is solely directed towards the machinations around status, preferment and politics in the terrestrial Church. Thus, it is a composite utopia, integrating an imaginary journey, utopian satire, and a cautionary tale for potential satirists, which has Ilphinzingo – to be on the safe side – leave this Earth and go to the Moon.

Lady Mount Cashell’s Selene

Selene is an unpublished, three-volume novel, written in Italy in the early 1820s by Dublin-born Margaret King Moore (Lady Mount Cashell). The subtitle of Selene is Memoirs of Matthew Ivy, Quondam Esquire of Ivy Castle, Supposed to Be Written by Himself, and Prepared for Publication by Basil Fitz Edward. The preface is written by Fitz Edward, who tells how he met Matthew Ivy, the author of the first-person narrative that follows. Matthew’s mother dies when he is still a child and he is adopted by a rich uncle, Jonathan, who declares that the boy will be heir of Ivy Castle. Over the course of seven years, Matthew is schooled at home by a private tutor and indulged by his uncle, whose passions include the study of Arabic and the Irish language. When he goes to university Matthew falls into bad company and
after his uncle’s death fails in his attempt to pursue a political career. He marries a

girl whom he discovers has been having an affair with his dearest friend, resulting in
her pregnancy. The lovers elope, and Matthew decides to commit suicide rather than
endure the public shame of a divorce. While searching for a pistol in his uncle’s
bureau, he discovers a narrative entitled ‘A Voyage to the Moon’ and a set of
balloons, which he inflates before using them to set off on a journey which brings
him to the moon. Upon the moon he is impressed by the volcanic lunar landscape,
by the giant unicorns with eight legs, and by the lunar people themselves. The
Selenians have yellow skin, are taller and thinner than humans and they have an
extra organ in the middle of their foreheads, this functions as a kind of sixth sense,
which allows them to see the meaning of words, and so to gain an understanding of
the true nature of wisdom. Following on from this, they value benevolence above
wealth, virtue over self-indulgence, justice over self-interest.

Similar to McDermot and Humphrey Lunatic, after a time Matthew wishes
to return to earth, completes his homeward journey, and makes his way to
England. There, he is unrecognised as the heir of Ivy Castle, and so, he makes a
living as a translator while searching for his two brothers whom he has not seen
since childhood. He meets a young woman named Eleanor, having found out that
his wife is dead, he marries her. They adopt his first wife’s son and settle in the
country. An extract on the title page from Canto 34 of Ariosto’s Orlando Furioso,
which details the strange landscape first glimpsed by Orlando after his arrival on the
moon, places Selene within the tradition of lunar narratives stretching back to
classical times. Selene encompasses facets of More’s Utopia, Swift’s country of the
Houyhnhmns, and Voltaire’s El Dorado. The Seleneans never engage in war,
murder is unknown to them, and the hardest punishment given to those found guilty
of wrongdoing is to deprive them of sunlight while sentencing them to hard labour on public projects for specific periods of time. Consequently, soldiers, barristers and attorneys are unheard of. Among Seleneans celibacy is popular, marriage at a young age is unheard of, and when it does take place at a later stage, it is based on mutual respect and companionship. Seleneans only permit a handful of books and censors review everything that is written, and those texts regarded as unsuitable are destroyed at a public event known as the Feast of the Books once every three years. The Seleneans look after their health, renounce alcohol and all excess. They have no system of currency and no taxation, and they repudiate all falsehood and injustice. Matthew discovers that at one time all Seleneans were equal but that an aristocratic race evolved and their physical strength and intellectual prowess set them apart from all others. Every three years, a chief is chosen from the elite, and all the noblemen over the age of twenty-five years and plebeians over the age of fifty can vote in the elections. If it is shown that the elected chief is unworthy of office, the appointment does not go ahead.

Lady Mount Cashell uses her protagonist’s trip to the moon to criticise British politics and society. Claire Connolly has argued that Selene “imagine[s] interplanetary travel as a way of highlighting injustices in Ireland” (195). However, Anne Markey suggests that this argument is difficult to sustain, “not least because the only two Irish characters to feature in the three volumes are a drunken priest and a proselytising, avaricious Catholic nurse” (4). That said, Lady Mount Cashell’s Irish background must have influenced her political views and her depiction of life on the moon. As Markey points out:

the principle of toleration that underpins Selenean attitudes to religious practice and belief reflect her disapproval of the injustice enshrined in the
Penal Laws, many of which were still in operation in Ireland at the time *Selene* was written. (4)

In addition to her critique of contemporary politics and social mores, Lady Mount Cashell casts a satirical eye on the English publishing industry in the late Romantic period. Matthew discovers that whereas in Selenean practice, only a few books of real merit are published each year, English booksellers print a vast amount of inferior works. In London, after his return from the moon, he secures work from a bookseller doing translations of second-rate romances, and he comes across many works replete with vacuous sentiment and dull moral philosophy which prompts him to try a superior fiction, which he offers to his employer. When the bookseller, Mr. Adamson sees the one-volume manuscript, he suggests that it needs to be extended to at least three volumes to get a good price, but he agrees to read it. He likes it but gets a successful novelist called Mr. Amplify to amend some parts so that Matthew can see how to make the necessary improvements. One of these adjustments involves the expansion of a passage of some forty words into several, paragraphs running to over four hundred words, to which nothing of any substance has been added. In spite of Adamson’s assurances that the book could be expanded into four volumes, Matthew puts it aside and commences work as a reviewer for a periodical of literary criticism. *Selene* draws attention to the power of the bookseller in determining literary taste and convention. Adamson’s refusal to print a one-volume novel and his recruitment of Amplify to improve on Matthew’s efforts may seem satirical, but according to Barbara M. Benedict, booksellers were the most influential people in English publishing during the Romantic period, often telling “printers, and sometimes authors too, what to produce” (6). *Selene*, as a work of utopian satire partly set on the moon, presents a
critique of English politics and social mores while also conveying insights into the English publishing world in the final years of the ‘long’ eighteenth century.\(^\text{10}\)

Combined, these lunar and extraterrestrial works of utopian satire represent a distinctive facet of eighteenth-century Irish utopianism. In each case, the extraterrestrial voyage functions as a device for estranging readers from the familiar world, enabling usually satiric perspectives to be set up. Estrangement is a necessary component of these utopias. It allows a critical distance through spatial separation as the imagined ‘good place’ is set apart from the present. The lunar realms are guided by different values from the authors own and organised through diverse and different socio-political arrangements. The journey to, and \textit{topos} of, the extraterrestrial world functions to hold contemporary society (or in the case of ‘A History’ specific aspects of it) up to ridicule and analysis. The author of ‘A History’, while presenting a cautionary tale on the perils facing the occupational satirist, also allegorises the conflicts of the society from which he emerged, reflected and refracted on the moon but rooted firmly in and around clerical politics in contemporary Dublin. Swift’s ‘Laputa’ comments on society, and ultimately offers the possibility of the renovation, or the ‘making new’, of Ireland. The fantasy adventure writer McDermot finds a utopian commonwealth on the moon, and provides a counterspace in which the experimental science of rocketry as a means of inter-planetary travel and satire cohere in a work of proto-science fiction. Gentleman’s moral, philosophical and ideological work is enveloped in the kernel of a utopian society, his ancestor Whimsical Lunatic’s vision for a Plato’s Republic is recovered on Noibla and counterpoised with the dystopian space of the terrestrial world. Lady Mount Cashell’s \textit{Selene} takes the form of a travel account, combining elements of an adventure narrative set in a classical republican government with
utopian satire while drawing attention to contemporary English literary production. The presiding spirit of Swift and the leitmotif of the extraterrestrial world as a space from which to criticise or comment on a parlous contemporary society is a unifying element in all of these works, whilst the authors independently grapple with the plausible alternatives to which a re-configured terrestrial world might aspire.

Endnotes


³ Janet Todd in Rebel Daughters: Ireland in Conflict 1798 (2003) mentions Dublin-born Margaret King’s utopian novel Selene, written in the early 1820s in which she imagined an ideal society set on the moon based on a classical republican government. The 3-volume unpublished manuscript of Selene is part of the Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle held in New York Public Library. I am indebted to Dr. Anne Markey of Trinity College, Dublin for providing me with much information and assistance in relation to Selene. In her ongoing research and analysis of the manuscript she says that it would be accurate to describe it “as a novel that incorporates a lunar Utopian narrative”. [email communication, Anne Markey, August 2012].
William Wood (1671-1730) was an English hardware manufacturer and mintmaster who received a contract to strike an issue of Irish coinage from 1722-1724. Wood thought this would be profitable and purchased the royal patent for £10,000. Wood’s coinage was extremely unpopular in Ireland. Swift in his Drapier’s Letters (writing under the guise of ‘M.B. Drapier’ a Protestant Shopkeeper), a series of seven pamphlets written during 1724-1725, wrote against the measure that a private individual should be awarded the patent to mint. After the Irish Parliament objected to Wood’s patent, Swift began his campaign against ‘the deluge of brass’. Robert Walpole (1676-1745) revoked the patent in 1725, and Wood was privately compensated. See Swift, The Drapier’s Letters, ed. Herbert Davis (Clarendon Press, 1935). An example of Wood’s halfpence (1722) can be found in Fintan O’Toole, A History of Ireland in 100 Objects (The Irish Times and the Royal Irish Academy, 2013).

These paragraphs were not printed in the first edition of 1726, the second edition of 1727 or the revised edition of 1735, presumably because the publishers feared political repercussions. They remained unprinted until 1896. This shows how particular political and historical events could come to be evident in the composition of Gulliver’s Travels.

It is probable that Whately is referring to actual advances in medicine. In 1796 Edward Jenner observed that the mild disease cowpox gave immunity against smallpox, and established the practice of vaccination. Whately would have been cognisant of such medical advances and retrospectively incorporated them in the work of the medical projectors Gulliver meets on his return visit to the Academy. Whately was also a promoter of homeopathy, a form of alternative medicine based
on the theory that ‘like cures like’. He was vice-president of the London Homeopathic Hospital in 1850.

7 McDermot’s work was first printed by Christopher Dickson in Dublin in 1727. It was reprinted by J. Roberts in London in 1728. The Dublin and London editions conclude with ‘the end of the first part’, but nothing more was ever published.

8 The well called the Notlam or Spring of Purification is a reversal of Malton, the town near York in England where Gentleman lived for about four years and wrote both volumes of *A Trip to the Moon*. There are many other such examples throughout *A Trip to the Moon*, most notably in Vol. 1. Bishop Wilkins’s title, of Namredal, is an anagram of alderman. The House of Justice, called Requecex, needs only to be reworked and given an extra letter to form Exchequer. Each of these techniques—added letters, foreign sounding words, anagrams form part of the pattern found in Gulliverian works.

9 There is no indication that this pamphlet is a reprint or of there being a London imprint. As the Dublin imprint is the only one listed, that would seem to indicate that it was an Irish work printed in Dublin by John Hillary of Castle Street in 1782.

10 The ‘long’ eighteenth century is a phrase often used by historians to cover a more *natural* historical period than the standard calendar definition. They expand it to include the larger historical movements with their subsequent ‘long’ eighteenth century extending for the Glorious Revolution of 1688 to the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. Other definitions, perhaps those with a more social or global interest, extend the period further to, for example, 1660-1830.
Dark Caverns: Samuel Madden’s Futurism

Leaving the beaten Tracts of writing with Malice or Flattery, the accounts of past Actions and Times, have dar’d to enter by the help of an infallible Guide, into the dark Caverns of Futurity, and discover the Secrets of Ages yet to come.

Samuel Madden, Memoirs of the Twentieth Century.

I could not with ease look back on the World, I resolved to look forward and consider what might happen, since I abhor’d to reflect on what had.

Samuel Madden, Memoirs of the Twentieth Century.

The variegated nature of Irish utopianism reveals a succession of utopias, to be found in fiction, verse, speeches, songs, manifestos. So far, I have recognised a clear utopian propensity in Irish culture of the eighteenth century, one marked by twin discourses of improvement and satire. The utopian projections of George Berkeley, the imperative to improve and the sense of advancing the public good of the founders of the Dublin Society combined disparate improving visions in the public sphere; while the extraterrestrial and lunar narratives of Jonathan Swift, Murtagh McDermot, Francis Gentleman and others presented utopian satire as a means of fictional discourse through which to allegorise and criticise contemporary society.

In this chapter, I focus on one Irish authored text. It stands as a high point in the literature of utopian satire predicated on an imagined future society conjoined with the inaugural time-travel utopia—it is Samuel Madden’s Memoirs of the Twentieth Century, published anonymously in 1733.¹ For many years, Louis Sébastien Mercier’s Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred—L’an deux
*mille quatre cent quarante* (1771) was presumed to be the first literary utopia set in the future. We now know that it was not the first and was predated by Madden’s *Memoirs* by forty-eight years. Drawing on Sargent’s specific definitions of the disparate textual forms of the generic literary utopia, eutopia, dystopia, utopian satire, anti-utopia, and critical utopia (“Three Faces Revisited” 9) I define a future utopia as a non-existent society described in considerable detail combining one or all of these elements: utopian satire, time-travel and prophecy; and located in a chronologically specified future that the author intended a reader to view as a comment on contemporaneous society. While all authors of utopias locate the new society in a place different from his or her own, the significance of Madden, and so often celebrated of Mercier, was that their utopias were located not in another place on earth, such as the Antipodes of the South Seas, a Lost Valley such as Shangri-La, one of the polar regions, or indeed underground in a cavernous society, that is in places not yet explored by Westerners. Instead, these new works of the eighteenth century shifted the location to the future.

That said, it is not so much that they created a new category of a future utopia but that they changed in a radical way the former provenance of utopia from an honoured place to be found contemporaneously with the author’s own time to another place in the future. This has deep implications, because it strongly supports the idea of historical development, even progress. And so, the move is not to some parallel or lateral society but indeed a future society that grew from the contemporaneous author and reader’s own present. This remains a significant change because it implies that humanity through its own efforts can get there.

And so, who was Samuel Madden, and what do we know about him? Samuel Molyneux Madden, Church of Ireland clergyman, writer and philanthropist
was born in Dublin in 1686. He was the second son of John Madden MD (d. 1703), who was one of the original members of the Irish College of Physicians, of Manor Waterhouse, Co. Fermanagh, and Mary Molyneux (d. 1695) a sister of William and Thomas Molyneux. Samuel Madden received his BA from Trinity College Dublin in 1705 and his DD degree in 1723. In 1709 he married Jane Magill and they had five daughters and five sons, and employed the progressive Church of Ireland clergyman and philosophical writer Philip Skelton (1707-1787) as a curate and tutor to their children. After his father’s death Madden inherited the estate in Fermanagh. Upon ordination, he became rector of the parish of Galloon (which included Newtownbutler, the nearest place to the family estate), to which was added (in 1727) the adjacent parish of Drumully, at that time in the gift of the Madden family. He had a notable involvement in the civic life of the area, he was an active author; and through the Dublin Society he promoted his ideas on agricultural improvement, architecture, philanthropy and education.

In 1732 his Proposal for the General Encouragement of Learning in Dublin-College was published. It was a seminal pamphlet in which Madden proposed instituting a system of prizes for students in the quarterly examinations at Trinity College. It was dedicated to Hugh Lord, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of all Ireland. In this Proposal Madden asks the named cleric for his support and notes that such approval would encourage other clergy and gentry to support it. He lays down what he calls “the naked skeleton of this plain and easy scheme; which by God’s Blessing may produce very happy effects, if it be pursued with that honest zeal and warmth which may be hop’d for from many people of worth among us” (10-11). It was to provide the basis of his soubriquet of ‘Premium Madden’. Madden writes of “some additional Motives and Premiums for Diligence, which
might operate perpetually, and keep up a constant and almost a daily Emulation for Application and Study in their Pupils; we should soon find such an Improvement thereby among the whole of our People” (10). And so, Madden’s words foreground the socially transformative logic of the utopian mode, for diligent and worthy students will ultimately bring benefits to the whole of society.

Madden’s plan for the encouragement of learning was adopted by the university, and he contributed £600. With this resolve, he also funded a series of annuities from 1740 for the Dublin Society. In 1745, with the help of his friend, the eminent lexicographer Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), he published a panegyric poem in memory of Hugh Boulter, the long-serving archbishop of Armagh and Whig Privy Councillor, and which was dedicated to Frederick, Prince of Wales. He also penned an anonymous panegyric to Lord Chesterfield and prefixed a 200-line metrical epistle to the biography of Philip of Macedonia by Dublin-born classicist and historian Thomas Leland (1722-1785) which was published in 1758.

In his History of Irish Periodical Literature Richard Robert Madden recounts what he calls the earliest notice he had found of the illustrious benefactor, Dr. Samuel Madden, in any Irish newspaper. He cites the Dublin Evening Post of November 14th, 1732: “Last Saturday, a number of gentlemen, educated in Dr. Sheridan’s school, entertained him at the Eagle, on Cork Hill, where they entered into a resolution to support some reduced young gentlemen at the University, bred under him” (2:286). Undoubtedly, this gathering would have been aware of Madden’s recently published Proposal for the General Encouragement of Learning in Dublin-College and were willing to support it. In her correspondence, Mary
Delany records a visit to the Madden estate in Fermanagh in August 1748, and of both Madden and his estate she notes:

*He is a very remarkable man,* and to give you a just portrait of him would take up more time than is allowed me at present. The place is pretty; a very fine wood of all sort of forest trees, planted by Doctor Madden just by the house, surrounded by a fine river. He has been a great planter and benefactor to his country on many accounts and a great encourager of the premiums and charter-schools. (494-95)

Delany provides a clear link between both Madden’s domiciliary milieu and other major aspects of his career, that of a benefactor and philanthropist.

**Madden in the Age of Walpole**

In 1733, the year in which Madden’s *Memoirs of the Twentieth Century* was published, the author was forty-seven years old. George II had been King since 1727 and Robert Walpole had been Prime Minister for over ten years and was to remain so until his forced resignation in February 1742. Walpole, born in August 1676, was the son of a Norfolk country gentleman, and was educated at Eton and King’s College, Cambridge. He was politically ambitious: a Whig since his Cambridge days, he fought his first general election in 1701 without success. He was elected in 1701 for Castle Riding where his father had been MP, and in 1702 he was elected to the more important Norfolk borough, of the port of King’s Lynn, the seat he was to represent until he was created Earl of Orford in February 1742. By the time of the accession of George I in 1714, Walpole had a reputation as one of the leading Whig parliamentarians. His rise had been rapid, and he was, by the
standards of the day, a good party man. Swift, a Tory, wrote of “his bold, forward countenance, altogether a stranger to that infirmity which makes men bashful, joined to a readiness of speaking in public”. A pamphlet of 1716 referred to Walpole’s vivacity, fine parts, deep judgement and penetration, another to his wisdom and ‘golden tongue’. A pamphleteer of 1711 called him “pragmatical, noisy and impertinent”.

To understand both Walpole and Britain in this first half of the eighteenth century it is necessary to appreciate the seventeenth-century background. This was the period in which the subsequent generation of leading politicians was born and grew up. Of the leading Whigs, Stanhope was born in 1673, Townshend and Sunderland in 1674, Walpole in 1676, Argyll in 1678, Ilay in 1682, Pulteney in 1684 and Newcastle in 1693. Of the leading Tories, Strafford was born in 1672, Shippen in 1673, Bolingbroke in 1678 and Wyndham in 1687. These were years of great instability and conflict. The primary interconnected causes were religious, political and dynastic. The religious conflict was pivotal in the major events of the seventeenth century. The English Civil War can best be understood as a war of religion. James II (1685-8) was ousted in the so-called Glorious Revolution largely because of the fear that he would try to enforce his own Catholicism on his subjects. However, religion was not solely a matter for politicians. Those people who were in the wrong Church were deprived of a wide variety of what would today be considered rights but were then thought of as privileges, such as the right to vote or to be an MP, to hold political and government office, to establish schools or to go to university.

The anti-Catholic sentiment that accompanied the Popish Plot of 1678 and the violence that was directed against Dissenters (the burgeoning denominations of
Protestants who were not members of the Church of England) testified to the force of religious passion in the politics of the period and the extent to which such fervour was by no means confined to those who had political power. The overthrow of James II had been prefigured in the Exclusion Crisis of 1679-81 when an attempt had been made to exclude him from the succession of his brother Charles II in favour of a Protestant heir, and again in the rebellion of Monmouth and Argyll in 1685. After his overthrow, there were two claimants to the throne. The supporters of James and his descendants, known as Jacobites, were especially strong amongst the Catholics in Ireland and the Catholics and Episcopali ans in Scotland. The throne itself was held by Protestants, first James’s daughter Mary and her husband William III of Orange, then, because they had no children, by Mary’s sister Anne and, after her death without issue in 1714, by the Lutheran Electors of Hanover, whose claim descended from the German marriage of James I’s daughter. Their claim was recognised by Parliament in the Act of Settlement of 1701 but, in dynastic terms, they were clearly further from the Stuart line than James II’s son James, who claimed the throne from exile in France that year as ‘James III’ on the death of his father.

The political atmosphere of the period was one of hovering conflict and violence. Plots such as the Rye House Plot of 1683, a scheme to assassinate Charles II, were suppressed with violence. Judge Jeffrey tried and executed many of Monmouth’s followers, only to end up dying in the Tower of London himself when the political climate changed. It was a time when an unsuccessful politician could expect parliamentary impeachment, exile, imprisonment and even execution. Such was the political world in which Walpole grew up, and indeed Walpole himself was imprisoned in the Tower in 1712 by his Tory opponents. The longevity of
Walpole’s ministry from 1721 to 1742 did not eliminate instability. The Jacobite rebellion of 1745 was ample evidence of the continued problem posed by dynastic conflict. It was only with the battle of Culloden in 1746, when Bonnie Prince Charlie, leading the army of Scottish Highlanders on behalf of his father, ‘James III’, was defeated by George II’s younger son, the Duke of Cumberland, that the Hanoverian dynasty was really safe. The nature of politics and government during the period of Walpole’s twenty years as Prime Minister is a recurring theme of writers during this time. Nearly all of the major writers of the period (Swift, John Gay, Alexander Pope, Samuel Johnson and Henry Fielding) adopted an antigovernment stance, which was reflected in their works.

While in the summer of 1711, aiming to consolidate intellectual support among Tories, Henry Bolingbroke had founded the Brothers Club for men of learning, wit and breeding as a counterbalance to the Whig Kit-Cat Club. This aristocratic and intellectual circle included Swift, John Arbuthnot, and Bolingbroke and was soon joined by younger poets such as Pope and Gay. The Scriblerus Club evolved out of the Brothers Club. For the next thirty years this group of wits and satirists were, as Isaac Kramnick puts it, “committed to scourging the follies from mankind, directed their offensive against the corruptions of the new England” (12). Walpole had had only token opposition after he came to power in 1721. Between the years 1727-1730 the situation was transformed, with the appearance of Bolingbroke’s opposition newspaper The Craftsman on December 5th, 1726, and so, a sustained critique of Walpole’s ministry began. Kramnick quotes a pamphleteer as he describes the mood as The Craftsman began “all hands were employed and engines set to work, manuscripts were circulated, the press loaded,
coffee house talkers, table wits, and bottle companions had their instructions given them” (18).

These years also saw the publication of Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera*, and Pope’s *Dunciad*, all of which were, at least in part, intent on maligning Walpole and his administration. Estimates of *The Craftsman’s* circulation vary however; Johnson’s estimate had it high: “It was more read and attended to that any political paper ever published, on account of the assistance given to it by some of the most illustrious and important characters of the nation. It is said 10,000 of that paper have been sold in one day”⁴. That said, whatever its circulation, its impact was evident, as Laurence Hanson puts it: “it raised the whole tone of political controversy in the press, for the criticisms which it made were both pungent and well informed” (108). *The Craftsman* excelled in barbed wit and biting satire that focused the ire of its reading public on one individual as the object of all its vilification, Walpole. As J.H. Plumb writes on Walpole and *The Craftsman*, “Walpole hated it, hated it furiously and bitterly” (II, 141). Samuel Madden also spoke about *The Craftsman*. However, unlike his fellow Irishman Swift, Madden was, or at least appeared to be, a dedicated supporter of Walpole. In a letter written to Walpole some time after 1727, Madden offered his services in a literary capacity, and admitted that *The Craftsman* had a “greater Reputation for Wit, & Talents for dispute” and that it was “a superior Master of the arts to catch the Crowd” (Urstad 114). Thus, Madden recognised the popular, literary and intellectual appeal which the newspaper had captured. Contrary to the spirit of Christian forebearance which a clergyman such as himself might be expected to practice, he made the following recommendation:

Begin an attack against them in a method & manner entirely new & that there was no way so effectual to defeat them, as to turn their own Cannon against
them & ridicule them; for besides that this is no reasoning age nor our People
so fond of strong arguments as biting Jests, I was persuaded if once the laugh
could be turn’d against them the mob would desert them & they must be
undone. (Urstad 114)

The exact date of this letter from Madden to Walpole is not known, but it is clear
that Madden is against the opposition newspaper The Craftsman and is pro-
government or appearing to be pro-government. Clearly, he is proposing an idea as
to how it could be defeated and undone. He argues that, should the techniques of
The Craftsman be adopted and adapted by pro-government writers and used to turn
their satire and ridicule back upon them, he believes what he calls the ‘mob’ would
decamp and cease to support those anti-government writers. Madden asserts that it
can be defeated; although interestingly he does not expand upon how such a plan
was to be effectively produced and executed. While Madden was not alone in
expressing such sentiments, there is no evidence to suggest that he became one of
Walpole’s penmen.

A letter written by William Pulteney, Earl of Bath in 1733 to Walpole
expresses the view that critics of The Craftsman are “the shameless crew, who write
against their Country, as they would write against their God, for hire”(1). He argues
that “the Ribaldry, which these Scribblers employ, hath been and will continue to be
despised, not answered” (2). He defends the writings of The Craftsman saying that
they endeavour to revive the Spirit and to “confirm and propagate the Doctrines of
Liberty” (1). Alongside Walpole’s administration, pamphlets were regularly issued
by J. Roberts, the government printer, in which the position of his government was
presented by writers such as Bishop Hoadly, Daniel Defoe, Lord Hervey, and
Horatio Walpole. Writing about The Craftsman to Thomas Sheridan in 1727, Swift

199
says “It is certain that Walpole is peevish and disconnected, and stoops to the vilest offices of hireling scoundrels to write Billingsgate of the lowest and most prostitute kind and has none but beasts and blockheads for his penmen, whom he pays in ready guineas very liberally” (Correspondence, 111: 388). Swift’s comments were accurate: a covert parliamentary investigation in 1742 into Walpole’s conduct in office revealed the extent of Walpole’s purchase of penmen. The sum of £50,000 had been paid during the years 1732-1742 to authors and printers of newspapers, the most popular of these being The London Journal.

Thus, Bolingbroke’s Craftsman and many contemporary writers alluded to Walpole in their works. Gay in The Beggar’s Opera made an implied comparison between the criminal world and the world of politics. In Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels, “Flimnap, the Treasurer”, thought to be an allusion to Walpole, does a dance on a rope to entertain his Majesty and the Court. Whoever jumps the highest without falling succeeds in the Office and chief ministers themselves are commanded to show their skill to convince the Emperor that they have not lost their faculty: “Flimnap, the Treasurer, is allowed to cut a Caper on the strait Rope, at least an Inch higher that any other Lord in the whole Empire” (Swift 39). The exercise in rope-dancing is an apt metaphor for the contortions contemporary politicians went through to obtain and to retain power. The theatre became increasingly politicised from 1728 following the first performance of The Beggar’s Opera. Writing in the first volume of his Dramatic Censor, Francis Gentleman records an anecdote about Sir Robert Walpole, against whom Gay chiefly brandished his pen. The characters Peachum and Lockit engage in a satire about their accounts:

When you censure the age,

Be cautious and sage,
Lest the courtiers offended should be:

If you mention vice or bribe,

‘Tis so pat to all the tribe,

That each cries that was levell’d at me. (*Dramatic Censor* 120)

Walpole was seated in the stage-box and Gentleman records his supposed response:

In respect of this song, which showed an agreeable and politic presence of mind; being in the stage-box, at the first presentation of the opera, a most universal encore attended Lockit’s song, and all eyes at the same time were fixed on Sir Robert, who, noting the matter, joined heartily in the plaudit, and encored it a second time with his single voice; which not only blunted the poetical shaft, but gained a general huzza from the audience. (120-21)

On that occasion, and from this account, it would appear that Walpole’s response defused the potency of the allusions to him evident in *The Beggar’s Opera*. However, allusions to him occur and recur throughout the period. Criticism was voiced through literary works, and Walpole as a character was an obsession with writers more or less loosely associated with the opposition. Some years later, in the early 1730s, Lord Hervey, a supporter of Walpole, recalls in a letter to Henry Fox, dated January 25th, 1733, a visit to the theatre in Goodman’s Fields to see James Ralph’s adaptation of a Restoration play, *The Fall of the Earl of Essex*. When the actor who played the leading role delivered his lines:

Abhor all Courts if thou art brave or wise,

For then thou never shalt be sure to rise,

Think not by doing well a Fame to get,

But be a Villian & thou shalt be great. (*Urstad* 15)
Hervey records that “Her Grace of Marlborough cry’d charming; & clapt her Hands so loud that we heard her cross the theatre into the King’s Box”.

This story shows how sensitive and attuned audiences were to political allusions in literary works. As a supporter of the opposition, the Duchess had seized the opportunity to show her contempt for Walpole. Although he is not mentioned by name in the passage audiences would have had very little difficulty in reading an allusion to Walpole in the final line. The word “Courts” in the first line evoked the entourage of Kings and Queens, but aimed at a whole coterie of Whig supporters who maintained Walpole in power. In the final line, the use of the adjective “great” would have been enough to bring up the image of Walpole as a corrupt politician. The opposition writers often ironically referred to Walpole as “the Great Man,” so that the term “great” came to have very negative overtones. “Great” and “Good,” used in this context were almost antonyms, just as in the lines from Ralph’s play an opposition is established between “brave,” “wise” and “doing well” – qualities that relate to social success (“Courts,” “rise,” “Fame,” and “great”), all in this context related to the negative word “Villain.” In referring to this clear undercurrent of political allusion present in numerous eighteenth-century literary works, Bertrand Goldgar uses the term “argot” in which certain words developed layer upon layer of political meaning and connotation to the point where the mention of words such as “screen” or “brass” conjured up the image of Walpole as a corrupt politician.

What was happening politically during the twenty years of Walpole’s ministry clearly influenced the literary works of the period.

Unlike his fellow Irishmen Swift and Berkeley (Berkeley believed that Walpole, in refusing to pay a £20,000 grant was chiefly responsible for defeating his Bermuda Project), Madden was and remained a supporter of Walpole. As I have
noted in his letter to Walpole, Madden had determined that an aggressive campaign against *The Craftsman* would be effective and in the same letter he also noted that the problem confronting government propagandists is “you know well Sr. how vain it is to reason with anyone, who will never be convinc’d or silenc’d, but will still have the last word”. In their striving to criticise Walpole, Madden here seems to suggest that such dogged opposition will be difficult for pro-government writers to match without an aggressive campaign on their part. Did Madden receive a response from Walpole? Did Walpole take any note of what Madden had said? Was such a situation likely, or would Walpole have kept an impersonal distance between himself and correspondents such as a Church of Ireland clergyman with a novice literary career? We do not know if Madden tried to keep his association with Walpole a secret. Some supporters had done this, motivated by a wish to avoid any backlash in their surroundings should their political persuasions become widely known. However, the letter does show Madden’s own point of view and could explain some of the questions surrounding his subsequent suppression of his anonymously published *Memoirs*.

That said, the bifurcated nature of Madden’s career at that time seems stark. He was a Church of Ireland clergyman running his family estate. He was aware of the early Dublin societies and was developing his plan for the encouragement of learning in Trinity College. In 1731, his brother, the Rev. John Madden (Vicar of St. Ann’s and later Dean of Kilmore), and his uncle, Thomas Molyneux, were among the founding members of the Dublin Society. Madden was to become its first Patron. Madden’s milieu for his literary efforts is clearly set with the flux of the eighteenth-century political life going on about him. However, the contrast between his utopianism as manifest in his practical support and patronage of the Dublin
society and his *Memoirs* reveals a character whose utopianism is far more complex and disparate than at first appears.

_Memoirs: Pre-vision and Futures of the Past_

It was against the background of this political and literary milieu that Madden’s *Memoirs* was printed in March 1733, and it caused enough of a stir that it was suppressed by him shortly after its publication. It was printed, as John Nichols puts it, “with such very great dispatch that three printers were employed on it (Bowyer, Woodfall and Roberts); and the name of an uncommon number of respectable booksellers appeared on the title page” (2:31-32).⁸ Only the last named printer actually knew the identity of the author. One thousand copies were printed, and according to one report, the book was finished at the press, March 24th, 1733, and 100 copies were that day delivered to the author. On March 28th a number of them were delivered to the several Booksellers mentioned in the title-page; and four days later, all that were unsold were recalled, and 800 of them given up to Dr. Madden to be destroyed. Other reports have claimed that 900 copies were delivered to Madden and probably destroyed, and that it was suppressed on the day of publication. Only one volume of the work appeared and whether any more were ever really intended is uncertain. Madden dedicated his *Memoirs* in an ironic fashion to Frederick, Prince of Wales (1707-1751), the eldest son of King George II.⁹

Madden had already dedicated his play *Themistocles* to the Prince of Wales and may have acted as chaplain to him. They had certainly carried on a correspondence. Frederick, Prince of Wales, served as the tenth Chancellor of Trinity College, Dublin from 1728 to the year of his death in 1751. In 1733 he was

204
not yet officially part of the opposition to his father George II’s government. Madden is explicit in viewing this dedication as a public espousal of his regard for the Prince of Wales. As he puts it, “possibly I had been less liable to Censure, if I could have contented my self with paying You in private the secret Homage of my Heart, without giving any publick Testimony of that infinite Regard which I pretend to bear you” (iii). Madden speaks of his “uncontested Virtues so universally acknowledged by all” (iv). He expresses his “sincerity of heart” (iv) which should remain “unsuspected of the little Arts of fawning sycophants” (iv). While distancing himself from fawning sycophants, Madden clearly admires the Prince of Wales, but he also expresses admiration for the King and Queen. As he writes, he sees the Prince, “as the Heir apparent of the best Man and Woman, the best King and Queen, that ever adorn’d a family, or blest a Nation” (v). Madden’s dedication is dated January 25th, 1731, two years before Memoirs was published. He is clearly dedicating this in anticipation of Frederick becoming King; although this wasn’t to happen. Alternatively, it could have been written by Madden to accompany any subsequent work of his, not necessarily Memoirs.

He views the Prince of Wales as an “amiable character” (vi), and he speaks of the Britain which would emerge under his reign in utopian terms, as King Frederick would “make us the happiest of Nations, and the best of Subjects under a race of Princes, against whom the little Clamours and Arts of Faction at Home, will be as impotent and contemptible, as the inveterate Malice of Rome, and the Enemies of our Peace Abroad” (ix). However, Madden’s view of Britain as utopia under the new King is contrasted with the image of those who he views as threatening the ‘happiest of nations’ (ix) namely factions at home, the Church of Rome and any other enemies of Britain’s peace abroad, essentially any enemies of his utopia.
Madden’s fulsome praise for the Prince of Wales may have been heightened to garner some perceived advantage for himself and his plans for practical improvements during the Walpole years. The printing of one thousand copies seems to contradict Madden’s claim that only fifty copies would be published. In the first preface to Memoirs he explains that only fifty copies were to be published, or as his narrator puts it:

For my part, I have acted with the utmost Caution in suppressing or publishing any Particulars, and as it is to be fear’d if after all my Care this Book should grow too common and be in everyone’s Hand, it may be applied to ill purposes, by letting the meanest of the People see, I have given order to print but fifty copies, which I compute will answer the number of Persons in Great Britain, who are Wise and Honest enough to be trusted with such a jewel. (29)

It is clear, however, that Madden viewed the work as directed towards a private readership or at any rate a select readership. None of this is to deny, however, that the printers did not print as many as 1,000 copies, but it may offer a reason as to why Madden sought to suppress them, not solely because of content but because of quantity.

The sacred text of the Comte De Gabalis, Cervantes’ Don Quixote, and the writings of Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac are among the coterie of literati Madden alludes to in his first preface to Memoirs.10 The narrator, interestingly not specifically identified as Madden is, we are told, descended “in a direct line by the Mother’s side, from a Son of that famous Count Gabalis, in the 17th century, whose History is in every one’s Hands” (9-10). He questions whether Balzac “ever toil’d more than I have done to give full Satisfaction in this Introductory Discourse, to the profound Readers and Judges of these Times, who have the Glory and Advantage of
being Witnesses to the birth of this admirable Production” (1-2). The narrator clearly establishes his literary credentials and wants his “admirable production” to find a worthy readership, conscious of the “treasure” (3) which they are being offered. After alluding to those literary titans he begins an account of his own august origins:

I was born also under the most fortunate of all Planets, and to make my Nativity still more Happy, in one of the Ember-Weeks, and with a Cawl, or certain Membrane about my Head; both which as the learned Jesuit Thraeus, (an Order I particularly Reverence) observes, in his Tract de apparitione Spirituum, are Circumstances, that render such Children more likely than others, to gain the Acquaintance and Familiarity of the Genii design’d for their Conduct. (10-11) 

The narrator here expresses his admiration for the Jesuits, specifically the German Jesuit theologian and preacher Hermann Thyräus. While this is inconsistent with the representation of the Jesuits in much of Memoirs, for the narrator it is central to establishing the uniqueness of his origins. Such origins are a prelude to his having been chosen for a visitation from the Genii or celestial beings. He recounts the “more material particulars” (11) of his history: he “came into the World Heir to a good Family and Fortune, as well as a deal of Pride and Ambition, to distinguish my self from the common Herd of Mankind” (11). He had spent considerable time travelling around the world so that he could observe something more “than my Country-Seat and Neighbours in Summer, and London in the Winter” (12). And so, he travelled for three years and became “as perfectly improv’d as any fine Gentleman of my Time” (12). He believes that he became a “sage politician and patriot” (12). At this point he observes:
I bought a Seat in Parliament at a fair Purchase, for a good deal of Beef and Ale for the Mob, and a round Sum of Money to the worthy Electors, and determin’d to grow great by Voting according to my Conscience, and as the best Arguments should be offer’d me in Favour of those two dangerous Monosyllables, _Yea_ and _No_. (12)

He chose his patrons wisely and received many fair promises, not only from his patron but from his patron’s patron’s patron who was, we are told, a very great man indeed. He was “trusted with several Secrets before they were in Print, and assur’d of succeeding to many tolerable places, before they were vacant; and was so much considered, that I never asked for anything” (14). After some time our narrator realises that his Patrons are offering him little more than empty promises, and he makes a decision to break with his Patron and all my dear Friends the Courtiers, and:

set up once more for a good Conscience, on the other side. But, alas! I soon found this was the worst tim’d step I could have taken, for it both ruin’d my Character with the World, and my Tradesmen lost me my Election the next Parliament; and in a Word, left me to brood over my own Resentments, Disappointments and Despair. (15)

Thus, having made an unwise political move and under altered circumstances, he takes leave of the city and returns to his debt ridden estate in the country. His life becomes a melancholy and embittered one. He “began to hope for a thousand scenes of confusion and destruction to my Country and the Royal Family, and to see their Labours to make us happy, luckily overturn’d by some fortunate Calamities, which might destroy their interest with the people” (17). For several years he gave himself
up to reading, despising what he saw as the narrow paths taken by common scholars
and so by contrast he:

   Studied all hidden Sciences, from magick to the Jewish Cabala and the
   Philosopher’s Stone, and particularly turn’d my self to Astrology with vast
   Application, in hopes to find some propitious influence from the Heavens, to
   favour these reasonable expectations, since I saw with sorrow there was little
   to be hop’d for from the Earth. (17)

The impetus for Memoirs began with the arrival in the narrator’s room of a celestial
being on January 20th, 1728. As he described it, he was lying in his bed:

   When I was surprised to see my door which was fast lock’d, and my curtains
   which were close drawn, opening suddenly of themselves and a great light
   filling my chamber, in the midst of which I saw a beautiful appearance of
   something like what we usually imagine Angels to be. (18)

The Angel told him that “he was my good Genius, and was come to show me nobler
Prospects, that should be deriv’d to me and my family, as well as my Country, from
the present Royal Line and their Posterity, than those I was drawing from my
mistaken Principles in Political Astrology” (19). The Genius seems to be suggesting
that the narrator is erring in his reading of political astrology, because greater
knowledge and enlightenment of what the future holds both for the narrator’s family
and his country’s politics will be forthcoming from him. He promised to keep up
constant communication and correspondence with the narrator and to give him “at
once some little intelligence of the great events that would happen under their
glorious Government, not only to my country, but even my own house and
descendants” (19). Here, the enigmatic visitor sets out to provide information to the
narrator not only on the future of his own country but also on the future of his
family. To this end, he presents him with several large volumes of letters which, he 
asserted, would be written by or to his great-great-great-great-great grandson, 
who would be chief (prime) minister at the end of the twentieth century under 
George VI and which would also mark the last days of the world. As soon as his 
visitor had left, the narrator began to read over the volumes of letters and decided to 
publish a select portion of them. He decided not to make any alterations other than 
translating them into the English of what he calls these “illiterate times” (22). And 
so, the narrator anticipates that radical changes in the language could be expected 
over the course of the next two centuries.

In great detail, he presents his reasons for deciding to publish the letters. 
Firstly, he decides that having been “enlightened, and having such wonderful 
discoveries revealed and instructed” to him (23), he should give the public some 
foretaste of the fate of mankind in the ages to come. Secondly, by making the letters 
public and by showing the glory accruing to certain future ministers, he may lessen 
the reputations of those who presently have positions of power. As he argues:

I saw it in vain to attempt their Ruin by downright Railing, throwing Dirt at 
random, and calling them at all Adventures Rogues and Knaves in Print; for 
they have so deluded the People, by the cursed success of their 
Administration, that they will not listen any longer to general Declamations, to 
witty insinuations or the boldest satyrs, without some few real facts to vouch 
them and prove they are well grounded. (24)

He believes that in showing the world that in time to come there will be far greater 
ministers than exist at present, namely in the form of his descendant, then they may 
pay a little more respect to himself, the ancestor of the future prime minister who as 
he puts it, “(out of that modesty so natural to all great Spirits) I shall not mention
here” (25). Therefore, the narrator is, through the revelation of these letters, showing the current government how badly it had handled the ancestor of the great man who will rule England at the end of the world.

Thirdly, he recounts that the sages and politicians of the present could be kept from destroying the peace, if they could be drawn to focus on the secrets of times to come. He believes that it is insufficient for the elevated elites of his time to know all that may be known but should aim at being masters of all that is not yet known. He recalls that whenever Augustus or one of the ‘antients’ (27) had a dream of the public and relating to the Commonwealth, it would be published either “by the voice of the common Crier” (27) or written up for others to view it. And so, he believes it would be criminal to withhold from publishing, as he wants to preserve

Our country from all the confusion and madness, which the rest of the world will be involv’d in; and continue us in that happy situation, and that spirit of improving our Laws, Arts and Manufactures which I have shewn we shall enjoy in the following centuries, when the other kingdoms of the Earth are to labour, as it were, in actual convulsions, and be jumbled together, like the mountains and plains of Jamaica in the dreadful earthquake of 1692. (28) He takes great care to ensure that his text, when published, should not be tampered with. To this end, he says he has made an exact inventory of the number of syllables, words, and sentences it contains in order to prevent imitation or bowdlerisation. He argues that while this may appear somewhat arrogant and conceited, the Turks had done as much for the sacred Alcoran and the Jews for their Talmud, because mistaking a letter could alter the world.
In what he calls a *Coup d’Eclat* or a grand gesture the narrator chose to make three prefaces to this work, with the second and third in the middle and end of the volume. In the second preface, which begins on page 215, the narrator interrupts his readers in studying what he calls “these admirable letters, and the amazing scenes of Futurity discover’d in them” (215) to answer his critics who accuse him of mere invention, and suggest there could not be such beings as angels or genii assigned to mankind. The narrator, in a lengthy commentary, refutes such allegations and draws on his knowledge of different religions and their fundamental beliefs in the existence of angels. He argues that “it has been common opinion of all Nations, of all Religions, of all Ages, that every Man had a good Angel attending him” (216). He argues that all the Pharisees in the ancient Jewish Church maintained the existence of Angels, but many of them believed that every man had two assigned to him, one good to protect him, and the other bad to record his faults and ultimately to be his accuser.

He refers to ancient authors to back up his thesis, including Homer and Hesiod, and mentions that Seneca’s hundred and tenth epistle to Lucilius maintained that every man had his Genius and every woman her Juno attending on her. He notes that ancient writers who had such Genii and who conversed with them included Hermes, Socrates, Aristotle and Cicero. These men, according to the narrator, were allowed to have their Genii, “who either appeared to them, or only assisted and watched over them privately” (222). He mentions Bartholomaeus de Sybilla and states:

a good Angel is assigned to every one of us, from the moment we peep into the World; because, as he wisely and judiciously observes, the minute we are in danger of sinning, the care of the good Angel is necessary to defend us from
the assaults of Satan; and that till we are born, we are sufficiently watched
over by our mother’s good Angel. (227)

He mentions that the Church of Rome had ventured to assign men in high and
public stations not only an Angel but an Archangel. A man of consequence may
sometimes be allowed thirty or more Angels. He asks the reader why he would have
said he received the work from his good genius when it would have been much
more to his advantage to attribute all of these things to “the force of my own
learning and wisdom, and a happy foresight into future events?” (234). He asks
would it not be better for his own posterity if in future centuries, when everything is
verified, that he should be endea red to after ages. They would come to know that
he was “the original inventor and author of this new and unexampled way of
writing the History of future times, than that I was the bare transcriber, or translator
of this prodigious work?” (235, my emphasis). He asserts it would have taken an
enormous fund of imagination to have composed all that is to be contained in six
volumes, and it shows that he could only have received such prodigious knowledge
from the hand of a superior being. He argues that it is not unusual to have the death
of particular persons foretold “as well as the place of their departure and burial, by
the means of those surprising apparitions, called Dead Men’s Candles; which are as
frequently seen walking their rounds in that Country, as our watchmen are with their
lanthorns every night in London” (238).

The second objection is on the pretext that he has some skill in the worst sort
of magic or in the Black Arts. These critics suggest that through these means the
narrator attained his amazing knowledge on futurity. He answers his critics with the
riposte that if they really believed that he was a practitioner of the Black Arts they
would desist from making such claims for fear that he should use his powers against
them. Another objection relates to insinuations that he had borrowed all the vast
scenes of future events as depicted from his understanding thoroughly the celestial
alphabet, which many of the greatest Rabbis suggest is written by the “divine Finger
of the Creator of the Stars, plac’d in the Heavens in Hebrew Characters, and which
contain all the various accidents which shall ever happen below” (250). He assures
that he will conceal nothing from the reader and mentions his learned friend, a Mr.
Vincent Wing, an ingenious writer of almanacks who prefixes all his almanacks
with these words “The Heaven’s a Book, the Stars are Letters fair; God is the
Writer, Men the Readers are” (252).14

The third preface of Memoirs is written by way of a postscript to the critics. It
is an answer to the critics who make charges that the subsequent letters presage
events which cannot possibly happen and because of their improbability are
consequently not true. He again asserts that they are “not forgeries and impostures,
but real facts,” (507) which will be made public by an honest publisher. By way of
example, he asks readers to engage in some retrospection to look back in history and
contemplate how improbable it would have seemed to the original builders of the
city of Rome if they had been foretold of how vast and powerful that city was to
become through the ages. This includes what he calls “the overturning of all others
by that embryo state, the majesty of the pagan religion there, the birth and rise of the
Christian, the breaking of the Roman Empire into several little scraps and pieces
which are now miscall’d Kingdoms; the spreading conquests of the Pope and his
Monks” (509). He even asks who could have foreseen that Britain within a short
space of time had grown under what he calls “the care of a few good Princes” (513)
before noting that further progress for the country is to be foretold in his work. And
as to trade and riches he wonders how anyone could have foreseen how
the new world prov’d the great nursery and prop of the old, which was so long
a weak and sickly infant, hardly thought worth the rearing or owning, tho’ it is
now grown one great source, of the strength, wealth and prosperity of those
kingdoms, who almost grudg’d its support. (513)

He appeals to time, which he calls “the great parent of truth, for the verification of
all I publish, and to posterity for that honour and deference, which I already behold
them paying, to my faithful labours” (527). And so, he believes that with the
passage of time his narrative’s veracity will be confirmed.

Letters from the Future

The letters which Madden’s narrator received on that winter’s evening in January
1728 are those written to N----m, the narrator’s great great great great great
grandson, who at the end of the twentieth century is both lord high treasurer and
prime minister, together with N----m’s answers. His initials of N and M are the first
and last initial of Madden reversed. The letters to N----m, are all addressed to the
lord high treasurer. His correspondents are all connected with places:
Stanhope, Constantinople
Hertford, Rome
Clare, Moscow
Herbert, Paris
N----m, Chelsea, London.

The correspondents write on diverse dates in 1997, 1998 and 1999. From the
vantage point of the future they adroitly comment on conditions in Paris, Rome,
Constantinople and Moscow. Stanhope, writing from Constantinople on November
3rd, 1997, gives a very detailed account of trade between England and the East. In a clearly utopian mode Stanhope is lauding the success of his trade mission to the east. He has been engaged in talks with people and assures his prime minister that these diplomatic manoeuvres will result in greater glory for Britain. He says that in a short time they will mutually sign an agreement whereby British products will not have any duties placed on them as he puts it, “our cloath and manufactures shall hereafter have no unreasonable Duties impos’d on them, as those of other Nations have” (2). Stanhope humbly suggests that such successful trade negotiations on behalf of the English are not entirely his own doing but are also owing to the wisdom of his Majesty George VI “the strength, loyalty and wealth of his subjects, the terror which his fleet spreads over the ocean and the care and policy of his Ministers, and above all your Lordship, who now so happily preside over them” (2).

Tellingly, Stanhope’s trade negotiations with the Grand Visier of Turkey are backed by the military force of his King and his Prime Minister. Stanhope’s wish is simply for his country to be powerful in trade and status throughout the world. As an envoy, his focus is clearly on bettering the success of his country abroad. His greatest hope is that “our native Country shall hereby be highly advantag’d” (3). Stanhope portrays England as a potential Utopia which will become a better place as trade and military success advances. George VI has through his military stratagems forced his enemies to concede defeats he has “humbled France so far, as to oblige her to give up all her ports in the Channel, even Dunkirk and Calais itself into our hands, and taught all the powers in Europe the respect and almost dependence they owe us” (3). Stanhope suggests that the Prime Minister’s cares will now be based on keeping the general peace with the ultimate aim to promote trade and profit. He then continues to give an account of Turkey from 1949 to the present time. The Memoirs
of his two predecessors in the post had fallen into his hands, and this, coupled with
his own experience, had given him great knowledge. He offers an account of
religion, namely the overshadowing of the “Mahometan Religion” (5) by Christian
missionaries and Jesuits. As he puts it:

It is incredible, my Lord, what an harvest Christian Missionaries and Jesuits
have reap’d thereby among this people. For being disguis’d as Physicians,
Mathematicians, Astrologers, as Janizaries and Spahies, as well as under the
appearance of all kinds of the best sort of trades, (and some of them even by
the Pope’s connivance circumcised and acting the part of Turkish Priests) they
got so thoroughly both into the knowledge and confidence of all kinds and
ranks of people here, and especially the better sort, that under pretence of
proposing their own doubts, they soon overturn’d the established Religion, in
the Minds of all persons eminent for their posts or learning. (6)

And so, Stanhope lights on the dominant motif of Memoirs: religion. Madden’s fear
of or distrust of the Society of Jesuits seems to mirror contemporary prejudices
rather than anticipating any actual changes in society. And so, in the future milieu of
the late twentieth century, Madden has Stanhope accentuate the not uncommon
eighteenth-century fear of the power and growth of the Jesuits. However, his letter
is wrapped in the lexicon of expansionism, the growth of Britain’s trade through a
combination of diplomacy and war is presented as positive. Ultimately his aim is to
see a stronger country, Britain as a Utopian country under the magisterial rule of
George VI and his ministers. Britain as Utopia is part of Stanhope’s capacity for
utopian anticipation, visions of a better society are articulated through his letters
proposing a utopia re-configured no place else but in Britain. The acceptable
political expansionism of Britain is paralleled by the religious expansionism of the
Jesuits which so concerns the narrator.
Stanhope juxtaposes the growth of the Jesuits with the decline in Muslims practising their own faith and it is portrayed in dystopian terms. Stanhope recounts how in the villages the Turks could be seen all day drinking and carousing in defiance of their Alcoran. He adds that some had been heard to “speak contemptuously of the stupid Prophet, who thought, (they said) by the blind Hopes of an imaginary Paradise above, to deprive them of the only Heaven Men could enjoy below, a cheerful bottle, and an open-hearted friend” (8). In a curious way, the Muslims, in abandoning the hope of an imaginary paradise, are presented as having entered a dystopian space where collective hopes are distilled into ‘the cheerful bottle’ thereby foregoing and thwarting long held hopes of an imaginary paradise above. As caveats and cautionary soundings about the Jesuits permeate Stanhope’s letters, the Muslim Turks are presented as having been led into a darker world by the Jesuits in abandoning their faith. This abandonment is represented in dystopian terms, the hopes they held of an imaginary paradise become denuded of value, hopes formerly held dear recede. He argues that Mahometism is now just like a pagan religion, and that this state of affairs has been brought about “chiefly by the means and management of the Roman See, though she has almost renounced the Faith herself, yet out of political views labours to encrease her converts here” (10). Thus, Stanhope links both religion and politics, the Church of Rome portrayed as lacking in faith herself seeks in political terms to increase her numbers in eastern Europe.

Stanhope gives an account of the state of the Turkish army and soldiery, its trade and revenue, its laws and customs as they have been since 1949. They had suffered defeats in battles with the Germans and the Poles and likewise had been vanquished by both the Muscovites and the Persians. This was brought about by “decay’d valour and discipline” (13) among the Turks which saw
them lose all their conquests in Persia, their territories round the Black Sea, together with the greatest part of Transilvania, Moldavia and Wallachia. Their naval power had been significantly depleted after a defeat by the British and they lost both Crete and Cyprus to the Pope and Venetians. Their trade was also in a poor way due to the weakness of their vessels and what he calls “the natural indisposition of the Turks to long voyages” (14). He juxtaposes the life in Turkey in the decline of its years with life in Britain. He suggests that every ‘Britton’ must have honest joy when he sees himself

Secur’d by laws of his own making, in his liberty, life and property, above the reach of the highest power and the strongest Arm; and in Peace and Security under his own Vine and Fig-tree, enjoys from the best of Constitutions, and (the usual and natural consequences thereof,) the best Princes, all the Blessing men can ask for as Freemen and Christians. (17)

Here, Stanhope views himself as a favoured ‘Britton’. This is his utopian vision lauding his country and its espousal of the values of liberty, peace and security throughout his dispatches to N---m from foreign lands.

N---m responded to Stanhope in a letter sent from Chelsea, London and dated December 19th, 1997. Although Stanhope has spent twenty-five years in Turkey, N---m compliments him on not having forgotten his native country “you have not forgotten England so much, by your long residence at Constantinople” (133). In this letter N---m confirms that he will have a telescope sent to Stanhope and gives an account of its extraordinary power to allow the viewer to see “real cities in the Moon, that seem nearly to resemble our own, and what is still more, even mountains and seas in Venus and the other planets” (136). In his letter N---m seeks to reacquaint Stanhope with the improvements made in science and the arts in England during his long absence. His commentary on the scientific advances
afforded by telescopes is allied with his long discussion on England’s great achievements in the Arts and Sciences. N---m aims to inform Stanhope about the Premium Models at Oxford and about the improvements that “have been made here in the polite Arts; and also, how far our Trade, and both the Laws and Manufactures of our Country, are advance’d and regulated within these twenty-five Years, since you left us” (137).

He recounts how a premium scheme had been established to fund those who create the best picture, houses and statues each year. The King subscribes £1,500 a year and “he has but one vote in determining who best deserves the Premiums; and that parties and factions may be excluded” (138). Accordingly, he says that Great Britain has become the seat of the fine arts and has drawn many Masters of the Arts to it confident of generous rewards for their labours and merit. He states that “we have better new Pictures and Statues in Great Britain, than in all Europe besides; and perhaps Italy herself, will not, in a little Time, be able to excel the Palaces we have built here, since this Scheme has taken Place” (138-9).

N---m confirms that The Royal College of St. George at Oxford, which had been founded in the eighteenth century, had been vastly improved and a great square had been built by his Majesty, which he named “the College of the learned World” (141). There are apartments for Fellows and lodgings for four new salaried professors. One of these professors is employed in teaching agriculture and gardening “and has (near the College) twenty Acres of Ground, which he employs in small Parcels, under the Plow and Spade, in different Methods and Experiments, in those two useful Arts” (142). Another professor has been appointed the Weather Professor and is obliged to keep exact diaries and indexes of all wind and weather patterns. He must note “the Changes of the Air and Weather, with Deductions and Conjectures as to all Dearths of great Crops, healthy Seasons, and epidemical
Distempers, and the Causes and Remedies of Famines and popular Sicknesses. He is to enter his Observations in regular Calendars” (143).

There are two professors of trades and mechanical arts. They divide all the trades between them, such as dying, weaving, tanning, carpentry, masonry, painting, brewing, baking, spinning, printing, glass-making, and such like. They are obliged to investigate all possible or probable methods of improvement in these trades. Each year they give their observations or inventions to the Board of Trade, who after examining them may allow the apprentices to publish them “for the common Good” (145). This forms a clear connection with the actual concerns of Madden’s life. N---m in speaking about premiums, improving projects, and experimental gardens reflects Madden’s own commitments to improvement. His fictive concerns cohere succinctly with Madden’s philosophy expressed in his 1732 Proposal and also in his Letter to the Dublin Society in 1739.

Writing from Rome on November 7th, 1997, Hertford recounts that he is well settled in the city in “a most handsome and convenient house” (28). He has had an audience with the Pope and is impressed with his visit and says:

The Pope, to say truth, how heartily soever he wishes our destruction, as the great bulwark of the Protestant cause and interest; yet is so sensible of his Majesty’s wisdom and power, and the vast ascendant his fleets and arms have procur’d him, over all the affairs in Europe; that he shows the greatest readiness to comply with all our demands, and puts the best mien on it he can. (28-29)

More deliberately, the Pope in Rome is portrayed as both a religious and a political figure aware of the military strength of Britain, who complied with all their demands relayed to him through Hertford. The Pope, we are told, has restored all privileges to Britain in the area of the Adriatic Sea. And so, in 1997 we learn that
the Pope employs what is called the Holy Office of the Inquisition which is, according to Hertford, a mere engine of state to uncover heresy among any enemies of the Papal See. Hertford confirms that a Bull is to be published wherein the Pope has agreed to all the conditions it contains.

At a more covert level, Hertford’s mission is to gather any intelligence relating to what he calls “this overgrown State” (29). It is Hertford’s remit to gather intelligence on behalf of the Prime Minister and his Government, as they are feeling the threat of the growth of this “new Empire of the Vatican” (30). He suggests that the new Empire of the Vatican has “risen of late to so prodigious a height, that it seems not only to rival, but out-grow the most extended limits of old Rome” (30). He then relates as much information as possible about what he calls this “Spiritual Monarchy” (30). He relates how historically throughout the nineteenth century the church in Rome had expanded and strengthened and that the policy of this See had been for many ages to employ her “ecclesiastics to preach up to the people in all parts of the Earth, the vast superiority of the spiritual office of priesthood” (34). It is the Jesuits who become the focus of Hertford’s displeasure and grievance. He argues that the Jesuits “took care to build the prodigious superstructure of wealth, territories and power” (34). He believes that the Pope and the order of Jesuits are but one and the same. They have amassed great treasure and power “the Pope and this Order (for they are but one and the same Body and Interest) have from their Provinces in Africk, their territories or empire rather of Paraguay in America, and their revenues from China, a fund so prodigious, that it exceeds all belief” (37). Not only has the Vatican amassed great wealth and power, but the Jesuits also have political power. Speaking of the courts of Europe he says that there is hardly a great person in them, who has not a Jesuit for his confessor, nay his director. How few of its crown’d Heads are there, whose Prime Minister is not
either a Cardinal Jesuit, or so absolutely under the influence of the Pope’s Nuncio, that they may be said to be entirely govern’d and directed by them. (37)

Hertford then turns to the Protestant cause and the damage wrought on it by the Jesuits, who have been “able to divide and distract the Protestant Powers, to corrupt and pervert some of them, perfidiously” (40). In education the Jesuits reign supreme “besides their being the general bankers and traders of the world, they have unjustly, and by the vilest means engrossed all the schools and colleges of Europe, and the sole Education of the youth there” (41). They have control over the minds of Princes and those in authority but even preserve their empire with “the lower ranks and degrees of men; to the poorest tradesmen, the common soldiers, and the very porters and rabble of the streets, who are all oblig’d to confession at least once a month or to be excommunicated and outlaw’d” (42).

The Jesuits are also the sole licensors of books, by which means nothing appears in Public, “but what is season’d to their palate, and dressed up by their spiritual cooks so skilfully, as to please their Society” (44). He refers to Pasquin who had said that his Holiness had made his good brethren the Jesuits, “sole spectacle-makers to the world; by which means they were impower’d to make all things in print, appear dark or clear, fair or foul, great or little, as they pleased to represent them to the eyes of others” (44). He computes there are 170,000 known Jesuits in Europe alone, in a hierarchy where each member once a week gives an account of his conduct and observations to his rector, and he to the college, each college to the Provincial, and each Provincial to the Nuncio, and each Nuncio to the Pope, who is always General of the Order. According to his intelligence gathering there are 1300 stationed in Britain in different places some of them as tradesmen, valet de chambers, clerks, preachers, school-masters. He encloses a list
of the names and last known places of residence of 75 of what he calls “these traytors” (47).

Interestingly, Hertford at the close of his lengthy dispatch combines anti-Catholicism and anti-Jacobitism. While the Jesuits and the Papal See are seen as a threat and kept in check by the potential power of his Majesty “George VI” as it is most sure his Britannick Majesty is consider’d here, as the greatest obstacle to all these schemes of the Papal ambition; and how far the daily Terror of our Fleet on this coast, and his Majesty’s Arms, Conduct, and personal Bravery, (hereditary to his house) may intimidate and cool the ardour of his hopes, is not easily to be imagin’d. (49-50)

However, Jacobitism is portrayed as a lost cause with but few adherents. Hertford describes a meeting with

an old Gentleman who is actually the lineal Descendant of one of our ancient Kings, who abdicated his Throne thro’ a violent Aversion to the Northern Heresy, and his Zeal to this See…He is certainly Great Great Grandson, to the Person who is once or twice mention’d in the Histories of the glorious Reigns of George II. and Frederic 1. under the Name of the Pretender. (51-52)

He is considered “a piece of Antiquity” (52). The Vatican allows him “2000 l. a Year, and a beneficial Place, of first Valet de Chambre to his Holiness” (52). He is near eighty and is “very constant at his Breviary” (52). The whole description of this octogenarian is suggestive of a lost cause. He is attended only by “a few Highland Gentlemen” and “converses with none but a Rabble of Scotch and English Jesuits, and now and then an Italian Painter or Fiddler” (52). Neither he nor his father ever took the title of king, nor does he have an heir, for his five children – all in occupations relating to the Catholic faith – are illegitimate. His links with Britain are completely severed to the point where he does not speak English. Hertford had
met him at the Opera, and they conversed in Italian.

In a lengthy letter which Hertford again wrote from Rome, dated January 7th, 1998, to be delivered by “a very worthy English Gentleman, Mr. Lumley” (99), he gives an account of an auction of holy relics which is to take place at the Church of St. Peters “on Monday April 25th, 1998, from Nine in the Morning till eight at Night, and to continue till all be sold” (102). This amazing event of “selling publickly those venerable Remains, which the Bigotry and Zeal of their Ancestors had so long held sacred, is entirely occasion’d by the Avarice and Prodigality of the Cardinal’s Nephew” (99). Tellingly, the auction is being presented as an opportunity to disperse holy and precious items throughout all Christian Nations in order to increase devotion and piety to them. The description of the relics is both painstaking and exceedingly satiric, a veritable tour de force in the use of detail, where Hertford presents a five page inventory that shows a wide, if biased, knowledge of Catholic dogma. Some of the items that he mentions are “the Table on which Christ eat the last Supper, a little decayed…The Towel with which he wip’d his Disciples Feet, very rotten…Part of the Money paid Judas” (105)… “the holy Linnen-Cloath upon which St. John Baptist was beheaded, wants new Hemming and Darning…the brains of St. Peter, from Geneva” (106)… “the Water-Pots of the Marriage at Cana in Galilee” (105).

Writing from Moscow, on November 29th, 1997, the correspondent Clare writes on matters of politics. It appears that Britain had used her naval power to defeat the Russians in the Baltic, and Clare suggests that the Russians want to develop an accord with them to assist in matters of commerce. Clare notes that he will lose no opportunity in developing cordial relations with them and comments that the people are vastly improved in every way having made “great advances in all polite Arts, as well as the learned Sciences” (55). He notes that “a Caravan for
China went off yesterday, with near twenty British Merchants in their Company, all provided with sufficient Pass-ports, and allowed the same Privileges with the Czar’s Subjects” (55). Clare advises that Russia would make a dangerous enemy but would prove a useful friend. He suggests that all efforts should be made to cultivate the Czar’s friendship and that he will do everything in Moscow to achieve that aim. In a lengthy digression Clare mentions Laplanders employed in Moscow to create fine gardens. They had the art of making sunshine and could create gardens of choice fruit, flowers and exotic plants. Clare suggests that such Laplanders employed in Britain could enhance life greatly. Gardens could be created under their direction with all the fruits, trees and flowers of France and Spain or even the East and West Indies. He asks “how many Cures might our George the Sixth make, by settling a few acres by the year on our hospitals for the sick” (69). Clare sees the Laplanders in utopian terms, believing Britain would be a much better place with their presence, as he notes “but by the help of their improvements in our fields and gardens, we shall get, as it were, new Heavens, and a new Earth, as St. Peter speaks” (72).

In a letter dated March 8th, 1997, Clare, again writing from Moscow, refers to the Prime Minister’s request that he give details on the Jesuits in Moscow. Clare speaks of “the prodigious growth of that Society in Muscovy” (339). They have applied themselves to the study and practice of Physick with great success, and have had success in the Czar’s Court and throughout his empire. On December 16th, 1997, Herbert writes from Paris on what he calls “this unhappy kingdom” (80). He finds that works at Calais have much improved the port, and at Dunkirk British ships could come and go without any hazard. He finds all the British garrisons, in perfect good health and order, “well fed, cloath’d, and paid, and made a fine Appearance; especially when compar’d with those of the French in the towns I past thro’, which were as naked and lean as Beggars” (75). France has been ravaged by
both famine and plague, has had an unsuccessful war with Germany and her naval affairs ruined by Britain, and are on the decline. King Lewis the twentieth “does not seem sufficiently resolute, or able, to mend the ill posture of his Affairs” (98). He has “grown a little crazy” and “leaves his Affairs to his Ministers” (98). The poor people “pay taxes for all that they eat or drink or wear, to an excessive degree, even to their salt and bread” (84). Meanwhile, “the Luxury of the Nobility and Gentry is increas’d beyond all Bounds” (85).

N---m, writing from London on April 5th, 1998, responds to Clare’s letters from Moscow of November 29th, January 17th, and March 8th, 1997. N---m responds to Clare’s comments on the caravan which had left for China and notes that previously any Chinese who had been brought to England had “taught our people here to be as good potters, and to make as fine vessels as any in China” (434). N---m asks that some Chinese be hired at any expense and “sent to us by the return of the first caravan. Our chief want is painters and bakers, tho’ the truth is, we are already such masters in this art” (434). Despite his request that Chinese be hired for their skills in painting, baking and pottery, N---m concludes that England presently exports vast quantities of its superior quality manufactured goods to China, and as for English pottery it is, he argues, “better painted”(434). N---m informs Clare that his Majesty wishes to maintain cordial relations with the Czar and to have a resident, if not an ambassador, perpetually with him to, as he puts it, “preserve a constant mutual intercourse of good offices between the two Crowns, and favour our traders thither all we can” (423). N---m informs Clare that he is unlikely to be recalled from Moscow for these reasons and says of him: “I believe’d indeed by your long continuance in that Court as an Ambassador, you were almost chang’d into a perfect Russian” (424).

Although N---m argues that Clare’s comments on the Laplanders are most
likely invented and says that his Majesty having read his letter “is of opinion, you have either a mind to laugh at us, or to make us laugh at you and your sun-shine” (424). Nevertheless, N---m does ask Clare to inform him should he “have heard or seen anything more, of the handy-work of these Sun-drummers” (424). N---m returns to the theme of the Jesuits and to Clare’s account of their growth in Moscow. He notes that many of the plans of the Jesuits had been adapted by his Majesty and his royal ancestors and put into execution in England “to the infinite service of the British Churches” (425). N---m does not elaborate on what aspects of the Jesuits plans had been so subsumed by the British Churches. However, he does return to one of the main themes of his letters: that of premiums. He implies that premiums are one of the ideas of the Jesuits which had been absorbed and adapted. The connection between the Jesuits and Premiums was first made by Madden in his 1732 Proposal. Writing on the benefits of establishing premiums as incentives for the most diligent of students, Madden refers to the success of the Jesuits in this area in their schools:

         Whoever doubts of this may easily be convinc’d by the Conduct of the Jesuits, in most of their Schools all over Europe, and by the Effects both Balzac and the French Academies annual Premiums in France. (12)

Here, then, Madden’s practical Proposal of 1732 converges with the fictive imaginative landscape of his Memoirs of 1733. It highlights his spirit of improvement as both practically applied and imaginatively rendered.

         N---m in his letter refers to Frederick III, who at the beginning of the last century had “established premiums in our principal colleges, for those who gave their best proof of their scholarship” (425). N---m argues that the Jesuits had only “imitated the zeal, of one of our best Princes in the same century” (425). His concern remains that “the Russian Church must in a very little time, become a
province of the Roman See, and embrace all her errors, superstitions, and idolatry, as the essential truths of Christianity” (426).

The themes of religion, trade, politics and military engagement occur and recur throughout the letters. Writing on April 16th, 1998, from Constantinople, however, Stanhope confines himself to accounts of his meeting with the Grand Seignior and their discussions on scientific and astronomical matters. Stanhope has learnt to speak Turkish and this facilitates his conversations. The Grand Seignior had an interest in globes, watches and the like, and so Stanhope says that he had delivered to him from London “Globes, Maps, Clocks of all kinds, and Watches; Dogs, Guns, Barges, Coaches, and, in a word, whatever I found him most desirous of” (309). Stanhope and the Grand Seignior spent many hours conversing on the moon and the stars. The Grand Seignior wondered if there could be living creatures, and above all, men on the moon. Stanhope responded that he had “great and weighty reasons to be persuaded of it” (311). Together they spent hours looking through the telescope which Stanhope claimed

Could not only discern Hills and Rivers, but even objects like Towns and Forests in the Moon; and that, if the Inhabitants there were as large as some great Astronomers conceived them to be, I doubted not in time, our Glasses might be so far improved, as to see even Men and their actions there. (311)

And so, Stanhope is aware of what his telescope may discern but he is also aware of the fact that ‘glasses’ will be improved in the future and much more of the world of the moon will be revealed. They pored over a vast map of the Moon, which Stanhope had brought from London, with “all the Seas, Rivers, Mountains, Hills, Valleys, Forests, and the supposed Towns that are so accurately laid down in it by the Selenographers” (313). Before they parted the Grand Seignior had decided to endow and have built an Astronomical College to be staffed by the best professors
in Europe. Stanhope requested of the Prime Minister that he should give orders that some excellent astronomers may be prevailed upon to set out with the next fleet for Turkey. They ponder on the wonderful discoveries which will be made: “what discoveries shall we not make in the Heavens of new Stars arising, old ones decaying, unobserv’d Comets, with new Suns and Planets in their several systems, arranging in the thousands and ten thousands of the yet undiscover’d hosts of Heaven” (334). When Stanhope writes his next letter from Constantinople, on May 1st, 1998, the astronomical college has been established with great zeal and expedition. The Grand Seignior though not very fond of travelling upon the Earth, “he frequently makes the great tour of the Heavens, and visits all the constellations in their turns; and begins to be confident, that in another age, we shall not only be able to see the inhabitants of the Moon, which would be useless, without any other benefit, but to invent engines to carry us thither” (475). In the closing years of the twentieth century, he alludes to another age, a future age, when inhabitants of the moon will not only be visible but ‘engines’ will be invented to transport people to it.

In an excursion with the Grand Seignior to his new house of pleasure, built with immense expense near Chalcedon, Stanhope recounts how in this “earthly paradise” (496) the gardens are among the finest built in the European manner and describes the temples, vistas, porticoes, walks and flower-beds and fountains which are all surrounded “with so perpetual a serenity of the heavens, and fertility of the earth, that it looks like the Paradise, which God planted for the Lord of the world to dwell in” (495). However, this letter contains a prophecy that the ten lost tribes of Israel are to be rediscovered in the twentieth century. A Rabbi Solomon from Tunis visits Stanhope and tells him that the ten tribes have been discovered in the centre of Africa. He says that they “have a vast Empire there, and are very powerful, having near 50 millions of souls under their Kings” (485). The Messiah is among them and
has an army of 500,000 men; they are in motion to cross the deserts of Borno and Guoga, and passing the Nile, to seize Egypt, “and then the land of Canaan their Heritage, and build up the fallen glories of mount Sion and Jerusalem” (485). The Rabbi had letters from the Synagogue of Tunis, directed to all faithful Jews to be on their guard “for the Kingdom was about to be restor’d to Israel” (486). As one of the few attempts at actual prophecy in Memoirs it is the one that has proved true. Accounts of events in France are provided by Herbert in a letter sent from Paris, and dated December 16th, 1997. Herbert reports that he had just returned from a journey visiting the sea ports and garrisons in France, all of which are in perfectly good order. The port of Calais is much improved and he observes “in the lowest neap tides at Dunkirk, our ships of war of forty guns can go out and come in without any hazard; the benefit of which I need not mention” (75). He finds all the British garrisons, both men and officers, are in perfect good health and order, well fed, cloath’d, and paid” (75). By contrast the French troops he saw in the towns he passed through were hungry and unkempt. He argues that when troops are so ill paid and fed, they will “neither have heart and spirit in time of action” (75). Herbert says that both France and Spain have for a long time been noteworthy for the mismanagement of their troops and “have paid dearly for their neglect, by so many terrible losses as they have met with for these last fifty years” (75-76). France has been much on the decline due to the ravages of both famine and the plague and their unsuccessful wars with Germany. Further, they have been weakened by Britian ruining their naval affairs and impeding their trade. He notes that Lewis the nineteenth and the present king, Lewis the twentieth, have had quarrels with the Papal See. The French King during the reign of Henry VIII in England had renounced the Pope’s authority. In order to placate Rome, France had given up strong frontier towns in Dauphine, which, as Herbert observes, “the Pope keeps as
Keys to enter the Gates of France from Italy, now that most of Savoy is his own” (77). Relations with Spain are not good as there had been wars between the Crowns, and Spain as victor has forced France to accept some “very inglorious conditions” (77). The French are no longer the fear of Europe that they formerly were, and Herbert concludes “the Pope is now the entire object of the fears of Europe, instead of the conquering French” (78). According to Herbert, the truth is “this Nation does not seem form’d for Empire, and tho’ they’ve often made mighty efforts, and great conquests, they never preserve them” (78).

The present King Lewis the twentieth is portrayed as not sufficiently resolute, indeed his clergy and people seem more desirous to support the Pope than to strengthen the hands of their king. It seems they are fearful that the king would exact revenge “for their joining with Rome against him, if he should once recover his former power” (78). The king, while not yet fifty years of age, has grown a little crazy, and leaves matters of State to his Ministers. They are only “mercenary rapacious Ministers” (79) who had pillaged the Kingdom. The King is surrounded by sycophants and flatterers “that are ever buzzing about the ears of great Princes, knowing it is impossible otherwise to support themselves” (83). Herbert portrays France as “this unhappy Kingdom” (80) the poor people, groan under so many burdens. As they “pay taxes for all that they eat or drink or wear, to an excessive degree, even to their salt and bread” (84). Meanwhile, the luxury of the nobility and gentry is increased beyond all bounds “as if they were not only insensible of, but even rejoiced in the publick calamities of their fellow-subjects” (85). Ultimately, Herbert sees France as having fallen now “from the object of our Fears, to that of our pity” (90).

Herbert, writing from Paris on February 8th, 1997, gives an account of his view of everyday life in France. He notes that public granaries in all the major
villages are filled with plentiful crops, so that they have nearly two years provisions to supply them should any shortage of food occur. On a political level efforts have been taken to prevent what Herbert calls “the continual Fraud in the managing of the Finances” (289). He speaks of “the vile arts these Financiers, and Bankers of the Treasures of the State, made use of to enrich themselves” (290). To prevent further such dishonesty an edict had been passed and seven commissioners are to examine “with the strictest care and fidelity, all publick accounts of the Nation” (290). Such information is to be published annually and to be viewed by the public, noting any errors found in them whether by fraud or mistake. Any such lapses are to be repayed by the offender. Herbert notes that, as a result, “it is hard to be believed with what honest severity, regularity, integrity, and economy, the Publick Finances here have been managed of late” (291).

Writing from London on February 24th, 1997, N---m responds to Herbert’s correspondence from Paris of December 16th, and February 8th. He notes that the King has read the letters and is happy with the account of the works carried out in the harbours of both Dunkirk and Calais. N---m notes that the King is anxious that a planned audience between Herbert and the French King goes well as he hopes that closer ties between France and Britian may benefit by, as he puts it “humbling the exorbitant power of the empire of the Vatican” (368). N---m returns to the favoured theme of his letters, improvement. He speaks of the development of the state-run Royal Fishery and the Plantation Companies. The Royal Fishery which operates out of sixteen ports is obliged to employ at least 200,000 workers employed as coopers, shipwrights, smiths, sawyers, sailors, fishers, and sailmakers; others are to be employed making nets, baskets, ropes, dressing and spinning hemp and flax. At least 1,600 lame and 1,000 blind people are to be employed in rope and net-making. It is financed by share holders. All “common beggars and vagabonds, and all
foundlings, when eight years old shall belong to the company, and be seiz’d by
them, and kept in their work-houses for seven years, allowing them cloaths and diet,
without wages” (371). Without the taxes that the Dutch pay, the plan for the Royal
Fishery is that it would train all these people for employment and in selling to
foreign markets would enable Britain “to undersell all our rivals in this trade” (372)
and “to breed up every year several thousand seamen, and employ numbers of our
useless poor, and import immense sums of treasure to our happy island” (372).

Utopian in its tendencies to define how individuals working for the company
have to live, the Plantation Company for the new colonies in the West-Indies has
three million acres and the plan is that they are “to be laid out and applotted equally
to all planters who shall settle there, and build new towns” (372). They also have
large Premiums for “such limited quantities of iron, pitch, tar, hemp, flax, silk,
indigo, wine or oil” (372-3). These items will be imported from Britain and the plan
is that in a few years they will “make us utterly independent of our neighbours in
the North for all naval stores, which us’d to drain such immense sums from us”
(373). N---m notes that these two companies can only strengthen the wealth of the
country. They will “not only enrich us vastly beyond any of our neighbours but they
also vastly increase our naval strength, employ our starving poor, and will so far
enlarge and extend our colonies on the Continent” (373). N---m argues that new
bishoprics founded by his Majesty’s ancestors and well as those of Carolina,
Barbados and Boston should contribute to the reformation of manners and principles
in the colonies “and to keeping them firm in their allegiance to the crown” (375).
He notes that two colleges erected in the colonies by George the third had gone a
great way in civilising and improving the inhabitants. He reflects on “the happy
condition of our own country, and what it owes to that glorious Line of Hanover”
(379).
Madden stated in his lengthy title to *Memoirs* that six volumes would be published, only one of which ever appeared. However, questions remain as to why he had a substantial number of his newly printed book destroyed. It has been a matter of some speculation. It could have been suppressed by him in deference to Walpole or suppressed by Walpole. I would argue that Madden’s work is superior to most pro-government satires and was neither suppressed by him in deference to Walpole, or suppressed by Walpole. It seems most likely to have been suppressed as a result of Madden’s cloak of anonymity being cast aside and his authorship revealed. As a clergyman, he could have viewed partisan party writing as inconsistent with his vocation and wished to remain anonymous. This is substantiated by reference to the first letter which Madden wrote to Walpole and which seems to reveal his wish for general anonymity in party political matters. Madden suggested the setting up of a newspaper, “as a vehicle for his (Walpole’s) papers” (Urstadt 59). He mentioned “many of your & our Countries friends might hereafter come in to my assistance” (59). He mentioned specifically Dr. Edward Younge, Sir William Yonge and George Lyttelton (who after entering Parliament in 1735 was to become a prominent member of the opposition and an opponent of Walpole, but who in the early 1730s wrote in favour of Walpole’s government). However, Madden wished to remain anonymous, citing his personal belief that political writing was improper for a clergyman. These men represented the ranks from which government writers often emerged, politicians or clergymen. The number of clergymen among them is noticeable – Edward Younge, Thomas Newcomb, Madden and others.

In the years following *Memoirs* Madden continued his correspondence with Walpole. Writers who sent their work to Walpole very often wrote of their
willingness to alter the material to suit his taste. Writing from Ireland on January 3rd, 1740, Madden sent material “to be publisht when & how you please, with whatever corrections those you entrust them with think best” (Urstad 90). He expands:

I am sensible both my want of abillity [sic] & skill for such a Work & my distance from the scene of business, & being depriv’d of all proper instruction & information, must make them very defective; but if you think they are worth my own attendance or the care of others to alter or improve them, they & I are absolutely at your service, if such trivial things can be worth your service.

(Urstad 90)

Among the ‘trivial things’ is Madden’s poem “Bermuda”. He wrote to Walpole that he wanted to print his poem, as he “is often mention’d in it with honour & that the War with Spain makes a number of Passages very seasonable for these times” (Urstad 90). This is a recurrent motif in the letters of pro-government writers: they are replete with references to works that either “cannot appear at this time” or works that the author, as in Madden’s case, considered “seasonable”. I would argue that the combination of the loss of Madden’s anonymity, and his specific references to religion in Memoirs necessitated his suppression of it. Madden’s major concern in Memoirs is the danger of a Catholic plot to takeover and undermine Britain. Like Swift, he was opposed to Catholicism and to the new politics which were beginning to emerge. The combined threat from the ‘overgrown state of the Vatican’ and the ‘prodigious growth of the Jesuits’ form the central theme of the letters from the future. While such criticisms were not uncommon, Antonio Gavin’s A Master-Key to Popery was a bestseller of 1725. Madden, in locating them in the later half of the twentieth century, taking place far from the everyday world of eighteenth-century life, confirms in fact “that all utopian fiction whirls

236
contemporary actors through a costume dance no place else but here” (Rabkin, Greenberg, and Olander vii).

Thus, Memoirs speaks to the fears of its times. Yet, in writing his history of future times Madden, to use the words of Paul Alkon, “created a viable form in the shape of a tale of the future that could work perfectly well as a framework for futuristic fiction in any of its modes” (93). If Madden provided a framework for further future histories, he was also, according to Alkon, “the first to write a narrative that purports to be a document from the future”; and he thus “deserves recognition as the first to work with the rich idea of time-travel in the form of an artefact sent backwards from the future to be discovered in the present” (96). Madden’s work is also noteworthy, according to Alkon, because his was

the first prose narrative to adopt the central technique of those modes of futuristic fiction formally distinct from previous traditions by virtue of inviting readers to imagine themselves looking backwards from a far future to their own present and immediate future, which are thus also to be regarded as the past. (109)

Memoirs is therefore seminal in being the first English language work of prose fiction set in a chronologically specified future. The framework of Madden’s narrative—documents transported backwards in time from the twentieth to the eighteenth century—differs from the idea of transporting a narrator forward to the future, a device used in Louis-Sébastien Mercier’s 1771 L’An 2440: Un rêve s’il en fut jamais) and translated as Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred.15 Madden had found a novel way of satirising and depicting contemporary life by describing it from a future vantage-point. Speaking of Memoirs, Alkon writes: “the first time-traveller in English literature is a guardian angel who returns with state documents from 1998 to the year 1728” (3). The literary world of
eighteenth-century Britain and Ireland was distinctive for its formal experimentation, especially in satirical works that parodied existing genres, and in the process sometimes created viable new forms. And so, Madden did create a viable new genre: the future history enveloped in utopian satire.

*Memoirs* represents a multidimensional perspective on utopia: it deploys elements of satire, science fiction, myths of the earthly paradise, travel narrative and prophecy. As we have seen, *Memoirs* points to the gap between present and future, Britain and Europe, prophecy and diatribe in an expanding world. By imagining another reality in a hypothetical future, Madden created a future history which enabled him to develop a satire on contemporary politics and religion. It is possible that Madden was not as vociferously pro-Walpole as his correspondence would indicate. Indeed, it is more likely that he was garnering favour on behalf of his improving projects which ultimately were the bedrock of his utopianism. He seems to have been, as evidenced by his dedication to Frederick, Prince of Wales, unimpressed by the current party system. Like Swift, he was opposed to Catholicism and to the new politics as they were beginning to emerge. This may be what *Memoirs* is all about: a satire on contemporary politics and religion but one which could be construed as conservative, or even as Jacobite, as it could be Whiggishly pro-Walpole. Swift, as an Anglo-Irish patriot, distrusted deluded singlemindedness (Jesuit and Presbyterian) at the expense of practical improvement. Madden may well be doing with time and futurism what Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* did with space and fantastical islands: satirising folly wherever it manifests itself. However, through the diverse voices of *Memoirs* Madden clearly maintained a
thread of connection with his ideas for practical improvement as revealed in his Proposal and in his Letter to the Dublin Society. Madden’s Memoirs combines the twin discourses of improvement and satire, while appearing distrustful of deluded singlemindedness (Jesuit) wherever it detracted or distracted from practical visions for improvement.

Madden’s Letter to the Dublin Society, on the IMPROVING Their FUND; and the Manufactures, Tillage, &c. in IRELAND is clearly a practical and pragmatic presentation of his improving visions and can be linked to his Memoirs. N---m in Memoirs speaks in his letters of premiums, improvements in agriculture, trade, arts and sciences. In his Letter, Madden transposes such a vision to the geographical, political, cultural and economic milieu of his home country, while also foregrounding his social conscience. In the opening section entitled ‘To the reader’ he requests that his letter should be read “with the same good will it was written with, and promote the honest Designs it proposes, for the service of our poor neglected People” (2). In the substantive part of the letter Madden addresses the gentlemen of the Dublin Society, ensuring them that his plan and the measures he suggests to implement it, would aid in making “you one of the most useful Societies that ever was set up in Ireland” (5). Madden suggests that all the learning in the world is mere foppery and folly “where it does not contribute to the Good of Men; so it is as certain, that the highest and noblest labour of the Mind, is the contriving and providing for National Interests, and the real Service of one’s native Country” (6). Madden’s utopian vision is aligned with his design for the betterment of his country. Here, then, Madden’s utopian anticipation can be seen as his production of hopeful visions of a better society, one that is shaped through social practices. As he is dissatisfied with the way things are in contemporary Ireland, his narrative aims to
offer a radical template for the better organising of the Dublin Society. Such a vision for an improved Society is one which offers the possibility of a re-configured Ireland. It should “be capable of changing and absolutely mending the situation of Ireland, and placing its future prosperity and welfare, on the most immoveable foundations” (7).

Central to his mode of thinking is the concept of self-reliance. He believes that “the remedies of all our evils, must begin from ourselves, rather than our neighbours, and chiefly from our own increase of industry” (8). Madden paves the way for the positive creation of a better society based on self-reliance and practical application. Such practical application is predicated on the need for the Dublin Society to increase the number of its members and to increase the amount of financial resources available to it. He considers how this is to be done, what is to happen, when it is to be achieved and what purpose funds are to serve when attained. Madden suggests ideas on improving Ireland’s linen-industry and ways to lessen the country’s reliance on imports by developing industries for the manufacture of glass-bottles, earthenware, iron tools, pots, knives, scythes, lace, paper, tapestry, sugar and salt. He believes that proper premiums or encouragements offered to interested parties (including skilled people from other countries who may be persuaded to come and settle in Ireland) would assist these developments. He proposes that a select number of acres in different soils and places near Dublin be developed as experimental farms, for all aspects of husbandry. Such improvements could, in a number of years, contribute to what he calls “the service of mankind” (35). Madden’s vision is summed up in his call to members of the Dublin Society “to encourage our people to think for others as well as work for themselves” (49). He is clear that his vision is inclusive and that it cannot be thwarted because “it is neither Papist nor Protestant, Whig or Tory” (53). This,
then, is Madden’s public-spirited plan for a better society. *Memoirs*, located in the future and predicated on satire and improvement, is the fictive precursor to his pragmatic and practical *Letter to the Dublin Society*; they provide important insights into the disparate journeying of Irish utopianism in the eighteenth century, and confirm that Madden belongs in both the *Tír na nÓg* of intellect, and of imagination. ¹⁶

Endnotes

¹ The full title is *Memoirs of the Twentieth Century. Being Original Letters of State, under GEORGE the Sixth: Relating to the Most Important Events in Great-Britain and Europe, as to CHURCH and STATE, ARTS and SCIENCES, TRADE, TAXES, and TREATIES, PEACE, and WAR: and Characters of the Greatest PERSONS of Those Times; from the Middle of the Eighteenth, to the End of the Twentieth CENTURY, and the WORLD. Received and Revealed in the Year 1728; and now Published, for the Instruction of All Eminent Statesmen, Churchmen, Patriots, Politicians, Projectors, Papists, and Protestants*. In SIX VOLUMES. Vol. 1. London: Printed for Osborn, Longman, Davis, and Battey et. al, 1733.


7 See Tone Sundt Urdstad 73. Urdstad notes this letter from Madden to Walpole is held in Cambridge University Library, Cholmondeley (Houghton) Correspondence, 1507 (Madden to Walpole, September NY).

8 See Nichol’s *Literary Anecdotes*, 2: 29-33. John Nichols (1745-1826) was apprenticed at twelve years of age to William Bowyer, often referred to as “the last of the learned printers”. Bowyer was one of the printers of *Memoirs* in 1733. In 1812 Nichols began the publication of the work by which he is perhaps best known today—the *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*. The six volumes which Nichols contemplated grew to nine, the final volume appearing in 1815.

9 Under the Act of Settlement passed by the English Parliament in 1701, Frederick was in the direct line of succession to the British throne. He moved to England after the accession of his father in June 1727, and was created Prince of Wales. He predeceased his father George II, and upon the latter’s death in 1760, the throne passed to Prince Frederick’s eldest George, Prince of Wales, who reigned as King George III from 1760 until 1820.
The sacred text of The Comte De Gabalis was anonymously published in 1670 under the title *Comte De Gabalis*, a French ‘novel of ideas’. The first English translation was printed in 1680. Only in later publishings did the name Abbé de Villars (b. 1635) become associated as author of the work. The book describes an encounter with a mysterious Comte De Gabalis, who is master of the occult sciences. De Gabalis initiates de Villars into the secrets of elemental beings: the sylphs of the air, the undines of the water, the gnomes of the earth, the salamanders of fire. Alexander Pope was influenced by the Comte De Gabalis in *The Rape of the Lock*, his Rosicrucian poem first published in 1712.

Madden is referring to Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac (1597-1654) born probably in Balzac, near Angoulême, France. He was an author and critic who was best known for his epistolary essays which were widely circulated and read in his day. He was one of the original members of the Académie Française. Swift’s library contained a copy of de Balzac’s *Oeuvres diverses* (1664). See Le Fanu, *A Catalogue of Books Belonging to Dr. Jonathan Swift*, 12.

Hermann Thyräus (1532-1591), German Jesuit theologian and preacher. His *Confessio Augustana* appeared in 1567. He also left several volumes of sermons.

Madden here refers to the actual historical event of the earthquake which struck Port Royal, Jamaica on June 7th, 1692. Port Royal was then the unofficial capital of Jamaica, and one of the busiest and wealthiest ports of the West Indies. The earthquake caused most of the city to sink below sea level and about 2,000 people died as a result of the earthquake and the following tsunami.

Vincent Wing (1619-1668) was an English astrologer and astronomer. In 1649 he published *A Dreadful Prognostication* containing astrological predictions. His major work entitled *Astronomia Britannica* 1652 (2nd edn. 1669), was a complete
compendium of astronomy on Copernican principles. Madden may well have been familiar with Wing’s work and refers to him as ‘his learned friend’ in Memoirs. He is also alluding to the long tradition of almanac-making. As an antidote to seemingly bogus almanac-makers Swift, in January 1708 (as Isaac Bickerstaff), published his Predictions for the Year 1708, the initial instalment of his satirical attack on the astrologer and almanac-maker John Partridge. Conversely, Madden, in his references to political astrology and in his positive appraisal of Wing, is clearly presenting Wing as an almanac-maker and astrologer in a positive light.

15 See Peter Fitting 138. (Cambridge Companion). Mercier’s work has often been noted as an inaugural time-travel utopia, in which the narrator falls asleep and wakes up 700 years later in a transformed Paris.

16 The term ‘Tír na nÓg of intellect and imagination’ was used by Seamus Heaney and applied by him to Vaclav Havel in an address given on November 13th, 2003. I have taken his usage and applied it in an eighteenth-century Irish context to Samuel Madden.
Afterword

I know not what the younger dreams –
Some vague Utopia – and she seems,
When withered old and skeleton gaunt,
An image of such politics.¹

W. B. Yeats. “In Memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markiewicz”

Ralahine became as “a city on a hill”, and attracted the attention of
men of all classes.²

E.T. Craig. An Irish Commune.

The world of utopianism in eighteenth-century Ireland created a body of textual
works of utopian satire and whole categories of societies founded to promote an
improving agenda or to provide charitable assistance. The raison d'être of those
societies was to advance and pursue distinct purposes. They presented themselves as
intellectual and improving societies, political societies, convivial, sociable and
sporting societies, and regional societies. These categories are not and should not be
thought of as fixed. The legacy of eighteenth-century Irish utopianism coalesced in
subsequent nineteenth-century and twentieth-century utopian visions which may be
collectively identified as offering a plurality of models, both in text and in social
practice. Their structure is varied and moves from the utopian satire of Irish-born
writers such as Edward Mangin (1772-1852) and John Banim (1798-1842) to the
philosophical writings on radical and feminist utilitarianism of William Thompson
(1775-1833) and Anna Doyle Wheeler (1785-1850), to lived utopian experiments in
Ralahine, County Clare, and others in West Cork, Dublin and Galway. Moreover, in
keeping with this pattern, utopianism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-
century took many forms. Horace Plunkett (1854-1932), George Russell (1867-
1935), James Connolly (1868-1916) and others have demonstrated the extent to which the benefits of co-operation and politics were to become a central concern to the lives of ordinary people.

In the realm of utopian satire Mangin’s *Utopia Found: Being an Apology for Irish Absentees Addressed to a Friend in Connaught by an Absentee Residing in Bath* (1813) provides a nineteenth-century counterpoint to Richard Head’s *Hic et Ubique, or, the Humours of Dublin* (1663). While Head’s émigrés view Dublin as utopia and London as dystopia, Mangin, as an absentee landlord, represents London as utopia. He resides in England along with other absentees, because of the “astonishing superiority of this Country over every other civilised nation upon the face of the earth” (1-2). In drawing a comparison between England and Ireland he lauds the English climate and its political system, which he regards as “the best that ever was devised by the wisdom of man for ensuring the happiness of his kind” (14). The streets in London are perfectly clean and free from offensive smells. Moreover, in no part of the world are human life, health and property so secure as in that city. Mangin celebrates England’s liberal hospitality to Irish wit, and wits, of the previous century:

Ireland boasts (and boasts sufficiently) of Swift, and Steele, and Farquhar; of Goldsmith the Poet, and Barry the Tragedian, and Barry the Historical Painter: of Edmund Burke, and Richard Sheridan; of Grattan, and Curran, and Thomas Moore: but, mark the liberality of this country; England makes these very men (aliens as they are) the subject of her pride and exultation likewise, and on all occasions, kindly allows them to pass for her own. (84)

Here, then, Mangin’s utopian projection represents, as did many of the eighteenth-century Irish utopias, a commentary on colonization and identity. His satire
represents one facet of nineteenth-century utopian writing indebted to works of earlier times.

By way of contrast, in his *Revelations of the Dead Alive* (1824), Mangin’s near contemporary John Banim’s narrator explains that he possesses the power of sleeping at will for long periods, and during these periods possesses the faculty of ‘going out of himself’, a form of self-activating clairvoyance. He “lay down in a sequestered and silent arbour, with the rays of a spring sun dancing in through the trees, over and around me. I collected my mind as usual, and to the earth soon became dead” (7). He had been enabled through consuming an unusual American plant to extend the periods of sleep to a length much beyond the usual. After a slumber of one hundred and ninety-eight days and a quarter, he is able to record and relate the events of the year 2023. For every day of his sleep he saw a year of time, so that when he came to life again, he had observed what was, and what was to be, in the subsequent one hundred and ninety-eight and a quarter years. The narrator recalls that for “eight months altogether I lived in futurity” (335). Banim’s early biographer Patrick Joseph Murray notes that the *Revelations* are, “for the chief part, very clever hits at the follies, fashions, and manners of the year 1823” (141). Amongst the fashions of the period was that of phrenology which Banim satirises. He did not, however, spare the literary profession. It was the age of reviewing and Banim satirises both contemporary reviewers and newspaper critics. And so, Banim’s utopian satire, set in the future, connects to Madden’s *Memoirs of the Twentieth Century*, exposing and satirising folly wherever it manifests itself while alluding to improvements in taste, art and society to be revealed in future times.

Both Thompson and Doyle Wheeler presented a different utopian mode of enquiry. Using the analytical tools of a philosopher, Thompson questions why
inequality exists and wonders about the possibilities of human beings finding happiness. He wonders why in the midst of the plenty enjoyed by the idle classes was there such poverty. And why are the institutions of society reluctant to give power to the people? In 1825 he and Doyle Wheeler co-operated on one of the first books in Ireland to express the rudiments of a socialist feminist position. *The Appeal of One Half the Human Race, Women, Against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to Retain them in Political and Thence in Civil and Domestic Slavery* explains the causes of the subordination of women, causes which permeate through all of contemporary society’s institutions. The remedies which would remove sexual inequality are also outlined. The visit of Doyle Wheeler’s collaborator Robert Owen to Ireland in 1823 led directly to the development of a co-operative experiment on the Vandeleur estate at Ralahine, Co. Clare.

Owen held a series of public meetings at the Rotunda in Dublin which John Scott Vandeleur attended, he was impressed by Owen’s account of New Lanark. In his essay “An Irish Utopia” (1910) James Connolly refers to Owen’s visit undertaken, as Connolly notes, with “the purpose of explaining the principles of Socialism to the people of that city” (129). Owen presented an outline of the possibilities which a system of Socialist co-operation could produce. The result of this proposal was the establishment of an association styling itself the ‘Hibernian Philanthropic Society’, formed with the aim of carrying out Owen’s ideas. A sum of money was subscribed to aid the society, and Owen himself subscribed £1,000. The society was short lived but Connolly records how Vandeleur was impressed with what he had seen and heard of the possibilities of Owenite Socialism. The Owenite moment, in turn, provided the impetus for the establishment of his co-operative at Ralahine. Vandeleur came to believe that Ralahine could become the agricultural
equivalent of New Lanark. Early in 1831 he travelled to England to seek an assistant for his project, and met E.T. Craig in a Manchester hotel. Subsequently, Craig wrote of the meeting:

It was…the work I had done in Manchester that Mr. Vandeleur heard of, through John Finch of Liverpool, that induced him to come to Manchester, where I had an interview with him at the Talbot Hotel, which existed at the bottom of King Street before the improvements were made. (Co-operative News 16)

In his account An Irish Commune: The History of Ralahine, Craig describes Ralahine upon his arrival:

I found the estate admirably adapted for the purposes of a co-operative farm. It consisted of 618 acres, about one-half of which was under tillage, with suitable farm buildings and situated between the two main roads from Limerick to Ennis. A bog of sixty-three acres supplied fuel. A lake on the borders of the estate gave a constant and available supply of water power. (11)

While the co-operative at Ralahine lasted a short two years its legacy continued to generate commentary. In his introduction to the edition of Craig’s An Irish Commune: The History of Ralahine published in 1920, the intellectual idealist George Russell lauds Craig’s endeavours at Ralahine and comments on the then current development of co-operatives in Ireland and beyond:

We are moving rapidly to the creation of co-operative communities all over Ireland. We have co-operation in purchase, manufacture and sale in every country, and I hear with pleasure that societies for co-operative farming on the Italian model will soon be established, and these Italian
co-operative land cultivation societies are the nearest things in Europe to the Ralahine community; and in Italy I am told they regard that long-vanished society at Ralahine as the pioneer or morning star of their own fascinating movement. (v)

Moreover, Connolly in “An Irish Utopia” concludes that “Ralahine was an Irish point of interrogation erected amidst the wilderness of capitalist thought and feudal practice” (143). In writing about Ralahine, Connolly reveals an understanding of the historic tradition of Irish utopianism. From a twentieth-century vantage point his appraisal of the Ralahine Co-operative and its historical and social context shows that the utopian tradition on which he drew was no tradition of idle dreaming but a plan for future political engagement which could be both transformative and emancipatory. This was first set out in his early pamphlet Erin’s Hope (1897), a very uncompromising statement of the socialist case. It begins by invoking the common ownership of land, which Connolly maintained characterised the Celtic clan system and which lasted longer than similar systems elsewhere. He believed that the conflict between the rival systems of land ownership was the pivot around which all the Irish struggles and rebellions revolved. He argues that different elements of Irish society fused in a compact nationality and during the process a new class arose which accepted the social system of the invader. This was the new middle class, which was viewed as compromising and betraying the hopes of the Irish people. This is the most vital aspect of the pamphlet and it is the theme which Connolly developed further in his major work Labour in Irish History.

The utopian propensity in Irish culture emerged over many centuries and its longevity is matched by its variety. As this thesis has demonstrated, Irish utopianism is multi-faceted: it can be found in the literary realms of novels and
poetry, in political manifestos, in art and architecture, in speeches and songs, in the pamphlets and works of eighteenth-century improving societies, in the lived traditions of nineteenth-century communal enterprises, and in the cultural and political nationalisms of the twentieth-century. The case for ‘a national being’ as a prerequisite to an improved and better Ireland was expressed in a utopian mode by Russell who believed that national ideals “must be built up with the same conscious deliberation of purpose as the architect of the Parthenon conceived its lofty harmony of shining marble lines, or as the architect of Rheims Cathedral designed its intricate magnificence and mystery” (The National Being 6-7). International developments in science, in chemistry and physics, as well as art, in futurism and Dadaism prompted Russell to enquire into the nature of both his environment in Ireland and in the world beyond. For Russell was not simply receptive to emerging trends in global thought; he actively developed new modes of discussion. His belief in self-help and the moral benefits that accrued from industrial, as well as psychological decolonisation, contributed to his own programme of national reconstruction. As an agent of economic and national revolution in Ireland, as a painter and author of pamphlets, poetry and prose, Russell was a utopian thinker capable of rigorous practicality. The Ireland from which Russell and others wrote from 1890 to 1930 was a society experiencing relentless change. The history of Irish utopianism has its own peculiarity and uniqueness, but it is a peculiarity and uniqueness that must be assessed in terms of the contingencies of history. There is no doubt that the continuum of utopianism from earliest times to the present day ensures that the prospect of a better society transformed and re-configured lies always ahead. Somewhere between Yeats’s ‘vague utopia’ and Craig’s ‘city on a hill’, it is a Utopian ideal—an ideal we have not realised and might never attain, and yet, it pervades our daily existence.
This poem is from *The Winding Stair and Other Poems* (1933). It is set in Lissadell, a late Georgian house, home to the Gore-Booths. Political change was an integral feature of early twentieth-century Ireland. On the shift to national independence I see this poem and, most notably, the lines quoted as representative of the unease which such change wrought. The hopeful visions for the future which Yeats represents as ‘some vague utopia’ (Lines 10-13) are ultimately those out of which an evolving independent Ireland, grappling with colonialism and its legacy, must emerge.

2 See *An Irish Commune: The History of Ralahine*. Adapted from the narrative of E.T. Craig, with an introduction by George Russell (AE) and notes by Diarmuid Ó Cobhthaigh. Dublin: Martin Lester, 1920. (80)
Bibliography

Primary Sources


A History of the Customs, Manners, and Religion, of the Moon. To Which Are Annexed, Several Specimens of Lunar Poetry; and the Characters of the Most Distinguished Personages. (Anon.) Dublin: John Hillary, 1782.

A Letter from The Right Hon. W----m P------y, Esq: To the Right Honourable Sir R----t W------e; With Regard to the Observations on the Writings of the CRAFTSMAN. 1733.

A Fourth Letter from the Rt Hon W-----m P------y, Esq: To the Rt. Hon. Sir R----t W----e. With Regard to the Observations on the Writings of the Craftsman; Being a Continuation of Remarks on the History of England from the Minutes of Mr. Oldcastle. 1733.

A Letter to G...... W...... Esq; Concerning the Present Condition of the College of Dublin, and the Late Disturbances that Have Been therein. (Anon.) Dublin, 1734.


‘A List of the Members of the Dublin-Society, for the Improvement of Husbandry and Other Useful Arts, for the Year 1733’. Printed by A. Rhames, Printer to the Dublin-Society, 1734.

A Long Ramble, or Several Years Travels, in the Much Talk’d of, but Never Before Discovered, Wandering Island of O-Brazil, Containing a Full Description of That Whimsical Country. London, 1712.

‘Advocate for Justice’, Oppression Unmasked: Being a Narrative of the Proceedings in a Case Between a Great Corporation, and a Little Fishmonger, Relative to Some Customs for Fish, Demanded by the Former as Legal, but Refused by the Latter, as Exactions and Extortions. Dublin, 1784.


Berkeley, George. *A Proposal for the Better Supplying of Churches in Our Foreign Plantations, and for Converting the Savage Americans to Christianity, by a College to be Erected in the Summer Islands, Otherwise Called the Isles of Bermuda*. Dublin: George Grierson, 1725.


---. *Private Notes on The Second and Third Editions of An Irish Utopia.* June, 1911.


Head, Richard. *Hic et Ubique; or, the Humours of Dublin.* London: 1663.
---. The Western Wonder; or, O Brazeel, an Inchanted Island Discovered; with a Relation of Two Shipwrecks in a Dreadful Sea-storm in That Discovery. To Which Is Added, a Description of a Place, Called, Montecapernia, Relating the Nature of the People, Their Qualities, Humours, Fashions, Religion, &c. London: 1674.

---. O-Brazil, or the Inchanted Island: Being a Perfect Relation of the Late Discovery and Wonderful Dis-Inchantment of an Island on the North of Ireland: with an Account of the Riches and Commodities Thereof. Communicated by a Letter from London-Derry, to a Friend in London. London: 1675.


Instructions for Planting and Managing Hops, and for Raising Hop-poles: Drawn up and Published by Order of the Dublin Society. (Attributed to Thomas Prior). Dublin: A. Rhames, 1733.


Llanover, the Rt Hon. Lady, ed. Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs. Delany Vols. i-vi. London: 1861-2.


Luce, J.V. “Dublin Societies before the R.D.S.” A Discourse delivered at a joint meeting of the Royal Dublin Society and the Dublin Philosophical Society on 10th December, 1981.

MacSparren, James. America Dissected, Being a Full and True Account of All the American Colonies. Dublin: S. Powell, 1753.


Madden, Samuel. Themistocles, the Lover of His Country. Dublin: Printed by S. Powell for George Risk, George Ewing, and William Smith, 1729.

---. A Proposal for the General Encouragement of Learning in Dublin-College. Dedicated to His Grace the Lord Primate; and Humbly Offer’d to the Consideration of All That Wish Well to IRELAND. 2nd ed. Dublin: George Faulkner, 1732.

---. Memoirs of the Twentieth Century. Being Original Letters of State, under George the Sixth: Relating to the Most Important Events in Great-Britain and Europe, as to Church and State, Arts and Sciences, Trade, Taxes, and Treaties, Peace, and War: And Characters of the Greatest Persons of Those Times: From the Middle of the Eighteenth, to the End of the Twentieth Century, and the World. Received and Revealed in the Year 1728; And now Published, for the Instruction of all Eminent Statesmen, Churchmen, Patriots, Politicians, Projectors, Papists and Protestants. London: Printed for Osborn, Longman, Davis, and Battey et. al, 1733.


---. Reflections and Resolutions Proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland, as to Their Conduct for the Service of Their Country, as Landlords, as Masters of Families, as Protestants, as Descended from British Ancestors, as Country Gentlemen and Farmers, as Justices of the Peace, as Merchants, as Members of Parliament. Dublin: Printed by R. Reilly, 1738.


*Memoirs of the Court of Lilliput. Written by Captain GULLIVER. Containing an Account of the Intrigues, and Some Other Particular Transactions of the Nation, Omitted in the Two Volumes of His TRAVELS. Published by LUCAS BENNET, with a Preface, Showing How These Papers Fell into His Hands.* Dublin: Printed by S.P. for George Risk, George Ewing, and William Smith. 1727. Lucas Bennet was a pseudonym possibly used by Eliza Fowler Haywood.


Molyneux, Capel. *An Account of the Family and Descendants of Sir Thomas Molyneux, Kt., Chancellor of the Exchequer in Ireland to Queen Elizabeth.* Privately printed, Evesham, 1820.


O’Donnel, Manus. “A *Voyage To O’Brazeel:* Or, the Submarine Island. Giving a Brief Description and a Short Account of the Customs, Manners, Government, Law, and Religion of the Inhabitants.” *The Ulster Miscellany* (1753): 9-64.


O’Flaherty, Roderic. *A Chorographical Description of West or H-Iar Connaugh.* Dublin: 1846.

---. *Ogygia, or, a Chronological Account of Irish Events.* (Tr. J. Hely). Dublin: M’Kenzie, 1793.


Raspe, Erich Rudolf. [Baron Munchausen] *Gulliver Revived: Containing Singular Travels, Campaigns, Voyages, and Adventures in Russia, the Caspian Sea, Iceland, Turkey, Egypt, Gibraltar, up the Mediterranean, on the Atlantic Ocean, and Through the Centre of Mount Etna into the South Sea: Also an Account of a Voyage into the Moon and Dog-Star, with Many Extraordinary Particulars, Relative to the Cooking Animal in Those Planets, Which Are Here Called the Human Species*. Dublin: Printed by P. Byrne, Grafton Street, 1788.


Skelton, Philip. *A Letter to the Authors of Divine Analogy, and of the Minute Philosophers from an Officer*. Dublin: 1733.


---. *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver*...(London: Benjamin Motte, 1726 [revised 1735]).


The ANTISATYRIST. A Dialogue. To Which is Prefixed, A Short Dissertation on Panegyric and Satyr. (Anon.) Dublin: George Faulkner: 1750.

The Irish BLASTERS: or, THE Votaries of BACCHUS. (Sometimes Attributed to George Berkeley). Dublin: 1738.

The STATE DUNCES INSCRIBED TO MR. POPE. London: W. Dickenson, 1733.


Updike, Wilkins. *A History of the Episcopal Church in Narragansett, Rhode Island (Volume 1, pt. 1); Including a History of Other Episcopal Churches in the State.* New York: Onderdonk, 1847.


Westropp, Thomas Johnson. “Brasil and the Legendary Islands of the North Atlantic: Their History and Fable. A Contribution to the "Atlantis Problem".”


Secondary Sources


Barthes, Roland. ‘The Death of the Author.’ in The Rustle of Language. Trans.


Hinkson, Tynan Katharine., ed. The Cabinet of Irish Literature Volumes 1-IV

Hone, J.M., and M.M. Rossi. Bishop Berkeley: His Life, Writings and

Hoppen, Theodore. The Common Scientist in the Seventeenth Century: A Study of
the Dublin Philosophical Society 1683-1708. Charlottesville: The University Press
of Virginia, 1970.

Houghton, Raymond W., David Berman, and Maureen T. Lapan. Images of

Houston, Chloë. “Utopia, Dystopia or Anti-Utopia? Gulliver’s Travels and the


---. Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other


---. Parameters of Irish Literature in English. Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe,
1986.


Johnson, Donald S. Phantom Islands of the Atlantic: The Legends of the Seven

1963.

Kelly, James, and Martyn J. Powell, eds Clubs and Societies in Eighteenth-Century


Kolakowski, Leszek. ‘The Death of Utopia Reconsidered’, The Tanner Lectures on
Human Value, vol. 4, ed. Sterling M. McMurrin (Salt Lake City, UT: University of
Utah Press/Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 227-47; reprinted in his

Kramnick, Isaac. Bolingbroke and His Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age

Kumar, Krishan. Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times. Oxford: Basil


---. “The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society or Why Sociologists and Others Should Take Utopia More Seriously.” University of Bristol. 24 October 2005. Inaugural Lecture


Lysaght, Patricia, Séamus Ó Catháin and Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, eds. *Islanders and Water-Dwellers*. Dublin: Four Courts, 1999.


O’Toole, Fintan. *A History of Ireland in 100 Objects.* Dublin: The Irish Times and The Royal Irish Academy, 2013.


