

The Politics & Poetics of Gulliver's Travel Writing

By

Philip Cox
B.A., University of Toronto, 2010

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of English

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University of Victoria

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Supervisory Committee

Dr. Jentery Sayers, Co-Supervisor
Department of English

Dr. Peyman Vahabzadeh, Co-Supervisor
Department of Sociology

Abstract

Working at the intersection of narrative studies and political theory, this thesis performs an original critical intervention in *Gulliver's Travels* studies to establish the work as an intertextual response to the hegemonic articulations of European travel writing produced between the 15th and 18th centuries under the discourse of Discovery. My argument proceeds through two movements. First, an archeology of studies on *Gulliver's Travels* that identifies key developments and points of significance in analyses of the satire's intertextual relationship with travel writing. Second, a discursive analysis of the role of Discovery generally, and travel writing specifically, in constructing European hegemony within a newly global context. Together these movements allow me to locate *Gulliver's Travels* firmly within the discourse of Discovery and to specify the politics of the text and the poetics of its operations. For this analysis I adopt a conceptualization of hegemony elaborated by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985), which defines discourse as a structured totality of elements of signification, wherein the meaning and identify of each element is constituted by articulatory practices competing to fix the differences and equivalences between it and others within the discourse. An *hegemonic* discourse is one that successfully limits the possibility of novel articulations according to a particular governing logic. In the Age of Discovery, this governing logic, I argue, is a socio-spatial logic that constructed the "European" subject through its difference from the "Non-European," the "civilized" subject through its difference from the "savage," and the "free land" of the "savage" peoples through its difference from the occupied lands of the "civilized." To conduct the concomitant critical analysis of *Gulliver's Travels*, I draw upon Jacques Rancière's conception of the "distribution of the sensible," which refers both to the partitions determined in sensory experience that anticipate the distributions of parts and wholes, the orders of visibility and invisibility, and the relationships of address or compartment beneath every community; and to the specific practices that partake of these distributions to establish the "common sense" about the objects that make up the common world, the ways in which it is organized, and the capacities of the people within it. This enables me to establish travel writing as an articulatory practice that utilized a narrative modality to "reveal" the globe in a Eurocentric image dependent upon the logic of Discovery: a discursively constructed paradigm that I identify as what others have labeled "travel realism," which organized the globe into a single field of discursivity predicated upon the "civilizational" and "rational" superiority of Europeans over their non-European Others. *Gulliver's Travels*, I conclude, intervenes in this distribution of the sensible by utilizing the satirical form as a recomposing logic to upend the paradigm of travel realism and break away from the "sense" that it makes of the bodies, beings, and lands it re-presents.

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Land Acknowledgement

Over the last several years I have lived and worked as an uninvited guest on the traditional territories of the Lekwungen (Songhees) and WSÁNEĆ (Pauquachin, Tsartlip, Tsawout, Tseycum) peoples, whose histories were previously made invisible to me.

Dedication

To my mother: symbol of strength, sower of seeds, nurturer of life.
And my father, whose love, warmth, and kindness survive him.

With love and a lifetime of gratitude also to James, Sabrina, Zoe & Teo, and Charlotte, Jason & Keeley, and Mike & Christine Giles. Family, all.

Acknowledgments

This thesis is a labour of love in the oddest sense (it is a thesis, after all). It stems from a project that I began in the final year of my undergraduate degree at the University of Toronto under the guidance of Dr. Marjorie Rubright, who took seriously my desire to learn and taught me to do the same. It found new life in the context of an advanced graduate seminar in political theory taught by Dr. Rob Walker, who without hesitation encouraged me to take this course for which I felt entirely unqualified. And it took shape within the interdisciplinary space provided by Dr. Peyman Vahabzadeh first in the year-long core course of the Cultural Social & Political Thought (CSPT) program, and then for years afterward in his office over many hours of conversation. Each of these teachers has given me something I could not have found anywhere else. I am proud to have been their student.

I am indebted to Dr. Jentery Sayers, whose generous support of my work on this project in its final throes was essential to its completion. Also to Dr. James Tully, who graciously shared his time, attention, and awe-inspiring breadth of knowledge with me over the course of several lengthy and memorable conversations.

I am grateful to the English and CSPT departments at the University of Victoria for supporting my work in the first year of my degree. Especial thanks to Colleen Donnelly, Dailyn Ramirez, and Karen Erwin — traffic directors *extraordinaire* who bear the administrative weight of these departments with grace and kindness.

Thank you to the maintenance and service staff of the Lawbrary (a.k.a. the Diana M. Priestly Law Library) where I conducted much of the research for this project, working diligently as a S.N.A.I.L. (Student Not Actually in Law) for over two years.

A warm thank you to Emile Fromet de Rosnay and the French department (especially Marc Lapprand and Suzanne Lanthier) for providing me with an office space in which to write Part I of this document.

Among the many friends who have supported and enlivened me over the last several years, I am particularly grateful to Susan Kim and Will Kujala, both of whom made suggestions during the earliest days of this project's formation that became central to its conceptual development. Also to Philip ("prime") Henderson, Elissa Whittington, Matt Stuckenberg, and Sasha Kovalchuk — who, with Susan, Will and Olivia, made a more formidable "theory group" (*cum* Star Trek: TNG group) than any of us could have envisioned when setting out — and to Yusuf Saadi, Didier Zúñiga and Regan Burles for many formative conversations that informed my thought throughout.

Finally, fully, to my partner in life, abject poverty, thought-crime, and citation styles, Olivia Burgess, who lived and breathed this thesis with me every step of the way. I couldn't have done this without you, my love.

Thank you, friends.

- Phil

Epigraph

“The critic must attempt to fully realize, and take responsibility for, the unspoken, unrepresented pasts that haunt the historical present.”

- Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (1994).

Introduction: *Gulliver's Travels* in the 21st Century

Writing about a work as old, popular, and controversial as *Gulliver's Travels* presents a number of unique challenges, not least because of the discord among scholars regarding the targets of its satire. As Ashley Marshall writes in “The State of Swift Studies 2010,” “no other eighteenth-century text has yielded as little consensus on fundamental issues of interpretation as *Gulliver's Travels*.... A decade into the twenty-first century, critical disagreement about the elusive center of [the work] is looking like a permanent feature of Swift studies” (Marshall 91). Odd, then, that more attention has not been given to the work's adoption of conventions, tropes, character models, and narrative structures common to travel writing produced during the “Age of Discovery” — a period between the 14th and 18th centuries that gave rise to a European “global” hegemonic order, which lasted almost four hundred years. It is significant, after all, that elements taken from such travel writing provide so much narrative stability in a work whose meaning is, in the eyes of so many scholars, so fiercely unstable.

Odder still is that the significance of the concept of Discovery also has received so little attention in almost three centuries of the book's study. When the concept has been noted, it has been limited to Gulliver's tirade in the final pages of the book against English colonial practices “justified” by the doctrine of Discovery, which European nation-states used among themselves to authorize their land appropriations of non-European territories. Yet even this passage is almost universally misunderstood as suggesting that the narrator is against colonialism, when in fact he almost immediately afterward asserts his own claim to the lands described in his *Travels* as the first European to find them — presumably rallying against Discovery because of his own failures as a Discoverer during his journeys. My own work on the topic establishes at least this: that Discovery is a central thematic around which Gulliver's movements orbit. For instance, the power dynamic in each of his encounters is anticipated by the success of his ability to Discover the lands he approaches. Indeed, as I will show, Discovery organized the very terrain upon which Gulliver travels. Clearly, an elaboration of the role that this concept plays in this work is long overdue.

Working at the intersection of narrative studies and political theory, my thesis therefore performs an original critical intervention in *Gulliver's Travels* studies to establish the work as an intertextual response to the hegemonic articulations of European travel writing produced under the discourse of Discovery. My argument proceeds through two movements. In the first half of the thesis I conduct an archeology of studies on *Gulliver's Travels* that identifies key developments and points of significance in analyses of the satire's intertextual relationship with travel writing. Examining the critical approaches and general treatments of literary elements and figurative language operating within the text from scholarship spanning almost one hundred years, I tease out pre-suppositions, omissions, and theoretical limitations while establishing recurrent terms, tropes, themes, and concepts relevant to a discussion of Discovery. In the second half of the thesis I then perform a discursive analysis of the role of Discovery generally, and travel writing specifically, in constructing European hegemony within the newly global context of the 15th through 17th centuries. An etymology of the term "discovery" uncovers three geographically-oriented meanings operative during the Age of Discovery: as exploration, appropriation, and revealing/unveiling. Taking the shift in its usage, from exploration to appropriation, as my point of departure, I offer three theoretical-historical arguments that establish the travel writing produced by Europeans throughout this period as a form of revealing and unveiling that facilitated European land appropriations through hegemonic articulation and re-iteration.

For this analysis I adopt a conceptualization of hegemony elaborated by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985), which defines discourse as a structured totality of elements of signification, wherein the meaning and identify of each element is constituted by articulatory practices competing to fix the differences and equivalences between it and others within the discourse. A hegemonic discourse is one that successfully limits the possibility of novel articulations according to a particular governing logic. In the Age of Discovery, this governing logic, I argue, is a socio-spatial logic that constructed the "European" subject through its difference from the "Non-European," the "civilized" subject through its difference from the "savage," and the "free

land” of the “savage” peoples through its difference from the occupied lands of the “civilized.” To conduct the concomitant critical analysis of *Gulliver’s Travels*, I draw from Jacques Rancière’s conception of the “distribution of the sensible” — the “specific distributions of space and time, of the visible and the invisible, that create specific forms of ‘common sense’” particular to an historical moment (Rancière *Dissensus* 141) — to establish travel writing as an articulatory practice that utilized a particular narrative modality to “reveal” the globe in a Eurocentric image dependent upon the logic of Discovery. This narrative modality is a discursively constructed paradigm that I identify as “travel realism,” which organized the globe into a single field of discursivity predicated upon the “civilizational” and “rational” superiority of Europeans over their non-European Others. *Gulliver’s Travels*, I will argue, intervenes in this distribution of the sensible by utilizing the satirical form as a recomposing logic to upend the paradigm of travel realism and break away from the “sense” that it makes of the bodies, beings, and lands it re-presents.

Central to my work, assumed and argued specifically, is that one can understand neither the particulars nor the general form of *Gulliver’s Travels* without a working theorization of Discovery, the order and orientation of the epoch it came to define, and its dynamic relationship with travel writing in producing European cultural, social, and political formations during that period. This conclusion is directly supported by the findings of the archaeology I conduct in the first half of the thesis, which shows how the absence of such a unifying, historically contextualized, theoretical framework confounds interpretations of even the most basic aspects of the text. This is particularly true for the work’s references to travel writing, which have been recognized but largely misunderstood since the time of its publication. Paratextual elements standard to contemporary travel works such as the book title, frontispiece, maps, and other addenda in *Gulliver’s Travels* were almost as explicit a signal of the work’s satirical intent for the reader as the narrator’s naming as his “cousin” the then-famous explorer William Dampier (1651 - 1715) in the “Letter from Captain Gulliver to his Cousin Sympson” that prefaces the satire’s narrative. Equally commonplace in travel writing are tropes and conventions such as the narrator’s assertions of veracity, pleas for credulity

from the reader, diatribes against other travel writers, geographic corrections for cartographers, ethnographic descriptions of peoples encountered, and repeated insistence on the “public utility” of the narrator’s account, which Gulliver deploys almost incessantly throughout his four journeys.

Even the narrative form and plot points of *Gulliver’s Travels*, with all the fantastic encounters they contain, are taken from travel writing: Gulliver is a traveller who departs from his home country, encounters “strange” peoples in “remote” regions of the globe, then returns home only to depart again another three times and write all about it. In Part I: A Voyage to Lilliput, Gulliver is shipwrecked at sea and awakens imprisoned by a people one-twelfth his size. He becomes a favourite of their Royal Court, aids them against their rivals in neighboring Blefuscu, and then must escape to that rival land after being charged with treason. From there Gulliver sets out on a small boat and is rescued by a passing ship and returned home, where he finds it impossible to remain for long. In Part II: A Voyage to Brobdingnag, Gulliver's ship is blown off course and then abandons him in a land of people twelve times his size whilst he searches for fresh water. Kept by his finder as a curiosity and toured almost to death for profit, he is then taken into the Queen's care and kept in a small box that is one day picked up by a giant bird and dropped into the water where again a passing ship finds him and returns him home, and where again he finds himself compelled to sail again. In Part III: A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbudrib and Japan, Gulliver is marooned by pirates and rescued by the flying island of Laputa, which rules over the region of Balnibarbi beneath it. Seen as a famous traveller, Gulliver is given a “grand tour” of the area, visiting the infamous academy of Lagado, the port city of Maldonada, and the islands of Glubbudrib and Luggnagg before taking a brief sojourn in Japan, from which he sails home. Although he again intends to remain in England, circumstances dictate that he cannot. In Part IV: A Voyage to the Land of the Houyhnhnms, mutineers abandon Gulliver near a land where the animal-like human Yahoos are enslaved by a race of rational horses named the Houyhnhnms. Living with his “master” Houyhnhnm, Gulliver increasingly identifies with this culture while distancing himself from the Yahoos until his presence as a Yahoo endowed with reason begins to threaten the Houyhnhnm social order, leading to his exile.

Departing on a Yahoo-skin canoe, Gulliver is taken aboard a Portuguese ship and returned home, where he takes shelter in a stable among his horses, secluded from humanity and misanthropic to the last.

That this narrative form and other aspects of the text are taken directly from travel writing and given a satirical twist has never been seriously disputed. Among scholars, it has long been commonplace to note that Jonathan Swift read “many diverting Books of History and Travels” during the composition of the satire;¹ that he called the English explorer Thomas Herbert (1606 - 1682) a “coxcomb” and wrote the word “insufferable” in his own copy of Herbert’s work;² and that he plagiarized a substantial passage from Samuel Sturmy’s *Mariner’s Magazine* (1679) to add nautical detail to Gulliver’s voyage to Brobdingnag.³ What cannot be agreed upon is the significance of these elements from travel writing for an analysis of *Gulliver’s Travels*. Early in the 20th century, for instance, detractors like Harold Williams (1932) denied that they were relevant at all, while pioneers like R.W. Frantz (1938) demonstrated that they could not be ignored. A “second wave” of scholars such as Arthur Sherbo (1979), Peter Wagner (1992), and Ronald Knowles (1996) dedicated themselves to elaborating possible references and connections to specific travel works, yet still maintained that travel writing is secondary to the “true” target of Swift’s satire, providing little more than a rhetorical framework for the tale. Such conclusions, I will argue, reflect a longstanding lack of theorization and historicization of the discourse of travel writing and its intertextual relationship with *Gulliver’s Travels*, which characterizes centuries of study on the satire. Although it is generally recognized as a political work, the question of what politics *Gulliver’s Travels* “does” has traditionally been seldom considered outside the context of Swift’s contemporary British domestic political sphere — as a critique of Robert Walpole’s Whig oligarchy of the 1720s or a record of the broader struggle between the “moderns” and the “ancients” competing to shape British society at the time of the work’s composition. A disproportionate amount of attention has therefore been paid to

¹ See, for example, Rawson (2), Frantz (333), Wagner (129 n 6), Knowles (13), Markley (54), Rogers (140), Bonner (158), and now my own!

² See Hawes (211 n 10), Mezciems (13), Jones (34), and Rogers (142).

³ See Jones (4), Frantz (334), Rogers (139), Markley (139), and Knowles (15).

Gulliver's thematic parallels with imaginative works that do not contravene such analyses, such as Lucian's *True History* (c. 200 A.D.), Thomas Moore's *Utopia* (1516) and Cyrano de Bergerac's *Histoire Comique* (1665), rather than with the outwardly-looking travel works contained in Swift's personal library such as Cristobal de Acuña's *Voyages and Discoveries in South America* (1698), Lionel Wafer's *A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* (1699), or the voluminous compendiums of Richard Hakluyt (1589) and Samuel Purchas (1625).

This trend was reversed following the "postcolonial turn" of the 1980s and 90s, when attention turned more critically to the socio-historic contexts in which texts were produced. It is no coincidence that readings such as those by Jenny Mezcicms (1982) and David Jones (1987), which analyze the intertextual relationship between *Gulliver's Travels* and travel writing according to the social, political, and historical conditions of their production, opened up a previously unnamed colonial element operating within *Gulliver's Travels*. Scholars such as Clement Hawes (1991) and Claude Rawson (2001) were then able to locate Swift's infamous work within and as a response to British colonialism, offering poignant and insightful discussions that were only limited by their isolation of colonial discourse from the broader, global context in which it operated. This myopic focus, which confined the readings of both Hawes and Rawson to Gulliver's journey through Houyhnhnm Land in Part IV, was expanded by scholars such as Anna Neill (2002) and Danielle Spratt (2012), both of whom locate *Gulliver's Travels* in the Age of Discovery. Despite the stress that each scholar places on historical contextualization, however, both (somewhat surprisingly) depend upon Swift's authorial intentions and other works from his oeuvre to situate their analyses, leading to conclusions that conflate the politics of the text with those of its author.

Such fixation on Jonathan Swift has mislead analysis of *Gulliver's Travels* for centuries, as my archaeology repeatedly shows. Claude Rawson noted in the 1990s that "a tension between Swift's and Gulliver's meanings, and especially an uncertainty as to how to interpret Gulliver's in relation to his state of mind as the fiction shows it to be, remain unexorcized" (23). This is arguably only true because of the theoretical weight that is almost invariably placed upon the author over the logic of

the text. Even the 2012 Cambridge edition of *Gulliver's Travels* is suffocated by footnotes about the author, his acquaintances, his correspondences, his other works, and on and on, *ad absurdum*, leading scholarship away from the text and toward its author. Here I adopt Jacques Rancière's maxim that "in literature, intentions don't count. If the author has to say what he's doing, that means he hasn't done it" (*Literature* 43). With this in mind, I argue that the work itself exceeds the author's intentions; that great authors can (and do) create works whose politics and poetics exceed the sum of their own understanding; that the relationship between a work, its broader historical moment, and the socio-political contexts of its production are more substantive than that between the work and its author. There is thus, in this sense, "a profound gap between the intelligence of a book and the will of an author," as Samuel Chambers says it (ix). Scholars who insist on reading *Gulliver's Travels* in relation to its author would do best to keep in mind that the text was published anonymously, with authorship originally attributed to Gulliver himself (Womersley 633 - 5). This means that Swift intended for the author to appear as much a character as any others within the work. Moreover, as a satire of travel writing, it is the literality of the author-figure that is in question in *Gulliver's Travels* as much as that of his reports.

Just as a lack of historicization and theorization of travel writing had previously mislead the analyses of others, focus on Swift-as-author leads Neill and Spratt to overlook themes of Discovery in *Gulliver's Travels*, even though they locate the work within in the Age of Discovery. These two identify specific practices within discourses of geography, the sciences, and economics that are targeted by *Gulliver's Travels* as expressions of a colonial logic, although neither considers how Discovery organized the relations between these individual discourses to comprise their common colonial constitution — both take this commonality as an historical given. My own work therefore looks back to the origins of the age for greater insight into the politics and poetics of Discovery operating within the text. These origins can be traced, I argue, back to the first European movements into the Atlantic ocean in the 14th century, which lead to their finding of the Atlantic archipelagos and then the Americas, while a subsequent movement into the Pacific Ocean lead first to direct

contact with India and Asia and then to the circumnavigation of the globe. Over the next two hundred years one can witness in a broad dispersion of European representational apparatus the first intimations of a new, geographical conception of the world right through to a scale-model of the earth and its coastal outlines, as Europe moves from a continent divided amongst itself to a bloc of nations depicting themselves as sole representatives of a newly global civilization while pursuing the lands and resources of non-European peoples without restraint. Discovery was instrumental for ensconcing an age-old civilizational discourse into a new territorial imaginary, uniting European nations *vis-a-vis* groups indigenous to Africa and the Americas, and (re)organizing the ever-expanding European discursive terrain according to Eurocentric principles that constructed Others in positions of oppression and domination through a discourse of cultural difference. This created a new, hegemonic, socio-political order within Europe that was traversed across the globe on the heels of European agents and actors, as a vast number of European social practices became (re)oriented towards appropriation — hence the number of social practices and actors that critics of *Gulliver's Travels* have suggested as *the* target of the satire, outlined in the first half of this thesis. The plurality of valid readings of *Gulliver's Travels* reflects the overdetermination and interconnection of elements with which it is concerned. Its perceived instability results as much from what Clement Hawes argues is a long-standing European cultural foreclosure of the colonial dialectic on which the satire depends (189) as from the lack of a single, unifying analytical framework that captures these elements and their movements within the text.

Unique to my attempt to provide such a framework in this thesis is that I try to stay anchored within the moment of Discovery — to tease out its logic and inhabit the space of its operations. As Stephen Greenblatt has noted, “we can be certain only that European representations of the New World tell us something about the European practice of representation” (7). For the purposes of this project, then, the “Discovered” do not appear at all except as an image constructed through the lens of Discovery — which is to say, they appear more or less in name only, and more often than not through a name given by the Discoverer. This specifically is the focus of the second half of this

project: the lens of the Discoverer, and the way that lens focalized non-European peoples and places in an age oriented toward land appropriation, commercial expansion, and cultural expropriation.

Whereas scholars like Mary Louise Pratt work to escape the “European expansionist perspective” (7), I work to stay within it. And I do so because, as an explication of *Gulliver’s* relationship with travel writing produced during the Age of Discovery will make clear, so too did Gulliver throughout his travels. This is the task to which we now turn.

Part I: A Genealogy of Travel Writing and *Gulliver's Travels*

Chapter 1: Establishing the Connection

After centuries of critical thought that denied the relevance of travel writing for any substantive analysis of *Gulliver's Travels*, the earliest indication of a coming sea-change can be detected in A.W. Secord's 1923 dissertation, "*Gulliver's Travels: A Critical Study*," in which he scolds William Eddy for "arbitrarily limit[ing] his source study to those voyages which are of a philosophical (that is to say, allegorical) nature" and showing "scant attention to authentic and pseudo-authentic English voyages" (401 - 402). Earlier studies had made passing connections between *Gulliver's Travels* and travel writing, such as Walter Scott's mention in 1824 that "the character of the imaginary traveller [Gulliver] is exactly that of Dampier,⁴ or any other sturdy nautical wanderer of the period endowed with courage and common sense" (qtd. in Bonner 157). More famously, E.H. Knowles discovered in 1868 a passage in Samuel Sturmy's *Mariner's Magazine* (published in 1669) that had been reproduced verbatim in Gulliver's voyage to Brobdingnag (223) — a literary "joke" some two hundred years in the making, assuming the passage was not meant to go unnoticed. Curiosity about the "inspiration" for the Yahoos in *Gulliver's Travels* also led scholars such as Churton Collins in the early days of the twentieth century to find connections with descriptions of the "Hottentots"⁵ in the travel account of Thomas Herbert (qtd. in Frantz, "Swift's Yahoos" 49), although as Ray Frantz notes, this is "a mere assertion, supported neither by argument nor by citations from Herbert" (49). Just as Secord had intimated a decade earlier, Frantz also insisted in 1931 that the influence of travel works on *Gulliver's Travels* simply could not be ignored in any serious attempt to unravel certain puzzles found in the text. At that time, however, neither author proved able to produce an argument, nor the evidence, sufficient to satisfy more traditionally-minded scholars who denied the significance of travel writing for an analysis of *Gulliver's Travels*.

⁴ William Dampier, 1651-1715. Renowned English explorer.

⁵ Now recognized as a racially-charged designation, the term "Hottentot" referred to a group of indigenous, nomadic peoples of South-Western Africa, who are now known as the Khoikhoi. The "default pariahs of travel-books" (Rawson 99), these peoples received an unparalleled amount of vitriolic and racist attacks from Europeans for decades, if not centuries.

Among the “authentic and pseudo-authentic English voyages” named (but not elaborated on) as influences on *Gulliver’s Travels* by Secord are those by John Mandeville, Thomas Herbert, William Dampier, and the plagiarized passage from *Mariner’s Magazine*, all of which have since gone on to become “canonical” works and references within *Gulliver’s Travels* studies. The only connection between *Gulliver’s Travels* and these works actually substantiated by Secord, however, was with Dampier. Secord argues that Dampier “not only influenced Swift’s style... but also contributed to the fable,” pointing to the coincidence between a ship named the “Antelope” upon which Gulliver claimed to have sailed from Bristol on May 4, 1699, and which Dampier had reported meeting at the Cape of Good Hope on its way to the East Indies on June 3, 1699 (402). It would seem, then, that the (fictional) Gulliver and (very real) Dampier had opportunity to meet in the twilight of the 17th century, if Gulliver’s report is to be believed. This explicit reference to Dampier, along with the general narrative style and structure of *Gulliver’s Travels*, had long been accepted as evidence of a surface-level similarity between *Gulliver’s Travels* and travel works that otherwise went without question for centuries.

In 1931, Frantz took the then-novel approach of extending consideration of travel works that *may* have influenced Swift to texts that the author specifically owned and/or had read during the composition of *Gulliver’s Travels*, which included Thomas Herbert’s *Some Years Travels into Divers Parts of Asia and Afrique* (1638), Lionel Wafer’s *A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* (1699), and William Dampier’s *Voyages and Descriptions* (1699) among others.⁶ Frantz argues that these works had not just influenced Swift’s writing generally, but rather that “various details from Swift’s reading of the voyagers seem to have stuck in his mind and to have suggested certain revolting habits and personal characteristics of the Yahoos” (“Yahoos” 50). Wafer’s *New Voyage*, for instance, described monkeys skipping “from Bough to Bough... chattering,

⁶ For a full list of works in Swift’s library, see Part I, Chapter 2.

and, if they had opportunity, pissing down purposely on our Heads” (qtd. 52).⁷ A parallel situation is also described by William Dampier in his *Voyages*, which Swift did not own but which “might well have lain dormant in [his] memory” when writing Gulliver’s first encounter with the Yahoos, since a significant amount of evidence indicated that Swift was highly familiar with Dampier’s works (52). In the episode when Gulliver (and the reader) first encounters the Yahoos, Gulliver is cornered against a tree by an angry “herd” of the humanoid creatures, who are reported to have then “leapt up in the Tree, from whence they began to discharge their Excrements on my Head” (qtd. 52).

Further descriptions by Gulliver of the Yahoos that use animal imagery enable Frantz to elaborate on the work’s link with Thomas Herbert, which Churton Collins had earlier given such short shrift. In disturbingly racist and stubbornly persistent language that was designed to arouse moral disgust, Herbert describes the faces of the “depraved Hottentots” as “flat and broad, the Nose depressed, the Lips large, and the Mouth wide” (qtd. in “Yahoos” 53) — a depiction clearly more suitable for an ape than a human being.⁸ This language is then echoed by Gulliver in describing the Yahoos. Whereas in his earliest encounter with the Yahoos, Gulliver notices that they imitate him “after the manner of Monkeys,” he gradually realizes that they also “did not always walk on their hind feet,” and “to his horror,” resemble men more than monkeys. Placed alongside a Yahoo for comparison, Gulliver is loath to discover “in this abominable Animal, a perfect human Figure; the Face of it indeed was flat and broad, the Nose depressed, the Lips large, and the Mouth wide” (qtd. 51) — a description cast almost exactly in Herbert’s mold. This parallel indicates to Frantz that “the Yahoos are to be thought of as men who are degraded to the lowest conceivable brutish condition” (51) in a manner reminiscent of European explorers’ descriptions of the “savages” they encountered

⁷ Because of the variation in both *Gulliver’s Travels* editions and citation styles used by the many critics cited throughout this project, I have left all secondary source citations in the format of the primary source in which they were found for the sake of both simplicity and ease of locating said quotations.

⁸ The “persistence” of this language is visible in the works of scholars from the 20th century as much as explorers from the 18th — Moore, for instance, writes that “perhaps Swift’s most characteristic indebtedness to the travellers lay in his borrowing the filth of the Hottentots for his Yahoos” (Moore 228). R.W. Frantz adds that the Yahoos are the descendants of “the libidinous, evil-smelling, and filthy Hottentots, the dugs of whose females hung below the navel” (“Yahoos” 57). Their complicity in these descriptions may explain their neglect of certain historical and political aspects of Swift’s satire, as I will show in Chapter 6. Clearly these scholars were still constrained at least partially by the very paradigm that *Gulliver’s Travels* attacks.

abroad. Voyagers such as Thomas Herbert “had set down in many a page of vivid, homespun prose precisely the characteristics of monkeys and undeveloped [sic] men stressed by Swift in his descriptions of the Yahoos” (51-52). Swift’s Yahoo, Frantz argues, is “not monkey but man — man at his conceivable worst. And man at his worst, according to the voyagers, sat naked and filthy in southernmost Africa or roamed the fly-infested sands of Australia” (53).

Although compelling, Frantz’s argument was also highly conjectural, as he himself admits: “There is, of course, little in these excerpts [from travel writing] that can be considered as a ‘source’ of the Yahoo. We need not suppose that Swift ransacked travel-books for data of this kind; and we certainly need not think of him as writing with Wafer’s and Dampier’s voyages spread before him” (“Yahoos” 52-53), he writes. The crux of Frantz’s argument, then, rests upon his own assessment of Swift’s intellectual dispositions and some speculation as to how these dispositions would affect the author’s attention. For, “a mind that morbidly dwelt on man’s ugliness, lecherousness, and loathsome natural functions would naturally have been extremely sensitive to passages such as these and might well have retained them indefinitely” (53).⁹ It is perhaps for these reasons that consensus remained opposed to the notion that Swift had taken anything more from travel works than “a few unimportant details and hackneyed expressions, which were the common property of all voyagers, and a simple, homespun way of writing, by which he achieved an atmosphere remarkably like that of authentic travel books” (“Gulliver’s ‘Cousin’ 334). Most damning was a statement from the eminent *Gulliver’s Travels* scholar Harold Williams in 1932 that a researcher who turns to Swift’s library for potential source materials “meets with something very like a reverse.... A conclusion which emerges from a comparison of hypothetical sources discoverable among Swift’s books, and those absent, is that *Gulliver’s Travels* owes little to direct hints.” The search for direct and indirect allusions to other

⁹ Arthur Sherbo later establishes a firmer link between Gulliver’s descriptions of Yahoos (whose women have “dugs” that “hung between their fore-feet, and often reached almost to the ground as they walked” and an “undistinguishing appetite to devour every thing that came in their way ... [even] the corrupted flesh of animals”) and descriptions in Johan Nieuhoff’s *Voyages and Travels into Brasil and the East Indes* (1744) of the Khoikhoi (whose women have “long breasts” that, “when they are suckling their Infants, hang backwards over their shoulders” [II.188] and who “devour raw pieces of flesh or carrion, as greedy as dogs” [II.187]) (123).

texts, he says, “may easily become a mistaken pastime” (Williams 88-89). Decades later, esteemed cultural critic Edward Said would note that

Swift... has been the beneficiary in the main of a certain kind of scholarship. I do not mean to be sarcastic when I say that so formidable are the scholars who maintain the Swift canon, who uphold his textual orthodoxy... that approaching him has become a daunting prospect. In Swift's case there are such facts to be reckoned with as the great Harold Williams and Herbert Davis editions. So high is the standard of work that such labors have upheld, so focused and so scrupulous their attention to strict factuality (which is what one must have from good editors), that Swift seems even more like the rather dry and abrasive Anglican divine he must have been at least some of the time in real life. It is not that Swift scholarship has restricted Swift's appeal, but that with so many of the textual problems having been so splendidly solved, scholars seem to have felt a certain unwillingness to venture beyond that realm. And indeed that realm has come to resemble the ambiance of a club. (*The World* 73)

The significance of William's statement against turning to travel works contained in Swift's library, however, is that although it maintained the *status quo*, it makes clear to us now that despite preliminary connections made between *Gulliver's Travels* and travel writing, a more substantive analysis of this connection was clearly lacking.

As though responding to this challenge, Willard Bonner attempted to expand the link between *Gulliver's Travels* and William Dampier in a chapter of his 1934 book, *Captain William Dampier: Buccaneer-Author*, through what Arthur Sherbo would later describe as an “ambitious” but “long and circumstantial argument” (115). The crux of Bonner's contention takes a page from Frantz's playbook, resting upon the fact that Swift had read the travelogues of Dampier and others while writing *Gulliver's Travels* and had kept an autographed copy of Dampier's *New Voyage Round the World* (3rd ed., 1698) in his library (Bonner 158-160). When compared against several passages from Dampier's work, Bonner observes that passages in *Gulliver's Travels* were written in “quite the same mood,” leading him to conclude that “it takes no stretch of the imagination to conceive that Swift is gently mocking Dampier, so much the same is his language” (161-162). As one may gather, however, the author's conclusions only go skin-deep. Bonner believes that *Gulliver's Travels* is “a satire on the tedious character of travel books in general” (162), for “unquestionably also Swift was annoyed at Dampier's tables of latitude and approximate longitude for every day's run across the Pacific” (163). More speciously, Bonner argues that Gulliver's character was modeled after Dampier specifically,

since both longed for the sea from childhood, learned early the arts of navigation, and were “condemned” to an active and restless life of travel (164). The two were “educated beyond the average,” spent their leisure hours reading old travel works, and had self-professed, acute senses of observation (165). Moreover, each had progressed “from a lesser office on shipboard to the captaincy of ‘several ships,’ from surgeon to captain” (167). Finally, Bonner remarks that “no one has ever commented on the fact that Gulliver’s entire wandering life, being a series of four long voyages, is strikingly like Dampier’s. No figure in Swift’s time or before it furnishes so near and interesting a parallel” (166). Unfortunately for Bonner, but of great significance for *Gulliver’s Travels* studies nonetheless, Arthur Sherbo would later demonstrate that “much of what he [Bonner] thinks peculiar to Dampier and Swift was pretty much commonplace in travel literature” (115). Sherbo’s conclusion, which benefits from over four decades of hindsight, does not diminish Bonner’s contribution, however, because it indirectly indicates that the scope of Bonner’s argument was just too narrow — a result we may attribute to the infancy of scholarly attention to travel writing generally rather than any inadequacy on Bonner’s behalf.

What had been lacking until that time, and was finally provided by Frantz in his 1938 essay “Gulliver’s Cousin Sympson,” was the identification of a concrete and compelling link between *Gulliver’s Travels* and travel writing, coupled with an argument that revealed the significance of that link for *Gulliver’s Travels*’ narrative strategy. Towards this end, Frantz establishes such a connection between Gulliver’s “Cousin Sympson,” the professed author of *Gulliver’s* prefatory statement, and William Symson, a well-known voyager and travel-writer of the early 18th century (331), using passages from *Gulliver’s Travels* and Symson’s *A New Voyage to the East-Indies* (1715, 2nd ed. 1720). In Part I of *Gulliver’s Travels*, “A Voyage to Lilliput,” Gulliver describes the Lilliputian way of writing as such: “... their manner of writing is very peculiar, being neither from the left to the right, like the *Europeans*; nor from the right to the left, like the *Arabians*; nor from up to down, like the *Chinese*; nor from down to up, like the *Cascagians*; but aslant, from one Corner of the Paper to the other, like Ladies in *England*” (qtd. in Frantz, “Cousin” 331-2). In Symson’s work, the writing

of the native peoples encountered by the author is described all too similarly: “Their Way of Writing, is not like the Europeans, in a Line from the Left to the Right; nor like the Hebrews, from the Right to the Left; nor yet like the Chinese, from the Top of the Paper strait down to the Bottom; but from the Left Corner down to the Right, slanting downwards” (qtd. in Frantz, “Cousin” 332). This connection, however, is not so straightforward as it seems and offers only a glimpse into the complexity of the intertextual relationship between *Gulliver’s Travels* and travel writing. For one thing, William Symson never existed: major portions of the book which bore his name were plagiarized from the “valuable and trustworthy” *Voyage to Suratt* by John Ovington (1696) (Frantz, “Cousin” 332), including the following passage describing the handwriting of the locale’s inhabitants: “Their manner of Writing is neither directly forwards nor backwards, nor in a streight Line downwards, like the Chinese from the upper to the lower part of the Paper; but it is a Medium between both, from the uppermost Corner to the left to the lowermost Corner of the right, slanting gradually downwards; especially when they write any Notes or Epistles to one another” (qtd. 333).¹⁰ Thus, Frantz concludes, “we must alter somewhat our conception of the role which Swift intended Richard Sympson to play in *Gulliver’s Travels*.” The deliberate allusion to a well-known “travel lie” — a specious work masquerading as an account of a real voyage — suggests that “the choice of the name [Richard Sympson] formed part of the well-laid plan of throwing dust in the reader’s eyes” (333). Although it may seem minor now, this argument undermines centuries of critical thought that had implicitly and explicitly rejected the notion that allusions to travel, exploration, and Discovery in *Gulliver’s Travels* had shaped its satirical aims in any meaningful way.

Another essay, published within three years of Frantz’s now highly-cited work, shows how quickly and finally that thought had changed. John Moore’s “The Geography of Gulliver’s Travels” (1941) makes an argument parallel to Frantz’s in its concern for the relationship between travel writing and the narrative strategy of *Gulliver’s Travels*, focusing on a different element of *Gulliver’s*

¹⁰ The similarities between *Gulliver’s Travels* and Symson’s passage, and differences between *Gulliver’s Travels* and Ovington’s, lead Frantz to conclude that *Gulliver’s Travels* used Symson’s and not Ovington’s text (332).

Travels' paratext: the maps. Despite prior claims that the maps and geographical descriptions in *Gulliver's Travels* were more or less accurate, Moore demonstrates without room for doubt that all geography in *Gulliver's Travels* is thoroughly unreliable because highly disoriented and grossly exaggerated. Of the five maps included in the first edition of *Gulliver's Travels*, for instance, only that of Houyhnhnm Land is drawn more or less to scale and with actual lands in their proper place (Moore 223). Equally noteworthy is Gulliver's return from that land, when he rowed some two thousand nautical miles eastward, in a canoe made of Yahoo skins, in just sixteen hours; or his return from Blefuscu, which would have him travel thousands of miles across land and water, right across the continent of Australia, to return home (220). Similarly, coordinates and estimates of Brobdingnag's size given by Gulliver would have the country reaching over the North Pole, from Michigan to Vienna, spanning westward half-way across the world. Assuming Brobdingnag were a rectangle, "its area figures out at 24,000,000 square miles — something more than forty times as large as Alaska, or almost exactly three times as large as North America, or not very far below half the total land area of the world" (218).¹¹

Moore argues that the absurdity of Brobdingnag's dimensions in particular recall the "egregious errors" of travel-writers describing the so-called "Company's Land" — a land supposedly discovered by Captain Uriez in 1643 and named for the Dutch East India Company, which had funded Uriez's expedition. In addition to a semblance between Uriez's descriptions of this supposed landmass and Gulliver's descriptions of Brobdingnag, both narrators grossly over-estimate the distances they had covered in their journey and fail to account for discrepancies between the area and

¹¹ A further contradiction between the Gulliver's geographic descriptions and the maps, which I do not take up here, arises from discrepancies between Gulliver's descriptions of certain lands and their position on the map: "Swift wrote that Flanflasnac was only 18 miles from the south coast of the kingdom, but the map shows it at the west end, and fairly well inland" (Moore 225). This map also contradicts another, which depicts the operation of the Flying Island, to such a degree that Moore concludes "it suggests different workmanship altogether" (225). I have omitted this from discussion since there is evidence to believe the error was the result of the mapmaker, who worked from descriptions in the text. Whether this is true or not, the contradiction only serves to strengthen Moore's argument with yet another example of the absurdity of geography in *Gulliver's Travels*.

its portrayal on the map (219).¹² Like that of the pseudo-traveller William Symson described by Frantz, Uriez's account was also discredited after having initially been received as authentic. In the case of Uriez, however, his account was still published as legitimate long after it had been proven false. "As late as 1748," Moore notes, "the editor of the second volume of Harris' *Voyages* still retained the fabulous account of Captain Uriez's discovery of the great continent of Company's Land in 1643" (219). Moore thus concludes that *Gulliver's Travels* stands as an "attack on false learning," which "could have been based on a slight acquaintance with almost any book of travels which passed through his hands" (227).

The most striking thing about Moore's conclusion is how little the author is concerned with the historical context in which Uriez made his "discovery," and whether there are any political stakes in the type of misrepresentation he sees as rampant in the travel works that *Gulliver's Travels* supposedly attacks. Misrepresentation in travel writing is relevant to Moore only insofar as it is a "target" of Swift's satire, which is similarly analyzed in isolation from the cultural, social, and political contexts in which it emerged. Like Frantz, Moore also leaves untouched the question of how the travel writing to which *Gulliver's Travels* alludes simultaneously establishes realism in *Gulliver's Travels* while also signaling a form of misrepresentation in its narrative. Frantz, for instance, suggests that "if Swift was all along completely innocent of any intention of connecting Richard Sympson and William Symson, he must certainly have considered the chance selection of the name as one of his luckiest strokes, since, beyond doubt, it contributed in no small measure to the verisimilitude for which he strove" ("Cousin" 331) — clearly stating his assumption that an allusion to travel writing establishes verisimilitude within *Gulliver's Travels*. Similarly, Moore, in a discussion on the influence of travel writing on *Gulliver's Travels*, quotes Leslie Stephen on the singular realism of *Gulliver's Travels* compared to other works of fantasy against which the satire is traditionally read:

¹² Mercator's projections, commonly used at that time to render a (round) globe on a (square) page, collapse the areas closer to the northern and southern poles, as the degrees of longitude become narrower and narrower moving away from the equator.

Swift's peculiarity is in the curious sobriety of fancy, which leads him to keep his most daring flights upon the confines of the possible. In the imaginary travels of Lucian and Rabelais... we frankly take leave of the real world altogether. We are treated with arbitrary and monstrous combinations which may be amusing, but which do not challenge even a semblance of belief. In *Gulliver* this is so little the case that it can hardly be said in strictness that the fundamental assumptions are even impossible. (qtd. in Moore 214)

Although Moore does not say it explicitly, the difference between *Gulliver's Travels* and the works of Lucian and Rabelais is the verisimilitude effected in the narration of travel writing, which Swift explicitly utilized in *Gulliver's Travels*. At surface level, both Moore and Frantz indicate that the misrepresentation consciously signaled by *Gulliver's Travels* results from ironic allusions to well-known "travel lies." Yet the question remains how a particular practice of presentation was able to establish at least a semblance of veracity in works of "fantasy" like *Gulliver's Travels*, "travel lies" like those of Uriez and Sympson, and "authentic" travel writing from the centuries leading up to Swift's time. Moreover, it is taken for granted by all authors considered thus far that "travel writing" is itself a clearly defined genre that requires little further elaboration, when actually the case is quite the opposite. As we will see, these questions are intimately entwined with the historical context in which these authors were writing, and the broader political circumstances of that time. But before these issues can be addressed, it is best to establish once and for all the most compelling sources of travel writing for *Gulliver's Travels*, to better establish the significance of their presence within the text.

Part I: A Genealogy of Travel Writing and *Gulliver's Travels*

Chapter 2: Examining Swift's Library

Despite the long-held knowledge that Swift had kept travel works in his personal library, it was not until 1979 that any scholar undertook what Ronald Knowles describes as a “systematic scrutiny” of these works, “painstakingly carried out” by Arthur Sherbo (13) in his highly influential essay, “Swift and Travel Literature.” In that essay, Sherbo expresses surprise that “in view of the fact that Swift usually employs recognizable literary genres as vehicles for his satires and adopts the language and conventions of those genres, there has been relatively little more written on the possible influence of travel literature on *Gulliver's Travels*” (115), indicating that the “sea change” in *Gulliver's Travels* studies we noted in the previous chapter was slow to gain momentum. As we have seen, what consideration this topic had been given was fragmentary, contentious, and only partially developed. This chapter is therefore concerned with the ongoing effort to secure possible sources from travel writing for *Gulliver's Travels* and the resulting questions that arose from such an effort.

Responding to Bonner's argument that William Dampier's account was the “source” of *Gulliver's Travels*, Sherbo's essay follows Frantz's precedent (without, unfortunately, giving Frantz due credit) of examining the catalogue of travel writing contained in Swift's personal library to cement the connection between the author and the genre he had satirized. Although Frantz had already published a list of these works in the 1930s, his focus on a single text (Symson's *A New Voyage to the East-Indies*) detracted from the emphasis that could have been placed upon all the works as a group.

Further investigation into Swift's library reveals that travel writing had, in fact, comprised a significant element in his collection. These works included:¹³

Addison, Joseph. *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705).¹⁴

Bernier, Francois. *Voyages Contenant la Description des États du Grand Mogol*. 2 vols (1699).¹⁵

¹³ All sourced from Sherbo (114) and cross-referenced with the catalogs of Harold Williams and William LeFanu.

¹⁴ Inscribed by Addison, to Swift (LeFanu 11).

¹⁵ Annotated by Swift (Sherbo 114).

Dampier, William. *New Voyage Round the World*, 3rd ed. (1698).¹⁶

De Acuña, Cristobal. *Voyages and Discoveries in South America* (1698).¹⁷

Hakluyt, Richard. Work unknown.¹⁸

Herbert, Thomas. *Some Years Travels into Divers Parts of Asia and Afrique*. Folio edition, illustrated (1634).¹⁹

Le Blanc, Vincent. *The World Surveyed*. Trans. from French (1660).

Leo, Joannes, Africanus. *De Totirus Africae Descriptione*, trans. from Italian (1556).²⁰

Nieuhof, Jan. *Legatio Batavica ad Magnum Tartarei Chamum Sungtseium* (1658).²¹

Purchas, Samuel. *Purchas His Pilgrims*, in 5 volumes (1625).

---. *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, 4th ed. (1626).

Rycaut, Sir Paul. *The History of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, 6th ed. (1686).²²

Van Linschoten, John Huyghen. *The Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten to the East Indies* (1598).²³

Wafer, Lionel. *New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* (1699).

To this list, Sherbo adds five works noted but not specifically identified on Swift's reading list from 1697 - 1698, at least two of which may have been works of travel writing. Listed as *Voyage de Syam*, *Histoire d'Aesthiopie*, *Voyage de Maroc*, *Histoire de Chypre*, and *Histoire de Cotes*, Sherbo speculates that *Voyage de Syam* may be either *Journal du Voyage de Siam fait en 1685 & 1686* by the Abbé de Choisy (1687) or *Voyage de Siam des Père Jesuites* (1686), and that the *Histoire d'Atiophie* may be *Nouvelle Histoire d'Abissinie, ou d'Ethiopie* (1684) (115).

¹⁶ Signed by Swift (Bonner 160).

¹⁷ The author of this work was not identified by Sherbo, who must have followed Harold Williams' account, which listed the author as unknown. Cristobal de Acuña was later identified by LeFanu (11).

¹⁸ Listed in Williams as "Collection of Voyages by the English Nation," but not LeFanu at all. Jones notes that Swift's knowledge of Hakluyt was certain, although which book he owned exactly is not: "An element of doubt exists over the Hakluyt collection, which could be *Divers Voyages* (1582), *Principall Navigations* (1589) or the enlarged *Principall Navigations* (1598 - 1600)" (Jones 31).

¹⁹ Annotated by Swift (Sherbo 114).

²⁰ Listed by Williams (19) and LeFanu (22), but otherwise not noted by any scholars that I have found to date.

²¹ First name variously published as Jan, John and Johan.

²² Signed by Swift (LeFanu 28).

²³ Listed in Harold (10), but not LeFanu.

To further strengthen Sherbo's case, we may add works of travel writing known to have been read by Swift while composing *Gulliver's Travels*. In an oft-cited passage from a letter written by Swift to Miss Esther Vanhomrigh on July 13, 1722, Swift professed that "the use I have made of [a long spell of bad weather] was to read I know not how many diverting Books of History and Travells" ("Swift to Miss Esther Vanhomrigh" 430). These works included Thomas Herbert's *Some Years Travels into Divers Parts of Asia and Afrique* (1634),²⁴ Lionel Wafer's *A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* (1699),²⁵ and William Dampier's *Voyages and Descriptions* (1699).²⁶ "All of this" Sherbo concludes with a splash of understatement, "of course, is clear evidence of Swift's familiarity with travel literature" (115).

The relevance of this familiarity becomes immediately clearer as Sherbo begins to establish specific connections between these works and *Gulliver's Travels*, especially within the pages of Samuel Purchas, Richard Hakluyt, and Lionel Wafer, but also with the works of Francois Bernier, Jan Nieuhof, and Cristobal de Acuña. For the sake of clarity, I have organized these parallels thematically, with titles for each.

Size Tropes

In the collections of Purchas and Hakluyt are repeated references to peoples of exaggeratedly slight or great stature (Sherbo 116 and 127 n8, respectively), which may have provided a model for the Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians. It is with the passages from Purchas' pages describing giants, however, that Sherbo finds the most compelling parallels.²⁷ In Magellan's voyages, notations summarizing the content in the margins of the page list "Cannibal Giants, Giants, The bignesse of the Giants, Another Giant, Foure other Giants, Two Giants are taken by a policie, and The Giants feeding." Within the text, Magellan describes how he gave one of these giants "certaine Hawkes

²⁴ Which Swift owned and inscribed.

²⁵ Which Swift owned.

²⁶ Which Swift did not own.

²⁷ All references below taken from Sherbo, 116.

Bells, and other great Bells, with a Looking-Glass, a Combe, and a payre of Beads of Glasse,” against which we may compare Gulliver’s personal inventory of “some bracelets, glass rungs and other toys, which sailors usually provide themselves with on those voyages,” and the “two knives, three bracelets of false pearl, a small looking-glass, and a bead necklace” that he offered the Houyhnhnms. This trope of gift-giving is again repeated, with clear overlaps in *Gulliver’s Travels*, in another travel account from Purchas’ collection, *Sir Thomas Roe’s Journal, Giving an Account of his Voyage to India*, where Sir Thomas Roe lists items that he would offer as gifts, including “knives large and fair ... ‘Amber and Coral Beads’ [and] ‘Looking-glasses.’” A second instance of a “size trope” that appears in *Gulliver’s Travels* is a description of giant’s teeth, which seems to follow from the account of Joseph Acosta, who warns the reader that “we must not hold this of the Giants to be strange, or a fable; for at this day we find dead men’s bones of an incredible greatnesse’ and cites the discovery in Mexico of a tooth ‘as bigge as the fist of a man.’” Against this we may compare the only gift accepted by the captain who rescued Gulliver after his trip to Brobdingnag, which was “a foot man’s tooth’ which was about a foot long, and four inches in diameter.” Given these and other more general references within *Gulliver’s Travels*, Sherbo concludes that one seeking a “source” for the Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians in travel literature known to have been in Swift’s possession need look no further than Purchas’ collection (116). The use of size as a trope taken from travel writing, rather than works of fiction, in *Gulliver’s Travels* signals not the fantastic but rather the travel-realistic: a description resting on an epistemological fault-line, where all sense of proportion becomes unreliable because the possible, the plausible, and the improbable become inseparable. As Susan Stewart writes about the miniature, and which is equally true of the gigantic: “the miniature has the capacity to make its context remarkable; the fantastic qualities are related to what lies outside it in such a way as to transform the total context” (46). Whereas in travel writing size tropes affirm the strangeness of the regions in which they appear, in *Gulliver’s Travels* they “transform the total context” of the works in which they appear, affirming the strangeness of travel writing instead.

Remote Tropes

Gulliver's Travels may be indebted to Purchas and Hakluyt for more than just imagery, however. The original title of *Gulliver's Travels*, *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World*, seems to echo the full title Hakluyt's work, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation. Made by Sea or Over-land to the Remote and Farthest Distant Quarters of the Earth at any time within the compasse of these 1600 Yeeres*, as well as Purchas' title page, which promotes "Voyages... to and thorrow the *remoter* parts of the knowne World." Hakluyt's preface further describes "'strange, *remote*, and farre distant countries' [and] 'searchers of the *remote* parts of the world'" while "Purchas writes of 'Beasts, Fowles, [and] Plants of *Remoter* Regions'" in his "Epistle Dedicatorie" (Sherbo 117-18). True to form, Gulliver describes at various times "so remote a country, so remote a prince, a country so remote, countries very remote, England, which was remote from this country, a stranger from the remotest part, us who travel into remote countries, those remote nations" (119). *Gulliver's Travels* picks up on the way in which Hakluyt uses the sense of the distant and isolated to create both a sense of position for Europeans that locates the objects of description on the periphery, as well as a direction towards which the gaze of both travel-writer and reader will go.

Plea for Veracity

In a similar manner of mimicry, *Gulliver's Travels* also follows the form and conventions of travel works such as Lionel Wafer and Francois Bernier in the first chapter of Book II, when Gulliver insists that he has been "chiefly studious of truth, without affecting any ornaments of learning or style" (qtd. in Sherbo 118) and in the twelfth chapter of Book IV, when he concludes his report of "plain facts" by insisting that he has given "a faithful history" in a manner that "related plain matter of fact in the simplest manner of style." Bernier's preface similarly asserts that he will provide only "Facts and actual Occurences" to the reader in "a faithful account of the manners of this people," which he describes therein (qtd. in Sherbo 119). So too with Wafer, who insists that, while he

“cannot pretend to any great Exactness,” he has been “especially careful... to say nothing but what, according to the beset of [his] knowledge, is the very Truth” (qtd. 120). Purchas, as well, in “A Note Touching the Dutch,” asserts that “the necessities of a Historie is... to say the truth, all the truth... And nothing but the truth” (qtd. 118).

Ship Names & Details

From Wafer also we find in *Gulliver's Travels* a parroting of the details used to describe the ships upon which these travellers sailed. Gulliver, for instance, sailed upon “The Swallow, Captain Abaraham Bunell Commander” and “The Adventure, a merchant-ship of three-hundred tons, bound for Surat, Captain John Nicoholas of Liverpool Commander,” while Wafer’s first voyage was on the “Great Ann of London, Capt. Zachary Browne Commander bound for Bantam.” On Wafer’s second voyage, his captain considered going “to the Bay of Campeachy, to fetch Log-wood” (qtd. in Sherbo 121) — which Gulliver claims to have met as he set off on his fourth voyage, meeting another ship “going to the bay of Campeachy, to cut logwood” (121). Moreover, several of the ships named in *Gulliver's Travels* can be found in various travel works: “The Antelope,” from Dampier; “The Swallow” and “The Adventure” from the works of Purchas and Hakluyt (117); and “The Hopewell” from Purchas and Hakluyt as well as the work of Thomas Herbert (Jones 128).

Following this summary of parallels, Sherbo thus confirms with substantial evidence what Frantz had earlier intimated: that Swift “occasionally parodies travel literature or is otherwise satiric at its expense... and, even more important, that he everywhere uses the language, conventions, and the very details of travel literature as the vehicle for his satire of man and his institutions” (125). This point was soon taken up by David Jones in his sadly-neglected dissertation for the University of Warwick, entitled *Swift's Use of the Literature of Travel in the Composition of Gulliver's Travels* (1987). Responding specifically to the works of Frantz, Eddy, and Sherbo, Jones provides by far the most comprehensive analysis to date of possible correlations between *Gulliver's Travels* and the travel works in Swift’s library. The book-length work, which establishes the conventions of travel

writing, “which are partly imitated and partly mocked by Swift,” focuses specifically on the correspondences between *Gulliver’s Travels* and non-fiction travel writing before and during the famous satire’s composition (Jones III) — namely, those works listed above. Although Jones claims “not to offer a literal reading of hypothetical borrowings, but to attempt to achieve a deeper perception of Swift’s intentions in the construction of this elaborate literary joke which is scarcely concealed in *Gulliver’s Travels*” (Jones V), Jones’ work focuses substantially more on semblances, direct allusions, and thematic parallels than on theoretical (let alone discursive) analyses of the relationship between *Gulliver’s Travels* and travel writing. The most significant of Jones’ findings are within the volumes of Purchas and Hakluyt, of which, for the sake of brevity, I here summarize only a fraction of the total contained in Purchas alone.

Size Tropes, Re-visited

Highly significant in Purchas’ collection, for reasons that will become clearer below, are repeated instances of what I earlier termed the “size trope.” In the account of Arngrim Jones, for instance, the explorer recounts a popular myth of his time: that the first inhabitants of the “Northerne World” (i.e. Iceland, Greenland, etc.) were “supposed to be Giants expelled from Canaan” (qtd. in David Francis Jones 117). They were “men that inhabited the mountaines of an huge and sometimes a monstrous body, and of monstrous and exceeding strength: ... [a] remnant of the Canaanites, expulsed from the Territories of Palestina... by Joshua and Caleb” (qtd. 117). One such giant “of fifteen cubits” (approximately 23 feet) had been slain by four men in Norway, the author reports, reciting a common trope from earlier oral and written histories (117). Gulliver seems to refer to such legends in Brobdingnag when reading “a little old Treatise,” which his “nurse,” Glumdaclitch, kept in her bedroom. This book suggests that “there must have been Giants in former Ages; which as it is asserted by History and Tradition, so it has been confirmed by huge Bones and Skulls casually dug up in several parts of the Kingdom, far exceeding the common dwindled Race of Man in our Days” (qtd. 117). References to similarly proportioned creatures in Purchas include a

twenty-two-yard whale described by William Goodlard, “a single eye alone of which required six horses and a cart to transport it” (118), which may be reflected in Gulliver’s allusion in the second book to whales so large that “a [giant, Brobdingnagian] Man could hardly carry one upon his Shoulders,” and at which Gulliver scoffs, “I have seen one somewhat larger in *Greenland*” (Swift 157; pt. 2, ch. 4).

On the opposite end of the hyperbolic spectrum we have the peoples “of small stature” recorded by Henry Hudson (qtd. in Jones 118): the “very little people, tawnie coloured, thin or no beards, and flat-nosed, and Man-eaters” described by John Knight (qtd. 118), or the Pygmies described by Dithmar Blefkings. Sounding in several ways like Swift’s Yahoos, Blefkings reports that the individuals he has encountered “are hairy to the uttermost joynts of the fingers, and that the Males have beards downe to the knees. But although they have the shape of men, yet they have little sense or understanding, nor distinct speech, but make shew of a kind of hissing, after the manner of geese” (qtd. 118).²⁸

Character Models

From travel writing it also seems likely that Swift found models for a number of his characters. John Saris provides a possible model for Swift’s Yahoos in his account of the Japanese island Yedzo, known to current-day audiences as Hokkaido. Saris writes of a people “very hairy all their bodies over like Munkeyes” who use bows to shoot poisoned arrows, much like the Yahoos who shoot at Gulliver’s during his escape to New Holland (qtd. in Jones 154). If this parallel holds, Jones ponders, then reference to “people of very low stature, like Dwarfes” one page later may also suggest the Lilliputians (154).

²⁸ Of course, Purchas’ collection contains accounts in which the little people fight the large, as well. The travelogue of Andrew Battelli describes a Congolese race of Lilliputian-like people called the “Matimbas,” who are “no bigger than Boyes of twelve yeares old.” The Matimbas, writes Batelli, use their “poysoned Arrowes” to fight the “Pongos” — a race of people “More like a giant in stature than a man” (qtd. in Jones 129). The more travel writing one reads, the less imaginative *Gulliver’s Travels* seems.

Gulliver may himself have a figurative ancestor in Will Adams, the first Englishman known to have landed in Japan. His experience “comprises one of the most Gulliver-like lives imaginable,” writes Jones (154). In letters published by Purchas, Adams describes his arrival at Kyushu on April 19, 1600, the strongest of five men able to sit up in a party of twenty-four survivors from the last ship of a Dutch fleet composed of more than 500 men. Both Gulliver and Adams are imprisoned upon arrival in Japan and subjected to rigorous questioning. Both also become acquainted with the land’s ruler, enjoying a similar discourse on trade, war, religion, and international affairs. “At the height of his powers,” Jones writes, Adams “felt himself to be adviser to the ruler... on everything from mathematics, ship-building, and the use of artillery to the arts of government and the wars of Western religion” (155-157), in a highly Gulliver-esque moment of braggadocio. Similarly, both explorers find error with the maps upon which their navigation had been based. Adams writes how, ““according to wind and weather, we followed our former intention for Japan, and in the height of thirtie degrees, sought the North Cape of the forenamed island, but found it not, by reason that it lieth false in all Chartes and Globes, and Maps: for the Cape lieth in thirtie five degrees, which is a great difference”” (qtd. 159). This parallels Gulliver’s insistence that “The whole extent of this prince’s dominions reacheth about six thousand miles in length, and from three to five in breadth. From when I cannot but conclude, that our geographers of Europe are in great error” (*ibid*).

Narrative Framing

Precedence for the narrative framework of *Gulliver’s Travels* can also be found in Purchas, such as in “The Discoveries of M.M. Nicolo and Antonio Zeni,” wherein the ship of an ardent explorer is blown off course, shipwrecked upon an unknown land, and attacked by natives of hyperbolic dimensions:

In the yeere 1380 Master Nicolo Zeno being wealthy, and of haughtie spirit, desiring to see the fashions of the world, built and furnished a Ship at his owne charges, and passing the strats of Bibralter, held his course Northwards, with intent to see England and Flanders. But a violent tempest assailing him at sea, hee was carried hee knew not whither, till at last his ship was carried away upon the Ile of Friseland; where the men and most part of the goods were saved.

In vaine seems that deliverie, that delivers up presently to another Executioner. The Illanders like Neptunes, hungry groomes, or his base and blacke Guard, set upon the men whom the Seas spared. (Purchas, *Pilgrimage* XIII: 413)

There are similarly strong narrative parallels between the third book of *Gulliver's Travels* and a collection of writings on China by the Jesuits Francis Xavier, Melchoir Nunnes, Valignanus, Ruggerius and Pasius, entitled *A General Collection and Historicall representation of the Jesuites entrance into Japon and China, untill their admission into the Royall citie*. In this work, “considerable attention is paid to mathematics, astrology, geography and geometry, which have a bearing upon Laputa and Luggnagg,” Jones finds. “The subjects range from Mathematics and astrology to floor kissing rituals and accounts of cities” (149).

Miscellaneous

Further instances of tropes and imagery held in common between *Gulliver's Travels* and Purchas include: the aforementioned image of poisoned arrows, which also appears in a tale recounted by John Leo of the King of Tombuto, who “‘hath alwayes three thousand horsemen, and a great number of footmen who shoot poynsoned arrowes, attending upon him’ (qtd. in Jones 129); the Dutch practice of trampling on a crucifix to confirm their atheism for the Japanese, found in the accounts of Will Adams, John Saris, and Richard Cocks (Jones 148); tales of survival which mirror Gulliver's Voyage to Laputa, such as those of William Barents and Antonio Zeno (107); bartering with Indigenous peoples, as Gulliver does with the Houyhnhmns, using “trifles” such as beads, knives and bracelets, reported by Froshbier (108); a “Struldbuggian” pre-occupation with the notion of longevity, found in multiple accounts of Japan and China (147, 166); and a Houyhnhmns-Land-like “island of horses” known as “*Isolla de Cavallo*,” alleged by Edward Lopes to exist within the “River Zaire” (134).

All of these examples contribute to our understanding of the undeniable strength of the overlaps between *Gulliver's Travels* and travel writing. However, one of the major problems facing scholars like Sherbo, Frantz, and Jones who hunt for possible source materials in travel works such

as these, however, is the *indeterminacy* of the tropes, conventions, and frameworks they identify. This problem can be broken down into two distinct elements, one epistemological and the other ontological: first, a lack of evidence in support of an inference regarding a particular source; and, second, a more radical indeterminacy, wherein there may not be a single source for a given trope.

In the first instance, the indeterminacy surrounding connections between *Gulliver's Travels* and travel writing may only be a problem of weak inference. Consider the following so-called parallels described by Jones: "Swift's Letter to his Cousin Sympson and Publisher's Letter were *likely* inspired by the forged travel books of Denis Vairasse D'Alais and George Psalmanaazar..." (25, emphasis mine); "Mandeville *could* have provided Swift with a range of weird monsters..." (31, emphasis mine); An account in Hakluyt of mutineers overtaking the author's ship "*might have* inspired Swift" to write a parallel episode at the start of Book IV (108, emphasis mine). This problem is not confined to Jones, however. In Robert Markley's analysis of depictions of Japan contained in both *Gulliver's Travels* and certain travel works, for instance, the author argues that "In one of [the] most popular atlases of his day, Swift *could* have read that... the Emperor of Japan surpasses all Monarchs of Europe in Splendor (Markley 55, emphasis mine). And in a passage quoted earlier, Frantz argues for a parallel between *Gulliver's Travels* and a work of Dampier's that "*might well have* lain dormant in [Swift's] memory" when writing Gulliver's first encounter with the Yahoos (52, emphasis mine). Further examples can be multiplied almost indefinitely. Unfortunately, such speculation tends to undermine, rather than reinforce, the more clear-cut parallels established elsewhere.

The second form of indeterminacy surrounding connections between *Gulliver's Travels* and travel writing is a deeper, more radical problem, where certain tropes come from multiple sources and there may not be a single, determinable source at all. Precedents for the "size trope" outlined at length by both Sherbo and Jones could have come as much from the travel collections of Purchas as from fantasy works such as Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone* (1638), also framed as an authentic voyage, wherein the narrator is attacked by the English *en route* from the East Indies back

to his native Spain. The narrator then literally takes flight and journeys to the moon, where he finds what Jones describes as a “Brobdingnagian world proportionately ten, twenty, or thirty-times bigger than ours” (7). Indeed, reference to giants in Western European culture in the medieval and early modern periods were as bound up with folklore originating from early exploration of northern lands as they were with Ancient Greek classics featuring giants, such as Homer’s *The Odyssey* (117).

Both of these forms of indeterminacy are reflected in the competing conclusions of *Gulliver’s Travels* scholars arguing for one particular “source” over another. As mentioned above, Arthur Sherbo counters Willard Bonner’s claim that William Dampier’s account is the source for *Gulliver’s Travels* by establishing strong connections with works such as those of Hakluyt, Purchas, Bernier, and Wafer. Yet David Jones shows that there is as much evidence for the works of Dampier as a source as there is for the collections of Purchas or Hakluyt, among others.²⁹ Thus, despite substantial evidence for links between *Gulliver’s Travels* and travel writing in Swift’s library, we will see in the next chapter how the problem of indeterminacy poses a fundamental challenge to scholars who wish to pursue this avenue of critique. These works may indeed have been sources for *Gulliver’s Travels*, but it seems equally possible that they were not. What exactly Swift had in his head at the time of writing died with him, and forensic evidence of this sort can be extremely unreliable, making an entrenched skepticism hard to overcome. We therefore turn our attention to the conclusions reached by these authors regarding the significance of the connections between *Gulliver’s Travels* and travel writing, and to their understanding of travel writing itself, before returning to this topic again.

As I will argue, the correspondence of tropes, character models, and narrative conventions between *Gulliver’s Travels* and travel writing speaks to the fundamental *intertextuality* between them, which, following Julia Kristeva’s conceptualization of the term in “Word, Dialogue and Novel” (1966) and “The Bounded Text (1966 - 7), points to the dynamic and relational processes at work in

²⁹ In addition to Gulliver’s explicit mention of Dampier in “A Letter from Gulliver to his Cousin Sympson,” and to the substantive parallels raised by Bonner discussed above, there are a number of clear correlations between the two narrators. Both Gulliver and Dampier promise not to trouble the reader with excessive details about nautical matters, and both suggest corrections to the maps of their day. Gulliver states that it would not be proper to use “sea-language” for a general readership, while Dampier claims he will divest himself of “sea-phrases” to gratify the “land-reader.” Dampier constructs canoes with manatee skins, while Gulliver does so with Yahoo skins (Jones 6), and so on.

the construction of what appears as static forms of meaning. The indeterminacy, uncertainty, and constant movement of narrative elements through direct references, vague allusions, strict adoptions, loose borrowings, and ironic commentary from one work to the next does not defeat our project: it merely emphasizes the importance of theorizing intertextuality in a reading of *Gulliver's Travels* and travel writing.

Part I: A Genealogy of Travel Writing and *Gulliver's Travels*

Chapter 3: Theorizing the Relationship

The exhaustive (and sometimes exhausting) works of Arthur Sherbo and David Jones confirm without a doubt Frantz's thesis that travel writing plays a significant, structural role in the narrative strategy of *Gulliver's Travels*. As we noted of Frantz and Moore earlier, however, Sherbo makes no attempt to define, classify, or otherwise theorize what constitutes as "travel literature" the works he analyzes, beyond the contingent commonality of their being works kept in Swift's library; nor does he attempt any explanation of the function that travel writing plays in *Gulliver's Travels* beyond a statement quoted in the previous chapter that travel writing acts as a "vehicle" for Swift's satire. Sherbo's rather general and unsatisfying conclusion that *Gulliver's Travels* attacks "man and his institutions" follows from these omissions and raises questions that beg to be answered. Which men does *Gulliver's Travels* attack? Which institutions? And what is the nature of the attack? The universalizing claim offered by Sherbo exposes the generality of his theorization. Sherbo clearly takes it for granted that he and his readership must share assumptions about the scope and context in which *Gulliver's Travels* is to be read. The lack of specificity regarding travel writing is also reflected in Sherbo's conclusion about the "source" of *Gulliver's Travels*: that "all one can claim for the similarities between *Gulliver's Travels* and travel literature [Swift] owned or can be shown to have read is that Swift's 'source' was travel literature rather than any collection or individual volume" (122) — a hard conclusion to swallow given the strength of connections he makes with specific works in Swift's library such as those by Purchas, Hakluyt, Bernier, and Wafer. Although he establishes without question *Gulliver's Travels*'s immersion in the conventions of travel writing, a lack of clarity about the travel writing in question leaves a clear gap in Sherbo's argument. He seems to suggest that travel writing is no more than a structuring device of lesser significance to the broader, though unnamed, targets of "Man and his institutions."

A similar theoretical lack appears in an essay by Peter Wagner, entitled “Swift’s Great Palimpsest: Intertextuality and Travel Literature in ‘Gulliver’s Travels’” (1992).³⁰ Contrary to Sherbo, Wagner does offer an explicit, thorough (if perhaps needlessly technical) theorization of the relationship between *Gulliver’s Travels* and travel writing: as the title of his essay suggests, one of palimpsest and intertextuality.³¹ Like Sherbo, however, a lack of specificity regarding travel writing also leads him to diminish the significance of the role that travel writing plays in *Gulliver’s Travels*. According to Wagner, paratextual elements in *Gulliver’s Travels* such as the frontispiece, title, and letters included prior to the main text, “simulates and assails travel literature as a form of discourse” (109). Which is to say, the paratext of *Gulliver’s Travels* both invokes and provokes certain conventions of travel writing. Having situated *Gulliver’s Travels* within the discourse of travel writing, the paratext then leads the reader through an “intertextual game” in which elements from *Gulliver’s Travels* are satirically articulated to elements from travel writing, and *vice versa*, constituting what Wagner describes as “an ambiguous and highly sophisticated palimpsest” (109).

The crux of this relationship according to Wagner, invoking Frantz’s problematic outlined in the first chapter of this thesis, is to simultaneously establish a semblance of veracity within *Gulliver’s Travels* while signaling Gulliver’s unreliability as a narrator. As described some sixty years earlier by Frantz, though without reference or allusion to that work, Wagner provides as one example the “Letter from Captain Gulliver to his Cousin Sympson,” which acts as preface to *Gulliver’s Travels*. Readers from Swift’s time may equally have recalled either the “real” Richard Sympson, a publisher and editor whom Swift knew personally, or the fictitious Captain Symson, supposed author of the plagiarized *A New Voyage to the East Indies* (1715). It is no small irony, then, that this same character turns up again to pre-emptively vouchsafe for the honesty and veracity of

³⁰ Nevertheless, Wagner’s essay is particularly excellent for its thorough examination and analysis of references to *Gulliver’s Travels* in Swift’s correspondence.

³¹ It is worth mentioning at the outset of this discussion that Wagner is exceedingly concerned with Swift’s intentions for *Gulliver’s Travels*, rather than with the meaning of the text proper. For instance, he notes that the paratext “proves to be a fascinating if tricky entrance-way to a maze in which the careful reader is meant to find hidden clues *to the author’s point of view*” (128, emphasis mine). It is difficult to determine what exactly the author’s point of view should tell us if knowledge of his perspective helps us to unlock the meaning of the text, which in turn tells us more about his perspective!

Gulliver and his *Travels*, problematizing notions of authorship, authenticity, and textual reliability (Wagner 110-111).

Similarly, the portrait of Gulliver that adorns the frontispiece of *Gulliver's Travels* also utilizes conventions taken from travel writing for ironic ends. Such portraits were standard within 17th century travel works, including that of Vincent Le Blanc, whose work Swift had in his library (Wagner 117). On one hand, the portrait itself and certain details surrounding it help to establish Gulliver as a credible author and narrator. In the first edition (a.k.a the "A-edition," or "Motte edition," just one of the three earliest versions that Wagner examines),³² the portrait appears with the inscription "*Captain Gulliver, of Redriff Aestat/suae 58*" on a tablet fixed to a pedestal on which the oval portrait rests. These autobiographical details (name, age, and hometown) "simulate authenticity," as Wagner describes it. The information "seems to be true" because information such as Gulliver's hometown — Redriff, a real locale in England — is verifiable" (Wagner 112). So, too, with the signatures below the portrait, "Sturt et Sheppard Sc.," which indicate that the portrait was created by John Sturt and Robert Sheppard, both well-known engravers from that time (117). On the other hand, and working *against* Gulliver, are certain details which undermine his credibility as a narrator. The pedestal upon which Gulliver's portrait rests, for instance, is suggestive of a type "usually done for 'the better sort of people'" such as noblemen and *nouveaux riches* merchants in the 18th century, when the book was published (118). Contrary to his claims to be a plain and humble man, then, this pedestal implies that Gulliver is "vainglorious and quite the opposite of what he wants to make us believe in his travelogue." It is, in other words, "a revelation of Gulliver's pride and pretension" (119), which signals to the reader that "the narrator must not be trusted and that he is in fact one of the targets of the satire" (126).

Such a contradictory deployment of these simple conventions "appropriates and explodes a technique of portraying by carrying it to the point where the careful observer/reader begins to notice the problematics of signifying as such" (117), writes Wagner. More simply, we may say that certain

³² See appendix for more information on the publication history of *Gulliver's Travels*.

clues have been laid for the attentive reader to discover the fraudulent nature of Gulliver's character, and by extension that of travel-writers generally. "Gulliver's letter is a brilliant example of the way Swift simulates literary practices and conventions (the preface, the author's letter to his publisher) *while undermining their traditional functions* in an attempt to impose his own satiric aims.... Those who read with care will discover not only the true nature of the hero's character but *also the limits of the paratext Swift subverts*" (126).

We may thus summarize Wagner's theorization of the intertextual relationship between *Gulliver's Travels* and travel writing as such: that certain conventions from travel writing act as a framing device for the narrative of *Gulliver's Travels*, implicitly establishing verisimilitude within the text. In their ironic articulation with satirical elements from *Gulliver's Travels*, however, the capacity of these conventions to signify authenticity is itself undermined. Again, though, this begs the very simple question that we asked of Sherbo: *what travel writing?* What gives cohesion to the works labeled as such? And, as we asked of Frantz and Moore in the first chapter, how do certain conventions from these works establish verisimilitude? Wagner seems to have found it sufficient to note that references to travel writing in *Gulliver's Travels* are to "the familiar" (121), which we may take to suggest that the answer to both questions lies in the works popular in and around the time of *Gulliver's Travels*' composition, and which may or may not have been in Swift's library. Beyond this, the origin, historical context, and popularity of travel writing and its explorer-authors is taken for granted, left unquestioned, and therefore left entirely under-theorized by Wagner. His conclusion that travel writing conventions in the paratext are "simulating the texts and contexts of travel literature... although *only an accessory to the main text*" (128, emphasis mine), and that the paratext is a function of the text's irony, follows directly from this lack of specificity: *Gulliver's Travels* cannot be specifically *about* the "texts and contexts of travel literature" if neither have been explicitly identified.

A similar conclusion to Wagner's is reached by Ronald Knowles in the chapter "Travellers, Geographers, Wonder, and Satire: The Background of *Gulliver's Travels*" from his book *Gulliver's*

Travels: The Politics of Satire (1996). Like Wagner, Knowles argues that travel writing in *Gulliver's Travels* functions to establish a context of veracity that is then satirically undermined. This includes Wagner and Frantz's example of the "Letter from Captain Gulliver to His Cousin Sympson," which for Knowles "signaled in several ways something other than a straightforward account of voyaging. Not least because William Sympson was the spurious author of *A New Voyage to the East-Indies* (1715), a plagiarism of another work" (16). Knowles further demonstrates how conventions from travel writing can explain Gulliver's hyperbole and claims to veracity, illustrating how representations of both the credible and the incredible evolved throughout the long history of exploration.

Throughout the medieval and early modern period, the authority of the written word was paramount in European culture, since writing was the primary means by which knowledge was stored and transmitted for millennia. This was especially true of travel writing, which described ever-more lands, peoples, and customs that had never been encountered before. One major problem, however, is that these works were not only based upon often unverifiable empirical observations and alleged testimony from other travellers or Indigenous peoples, but also that they were riddled with errors, exaggerations, and outright fictions transmitted from antiquity through the middle ages (R. Knowles 6). One example among many given by Knowles is the work of Ctesias of Cnidus on India, published in the 4th century B.C., which collected all folklore, tales, and legends about the marvels of the East, and which described creatures "who were to haunt the European imagination for more than two thousand years":

pygmies who fought with cranes (as Homer records in the *Illiad*); 'sciapodes,' who raised their single foot over their head as a parasol in the midday sun; the 'cynocephali,' men with dogs' heads who barked; headless people with their faces in their chest; the 'anthropophagi' recalled by Othello; people with elephantine ears covering their upper body; giants; men with tails; people with reversed feet. Then there were the wondrous animals — unicorns, griffins, and the mortikhora, which had the face of a man, the body of a lion, and the tail of a scorpion. (6)

These "marvels" were then repeated by Megasthenes, a Greek ambassador to India, and published in Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*, in the 1st century A.D. Pliny's work was accepted as an authoritative

source from encyclopedists in the medieval period right up to Bartholomew in the 13th century and then was translated from Latin into English by Philemon Holland in the 17th century (7). One animal described by Pliny which was received from Ctesias — the griffin — was later described in an account by the now infamous traveller-author Marco Polo and then included as an illustration in the best-known of the medieval world maps, the *Mappa Mundi* in Hereford Cathedral, in the earliest days of the 14th century (7). From here instances of its publication history grow exponentially as the image took root firmly within the European imagination. Highly significant within the context of this discussion, however, is that Ctesias' fantastic creatures were also included by one of the most influential travel works of all time, Sir John Mandeville's *Travels*. As Knowles describes it:

Mandeville took what he wanted from Marco Polo and added material from the journal of Friar Odoric, a missionary in Africa. To these were mixed in the fabulous beasts and men — giants, pygmies, griffins, dogs' heads, and the like. The only difference is that whereas Marco Polo and Friar Odoric were actual travellers, 'Sir John Mandeville' never travelled anywhere. Yet his *Travels* was included in the first edition of one of the greatest collections of voyages put together in the Tudor period, that of Richard Hakluyt. Fantasy and fact were accorded the same status. (8)³³

Gulliver's hyperbole, as much as his claims to veracity, therefore follow historical precedents found in travel writing, geography, and natural history reaching back millennia. His claims to veracity rest on the general authority of the traveller-author, while his exaggerations and hyperbolic indulgences emerge from conventions of the tradition as a whole.

Unfortunately, Knowles belongs to the lineage of scholars who see travel writing as secondary to the "true" target of Swift's satire. "*Gulliver's Travels* takes great pains to copy mostly seventeenth-century predecessors to establish a concrete geographical setting against which Swift can place fantastic materials *for the ulterior purpose of satire*" (13, emphasis mine), he writes. Drawing explicitly from Sherbo for sources from travel writing that appear in *Gulliver's Travels*, Knowles goes to impressive lengths to elaborate the historical context in which *Gulliver's Travels* and the travel writing it parodies were written, even labeling the latter as the "Literature of

³³ It is worth noting that Mandeville's work was excluded from publication after the first edition of Hakluyt's work: "Hakluyt applied more stringent criteria for inclusion of documents in the collection of travels in the second edition. Mandeville was rejected by him as a travel liar" (Jones 31).

Discovery” (9). Oddly, though, he rather abruptly drops this discussion altogether to focus on *Gulliver’s Travels’* various coincidences with Utopian works and British domestic politics instead, with only cursory reference to travel works later in his analysis and no discussion of Discovery whatsoever. Knowles claims that *Gulliver’s Travels* is “a particular and general exposé of the vices and follies of rulers and politicians, individuals and societies” (3) in which “Swift alludes several times in a generalized fashion to seventeenth-century European history” (26). For his analysis, however, Knowles follows those scholars who “...would claim that the importance of *Gulliver’s Travels* derives from its historical specificity as part of the Tory reaction to Sir Robert Walpole’s Whig oligarchy of the 1720s;” and, “if topical significance is expanded to culture as a whole, the importance of the work lies in its record of a struggle between the shaping forces of *British society*, between emergent ‘moderns’ — utilitarian, urban, and mercantile — and humanist ‘ancients’ — conservative, intellectual, and anti-scientific” (30, emphasis mine). As a record of this struggle, then, Knowles views *Gulliver’s Travels’* mirroring of the hyperbole in travel writing as commentary upon these forces: “However bizarre or fantastic, there is always a dialectical relationship between what Gulliver finds in his travels and what can be found in the past and present history, politics, and society of *England*” (57, emphasis mine).

Knowles’ focus on British domestic politics and the debate between the “ancients” and the “moderns” within that nation (as well as the correlative concern with Gulliver’s “Modernity” versus Swift’s more “Ancient” values) prevents him from taking his research regarding *Gulliver’s Travels* and travel writing to its next logical conclusion, leading him to neglect consideration of the significance of the term “Discovery Literature,” even as he applies it to works that form the “background” of *Gulliver’s Travels*. Such neglect of travel writing may seem to follow from Knowles’ conclusion that *Gulliver’s Travels* is “a carefully calculated synthesis of many kinds of literature, including genuine accounts of travel, imaginative combinations of realism and fantasy, outright fantastic voyages, and Utopian and anti-Utopian (‘Dystopian’) fables, which can idealize or satirize society, or, indeed, do both” (3-4). He may therefore have seen no reason to prioritize one

“kind of literature” over another. Be that as it may, his work still suffers from an inadequate theorization of travel writing, making it difficult for him “to adequately categorize literature of this kind since there are so many overlapping boundaries” (5). This is evident in the following profession:

There are accounts of actual voyages by those who undertook them; reports of stories told to (but not experienced by) genuine voyagers; fictional stories drawing on first-hand reports of voyages believed to be real, but a medley of fact and fantasy; apparently true stories based on actual voyages, but with the deliberately added sensationalism of the fantastic; tales of imaginary voyages, grounding Utopian fictions in materials from actual voyages; and so on. (5)

Without a working theory of travel writing, Knowles cannot get passed what I earlier called the problem of indeterminacy. “Swift’s borrowing from travel literature is extensive and unquestionable,” he writes, but multiple sources for specific tropes “indicate the problem of source attribution” (15). Echoing Sherbo, Knowles thus concludes that rather than seeing *Gulliver’s Travels* “as a parody of a specific work [of travel writing], it is more appropriate to recognize Swift’s synthesis of various voyagers’ words and matter” (14).

As we have already demonstrated above, scholars who take this approach almost invariably find it sufficient to accept the term “travel writing” or one of its various alternatives without further clarification as to what it signifies, to utilize it without further theorization of its intertextual relationship with *Gulliver’s Travels*, and/or to neglect consideration of whether there is some further significance to this relationship that could broaden the scope of their analyses. Sherbo provides neither a theory of travel writing nor a substantive analysis of its role within *Gulliver’s Travels*, nor an historical context for *Gulliver’s Travels* and the travel writing to which it alludes. Wagner offers just such an analysis, but with neither a theory of travel writing to inform it nor an historical context to support it. Knowles provides both an historical context and a substantive analysis of the tropes from travel writing in *Gulliver’s Travels*, but again neither a theorization of travel writing’s role within *Gulliver’s Travels* nor a theory of travel writing at all. We therefore see in the works of Sherbo, Knowles, and Wagner a coincidence between the lack of theorization around travel writing and the conclusion that it is of secondary significance to the understanding of *Gulliver’s Travels*.

Specifying the type of travel writing and the historical context in which it emerged enables us to review the broader patterns at play in *Gulliver's Travels*; but without a theory that brings them all together, it becomes impossible to say with any clarity what work this infamous satire *does*. We therefore turn our attention towards an elaboration of the term "travel writing" before moving forwards with our reading.

Part I: A Genealogy of Travel Writing and *Gulliver's Travels*

Chapter 4: Toward a Typology of Travel Writing

Specifying a type of travel writing can be highly problematic due to a lack of unity among the various documents which may be labeled as “travel writing” — a grouping which Glenn Hooper curtly describes as “only a loosely defined body of literature” (2) in *Perspectives on Travel Writing* (2004). This “looseness” comes obviously not from the actual definitions, but from the body of works and documents itself. Historically speaking, travel writing has evolved in a discontinuous, non-linear, highly rhizomatic manner. What “body” it has (and, therefore, what “travel writing” signifies) is pierced to the core by fractured, competing, and overlapping elements, many of which were only centuries later formed as distinct discourses, including what we would now call geography, cartography, chorography, ethnography, autobiography, historiography, sociology, anthropology, and political science,³⁴ among others.

Even the term “travel writing” is itself an ambiguous, highly contested, over-determined shorthand for the jumble of writings that emerged from millennia of exploration and revealing. Many scholars hoping to find some name both general and specific enough to capture the broad, unruly, contradictory spectrum of documents that together comprise the totality of works I have here labeled as “travel writing” have utilized and often argued convincingly for a wide range of terms such as “travel literature,” “travel books,” “travelogues,” “travel memoirs,” and “realistic” (versus “extraordinary”) “voyage accounts,” to name a few. Of these terms, “travel literature” is by far the most widely adopted. Jan Borm argues with great clarity that “the *literary* is at work in travel writing, and... it therefore seems appropriate to consider the terms the *literature of travel*, or simply *travel*

³⁴ See Helga Quadflieg: “As the generic distinctions between discourses of geography, ethnography, anthropology, sociology or historiography had not yet been academically institutionalized, and the individual self as both subject and object or autobiographical kinds of writing had not been generally established, Tudor travel writing participates in a number of discourses” (qtd. in Hooper 28). Also, Barbara Shapiro notes that “we can trace an early, albeit rather undeveloped, stage of a kind of factually oriented ‘political science,’ or ‘social science,’ although no contemporary would have employed the term ‘science’ for any descriptive treatment of human or natural phenomena or facts. ‘Science’ was a term reserved for certain knowledge and causal explanation and was not applicable to the accumulation of even the most well established ‘matters of fact.’ Such ‘factual’ political description might include first-person eye-witness accounts, the more or less reliable accounts of other contemporaries, and sometimes documentary or historical materials” (77).

literature, as synonyms of *travel writing*” (qtd. in Hooper 13). Among others who favour the term “travel literature” is Jenny Meziems, a Swiftian scholar whose work will be considered in the next chapter of this thesis.³⁵ Without belabouring the point, I would argue that the term “travel literature” alone favours the narrative forms of travel writing over more technical documents collected alongside travel narratives,³⁶ such as ship logs and manifests, nautical or cartographic miscellanea, instructions and manuals, civic descriptions, and so on. Not all travel writing was produced for a general audience following a rhetorical form; a significant proportion of it was highly specialized and produced for small, specific, and often technical audiences. I have chosen for this project the term “travel writing” to refer to travel works generally since I am specifically concerned with the theoretical primacy of writing in its functional relation to travel, and the specific ways in which travel writing organizes both narrative and non-narrative elements in its construction of “truth” and “reality” in opposition to notions of falsity, fictionality, and fantasy according to a particular order and orientation of the social body.³⁷

Equally controversial and resistant to consensus is the debate on the genre of such documents. A small sample of the range of well-established travel writing sub-genres operating concurrently in Swift’s time alone include: “survival literature,” a “sentimental” form of travel writing emerging from Medieval times, which melds themes of hardship and danger with an over-arching curiosity (Pratt 5); “civic description,” which originated in early Spanish colonial expansion and collated information on the state of a country (mostly under Spanish colonial rule) without anecdote of any form (“a ‘statistical’ work, in the earliest sense of the term, in which statistics meant ‘an inquiry into the state of a country’” [20-21]); “privateer” or “buccaneer journals” from the 17th century, which recorded the exploits of formerly English, French, and Dutch men (“Deserters, dissenters, crews of

³⁵ “In communicating his experience the traveller became a literary man,” Meziems writes. “Whether his aim was to convey an accurate and useful account of lands his king or church might claim, and for the discovery of which he might be rewarded, or whether he astutely recognized the romantic appeal of such material... artfully arranged to court a growing market among ordinary readers, he was among those with something to sell, needing to develop skills of narrative in informing, persuading, or merely delighting” (2).

³⁶ Hakluyt for instance, “insisted on the value of raw documents like itineraries and logs and included them alongside more polished narratives — keeping his editorial intervention, in both cases, to a minimum” (Hulme and Youngs 23).

³⁷ See Part II, Chapter 4 for more.

wrecked vessels, or chance marooners”) who renounced all national ties and preyed on commercial vessels sailing on the open seas (Neill 34-39); or narratives of the “Grand Tour” from the 17th to 19th centuries, wherein youth of a recently formed English upper class acquired a prescribed form of “experience” from travelling to certain destinations in Europe (Hulme and Youngs 39). Many further examples could be provided, each of which may be more or less equally classified/categorized as “travel writing.”

It seems quite understandable, then, that one of the most common and persistent observations about travel writing of any sort is “its absorption of differing narrative styles and genres, the manner in which it effortlessly shape-shifts and blends any number of imaginative encounters, and its potential for interaction with a broad range of historical periods, disciplines and perspectives” (Hooper 3). It is also therefore with good reason that scholars who treat travel writing as a homogeneous body of works are inevitably led into fallacious reasoning at worst or partial truths at best. Such malleability may have granted authors and scribes a certain amount of freedom in adapting the conventions of travel writing to their own needs, but it wreaks havoc for scholars looking to make clear, concise conclusions in their interpretations. What remains, then, is the need to specify what does give the term “travel writing” its unity.

Towards this end, David Jones is the earliest critic I have found whose analysis captures the complex relationship between specific travel works and the broader circumstances in which they emerged, rather than encapsulating them within a less determinate but more rigid system of classification such as genre. Jones implicitly grounds the travel writing to which *Gulliver’s Travels* alludes in a particular historical moment without diminishing or downplaying its role in his analysis of *Gulliver’s Travels*, which is decisive for his conceptualization of travel writing and his final conclusion regarding the targets of Swift’s satire. “It is necessary to acknowledge the broad tradition of prose satire to which *Gulliver’s Travels* belongs and to evaluate the significance of the travel background, not as a discrete feature, but *as an integral component of an imaginative whole*,” Jones writes in his introduction (V, emphasis mine). Within the context of a thorough analysis of links

between *Gulliver's Travels* and travel works in Swift's library, outlined in the second chapter of this thesis, Jones makes careful distinctions to more clearly establish what "travel writing" we are talking about in *Gulliver's Travels* studies. Among the travel writing in Swift's library, for instance, is Joseph Addison's *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy, etc. In the Years 1701, 1702, 1703*, published in 1705 and inscribed "with the author's compliments." A "prime example of non-fiction travel literature," according to Jones, Addison's description of his "Grand Tour" was popular enough to warrant at least thirteen editions in the 18th century alone (36). The Grand Tour is what James Buzard calls "from start to finish, an ideological exercise" for the youth of a recently-emerged British upper-class throughout the late 17th to early 18th centuries (qtd. in Hulme and Youngs 39). "Usually occurring just after completion of studies at Oxford or Cambridge University and running anywhere from one to five years in length, the Tour was a social ritual intended to prepare these young men to assume the leadership positions preordained for them at home" (qtd. 38). Ostensibly, a Grand Tour included travel across "the Low Countries [Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg], Germany, Switzerland, and France, and held as its symbolic centre a view of Italy and, especially, Rome. From Calais the traveller could pursue a number of routes to Italy, the majority travelling through Paris and Lyons, followed by either the Alps... or, less popularly, the sea route to Leghorn" (Ord 199 n23). More important than the route itself, however, was the "experience" one garnered from the Grand Tour. Travel in this sense was encapsulated within a broader paradigm that viewed the experience of travel as an abstract ideal for personal development: a type of experience one "ought to have" that could be gained in no other way. "Merely reading about conditions elsewhere was not enough. Those who could travel, should — though of course precious few actually could" (qtd. in Hulme and Youngs 37). Thus, it was a particular *kind* of experience that was to be gained from the Grand Tour, and works on the Grand Tour such as Addison's spoke to the value of travel for this purpose (qtd. 38).

Gulliver's Travels, Jones shows, does not follow the mold of such works. Narratives of the Grand Tour tend to go to great lengths to describe cities in "copious detail," whereas Gulliver's

description of Mildendo, the capital of Lilliput, refers “only briefly to streets, houses, city walls” (Jones 37). Of Lorbrulgurd, a description is promised, but not given. Gulliver instead offers “the barest facts:” he describes for the reader how “this city stands upon two equal Parts on each Side the River that passes through. It contains above eighty thousand Houses” (qtd. 37-8). His description then shifts from small details to broad exaggerations of size and distance — a practice more closely linked, as we will discuss in Chapter 7 of this work, to trends in cartography and chorography. The city is “fifty four English miles,” Gulliver writes, and the King’s Palace “no regular Edifice, but an Heap of Buildings about seven Miles round: the chief Rooms are generally two hundred and forty Foot high” (37-38). Moreover, unlike Addison’s narrator, “Gulliver is not a gentleman travelling to Europe for the benefit of his experience and education; nor is he a scholar.” As a sailor travelling to “Remote nations” of the world, he “would not be expected to adorn his narrative with ‘Ornaments of Learning,’” like one writing about the Grand Tour would. As a “traveller-hero,” however, Gulliver “reflects classical precedent and experiences of the Elizabethan voyagers, not the Eighteenth Century gentleman travelling for his education and professional development” (72). Given the slew of commonalities between *Gulliver’s Travels* and works collected by Hakluyt and Purchas, or written by William Dampier, Lionel Wafer, and Francis Bernier, then, it is clear that Gulliver’s affinity is strongest with 16th and 17th century explorers (39).

Although this has, in fact, been at least superficially acknowledged by many other scholars in the past (including Walter Scott in 1824, mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis), Jones makes the crucial move of linking the explorers from these centuries to the European doctrine of Discovery. Among the explorers’ accounts in Swift’s library, it is perhaps with Hakluyt’s collection in particular that Knowles’ term “Discovery Literature” is most clearly applicable. For Hakluyt, the so-called “prophet of English overseas expansion” (Helgerson 15), travel and exploration represented opportunities for “the lawfull enlargement of her Majesties Dominions, commodious to the whole realme in general, profitable to the adventurers in particular, beneficiall to the savages [sic!], and a matter to be attained without any great danger or difficultie” (qtd. in Jones 71). Once termed

“England’s epic” for the scope of its ambition and scale of its popularity (Sells VII), Hakluyt’s *Principal Navigations* promoted British expansionism abroad in no uncertain terms, providing “cogent reasons for planting colonies” and listing specific commodities that could be gained by expeditions to North America (Jones 92). Its publication came only a few years after England’s first attempt to establish a colony abroad had failed and one year before their second attempt would fail as well. Outgunned by Spanish maritime and colonial power, and with only a few successful voyages to boast of, Hakluyt thus collected “whatever reports about voyages to distant countries he could get hold of” to publish what Helga Quadflieg describes as “a plea... for future successes more than a documentation of a glorious past” (qtd. in Hooper 27).

Thus, Jones argues, the combination of references to works from Hakluyt’s collections throughout *Gulliver’s Travels* and Gulliver’s forceful rejection of “planting” (or, colonization) at the end of the fourth book makes a clear allusion to Hakluyt’s pleas. A comparison of Gulliver’s admonitions with Hakluyt’s *Western Planting* turns up several points in common. In his *Western Planting*, for instance, Hakluyt writes that:

In the Ende, what success his voyage had, who list to read the Decades, the historie of the West Indies, The conquest of Hernando Cortez about Mexico and those of Francisco Pizare in Peru about Casamalcha and Cusco, may knowe more particularly, all which their discoveries, travailes, and conquests, are extant to be had in the English tongue. This devise was then accounted a fantasticall imagination and a drowsie dream. But the sequel thereof, hath since walked out of dreams thousand of souls to know their creator, being thereof before that time altogether ignorant: and hath since made sufficient prooffe, neither to be fantasticke, nor vainly imagined. Withall, howe mightilie hath it enlarged the dominions of the crown of Spaine, and greatly enriched the subjects of that sithence the time of Colombus his first Discoverie, through their planting, possessing, and inhabiting those partes, there hath been transported and brought home into Europe greater store of golde, silver, pearl, and precious stones, than heretofore hath been in all ages, since the creation of the worlde. I doe therefore hartily wish, seeing it hath pleased almightie God of his infinite mercy at the length, to await some of our worthy contriemen, out of that drowsie dream, wherein we all haath so long slumbered: That wee may nowe not suffer it to quail for want of maintenance, that by these valiant gentlemen our Countrey men is so boldly begun an enterprise. For which purpose I have taken upon me to write this simple short treatise, hoping that it shall be able to perswade such as have been and yet doe continue detractors and hinderers of this journey... to prove that the voyage, late enterprised for trade, traffike and planting in America, is an action leading to the lawful enlargement of her Majesties Dominions, commodious to the Realme in general, profitable to the adventurers in particular, beneficiall to the Savages, and a metter to be attained without any great danger or difficultie. (qtd. in Jones 93)

Gulliver echoes this passage at several points in what Jones reads as a form of reply:

I confess, it was whispered to me, that I was bound in Duty as a Subject of *England*, to have given in a Memorial to a Secretary of State, at my first coming over; because, whatever Lands are discovered by a Subject, belong to the Crown. But I doubt, whether our conquests in the Countries I treat of, would be easy as those of *Ferdinando Cortez* over the naked *Americans*. (Swift 438-9; pt. 4, ch. 12)

Thus, in what seems a fairly direct response, Gulliver's general reference to details of Columbus' "first Discoverie" and Cortés' assault of the Indigenous population, and his further allusion to specific details such as the desire for trade, gold, and "enlarg[ing] his majesty's dominions," establishes for Jones Gulliver's familiarity with, and disdain for, Hakluyt's charge (Jones 94).

For Jones, then, the function of travel writing in *Gulliver's Travels* is twofold. On one hand, travel writing acts as a framing device for the narrative of *Gulliver's Travels* to establish a form of "travel realism" that contrasts the fantastic elements from Gulliver's journey. The voyages themselves are modeled after travel works that "describe the natural pattern of departure, discovery, and return" (182), and are framed by realistic detail taken specifically from works such as those by Bernier, Dampier, and Wafer, or those contained in the collections of Hakluyt and Purchas. Such details as "dates, navigational information, names of ships, captains, crews, mutiny, piracy... monsoons, storms, use of longboats to explore islands, [and] the need to search for fresh water" tend to be concentrated at the beginning and end of each voyage, providing a frame through which Gulliver's encounters on fictional lands occur (171). On the other hand, this travel realism is "intentionally flawed by Swift," which reveals the second role that travel writing plays in *Gulliver's Travels*. Themes of nationalism and patriotism, which are common to explorers' travel narratives from the period in question, run throughout the first three books of *Gulliver's Travels* and "meet up with colonialism" in the fourth. This final voyage incorporates English colonial practices in such a way as to undermine Gulliver's stated purpose for publishing his *Travels*: that he wrote for the "Publicke Good" according to the maxim that he "strictly adhere to the Truth." The Elizabethan dream articulated by the likes of Hakluyt and Purchas thus "ends in savage, anti-social bigotry" directed against the English themselves (94). *Gulliver's Travels*, then, can be read as a satire of

English colonial practices through invocation of the travel works in which they were originally articulated — a thematic to which we will return in Chapter 6.

In Jones' reading, not only is Discovery front and centre, but so too is the historical age in which Swift wrote: "It is likely that Gulliver's vindication of his failure to take formal possession in the name of the sovereign of the countries he visited, 'the only objection that can be raised against me as a traveller,' [quoted above in full] is an adroit allusion to the great age of Tudor exploration, discovery and planting" (71, emphasis mine). Crucially, Jones notes that such parallels allude not only to Hakluyt himself, but also to "the ideas of the great age of English exploration and discovery," providing "subtle reminders of [the] truth and historical reality" (94) behind such individual works. The tone of Gulliver's remarks in the closing pages of *Gulliver's Travels* thus contradicts "the spirit of the Elizabethan voyagers whose colonial exploits were praised by Purchas and Hakluyt in the great age of discovery and exploration" (44). This suggests that the travel writing works in Swift's library with which scholars have established clear parallels in *Gulliver's Travels* are exemplars of a particular type, and that the use of character models, narrative structures, and subject matter in *Gulliver's Travels* points to specific — even if unnamed — targets exemplified by this type of travel writing. Travel writing therefore plays a double role in *Gulliver's Travels*: not merely a rhetorical device to frame the narrative "for the ulterior purpose of satire" as Knowles suggests, but as a discursive framework through which the tale's narrative focalizes the targets of Swift's critique. How exactly this is accomplished is the topic to which we will now turn in the next chapter.

Part I: A Genealogy of Travel Writing and *Gulliver's Travels*

Chapter 5: Travel Realism

A persistent yet seldom elucidated assumption among scholars is that travel writing establishes some form of realism within *Gulliver's Travels*. Knowles, for instance, writes that “Swift’s basic technique is to ground the opening of each of the four parts of *Gulliver's Travels* in the solidity of the real, geographical, social and historical world... creating credibility and authority” (63).

Similarly, Jones observes that “*Swift employs travel as a realistic framing device* at the beginning and end of each of the four voyages, very much in the style of William Dampier or Lionel Wafer” (3, emphasis mine). Even Harold Williams, who explicitly rejects the significance of travel writing for interpreting *Gulliver's Travels*, acknowledged “that touch of realism added to [Swift’s] narrative by the four maps” that framed each of Gulliver’s tales (qtd. in Bracher 64) — a convention taken specifically from travel writing (60).

As we saw in the third chapter of this work, there are a number of scholars who believe that the function of this realism is to establish a form of verisimilitude that is then deliberately undermined to signal some form of misrepresentation within *Gulliver's Travels*. This includes references to the “travel liar” Richard Sympson, inclusion of spuriously drawn maps and a confounding portrait of the author in the paratext, and Gulliver’s alternating indulgences in hyperbole and assertions of veracity, among others. Indeed, for Frantz, Moore, Wagner, and Knowles, the primary purpose of such verisimilitude in *Gulliver's Travels* is simply to create a contrast against which certain of the narrator’s misrepresentations can be measured, occasionally (or, incidentally) implying a dubious nature for certain practices within travel writing itself. While this argument is convincing on some levels, it merely repeats the assumption that travel writing establishes a form of verisimilitude in *Gulliver's Travels* without elaborating further. Moreover, none of these scholars question the “reality” that *Gulliver's Travels* reproduces, nor clarify the significance of its production within travel writing. As I suggested in the previous chapter, it is no coincidence that these scholars would have us believe that the significance of travel writing in *Gulliver's Travels* stops there, because, for

them, the target of *Gulliver's Travels*' satirical critique lies elsewhere. For Jones, however, who demonstrates the primary position of travel writing within the narrative structure of *Gulliver's Travels*, the specific form of realism which *Gulliver's Travels* invokes from travel writing is itself part of a particular paradigm that *Gulliver's Travels* attacks: a form of what he calls "travel realism" that is particular to the Age of Discovery.

In this analysis, Jones agrees with another critic, Jenny Mezcicms, who similarly examines the intertextual relationship between *Gulliver's Travels* and travel writing according to the social, political, and historical conditions in which these works emerged. In her rich and insightful if sometimes rough-and-ready essay, "'Tis not to divert the reader': Moral and Literary Determinants in Some Early Travel Narratives" (1982), Mezcicms offers an embedded theorization of what Jones calls travel realism but which she describes as *a particular version of reality* that arose within travel works in the (so-called) Renaissance.³⁸ Crucial to Mezcicms' reading of travel writing, and thus of travel realism, are the historical age in which it emerged and the social transformations associated with the circumnavigation of the globe, increasing competition between nation-states, and the rise of scientific discourse.

The travel works from this time, which Mezcicms specifically labels *travel literature*, formed a literary genre that grew alongside the activities of Renaissance travellers in particular (1). Whereas earlier travel works had excited their readers' imaginations with tales of fantastic creatures and descriptions of other worlds (e.g. those first described by Ctesias of Cnidus and later published by Mandeville, among others, as discussed in Chapter 3), these new works offered *facts* — facts that were all the richer for remaining within the realm of the possible, promising to describe the world *as it actually was* to an audience for whom the globe was newly circumnavigated, and thus only barely imagined as a whole. Along this often-hazy path, the authority of the traveller *as narrator* emerges, offering guidance through the shifting, shaky, uncertain terrain. Whereas earlier travel works had captivated readers with the romantic implications of their author's gambit, now they were positioned

³⁸ A term I here eschew in favour of the broader and slightly less contentious "early modern period."

“as a source of new truths with wide application for the material world” (2). The traveller-author thus represented a new type of individual, offering new experiences that could not be readily confirmed nor denied by others and new truths that exceeded or, quite often, contradicted traditional knowledges and worldviews. This lent “new dominance” to the experiences of these traveller-authors, who recorded their findings and shared their interpretations for the use of both common readers and patrons alike. And, in this way, the traveller became a literary figure:

Whether his aim was to convey an accurate and useful account of lands his king or church might claim, and for the discovery of which he might be rewarded, or whether he astutely recognized the romantic appeal of such material... artfully arranged to court a growing market among ordinary readers, he was among those with something to sell, needing to develop skills of narrative in informing, persuading, or merely delighting. (2)

Thus the reason Mezciems adopts the term travel *literature*.

This new type of traveller — whom I will later identify as the *travelling subject* — begins to take on an idealized image which is laid out in part by the Royal Society, an organization formed in 1645 to advance and support the pursuit of scientific knowledge. “The Royal Society, rather than the Ulyssean wanderer or the avaricious monarch [of the past], was the traveller’s new image-maker” Mezciems writes (13). A manual written by Robert Boyle for scientific explorations, entitled *General Heads for the Natural History of a Country... Drawn out for the Use of Travellers and Navigators* (1692), for instance, provides a stereotypical outline of the requirements for this new sort of traveller. Like Gulliver, readily-equipped with his watch, glasses, and compass, the English voyager was told to carry “various ingenious mechanical devices and the instructions to weigh and measure and record everything he experiences: not to reflect upon its value, but to register it statistically” (13). The traditionally romantic overtones of travel writing thus gave way to the criteria of the new, “scientific,” reality. In its place comes “a narrative of observation without surprise or judgment: it becomes scientific, unemotional, and amoral” (15) — a not-coincidentally perfect description of Gulliver, who remains notably unperturbed and dedicated to the measurement and recording of seemingly trivial detail throughout his fantastic encounters.

The motives of the authors of such works, however, were often more dubious than not. In claiming to report only the “facts” of the lands surveyed, their descriptions often betrayed a more avaricious intent. Mezciems describes the reports of Christopher Columbus, for instance, as “factual records which convey in economical plain prose the required information,” but which reveal his ulterior motives for undertaking such a journey nonetheless (6). The claim Columbus stakes for his Prince is on “the situation most convenient and in the best position for the mines of gold and for all intercourse as well as the mainland ... where there will be great trade and gain,” for example. Further on he notes that “here we are in the neighbourhood of many mines of gold,” then describes an island where “there is much gold,” and later records an incident in which they changed course “because there was news of gold in that direction” (qtd. 8). Otherwise, Columbus was rather restrained in his enthusiasm for this Discovery, evasively limiting details rather than embellishing or expanding upon them, “so that his own frustrations are transferred to reader or patron with the emphasis on promise, not fulfillment” (7). The distortions of these accounts are thus “not in the facts but in their presentation,” revealing that “a rhetoric so dependent on statistics, and which has no stylistic eloquence, can all the same reveal as much as it conceals to prove to be a kind of fiction after all” (7).

A similar practice of presentation can also be seen in the accounts of Wafer and Dampier, both of whom were buccaneers who later became famous for their travelogues. A large part of the exploits they recount consisted of their raiding and looting of Spanish ships, describing “unemotionally the various tricks and deceptions which brought them prizes as well as punishments” (Mezciems 15). Dampier, however, made significant revisions to his original manuscript before its publication, transforming it from a tale of violence and adventure into a natural-scientific and maritime resource that claimed scientific disinterest as motive for his journeys. In the dedicatory address of the published version, he writes to the President of the Royal Society that “there may be some things... new even to you; and... not altogether unuseful to the Publick” in his travelogue, appealing to the “Zeal for the advancement of Knowledge, and the Interest of your Country” in such scientific works

(qtd. 15-16). Wafer, on the other hand, appeals to the more overtly imperial ambitions of his nation. As we noted in the previous chapter, the introduction to the second edition of his *New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* makes a strong plea for the establishment of a colony on the continent. Like Columbus, he further provides numerable accounts of gold mines, adding his own enthusiasm for displacing the Spanish from their stolen territories. This, Mezciems suggests, “rather alters the face of the modest traveller and suggests a far from disinterested attitude on the part of author and potential reader alike” (16). Mezciems thus concludes that “what we might call fictions (in the sense of false appearances) were needed to cover the real private and public motives of Wafer and Dampier” and make them more acceptable to the public back home (15). Claiming veracity, such works thus present a version of reality that becomes accepted as such — one that is highly favoured by the sovereigns of that epoch who funded such journeys for the ways they promised “an opening up and reordering of the known world” in their favour (1). Given the privileged position of the traveller-author at this time, such “fictions” thereby established as “fact” the appropriative aspirations of the explorer.

Mezciems’ reading of *Gulliver’s Travels* works in the light of these trends in travel writing, arguing that the satire’s purpose is to save both the traveller and reader alike from themselves. More broadly, she locates *Gulliver’s Travels* within a long-standing battle between the “Moderns” and the “Ancients” (18),³⁹ similar to Ronald Knowles.⁴⁰ In Mezciems’ reading, travel literature emerges specifically in opposition to the *ancien regime* of the classical order. Whereas earlier travel works, such as those of John Mandeville and Marco Polo, contained their own fair share of lies, hyperbole, and plain fancy, they had still served a *moral* purpose. Like Columbus, Marco Polo’s motivations were undoubtedly mercantile, but the story told by his collaborator, Rustichello of Pisa, drew liberally from the materials of Polo’s journey for more artistic ends. The result is “*a story of the*

³⁹ For more on this debate, see Knowles “Bannibarbi and Glubbudubdrib: Ancients and Moderns,” 98-113.

⁴⁰ The implications of Mezciems’ reading far exceeds that of Knowles’ however, as she looks concretely to acts of Discovery and the role of travel writing within them, even without explicit mention of Discovery, planting, colonialism, etc.

wonderful rather than an account of the potentially useful” that reaches the reader, padded with set-pieces and extra material from other sources in romance” (5, emphasis mine). Similarly, Mandeville’s *Travels* were not truthful or useful “in the sense of being accurate reports of real personal experience,” but the “facts” recorded in his account are “sacred *as facts*” (6). For instance, Mandeville’s *Guide to the Holy Land* outlines practical information such as routes and attractions, dispensing with personal experience in favour of “digressive fables” that serve to inform the would-be traveller. The narrator’s personal experience, Mezcziems argues, is important only insofar as he, as *witness*, can authenticate claims heard and things seen: “The impression is... that it is not Mandeville’s own integrity, but the very existence of places long known that might be questioned if he did not vouchsafe witness” (6). It seems as though his purpose were to reaffirm what was already known, to verify and validate the stuff of legends which represented an established order, rather than offer new truths that break from this past. Moreover, the narrator also acknowledges “his own inability always to distinguish between fantasy and fact” in the face of the unknown, leading him to sometimes seek “other evidence than personal experience” (7). Mandeville comes to recognize “his own and a general human fallibility which leaves room for things comprehended by God, to be wondered at rather than explained” (7). There is a sense, then, lost in later travel literature, that the narrator relies upon a source beyond himself to authorize his observations. Thus, Mezcziems argues, whereas earlier traveller-authors such as Polo and Mandeville had recognized a higher moral authority, authors of travel literature such as Vespucci and Columbus represented a new, corrupting influence that rejected such established truths in their quest for “facts” and “discoveries.”

As travel literature evolved, Mezcziems argues that attention from the author, narrator, and publisher begins to shift purposefully towards the reader, such that “the literature itself becomes a recognizable medium for conversion, not of the savage *but of the literate European*” (10, emphasis mine). The image of the romantic traveller gives way to that of the humble scientific collector, who adds to the sum of human knowledge without moralistic pronouncement. Simultaneously, however, the traveller also begins to pose as an “ordinary man of common sense whose personal observations

may be trusted by virtue of his lack of specialist skills (especially literary ones) and his possession of ordinary faculties” (2) — very much in the manner of Dampier and Wafer. His narrative increasingly becomes “entertaining and informative, modest in address, sane and balanced in tone,” written in a plain style that suited the modern values of the readership (14). His prefatory address speaks not to his patron from the Crown, but rather to the middle-class book buyer in a plain prose style which projects no superiority over the reader whatsoever, except that of the unique opportunity the narrator happens to have enjoyed (11). The traveller-author of travel literature, in other words, comes to both *reflect* and *project* the image of the common (white, lettered, European male) reader. While on one hand this “makes remote places feel more accessible to the common man,” on the other hand it represents “a transference of authority by means of which *a new reality becomes the property of any man’s sensations and powers of expression and measurement*” (12, emphasis mine). The reader, like the traveller, begins to look upon the world with an appropriative gaze, free from moral constraint.

Working against this corrupting influence was the work of the “ancients” — classical texts that had been recently rediscovered and which Mezcims argues undermined the newness and value of such “modern” developments as those exemplified within travel literature. Lucian’s *True History* (c. 2 A.D.), for example, is a fictitious travel work that ridicules the credulity of the reader who accepts the authority of the written word, showing “that deception, at a level of art beyond that of the plain-speaking liar, may nevertheless be used to undeceive” (Mezcims 3). Lucian’s text thus undermines the assumption that all facts convey truth, whereas fictions do not. His work parodies his contemporaries and other more ancient authors, including Ctesias, for presenting fantastic and mythological events as truth. Lucian thus exposes a moral crux for his readers: their culpability for accepting the authority of the narrator based solely upon his unique experiences, such that his credibility as narrator becomes the measure of truth (4). Lucian’s own lies thus serve the *moral* purpose of challenging his readers to exercise common sense when reading the works of those they perceive to be authorities. It is perhaps no surprise, then, that Humanist educators like Thomas More promoted Lucian’s works in the early modern period. More’s own *Utopia* follows Lucian’s mold

within a Christian context, similarly challenging blind acceptance of authority and religious dogma in the early days of European expansionism. Mezciems reads *Utopia* as a sort of travel work which then “turns into a cautious warning about the limits of human potential among both travellers and readers, abroad or at home” (4). More presents fiction as though it were fact in such a way as to “impose a dimension of moral responsibility on the excited imagination” (5).⁴¹

Gulliver's Travels, then, is for Mezciems similarly cast in the Lucian mold, critiquing these explorers from the “ancient” tradition. Against the “fictions” of travel literature, Swift offers fictions of his own to provoke his readership into questioning their authority and rejecting their corrupting influence. His textual allusions are thus of two distinct kinds: one from the classical literary tradition typified by ancient authors such as Lucian and Humanists such as More, the other from modern travellers such as Columbus, Dampier, and Wafer (17). “The theme of travel furnished Swift with an opportunity to restate the pessimistic view that man cannot change by cutting himself off from traditional values or by measuring everything in terms of his experience of the physical world,” Mezciems writes. “The zeal for exploration and colonial projects for ‘the public good’ which Gulliver wields in obligatory fashion in his final chapter, turns against deceiver and deceived alike” (18).

Taken as such, the “travel realism” of which Jones speaks strongly coincides with Mezciems’ reading of the “version of reality” that travel literature projects; and, although the two take distinctly different approaches, they arrive at parallel conclusions regarding *Gulliver's Travels*. For both scholars, there is a particular practice of presentation (call it travel realism, or a version of reality, or what have you) employed by travellers from the “Renaissance” period (a term Jones does not utilize, but which coincides with the historical period of his analysis) in their depictions of their journeys to, and explorations of, other lands. Whereas Jones focuses specifically on the misrepresentations of others, which travel realism effects in service of colonialism, Mezciems targets the ways in which it

⁴¹ At which point, one begins to note that Mezciems’ argument is as much a moral judgment against “modern” practices as it is a reading of *Gulliver's Travels*. Like the travellers she discusses, her own objectivity has limits.

obfuscates the corruption and greed of these explorers more generally — a lust for riches extracted from Discovered lands, even if she does not phrase it quite that way. In each case, the authors independently conclude that *Gulliver's Travels* both adopts and undermines this particular practice of presentation to reveal the appropriative and destructive practices of colonialism such “realism” supports. We may thus conclude this chapter by summarizing the arguments of Jones and Mezciems as demonstrating that the verisimilitude in *Gulliver's Travels* therefore represents a specific paradigm in its invocation of travel realism: that of the Discoverer. The historical epoch in which this paradigm emerged, however, has yet to be fully elucidated.

Part I: A Genealogy of Travel Writing and *Gulliver's Travels*

Chapter 6: Historical Context

It is no coincidence that David Jones' and Jenny Mezcicms' reading of travel writing opens up a previously unnamed colonial element operating within *Gulliver's Travels*, since each author analyzes the intertextual relationship between *Gulliver's Travels* and travel writing according to the social, political, and historical conditions in which these works emerge — conditions which point directly to the European doctrine of Discovery, as this chapter will further elucidate.

As I outlined at length in the third chapter, scholars who neglected such conditions in their theorization of travel writing were also those who neglected the overall significance of travel writing in *Gulliver's Travels*. Notable in the context of this chapter are the conclusions of Arthur Sherbo and Ronald Knowles. When Sherbo catches what he labels as a “patriotic note” in Hakluyt, Purchas, and Wafer, he pays no heed to the language of Discovery within the passages he considers. In Hakluyt, Sherbo notes “the honour of our Nation” and the “generall... desire in the youthe of this Realme to discover all parts of the face of this earth” as two of the primary motivations for undertaking voyages of exploration (117). Such patriotism is amplified in Purchas' *Epistle Dedicatorie* to the Prince of Wales, which vividly describes images of “the English Martialist everywere following armies, whiles his Countrey is blessed at home with *Beati Pacifici*; the Merchant coasting more Shoares and Ilands for commerce, then his Progenitors have heard off, or himselfe can number; the Mariner making other Seas a Ferry, and the widest Ocean a Straigt, to his discovering attempts” (qtd. 118). And, in the preface of the second edition of Lionel Wafer's *New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America*, the author explicitly equates the wealth of the nation with conquest, stating that the purpose of his work is “only to represent to the World how far it would be the Interest of England to make an Establishment upon that Continent; the Product of whose Bowels enriches the other Three Parts of the World” (qtd. 120-121). For Sherbo, these passages are but part of a broader pattern of “bookish proclivities [which] were not unusual among these traveller-authors” (117) — an observation which supports his argument against Bonner's attempt to establish Dampier as the sole

source for Gulliver's character. The arguments these passages make for Discovery otherwise fall on deaf ears, drowned out by details that eclipse the broader contexts surrounding them.

Knowles, on the other hand, *does* attend to the social, political, and historical conditions in which *Gulliver's Travels* and travel writing emerge, yet, as we noted earlier, the historicity of travel writing in his reading is relevant only within a myopically domestic British context and the politics of *Gulliver's Travels* are conflated with those of the work's author, Jonathan Swift. As Clement Hawes argues in "Three Times Round the Globe: Gulliver and Colonial Discourse" (1991), these are two of the ways in which *Gulliver's Travels* is depoliticized, domesticated, or otherwise removed from the specifically colonial context in which the work was written. Attention must, Hawes argues, be placed upon *Gulliver's Travels*' historical position within the British slave trade. Its publication in 1726 comes within thirteen years of a key turning point in the history of British colonialism, the English acquisition in 1713 of the 'Asiento'" (Hawes 188), which was a contract that gave the British the right to supply an annual quota of slaves to Spanish colonies (211 n6). Although the British had participated in the African-Caribbean slave trade since the mid 17th century, acquisition of the Asiento brought slavery into the centre of English economic expansion. It thus marks the beginning of the largest slave trade in history, during which at least 6 million human beings were kidnapped, transported across the Atlantic, and sold into forced labour (188).⁴²

Traditionally, critical reception of *Gulliver's Travels* has limited insight into colonial practice and discourse in three particular manners, Hawes argues: by utilizing inconsistencies in Gulliver's character across the four books to deny the underlying unity of his personhood, understood within the conventions of the nascent novel (187);⁴³ by conflating the politics of *Gulliver's Travels* with those of its author, condemning or pathologizing Swift as an individual and reducing historical interpretations of his satire to that of an individual case history (188); and by taking a narrow view of

⁴² Current estimates suggest that the number people forced into slavery during the Atlantic slave trade is as high as 12 million people. See Segal, *The Black Diaspora*, 4.

⁴³ This is a persistent argument that I have found circulating as late as 2001, when Hermann Real, in "The Structure of Gulliver's Travels," argues that "Gulliver does not develop at all; he simply changes" (286). Real also commits the second "sin" on Hawes' list, arguing that *Gulliver's Travels* is about "history, in particular the history of recent English politics and science" (290), marking him as a tempting straw-man against which to read Hawes' arguments.

history, reading scenes in *Gulliver's Travels* onto “historic” events specific to British domestic politics, such as the infighting between Tory leaders Oxford and Bolingbroke (189). To this list we may now add a neglect of the historicity of the travel writing targeted by *Gulliver's Travels*, which was deeply entwined with colonial practice in the Age of Discovery.

Although I do not believe Hawes’ polarizing rules can be applied without exception across the board, I do accept two fundamental premises of his argument: that “the cultural representation of ‘history’ in a strong sense — as European colonialism — also offers a possible explanation for the reception of *Gulliver's Travels*” and that residual elements of European colonial culture “foreclose the colonial dialectic on which the full satiric effect of the book depends” (189). This offers a compelling explanation for the widespread critical neglect of the relationship between *Gulliver's Travels* and travel writing outlined in the first chapter. Knowles, along with Bonner, Rogers, and Frantz, seems to “domesticate” the text in the second manner named by Hawes: by conflating the politics of the *Gulliver's Travels* with those of its author. More problematically, Knowles also reads *Gulliver's Travels* as a critique of domestic British politics in exactly the way Hawes describes, which explains both his failure to take his discussion of travel writing in *Gulliver's Travels* to its logical conclusion as well as the notable absence of the term “colonialism” and its analogues in the index of his book. In somewhat less contentious terms, one might say that it is Knowles’ focus on “history in the weak sense” that constrains his conclusions, as his scope for “history” remains too narrowly within the realm of British politics — a charge that I will extend, with several caveats, to Hawes’ reading of *Gulliver's Travels* as well.

Hawes’ own analysis of *Gulliver's Travels* locates the work specifically within and as a response to colonial discourse, establishing thematic parallels between Swift’s work and travel writing that supported slavery and colonialism in Swift’s era. “In support of this process, an institutionalized discourse of the ‘Other’ necessarily arose, a discourse with the political agenda of colonization. This colonial discourse implicated, in a new way, travel literature, adventure novels, illustration, ethnography, cartography, and science: that is, many of the particular targets of Swift’s

satire,” Hawes writes (188). This claim is supported by Michael Omi and Howard Winant, who trace the originary moment of modern racial discourse back to Columbus’ finding and appropriation of the Americas. This was “not simply an epochal historical event — however unparalleled in its importance. It was also the advent of a consolidated social structure of exploitation, appropriation, domination. Its representation, first in religious terms, but soon enough in scientific and political ones, initiated modern racial awareness” (Omi and Winant 62). Hawes’ primary concern is thus with the constitutive role that travel writing played in this emerging racial-colonial discourse, establishing what he calls “a thematic of absolute ‘Otherness’” to justify the violence and aggression directed towards peoples indigenous to Africa and the Americas. Narrative strategies that fulfill this function and which appear in both travel writing and *Gulliver’s Travels* that he considers include cannibalism (“a term so freighted with racist history that it has no application outside the discourse of European colonialism” [Hawes 190]); a “topoi of abasement,” in which the Other is portrayed as debasing themselves before the superior European; and a “topos of display,” derived from supposedly “ethnological” exhibitions in which “unusual” human beings were displayed like zoo animals across Europe from the 16th to 20th centuries (191).

Among the many examples Hawes provides in support of his argument, Thomas Herbert’s work in particular stands out as a paragon of colonial texts. Descriptions such as those of the African peoples of Loango (““divels incarnate’ who butcher their neighbors and friends with a ‘vultures appetite’ and even proffer themselves, when ‘worne by age,’ to be ‘joynted’ and ‘set to sell upon the stalls’” [Hawes 190]), or, more notoriously, the Hottentots, whom we discussed in the first chapter, were undergirded with a number of now-stereotypically racist tropes designed to excite his readers’ imaginations in the worst possible way. “Social differentiation, such as colonial conquest demands, depends on *disgust*,” writes Hawes (192). For an unsuspecting audience without means to confirm or refute his claims, Herbert’s descriptions of African people would certainly achieve just that. From this reading, it follows that although tropes of fantastic and monstrous creatures had circulated in travel writing for centuries, they became in Swift’s time “deeply implicated in the historically

specific political project of colonialism” (190). Thus, Hawes argues, while *Gulliver’s Travels* could be read in response to tropes and conventions that harken back to classical or medieval times, the historical moment in which its critique is articulated points directly to the specific discourses of early colonialism.

Taken as such, Gulliver’s size in the first two books therefore stands as a hyperbolic figuration of colonial power, Hawes argues. In Lilliput, Gulliver is large compared to the tiny Lilliputians, enacting “all too literally, the dynamics of European encounters with non-European peoples as the West has imagined them” (197). Evidence of English technological superiority supports this: “In a classical colonial topos, Gulliver dazzles the Lilliputians with the awesome sound of his pistol: ‘The Astonishment here was much greater than the Sight of my Scymiter. Hundreds fell down as if they had been struck dead; and even the Emperor, although he stood his Ground, could not recover himself in some time’” (qtd. 197). The Lilliputian’s awe at Gulliver’s pistol then exemplifies the (European myth of) “the almost godlike power of one superior European individual over ‘lesser’ non-Western beings” (197). In Brobdingnag, on the other hand, this same attempt leads to “humiliating results. Gulliver’s expert knowledge of gunpowder and cannons — his ‘technological superiority’ — reveals... his moral inferiority” (198). Whereas Gulliver offers the king the secret of gunpowder to make him “absolute Master of the Lives, the Liberties, and the Fortunes of his People,” the King “far from being dazzled, is merely horrified,” revealing that Gulliver is himself a product of the expansionist colonial mentality (198).

For Hawes, then, *Gulliver’s Travels’* critique of colonialism operates through an ironic appropriation of colonial discourse exemplified in travel writing, redirecting ideologically charged tropes to turn them against the “wrong” object: “the middle-class Englishman” (Hawes 189). Hawes argues that the satire’s plot revolves around *Gulliver’s* colonization, which in turn “colonizes” the reader through the relationship effected through Gulliver’s first-person narration. Throughout Gulliver’s transformation, the reader “likewise undergoes an increasingly painful confrontation with

the experience of the colonized,” ultimately undermining the identity of the colonizing subject itself (189).⁴⁴

Throughout his travels, Gulliver exemplifies a number of “topoi” specific to colonial discourse, such as the “topos of exhibition” when in the second book he is treated as a “novelty” and toured almost to death for the entertainment of the Brobdingnagians. The magnified view he gleans of the “monstrous Breast” of a Brobdingnagian woman “is in reality an exemplary demystification of white skin,” attacking “a quite specific dermatological fetish, a topos that justifies colonialism in the name of the supposed aesthetic superiority of Caucasian skin, hair, and breasts” (Hawes 200-201). Most marked, says Hawes, is the “topos of assimilation,” which begins in Gulliver’s voyage to Lilliput when he immediately abandons his own cultural perspective in favour of a more Lilliputian way of seeing. This process is repeated in Brobdingnag, when Gulliver echoes the Brobdingnagian King’s description of the English as “the most pernicious Race of little odious Vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the Surface of the Earth” (qtd. 201). Rescued from that land by an English ship, Gulliver describes its sailors as “the most little contemptible Creatures I had ever beheld” (qtd. in Hawes 201). He then confesses that “while I was in the Prince’s Country, I could never endure to look in a Glass after my Eyes had been accustomed to such prodigious Objects [as the Brobdingnagians]; because the Comparison gave me so despicable a Conceit of my self” (qtd. 201-2). The tipping-point comes in the fourth book when Gulliver subtly begins describing his own people as Yahoos, a word that for the Houyhnhnms represents “all that is evil or badly made.” Its use thus “represents nothing less than the cultural dispossession of Gulliver, his alienation from his own history and origins. Gulliver is becoming more and more the object than the subject of his own story and speech” (Hawes 204). By the collection’s end, Gulliver stands out as “the victimized, radically misanthropic — and indeed, quite insane — product of repeated colonization.” Hawes argues that

⁴⁴ Except that *Gulliver’s Travels* is such a pleasure to read! Hawes’ logical leap from the protagonist’s experience to that of the reader is problematic insofar as it assumes a (necessary and) direct causal correlation between the two. This does not, however, undermine the contributions made by Hawes’ analysis and earlier conclusions.

The puzzles of Gulliver's disintegrating character and decentered voice thus belong neither to Swift's compartmentalized feelings nor to the genre of Menippean satire, but rather to *Gulliver's* narrative enactment of that violent colonial process which it so consistently and lucidly condemns. For not only is Gulliver *not* a heroic and conquering European individual, but he so lacks true autonomy of voice and thought that he can hardly be said to be an "individual" at all. (208)

This reading is highly informative and, I think, quite right in many ways, but it does not tell the whole story. Indeed, as I will elaborate below, Hawes' analysis is more or less limited to the fourth book only — meaning he quite literally does not tell "the whole story" of *Gulliver's Travels*. One crucial element underlying colonial discourse that Hawes overlooks in particular is identified by Claude Rawson in *God, Gulliver, and Genocide: Barbarism and the European Imagination, 1492-1945* (2001), which can be read in tandem with Hawes' work due to the parallel course of their arguments and the strong overlap of the examples each analyzes from *Gulliver's Travels*.

Rawson's book offers a creative, compelling, and extremely insightful analysis of the tensions between "us" and "them" expressed within the Western literary tradition, examining against a backdrop of some five hundred years of actual genocides how certain "fictional" frameworks and figures of speech authorize authors and the culture of which they are a part to entertain the extermination of a "savage" Other within and without. Often more descriptive than analytical, and sometimes frustratingly repetitive in detailing plot points which serve to connect tropes and images across texts separated sometimes by centuries (e.g. the discoverer's lust for gold [23], native peoples frightened off by gunpowder [63], long, low-hanging breasts [99], and bestialization of the Hottentots [108]), Rawson offers surprising connections across a range of thinkers and historical actors, spanning from Columbus's landing in the Americas to the end of the second World War.

Like Hawes, Rawson examines tropes circulating within colonial-era European travel writing for their role in constructing these Others, but looks to the underlying twin-concepts of the "civilized" and the "savage" upon which the racial-colonial discourse depended. Together, these concepts form the *antagonism* (although Rawson does not label it as such) between the European Self and his non-European Other, expressed as a difference between "civilization" and its radical

lack.⁴⁵ Denigrating descriptions of African peoples such as those by Thomas Herbert, which are central to Hawes' thesis, therefore not only justified torture, murder, and slavery for the Europeans, but were also instrumental in the formation of the European identity itself. Thus, whereas Hawes reads topoi of the Other as inherently *political*, Rawson's analysis also includes their *cultural* foundations and formulations: they are expressions of the antagonism by which the European defines himself against non-European Others, the myths of the "savage" Other created by the "civilized" European explorers.⁴⁶

Rawson, like Frantz before him, sees the figure of the Yahoo in *Gulliver's Travels* as embodying the stereotypical "savage" and his own work as a "study of the Yahoo stereotype in the European imagination" (11). The Yahoos are "Swift's version of what we have sometimes chosen to call 'the other,' whom we distinguish from ourselves and whose all too probable kinship with ourselves has always disturbed our consciousness, as well as our conscience" (3). *Gulliver's Travels* makes an ideal work for such a study, he argues, "not only because of the exceptional completeness with which the Yahoo fiction anatomizes a vast range of largely unspoken and in some cases unspeakable assumptions, but also in a narrower and more specific sense, as the repository of many representative myths of the savage-civilized encounter" (11). One such "representative myth" is noted explicitly in the final pages of the fourth book when Gulliver alludes to the "easy" victory of Fernando Cortés over the Aztec Empire, infamously attributed by Michel de Montaigne to the indigenous peoples' fear of gunpowder, which became "part of the received mythology of the Amerindian conquest" (63).⁴⁷ This trope is first played out in Gulliver's voyage to Lilliput, but with sharply divergent results from those of Cortés' conquest. Loading his pistol with gunpowder only, Gulliver notes how

⁴⁵ For an elaboration of this point, see Part II Chapter 3.

⁴⁶ Although Rawson does not consider this aspect, his reading points to the *relational* character of the European identity, which has been overlooked by the scholars we have considered so far. Instances where scholars have attributed "savagery" to the traditional targets of this civilizational discourse (e.g. Moore and Frantz, as discussed in Chapter 1) reveal their complicity with the continuing aim for European ascendancy and their implicit position within the discursive terrain of the "civilized," as Hawes suggests.

⁴⁷ Montaigne wrote of the effects of "gunpowder, and the unfamiliar sight of bearded men on horseback, in a land where beards and horses were as unknown as explosives, so that the conquerors seemed fierce gods shaped like centaurs, and able to direct lightning which killed the native inhabitants from afar" (qtd. in Rawson 63). A highly Greek-mythological reading to my ears.

“I first cautioned the emperor not to be afraid, and then I let it off in the air. The astonishment here was much greater than at the sight of the scimitar. Hundreds fell down as if they had been struck dead; and even the emperor, although he stood his ground, could not recover himself for some time” (qtd. in Rawson 64). His shock, however, quickly passes, as Gulliver hands off both his pistol and timepiece in a gesture of subservience to the emperor. In Brobdingnag, when Gulliver again tries using the power of gunpowder to impress his audience, Gulliver’s own morality comes into question as the King listens in horror to his plan for destroying the Brobdingnagians’ enemies. The scene is again repeated in Houyhnhnm Land, but with “a significant darkening of the moral landscape” as Gulliver’s disturbing fascination with the explosive force of gunpowder becomes clear (64).

Assuring his disbelieving master of the carnage unleashed by his countrymen in war, Gulliver describes with some relish an occasion when he “had seen them blow up a Hundred Enemies at once in a Siege, and as many in a Ship; and beheld the dead Bodies drop down in Pieces from the Clouds, *to the great Diversion of all the Spectators*” (qtd. 68). Such scenes are for Rawson the “expression of a radical human depravity... an exposure of human cruelty wider than, if inclusive of, such conquests” (69), which together undermine the myth of European moral superiority over the “savage” Others.⁴⁸

More broadly, Rawson argues that the final aim of Swift’s project is “to bring his ‘civilized’ compatriots into an unsettling equivalence with the ‘savages,’ so that the European conqueror or English settler is just as Yahoo as the Yahoos of the bush or bog” in order to “rub in the incriminating resemblance with our despised subgroup” (5). In Gulliver’s descriptions of the Yahoos, Rawson finds depictions of a radical Other, which nevertheless suggest that the Yahoos represent “us” as well. Through skillfully contrived ambiguity, Gulliver’s earliest descriptions of these beings

⁴⁸ Gulliver’s concern for the Amerindian conquest is further evinced in his “angry, sweeping summation” against the doctrine of Discovery at the end of Book IV, for which Rawson finds a prototype in Bartolome de Las Casas’ *Brevisima Relacion* (or, as it was titled in English: *Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*), published in 1552, translated to English in 1583, and included in the 4th volume of *Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1625), which Swift owned. Rallying against the Spanish atrocities in the Americas, Las Casa’s work “contains several summary portrayals stressing large-scale extermination and depredation, towns, provinces, and kingdoms destroyed, the degenerate and reprobate character of the invaders, their greed for gold, [and] their cruelty to gentle and innocent native populations” (Rawson 18).

intimate a bestial nature by pointing to the *absence* of animal features: “Their Heads and Breasts were covered with a thick Hair... but the rest of their Bodies were bare.” And, like all humans, “They had no Tails ... and often stood on their hind Feet” (Swift 334; pt. 4, ch. 1). Suggestion of their difference is furthered even when Gulliver realizes that the Yahoos are indeed humans, describing the Yahoo before him as “a perfect human figure: the face of it indeed was flat and broad, the nose depressed, the lips large” — “differences” which he says “are common to all savage nations” (qtd. in Rawson 97). Such “differences” were indeed those commonly *attributed* by the English to those groups they described as “savage.” Tropes such as the “flat noses” and long, low-hanging breasts were notoriously attributed by the English to African peoples such as the Hottentots,⁴⁹ but also to the “bog Irish” in the sixteenth century, who from then on were called “Indians” (Rawson 3). This term, as is more commonly known, was also applied to the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, whose “savagery” the Irish were said to closely resemble (9). There was thus a close equation made by the English between the Irish, the south-western African, and the Indigenous American peoples, all of whom represented the “not us” of British travel writing.

In descriptions of the Yahoos, however, Rawson notes a “teasing slippage between what is true of savages and what is generic to human kind” (96), since Gulliver’s descriptions of the Yahoo physiology do depict, after all, what is in his own words “a perfect human figure.” Moreover, Gulliver’s characterization of the Yahoos as “the most filthy, noisome, and deformed Animal which Nature ever produced ... the most restive and indocible, mischievous and malicious...” (qtd. 263) describes a form of group-character rather than any actual transgression. In fact, the “worst” of the Yahoo’s trespasses (that “they would privately suck the Teats of the Houyhnhnm cows” or “kill and devour [the Houyhnhnms’] Cats, trample down their Oats and Grass... and commit a Thousand other Extravagancies” (qtd. 263) suggests that they are more of a domestic nuisance than some form of radical evil. It thus seems to Rawson that “for all their repulsiveness... there is a disproportion in their contemplated punishment [by the Houyhnhnms], which suggests that *their depravity is less in*

⁴⁹ See Part I Chapter 1 for discussion of European representations of the Khoikhoi (a.k.a. the Hottentots).

their doings than in the fact of their being humanoid" (263, emphasis mine). The Yahoos therefore "stand more prominently not as members of an individual race but as representatives of the human species in its most radical and degraded form" Rawson argues (238), and the fictional Houyhnhnms' proposed extermination of the Yahoos enacts the historically reoccurring "human slaughter of rejected human groups" (260).

In their position as a persecuted human subgroup, then, the Yahoos therefore also represent, by extension, the "harmless People" of Gulliver's anti-colonial speech at the end of Book IV (Rawson 23).⁵⁰ Rawson's close-reading of this passage shows him at peak form:

[The passage,] with its strong charge of indignation at brutal invaders and its animated rendering of their cruelties, shows the 'harmless people' as having very little identity. They are recessive and somewhat lifeless figures, with almost no characteristics other than their harmlessness. They are not once shown doing anything, if you exclude a personal reference to the kindness with which they entertain their invaders. And even that is represented, grammatically, in the passive voice, so that the focus is all on the invaders, who *are entertained* with kindness, rather than on the invaded who do the entertaining. All active verbs relate to the invaders.... (21-22)

We see, then, that the "harmless people" appear only through the Discoverer's lens, just as the Yahoos appear only through Gulliver's narration and the Houyhnhnms' transcribed descriptions. Rawson notes that the grammatical structure of the passage was "designed to insinuate less the virtue of the natives than the viciousness of their tormentors" and that "there is an inescapable sense that the victims' decency and harmlessness are only introduced in order to intensify our perception of that viciousness" (21-22). But we can see that the reverse is also true: just as depictions of the viciousness of the Discoverer depend upon perceptions of the harmlessness of the conquered peoples in *Gulliver's Travels*, so too do depictions of the "savagery" of Othered peoples depend upon the perceptions of the harmlessness of the Discoverer in travel writing. Deconstructing this rhetorical device disables an "innocent" reading of travel writing by undermining the antagonism that constructs the "savage" through its hierarchical opposition to the "civilized" counterpart. Moreover,

⁵⁰ This passage has already been discussed and quoted at length in the previous chapter. As we proceed it will become clear that the passage, which was more or less ignored for centuries, is key to understanding the broadly historical implications of Swift's satire.

the “offenses” of the Yahoos throughout the fourth book are trivial compared to those of the Discoverers of the final passage, suggesting that the “civilizing” mission of the Discoverer makes them far worse than the “savages” they have come to “civilize.” In this sense, the Discoverer is the morally bankrupt “savage” he deplors.

Like Hawes, Rawson makes an insightful addition to critical debates surrounding *Gulliver's Travels*, but focuses too particularly on a single issue and so misses the bigger picture. Hawes' focus on colonialism is highly important, but unfortunately relies on too constrained a reading of travel writing and the contexts in which travel works were written. Firstly, colonialism itself extended well beyond England; rooted chiefly in the Iberian peninsula in the late middle ages, it then became a quintessentially European doctrine, which included but was not limited to the English.⁵¹ In a similar vein, Hawes' focus solely on *English* travel works also neglects the transnational movements of travel writing. “No estimate of the effects and methods of travel-writers in this period [1660-1800] can be satisfactory if they are considered on a national basis only,” writes Percy Adams, providing multiple examples of travel-writers immersed more in the travel writing of other countries than of their own, and of editors drawing as much from one nationality of author as from another. “There is no literature more international than voyage literature,” he argues (236). An analysis of travel writing must therefore get at the global character of these writings, and the global impact of colonialism, which Hawes does not do. Secondly, although Hawes correctly identifies the historical transformation of the “tropes of fantastic and monstrous creatures which had circulated in travel writing for centuries,” which in Swift's time became “deeply implicated in the historically specific political project of colonialism,” he does not note that this historical transformation came about from the circumnavigation of the globe and subsequent discovery of the Americas by European travellers. As Helga Quadflieg indicates, speaking directly to Jenny Mezcicms' thematic, travel writing from this era was produced

⁵¹ For a riveting history of the Mediterranean roots of modern colonialism See Fernández-Armesto, Felipe. *Exploration and Colonization*. The spread of these colonial roots to the rest of Europe will be covered in depth in Part II Chapter 2.

in a historical phase in which people's perception of the universe and the individual's time and place in this world changed in a radical way, and in which traditional systems of coherence had lost their binding force. The spatial, temporal and social co-ordinates that serve to position the individual with regard to particular systems of reference and coherence had to be redefined and adjusted to these new concepts. The writings of these Tudor and early Stuart travellers, therefore, can be analyzed not only as examples of a particular kind of colonial discourse, but also as texts that are symptomatic of the changes in the perception of the world which took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and which constitute the 'modernity' of the early modern period. (qtd. in Hooper 28)

Hawes' position is concisely summarized in his comment that "*Gulliver's Travels* remains, even today, an effective critique of colonialism in any form" (189); but it is equally true that "the critique of colonialism is a critique of the whole Age of Discovery" (Schmitt 31), as Carl Schmitt argues.

Hawes clearly falls short of such a wide scope, and therefore offers only a partial reading of *Gulliver's Travels* — one that was long overdue in its publication, but partial nonetheless. Rawson similarly focuses too narrowly upon the Civilized/Savage antagonism, examining thematic relations between tropes that exemplify this relation rather than analyzing their broader historicism, beyond the fact of their production within a given range of dates. This is, of course, understandable given the conceit of his analysis (on genocide), but the fact remains that while Rawson connects a wide range of tropes separated by centuries before and after Swift's time, he does not consider the significance of the historical period that unites them.

For both Hawes and Rawson, the constraints of their analysis lead to a highly limited reading of *Gulliver's Travels*, which is perfectly demonstrated by the fact that both authors focus almost entirely on the fourth book and only trivially on the rest of the collection. As I will show in the second part of this thesis, they cannot account for the entire collection of *Gulliver's Travels* because they do not account for the entire historical context in which it emerged. As historically significant as the onset of an expansive, industrialized slavery, or of the specific genocides committed by Europeans against Indigenous American peoples, is the fact that for 200 years before and after Swift's time, European hegemony shaped the world history and the global order. Slavery and several genocides emerged within (and were frequently justified by) a European hegemonic order that depended upon the Civilized/Savage antagonism and that defined the historical epoch in which it

obtained. Hawes' and Rawson's sole focus on the fourth book of *Gulliver's Travels* and thematics of colonialism and Othering preclude consideration of these underlying conditions and, thus, a full characterization of the historical epoch in which each emerged: the Age of Discovery. To extend this picture and wrap up our genealogy, we will now turn to scholars who locate *Gulliver's Travels* specifically in this Age.

Part I: A Genealogy of Travel Writing and *Gulliver's Travels*

Chapter 7: *Gulliver's Travels* in the Age of Discovery

Two authors that read *Gulliver's Travels* specifically in the context of the Age of Discovery are Anna Neill in *British Discovery Literature and the Rise of Global Commerce* (2002) and Danielle Spratt in “Gulliver’s Economized Body: Colonial Projects and the *Lusus Naturae* in the Travels” (2012). Neill’s work focuses on the ways English travel narratives constructed the Otherness of peoples encountered abroad to support the movement of capital across the globe. Among the narratives surveyed are such early modern luminaries as William Dampier, Jonathan Swift, Daniel Defoe, William Bligh, and James Cook, whose works Neill sees as representing “something like a ‘canon’ in studies of eighteenth century British discovery literature” (Neill 29). Spratt’s essay shares Neill’s economic preoccupations, arguing that *Gulliver's Travels* can be read as a critique of the dehumanizing colonial-economic logic typified by projectors of the 18th century. Unlike Neill, however, Spratt argues that Swift’s economic concern is not with the movement of capital, but with the creation, control, and circulation of human populations between colonized and colonizing nations. For Spratt, the commodities with which *Gulliver's Travels* is concerned in particular are not raw resources or manufactured goods, but rather “living and usually human bodies” (Spratt 138). The “economic plans” outlined by Gulliver at various moments throughout his tales thus reflect the emergent field of demographics, which included population control and which, at the time of Swift’s writing, linked economic theory with colonial practice.

While both scholars offer insightful critiques of the Euro-imperial logics operating within and across the geographic, scientific, and economic discourses critiqued by *Gulliver's Travels*, neither Neill nor Spratt attempt to theorize the commonality of this imperial constitution that reaches across such a range of discourses to ask under what conditions this order obtains. This leads to a neglect of the role of Discovery in both *Gulliver's Travels* and in the formation of what I will argue in the second half of this thesis is an *hegemonic* order. Interestingly, both authors mention hegemony in their discussions but fail to elaborate upon the concept at all. In this chapter I will argue that, for

Neill, this is the result of two theoretical limitations that constrain her arguments: first, a form of economic determinism that assumes that the economic stratum governs, “in the last instance,” all other socio-historical processes; and, second, a dependence upon English national paradigms that unnecessarily limits the scope of her considerations. These limitations inhibit Neill’s attention to the full historical significance and international reach of *Discovery* in a newly global context, leading her to neglect the broader hegemonic order in which England participated, and, therefore, to the broader range of discursive practices with which *Gulliver’s Travels* is concerned. In Spratt’s discussion, the concept of hegemony is mentioned early on but then abandoned altogether, even as the author implicitly recognizes that *Gulliver’s Travels* critiques the moments of what is an otherwise unspecified hegemonic order. As I will show, both Neill and Spratt privilege the author of the text and other works from his oeuvre to situate their analysis of *Gulliver’s Travels* within a broader historical context. Utilizing Swift’s personal associations and authorial intentions this way leads them to project external elements onto the text in their readings, misleading and constraining their analyses in similar ways. Both authors, I will show, ascribe all agency to Swift rather than to a logic internal to *Gulliver’s Travels*, leading to conclusions that conflate the politics of the text with those of its author.

Despite my emphasis these limitations here, Neill’s richly textured book provides a particularly powerful and sagacious reading of *Gulliver’s Travels* that shows careful attention to the social, political, and philosophical conditions specific to the age in which Swift wrote. Her work focuses on British travel narratives written during the “long eighteenth century,” from 1680 to 1800, throughout which the ascendant English nation-state exerted increasing pressure on explorers to participate in its pursuit of wealth abroad. During this time, England had centralized its economy according to the principles of balanced trade and an inflow of resources extracted from other nations and territories in an effort to gain a foothold in the nascent global economy. “Combined with a centralization of *power* in the state after the Reformation, this emphasis on the accumulation of the nation’s treasure elevated commerce from a local to a national concern,” she writes (4). This commercial endeavour was

supported and justified by a scientific discourse that maintained a viciously pro-European conception of human nature to the detriment of non-Europeans and a geographic discourse that produced a seemingly homogeneous global space to open up new avenues for trade with previously unknown and isolated communities.

Neill's concern is thus to show how representations of culture and cultural difference in British maritime travel writing were bound up with the expansion of national economic interests across the globe and the ways these narratives challenged or contributed to the theories of social order and development supporting England's commercial imperialism (22-23). "Travel narratives," she suggests, "may at once illustrate the powerful reach and increasing sophistication of nascent global capitalism and the 'civilized' world, and at the same time animate a certain kind of countermodernity; one in which the very experience of increased mobility and exposure to the non-European world creates new social identities and forms of behaviour that are anathematic to commercial imperialism" (2-3).⁵² In their published narratives of encounters with previously unknown peoples from non-European lands, travellers addressing questions about these peoples' modes of subsistence, social organization, and forms of governance often reified arguments by social theorists such as Hugo Grotius, Samuel von Pufendorf, and John Locke, who suggested that, "according to the laws of nature, human beings will form settled communities, cultivate land, create private property, and contract to obey laws and governments in order to protect that property" (12). Travellers' observations about the particularities of these non-European peoples were thus organized into general, supposedly universal rules about the fundamental difference between those who conformed to such laws of nature (i.e. Europeans) and those who did not — a difference firmly articulated within the twin concepts of the "civilized" and the "savage" respectively.

⁵² In this, Neill's reading coincides with those of Mezciems and Knowles, who locate *Gulliver's Travels* within a long-standing debate between the "moderns" and the "ancients," representing those for commercial modernity and those for the values of old. Neill, however, takes this analysis one step further to suggest that *Gulliver's Travels* expresses "not just an anti-modern sensibility but *also a thorough critique of the globalizing technologies of mercantile capitalism*" (84, emphasis mine).

One of the most compelling aspects of Neill's argument is the way in which she positions Dampier as a foil for Gulliver and a target of Swift's text. Unlike her predecessors, Neill does not merely identify Dampier and those aspects of his writing which Gulliver subverts, but rather looks to the ways in which both writers respond to the geographic and scientific production of a "global" homogeneous conceptual space made ready for trade (89). Neill reads Dampier — a pirate and plunderer turned "man of science" turned captain of an English merchant vessel, directly representing English commercial interests (Neill 36) — as a product of his time, when England's growing concern with establishing a global economic presence led to its increasing control of overseas trade and persecution of piracy. Dampier's transition was further enabled by his own willingness to shift the focus of his travel writing, through edits and omissions, from a report of violent encounters and material riches "available" in a particular region to descriptions of the ethnographic and botanical character of foreign lands, emphasizing potential contributions to natural scientific and geographic discourses back home while denouncing the "savagery" of indigenous peoples encountered during his travels. In addition to earning official endorsement from the Royal Society (41), Dampier thus renounced his own statelessness and nomadic lifestyle in order to explicitly participate in the state's scientific-commercial endeavours.

But whereas Dampier utilizes his new-found scientific authority to escape persecution by asserting his difference from the "uncivilized" Indigenous peoples of the Americas and align himself with state interests thereby, Neill argues, Swift uses the marvellous, singular, and improbable to highlight the limits of scientific and imperial perception instead (11). In *Gulliver's Travels*, the author counters the geographical production of a global, homogenized space ready for trade through tropes of measurement in a biting critique of the spatial logic of English commercial imperialism (26). In each of the four books, Gulliver's awkward, blundering attempts to reorient himself within these environments highlight both the peculiarity of his body and the impossibility of trying to measure or describe accurately the spaces in which he finds himself (Neill 85). In this, the "monstrous bodies" produced by Gulliver's physical transformations in each book challenge the

official discourse of the state, exposing the ways in which the geographical sciences and mercantile capitalist interests Other those who remain outside the influence of global commerce. Swift's writing thus "draw[s] attention to the moments when geographers find they cannot assimilate those peoples that remain outside commercial modernity into measured global space and so construct such peoples as excessively remote, barbaric, and physically grotesque" (85). For Neill, then, the fantastical descriptions that had persisted for centuries in travel writing are specifically the construction of geographers motivated by the interests of trade. In their least threatening form, such exaggeratedly monstrous beings are the expression of a fascination with remote regions of the earth, which must remain remote in the European imagination to maintain their imaginative potential (100). Less innocuously, these figures are people so radically different from Europeans that they cannot be accommodated by the European worldview and are thus presented as barbaric and often racially-marked outsiders (90). It is for this reason, Neill argues, that only peoples and nations who fit within the purview of geographical study and demonstrate a capacity for trade were considered "worthy" by travellers; those who remained too remote or "strange" or made no sense to European markets were thus encoded within geographical space as "savages." "The result," Neill writes, "is that the social, and at times the perceived physical, characteristics of 'remote' peoples become connected to the degree of commercial civilization they have achieved" (103). Where Europeans have no significant trade appears a racially-marked outside to Western commercial-imperial discourse.

At stake here, according to Neill, is the obstacle such figures present for the movement of capital across the globe. Because geographers were dependent upon eye-witness reports from travellers that could not easily be verified, the stubbornly persistent fantastic descriptions of yore (such as "both exceedingly large and unusually small peoples in South America" or "sensational claims about giants, monsters, cannibals and necromancers" [99]) and instances of false accounts

(such as Captain Uriez's "Company's Land" which had been accepted as fact⁵³) presented a radical challenge to those with confidence in the bond between actual and conceptual space (101-103). Moreover, fantastical descriptions that could not be verified presented epistemological challenges for a geographic discourse committed to the representation of a homogeneous space, in addition to the practical challenges that such unreliable data presented for merchants and travellers navigating through new spaces. The need for reliable information from abroad therefore became all the more pressing, leading to attempts in 17th century accounts on scientific methodology to identify specific practices and guidelines for explorers to follow in their accumulation of data abroad (7). The notion of the traveller as a "collector of data" that gradually emerged, Neill argues, was formulated specifically in response to such sensational and romantic narratives, as geographers attempted to contain reports that might "challenge the mercantilist logic of a fundamental commensurability between peoples all across the world" (104). It is this tension between the mercantilist logic of a single, accessible globe and the recurring representations of "strange" and "remote" peoples and regions of the world, which continued to defy homogeneous categorization, that *Gulliver's Travels* then articulates (104).

Neill argues that, for Swift, both the identity of the traveller and the world itself are inherently unstable — a reality that his readers are forced to confront through the impossible scenarios of measurement throughout his book's four parts. Where for Dampier, "both the epistemological coherence and the national identity of the travelling subject are secured by the growing congruity of the newly 'discovered' regions of the earth," for Swift it is exactly the opposite, as Gulliver represents "an incoherent traveller-subject in an incoherent global space" (84). Gulliver tries to follow Dampier's mold by equating race, civilized achievement, and global space in his accounts (104). As Dampier does, Gulliver offers his readers an understanding of the relative condition of the

⁵³ Described in Part I Chapter 1. The example Neill actually provides here is of a map engraved by Herman Moll which was published in Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce's *New Voyages to North America*. The map, which turned out to be false, nevertheless "became a part of established geographical knowledge of North America in the eighteenth century" (Neill 103). I have deliberately substituted this example with that of Uriez's account here due to the clear analogy between the two cases, for the sake of narrative simplicity in my own work.

peoples he encounters, attempting to show how commercially and politically backward these isolated nations are and how physically repulsive are those who have not yet achieved civilized reason. Yet by the end of the tale, it is Gulliver who withdraws from contact with his countrymen and who finds his own body most negatively affected by the systematizing needs of global capital. As “fantastic and monstrous spectacle,” Neill argues, “Gulliver falls out of global space; the ‘savage pictures’ that he sends back to his English readers mark only the ‘gaps’ of his increasingly unreliable narrative and the improbable dimensions of the strange lands and peoples he describes” (104).

One significant aspect of Neill’s conclusion that I would like to challenge is that it is “systematizing needs of capital” that leads to Gulliver’s corruption and that “*Gulliver’s Travels* struggles against this triumphant colonizing of global space by merchant capital” in “a dystopic critique of the spatial logic of British commercial imperialism” (25-26). As I will argue more fully in Part II of this thesis, the spatial logic that *Gulliver’s Travels* critiques is not solely British and certainly not solely commercial-imperial; nor is the scope of *Gulliver’s Travels*’ critique limited to the machinations of mercantile capitalism. This is an argument in some ways anticipated by Hawes in 1991, when he wrote that “Swift does much more in *Gulliver*... than merely anticipate a later Tory critique of the colonial system of mercantilism” (189). To the degree that Neill extends this argument beyond mercantilism to include the supporting roles played by the geographic and physical sciences, however, she does so by quite problematically subsuming them under capital in her analysis.

Evidence of the privileged position in which Neill places commerce can be seen throughout her historical contextualization. For example, she emphasizes the state’s centralization of the economy in 16th century England, the rise of a scientific discourse serving pro-commercial nations, the “mercantilist vision” of geographic disciplines, the homogenization of global space made ready for trade, and so on. This is, of course, because her stated concern is with the connection between cultural representations in English travel writing and the global expansion of national economic interests in the early modern period, but there are several ways that this is more than merely rhetorical posturing. First is her (mis)attribution of certain tropes appearing in *Gulliver’s Travels* to

an economic logic, as in her argument that it is “geography’s very anxiety about the uncharted ‘gaps’ where Europeans have no significant trade that constructs a racially marked outsider to the great society of commercial peoples.” She continues that “unusual customs, unfamiliar needs, and human bodies attuned to their environments *in ways that make no sense to European markets* become (in the vocabulary of geographical study) ‘brutish,’ ‘idolatrous,’ ‘bestial,’ ‘ignorant,’ ‘slothful,’ ‘cruel’ and ‘savage’” (103, emphasis mine). In the last chapter, however, I outlined at length Hawes’ illustration of the ways such Othering operated in racial-colonial discourses attempting to justify the violence and aggression directed towards peoples indigenous to Africa and the Americas. We also reviewed Rawson’s establishment of the structural role played by the twin concepts of the “Civilized” and the “Savage” in the European construction of the Self against non-European Others. Although Neill presents compelling evidence to link geography, the sciences, and racial-colonial discourse with trade in this epoch, it is clear that mercantilism specifically, or commerce generally, is insufficient to explain all the contemporaneous practices of racial formation.

The second symptom of the misplaced theoretical primacy of capital is the way Neill must *displace* other historical elements from the scope of her consideration to maintain emphasis on commerce. In her argument establishing geography as “belong[ing] to an essentially mercantilist vision,” for instance, Neill suggests that “map making in particular... was coterminous with commercial expansion during the early modern period. From the sixteenth century onwards, maps of the east as well as of the new colonies in the west often included representation of the lucrative commodities to be found in the region, and were frequently drawn so as to emphasize points of commercial significance rather than conquered or desirable territories.” She then acknowledges that “at the same time, of course, the acquisition of colonies did combine commercial and imperial ambitions, and cartography provided data that served *both the imperial archive and the centralized state*” and that maps “performed a public [as opposed to a private, mercantile] function, illustrating and legitimizing empire; at other times they served as sources of military intelligence” (86-87, my italics). Here we see acknowledgment of a horizontal relationship between commercial, imperial, and

military discourses, which Neill then reverses on the next page, when she writes that atlases from the 16th and 17th centuries document the “aggressive designs of sovereign states” in addition to “natural-historical, ethnographic, and *above all* commercial [relations]” (87, emphasis mine). My question is: why should commercial relations be considered “above all” in the Age of Discovery, let alone in a reading of *Gulliver’s Travels*? Even if we accept Benedict Anderson’s suggestion that global imperialism was “made possible by the achievements of industrial capitalism” (139), it does not follow that global imperialism and the full gamut of cultural, social, and political processes entwined with the imperial agenda can be explained by the movements of capital. An argument for such economic determinism would be partial at best, and reductive at worst.⁵⁴

In Neill’s case, I would argue that her analysis is, quite significantly, only *partial*. Consider as a further example when she notes how Discovery *and* trade unify spatial relationships in the production of a “global space,” but then emphasizes only “the integrating power of merchant capital” in the paragraph’s concluding sentence: “The reader of a geography is able to grasp the world in its entirety, a world whose coherence is determined by the great variety of commodities that *discovery and trade* have brought to his doorstep. Unlike the country estate landscaped to suit the single perspective of the landowner, the globe is made visible to any consuming eye by *the integrating power of merchant capital*” (91, emphasis mine). This is an odd conclusion to reach considering that Neill does explicitly acknowledge that *Gulliver’s Travels* takes place in the “age of discovery” (95).⁵⁵ One reason for the apparent emphasis on commerce and subsequent neglect of the full significance of Discovery is that Neill conflates colonial and mercantile interests in service of her book’s wider

⁵⁴ See Laclau and Mouffe (66-75) for a critique of this practice within Marxist discourse. They argue “that the space of the economy is itself structured as a political space, and that in it, as in any other ‘level’ of society, those practices we characterized as hegemonic are fully operative” (67). Neill’s argument very clearly works within what they identify as the “economist paradigm,” which accords economic relations with a necessity that pervades all other social formations.

⁵⁵ Full quote: “Geography is caught in a paradox: it must isolate the four major regions of the globe in order to identify the important climatic, historical and cultural differences that are so important to scientific investigation in the *age of discovery*, and at the same time represent the increasing integration of these four ‘quarters’ of the globe as the number of goods available for foreign and colonial trade is growing and the means of transporting them improving” (95-97, emphasis mine).

argument, leading her to neglect the thematic significance of land appropriations in *Gulliver's Travels*.

Where Neill does note instances of Discovery, she reads the term only as denoting “exploration” or as a form of *scientific* discovery. There is one occasion when it seems plausible that she could be using the term Discovery to denote “land appropriation” — in her observation that mapmakers “issued numerous atlases and geographical *works that recorded discoveries and boundary changes* in both the new and old worlds of which neither kings nor merchants could afford to be ignorant” (86, emphasis mine) — because of the conjunction of discovery and territorial boundary changes. All other uses of the term, however, indicate that Neill makes a clear distinction between “discoveries” and the establishment of territorial boundaries, such as when she notes that “*the discovery and possession of the new world is coterminous with a scientific globalism*” (10, emphasis mine). Here we see quite clearly that, for Neill, the “discovery” of the Americas is not equivalent to the subsequent appropriation of those lands. It is for Neill, therefore, a form of “finding” only.

It is with Neill’s use of a partial definition of “discovery” in mind that we can explain her misreading of a passage from the introduction of Awnsham and Churchill’s *Collections of Voyages and Travels* (1704), which she sees as exemplary of “the focus on the movement of consumable goods through global space” among collections of travel writing at the time:

Geography and hydrography have received some perfection by the pains of so many mariners and travellers ... Natural and moral history is embellished with the most beneficial increase of so many thousands of plants it had never before received, so many drugs and spices, such variety of beasts, birds, and fishes, such rarities in minerals, mountains and waters, such unaccountable diversity of climates and men, and in them of complexions, tempers, habits, manners, politicks, and religions; Trade is raised to the highest pitch, each part of the world supplying the other with what it wants, and bringing home what is accounted most precious and valuable... To conclude, the empire of Europe is now extended to the utmost bounds of the earth, where several of its nations have conquests and colonies ... drawn from the labours of those, who expose themselves to the dangers of the vast ocean, and of unknown nations... Whilst the rest of mankind, in their accounts, without stirring a foot, compass the earth and seas, visit all countries and converse with all nations. (qtd. 97-98)

Here trade is stated by Awnsham and Churchill as but one of the benefits of European global explorations, along with improvements in attendant technologies, advancement of natural and moral histories, access to a dizzying array of peoples, creatures, and things, and so on. Yet Neill writes that this passage “*puts the sciences of discovery at the service of trade*” (97, emphasis mine) and that it is thus “the commercial penetration of Europe into all parts of the globe [that] has enabled Englishmen to converse with other peoples” (98). From this it can only follow that the “extension” of the European Empire “to the utmost bounds of the Earth” described by Awnsham and Churchill — which results from the geographic exploration of the globe and subsequent appropriation of territories found — was done in service of trade as well. Europe’s various “conquests and colonies” are, for Neill, just one aspect of this “commercial penetration,” and it is for her “the mercantilist investment in geography” that makes explorers “the eyes and feet of history” (98). For Neill, then, Discovery is merely a form of exploration; exploration operates in service of commerce; and the “conquests and colonies” of Europe are, therefore, just another form of commerce — an acquisition of commodities, as it were. We may therefore conclude that Neill conflates colonial and commercial interests in her arguments, both of which are represented in her use of the term Discovery, but only one of which is explicitly accounted for in her theorization and subsequent analysis of *Gulliver's Travels*.

This neglect raises questions that cut to the heart of the problem with Neill’s analysis of *Gulliver's Travels*. Earlier I noted Neill’s claim that “for Dampier ... both the epistemological coherence and the national identity of the travelling subject are secured by the growing congruity of the newly ‘discovered’ regions of the earth,” whereas Gulliver represents “an incoherent traveller-subject in an incoherent global space” (84). Why, though, does the exploration and appropriation of new lands secure the traveller’s identity? And what role do they play in constituting “a world that can be comprehended as a hierarchically ordered whole”? Neill points to the *spatial logic* of geography and scientific discourse in her argument that *Gulliver's Travels* responds to “the ways in which knowledge about places and peoples across the world is spatially arranged” (15) and

to the “mercantilist logic of a fundamental incommensurability between peoples all across the world” (103), but geography, scientific discourse, and a nascent capitalist order are alone insufficient to explain what is in effect a global *hegemonic* order. Clearly, the conditions under which these discourses coalesced have yet to be fully elucidated.

The concept of hegemony does appear, albeit briefly, in Spratt’s potent but curiously unwarranted conclusion regarding the targets of *Gulliver's Travels*. She writes that “by virtue of its generic aims, one that links the individual with society, as well as scientific practice with governmental policy, Swift’s satire exposes the relationship between economic, scientific, and colonial modes of hegemony” (Spratt 152). I call this curious specifically because there is no reflection whatsoever on the question of how *Gulliver's Travels* “links the individual with society” nor on the hegemonic modality that Spratt here identifies. Regarding the former, it is presumably Swift’s adoption of the language of economic discourse, which “the political climate of the time made ... commonplace” (140), or the allusions to contemporary events made throughout *Gulliver's Travels*, such as the “mention of the creation of a new servant class” in Part IV, which Spratt suggests would have “had an important resonance for readers knowledgeable of the dire situation of Ireland in the 1720s” (150). Yet the mechanisms by which the text mediates the relationship between the individual reader and the social order of which they are (or are not) a part is taken entirely for granted. So too with the hegemonic relations identified. Spratt here recognizes that there is an hegemonic order in which these discourses obtain and that *Gulliver's Travels* was written with this order in mind, targeting specific elements within its discursive terrain, yet she does not name this order nor define its parameters.

Other than the aforementioned omissions, Spratt’s reading is a creative and rather astute form of conjectural criticism that postulates that “by viewing Gulliver as an economic projector in line with the modest proposer [in Swift’s *Modest Proposal*] and the Drapier [in *Drapier's Letters*] we gain a fuller understanding of the particular economic and colonial concerns of the *Travels*” (138). Spratt argues that Swift depicts this colonial-economic logic on Gulliver’s body: “forcefully moved,

scientifically examined, and sexually commodified” throughout the book’s four parts, Gulliver’s body mirrors his own economic-scientific theories, “making him both a culprit and a victim of colonial practices” (139). Gulliver’s is thus an “economized body” that “becomes objectified, animalized, and ultimately ostracized, making him neither human nor animal but rather what the scientific projectors in Book 2 call *lusus naturae*: a ‘freak of nature’” (139). His transformation thus effects what Spratt argues is the “moral lesson inherent to the *Travels*’ message: to enact economic theory on whole populations for the sake of colonial aims is at once to brutalize the population and, in turn, to make the projector a monster” (139). Problematically, however, Spratt is only able to gain this understanding by utilizing Swift’s Irish writings to situate her analysis of *Gulliver’s Travels* in the early 18th century and by privileging a reconstruction of his authorial intention to facilitate her reading. In effect, as I will show below, she privileges Swift’s position as author in a manner that ultimately constrains and misleads her argument regarding his work.

Attending to the animal imagery in the book’s first two parts, Spratt takes a page from the work of Sir William Petty, a Royal Society Fellow known to Swift (140), to establish the representative language of bestialization as a form of economic logic. For instance, in Part II, Gulliver’s body is commodified and objectified when the King and his “three great scholars” debate the nature of Gulliver’s being, ultimately determining him to be “neither a human or an animal, but rather a ‘*lusus naturae*,’ or ‘freak of nature’” (Spratt 145). This conclusion gives the King licence to control Gulliver through a breeding program similar to one that Gulliver himself proposed for the miniature animals he takes home from Lilliput, using “scientific methods of agriculture and husbandry not to improve society but to create spectacle and further material evidence of the luxury of the court” (145). In this Spratt hears an echo of the language used by Petty to describe “the importance of breeding the masses [of colonial subjects] for the benefit of England” (145), which Gulliver later parrots in his own apathetic descriptions of the British Empire, its wars, and its colonial expansion. Later on in Part IV, the sexual advances of a young, female Yahoo threaten Gulliver’s ability to distinguish himself from such “abominable animals,” and he turns to the

language of economic theory to manage the situation, leading him to “[recommend] the domination and slow extermination of the yahoo race through another form of population control” (148). For Spratt, “like the language of breeding, the language of population control through forms of mass extermination is explicit in much of Petty’s writing” (149). His works also “are occasionally punctuated by discourses of how the obliteration of the Irish people and culture would facilitate the economic growth of England” (149). This “solution” for the “Yahoo problem” proposed by the Houyhnhnms — to decimate and reduce to servitude the population through techniques originating from animal husbandry — reflects English practices in the New World, argues Spratt. It also echoes the colonialist push in the late 17th and early 18th centuries for the use of forced-migration as a colonial tool, in which a servant (read: slave) class would be artificially created and transported to the colonies to fill gaps created by migrating Irish labourers (149-150). In this light, Spratt sees Gulliver’s “project” to reform the Yahoos of England by transporting the Houyhnhnms as a means of “civilizing” Europe as one of Swift’s most subtle examples of how economic theory objectifies colonial subjects and commodifies their bodies “for the good of the nation” (151).

To frame her reading of *Gulliver's Travels* and to establish her economic argument regarding the targets of the text, however, Spratt locates *Gulliver's Travels* within the context of Swift’s “decade-long concentration on Ireland’s financial affairs,” during which he also authored *A Proposal for the Use of Irish Manufacture* (1720), *The Drapier’s Letters* (1724-5), and *A Modest Proposal* (1729). Such an approach seems all the more warranted by the fact that *The Drapier Letters* and *Gulliver’s Travels* were written concurrently, with a clear thematic parallel between the political struggles of the people of Lindalino in Part III of *Gulliver's Travels* and the strategies proposed by Drapier over the course of his seven letters (138). Part IV of *Gulliver's Travels*, in which Gulliver uses baby Yahoo skins to construct sails for his canoe, also anticipates the “modest proposal” to end Irish poverty by selling their young to the rich (138). Spratt therefore locates *Gulliver's Travels* within Swift’s broader concern for the colonial-economic logic shown by England towards *Ireland*. “The subject of Ireland’s economy pulses through Jonathan Swift’s writings of the 1720s,” the first

sentence of her essay states (137). Later she concludes that “through his outrageous depictions of Gulliver’s alternately commodified, animalized, and disenfranchised body, Swift creates a text that works to question the moral and practical implications of colonial sciences’ problematic relationship with Irish society” (152, emphasis mine). But while this colonial relationship between England and Ireland certainly does appear as one clear target of the text, it seems erroneous to read this particular conceit as *the* target of *Gulliver’s Travels*, as Spratt has done here. The link between the metaphor of Gulliver’s psychological transformation and colonial practice, for instance, has been clearly established by now; but to limit interpretation of this to Irish-English colonial relations narrows the identified target of the text unnecessarily. So too with the “stubbornly racist” language used to describe the Yahoos, which has been much discussed in this project and in *Gulliver’s Travels* studies more generally. As noted in the last chapter, there is strong evidence to suggest that this language was used more or less equally at different times and in different places by the British to describe Irish, south-western Africans, and Indigenous American peoples. Tropes within *Gulliver’s Travels*, including direct references to Indigenous American peoples at the end of Part IV, further support a more expansive interpretation of the work’s conceit than Spratt has offered here.

Moreover, while offering her readers a “fuller understanding of the *particular* economic and colonial concerns of the *Travels*” (138), Spratt instead gives us an extended argument about the particular concerns of *Swift*. From his Irish writings, Spratt gleans that “two common prescriptive refrains emerge as key components of *Swift’s economic theory*” (137, emphasis mine), leading her to observe that “*Swift’s economic preoccupation* is clear at the end of Book 4” (138, emphasis mine). The focus on authorial intent at times takes precedent over all else, such as when in her discussion of the binary between humans and animals in the 18th century she states that “The *Travels*, with its rational horses and servile, irrational yahoos, suggests that *Swift was well aware of this spurious divide*, and this awareness helps fuel his critique of economic and colonial logic from a broadly philosophical and moral standpoint” (140). This conflation between text and author is a practice committed by Neill as well, who similarly relies on Jonathan Swift *as author* and on other works

from his oeuvre to support her conclusions for *Gulliver's Travels*. The privilege that Neill ascribes to Swift's authorial intention is evident at surface level in a number of instances, such as when she writes that "*Swift attacks geography as fraudulent learning*" (83, emphasis mine), or that "*Swift here turns Gulliver into the grotesque savage subject of a grotesque state*" (113, emphasis mine). For Neill, *Gulliver's Travels* is therefore about "*Swift's anti-colonialism*" (85, emphasis mine), and the critic's task is "to look at how *Swift's epistemological puzzles* are responding to contemporary developments in the field of geography" (84, emphasis mine).

The deeper risk from taking such a line of analysis is a sort of pathologization of the author which emerges from the way Neill utilizes Swift's other works to ascertain and establish his intentions. "*Swift's distrust of geographical projects... is directly tied to his criticism of British mercantilist imperialism*" (emphasis mine), she writes. "An advocate of Irish self-sufficiency, conservative opponent of the financial schemes tied to merchant capital, and vicious satirist of the scientific projects that put new discoveries at the service of commercial expansion, Swift was consistently a critic of English imperial excesses" (83). As example of such criticism, Neill examines Swift's "Irish writings," including his 1724 essay, "The Truth of Maxims in State and Government Examined with Reference to Ireland" and the more notorious "A Modest Proposal" from 1729. In these works, Neill argues, the author "*articulates his disgust at the outrageous economic inequalities between imperial and colonized countries on the bodies of those whom he sees not as antagonists to global commerce, but as the most immediate victims of uneven progress*" (104, emphasis mine). *Gulliver's Travels*, she argues, "makes similar points [to those in his Irish writings] about the abuses committed by mercantile capitalism by satirizing measured space and measured differences" (106). Here it seems Neill is positing a motive for the author in writing *Gulliver's Travels* based on proclivities derived from his other works, which will then contextualize *Gulliver's Travels* for her analysis. Gulliver's story, she suggests, thus "revolves around the problem of the relationship of the travelling self to the foreign peoples 'studied' and about the improbable notion that members of different cultures can properly comprehend one another, a scepticism that is framed by *Swift's*

suspicion of the mathematical grid that commerce lays over the different regions of the world” (106, emphasis mine). Neill’s conclusion here, however, rests on a stanza taken from another of Swift’s works, his 1733 poem, “On Poetry: A Rhapsody,” which “argue[s] so directly that savagery is an invention of geography” (83).⁵⁶ From these four lines of poetry, Neill surmises the following:

Swift attacks geography as fraudulent learning, as a science that is always trying to cover the gaps and inconsistencies that it inevitably confronts by insisting on the barbarousness and barrenness of those regions about which it has little or no knowledge.... Rather than accounting for some existing geocultural reality or providing reliable documentation about the kind of human beings to be found in a continent as enormous and unexplored as Africa, Swift points out, “savage pictures” are in fact the product of a dangerous modern ambition to map the entire globe fully and systematically. (83)

Her reading of this poem then gives her further licence for interpreting the “savage” pictures in *Gulliver's Travels* as a critique of geography, which in turn supports her argument that his Irish writings indicate that *Gulliver's Travels* is a critique of the spatial logic of English imperialism. In other words, Neill’s analysis of *Gulliver's Travels* is framed by the presumption of *Swift's* distrust of geographical projects and hostility towards British mercantilist imperialism, both of which are inferred from elements external to *Gulliver's Travels* that are then read *onto* the text. Without this and his other works, however, *Gulliver's Travels* alone does not provide enough evidence to warrant her conclusion that it “explores how geography and merchant capital together create imperial and economic networks of connection between far-flung countries and cultures” (85).

For Spratt, privileging the author in this same way enables her to maintain an otherwise tenuous and questionable link with Petty, which stands alongside her presumption of Swift’s economic concerns as the second pillar of her main argument. Although the connection Spratt finds between Petty and Swift is strong enough, the one between Petty’s work and *Gulliver's Travels* is quite weak. Spratt notes early in her argument that *Gulliver's Travels* “echo[es] the logic of projectors like the seventeenth-century economist and Royal Society Fellow Sir William Petty and eighteenth-century economists such as Thomas Prior and Arthur Dobbs” (138), yet the examples of

⁵⁶The full stanza reads: “So geographers in Afric maps / With savage pictures fill their gaps / and o’er uninhabitable downs / Place elephants for want of towns” (qtd. in Neill 83).

this logic that she “hears” in *Gulliver's Travels* are from Petty only, and the connections she finds between them are for the most part questionable. Her argument for the coincidence of animal imagery in *Gulliver's Travels* and Petty’s work, for instance, seems to be exactly that — a matter of coincidence which is reified for Spratt by Swift’s personal acquaintance with Petty: “While these connotations [of “using comparisons between animals and slaves to consider power relations in human society”] of animals are at play in the *Travels*, the economic theory of Petty and other projectors also employed the metaphor of the animal. *Swift knew about Petty and his work and explicitly revealed this awareness in Modest Proposal*” (140, emphasis mine).

Spratt’s attribution to Petty’s work of the trope of the explorer taking home animals and non-European humans to breed (141) therefore feels equally implausible. Evidence of the stress Spratt puts on the connection between Swift and Petty can be seen through the significance she places on the coincidence of a single term in each of the authors’ works. From Gulliver’s statement that the king of Brobdingnag “was strongly bent to get me a woman of my own size, by whom I might propagate the breed,” Spratt makes the following argument:

Gulliver’s use of the term “breeding” to describe the king’s plan here recalls Petty’s work on developing specific populations in *A Treatise of Ireland* (1687). For example, Petty outlines the importance of breeding the masses for the benefit of England. He writes, “Of 600 People, the Sizeth Part (vizt 100) are teeming Women, which (if they were all marry’d) might bear 40 Children per Ann. (vizt) 20 more than do dye out of 600, at the rate of one out of 30; and consequently in 16 Years the Increase will be 320, making the whole 920....” (145)

The passage continues, but the parallel with *Gulliver's Travels* becomes no clearer. The only connection between this passage and the one from *Gulliver's Travels*, beyond the general topic of breeding, seems to be the connection between their respective authors. For Spratt, however, the connection is strong enough to warrant an interpretation of Gulliver’s conversation with the king of Brobdingnag, in which Gulliver “shocks him with his use of economic theory and his detached representation of wars of expansion and colonialism” as *Swift’s* suggestion “that *population science* itself is bereft of all value; it is intellectually, practically, and morally impotent” (146-147). As with Neill, we see a conflation here of economic and colonial discourse in service of the author’s

economic argument, with the colonial element playing a conveniently quiet supporting role. As we also saw with Neill, the privileging of Swift-as-author leads Spratt away from the text rather than towards it, as her conclusions rest more and more on a logic external to the text which is then read onto it. Informative as the coincidence between *Gulliver's Travels* and *Political Arithmetick* may be, Spratt's "evidence" convinces me that it is a coincidence nonetheless, and the choice of Petty as an exemplar of the type of political logic common to economic discourse at the time here only presents him a straw man against which Spratt can conveniently direct her arguments. The tenuous nature of this link compromises what is otherwise an interesting and creative argument.

For both Spratt and Neill, all agency is attributed to the author rather than to a logic internal to the text, and the politics of the text are thus conflated with the politics of the author.⁵⁷ Contextualizing *Gulliver's Travels* this way constrains the final analysis of the work and misdirects that analysis from *Gulliver's Travels* to Swift. Given this blind-sight, it is perhaps no surprise that although both Neill and Spratt focus on Gulliver's transformation and see colonialism in one form or another as the proximate cause of his transformation, each assigns theoretical primacy elsewhere. Neill subsumes the colonial elements within *Gulliver's Travels* under economics, and Spratt conjoins the two as a specifically colonial-economic logic. Neither theorizes this link, however: both take it as an historical given. As I will argue in the next chapter, the inescapability of colonial discourse in the age with which they are concerned speaks to the hegemonic position of the discourse of Discovery at the time: a relationship hinted at but not developed in either work. My own contribution to this debate will therefore establish the theoretical and political significance of Discovery in the hegemonic order of the Age of Discovery, uncovering its hitherto unmentioned role in *Gulliver's Travels* without resorting to authorial intention.

⁵⁷A practice much maligned by Clement Hawes, as discussed at length in the previous chapter. Neill's argument, which conflates the politics of *Gulliver's Travels* and its author specifically to examine the colonial thematic at play within *Gulliver's Travels*, stands as a clear exception to Hawes' argument that such practices limit insight into colonial practice and discourse. Here I take issue with it for different reasons, as will become clearer below.

Part II: Theorizing Discovery

Chapter 8: The Politics and Meanings of Discovery

At the end of his *Travels*, following his return from Houyhnhnmland in the fourth book, Gulliver confides to the reader that “I confess, it was whispered to me, that I was bound in Duty as a Subject of England, to have given in a Memorial to a Secretary of State, at my first coming over; because, whatever Lands are discovered by a Subject, belong to the Crown (Swift 438-9; pt. 4, ch. 12). In this oft-cited passage we find a particular use of the word “discovery” that, as I have shown, has drawn little direct attention from scholars over centuries of analysis. Not coincidentally, this particular meaning has also been overlooked by the Oxford English Dictionary (*OED* from here on), which offers several definitions of the term that are of interest to us here.⁵⁸

Etymologically, the noun *discovery* comes to us from the verb *to discover*. The first recorded use of this verb in English was in the 14th century, when it meant “to disclose, reveal, etc. to others or (later) to oneself; to find out.” By the late 16th century, usage came to favour those who were first in the act of finding out, when *to discover* meant “to obtain sight or knowledge of or become aware of a thing or person previously unknown or overlooked for the first time; to find out, to come to know of; to find in the course of a search or investigation” (“Discover”). The noun *discoverer* took a similar path. In the 14th century, a discoverer was “A person who or (occasionally) thing which makes known, discloses, or reveals a secret; an informer” or “A person sent out to reconnoitre or acquire information; a scout or spy” (“Discoverer”). By the 16th century, this noun acquired its contemporary meaning of “A person who finds out or discovers something previously unknown,” again privileging the first to find out.

It was around the 16th century also that the verb *to discover* took on an additional meaning, denoting “exploration, reconnaissance; an instance of this” or, more specifically, the “exploration of

⁵⁸ For the purposes of our discussion here, I have omitted from consideration those uses of the term “discovery” and its conjugates that are in no way related to the subject matter with which we are specifically concerned (i.e. travel, exploration, etc.).

a particular region, country, etc.; to explore” (“Discover”). Here we see that what began as a solely knowledge-based concept (i.e. discovery as “finding out”) later acquired a geographical element as well (i.e. discovery as “territorial exploration”) in the Age of Discovery. Interestingly, these two elements (the epistemic and the geographic) were then synthesized into the noun *discovery* around the 16th century to denote “the action of finding out or becoming aware of something for the first time; the action of being the first to find (a place)” (“Discovery”) — a usage first recorded in Hakluyt’s *Divers Voyages* (1527), which Swift may have kept in his library.⁵⁹ Each of the two clauses within this definition reveals an etymology shared with the verb, relating either to the perceptions of a knowing subject or to the undertaking of her geographical expeditions.

As an adjective, to be *discovered* in the 15th century was to be uncovered; the term connoted a person or object as “having no covering: bare.” By the 16th century, it also suggested that which “has been revealed, found out, made known, or divulged” (“Discovered”). The person or object that was discovered was, in this sense, exposed in the most vulnerable sense of the word. This element of vulnerability is more clearly expressed by the term’s use in the game of chess, where *to discover* was (and remains to this day) “to reveal (an attack, esp. check) by removing a piece which stands between the attacking piece and the piece being attacked” (“Discover”). And, therefore, *to be discovered* was to have one’s strategically valuable piece made available for attack by the opponent through the act of discovery. A “discovered attack” is thus an attack that is only revealed when an intervening piece is (re)moved. Of the piece that is implicated by the discovered attack, we may say that it has been unveiled to the attacker through the act of discovery.

Gradually, the noun found more general applications in a diverse range of fields such as geology, where in 1814 *discovery* could also mean “the finding of a mineral deposit within a particular area, esp. on the first occasion this occurs.” What continued after the Age of Discovery is a meaning of “discovery” first recorded in 1567, which denotes “the act of exposing something or

⁵⁹ There is some doubt whether it was this collection or another of Hakluyt’s that Swift owned. See Jones (31) or Chapter 2 of this work for more.

revealing something hidden or previously unseen or unknown” (“Discovery”). And, of course, a “scientific discovery” suggests precisely this. Discovery in this sense is intimately connected with knowledge, with strong emphasis on the originary moment from whence that knowledge came — hence the importance of being the discoverer who has introduced to the world that which he has discovered and the underlying significance of his claim to the discovery. To be the discoverer is to hold the title to that discovery. Afterwards we have only confirmations of what has already been discovered, since by definition the discoverer is one who has found or revealed something never found or revealed before.

The relevance of these definitions becomes immediately clearer in the context of that which is not said, since none of them explain or even intimate how a European subject’s becoming aware of lands previously unknown to them brought that land *ipso facto* into the possession of their sovereign, as Gulliver suggests. Semantic shifts over time reveal new constellations of meaning that are specific to the age with which we are concerned, indicating a strong correlation between seeking, finding, claiming, and land; but, in the *OED* definitions, the claim being made is to the *finding* of the land, not to the land itself. Notably absent here is a definition that explains Gulliver’s suggestion that it is by finding land that this land becomes claimed. Those definitions outlined above seem to suggest that the discoverer (or the sovereign he represents) has a right to the land he has found that others do not, since he found it first, and so it is the “finding first” that justifies the appropriation of that land. This could not however have been the case for the most infamous of all Discoverers, Christopher Columbus. It is common knowledge now that the lands “Discovered” by Columbus were not at all “free” when he found them; Indigenous peoples had been there for thousands of years prior to his arrival. Yet Columbus’ claim to the lands seems to hinge on his having found these lands “first.” Clearly, the Indigenous peoples did not “count” for Europeans when Columbus staked his claim and the territorial borders were being drawn up back in Europe. The preclusion of these peoples thus shows how Gulliver’s use of the term *discovery* did not pertain to its original (knowledge-based) definition during the Age of Discovery, since by definition the “first” to “find” the lands to which he

refers were its Indigenous inhabitants.⁶⁰ This shows that there is an aspect of *discovery* not included in the *OED*; or, perhaps more correctly, a particular politics of Discovery which is hidden in plain view. It is clear by now that “Discovery” in the sense that Gulliver uses it refers rather to a claim to land by some people over others. The “right” of the Discoverer to claim these lands was therefore not derived from the fact of finding lands previously unknown *simpliciter*, but from a particular order that validated for Europeans the appropriation of lands whose inhabitants had been precluded in advance.

In his 1950 book *The Nomos of the Earth*, German jurist and political theorist Carl Schmitt examines this aspect of Discovery through its historical role in such land claims beginning in the 16th century, which is not-coincidentally when the shift in meaning noted above originates. “The only justification for the great land appropriations of non-European territory by European powers,” he writes, “was discovery” (131).⁶¹ Discovery in this sense played a juridical function as a legal title that obtained only within a specific framework of European international law, the *jus publicum Europaeum*, to which we will return in chapter 10. Moreover, the spatial order supporting this framework was the product of an historical epoch in which newly emergent technologies had permitted the complete circumnavigation of the globe by European explorers, and, therefore, the actual discovery (read: finding) of lands and peoples previously unknown to Europeans. As such, Schmitt argues, “Discovery” is “not a timeless, universal, and normative concept; it is bound to a particular historical, even intellectual-historical situation: the ‘Age of Discovery’” (131) — a statement whose accuracy is intriguingly, if only partially, validated by the way the term took up and then dropped its specifically geographical element in the years encapsulated by the historical epoch Schmitt describes. Ignoring for now the question of whether there can be “timeless, universal, and normative” concepts (I would argue that there cannot, as the philosophical commitments I put

⁶⁰ To be clear, this is not a preclusion of “consideration” (i.e. an ethics) or of “recognition” (i.e. a politics of the late twentieth-century variety), but a *discursive* preclusion. This concept will be elaborated and clarified in the next chapter.

⁶¹ To escape ambiguity, I have capitalized the term “Discovery” when referring to its use as a legal title for the land appropriations of non-European territories by European powers throughout this thesis. For discussion of Discovery as legal title see Chapter 10.

forward in chapter 10 will make clear), Schmitt's statement here draws attention to the ways that language takes on meaning according to the contexts of its production and use. It is for this reason that entries in the *OED* are defined according to their use within certain contexts, since these contexts are themselves discourses, both general and specific. It is highly significant, then, that the doctrine of Discovery (as land appropriation) was invisible in common use during an historical period now known as the Age of Discovery, since this indicates that there was no clear separation between the social and political spaces in which the concept obtained.⁶²

The tradition Schmitt analyzes is that of a Western (Greco-Roman) juridical discourse, wherein it was seen as the "right" of the Discoverer to claim lands that were free for appropriation. Particularly noteworthy, however, is that by Schmitt's definition, to "appropriate land" is not only to *take* land, but also to *hold* land against others who would take it from one. "Land appropriation" in Schmitt's sense is the ability to project power across a given space — to enclose it within a domain of control and extend law across it, establishing security and order according to a particular orientation.⁶³ In this way, although he does not state it as such, the "claim" to the land belongs to those who can hold it. Similarly, within this legal tradition, the notion of a "right to land" historically "arose from overflowing migrations of peoples and campaigns of conquest and, at other times, from successful defense of a country against foreigners" (46), as Schmitt writes. The land-claim, then, is an expression of the power to impose and maintain control over a territory. This is a logic of the conqueror; one which specifies "the right of the conqueror" as such. The "right to land" in this sense is a matter of force — of the ability to project power across space in the face of others who would take that "right" away from one. On one hand, this allows us to say that acts of Discovery were not

⁶² This validates the claim by Clement Hawes that residual elements of European colonial culture had for centuries "foreclosed the colonial dialectic on which the full satiric effect of [*Gulliver's Travels*] depends" (189). See Part I Chapter 6.

⁶³ This definition of land appropriation is clearest in Schmitt's discussion of the *sea appropriations* by early sea Empires and maritime nations, whereby "security and order [was] established on the sea" (44). "The Assyrians, the Cretans, the Greeks, the Carthaginians, the Romans in the Mediterranean, the Hanseatics in the Baltic, and the British in the oceans of the world all 'appropriated the sea' in this manner," Schmitt writes (44). Whereas previously only *land* appropriations had been possible, the sea was first appropriated by those powers who became capable of establishing security and order upon it. See Schmitt (42-44) for more.

“justified” in the moral sense but *enforced* in the political or militaristic sense. On the other hand, it raises the question of how the concept of “Discovery” could obfuscate that fact, justifying the act of appropriation by diminishing it to the point of invisibility.

As shown by our discussion above, there is a radical ambiguity in the term “discovery” that neutralizes its imperial-political roots in everyday use, constituting the meaning of “discovery” as “finding” and constructing an originary moment by masking both the act of appropriation and the Indigenous inhabitants of the land. In addition to the *legal* justification of discovery, there is then a sort of *epistemic* function played by the term as well — one which results from within the metaphorical structure of the term itself. George Lakoff, an American Cognitive Linguist, argues that metaphor is a fundamental mechanism of the mind and that metaphors structure our most basic understanding of experience. The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. For instance, in a debate you take a position, attack the opponent’s claims, defend your own. This is because our concept of “debate” is metaphorically structured by the concept of war or conflict. Were the debate understood instead as a puzzle, where each side presents possible solutions, the others would not be constituted as “opponents” but, perhaps, teammates. Depicting the others as “opponents” utilizes a specific paradigm structured by metaphor that limits the perceptions and inferences that follow from it and the actions that are sanctioned by it. For example, by perceiving others in the debate as opponents, one will likely feel satisfied by “defeating” their arguments because that is how one wins a debate. And this is how the metaphor of Discovery operates: it opens and closes *discursive* possibilities that constitute specific modes of visibility.

Take the claim that “America is discovered” as an example. With “discovery” operating as a structuring metaphor, this claim has three distinct discursive possibilities that follow from the definitions outlined above: as explored, found, or revealed. If we interpret “America is discovered” as “America is explored,” then the territory explored is present in its full immediacy as that which has been explored, specifically with the purpose of observing (and, given the historical realities of exploration, documenting) its contents and inhabitants. This is suggested by two uses of the verb

explore from the 16th century: first, “to establish facts concerning, find out about (the condition or nature of something); to ascertain, find out, discover (a fact, a cause for something, etc.)” [first recorded use: 1531] and second, “to travel to or around (an uncharted or unknown area or region) for the purposes of discovery and gathering information; (later also) to go to or around (an unfamiliar place) in order to learn about it or get to know it” [first recorded use: 1577].⁶⁴ As such, the would-be discoverer is actually an *explorer* — one who has entered a space beyond the horizon of his peoples’ domain of knowledge and returned to share his observations of that space with those back home. The concern of the entire enterprise is specifically with what has been found, and there is a clear sense that the explorer approaches with uncertainty for the purpose of gaining clarity. What will be done with that knowledge upon the explorer’s return is entirely beside the point of exploration. This coincides with the meaning of the verb *to discover* as used prior to the Age of Discovery, outlined above. “Discovery” as such appears in late-medieval accounts like those of Mandeville, whose sense of wonder indicates recognition of a world beyond his own, which he as witness is tasked with recording.⁶⁵ With Columbus we see a radical difference in the way he sees the land itself, as Stephen Greenblatt points out.⁶⁶ Columbus’ “possessive gaze” is suggestive of an altogether different modality of encounter, which, I am arguing, is specific to the Age of Discovery.⁶⁷

If we interpret “America is discovered” as “America is found,” then we privilege the perspective of the Discoverer, since finding is relative to a knowing subject. Simultaneously, we assume a particular relationship between the land and the discoverer because the discoverer has a claim to it that others do not, since he found it “first.” The land, then, appears to have been “free” for the taking.⁶⁸ This interpretation further entails a *newness* of the land. Less clear is whether it is new

⁶⁴ In this modality, the exploration of land is *instrumentalized* for the purpose of appropriation, which reveals a novel articulation of exploration with land appropriation already in place by the late 16th century.

⁶⁵ See Part I chapter 5.

⁶⁶ See Part I chapter 7.

⁶⁷ One noted by Mary Louise Pratt as well: “a figure I sometimes call the ‘seeing-man’, an admittedly unfriendly label for the European male subject of European landscape discourse — he whose imperial eyes look out and possess” (7).

⁶⁸ Here my analysis aligns with Greenblatt, who notes that “According to medieval concepts of natural law, uninhabited territories become the possession of the first to discover them. We might say that Columbus’ formalism tries to make the new lands uninhabited — *terrae nullius* — by emptying out the category of the other” (60 n27).

simpliciter or new to us. *New to us* implicitly recognizes the perspective of a knowing subject without explicitly entailing whether there is a “them” inhabiting the lands discovered. The risk faced by the discoverer is the “discovery” that this relationship between the land and the knowing subject is not actually limited to him alone — that there were other knowing subjects present prior to his arrival with their own relationship to that land. The “newness” of the land to Europeans in such cases could therefore not be the basis for any claim to that land at all without a radical exclusion of the original inhabitants prior to the moment of “discovery,” else the would-be Discoverer could not be a discoverer at all, and this meaning of discovery would fit perfectly into the first (namely, exploration). The very claim of Discovery, then, suggests that the land is new *simpliciter*, designating newness as a property of the land. This connotes an absence: a continent unoccupied, without history and without culture, since “new” lands cannot contain “old” cultures. Historically, debates surrounding the Discovery of the Americas orbited precisely these two questions: whether Europeans had just such a claim to the land as Discovery suggested and whether the Indigenous inhabitants counted as a people with a culture and social order that grounded their own right to the land. Analytically, we see that the ambiguity of the concept of Discovery is here productive in limiting the possibility of recognizing knowing subjects other than the Discoverer.

“Discovery” *as a metaphor* therefore structures understanding of the land appropriation, neutralizing its specifically imperial-political origins and abstracting it away from the context in which it arose while still privileging the Discoverer through a discursive preclusion of the Discovered. The notion that Columbus had found a “new world” — a term still in use today — is thus neither accidental nor naïve and reveals the political logic that prevailed to constitute it as such. In all interpretations, this “new” land was therefore made “free” for the taking by the Discoverer. This shows that, rather than performing a “solely metaphoric” or “figurative” function, the metaphor of Discovery was and still is an active colonial logic that permeates both real and imagined worlds — a logic with which, I argue, *Gulliver’s Travels* is specifically concerned. The metaphor extends beyond the realm of the text and into the realm of social organization and human understanding.

Moreover, Discovery moves beyond the material practice of land appropriation into the symbolic structure that constituted the European social order. It is an *ordering* of place and peoples that follows a particular orientation.

This structuring function is clearest in the third meaning of “discovery,” which suggests America as *revealed* or *unveiled*. This additional aspect of *discovery* is almost a corollary of *finding*, since the act of finding must necessarily precede the revealing of that which is found. In the act of revealing, however, the land found has been made available in a way that previously it was not. There is a clear sense that some obstacle or boundary has been removed in the act of discovery; that which has been discovered in this sense has been *made* known involuntarily, leaving it uncovered, vulnerable. In this sense, it has been *unveiled*. Moreover, all agency is attributed to the Discoverer who has revealed the discovered land. This Discoverer is thus granted *a position of power* by his position *as a knowing subject*. This echoes what Greenblatt describes as Columbus’ “possessive gaze” as he overlooks the lands he claims for his sovereign, in that the “discovered” land appears *within* the horizon of the discoverer’s ontology, even as he finds it for the first time. In this action, the finding is thus erased and the land appears *a priori* within the discoverer’s discursive terrain. Through this meaning of Discovery, we see how the concept attempts to overlay the land and its inhabitants with a new meaning structure operating within a European paradigm — one that is hierarchical, exclusionary, and deeply Eurocentric in origin. The legal title of Discovery, then, can be understood as a public declaration of this discursive imposition, and the practice of re-naming Discovered territories can be said to make visible this meaning structure. That is part of the political stakes in the acknowledgement that opened this thesis that I am living and writing on the traditional territories of the Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ peoples: the colonial-era name of “Victoria” masks this fact.

To summarize, then: at the heart of the term “discovery” in the Age of Discovery is a particular politics — a discursive preclusion of those “outside” the European discourse of “what counts.” As such, the fundamentals of the European spatial order established through Discovery are also the logical

entailments of the concept itself: a *preclusion* of certain subjects that has been instrumentalized for the express purpose of appropriating land. As we have shown, however, its deployment in everyday discourse, as “discovery,” connotes a *finding* that collapses the moment of appropriation and lends an air of inevitability and neutrality to the Discoverer’s claims. What I am specifically concerned to show in this half of my project is the ways in which Discovery, while passing for a natural corollary of exploration in the reports generated by travellers throughout the Age of Discovery, (re)structured the land appropriations of non-European territories by European powers at the level of social organization and human understanding. Towards this end, I will ground my analysis of *Gulliver’s Travels* upon the three meanings of Discovery which together give the Age its name: as exploration, appropriation, and revealing/unveiling. For Part II of this thesis, I will argue that travel writing is the medium through which the act of *revealing* made the land appropriations of non-European territories by European powers possible. This will enable us to establish with greater precision the role of travel writing in the Age of Discovery and the nature of the response to such writing by *Gulliver’s Travels*.

Part II: Theorizing Discovery

Chapter 9: Exploration

This chapter represents the first of three theoretical-historical arguments on the significance of practices of “discovery” in effecting what came to be known as the Age of Discovery. In the last chapter I established the three meanings of Discovery from this historical period as exploration, appropriation, and revealing/unveiling. Here I will examine the historical significance of the European exploration of the Atlantic Ocean in the late-medieval period, showing how the move into Atlantic space was simultaneously a movement beyond the Medieval Christian conception of the world and towards a modern conception of the globe. Having established this relationship, I will then consider the impact that these explorations had on Europe as new peoples, “facts,” religions, political systems, and sources of land and wealth appeared on the European horizon, rupturing the established European worldview irreparably. I will be concerned to show throughout how the resulting dissolution of the Christian Republic and subsequent transformations in the European socio-political order set the conditions for a new hegemonic order with global aspirations, which will then form the conceit of the next chapter.

Early History: Conceiving of “The World”

Before Europe and the Atlantic, there was Rome and the *mare nostrum*. There was Jerusalem and the Black Sea. These earlier histories belong to another project, yet the conception of the world that emerged from this time shall mark the point of departure for ours. To conceive of “the world” is itself a major philosophical development in human thought and social organization. At our current historical juncture, where public discourse on globalism, global warming, and interplanetary travel is the norm, it is difficult to imagine a time before the world was known to be a globe (flat-earthers notwithstanding) and harder still to envision understandings of space and place before an idea of “the world” had formed at all. Yet there was such a time; and there was a period when this singularly formidable concept emerged and took root.

The most immediate reflection of humankind's mental image of the world comes to us through cartography, which historically has been concerned with geographic reality as often as not. Maps "suggest a way of thinking as well as a way of seeing," writes French historian Christian Jacob. "They materialize a view of the mind more than of external reality. They project an order of reason onto the world and force it to conform to a graphic rationale, a cultural grid, a conceptual geometry" (2). Here we are concerned with that phenomenological aspect of cartography: that mental image and conceptual order of the world. Early Roman cartography was notoriously pragmatic, with diagrammatic maps made for militaristic and administrative purposes, assisting travel, trade, and conquest. The round frames in which they were enshrined took on a disc-like form, which, in more current terms, might be most appropriately described as a sphere of influence or an area of interest. The lines upon these maps marked roads, resources, buildings, city centres, trade routes, resting points — all lines and forms that demarcated the inner order of the Empire and facilitated movement within or around it. The first known map of "the world" in the Western tradition comes from Anaximander (c. 610 – 546 B.C.) of Ionia (modern-day Turkey), who drew within this disc all inhabited lands known to the Ancient Greeks: Europe up top, "Libya" (as North Africa was then known) down below, and Asia to the right, with the Aegean Sea just slightly off-centre. Each of the known continents is separated from one another by some body of water — the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, the Phasis River, the Nile — and surrounded by ocean. For all intents and purposes, it is the water that here forms the boundaries of the world. Where there is no land beyond water, there is, presumably, nothing at all.

Some centuries later, Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa (c. 63 – 12 B.C.), son-in-law of the Emperor Augustus, would elaborate this work in his own *Orbis Terrarum*, which was mounted for public view in Rome and referenced by Pliny the Elder in his *Naturalis Historia* (c. 77 – 79 A.D.) (R. Knowles 9). Much of the detail included on this map was devoted to the territory encompassed by the Roman Empire, with the kingdoms of Serica, India, and Sarmatia appearing vaguely along the

periphery. Although the geographically-conceived world had expanded, it had done so only slowly and would soon contract before expanding again.

During the Christian Middle Ages, the Roman cartographic form of a disc-like earth was passed on through Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* to the church and transformed into what is now described as the T/O map, the most renowned of which was published by 7th century scholar Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologiae* (c. 600 – 625 A.D.). Visually, the “T” in the T/O map marked the intersection between the Mediterranean, the Nile, and the Tanais River, which created clear divisions between the three known continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa. Functionally, these maps and others from this time were little concerned with physical geography; the world they represented was ecclesiastically oriented, fitting more and more over time into scripturally related patterns (Robinson 9). Each of the lands they portrayed was said to be inhabited by the descendants of one of Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham, and Jaspeth. At the junction of this “T” sat Jerusalem, the Holy Land: the literal and figurative centre of the image. So understood, the world was seen as “a spiritual construct, and its distant and exotic corners were imagined not as they would be today — a series of coherent regions spatially organized and precisely represented — but as a variety of separate and emblematic locales beyond the reach of precise ordering” (Smith 17). Like the Roman disc maps before them, T/O maps were bordered by a rounded frame which signified its limits: the unconquerable ocean to the west, an impenetrable darkness to the north, Mongol hordes to the east, and infidel Muslims to the south (Knowles 9) — an “O” encircling all the known world. Within this world, however, there was certainty. Catholicism ruled; no other religions were recognized. All knowledge was derived from the Church or, later, from Aristotelian models. The border that surrounded the continent guaranteed the perimeter of a clear order in which everyone and everything had a place, from the top down, in a Great Chain of Being. Soon, however, the “O” — the unconquerable oceans — could not contain new knowledges of places and peoples encountered by Europe's determined, brave, greedy, adventurous, naïve, or desperate, often violent, explorers. And “all the known world” was found to be at once smaller and larger than previously imagined.

European Movement into the Atlantic: A Geographic Understanding

Starting in the early 1200s, through a particularly active and sustained period of the *reconquista*, the crown of Castile added the territories of Extremadura and Andalusia to her dominion through a series of (re)conquests, which expanded her reach to the ocean (Fernández-Armesto 43). This move, along with Portugal's acquisition of the Alentejo and the Algarve, gave the Christian kingdoms unfettered access to the coast and unwittingly opened up an era of Atlantic exploration that would forever change the course of what would soon become a global history.

On the Mediterranean side, Aragonese and Catalan forces had subjugated Valencia and Murcia (or, *Sharq al-Andalus* as it had been known until that time) by the 1260s, creating a "Mediterranean front" on the Iberian peninsula to complete the land-bridge between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic (Fernández-Armesto 43). The conquest of Andalusia in particular facilitated movement between these two bodies of water and made it possible for Mediterranean communities to gain a foothold in Atlantic ports, with Seville gaining immediate status as an invaluable staging post for the increasing traffic into the Atlantic by Aragonese and Catalan ships (94). The nascent Mediterranean-Atlantic trade was nurtured by the Genoese, whose colonial outposts spanning east to west along the Mediterranean formed what may loosely be described as an "empire" of merchant colonies along the Iberian and *Maghribi* (or, Northern African) sea routes into the Atlantic, giving Genoa a privileged position for travel and trade in the Atlantic leading into the 15th century (Fernández-Armesto 96). Her colonial warehouses in Malaga and Tunis, and trading houses in Iberia, were of particular importance. Malaga was a major port of call on the route from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic (107); Tunis was a terminus of Barbary trade, and therefore of Saharan gold ("the magnet and motor of European interest in Africa and the African Atlantic in the late middle ages" [108]); and Andalusia provided her (and Castile) with the deep-water ports required for Atlantic-bound trading ships (112). A growing maritime power, Genoa's networks of production and exchange were also important for Atlantic merchant communities, as the land-starved state fostered a

community of merchants, artisans, craftsmen, traders, and fighting men (Fernández-Armesto 104). Although her merchant-settlers were most concentrated in the several eastern Mediterranean colonies (of Gazzaria, Pera, and Chios), Genoese traders, agents, and businesses reached from Aegean, Levantine, and Egyptian ports to the Ottoman Empire, shores of the Caspian Sea, Persia, and eastwards as far as Beijing. The vast range of industries served by Genoese traders thus poised her for specialization in long-range travel and trade; it also stimulated her need for Atlantic markets to serve the commercial needs and opportunities generated by her presence out east. This experience was crucial in forming the basis of early Atlantic economies, providing Genoa with the requisite commodities and economic models when colonial activity in the Atlantic archipelagos began in earnest (116-117).⁶⁹

The final push into the Atlantic came, historian Fernández-Armesto argues, from colonial activity in the north-western rim of Africa in particular. This occurred “partly because the Maghrib had an Atlantic aspect of its own and partly — and more importantly — because the exploration of its trade routes demanded and rewarded Atlantic navigation” (119). Unvisited since the fall of the Roman Empire, the northern tip of the African continent which lies closest to Europe began catching the attention of Catalan and Aragonese agents (“missionaries, monarchs, and merchants”) in the early 13th century, with confirmed raids on the “Moorish” coast by agents of the crown of Aragon as early as the 1230s. By mid-century, Tunis had become an Aragonese dependency and tributary; and, by the century’s end, the northern coast had been divided (in theory, at least) into zones of conquest through treaty between Castile and Aragon, while her west coast was being explored by Genoese mariners (127).⁷⁰

⁶⁹ By the 15th century the Genoese were displaced in the east by the rise of the Ottomans (“who proved to be rapacious conquerors and unreliable partners in trade” [Fernández-Armesto 118]), deprived of their colonies in Cyprus, Pera and Gazzaria. The Atlantic then became their proper sphere of operation. Yet when opportunity to exploit the ocean arose, they “lacked resources, especially of manpower, to make full use of it” (118). From the height of her powers in the early 14th century, Genoa’s influence stagnated and diminished in relation to those around her. “In the Atlantic trade of the sixteenth century, Genoese no longer figured as pioneers or even, to any great extent, as participants. They were limited to a vicarious role, with Castilians as their main surrogates” (119).

⁷⁰ At least, *attempts* to explore the west coast of Africa were being made. Somewhat famously, the Vivaldi brothers were the first Europeans known to have sailed into the African Atlantic in 1291. Anticipating Columbus’ journey by some 200

Visits to the continent were prompted by traffic originating from the Crown of Aragon's emerging "island empire," which began with the conquest of Majorca in 1228 – 1229 and gradually created a network of island dominions heading west along the Mediterranean towards its Atlantic outlet, ending with the conquest of *Jarbah* (a.k.a. Djerba or Gerba) and *Qarqannah* (a.k.a. Kerkennah) in 1284 – 86.⁷¹ These islands "stretched like stepping stones across the western Mediterranean" and constituted a system of strategic strongholds along established trade routes between the two continents, facilitating economic warfare against other European trading states (Fernández-Armesto 128). Whereas earlier conquests were motivated by chivalric, religious, or imperial motives, "the main reason for the Aragonese presence in Africa was commercial," argues Fernández-Armesto (134). Movement along the coast was first propelled by a desire to be closer to the source of Saharan gold, which along with spices was a major commodity coming from the Barbary coast (141). Later market demands would include slaves and ivory as well (Fernández-Armesto 194; Fieldhouse 5).

The Portuguese, who in this period had the largest presence in and around Africa, ventured early in the 15th century overland into the Sahara, making increasingly long ventures into the mainland throughout the century. Finding the land-route impossible, however, they then turned to a sea-borne approach. The search for gold and slaves in particular pushed them farther and farther south, with rapid increases in exploratory voyages around Africa's "bulge" beginning in earnest in the 1440s. By the mid-1450s they had sailed up the Senegal and Gambia rivers, making contact with outposts of the empire of Mali. Between the years 1469 and 1475 alone, they added 2000 miles of coastline to the area navigated by Portuguese ships, aided by colonies in Madeira and Azores to ease the route home. Under the rule of the *Infante* Dom Joao (a.k.a. John VI), an ardent supporter of the

years, the explorers sought a route to India, but the galleys they sailed upon were "too low and too shallow for rough Atlantic waters" and "too dependent on inshore sailing for the inhospitable African coast." The brothers were never heard from again (Fernández-Armesto 152).

⁷¹ This "empire" included Majorca (conquered c. 1228 – 29), Ibiza and Formentera (c. 1234 – 35), Minorca (c. 1280s – 1290s), Sardinia (c. 1280 – 1320), and Jarbah (Djerba, Gerba) and Qarqannah (Kerkennah) (c. 1284 – 86).

exploration and exploitation of Africa, the encroachment continued with an increasingly centralized efficiency (Fernández-Armesto 190-193).

It was during the first expeditions into African oceanic waters sometime early in the 14th century that the archipelagos of the eastern Atlantic were found, including the Canary Islands, the Azores, and Madeira. The earliest authentic records of the Canaries after the fall of the Roman Empire come from the Genoese explorer Lanzarotto Malocello, although “the dating and authenticity of many of the earliest documents [from this journey] are so much debated that the exact circumstances and motives of Malocello’s voyage — whether under Genoese or perhaps Portuguese auspices, whether of reconnaissance, conquest or trade — are matters for speculation” writes Fernández-Armesto (155). More reliable evidence is the inclusion of a few of the archipelago’s smaller islands on a map drawn in 1339 by Angelino Dulcert and a brief mention by Plutarch in the 1340s that Genoese armed ships had sailed to the Canaries in his parents’ lifetime (153). Similarly, when exactly the Azores and Madeira were found is highly contested among historians, but both archipelagos turn up in records charting the progress of the mapping of the Canaries (162). Lands uncovered in this vicinity in the next century included the Cape Verde archipelago and other islands of the west African gulf (170).

From here the history of European exploration and revealing is more widely known. Names, deeds, and dates are by now commonplace to many: that Bartolomeu Dias was the first European to find the lands now known to many as the Cape of Good Hope in 1487; that Columbus was the first European to find the islands off the shores of the continents now known to many as the Americas in 1492; that Vasco da Gama was the first European to reach India in 1497;⁷² that Pedro Cabal was the first European to find the lands now known to many as Brazil in 1500; that four years after the Portuguese reached China by boat in 1514, Magellan’s voyage was the first to circumnavigate the globe in 1520, opening up the Pacific to a whole new era of European expansion; and on, and on.

⁷² Following the farthest voyage out of sight of land ever taken until that point (Parry 35), no less.

Exploration as a Movement Beyond

Such voyages to this day hold something of a mythological air, the voyagers held in reverence or (increasingly) with contempt. But although this project is directly concerned with the writing that originated from these explorations and discoveries, what I would like to stress here is not the particularities of each venture but rather the broader historical movements that their explorations represent and their contribution to the development in human spatial awareness of the globe we inhabit.

In the most fundamental sense, exploration is a movement *beyond*. It is a motion through which explorers approach and exceed the horizons of their culture's collective knowledge and spatial confines for the very purpose of looking beyond that horizon, of reaching beyond those confines. I take it as basic and self-evident here that this movement is both spatial and temporal: exploration itself is a movement through space over time. Spatially, the movement outward brings the "inside" into sharp relief. What first appeared as a horizon now becomes a frontier, the limits become a borderline, and the interior becomes illuminated through the projection of an exteriority.

Yet it is a fact that, almost without exception, where European explorers went Indigenous peoples were already there. Just as exploration is a movement *out of* the space that grounds one's culture, exploration is also a movement *into* an Other space — one that leads to encounters with Other peoples and things and that has its own effects on that space. There is thus an *ethical* aspect of exploration that often goes unsaid: an opening and an entering, a finding and a being found, a leaving behind and a bringing back.

Back home, the space explored becomes for the explorer's culture a space of intervention — a new source and surplus of elements that reveal the fault lines of the social whole and call its order into question. When the explorer travels *out*, their words and experiences, the objects they collect, and the cultures they encounter, begin to travel *in*. Readers, listeners, and students of their reports see *through* their gaze to an imagined present, towards which readers and listeners begin to move.

Encounters from outside are this way brought in, just as the inside is brought out through the movement into an Other space. Exploration thus sets in motion processes of which the explorer can hardly be aware; their actions during the encounter and the reports they generate afterward have temporal effects with potentially world-changing consequences for all involved. It is for this reason that a thorough historical contextualization of these processes and reports is so crucial to understanding their full significance. For the remainder of this chapter we will therefore remain focused on that context, in order to fully elaborate its significance in the chapters that follow.

Significance of Movement into Atlantic space: A New World

As I will show, the significance of the movement beyond Europe's spatial confines into Atlantic space in the late 13th and early 14th centuries is in the correlative movement beyond Latin Christendom's conception of the world and into a new image of the world as a globe soon after.

Within the space of a century after sea-faring vessels designed for the Mediterranean began probing the Atlantic, European explorers established a more or less firmly delineated zone of navigation in the previously unexplored ocean. This zone spanned from the Azores in the north, the Canary Islands in the south, and the Iberian and African coasts in the east, all of which were linked by Atlantic winds (Fernández-Armesto 152). It was significant for allowing further exploration beyond the immediate locale and for the new image of the region that emerged from it. Explorers were able to use this zone as a sort of mid-point surrounded by mainlands and archipelagos, which set the practical limits of navigation for the traditionally-Mediterranean seafarers, who at this point had to stay more or less within sight of land for navigating the ocean. From here traders first went north to England for wool and south to the coast of West Africa, and second went to the archipelagos of the eastern Atlantic in the 1330s (152-153), moving increasingly farther from home and land.

Equally significant to the zone of navigation itself is the detailed geographic image that these journeys created. Within two generations "there were so many voyages, accumulating so much knowledge, that an almost complete picture of the islands of the east-central Atlantic became

available in Latin Christendom” (Fernández-Armesto 153) — a clear indication of the dramatic increase of activity around exploration in a very short amount of time. The undeniably scientific image that emerged during this period is one symptom of Europe’s move from a mythological to a geographical conception of the world as brought about by exploration. This movement is most clearly illustrated in the finding of the Canary Islands. The islands were not entirely unknown to Europeans, but nor were they known through any direct observation or contact. Prior to their rediscovery at the end of the 13th century, they had been imagined “like patches of twilight in the Sea of Darkness,” as Fernández-Armesto describes it. Their depictions in Pliny’s *Naturalis Historia* range from the relatively precise (“concerning, for instance, the number of islands and their climatic heterogeneity [which] seem to correspond to the geographical realities of the Canaries” [154]) to the confused (“encrusted with fables of St. Brendan and St. Ursula [from late-antiquity], Merlin and the earthly paradise [of pre-Christian origin]” [153]).⁷³

Even now, the actual perceptions of the explorers regarding the islands are hard to separate from the myths that shaped their descriptions. Possible references to the islands by Plutarch and Horace are “too vague to inspire reliance and might refer to any or all of the great mass of islands known or thought, in antiquity and the middle ages, to lie in the western ocean. The same applies to the western isles, Hesperides and Elysian Fields, which have sometimes been taken as allusions to the Canaries or even the Azores, but which might be wholly fabulous, without any basis in actual islands” (Fernández-Armesto 154). By the 14th century, however, intensive exploration of the area made it possible, by consulting maps from this period, to trace an increase in the precision with which the actual landforms were depicted — from a “speculative mass of islands” in the 1339 Dulcert map to a “recognizably single archipelago” in the Pizigani portolan chart of 1367 (160).

This development further exemplifies the rise of a broader cultural trend towards geographical realism, which by the early 18th century culminates in what Anna Neill argues is a geographic

⁷³ Pliny’s name for these (the “Fortunate Islands”) was taken up by medieval cartographers; the later name, “Canary Isles” “current from the 1340s, also seem indebted to Pliny’s name, ‘Canaria,’ for “one island” (Fernández-Armesto 154).

production of homogeneous global space organized by the needs of merchant capital.⁷⁴ As Mediterranean vessels began probing the Atlantic, existing maps quickly proved inadequate for navigating the ocean. Christian maps from the middle ages, as we have seen, were until that point largely devotional in nature and highly ornamental, with the exception of a small number of area maps that illustrated travel itineraries or sailing instructions in diagrammatic form. By the 15th century, however, “map makers were showing the same interest in geographical realism as renaissance artists in naturalism” (Fernández-Armesto 245). This trend began, Fernández-Armesto argues, in the Italian and Portuguese *portulan* (or, sea charts) of the 13th and 14th centuries. “The experts who made them in Venice, Genoa and Majorca realized that their practical utility as navigational aids was enhanced by the accuracy and breadth of coverage” (245-246). A distinctive feature of these maps, which set them apart from others produced at this time, is that they were designed with practical purposes in mind and were therefore responsive to new information received from sailors and explorers, which made them increasingly accurate. World maps, on the other hand, remained constricted by religious forms, such as the tradition of depicting the world as a continuous landmass surrounded by ocean or the placement of Jerusalem in the map’s centre, well into the 15th century (246). One can see an historical tension here, between the geographical realism of navigational charts and the mytho-Christian illustrations of the *orbis terrarum*. Concessions to geographic realism, however, only increased thereafter.

This renaissance in cartography in the 15th century was also fueled in large part by the recovery of Ptolemy’s *Geographia*, which had been lost to Western civilization since the second century A.D. (Knowles 9). A manuscript of the work was carried by refugees of the failing Byzantine Empire fleeing west from Turkish forces. Almost single-handedly, *Geographia* “put map making back on a scientific plane” (Robinson 14). Forming the basis of academic geography in late-medieval Europe, it (re)introduced the concepts of a spherical earth, cartographic projections, northern orientation, and latitude and longitude, laying the foundation for a global coordinate system that would revolutionize

⁷⁴ See Part I Chapter 7

European cartographic and geographic thought (14-15). Within the span of little more than a century and a half, cartography had transformed from “a vehicle for figurative expression with a primary aim of symbolizing spiritually based metaphysical concepts” to a “reduced image of the real earth in the geometric framework of a projection, all done with as much scientific accuracy as observation and knowledge would allow” (15).

The finding of the Americas, so often discussed in isolation as a singular historical event, must also be understood within this context, since it occurs at the tail-end of this complex historical period. Many authors have noted the scientific thinking displayed by Columbus in his journals;⁷⁵ less mentioned is the worldview encapsulated by the Christian *orbis terrarum*, which was “firmly etched in the mind of every educated man” throughout the middle ages, that Columbus’ journey defied. This worldview, held more or less as common knowledge at the time Columbus set sail across the Atlantic, had presented all the world as a single, continuous landmass, with unrelieved ocean throughout. Columbus not only disproved this false notion when he found the Americas, but also provided a clear sense of scale when he showed that the Atlantic was navigable within 33 days of sail from the Canary Islands to the Caribbean (Fernández-Armesto 252). If it was not immediately evident by then, it very quickly became clear that the world was not a disc at all: it was a globe.

To focus on Columbus and his journey alone, however, as traditional Western analysis has, only feeds the mythology of the imperial encounter and appropriation by de-contextualizing the event in a manner that exaggerates its singularity and attributes all agency to a single individual in the narrative tradition of the Great Men of classical History.⁷⁶ More important for an analysis of *European* history are the consequences of the broader movement into Atlantic space and subsequent

⁷⁵ See, for example, Carl Schmitt: “Columbus was influenced by legendary and incorrect notions, but the scientific character of his thinking is unmistakable. The intense scientific awareness of his discoveries was documented in cosmographic expositions that spread like wildfire through Europe” (132).

⁷⁶ In this we agree with Michel-Rolph Trouillot, who argues that the representation of any act of Discovery as a single event ignores the “processual nature” of exploration and appropriation, simultaneously decontextualizing and narrativizing the event in a manner that compliments the hegemonic paradigm of the Discoverer, erasing the politics and power relations which brought that event into being (112-114). Here I am concerned with the production of Discovery “as a single and simple moment,” and the effects of the overdetermination of each act of Discovery, as symptomatic of an hegemonic discourse.

break from the ancient, faltering conception of the world to which it had been bound for over 1000 years.⁷⁷ Somewhat famously, the Scottish economist and moral philosopher Adam Smith proclaimed in the 1770s, with a universalizing, Eurocentric zeal typical of his time, that “the discovery of America, and that of a passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope, are the two greatest and most important events recorded in the history of mankind” (qtd. in Fieldhouse 3). Looking past the hyperbole, Smith’s observation follows from two direct consequences of European movement into the Atlantic and the spectacular importance of these explorations for European culture. British historian David Fieldhouse elaborates that whereas medieval Europe had been “parochial” in its isolation, the finding of the Americas and a sea-route east to Asia “liberated Europe from a geographic and mental cell” (3-4). Facing territorial encirclement by the Atlantic, Africa, and the Levant, and on the defensive from Islam the Ottoman empire, Europe escaped by heading west to the Americas and east to trade with “the powerful but generally tolerant” nations of India and China (9-10). This expansion “stimulated her intellectually by enabling her to draw more easily on the superior civilizations of the east, and stirred her imagination by giving her experience of utterly different peoples in the west. Neither the later discoveries in the Pacific, nor even twentieth-century investigations of space, had as great an impact as this first widening of the medieval horizon,” he writes (3-4).

Fragmentation Begins

⁷⁷ It must be said that the consequences of European exploration for, and impact on, Indigenous peoples, is equally if not more important at this particular historical moment. This project, however, focuses on the European lens, so to speak, as noted in the introduction. With regard to the Indigenous perspectives on the consequences of European movement into Atlantic space, Peter Mancall put it succinctly exactly 20 years ago, even if the nomenclature he adopts is by now anachronistic: “Wherever Europeans went, their impact on the native peoples of the Americas was catastrophic. Europeans unwittingly transported death-dealing pathogens that caused epidemic disease to spread through much of the hemisphere. Those diseases, in combination with sporadic warfare, reduced the population of Native American Indians by approximately 90 percent between 1500 and 1800. The threat to Indians went beyond the physiological assault. When Europeans arrived in the Americas, many were bent on taking from the natives anything that had worth in Europe, especially gold and silver. Along with the plunderers came missionaries, many of them aghast at the actions of their fellow Europeans, but all of them nonetheless convinced that the natives needed to be freed from the thralldom of their heathen [sic] customs. And, finally, when European colonizers crossed the Atlantic to create overseas outposts, they brought with them domesticated livestock previously unknown in the Americas; the animals often thrived, but their search for food threatened the dietary needs of native peoples. The bodies, souls, and lands of Indians were all under siege” (Mancall “Age of Discovery” 32).

For the remainder of this chapter I will elaborate several ways in which this “widening of the medieval horizon” brought about by the exploration of the Atlantic, the African continent, and the Americas, as well as increased trade with Asia, ruptured the Medieval European worldview irreparably. The new heterogeneity of peoples, facts, and religions undermined the capacities of established institutions and systems of knowledge to provide order and orientation for the burgeoning European continent. When order was restored, through the form of an emergent nation-state, the new *status quo* reflected this loss of an over-arching authority, as the scramble for “free” lands and resources left the continent divided against itself. As I will show, this period is therefore one defined by significant fragmentation on social, political, and epistemological fronts — a fragmentation that set the stage for a new hegemonic order.

New Peoples

Soon after Mediterranean civilizations set out to explore the Atlantic, they began to find not just new lands but also new peoples who were radically unlike any Others known to them at the time. Peoples indigenous to the Mediterranean islands conquered by the Crown of Aragon were in significant ways not so different from the conquerors, diverging little in appearance from cultures then known to be common to the area in recent history (Fernández-Armesto 223). Similarly, Black Africans were already familiar to Europeans, and (arguably) fit within Christian cosmology as the (purported) descendants of Ham, even as they were encountered in their homelands for the first time in the 1440s (227).⁷⁸ The first encounter with the Indigenous peoples of the Canary Islands, however, was both startling and confusing to Europeans, who had little experience with peoples outside of their known world. The earliest descriptions of these people, now known as the Guanches, run “the whole gamut of the possible and impossible without distinction,” Fernández-Armesto observes (226).

⁷⁸ To be clear, this “fit within Christian cosmology” was also a racially-motivated fiction, later used to denigrate and justify the enslavement of African peoples. The descendants of Ham, as tradition had it, were “men degenerate by sin” who had been “cursed with blackness.” The “diabolical” colour of their skin, otherwise reserved for depictions of demons, was therefore taken by white Christians of the time to signify sin (Fernández-Armesto 227).

An entry in the Hereford *Mappa Mundi*, written just prior to the exploration of the Canaries *circa* 1300, describes possible inhabitants of the area as “naked men, with round hats, braided hair and eyes in the back of their heads.” Another work, the *Libro del Conocimiento* (or, “Book of All Known Kingdoms”) published *circa* 1385, suggests the islands were inhabited “by sciapods, each reclining beneath the shade of his one enormous foot” (qtd. 226). Some of the earliest conquerors, in contrast, set out for the islands expecting to find fully-formed cities in line with European models: “The expedition recorded by Cocaccio took siege equipment for ‘cities and castles’ and the Majorcan invaders of 1342 hoped to acquire ‘villages, towns, fortifications and castles’” (226). The actual reports of the Guanches which then followed from first contacts are to a modern-day audience perhaps far more predictable for a small community living in complete isolation: they lived communally in caves, without clothing, nor knowledge of or interest in the weapons and gold shown to them by explorers (229-230). At the time, this radical Otherness defied simple classification, and the Guanches were as confounding as they were intriguing to European scholars from the outset.⁷⁹ In these two regards, the Guanches precisely foreshadowed the Indigenous peoples of the Americas encountered by Columbus and those explorers who followed behind him soon after. Perhaps as a result of the profound shock caused by the finding of this “new world,” or the substantially larger size, complexity, and number of cultures encountered there, the significance of the Guanches was almost entirely forgotten (7), even as the terms of the debate on American Indigenous peoples were framed by the earlier encounters with those of the Canary Islands (224).

By the 16th century, as a result of such encounters and the recently renewed trade with Asia brought about by a new-found sea-route to the by-now fabled continent,⁸⁰ Europeans were faced with what Benedict Anderson describes quite succinctly as an “irremediable human pluralism:”

In the course of the sixteenth century, Europe’s “discovery” of grandiose civilizations hitherto only dimly rumoured — in China, Japan, Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent — or

⁷⁹ Debates that followed will be covered in more depth in the next chapter.

⁸⁰ Trade with China in particular had been common throughout the 13th century, but stopped entirely midway through the 14th. Whereas Marco Polo could describe China in depth in 1288 - 9, Petrarch “was obliged to ‘confess that I do not know what the Chinese or Indians are doing’” by the 1350s (Fernández-Armesto 121). It was not until a sea-route was developed in the 16th century that trade and travel resumed in earnest.

completely unknown — Aztec Mexico and Incan Peru — suggested an irremediable human pluralism. Most of these civilizations had developed quite separate from the known history of Europe, Christendom, Antiquity, indeed man: their genealogies lay outside of and were unassimilable to Eden. (Anderson 69)

Anderson further argues that the evidence of this impact can be seen in a litany of popular fictional works that located imagined polities on a plausible world map rather than some “lost Eden” or other “models in a vanished antiquity” (69). Now-classics such as More’s *Utopia* (1516), which is purported to be the account of a sailor on one of Vespucci’s expeditions to the Americas, or Bacon’s *New Atlantis* (1626), situated in the Pacific Ocean, or *Gulliver’s Travels*, with Houyhnhnmland located in the southern Atlantic according to one of the addended maps, show that it had become “possible to think of Europe as only one among many civilizations, and not necessarily the chosen or the best” (69-70). For Europeans, there was thus a new cultural heterogeneity with which they were unexpectedly forced to contend.

New Facts, New Epistemologies

It is quite telling that the aforementioned authors of both fictional and non-fictional accounts alike conceived of non-European civilizations in narrative terms and structures couched in centuries of European discourse of travel and exploration, as many explorers struggled to understand and explain peoples, places, and things they encountered. In the face of such radical Otherness, one can trace within these reports the emergence of an epistemological instability that presages a more widespread failure of established systems of truth and knowledge back home in Europe, resulting from an influx of facts from abroad that could not be reconciled with existing ontological and epistemological structures. Throughout this chapter, we have touched upon many instances of this, such as the inadequacy of medieval cartography for oceanic navigation and the inability of scholars to fit the Guanches into existing classificatory schemes; it is a theme that cuts wide and deep across texts concerned with this historical moment.

From the time of the Portuguese voyages into Atlantic waters, travellers had become increasingly aware that their findings contradicted or exceeded ancient knowledge and authority (Shapiro 73). Notoriously, Columbus himself took great pleasure in disproving canonical works such as Ptolemy's *Geographia*, dismantling the reputations of written authorities that had been passed down through the ages (Fernández-Armesto 6). In the face of the new lands and peoples found, however, this loss of authority also meant a loss of certainty, and problems of representation and description quickly appeared. Literary theorist Jonathan Sell sees this in the written accounts of explorers in the 16th and 17th centuries who struggled to adequately convey what lay before them, which he describes in *Rhetoric and Wonder in English Travel Writing, 1560 – 1613*:

the textual transcription of new worlds pushes the problem of credible representation to the limits, and yet an age that witnessed unprecedented levels of geographical discovery and systematic voyaging to parts of the globe that were either entirely new or hitherto scarcely frequented was inevitably exposed to an access of new experiences, new situations, new peoples and new places, all of which demanded some sort of written record. The travel narrative would thus appear to constitute an extreme case of the problem posed by putting things into words; so much is new, so little can be taken for granted, that the rhetorical challenge of finding words for that new matter, *verba* for the new *res*, is at its acutest. (2)

In this analysis, Sell echoes Peter Mancall, who finds that Columbus had faced this problem as well: “the narrative of Columbus’ first journey testifies to the sense of wonder that he experienced. He knew that he had to describe in words a world that no European had yet seen. It meant describing the actions of people whose language he could not speak. And it meant telling how to live in a place through frames of reference familiar to his readers but not designed for the West Indies” (Mancall 30). The problem that both scholars here touch upon is fundamentally historical in that it is an *aporia* faced by explorers who have moved beyond their own cultural contemporaneity and into a wholly Other space. Their attention to wonder — “that psychosomatic response most frequently regarded as symptomatic of an encounter with the new” (Sell 3) — seems to recognize this move into the beyond. “Wonder is the beginning of philosophy,” Sell writes, “since our perplexity before the new or unexpected incites us to embark on a voyage that, in rationalizing the wonderful, leads us to an understanding of it” (4). This beginning that he notes does not emerge outside of an historical

context: it points directly to the rupture brought about by exploration with which we are here concerned. Thus, like Stephen Greenblatt, Peter Mancall, and many others, Sell sees wonder as “the appropriate object of study in the context of travel writing” because travel-writers “bring back news of wonderful new realities, and because wonder is the paradigmatic response of both traveller-writer and reader before such wonders: wherever there is wonder, there is a wonderful object and a wondering subject” (3-4).

The problem with which Sell’s work is ultimately concerned, however, is more strictly speaking *textual* — a problem of authorial credibility and reader response that results from what he identifies as a “contextual disparity”:

When reading a traveller-writer who claims to be relating what no one, least of all the reader, has ever seen before, we are before an extreme case of what communicative pragmatists would term “contextual disparity”: the context of the narrative — its situationality — is entirely different from the reader’s. But if the rhetoric is to have any perlocutionary force... that disparity has to be bridged somehow, or negotiated, by reader and writer. (3)

Sell sees rhetoric as bridging this gap between reader and writer, utilizing the language of persuasion to establish what Sell calls a “consensual truth,” which is “a truth of a different order from the absolute and irrefutable truth against which we tend to measure writing that purports to represent the world” (24).⁸¹ traveller-writers, Sell would have it, were thus concerned not with the representation of reality, but with the persuasion of their readers to accept as reality what the author describes. “Success,” he argues, “depends on winning the audience’s assent to a series of arguments that may be true or not, but which must be probable; and what is probable is determined by the expectations and assumptions of the audience itself” (26).

Setting aside Sell’s focus on what can only be an imagined reader response to the author’s work (since it is only the author’s work from which Sell wishes to glean these would-be responses),⁸² there is in Sell’s formulation a more problematically presumed *distance* between writer and reader

⁸¹ Sell’s language here is confusing, as he would have it that the writer seeks to establish a “consensual truth” with the reader against the state’s “consensual status quo” (24). In the terminology of Jacques Rancière, I would argue that such an act is *dissensual* in nature, though the point here is moot.

⁸² For Sell the reader is central to establishing authorial intention: “It is with a view to the mental resources of his reader that the traveller-writer constructs his representations. It follows that any reading of those representations should lead us to explore the contents of the reader’s mind as much as to contemplate the shape and form of new realities” (27).

that leads him to overlook the source of the epistemological instability with which he is concerned. For Sell, the source of this instability is the physical distance between writer and reader, which constitutes the “contextual disparity” he describes. Certainly, there were challenges of a technical or pragmatic nature in communicating from travel-writer to the reader back home; those named by Sell, however, are challenges inherent to communication itself that are not unique to travel and exploration. It remains for Sell to specify how contextual disparity would impact the naïve reader of a travel account in ways substantively different from any other topic for which they have no relevant prior experience or understanding. The deeper problem within travel writing from this period is an ontological and epistemological *aporia* encountered by explorers in the presence of such radical Otherness, which also awaits the reader back home. There may be a physical distance between writer and reader at the time of writing, but this distance collapses in the symbolic realm, where the salient distance between each actor lies between their respective subject positions in a shared discourse whose limits have been exceeded. The problems of representation that Sell identifies emerge from this *aporia*, which is not a problem between writer and reader, but rather a broader problem facing both.

Moreover, as historian Barbara Shapiro notes, “if early modern history remained inextricably tied to rhetoric, it was a rhetoric that came to emphasize ‘fact,’ truth, and impartiality, to be suspicious of artfulness, partiality, and ornamented style, and to prefer firsthand witnesses over citations to authority” (3). This emphasis on fact was the product of what was, by the 17th century, a wider “culture of fact” that travel writing itself had helped to create, and which exemplifies a clear concern of the traveller for the verity of *the content* of his reports that Sell precludes from consideration. Travellers were, as Sell notes, relentless in their insistence on the veracity of their writing and their rejection of falsehood and fiction (Shapiro 64). It is therefore entirely correct that they were very much concerned with issues of credibility, and particularly so in an age rife with “travel lies,” exaggeration, hyperbole, ambiguity, and outright error. Yet, quite the opposite of a will to establish with the reader a “consensual truth” that was unconcerned with the objective reality of

the circumstance was a broader cultural project to establish “the facts” that constituted the newly opened globe.⁸³

In gathering “facts” from around the world, the flood of details collected by explorers from abroad quickly overwhelmed the narrative models of historical discourse such as those of “perfect history” and “historia.” (Shapiro 39-40), which could no longer connect or explain the range of phenomena that were encountered, collected, and reported. In response, although convention held that historians were expected to both narrate and explain, many began to prefer the “bare narration” of fact (53); historians and readers alike started to treat “‘imperfect’ memorials, diaries, reports, antiquities, and narrations as history itself” (38); and, although emphasis on war, the state, and great men continued, the “lesser” topics (“what we would now call social and economic history, and the lives of lesser men”) began to gain status as meaningful parts of history (40). Travel writing, in this way, played a major role in transforming the concept of “fact” from a category limited to human actions and deeds to one that comprehended both human and natural phenomena. Matters of fact increasingly required evidence of a sort that previously had been denied historical status; firsthand observation maintained its privileged position, but now, along with documentary evidence, was a widespread acceptance of the evidence of “things” (47). Richard Hakluyt’s inclusion of documents such as ship itineraries and logs in his 1589 *Principal Navigations* alongside more traditionally contrived travel narratives — one of the distinguishing features of his collection (Hulme and Youngs 23) — signals this historical transition, showing how such details were becoming valued in and of themselves.⁸⁴ In time, these natural phenomena were themselves treated as “facts,” undermining the exclusive association of “historical fact” with “deeds and feats” that was so central to the classical (historiographical) order (Shapiro 52).

⁸³ In fact, in the 17th century, rhetoric in English-language travel works was strongly associated with deception, writes Melanie Ord: “Plainness had long signaled veracity in travel writing, partly as a response to the accusation that travellers ‘lie by authority’” (Ord 101).

⁸⁴ Hakluyt also “argued for a history of travel which relied on the testimony of travellers themselves: in other words, he looked mostly to eyewitness accounts” (Hulme and Youngs 3), which, along with his aversion to editorial intervention, locates him squarely in the emergent discourse of fact and the corresponding rise of the “history of things” which his own collection helped to effect.

The instability brought about by the influx of such “facts” from abroad similarly impacted and weakened the foundations of natural philosophy. Francis Bacon felt, in the 16th century, that “‘distant voyages or travels’ were beginning to change natural philosophy” because of the way that all “regions of the material globe... have been in our time laid open and widely revealed” (qtd. in Shapiro 73). He believed that travellers had found “a new continent of truth” based on observation rather than the dogma of received authority and that this new truth lay waiting to be found within their reports. By the early 17th century, such reports were already being associated with the “improvement” of natural history (73); travel writing, argue Hulme and Youngs, therefore “laid the foundations for the scientific and philosophical revolutions of the seventeenth century” (4). In the meantime, there existed a clear tension between the established, Aristotelian authority of the classical order and the potent new findings brought back by explorers throughout the 16th century.⁸⁵

New Religions

The over-arching religious authority from the Christian Middle Ages was also challenged by the introduction of new religions from all around the globe, which multiplied the impact of internal divisions already taking hold within the Christian order to devastating effect. Islam was at this point an old adversary, yet one that, from within the Ottoman Empire in particular, presented a continued threat nonetheless (Mancall “Age” 53 n101). Of greater concern, perhaps, were the internal divisions within Christendom such as the Protestant Reformation of the early 16th century, which sent shockwaves across Europe and left Western Christianity divided in a state of bloody religious wars. German philologist Helga Quadflieg argues that this had a profoundly destabilizing effect, leaving the Christian community without a single, shared religious concept or institution that could provide “a binding force strong enough to serve as a unifying and stabilizing co-ordinate for one’s religious identity” (qtd. in Hooper 29). Such divisions are highly visible in early reports of the Americas, says

⁸⁵ Of course, exploration was not confined to our planet alone. Galileo’s demonstration of the Copernican heliocentric system, which proved the earth was not the centre of the universe, is yet another development from this period with major scientific and philosophical consequences that I would be remiss not to mention.

Stephen Greenblatt: “divisions that not only marked the distinction between Catholic and Protestant but cut each of the groups into smaller fragments. Hence it would be possible to differentiate fruitfully between Franciscan and Dominican representations of the New World, and between Calvinist and Lutheran” (8). The impact of this disaggregation is “multiplied elsewhere by the discovery of other religions in the New World, Africa, and in Asia,” writes Michel De Certeau (150). This eminent French Jesuit scholar examines the broader social transformations at play during this period, arguing that the schisms of the 16th century had set in motion a “divorce” between morality and religion that would come to define the next two hundred years. Although the relation between morality and religion were never “harmonious,” he argues, the “referential *principle* of their union was never questioned. All through the Middle Ages and up to the 16th century it was accepted that morality and religion had *the same* origin: reference to a single God that organizes at once a historical revelation and an order of the cosmos.” Private life therefore moved “within a Christian framework; religion envelop[ed] a mode of behaviour” (148-149). Compounding the dissolution of this union was the fact that the religions of the new world “were impossible to frame within traditional terms” (151). Increasing pluralization of religious systems and the loss of a unifying principle, therefore, came to constitute a new social terrain which is characterized in the 17th century by mutual aggression between groups, none of which could bring about a new, stable order (151).

In this period, therefore, we see how Christianity became fragmented into smaller denominations which were relativized and then objectified within a newly heterogeneous socio-political terrain. The net result of these processes is that, finally and decisively, religion itself was displaced from its primary role in organizing social and political life in Europe as it had done for centuries. From the 16th century onwards, the internally fragmented and externally relativized religious order that had maintained the Christian Republic was overcome by the sovereign nation-state.

Rise of the Nation-State

De Certeau observes through a French lens the early symptoms of the European transition from a religious to a political order in the 17th century through the increasing *social* cleavages that result from the divisions between religious groups and the consequent shifts in frames of reference that accompany them. His argument, in a nutshell, is that the collapse of the Christian religious order, which had unified Europe throughout the Middle ages, is first expressed through the social divisions symptomatic of a fragmented and increasingly antagonistic social terrain. New unity is then provided by the emerging nation-state, which organizes social practice, identity, and meaning according to its own needs through a new *political ethic* that replaced *religious beliefs* as a frame of reference for individual and collective action. The 18th century is “the century of politics *par excellence*” for this very reason, argues De Certeau. It is “the century of the state” (170) that would usher Europe into a new, modern era.

Carl Schmitt sees this same transition away from a religious order in early modern Europe from a juridical, rather than a social, perspective. Whereas, prior to the Reformation, law was a concern largely of Medieval theologians, by the 16th century it was increasingly a task for jurists in service of the state government, who quickly set out to separate moral-theological from juridical-political arguments in the deployment of legal concepts and norms (Schmitt 126). The state “eliminated the holy empire and the imperial house of the Middle Ages. It also eliminated the pope’s *potestas spiritualis*, and sought to instrumentalize Christian churches for its own political ends” (Schmitt 127). The legal order of the Christian Republic was thus overcome in stages by the sovereign, spatially self-contained, territorially-defined, centralized European nation-state, which did not recognize any spiritual authority above its own (129). Despite the symbolic and administrative unity that the state effected within its own borders, however, the multiplicity of nations in Europe that recognized no higher authority than itself again left the continent without a political centre. Along with new peoples, religions, and forms of knowledge, the European movement into the Atlantic had also opened up a whole new world (so to speak) of land and resources, the scramble for which left states divided against one another.

Insofar as *trade* was concerned, the vast new lands and sea-routes that became available were a boon to European markets. In the 14th century, the continent had been blocked for trade out east by Islamic competitors. “Wherever the European Christians went in the East they found the Muslims had gone before them, and by 1500 both the production of spices and the trade in spices were largely in Muslim hands,” writes Parry (37).⁸⁶ This monopoly was eventually disrupted militarily, and then resumed, by Portugal in the 16th century, whose crown was quickly enriched by “plunder, trade monopoly, and strategic colonization of or alliance with spice producers and distributors” (40-42). Other European powers, however, were still left wanting. As is well known, Columbus’s journey across the Atlantic was motivated by the search for a western trade route to Asia to counter the Portuguese monopoly, which initially left Spain and England disappointed by the landmass he had found until it was recognized that there were other resources (such as wood, gold, fish, lumber, and pelts) available that had a value all their own (52-53, 76-77). The trade between European merchants in the Americas and those back home that ensued over the next century was comparable in value to internal trade within the European continent. By the 18th century, “transatlantic merchant fleets numbered thousands of ships, carrying goods as bulky as slaves, sugar and even timber. America could never replace the internal trade of Europe, but it provided an absolute addition to it” (Fieldhouse 4). As Karl Marx observed a century after that, “modern industry has established the world market for which the discovery of America paved the way” (Marx 8).

Even before the finding of the Americas, the movement into the Atlantic had linked existing economies of northern Europe and the Mediterranean, which had been separated by a narrow strait with substantially different sailing conditions that had, until then, prevented any exchange between them (Fernández-Armesto 2). “The gradual integration of the northern and southern economies depended on the navigation and exploration of the Atlantic and became increasingly tied up, from the fifteenth century onwards, with the development of an Atlantic economy which embraced both

⁸⁶ Fieldhouse observes that European markets were never completely closed, trading with North Africa and with Asia via the Levant; but these were marginal exchanges as a result of the cost and challenges associated with overland routes (4).

zones” (3). Of course, gold had a major role to play in European exploration as well. “Although Atlantic navigation by Mediterranean mariners had begun earlier and for other reasons,” writes Fernández-Armesto, “the lure of gold was the decisive stimulus to the new discoveries of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries” (148). The Aragonese push into the Canary Islands was driven by a desire for access to African gold (205), as was the Portuguese push into Africa itself (134). There is no shortage of scholars who have discussed at great length the European quest for gold in the “new world.” The immediate effect of this pilfered bullion was a significant stimulus for the European economy from the increased supply of available currency that was quickly reinvested back into merchant marines and shipbuilding (Fieldhouse 4), furthering the processes of exploration and Discovery.

Land was similarly lucrative to European eyes. Throughout the 15th century, it seemed that explorers were finding islands everywhere they went in the Atlantic. The general impression was that “there was no apparent reason why the discovery [read: finding] of fresh islands should not go on indefinitely” (Parry 47). Fantasies of new territories began to fill the blanks of their cartographic imagination; charts were filled with imaginary islands that betrayed a lust for wealth and privilege unattainable back home. This lust was based on the supposition, to be elaborated in the next chapter, that these lands were “free” for the taking. Explicit arguments that built upon this supposition took many forms. Nations across Europe in the 16th century suffered as much from insufficient food supplies resulting from agricultural methods inadequate for supplying densely-populated city-centres as from the destruction wrought by bloody wars and religious conflicts (Fieldhouse 4-5). This created an artificial demand for free land that Europe lacked and that the Americas seemed to have in abundance. In England, an oft-repeated social argument made in favour of colonization was to receive a perceived surplus population from the rapidly-growing towns believed to be the cause of widespread unemployment across the nation (Parry 107). “The most important arguments, however,” Parry argues, “were economic.” It was believed that colonies would enrich the realm and its peoples by supplying Europe with commodities that could not be produced back home, the merchants and

manufacturers by serving as markets for English products, and the Crown by providing a new source of duties and taxes (108).⁸⁷ “Discoveries and the trade and conquests which followed them, had practical consequences” writes Fieldhouse. “Every colony or trading centre was a new economic stimulus” (4).

Regardless of the motivations behind the land appropriations that took place throughout this period, be they social or economic, chivalric or romantic, religious or political, colonial or imperialistic, what is most important here is the effect that the “appearance” of this “free” land had in Europe. As shown above, Christian conceptions of the world and its peoples, upon which Medieval international law was also predicated, had been threatened from the earliest days of Atlantic exploration. As Schmitt describes it (with no small dash of grandstanding), these concepts, which had “remained in the mythical sphere,” could not “withstand the geographical enlightenment and scientific measurement that prevailed in the global image of the world after the 16th century” (51). Most decisive in effecting the dissolution of the old spatial order and subsequent instantiation of the new, however, was the finding of the Americas. When the “new world” emerged in the late 15th century, “the structure of all traditional concepts of the *centre* and *age* of the earth had to change” (87). On one hand, the lands of this newly explored hemisphere defied a worldview that had held for centuries, as we have argued above, but on the other hand, they represented to European sovereigns a vast, non-European space which “appeared” to them free for exploitation and appropriation. Crucially, jurists did not consider the problems of legal title associated with the appropriation of these lands in relation to Europe as a whole, as they had done under Papal authority, but rather in terms of a struggle between individual powers competing for land against one another (130). The finding of the Americas therefore destroyed the spatial order of the Christian Republic, Schmitt argues, “because it initiated an internal European struggle for this new world that, in turn, led to a new spatial order of the earth with new divisions” (87). Thus, following religious civil wars quelled

⁸⁷ This gives some indication of the inextricability of land appropriation and capital that leads Anna Neill to conflate the two. For more, see Part I Chapter 7.

by the state, we have what might be described as a continental civil war in the form of the competition between emergent nation-states — a war whose battles were fought in and over non-European lands by European powers.

As we will see in the next chapter, it was the appropriation of the new world that brought about an interstate order that eventually effected a new global hegemonic order, ending conflict in Europe by instrumentalizing it for extractive, appropriative purposes abroad.

Part II: Theorizing Discovery

Chapter 10: Land Appropriation

Here we move through a discussion of European practices of land appropriation into a decisive moment in my analysis of the significance of “discovery” as a foundational element of the historical epoch that came to be known as the Age of Discovery. In the last chapter I showed that the European movement into the Atlantic and the subsequent finding of new lands and sea routes across the globe left the continent socially, politically, and epistemically fragmented. Contrary to the overarching, unified political authority of the Roman Catholic Church that had held throughout the Christian Middle Ages, the European political terrain of the early modern period was divided against itself in the form of competition between a multiplicity of nation-states who simultaneously faced the ever-increasing pluralism of an outside world that until then had been more or less occluded by Europe’s own territorial isolation. This historical circumstance, I argued, set the preconditions for an *hegemonic* order to emerge in Europe, as the lack of an overarching authority resulted in a radical horizontality between regional powers vying for superiority in a newly global context.

In terms that will become clearer further on, this “new global context” ought to be understood as an emerging discursive terrain that placed a substantial number of peoples and social orders around the globe in contact for the first time in history. One must not take for granted here the physical and cultural threats that were posed at this time to these nations by one another, by traditional rivals such as the Ottomans, and by newly encountered African and Indigenous American groups. Although the printed histories of the Discoverers may tell us otherwise, European explorers were in constant states of conflict and cooperation with the various tribes of Western Africa in their pursuit of Saharan gold, and with the First Nations of the Americas, who helped Europeans survive the new environments into which they had sailed and who fought with or against one European nation or another. The resulting distributions and configurations of power were therefore not a foregone conclusion.

In this chapter we will see how conflicts between European nations were mediated through a new interstate law, which held at its centre the land appropriations of non-European lands and which thereby expelled conflict “beyond the line” (or, limits) of the European discursive terrain onto non-European peoples. It was through this process that Discovery took on its second aspect: that of *appropriation*.⁸⁸ As I will show, the land appropriations of non-European lands had a *structuring effect* on European nation-states, bringing them into order *vis-à-vis* non-European peoples. This created a new socio-political order within Europe, which was simultaneously pushed outward across the globe on the heels of Euro explorers, settlers, missionaries, traders, and travellers — all of whom were newly constituted as agents of Discovery and who consciously or not brought upon the world a new, Eurocentric, hegemonic order that lasted almost 400 years. As I will argue, Discovery acted as a *fundamental nodal point* in this hegemonic order, enconcing a preclusionary civilizational discourse within the new territorial imaginary and (re)organizing the expanding discursive terrain according to Eurocentric principles which constructed Others in a position of subordination through a discourse of cultural difference.

Before proceeding with this discussion, it is necessary that I specify what is an hegemonic order and under what conditions one obtains. Following Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, my use of the concept of hegemony alludes to an “absent totality, and to the diverse attempts at recomposition and rearticulation which, in overcoming this original absence, made it possible for struggles to be given a meaning and for historical forces to be endowed with full positivity” (1). Although this statement may seem cryptic to some at first glance, the theoretical framework in which Laclau and Mouffe situate their concept of hegemony is rather elegant in its parsimony. Here I will briefly outline a few of the assumptions behind this theory and the terms employed, so that we may revisit this statement again to unpack the claim that I am making regarding the European hegemony of the Age of Discovery.

⁸⁸ Recall that the first aspect was exploration. See Chapter 8 for an elaboration of the three meanings of Discovery.

First, it must be noted that Laclau and Mouffe operate within an anti-essentialist, post-structuralist paradigm that denies the possibility of any stable ground, principle, or “centre” from which properties, relations, or identities emerge. For them, there is only a discursive terrain (or *field of discursivity*) within which every social practice is constituted and all discourse is articulated, and which is pierced to the core with contingency and structural undecidability (97). This undecidability results from the *surplus of meaning* that characterizes all discursive space and that prevents any particular discourse from fully fixing the flow of differences upon it to reach a stable, “complete” (or “positive”) state (82).

A *discourse* in this context is to be understood as a structured totality of differences, whose differential positions are called *moments*. Those entities not discursively articulated are called *elements* (Laclau and Mouffe 91). A discourse is, in effect, a relational system in which all particulars within the system (be it subjects, objects, language, events, etc.) gain their meaning or identity through their difference from other particulars. Furthermore, the particulars within an articulated discursive totality gain a necessary character as a result of the regularity achieved through this system. To modify a single element is to modify the system as a whole because all identity constituted through this system is relational and therefore dependent upon the differential positions of each of its moments. Any dis- or re-articulation of moments within a discourse therefore has the effect of reconstituting its identity (92).

Given the impossibility of any discourse ever fully arresting the flow of differences upon the field of discursivity, however, it follows that the transition from “elements” to “moments” that it attempts is never complete. The composition of the discourse therefore remains fundamentally contingent (Laclau and Mouffe 93). All elements (that is, unarticulated particulars) retain a “floating” character, which establishes the overdetermined character of every social identity and ultimately subverts the fixity of all discourse. Articulations and dis-articulations of these particulars are thus always possible (and, indeed, inevitable) because the structure of a discourse is never given; it is always in a state of composition and decomposition, never achieving the status of the *positivity*

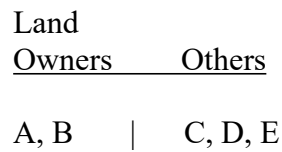
to which it aspires. There is, then, “no social identity fully protected from a discursive exterior that deforms it and prevents it becoming fully sutured” (97) — or, closed. Borrowing from Foucault, the authors hold that the apparent unity of this ensemble of differential positions is only a form of “regularity in dispersion” (91); it can, however, in certain contexts be “signified as a totality” (92), which will become important further on.

As intimated already, all discourses result from some form of *articulatory practice*, which is “any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice” (Laclau and Mouffe 91). *Articulation* thus involves the fixation or dislocation of moments within a system of differences — that is, within a particular discourse. Were there some laws internal to the social that determined its order, there would be no room for such articulations, nor for politics itself, since the permutations of the social order would be predetermined from the start (xii). This gives some indication of the political stakes involved in the processes of articulation, since they attempt to fix the field of social relations in one particular way, where any other way is equally possible.

The limit of every system of difference (that is, every discourse) is expressed through a particular form of relation known as an *antagonism*. It is not possible to define antagonism directly because, as Laclau and Mouffe note: “If language is a system of differences, antagonism is the failure of difference: in that sense, it situates itself within the limits of language and can only exist as the disruption of it” (111). Instead, an example will help to illustrate the *form* of antagonisms and clarify certain relationships that have until this point been entirely abstract.

Let us imagine a possible world that consists of multiple groups, all of which sustain themselves directly from the land they live and work upon. One day a collective forms among those who believe they have rights over these lands that the others do not. That is, they believe they should be the land’s owners and assert their right as such. In this, the Land Owners have unified *against* the others. In the terminology of Laclau and Mouffe, they have established an equivalence between

themselves *vis-à-vis* the others, who we will label as Others, to form an *antagonistic relation*. This antagonism between the Land Owners and the Others can be rendered diagrammatically as such:



First, it must be noted that the Land Owners were only able to posit an equivalence between themselves in their stated *difference* from the Others and that it is through this operation that their unity is constituted. The unity of the Land Owners, then, is not “objective” or given by some internal process or property; it is entirely relational and contingent upon the exclusion of the Others. If all groups in this possible world were Land Owners, there would be no difference between them and the term “land owner” would be meaningless since it would not produce any meaningful distinction between the groups. Thus, whatever “objective” property that each identity gains from this operation is a product of the operation itself.⁸⁹ This means that the unity of the Land Owners is, strictly speaking, a fiction — it is an effect produced only through opposition to something that is external to the group (114): namely, the Others. Their unity is, therefore, wholly negative. The Land Owners exist only as the not-Others. But “not-Others” is not an identity, since it depends entirely on what they *are not*; it is, therefore, the absence of an identity. Thus, representing the not-Others can only be done indirectly through reference to the equivalential chain that constituted their unity in the first place. The apparent unity of the Land Owners is, in this way, solely a matter of signification. It is a *representation* of a unity that exists only through the antagonistic relation to an Other. When Laclau and Mouffe write that “antagonism is the negation of a given order” (112), it is because the order (in this case, that of the Land Owners) only gained its coherence through its antagonism to Others. To situate oneself, theoretically speaking, at the site of the antagonism is to witness the limits of that order: to see the contingency of its construction and its efforts to signify itself as a given, objective

⁸⁹ For this reason, Laclau and Mouffe speak of *objectification* rather than objectivity and of *subject positions* rather than of subjectivity, since all forms of identity are the product of some form of process of *identification*.

positivity. Antagonism as such reveals the limits of that signification — that there is no underlying unity to speak of except that which emerges through differentiation from or opposition to some Other.

Moreover, it is a fundamental ambiguity introduced by the logic of equivalence (employed in this example when constructing the unity of the Land Owners) that manifests as a continuous movement of differences and that prevents every identity from ever achieving final closure (Laclau and Mouffe 108). For two entities (A and B) to be equivalent (such that $A = B$), they must be different, else they would be identical (in the logical form of $A = A$). To form this equivalence, though, their differential character must be collapsed (so that A and B would, through articulation, take the form of AB). A fixed (or “essential”) identity would require a closed space in which each differential position is fixed as a specific and irreplaceable moment (114). As we have shown, however, particulars here only gain equivalence to one another through their difference from Others. The unity of AB (the Land Owners), it will be recalled, obtains only through its difference from C, D, and E (the Others). In this unity, however, the differential character of A and B is lost, giving each the floating character of an element. This is so because the identity of each entity now exists only as not-C,D,E — a subject position that can be held equally by any other element that is also not-C,D,E. The appearance of these floating signifiers in the field of discursivity then (re)introduces the possibility of new articulations, and the process of articulation is therefore never complete. There is an endless flow of differences that results from a dialectic between the logics of difference and equivalence. Each identity is thus “overflowed with meanings which prevent its being as full positivity” (111). Were all floating elements fixed once and for all into moments, antagonism would find no point of emergence.

Because discourse exists as a never-complete process of fixation, all discourse exists as “an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre” (Laclau and Mouffe 98-99). The “centre” that a discourse constructs in this attempt at partially fixing meaning within the field of discursivity is called a *nodal point*. Nodal points (or “master-signifiers”)

are created when a particular element assumes a “universal” structuring function within a discursive field, organizing that field specifically as a result of the structuring function played by the nodal point (xi). Since these “centres” remain within the field of discursivity, however, they are always subject to contest: a contest to connect particular meanings to particular entities (or, to attach particular signifiers to particular signifieds) in a way that suits one’s own political aims. This gives rise to a competition to institute certain nodal points within a discourse, to partially fix the meaning of the social in its discursive formation (121).

A radical corollary that follows from this line of reasoning is that there is no such thing as “society” in the sense of a fixed totality or stable order from which social processes emerge: there is only (political) competition to articulate one’s own order over that of another. Laclau and Mouffe write that “we must... consider the openness of the social as the constitutive ground, or ‘negative essence’ of the existing, and the diverse ‘social orders’ as precarious and ultimately failed attempts to domesticate the field of differences” (82). To put this inversely, the “social order” as empirically understood is, in addition to being a concrete order of actors and institutions, also a symbolic order in which signification plays a structuring, organizational role. The visible, concrete order exists only as a contingent manifestation of the symbolic, as an attempt to secure an order on an insecure foundation. The determination of *meaning* and *identity* within this order is thus indeterminable in a rather precise sense: any effort to organize and re-organize the vast network of relations between individuals, groups, and concrete institutions that comprise the social order can never be fully, permanently successful. There is thus no stable ground upon which to rest: “the social” is no more and no less than this competition, and all appeals to an “ultimate reference” (be it God or “society”) as a point of anchorage rest finally on the success or failure of the appeal itself. It therefore also follows that there is no reason that any particular order “must” obtain over any other.

Hegemony

It is this within this context that we are now able to understand Laclau and Mouffe's concept of *hegemony*, which they describe as "a theory of the decision taken in undecidable terrain," since all "decisions" regarding the order upon this terrain and the relations between entities within it require contingent — or, hegemonic — articulations (xi). Clearly, then, the "openness" (or, structural undecidability) of the social is a condition for the emergence of hegemonic relations (120), as is an area with enough differential positions to require constant (re)construction of new systems of difference to maintain order (125). Drawing from the passage with which we began this chapter, we can say that such a space permits the "diverse attempts at recomposition and rearticulation" by social actors competing to "overcome this original absence" of a foundation upon which to secure the social order. In this sense, the concept of hegemony expresses *a logic of the social* (xxii) in that it concerns the processes by which the social fabric is constituted. From the example of the Land Owners, it should be clear that the result of any antagonism is *a division of social space* to form new communitarian spaces (149). All social spaces (which remain open to articulatory practice) are thus crisscrossed by a number of such antagonisms, forming the internal frontiers of society, as different groups compete to fix the meaning and order of the social in a system of differences through the construction of hegemonic nodal points (121).

The "absent totality" these groups therefore attempt to construct is what I earlier described as an apparent unity (or, positivity) that exists only through the antagonistic relation to an Other: it is the representation of the equivalential chain, whose identity is otherwise wholly negative. At the macro-social level, it is *hegemonic relations* that form through the same dialectic of the logics of difference and equivalence from which antagonistic relations emerge:

Social actors occupy differential positions within the discourses that constitute the social fabric. In that sense they are all, strictly speaking, particularities. On the other hand, there are social antagonisms creating internal frontiers within society. *Vis-à-vis* oppressive forces, for instance, a set of particularities establish relations of equivalence between themselves. It becomes necessary, however, to represent the totality of the chain, beyond the mere differential particularisms of the equivalential links. What are the means of representation? As we argue, only one particularity whose body is split, for without ceasing to be its own particularity, it transforms its body in the representation of a universality transcending it (that of the universal chain). (Laclau and Mouffe xii)

The relation through which a given particular — or, social force — comes to represent the (apparent) universality of the discursive totality constituting the equivalential chain, then, is the hegemonic relation. A hegemony thus occurs when this particular social force, through articulatory practice, expels or constitutes in a relationship of subordination other antagonistic articulatory forces who would subvert it (122), gaining its particularity as a *hegemonic subject* through the confrontation (101). Hegemony is, in this sense, a type of politics between social forces who compete to institute a particular social order by defining and articulating social relations in a field crisscrossed with antagonisms (137). It is a discursive structure that successfully limits the play of differences within the field of discursivity according to a particular governing logic.

European Fragmentation & Hegemony

The theoretical significance of the fragmentation in Europe that defined the period between the fall of the Christian Republic and the rise of the Age of Discovery should now be quite clear. Taking a page from sociologist and political theorist Peyman Vahabzadeh, wherein he describes a parallel circumstance using the terms and framework of Laclau and Mouffe, one might say that the collapse of the Christian Republic and the opening of the globe marked the end of the classical order in which “the world,” as it was conceived at the time, stood as an “enclosed totality in which structural determination and historical determination simply define the place, attributes and contents of its parts in general and the actors in particular” (Vahabzadeh 36). The inundation of this order resulted in “a growing proliferation of differences — a surplus of meaning of ‘the social’” — and a growing number of “difficulties encountered by any discourse attempting to fix those differences as moments of a stable articulatory structure” (Laclau and Mouffe 82). This state of affairs is most clearly illustrated by De Certeau, outlined in the previous chapter, in his discussion of the dissolution of the Christian framework, which resulted from the introduction of religions originating in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. What I earlier described as an increasing pluralism of religious systems can here be

understood as a growing proliferation of differences, which came to constitute a new social terrain in early modern Europe and which prevented religious groups in particular from fixing these differences as moments of a stable articulatory structure. Hegemonic relations between power complexes and political groups were thus able to emerge in response to the “absence” produced when the Roman Catholic church lost its capacity to unify the European socio-political space.

Before proceeding with this argument, it is worth countenancing a few possible objections to such an analysis. First, and most straightforwardly, it may be objected that Laclau and Mouffe’s *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* presents a “domestic” theory of (intra-national) politics, whereas here I apply it within an international context. It would seem that there is thus a quantitative disparity between the theory’s formulation and my own application of it. Against this, I note that Chantal Mouffe has herself demonstrated the applicability of this theoretical framework to the field of International Relations in *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically* (2013). With that said, however, it must be acknowledged that this framework cannot be applied directly *in toto*, without exception or due consideration, and so I proceed here with caution and a mind towards enunciating the philosophical commitments embedded within each aspect of my application of this theory.

A second and more substantial objection to my argument is that Laclau and Mouffe specifically argue in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* that it is not until the French Revolution that a “democratic principle” emerges to break with the theological-political logic of the modern nation-state that hegemonic relations could form in Europe. According to the authors, this democratic revolution marked “the end of a society of a hierarchic and inegalitarian type, ruled by a theological-political logic in which the social order had its foundation in divine will” (139). As such, power was “incorporated in the person of the prince, who was the representative of God — that is to say, of sovereign justice and sovereign reason. Society was thought as a body, the hierarchy of whose members rested upon the principle of unconditional order” (170). Hegemony was therefore not possible at this time because “the social body was conceived of as a whole in which individuals appeared fixed in differential positions. For as long as such a holistic mode of institution of the social

predominated, politics could not be more than the repetition of hierarchical relations which reproduced the same type of subordinated subject” (139). Following the French philosopher and political activist Claude Lefort, Laclau and Mouffe therefore argue that “the radical difference which democratic society introduces is that the site of power becomes an empty space; the reference to a transcendent guarantor [in the form of the sovereign, who acts as representative of God] disappears, and with it the representation of the substantial unity of society. As a consequence, a split occurs between the instances of power, knowledge, and the law, and their foundations are no longer assured” (170). It is thus “because there are no more assured foundations arising out of a transcendent order, because there is no longer a centre which binds together power, law and knowledge, that it becomes possible and necessary to unify certain political spaces through hegemonic articulations” (171). In sum, the objection to my own application of this theory would be that its originators specifically argue that the preconditions for the emergence of hegemonic relations are found not in the collapse of the Christian Republic, as I have suggested, but rather in the collapse of a logic that originated in this order and continued through its incorporation into the body of the sovereign. Furthermore, they attribute to the nation-state exactly the form of structural and historical determination that I ascribe to the Christian Middle Ages, rather than finding its end in the rise of the nation-state as I have here. Against this, I would point once again to my discussion in the previous chapter, which shows that it was an altogether new political logic which provided the social force necessary to organize social practice, identity, and meaning through the (representational) body of the sovereign state following the collapse of the Christian religious order. And what ontological status do we grant the state here, in its deployment of this political logic, and its particular arrangement of ontologically-privileged signifiers, if not that of an articulatory practice that fixed the meaning and order of the social in a system of differences through the construction of hegemonic nodal points?

Moreover, one might also note that, contrary to both my own and Laclau and Mouffe’s conclusions regarding the unipolarity of the Christian order, Antonio Gramsci refers in his *Prison*

Notebooks to an attempt by the Western Roman Empire to establish political and cultural hegemony over the East during Charlemagne's rule in the 8th century A.D. (82).⁹⁰ Here, Gramsci, whose theorization of hegemony is at the heart of Laclau and Mouffe's framework, clearly indicates that hegemony was possible almost a millennium before Laclau and Mouffe allow for it and that this hegemony obtained at a time when I specifically argue that it did not. The point, however, is moot for my own argument at least, as my analysis of the hegemonic relations that form between European nation-states can stand independently of the historical period that preceded it. One could also question the apparent unity of the "overarching" political authority of the Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages, as I have done for that of the nation-state above, without any consequence for my analysis here. For, in such a case, my discussion would pick up at the point at which one order disintegrated and another began.

Moving beyond these considerations, I would also argue that the apparent discrepancy between Laclau and Mouffe's analysis and my own is the result of the quantitative disparity noted above: theirs is a domestic, national politics, whereas mine concerns the international political arena. In this context, following the introduction and interconnection of previously separate discursive terrains across the globe, we see in all proximate discourses a series of splits at the symbolic level occurring during moments of departure, encounter, and return as a radically new and diverse field of discursivity opened up to competing forces. Within Europe specifically there were at this time dozens of power complexes vying for supremacy, none of which was fully successful. These complexes, whose name was state, are best understood as particulars in this newly global context. *Vis-à-vis* other social and political groups, it was by establishing relations of equivalence amongst themselves that these particulars were able to construct a singular and unprecedented hegemonic

⁹⁰ With thanks to Peyman Vahabzadeh for bringing this to my attention.

order, which constituted these Others in positions of subordination, domination, and oppression. Central to this process, as I will here show, was Discovery.⁹¹

A New Global Order

If the finding of the Americas was not exactly the “world historical” event that European colonial apologists have traditionally made it out to be, it is nonetheless significant for initiating the scramble among European nation-states for lands they deemed “free” for exploration and appropriation. As is well known, when Columbus set foot upon Guanahani, the Indigenous inhabitants’ name for a now-unidentified island in the Caribbean, his first act was to claim the entirety of that territory for his sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella. Less discussed now is that for over a century leading up to this, and concluding just four short years afterwards, repeated attempts at conquest of the Canary Islands had raged on against its Indigenous inhabitants⁹² — in fact, it may well have been the same individuals involved in settling the Canaries and launching Columbus’ journey (Fernández-Armesto 206-207). Nevertheless, there is a significant difference between these two conquests that may be used to demarcate one historical period from another: namely, the legal title used by European powers to justify the appropriation of these lands. While the conquest of the Canaries was framed as an extension of the *reconquista*, drawing from St. Augustine’s concept of a “just war,” and conducted with papal endorsement, the conquest of the Americas required an altogether new form of legal justification because it “could not be convincingly represented in these

⁹¹ A possible counter-argument here is that unity of these (European) political actors and power complexes is comprised through their adoption of the model of the nation-state itself and/or through their commonality as Christian communities. As we will see, these are commonalities that did indeed contribute to the formation of a European global hegemony, once their internal divisions were overcome and an interstate order was founded. These commonalities are otherwise superficial in the sense that they were insufficient for effecting a concrete, determinate unity within the Europe of this historical period. In fact, in many cases, it was precisely these commonalities which led them directly into conflict with one another. The source of their unity clearly must be found elsewhere.

⁹² For more detail on the conquest of the Canaries see Fernández-Armesto (171-184).

terms [of “reconquest”], nor justified on a basis derived solely from a civil-law tradition” as a result of the undeniably novel appearance of this new land (212-213).⁹³

In the interim, Castile’s claim to Columbus’ find was disputed by Portugal, which cited the Treaty of Alcacovas of 1479 as granting it rights to all lands found west of the African coast and south of the Canaries. This conflict was settled by the first of what would become many “global” lines drawn up by European jurists to mediate conflict between competing states over newly found lands in an emerging global context: Pope Alexander VI’s 1493 papal bull, the *Inter caetera divinae*. This decree entitled Castile to all lands “discovered” west of the Azores and Cape Verde islands that were not already held by another Christian sovereign, articulating the two elements of “finding” and “appropriating” into a shared moment. As a result of vague language that neither side found fully satisfactory, the bull was quickly superseded in 1494 by the Treaty of Tordesillas, which further clarified the zones of conquest for these two empires. This treaty formed the *partition del mar oceano*: all “unoccupied” lands outside of Europe were to be divided along a meridian 370 miles west of the Cape Verde islands, with those of the east going to Portugal and those west to the Crown of Castile (Schmitt 89).

While debates over the legality and morality of land appropriation in the “new world” waged on within Spanish legal and religious circles, Schmitt argues that the struggle for the Americas was in fact defined by global divisory lines, such as the *partition del mar oceano*, which were politically expedient in regulating inter-state interactions. The Treaty of Saragossa of 1526, for instance, drew a *raya* (or, line) across the Pacific Ocean through eastern Siberia, Japan, and the middle of Australia to settle a further dispute between Castile and Portugal over the Moluccas Islands (in current-day Indonesia). Similarly, the Spanish-French Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis of 1559, which ended the war between France and Spain over control of Italy, included a secret clause to establish an “amity line”

⁹³ Although that did not stop some from trying. In a brief aside, Fernández-Armesto adds that “remarkably... into a world where Christ and Muhammad had never been heard of... echoes of the religious language associated with the ‘Reconquest’ crossed the Atlantic.... Although not formally dignified by crusading indulgences, Castile’s American wars were justified by evangelical zeal and sanctified by apparitions of St. James” (213).

that ran the length of the equator and the Tropic of Cancer, cutting across the Atlantic Ocean through the Canaries and the Azores (Schmitt 90-92).

This treaty, and those that followed it, “defined a sphere of conflict between contractual parties seeking to appropriate land” insofar as they agreed on the “freedom” of the “open” spaces that began beyond the line defined by the treaty. This is the historical meaning of the term “beyond the line,” which denoted the line at which European public law ceased to apply (27). Beyond “the line” were two types of space: those of the “free sea” — the “newly discovered oceans conceived by the French, Dutch, and English to be a realm of freedom” — and those of the “free land” of the Americas, where European nations could pursue land appropriations without restraint. “Freedom” in this context therefore meant freedom from the law for European nations and its agents. On *this* side of the line was the “Old World,” where juridical mediation between states regulated their conflicts; on *that* side of the line began the “New World,” wherein “only the law of the stronger applied.” The basic principle behind these amity lines was thus simple and effective, remaining in force throughout the Age of Discovery: “that treaties, peace, and friendship applied only to Europe, to the Old World, to the area on this side of the line” and that “everything that occurred ‘beyond the line’ remained outside the legal, moral, and political values recognized on this side of the line” (90-94).

The ongoing question of legal title was less straightforward. While International Law had traditionally been a task reserved for Medieval theologians, it was, by the 16th century, one for jurists working in the service of a state government (Schmitt 126). Questions of “just war” and legitimate land acquisition based on moral-theological precepts therefore no longer applied in a field governed by a multiplicity of secular states of equal standing rather than the Church (120-121). As such, Schmitt argues, juridical problems arising from the appropriation of non-European lands were no longer considered in relation to Europe as a whole, but in terms of individual states competing against one another and without a common arbitrational authority above them. Thus, when the “discovery” of a land by one power was not recognized or accepted by another, as the *Inter caetera divinae* had prescribed, jurists turned to the Roman legal and civil concept of *occupatio* (or,

“occupation”), which granted ownership to those who occupied it first (126-130).⁹⁴ This title was formalized between England and Spain in the Treaty of London of 1604, when England declared that it would recognize Spanish claims to specific regions occupied by Spain but not to lands unoccupied by them. It was then reiterated in the Truce of Antwerp in 1609, which ended a war between Spain and the Netherlands. As Parry describes it, the title served as “a warning that the English and Dutch intended to colonize in North America whether the Spaniards liked it or not” (89).

The significance of the “global” divisory lines should now be clearer in this context. Although they emerged from different legal (and, indeed, spatial) orders, and therefore have very different meanings, each line functioned to mitigate conflicts between, and order relations among, European powers (Schmitt 100).⁹⁵ These lines thereby effected a new global spatial order that emerged from the pursuit and division of the “free lands” of the New World. Schmitt calls this “carving up” of the world “global linear thinking” — aptly named, I would add, because of the deeply hierarchical nature of the divisions it describes — which “represents a chapter in the historical development of spatial consciousness” resulting from the new global concept of geography (87). It is with caution, however, that we should accept conceptions of the global that are applied to geographical or juridical practices from this time. The *jus publicum Europaeum* was a “global” order insofar as its spatial concepts encompassed — and divided — the newly circumnavigated globe from within a juridical discourse. Obviously, there is a discrepancy between the concept and the realities on the ground; yet we must not underestimate the influence that these concepts actually had. Ideologically speaking, the centre of this new global image was Europe itself, and, more particularly, the European

⁹⁴ Occupation, which obtained in the 17th and 18th centuries, evolved into the now more well-known title of “Effective Occupation” by the 19th century (Schmitt 130). Although there are substantive differences between the two titles, the basic premise underlying each remained the same, which is why there is no further need to distinguish between the two here.

⁹⁵ Earlier examples of similar divisions, such as the partitioning of Africa into spheres of influence and zones of conquest on either side of the River Mouloua (just west of current-day Algeria) by Jaime II of Aragon and Sancho IV of Castile in 1291 (Fernández-Armesto 127), were different in two significant ways. First, in this case, the two powers both recognized the Pope as a common arbitrational authority. Second, the spatial order that preceded the circumnavigation of the globe was fundamentally *terrestrial*, as it lacked an independent spatial order of the sea, and was therefore constrained by the boundaries of known lands. The spatial order that held throughout the Age of Discovery was distinct insofar as it encompassed the entire globe and was “based on a particular relation between the spatial order of firm land and the spatial order of free sea” (Schmitt 49). In this sense, and in a more contemporary vernacular, one might say that earlier divisions were a local, rather than global, concern.

nation-state.⁹⁶ The “global linear thinking” Schmitt celebrates thus had two significant, concrete effects that concern us here. First, the nation-state of modern Europe emerged as the sole subject of European international law, which made international law (*jus gentium*) into an inter-state law (*jus inter gentes*), formally recognizing no other political entities (128-129). To put it otherwise, the “global” international law of the Age of Discovery that carved up the world among its subjects was, strictly speaking, a European law among European states. Second, all non-European lands — those “beyond the line” — were considered as “free” for appropriation by European states (130). Global linear thinking thereby produced a global imaginary that divided the world in two: into orders of European and non-European space, which were anything but equal in status.

The (self-asserted) right of European powers to appropriate non-European lands enabled states with the capacity to (at least theoretically) project their power and influence across the globe implicated all lands known and unknown within the globe. It was the combination of this territorial imaginary, (military) power, and cultural will that made the *jus publicum* a “global” order. What should be clear, however, is the contrast between the *claim* of an order with seemingly universal presence across the globe and the concrete reality of a practice of spatial ordering with global aspirations. “The globe” was in this sense a construction of the European colonial project — a signifier whose signified is not the planet earth, but rather an order claiming to be global in scope. It is a construction to which Schmitt subscribes and of which he makes great use in *The Nomos of the Earth*. For, “the world” as such consisted not of all peoples, cultures, and communities inhabiting the earth, but of a bloc of nations operating within a shared discursive order that they attempted to impose upon all others.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Anna Neill draws attention to this ideological construction of the globe from another vantage point. See Part I Chapter 7. Also see Mary Louise Pratt’s perceptive discussion of the European “planetary consciousness” during this period (29-30), which dove-tails with my argument here: “As an ideological construct, it makes a picture of the planet appropriated and redeployed from a unified, European perspective” (36).

⁹⁷ It is with this in mind that we should scrutinize an argument developed throughout Schmitt’s *Nomos of the Earth* that “a rationalization, humanization, and legalization — a bracketing — of war was achieved against this background of global lines” which lasted for the duration of the Age of Discovery (100). Schmitt’s fuller argument is that, in the context of bloody civil and religious wars (which were “wars of annihilation”), such spatial divisions effected a balance between

Discovery as Legal Title

Now, with this understanding of the “global” spatial order that characterizes the historical period in mind, we may begin to approach the full significance of the doctrine of Discovery, and the reason that Schmitt describes it as the only “true” European legal title (131).⁹⁸ As mentioned earlier, the doctrine of Discovery follows the Greco-Roman tradition that granted free lands outside of the kingdom to the person(s) who found them.⁹⁹ In the late-medieval through early modern periods, following the collapse of the medieval Christian spatial order in Europe and the abandonment of the moral-theological arguments that had supported it, this concept was sufficiently applicable to the circumstances of all European nation-states competing to explore, trade upon, profit from, and colonize lands they saw open up outside of their shared kingdom. It was sufficient in part because of a civilizational discourse which preceded it, reaching back to the 5th century A.D., when the Roman Catholic Church began conceptualizing a “worldwide” papal jurisdiction that would establish a universal Christian commonwealth (Miller et al 9-13). Jurists then developed a concept of “civilization” that upheld the inherent moral superiority of Christians over Others and ceded

European states that established a lasting, stable order through which peace for all members was guaranteed through juridical mediation. All conflict could thus be resolved, in theory at least, by juridical decision; and all war was limited to a “military relation” between states. (This argument is developed throughout his work, but see especially 140 - 143.) What Schmitt neglects to mention anywhere in his book, however, are the effects of this “global” spatial order on those outside of this privileged membership. This is one way that the historical scholarship of *Nomos of the Earth* is superseded by an overarching attempt to assert and restore European ascendancy in the early 20th century, at the tail-end of the hegemony which Discovery effected. His *apologia* for European colonialism justifies the violence and oppression of this historical period on the basis that it served the needs of Europeans. Peace was achieved in Europe through a bracketing of war from *within* to *without*. The entirety of Postcolonial thought and work operates specifically in opposition to the products and effects of such bracketing. The absence of this concern in Schmitt’s work speaks volumes about his thought and arguments — an absence dangerously invisible due to the sophistication of his reasoning, behind which lurks an attempt to recover the political imperative of the *jus publicum Europaeum*. Nevertheless, the value of Schmitt’s work as an assessment of the significance of the doctrine of Discovery for the Europeanization of the Western hemisphere over a 400-year period should not be underestimated. As legal theorist Nasser Hussain notes, Schmitt’s *Nomos* is “as much a lament for the irretrievable passing of a European public law as it is a document of its operation” (Hussain 244). Schmitt’s articulation of the logic of Discovery and careful explication of the European spatial order that defined the Age of Discovery is, in my opinion, profound. Although as a *prognosis* of history his work suffers from all the critiques of colonialism itself that have been the labour of intellectual thought for over 50 years now, as a *diagnosis* of the colonial mindset I believe it to be precise and theoretically productive. The difference between my and Schmitt’s conceptions of this order is, at very least, that I argue for its contingency, whereas Schmitt argues for its necessity. One outcome of my discussion of *Nomos* will be that it is this contingency of the social order specifically that gives new starting points for critiques of Discovery and the discursive practices that surrounded it.

⁹⁸ Full quote: “Once the medieval spatial order of the *Respublica Christiana* had been destroyed and every theological argument had been discarded, the only true legal title that remained for a Eurocentric international law was to discover... previously unknown (i.e. by Christian sovereigns) oceans, islands, and territories” (Schmitt 131).

⁹⁹ See Chapter 8 “The Three Meanings of Discovery.”

non-Christian lands to Christian powers in particular circumstances (namely, in the event of a “just” war) for the sake of their “protection.” Articulated to this civilizational discourse in the twin agreements of the *Inter caetera* and the Treaty of Tordesillas, the doctrine of Discovery appealed to the common Christianity of European nations by specifying that they “immediately automatically acquired legally recognized property rights in native lands and also gained governmental, political, and commercial rights over the inhabitants without the knowledge or the consent of the [I]ndigenous peoples” (2). This enabled states run by Christian sovereigns to share stolen land and assets amongst themselves rather than fighting costly wars over them (5-6).

Discovery was thus the “true” European title insofar as it supported the development of the *ad hoc* spatial order forming between European nation-states in the face of the “free” lands of the “new” world. Whereas “occupation” was a legal justification made by one state *against* another, Discovery was a legal title common to all Euro nation-states *against all Others*. As a common legal title, it typified a *spatially unified Europe*, which strictly speaking did not exist because of the fierce competition between states. Discursively, however, it organized land-appropriating nation-states into what Laclau and Mouffe would call a *structured totality of differences* through the articulatory practices of exploration and land appropriation. Thus, I am arguing that England, France, Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands — those particulars who might be considered constitutive of “Europe” at the time — were brought into a *functional equivalence* by these practices. Crucially, on a practical level this equivalence did not need to be recognized by these states for the equivalence to hold in effect, which explains how “Europe” became constituted as a unified entity despite the internal heterogeneity and fragmentation of its member states.

Discovery thus effected and maintained the spatial order of the *jus publicum* by constructing an equivalence among European actors, agents, and political entities through dispersed antagonistic relations to a heterogeneity of peoples, including those indigenous to the Americas and African continents among others. So long as antagonisms between member states took place on “that side of the line,” the conflicts on “this side” — within Europe — could maintain an *agonal* character

necessary for the continued functioning of the inter-state order of the *jus gentium Europaeum*. Europe was thus spatially unified ideologically in its opposition to those peoples of the “New World” and concretely through the common cause among nation-states to appropriate non-European territories. This is the locus of the hegemonic order that we are concerned here to outline in its particularity: the specific ways in which Europeans were brought into equivalence *vis-à-vis* non-European Others through the doctrine of Discovery. The doctrine of *occupatio*, on the other hand, and to put it simply, introduced or amplified antagonisms between individual European states, undermining the unity that Discovery achieved — a fact witnessed in the devolution of legal titles deployed in the service of European land appropriations: from Discovery in the 16th century, which recognized the “possessions” of others, to Effective Occupation in the 19th century, which recognized only the superior force of opposing states who were able to protect their acquisitions against other competitors.

Evidence of Discovery’s role in constructing this spatial order appears in multiple forms, but none so clear as the structuring effects it produced, which persisted for centuries after its initial formulation in the 15th century.¹⁰⁰ Most explicitly, this is visible through ongoing claims to “first discovery” by individual powers continuing until almost the 19th century, such as with the French claim to Tahiti in 1758 or the English and Spanish claims to territories in the Pacific Northwest right up until the 1790s (Miller et al 13-20). More subtly, alternative legal titles and concepts such as occupation and *terra nullius* can be seen as transformations of, rather than departures from, Discovery. Occupation, for instance, asks claimants for proof of their Discovery in the form of concrete settlements. When it was first formulated for King Henry VII of England in the early 16th century, legal scholars argued that English explorers would not violate the terms of the *Inter caetera* so long as they “confined themselves to claiming lands that had not yet been discovered by any other Christian Prince” (18) — clearly ignoring the absolute, totalizing claims for the Spanish and

¹⁰⁰ An aspect of Discovery also observed by Antonio Anghie, who shows that the “colonial origins of international law... create a set of structures that continually repeat themselves at various stages in the history of international law” (3).

Portuguese to *any* lands set out by the *partitio del mar oceano* in favour of a more localized concern for regional territories. This argument was adopted by Elizabeth I in the 1580s, who also added that the Discoverer had to actually occupy and possess Discovered lands for the title to hold, so as to prevent competing claims to “first discovery” (18). Thus, when charters were written for Virginia in 1606 and New England in 1620, James I noted that English colonists could claim title to the lands because they were “not now actually possessed by any Christian Prince or People” (19), again reiterating the requirement for concrete (rather than solely rhetorical) proof of prior “discovery.” The English concept of *terra nullius*, which stated that “lands that were not occupied by any person or nation, or which were actually occupied but were not being used in a manner that European legal systems approved, were considered to be available for Discovery claims” (21), simply adds to this earlier requirement a notice to Indigenous groups and competing nations alike that claims outside of these specific parameters would be forcefully contested. Thus, although *occupatio* and *terra nullius* were formulated by one European nation against other European nations, and were in some forms divisory as such, the structures that Discovery had erected were already firmly in place; the overall effect of these two legal titles was therefore, like Discovery, to unify the Discoverers against the Discovered. As Miller describes it, “while [European nations] occasionally disagreed over the exact definition of the Doctrine, and sometimes fought over discoveries and power in the New World, one thing they never disagreed about was that Indigenous peoples lost significant property and governmental rights immediately upon their first discovery by a European country” (6). For all of these legal titles, the absence of rights of the Discovered was a foregone conclusion so long as the hegemonic order persisted. The structuring effects of Discovery thus continued long after it was no longer recognized specifically as a valid title by European nations as a result of the hegemonic order that it helped to create.

Free Lands

There were several tangible “absences” such as the one just described that made the *jus gentium* possible, such as the conception of “free” lands envisioned by the European global territorial imaginary. Although the concept of “free” lands first emerged in a time when it is quite possible that lands outside of the boundaries of any given empire were actually unpeopled, and therefore actually free for appropriation, in the Age of Discovery this was not at all the case. As mentioned earlier, it was commonplace for travellers to meet Indigenous inhabitants almost everywhere they went. Here I will show that the supposed emptiness of these lands was *produced* through what I call *discursive preclusion* through two early, related, examples: the first encounters with the Indigenous peoples of the Americas and the Canary Islands.

...of the Americas

This particular type of preclusion can be witnessed in many forms, with perhaps the clearest coming from a letter written at sea by Columbus in February 1493 to Luis de Santangel, the treasurer of the Spanish Crown, which provides an account of his first voyage to the Caribbean:

As I know that you will be pleased at the great victory with which Our Lord has crowned my voyage, I write this to you, from which you will learn how in thirty-three days, I passed from the Canary Islands to the Indies with the fleet which the most illustrious King and Queen, our sovereigns, gave to me. And there I found very many islands filled with people innumerable, and of them all I have taken possession for their highnesses, by proclamation made and with the royal standard unfurled, and no opposition was offered to me. To the first island which I found, I gave the name San Salvador, in remembrance of the Divine Majesty, Who has marvelously bestowed all this; the Indians call it ‘Guanahani.’ To the second, I gave the name *Isla de Santa Maria de Concepcion*; to the third, *Fernandina*; to the fourth, *Isabella*; to the fifth, *Isla Juana*, and so to each one I gave a new name. (qtd. in Greenblatt 52)

Here Columbus simultaneously acknowledges the Indigenous population and the name they have given to their own lands, and then assigns those places new names of his own. This practice demonstrates on one level a preclusion of non-European discourse from that of the Europeans: specifically, that of the Discovered as constituted by the Discoverer. Although the *Inter caetera* and subsequent amity lines established formal lines of division, here we see one form in which these divisions *already existed*. Afterward, they would become increasingly apparent.

In *Marvelous Possessions*, Stephen Greenblatt observes a strong contrast between two descriptions by Columbus of the Indigenous population in his records of the encounters. In his ship's logs from his first voyage, Columbus "describes communities characterized ... by an admirable orderliness. He admires the 'wonderful dignity' of the native 'king' whose people 'all obey him so that it is a marvel.' 'All of these lords,' he goes on to note, 'are of few words and of very attractive customs; and their commands are for the most part carried out by hand signs so soon understood that it is a marvel'" (65). In a letter written after his third voyage, however, after the *Inter caetera* was issued, Columbus describes them quite differently: they are now "a people, warlike and numerous, and with customs and beliefs very different from ours, a people, living in highlands and mountains, having no settled dwellings, and apart from us" (qtd. 66). The "wonderful dignity" earlier observed has now disappeared, and in its place appears only a "savage," nomadic peoples.

Greenblatt sees this absence when considering the legal rituals performed by Columbus in a ceremony of possession. First, Greenblatt notes, Columbus makes no attempt to leave physical signs of his arrival, such as planting a flag, cutting down tree boughs, or erecting monuments. "There are no attempts in the initial landfall to inscribe the Spanish presence on the land, to leave even an ephemeral mark such as a gash in a tree or a cleared patch of grass. *His actions are performed entirely for a world elsewhere*" (56, emphasis mine). In all instances, it seems Columbus is not concerned with the Indigenous inhabitants at all — he "evidently does not feel the need to know anything about [the peoples he has encountered] at this moment" because his instruction to his fleet's official recorder "similarly does not include any provision for recognition of the cultural level, rights, or even the existence of the natives" (57-58). The depth of this lack of concern is manifested when Columbus includes an opportunity for the local population to contradict the Crown's claim to their lands and notes that "I was not contradicted." This is absurd, Greenblatt argues, because they could not even have understood his language, let alone the significance of the words he spoke. Greenblatt infers that this opportunity granted for contradiction from others is a legal formalism; that "Columbus is observing a form... [a]nd that form evidently calls for the possibility of a contradiction,

a counter-declaration to the one by which possession is claimed” (59). In his statement that “I was not contradicted,” however, Columbus omits mention of any particular subjects who might issue such a contradiction. Columbus “does not write, ‘the natives did not contradict me,’ but rather, ‘I was not contradicted.’ He is not concerned with a particular subjective consciousness responding to the proclamation and hence with consent as an inner act of volition but with the formal absence of an objection to his words. *Why* there was no objection is of no consequence; all that matters is that there was none” (59). Following the original conception of “discovery” as a finding of free lands, Greenblatt argues,

we might say that Columbus’ formalism tries to make the new lands uninhabited — *terra nullius* — by emptying out the category of the other. The other exists only as an empty sign, a cipher. Hence there can be no contradiction to the proclamation from anyone on the islands themselves, because only linguistic competence, the ability to understand and to speak, would enable one to fill the sign. (60)

What Greenblatt touches upon but does not make explicit is that, from Columbus’ letter to Luis de Santangel, we see that the issue here is not that the Indigenous population cannot speak Columbus’ language, but that they are precluded from having any voice at all. He does catch that “the ritual of possession, though it is apparently directed toward the natives, has its full meaning then in relation to other European powers when they come to hear of the discovery” (60), but ultimately glosses over what is for me of central significance: that the absence of this voice, the “emptiness” of this content, is determined specifically by a European spatial logic which is constitutive of the moment of Discovery.

Evidence of the spatial logic at work in Columbus’ thought is clearest in a letter written to his agent Antonio de Torres in 1494, where he extols the benefits of transporting enslaved Indigenous people to Spain. “The more that may be sent over, the better it will be...” he writes, because “they, having abandoned that inhumanity, will be better than any other slaves, and *their inhumanity they will immediately lose when they are out of their own land*” (qtd. in Greenblatt 71-72, emphasis

mine).¹⁰¹ Already, just two years after the finding of the Americas, the European territorial imaginary has become constitutive of new forms of social identification that specifically locate its peoples in a position of oppression: to “San Salvador” from Guanahani; to slaves labeled as “savages” from peoples whose real names and character we will never have chance to know. It is with an equal sense of irony and pathos that I read Columbus’ suggestion that by removing them from their homeland they would be “better off” for having been taken to Europe.

... And the Canary Islands

Precedent for such actions was set in many ways by encounters with the Guanche peoples of the Canary Islands (Fernández-Armesto 244), who were similarly dis-located through forms of preclusion that were then readily applied to the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. As noted in the previous chapter, the first encounter with the Guanches was startling to Europeans, who had never before seen or heard of people such as these. Nevertheless, the first Portuguese expedition brought back with it four native captives, and the Majorcans twelve, all of whom (and more) would end up for sale as slaves in Mediterranean markets (226). From then on, humanists, missionaries, and jurists alike wrote chronicles of encounters with the Canary Islanders which “established that their victims were fair game for enslavement or war, bereft of true sovereignty and consigned to inferior juridical categories” (228-29).

Debates were waged as to whether the Guanches could be seen as Christians, to what degree they could be considered as rational beings who were therefore endowed with natural rights, and

¹⁰¹ The full quote is enlightening for those with illusions of Columbus’ moral character: “You shall say to their highnesses that the welfare of the souls of the said cannibals [the natives whom the Spanish have enslaved and shipped back to Spain], and also of those here, has induced the idea that the more that may be sent over, the better it will be, and in this their highnesses may be served in the following way. That, having seen how necessary cattle and beasts of burden are here, for the support of the people who have to be here, and indeed for all these islands, their highnesses might give licence and a permit for a sufficient number of caravels to come here every year and to carry the said cattle and other supplies and things for the colonization of the country and the development of the land, and this at reasonable prices at the cost of those who transport them. Payment for these things could be made to them in slaves, from among these cannibals, a people very savage and suitable for the purpose, and well made and of very good intelligence. We believe that they, having abandoned that inhumanity, will be better than any other slaves, and *their inhumanity they will immediately lose when they are out of their own land*” (qtd. in Greenblatt 71-72, emphasis mine).

whether they were capable of internal sovereignty (Fernández-Armesto 243). Many scholars drew upon a classificatory scheme, developed by Albertus Magnus, which organized humankind on a range of mental faculties purportedly found in different racial groups and connected with specific physical characteristics. This scheme was later extended by his pupil, Thomas Aquinas, into a set of criteria for identifying “barbarians” (225). This became a “checklist” for civility, which also included the capacity for languages, the development of writing, forms of dress and diet, the formation of codified laws, and so on. A debate over the fate of the Guanches between Francesco Petrarca¹⁰² (1304 – 1374) and Giovanni Boccaccio (1313 – 1375), two prominent humanists of the time, shows how such concepts were tactically deployed. Whereas Boccaccio attempted to defend the Guanches by emphasizing their “rationality” and their “civilized” nature, Petrarca diminished them by rejecting their civility and emphasizing what he suggested were signs of “bestiality” (229). In both cases, the Guanches were measured by their equivalence to or difference from Europeans and European culture, which was seen as the universal standard for cultural, religious, and political norms. Even arguments for their similarity to Europeans assumed a fundamental difference that set them apart, and which we may describe quite simply as being a not-European — a decidedly inferior category to the European mind. The Guanches were thus “emptied of content” insofar as their own practices of identification were precluded in advance, and their identity within the European civilizational discourse appears only in a negative relation to the European’s sense of self.

To be not-European was thus equivalent to being not-civilized (that, is “savage”) insofar as both social categories were expressions of what I call discursive preclusion. When the question of the legality of appropriating the Guanches’ lands arose in the 15th century, we may in hindsight say that it was a question that was answered in advance. Petrarca’s patron, Pope Clement VI, was from the start concerned with juridical questions related to the appropriation of the Guanches’ territories and with justifying a “just war” against them. His argument, which was adopted by Bolognese jurists pushing to validate Portuguese claims to the islands, was that the Guanches had committed “sins

¹⁰² More commonly known by his anglicized name, Petrarch.

against natural law,” which had deprived them of their right to internal sovereignty (Fernández-Armesto 232). The Castilian jurist who responded to these arguments “wasted no time on the Canarians’ rights — no people, he said, was more savage or bestial.” His own argument rested on the King of Castile’s “exalted nature and position” (233). For neither side was there a question of the Islanders’ protection or recognition. Their difference from the Europeans was asserted at every opportunity, their land’s appropriation a foregone conclusion.¹⁰³ The “real” question here debated was of which Crown’s claim to that land was more valid than the other. The Guanches, in this way, did not appear.

This, then, is the true politics of Discovery: the preclusion of particular peoples from social, political, and juridical discourse to effect claims to their lands and to exclude them from historical discourse as social agents, political actors, and cultural beings. It is the manifestation of European antagonisms that constituted Others in positions of subordination and oppression, disempowering them prior to, during, or following the moment of encounter. This reminds us that Indigenous peoples were not outside European history: they were inside, welcoming explorers or not, sharing food or not, teaching skills or not, fighting with or fighting against. But history was written despite them, and in this we see a symptom of their preclusion raising its head again. Therefore, as we have said before, the “right” of the Discoverer to claim these lands was not derived from the fact of finding lands previously unknown, as the concept of “discovery” suggests, but from a discursive order which precludes certain subjects in advance. Thus, the concept of preclusion allows us to distinguish between “discovery” as a finding of unpeopled lands, “Discovery” as the appropriation of lands *made free* in the eyes of the Discoverer, and “dis(cover)y” as the articulatory practice that reveals these “free” lands as such.

¹⁰³ The Pope ruled in favour of Portugal, accepting the Portuguese argument that conquest of the Guanches was valid because of their supposed “savagery” and that an earlier bull prohibiting Europeans from trespassing upon the islands had interfered with the advance of “civilization.” Discovery here gained its civilizational element in the Pope’s decree that the domination of “infidels” was granted under a perceived need to lead them to “civilization” and religious conversion. The bull *Romanus Pontifex* of 1436 thus authorized Portugal to convert the inhabitants and control their lands, leading to a Portuguese monopoly that later prompted Spain’s authorization of Columbus’ voyage westward (Miller et al 11).

Spatial Divisions and Social Identities

This analysis opens up a logic particular to the Age of Discovery: a spatial logic that is also a social logic, a division of geographic space that is also a division of social space. This dual logic constructs the “European” subject through its difference from the “Non-European,” the “civilized” subject through its difference from the “savage,” and the “free land” of the “savage” peoples through its difference from the occupied lands of the “civilized.”

Thus it follows that, within this historical period, there is no subject of Europe outside of such operations: the identity is entirely negative, constructed through antagonism to the Other. In the face of the French, a British subject is decidedly British. So too with the French against the British, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, and so on. This is true whether on the soil of the Americas or any of the nation-states; the European identity has no internal objectivity or ground from which it arises. It is only in the presence of the Discovered that the French, British, Dutch, Spanish, or Portuguese became representative of a broader totality: the Discoverer — a singularly European figure newly come to their lands, offering violence and friendship from either hand. Europeans thus emerged in the form of the not-savage, the not-uncivilized: an “us” who is not “them.”

A parallel claim can of course be made about the Discovered. Those heterogeneous peoples labeled as Other, the foils of European unity, were similarly constituted as a homogeneous group, appearing within the European discursive terrain only through the lens of the Discoverer. Through this lens, all signs of “savagery” were brought into equivalence: raw food, nakedness, cannibalism, animalism, illiteracy, and so on. These moments were counterposed against signs of civility: written language, styles of dress, city structures, and of course Christianity. Collectively, these were considered signs of “humanity,” which De Certeau pointedly suggests represented “the established order of social conventions” for Europeans, defined in opposition to the Other (159). From a perspective outside of this antagonistic terrain, one could say that those heterogeneous peoples are simultaneously precluded from the discourse of the Discovered, yet also included as a homogeneity in a subordinated position. This moment of replacement is difficult to represent directly because it

takes place beyond the limits of language, specifically because it is a manifestation of the antagonism between Europeans and the non-European Others. The Discovered are thus a people who appear only as an Other emptied of content in their mutual difference to the European Self.

“Europe,” of course, also emerges from this process, not only gaining a spatial unity through the common cause of land appropriation or through a juridical discourse that constitutes the subjects of an interstate law and recognizes no Other, but also gaining a discursive unity through a territorial imaginary that constructs an “inside” through the repetitive practices of identification that locate peoples and places “outside” of European social spaces. Many scholars have written about this aspect of the constitution of the European identity. Mary Louise Pratt, for instance, remarks that “borders and all, the entity called Europe was constructed from the outside in as much as from the inside out” (6). Antony Anghie also argues that such practices were central to the formation of European international law and to the European concept of sovereignty itself, as Europeans forged “a legal system that could account for relations between the European and non-European worlds in the colonial confrontation” (3). We may therefore conclude that, externally, the European identity as a whole was formed both in response to, and against, the existential threat posed by the competing cultures in the Americas and ever-more explored continent of Africa. This threat is so far masked by claims of civility that it becomes all but invisible, unless we realize that such claims function specifically to overcome the threat through practices of externalization. Internally, the unity of the European subject was constituted around interests determined in relation to the Discovery of land for the purposes of economic gain, resource extraction, civilizational missions, religious conversions, or settlement. This equivalence obtained within the specific territorial boundaries that comprised the territorial imaginary of the Age of Discovery. It is, then, no overstatement to say that Europe and Europeans are, as such, at least partially constituted through the articulatory practices of exploration and land appropriation — the twin movements of encounter and suppression — that is, through “Discovery” writ large. This points directly to the *structuring function* played by Discovery as a nodal point within the European hegemonic order that, we have argued throughout, is constitutive of

the historical epoch known as the Age of Discovery. For the remainder of this chapter we will outline specific ways that these structuring effects appear, so as to summarize and expand upon the arguments developed thus far.

Discovery as an Hegemonic Nodal Point

As we have just seen, Discovery produces and organizes *social identities and social relations*, effecting and maintaining antagonisms such as European/non-European and Civilized/Savage (all of which may be contained in the discursive form of the Discoverer/Discovered) through discursive preclusion, cultural difference, and racial Othering. This ensemble of practices, disciplines, and discourses that produce the Discovered as a category mutually reinforce and act upon one another to create a systematic effect of division, organizing the “inside” and “outside” of social and physical spaces, reifying social and territorial borders, boundaries, and divisory lines. Discovery collapses differential moments, from major to minor (e.g. from civilized/savage to clothed/nude, literate/illiterate, and so on), to construct European superiority through the subordination of Others. An analogy is thus formed between all Others that justifies their subordination through their articulation as the not-us of European subjectivity. Discovery as such is therefore an expression of a particular power relation which gave ontological centrality and epistemological privilege to everything European, discursively constructing the acceptability of European domination and legitimating a multitude of colonial practices, including violence and exploitation of the worst sort.

This nodal point organized a bloc of European nations *vis-à-vis* a multiplicity of groups living in the Americas, continental Africa, and a range of Atlantic and Pacific islands. Concretely, the fragmented European terrain was united under the common cause of land appropriation of non-European territories, which effected and maintained agonistic relations between nations, bringing European practices of exploration under the *telos* of land appropriation and constituting explorers as agents of Discovery. In this, the discourse of Discovery crossed national lines to create

formal and informal networks of explorers, traders, travellers, and pirates.¹⁰⁴ Formal groupings were no less trans-national than the informal in their composition. For example, in travel writing from this period it is commonplace to find authors and publishers who pull indiscriminately from explorers' accounts of other European nations (Percy 236).¹⁰⁵ This transnational character was also in the companies of the ships on which explorers travelled, which were often comprised of mariners from across the continent, with the relatively brief exception of a British prohibition on such practices.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the subject of Discovery is not a national identity, even when lands claimed were for one particular nation over another, attesting to its feature as a discourse common to all European nations. This challenges Laclau and Mouffe's conception of the period as one determined entirely by a theological-political logic and supports Anghie's claim that the colonial confrontations brought about by Discovery were *constitutive* of European international law and concepts of sovereignty (Anghie 27-28).

As a nodal point, Discovery organized the rapidly expanding discursive terrain brought about by exploration into a new construction of "the global" through specific practices of spatial ordering embodied in the *jus publicum Europaeum*: a synecdoche of a new, Eurocentric territorial imaginary. Discovery stabilized relations on uncertain terrains by minimizing and organizing the points of antagonism between nation-states, bringing competing agents and actors into a functional equivalence. Empirically, conflict "beyond the line" was deeply unstable, as individual nation-states and Indigenous groups allied, conflicted, or existed in relatively close proximity but independently of one another. Historically, the doctrine of Discovery unified European interests and practices, establishing a chain of equivalence between its agents, actors, institutions, and subjects over time. As exploration continued, Discovery (and thus European hegemony) helped to manage new elements through these established chains of difference and equivalence. Geographic movement across the

¹⁰⁴ An aspect touched upon by Anna Neill in her analysis of the Age. For more see Part I Chapter 7.

¹⁰⁵ As already mentioned in Part I Chapter 6.

¹⁰⁶ The first detailed account of an expedition to the Canaries, for instance, (after Lanzarotto Malocello's expedition in the 1330s, for which we have few complete and unambiguously authentic documents) in 1341 sailed from a Portuguese port under Italian command with Castilian personnel, among others (Fernández-Armesto 155).

globe quickly became a movement *within* as the new discursive terrain was traced with the outlines of a new politico-juridical enclosure through the processes of spatial ordering and the burgeoning hegemonic order gained in valence. As a result, from an historical vantage point, each particular act of land appropriation cannot be given a “fixed” meaning in and of itself; each Discovery came to represent, in common consciousness (i.e. at the level of common sense) the moment of a more global phenomenon. In this sense, each further act produced *totalizing effects* that both confirmed and maintained the broader hegemonic order. The contingency of each act became masked by the necessity it was granted by the discourse of Discovery, since the Discoverer’s status was continually (re)affirmed as representative of this seemingly universal order.

All of this points to a *broadening* both horizontally and vertically of the European discursive terrain — an equal movement in breadth and depth of existing and new discourses under the auspices of Discovery, which (re)organized the playing field entirely and (re)constituted a vast number of social practices towards an appropriative effect. European appropriation quickly became the *orientation* for the Age, uniting the specific orders of cultural, social, and political practice under a common framework. In the terminology of Laclau and Mouffe, Discovery acted as a single element assuming a universal structuring function within a particular discursive field. Law, the physical sciences, commerce, writing, geography, cartography, and countless other discourses and disciplines were mobilized in the service of Discovery, while new forms representative of the Age, such as ethnography, emerged. A vast system of alliances between agents from all avenues of European life was mobilized against Indigenous populations and opposing forces in the name of civilization, “plantation,” trade, travel, or religious conversion, among others. Movements of capital, developments in technology, and (re)configurations of cultural, social, and political spaces all found their common denominator in this historical moment. Consequently, Europe emerged as an objective totality and in an ascendant position on all levels where its hegemony obtained: a seemingly global, universal order.

At the level of common sense, Discovery played the role of a regulating principle and progenitor of thought, organizing a vast range of cultural, social, political, and economic relations around simple lines of territorial and racial divisions — abstract lines organizing the objective realities that established the unity of European consciousness at the expense of all Others. The hegemonic hold of Discovery thus lies not in its juridical-political formulation (i.e. the *jus gentium*) but equally in its cultural and social expressions. As this chapter makes clear, it became more than a single element within the European discursive terrain: it was a fundamental nodal point in a newly global context, produced from an array of discursive positions, which (re)organized that terrain almost entirely. Equal attention must therefore be given to the broader dispersion of positions from which Discovery has been produced, which highlights the analytical utility of Laclau and Mouffe's theory of hegemony for this project. This theoretical framework makes immediately clear the relationship between what otherwise appears to be a contradiction in terms — between the unity and fragmentation of social practices that constitute and are constituted by Discovery.

Once we recognize the contingent nature of the unity of Discovery, and the dispersion of cultural forms and social practices through which that unity is produced, it becomes possible to adequately analyze the forms of resistance that have been taken against it, which is the ultimate task that my reading of *Gulliver's Travels* will undertake. Before moving on to such an analysis, however, we must first conclude our analysis of Discovery through its third meaning: that of revealing.

Part II: Theorizing Discovery

Chapter 11: Revealing & Unveiling

In the last chapter I elaborated upon the consequences of the European explorations of the globe and the role of land appropriations in unifying European interests *vis-a-vis* the Indigenous peoples of the Americas and Africa. Exploration and land appropriation, I have argued, were constitutive of a new socio-political European order predicated upon a new image of the globe with European nation-states as its centre.

In this chapter I will establish the travel writing produced by Europeans throughout this movement from exploration to land appropriation as a form of revealing and unveiling that made land appropriations possible — that is, as a primary articulatory practice of Discovery. My historical scope extends from approximately 1340, after the European movement into the Atlantic produced the earliest documentation of the Canaries, to approximately 1750 — a moment Mary Louise Pratt calls the ‘Linnaean Watershed,’ when the titular Swedish naturalist published a classificatory system “designed to categorize all plant forms on the planet, known or unknown to Europeans” (15). Through this historical period, we witness the first traces of a new conception of the globe right through to a scale-model of the earth and its coastal outlines as Europe moves from a continent divided amongst itself to a continent depicting itself as the sole representative of a newly global civilization, while its member states pursue lands and resources of non-European peoples without restraint or concern for the lives of Others. My discussion will therefore show how travel writing utilized a narrative modality to “reveal” the globe in this Eurocentric image dependent upon the logic of Discovery: a discursively constructed paradigm that I identify as the “travel realism” described by Jones, which organized the globe into a single field of discursivity predicated upon the “civilizational” and “rational” superiority of Europeans over their non-European Others.

Before proceeding with this discussion, we first require a more thorough theorization of land appropriation and the necessity of some form of revealing for maintaining the claim to land over time. In *The Nomos of the Earth*, Schmitt argues that land appropriations play a constitutive role in the

establishment of all forms of law that will follow from them; they are “a primary criterion embodying all subsequent criteria” (45) of a given territory. The land appropriation is foundational in this sense because, both historically and logically, land must be claimed, held, or otherwise “appropriated” before it can be measured and distributed for use. As a primary criterion, all law is thereby rooted in this initial act of appropriation. It precedes public and private law, establishing the “most radical legal title, in the full and comprehensive sense of the term *radical title*” (47) for a land-appropriating group. As a public act, the land appropriation also has implications for laws that are external to the land-appropriating group as well as for laws established between land-appropriating groups. In instances where “the land-appropriating group is confronted with other land-appropriating or land-owning groups and powers,” the land must be taken by some means or another, unless the land is “free” for claim (45-46). As such, the land appropriation is also the foundation of international law, since the laws and customs that bring order to coexisting empires, countries, and peoples are inevitably orchestrated around public and private procedures for territorial changes (83).

Although Schmitt’s theorization of the juridical role of land appropriations extends significantly further, I would like to stop here to dwell for a moment on two aspects of the land appropriation that Schmitt does not address at all throughout his book, but which bear directly on my conceptual elaboration of *revealing* as a practice of Discovery. The first is how one land-appropriating group displaces another land-holding group using means other than pure force. The second is how, outside of complete and total destruction and/or domination of the land’s original inhabitants, the invading group can maintain control over those lands over time. In his theorization of the land appropriation, Schmitt assumes for lands appropriated a sort of *carte blanche* — a *terra nullius* — from which all further activity will proceed. This is most evident in what he labels the “threefold root of law and justice” wherein the original lines of a community’s order are drawn. It is worth quoting Schmitt’s explication of these foundations because of their central significance within this thought:

First, the fertile earth contains within herself, within the womb of her fecundity, an inner measure, because human toil and trouble, human planting and cultivation of the fruitful earth is rewarded justly by her with growth and harvest. Every farmer knows the inner measure of this justice.

Second, soil that is cleared and worked by human hands manifests firm lines, whereby definite divisions become apparent. Through the demarcation of fields, pastures, and forests, these lines are engraved and embedded. Through crop rotation and fallowing, they are even planted and nurtured. In these lines, the standards and rules of human cultivation of the earth become discernible.

Third and last, the solid ground of the earth is delineated by fences, enclosures, boundaries, walls, houses, and other constructs. Then, the orders and orientations of human social life become apparent. Then, obviously, families, clans, tribes, estates, forms of ownership and human proximity, also forms of power and domination become visible. (42)

The first thing to note from this passage is the form of *discursive preclusion* operating within it, which is identical to that which I identified in the writing of Columbus and earlier Discoverers of the Canary Islands. Presence on the land seemingly begins with the work of a farmer, a symbol of agricultural society antithetical to the hunter-gatherer societies that preceded it in the Greco-Roman tradition. The “standards and rules of human cultivation” to which Schmitt alludes are thus specifically European standards, which make clear distinctions between cultivated and uncultivated spaces and favour European agricultural practices of planting, cultivating and harvesting on designated fields and pastures, using methods such as crop rotation and fallowing. Lands which are not maintained according to these standards are presumably vacant or lawless, and the human social life which that outside of “fences, enclosures, boundaries, walls, houses, and other constructs” are, by this formulation, *not apparent* — that is, they do not appear in the eyes of those living inside of these boundaries. Thus, we see how Schmitt’s theorization of the “root of all law” specifically precludes alternative (Indigenous) ways of being and doing to warrant European land appropriations and naturalize social orders organized according to the principles of agriculturalism and juridical enclosure. Moreover, his passage makes clear that *exclusion is integral to the entire system*. Land cannot be appropriated without some form of exclusion, since it must first be “cleared and worked by human hands” to manifest the firm lines of a novel social structure.

Yet every gardener knows that they grow with their garden and has felt within them the force of the reiterative violence required to claim and maintain that space as their own, continually freeing it from those others (be it plant, insect, animal, or human) who grew (or would like to grow) with it.¹⁰⁷ Even to designate a space for claim requires an original division which marks the outside as such, drawing the lines of an inner space through an active, sustained form of expulsion that keeps the inside from the out. Here we see the importance of European divisory lines beyond the internal significance of ordering relations between states: designating a space “beyond the line” which forms an outside constitutive of the inside. Before the European movement into the Atlantic, the outer boundaries of Eurasia were largely *geographical*: a mountain range, a desert, or a body of water. The inside, in its fullest sense, ended where these geographic boundaries began. Once technology permitted a maritime existence and a scale model of the globe, the fundamentals of boundaries in this sense changed radically. Boundaries became borders that were increasingly discursive in nature: amity lines, *rayas*, political limits, zones, and enclosures. Moreover, these borders were also increasingly permeable. The outside was forever coming in: it could not be kept out. And so the outside became increasingly discursive in nature as well.

The second aspect of Schmitt’s passage I would like to consider pertains to its relevance as an expression of a singularly European jurisprudential logic particular to the Age of Discovery, which links *spatial consciousness* with *social ordering*. As with Adam in the book of Genesis, it is through classification and distinction that objects become perceptible to a knowing-subject and thus available for ordering. In the Hebrew Bible (the *Tanakh*) and the Christian Old Testament, naming is one of Adam’s first responsibilities: “Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.” By naming these creatures they become perceptible, leading to the revelation that “for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.” Accordingly, “the LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him,’”

¹⁰⁷ Metaphors of “weeds,” “pests,” and “invasive species” abound.

and so He creates Eve to keep Adam company (Genesis 2:18-21). Similarly, in Schmitt's passage, it is when human hands shape the soil that the earth "manifests firm lines." It is the demarcation of field from forest — of that which humankind cultivates and that which remains uncultivated — that these lines become embedded within the earth and through this distinction that they "become discernible." It is the delineation of the earth by the human imposition of boundaries and borders that power-structures "become visible." At each level, human power over space increases with a consciousness of that space, and consciousness of that space increases from that power. This attests to a relationship between spatial consciousness and social ordering involved in this two-fold process: a capacity for (re)ordering that makes lands visible and a visibility of the land that enables further (re)ordering. In other words, in the act of revealing, the land is both made visible and (re)ordered according to an orientation imposed by the land-appropriating group. Where lands are already occupied, the original inhabitants are precluded from visibility in a manner that constitutes the land as "free" for appropriation. This also conforms to my earlier analysis of revealing as a form of Discovery that establishes the forms of visibility of that which has been found and of unveiling as a form of revealing that un-covers lands already held by others.¹⁰⁸

As I have indicated on several occasions, Europeans saw non-European lands as "free" to claim, despite the presence of the inhabitants on the lands they sought to appropriate. And this was accomplished, I have suggested, through an articulatory practice that revealed the lands as such. The conceit of this chapter is therefore to unpack this relationship between revealing and land appropriations, to examine the temporal and epistemological aspects of land appropriation that accompany all socio-spatial divisions. To initiate this discussion and establish certain terms for later, I will begin with four theses on revealing and unveiling, with two corollaries for land appropriation.

Thesis 1: *Revealing and unveiling follow immediately from exploration.* I take it as self-evident that the processes of revealing and unveiling could not occur without a prior finding of spaces unknown to the explorer. The concept of exploration itself denotes both finding and

¹⁰⁸ See Part II Chapter 8: The Three Meanings of Discovery.

revealing/unveiling; exploration is as much a revealing/unveiling of found space as it is a searching for and finding of spaces unknown.

Thesis 2: *The space between revealing and unveiling is ambiguous and ambivalent.* Revealing is a form of *making visible* in a manner closely akin to the stated purpose of “pure science,” taking the unknown as its object without regard for practical applications. Unveiling is a form of making visible *for use*, analogous to the processes of *applied* science. Unveiling always takes the form of revealing; revealing may always become an unveiling.

Thesis 3: *An attempt at land appropriation is first and foremost an attempt at unveiling.* Land appropriation is both a spatial and a temporal problematic. Finding, measuring, and encompassing land is insufficient as a form of unveiling for a successful land appropriation. A minimum amount of visibility is required even of unpeopled lands for the land appropriation to hold. Land found must be unveiled before appropriation is possible. If the unveiling is unsuccessful, so too is the land appropriation. More specifically, one could say that land appropriation is attempted *through* unveiling. If unveiling means “making visible for use,” and land appropriation is a re-ordering of space and place according to a new orientation, then unveiling is the process by which that space becomes visible for re-ordering.

Thesis 4: *Unveiling is not a form of (dis)placement.* Displacement can only occur when the land being appropriated is already occupied by another group. Unveiling makes the land vulnerable to appropriation; it makes displacement possible. It is a means through which displacement is achieved.

Corollary 1: *Land appropriation is not the result of a political decision; it is the result of a successful unveiling.* To claim land is not to hold land. The history of land appropriation is also a history of failed attempts. Spain, France, and England, for instance, were each unsuccessful in their first several attempts to settle North America in the mid- to late-16th century (Pickett 184-197). Similarly, Bartolomé de Las Casas twice tried to establish colonies in South America, though neither succeeded (Pagden xv). Unveiling is never a *fait accompli*. The decision marks the onset of the attempt; it does not determine the success of the attempt.

Corollary 2: *Land appropriation is always partial and contingent; it must be continually renewed through revealing/unveiling.* Land appropriation refers to the processes by which land is held under control by a particular group or collective of groups. This control will always be contested because the land appropriation is always partial and contingent. The appropriation must be continually renewed (or, re-enacted) through processes of revealing and unveiling, which maintain the forms of visibility required for a particular order to hold.

What these theses indicate is that land appropriation is a fundamentally *hegemonic* process, requiring a governing logic that maintains a given socio-spatial order over time. This follows immediately from the partial and contingent nature of land appropriation, which requires some form of articulatory practice to establish and maintain the appropriation as a full positivity — to establish the socio-spatial order as a fixed, stable totality that has “domesticated” (in Laclau and Mouffe’s terminology) the field of differences operating within it. It is to the topic of such an articulatory practice that we will now turn.

Travel Writing in Europe

A glimpse at any given list of travel works produced from the 15th century onwards shows an undeniable truth: in the movement into the Atlantic, westward across the Americas, eastward down the coast of western Africa towards Asia and India, beyond the horizon of the entirety of continental European knowledge and understanding and into a new conception of the world as a globe, voyagers were there at every step, paddle, and sail of the way, writing. From these movements, the physical sciences, ethnography, geography, chorography, religious missionary work, and commerce had all gained their own forms of travel writing, even if those forms were often wrapped up with one another in a single book. The general use-value of these accounts had significantly intensified as they found increasing application in a vast range of fields. Travel writing, and cartography along with it, took centre stage in European discourse around the same time that exploration and Discovery became an industry (Marchitello 92).

Although often written abroad, these works were published back home, and so it should be no surprise that it was primarily within Europe and among Europeans that they circulated. Public interest in travel was long established, as witnessed by the popularity of works such as Mandeville's and Polo's, but in the earliest days of the 16th century this interest exploded. Columbus's "Letter to Luis de Santangel," published within a month of his return in March 1493, quickly became one of the most disseminated travel works ever produced (Mancall, *Narratives* 31). Yet it was the work of another traveller, Amerigo Vespucci's *Cosmographiae Introductio* (1507), that would lead Europe to the realization that what Columbus had stumbled upon was actually a whole continent they had never seen before (Parry 54). Testament to the influence of that work lies in the fact that the continent was named after Vespucci, rather than Columbus.

The print revolution that had swept through Europe in the 15th century also made it possible for publishers to disseminate travelogues farther and faster than ever before, while an ever-growing and always insatiable public interest kept the presses rolling and travellers writing (Mancall, *Narratives* 8). Books were, in fact, the first mass-produced commodity (Anderson 34), leaving one to wonder what proportion of these had travel as their subject. The emergence and success of travel compilations around Europe in the two centuries that followed attest to the scope of both the supply and the demand of the information they contained. Collections such as Sebastian Münster's German-language *Cosmographia* (1544), Giovanni Battista Ramusio's Italian-language *Navigazioni et Viaggi* (1550), André Thevet's French-language *Les Singularités de la France Antarctique* (1557), or the English-language pages from Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (1589) and Samuel Purchas' *Purchas His Pilgrimage* (1614) indicate that interest was by no means confined to a single nation or cultural heritage. For Hakluyt's first edition, the editor collected over 90 voyages to fill 834 folio pages in a single volume, while his second edition required three volumes to publish more than double the number of voyages and pages contained within the first (Hulme and Youngs 19). "By the end of the 17th century, if not earlier," writes Barbara Shapiro, "there was [in Europe] an almost insatiable taste for 'facts' concerning European and more distant places" (76). Details of

peoples, plants, animals, things, and “remote” locations excited the European imagination to such a degree that the public avidly purchased the accounts of travellers and chorographers, pushing the popularity of travel writing well into the 18th century and beyond (Hulme and Youngs 37). The run-away success of Dampier’s *A New Voyage Around the World* (1697) ensured a continued, stable market for collections like John and Awnsham Churchill’s *A Collection of Voyages and Travels* (1704) and at least six other major new anthologies within the next three decades (Hulme and Youngs 24). It was during this period that popular interest in travel began to be exploited in earnest by writers who were decidedly *not* travellers. In 18th century English literature in particular, “travel is everywhere,” writes literary theorist James Buzard. “Almost every author of consequence is in on it: Daniel Defoe, Joseph Addison, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, Samuel Johnson, James Boswell, Laurence Sterne, Mary Wollstonecraft — and of course, Jonathan Swift — each produced at least one travel book” (qtd. in Hulme and Youngs 37).

Travel had by then long been on the agenda or syllabus of the learned class; seeing or reading about the wider world became “something like an obligation for the person conscientious about developing the mind and accumulating knowledge” (qtd. in Hulme and Youngs 37). Francis Bacon opened his 1601 essay “Of Travel” with the statement that “travel, in the younger sort, is a part of education, in the elder, a part of experience” (qtd. in Ord 5). René Descartes wrote in his *Discourse on Method* (1637) that as a youth he had resolved “to study no other science than that which I could find within myself or else in the great book of the world” and then “spent the rest of my youth in travelling, seeing courts and armies, mixing with people of different humours and ranks, in gathering a varied experience, in testing myself in the situations which chance offered me, and everywhere reflecting upon whatever events I witness in such a way as to draw some profit from them...” (33-34). At a time when firsthand observation was privileged over all other forms of learning, travel was broadly seen as “a way to acquire knowledge that can be put to the good of the state and a means to strengthen the judgment and hone one’s skills of discernment. It increases civility, social polish, and, potentially, social status and improves the morals and manners of the travellers. It is a cure for

ignorance and prejudice and promotes self-awareness. It enables one to know one's own country better by comparison [etc.]" (Ord 3).

For the majority who could not travel, however, there was travel writing: "The vicarious experience derived from travel accounts provided a valued, if imperfect, substitute" Shapiro notes (84). Travel and descriptive-chorographic accounts had become recognized as a form of historical writing due to their role in transmitting the form of experience thought necessary for public life (65), but they were also broadly recognized as the primary source of knowledge of the world for the lower but still literate classes (Knowles 4). Whether written to delight the reader, to inform the public policy of the political class, to contribute to natural philosophy, or enhance the opportunities of the elite, travel writing was thus instrumental for Europeans from all walks of life as they re-developed their ideas of the world and their own place within it. Benedict Anderson has suggested that the strategic importance of books for disseminating ideas made them central in the development of modern Europe (34 n58). This is true in the sense of "generating imagined communities, building... particular solidarities" (133) as much as in the sense of participating in "the discursive agenda of 'writing the nation'" (qtd. in Hulme and Youngs 27) or "orientalizing the oriental" (Said) in the early modern period. Books were instrumental in the formation of social orders that navigated the spaces between cultures newly in contact.

It is perhaps for this reason that a great deal of attention has been given to the role of writing in colonialism. When describing the technologies of power carried by European explorers into the Americas, Stephen Greenblatt lists writing first (9). Todorov's analysis of the settlement of the Americas concludes that conquest and colonialism is as much a control over the means of communication as a control over bodies and property.¹⁰⁹ And Roy Bridges observes that from the early 18th century, travel writing in particular was "increasingly identified with the interests and preoccupations of those in European societies who wished to bring the non-European world into a

¹⁰⁹ See *The Conquest of America* Chapter 3, part 3, on "Enslavement, Colonialism, and Communication" for example. Or, Chapter 2, parts 2 and 3, on "Montezuma and Signs" and "Cortés and Signs."

position where it could be influenced, exploited, or, in some cases, directly controlled.” The ways these works constructed a sense of European intellectual superiority over Others helped maintain what historians have characterized as “informal empire” or “unofficial imperialism” (qtd. in Hulme and Youngs 53). The historical moment that saw the emergence of travel writing as a fixation of popular culture also produced nationalism, colonialism, imperialism, slavery, and — not coincidentally — the first steps of globalization and capitalism. Travel writing thus exhibits an undeniably ideological content developed in a colonial context, and following a colonial form, at both macro- and micro-social levels. It was “as central to the cultural enterprise of Empire as the monarchy was to its political formation” (Ashcroft 3).

This dual-use of travel writing for cultural projects at home and abroad is wonderfully realized by Mary Louise Pratt, in the absorbing *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992). Pratt shows that, as a result of the pervasiveness and influence of travel writing in Europe, the subject of Discovery was a domestic subject as well. Travel writing, she argues, produced a “domestic subject of Euroimperialism” by “engag[ing] metropolitan reading publics with (or to) expansionist enterprises” (4). Throughout her extensive analysis of works from the latter half of the Euroimperial hegemony, Pratt establishes the internal, cultural dimension of travel writing, which “produced ‘the rest of the world’ for European readerships,” encoding and legitimating the aspirations of European expansionism (4). The subject that emerges from this process is best described as a *planetary subject* — an “historical subject” who is “European, male, secular, and lettered; his planetary consciousness is the product of his contact with print culture and infinitely more ‘compleat’ than the lived experience of sailors” (30).¹¹⁰ The European travel *reader*, Pratt shows, is therefore as involved as the European travel *writer* in two of the projects that I have partially outlined in the preceding chapters: the circumnavigation and description of the globe (“a

¹¹⁰ Pratt borrows elements for this particular description from a passage in Defoe’s *The Compleat English Gentleman* (1730): “[He may] make a tour of the world in books, he may make himself master of the geography of the universe in the maps, atlases and measurements of our mathematicians. He may travell by land with the historians, by sea with the navigators. He may go round the globe with Dampier and Rogers, and kno’ a thousand times more doing it than all those illiterate sailors” (qtd. in Pratt 15).

double deed that consists of sailing round the world and then writing an account of it”) and the mapping of the world’s coastlines (“equally dependent on ink and paper... still underway in the eighteenth century, but known to be completable” [29]) — projects undertaken, of course, under the auspices of Discovery.¹¹¹

The “planetary consciousness” shared by both reader and writer alike, Pratt argues, is “a basic element constructing modern Eurocentrism” (15). By 1735, however, a new version of planetary consciousness is discernible in the general shift “toward interior exploration and the construction of global-scale meaning through the descriptive apparatuses of natural history” (15). This shift is most clearly pronounced in two events that took place that year: the publication of Linnaeus’ *Systema Naturae* and what became known as the La Condamine expedition. Linnaeus’ innovative work developed “a descriptive system designed to classify all the plants on the earth, known and unknown, according to the characteristics of their reproductive parts” (24). It had a dramatic impact on travel writing in particular, as travellers quickly moved away from traditional forms such as survival literature, civic description, and navigational narratives, and towards “the new knowledge-building project of natural history” (24). Similarly, the La Condamine expedition, which was an “international” scientific expedition that aimed to determine the exact shape of the earth, marked “the onset of an era of scientific travel and interior exploration that in turn suggests shifts in Europe’s conception of itself and its global relations” (24). This marks a transitional period in European hegemony, from maritime to interior exploration and trade, from the inauguration to the consolidation of colonial and economic power, and from the rag-tag collection of “facts” to the complete systematization of knowledge: one which “makes a picture of the planet appropriated and redeployed from a unified, European perspective” (36). It is highly significant, then, that *Gulliver’s Travels* was written within this transitional phase in 1726, drawing deeply from travel writing to effectively look back to a time that has come to constitute its historical present. If one were looking

¹¹¹ Pratt’s conception of the “planetary project” in which these two small projects participate therefore neatly coincides with my conception of “the global” outlined in Chapter 10.

for a “type” of travel writing that the work takes as its object,¹¹² one need look no further than the discourse of Discovery, as travel writing is everywhere in it at that historical moment. Thus, finally, we may revisit the question initiated in the very first chapter of this thesis: what gives the term “travel writing” its unity? Due to the long history, complexity, and general incoherence of travel writing (“what Frederic Ogee rightly calls ‘one of the messiest palimpsests in literary history’” [Marchitello 23]) our answer to this question requires us to go back before we can move forward.

A Song of Travel and Narrative

Travel is as old as human civilization. In many respects, the history of human migration is also a history of travel, because it is also a history of exploration. And from these explorations came the explorer’s accounts of their travels. Unsurprisingly, then, narratives of travel are among the oldest stories known to us now, long preceding the modern distinction between fact and fiction by several millennia. One of the earliest stories on record, written in Egypt during the Twelfth Dynasty (circa 1991 - 1782 B.C.E.), is a tale of a sailor shipwrecked alone on a marvellous island (Hulme and Youngs 2). Over a thousand years later came those whose names are far more familiar to a contemporary audience — Homer’s *Odyssey*, the story of Exodus, Virgil’s *Aeneid*. It is no overstatement to suggest that travel narratives form the fabric of Western mythologies and religions as much as its cultures and politics.

That these early narratives have survived so long is a testament to the resilience of oral traditions and the persistence of scribes who recorded travellers’ tales and (re)produced hand-written manuscripts. The introduction of Marco Polo’s *Travels* shows that this relationship was alive and well in the late 13th century. Recorded by Rustichello of Pisa, it starts: “Emperors and kings, dukes and marquises, counts, knights, and townsfolk, and all people who wish to know the various races of men and the peculiarities of the various regions of the world, take this book and have it read to you” (qtd. in *Narratives* 3). Since travellers, like most Europeans, were for the most part illiterate at this

¹¹² The conceit of Chapter 4.

time, the chronicler figured as an important intermediary between the explorer and his intended audience. Peter Mancall observes that, “in an age before printing presses could churn out hundreds of copies of a report with less effort than scribes writing by hand, hard-won knowledge about travels survived in manuscripts, some of them copied time and again, or in the memories of those capable of recalling precise details of events they never witnessed.” Even after the print revolution, during a period when literacy rates and access to learned texts sky-rocketed, oral culture was just as important as the printed word for the transmission of information from explorers to the rest of the general population (4-5). It is for this reason that I begin this chapter on travel writing with an emphasis on the centrality of the travel *narrative*, which is foundational to any tale of travel regardless of the medium through which it was transmitted.

Although the print revolution significantly enhanced the scope and scale of transmission of travel narratives, their basic function has remained more or less constant throughout recorded history: teaching readers and listeners about the world and its contents, providing a sense of place and space, position and orientation. The Christian Middle Ages were what Kimball Smith describes as a “stay at home age,” where few people were able to travel widely. Thus, for every narrative we have of voyagers travelling to the ends of the earth, “there were multitudes whose only experience of the world ended a day’s walk from the villages where they were born” (17). Polo’s introduction alludes to this fact as well in his appeal to those listeners “who wish to know the various races of men and the peculiarities of the various regions of the world” (17). Until the end of the 15th century, all awareness of distant lands and peoples came from pilgrimage accounts and the rare *mappa mundi* put on display at the local cathedral (17). This basic function of the travel narrative has been traced at least as far back as *The Odyssey*, which is said to exemplify the Greek tradition of using exploration to learn of God, humankind, and nature (Jones 69). For Odysseus, exploration both fed and fueled a curiosity that propelled his adventures forward. Throughout his tale, unexplored territories always present “special opportunities for acquiring fresh knowledge” to pursue and report (69). In this he sets a precedent for Columbus, for whom travel and narrative became inseparable.

In *Conquest of America*, Todorov argues that Columbus' journals reveal a man for whom "... discovery seems in truth subject to a goal, which is the narrative of the voyage" (13). One might say, he continues, "that Columbus has undertaken it all in order to be able to tell unheard-of stories.... But is not a travel narrative itself the point of departure, and not only the point of arrival, of a new voyage? Did not Columbus himself set sail because he had read Marco Polo's narrative?" (13). For travellers, Todorov implies, narratives are themselves journeys marked by an inevitable return: a recurrent bringing back of the outside inward. This return then begs for another departure; it provides an intimation of what still exists beyond the horizons of knowledge and experience, which only further exploration can satisfy. Just as travel constitutes narrative, then, there is a clear sense in which narrative constitutes travel. Jean-Didier Urbain suggests that "at the origin of any journey there is 'a story, or another journey, or yet another story, in brief, there is a mediator of desire, a model to be translated that informs one's vision, governs one's action and feeds one's discourse'" (qtd. in Hooper 23). This knot between travel and narrative together thus fashion a logic of movement, which takes the form of departure, encounter, and return, and precedes the traveller's journey. In this way the *narrative form* brings a certain order to a tangle of subjects, objects, instances, and events, organizing them into moments of a single structure with a clear beginning, middle, and end. As a logic of movement, this narrative form also constitutes a logic of space, organizing inside and out, us and them, part and whole. It is the here and there that distinguishes home and away, staying and going, departure and arrival. This is one way that travel narratives provide us with basic forms of orientation and a sense of place: they organize spatial concepts that are fundamental to human ways of knowing and being.

Travel Writing as an Historical System of Identification of the Art of Writing

By the 16th century, narrative was no longer the sole discursive form through which the details of the journey were organized and transmitted. Merchants and mariners had long been instructed to keep records of their movements to direct those who would follow behind them (Hulme and Youngs

17), but in the Age of Discovery documentation of all aspects of the journey became integral to the activity (3). Itineraries, logs, maps, and illustrations were placed alongside narratives, anecdotes, and descriptions, so seamlessly and frequently that one cannot help but conclude that written records and narrative forms had become, with the journey itself, moments of a shared discourse. This is perhaps most simply evinced by the noun *travels*, which in that time could refer either to the journey or the journey's account.^{113, 114}

Some scholars have argued that it is the discursive nature of travel that was responsible for the proximity between narrative, writing, and travel during this period,¹¹⁵ but there is strong evidence to suggest otherwise, even if the claim that travel is discursive is not without merit. Travel forms the basis for connection and establishes, renews, or expands channels between historically disconnected geographic spaces and discursive terrains, introducing historically disconnected plants, animals, peoples, cultures, disciplines, and discourses. It is a form of inscription that, through moments of departure, encounter, and return, leaves impressions with long-lasting and far-reaching prolongations. Travel establishes routes, terminals, points of connection and intersection. It brings together what stands apart and sets apart what stands together. It writes, overwrites, erases, and edits. It covers and it uncovers. It articulates, re-articulates, and dis-articulates. In short, travel is a form of articulatory practice and is therefore discursive as such; yet it is articulatory only in a limited sense of the concept, since travel enacts a form of articulation from which all forms of epistemology are absent. The traveller is always a writer in this sense: they carry with them germs, seeds, fungi, and animals that may significantly alter the environment into which they were carried regardless of the traveller's intentions or awareness. These are the movements of life and death that leave a record of another sort.

¹¹³ "Travel," n. 2b, 2c. *OED Online*. March 2019. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/view/Entry/205267?> (accessed April 29, 2019)

(2b) "With a and plural. An act of travelling; a journey." (2c) "Account of occurrences and observations of a journey into foreign parts."

¹¹⁴ It is thus with good reason that Pratt describes the circumnavigation of the globe as "a double deed that consists of sailing round the world then writing an account of it." The term "circumnavigation," she adds in parentheses, refers "either to the voyage or the book" (Pratt 29).

¹¹⁵ See, for instance, Howard Marchitello's argument that Columbus and Hakluyt's respective conflation of narrative, writing, and travel is evidence of the discursive nature of travel (97-8).

Travel *narratives*, on the other hand, always operate alongside, within, and upon human awareness and activity, in addition to whatever prolongations they may have beyond this. They move with travel, yet stand apart from it through their ability to imagine, organize, present, and re-present the content of the journey. As such, they take the form of a journey towards some imaginary, towards some identity, towards some history — a movement that creates here and there as much as now and then.

Alternative definitions of “articulation” illuminate more fully this capacity and its place between the *episteme* and the *techne* — that is, between ways of knowing and of doing. Figuratively, the term may denote a conceptual relationship, interaction, or point of juncture (between two things) (*OED* I 1d); colloquially, it may suggest the utterance of distinct elements of speech (*OED* II7a); in linguistics “articulation” refers to the power of speech or the manifestation or demonstration of a concept (*OED* II 10, 11); while in music it expresses the capacity to produce effects of separation (*OED* II7b).¹¹⁶ From these varied expressions, I understand the form of articulation immanent to travel narrative beyond the formation of social relations constitutive of a civil-political or international juridical system and beyond any form of geographic interrelation, but rather as *a power of connection and distinction, of making things visible or producing effects of unity and separation* — that is, as a form of revealing constitutive of that which is revealed. Works that contain travel narratives therefore foster what Rancière calls an *archi-ethical* paradigm: “partitions of space and time that they produce to define ways of being together or separate, being in front or in the middle of, being inside or outside” (Rancière, *Dissensus* 137-8).¹¹⁷ This is not a form of Aristotelian *mimesis* — not a *representation* of a state of affairs that moves the reader to action (136). It concerns rather an ethics of representation — constitutive of a state of affairs — a framing of the fabric of shared sensory experience (137).

¹¹⁶ “articulation, n.”. *OED* Online. March 2019. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/view/Entry/11196?redirectedFrom=articulation> (accessed April 29, 2019).

¹¹⁷ It must be noted that Rancière’s discussion pertains to works of modern fiction (namely, works of literature produced around the time of the French Revolution), but is directly relevant to travel writing from the Age of Discovery, as I hope my discussion makes clear.

Through the narrative form, I argue, travel works take on *the power to frame the common world*, to produce partitions in space and time: to create and maintain particular configurations of the common fabric of sensory experience — “In other words,” as Rancière says, to configure “the shared plots of life, ways of seeing, doing, acting and being in the world (141).” This configuration is what Rancière calls a *distribution of the sensible*:

I call “distribution of the sensible” a generally implicit law that defines the forms of partaking by first defining the modes of perception in which they are prescribed. The partition of the sensible is the dividing-up of the world and of people, the *nemein* upon which the *nomoi* of the community are founded. This partition should be understood in the double sense of the word: on the one hand, as that which separates and excludes; on the other, as that which allows participation. A partition of the sensible refers to the manner in which a relation between a shared common and the distribution of exclusive parts is determined in sensory experience. This latter form of distribution, which, by its sensory self-evidence, anticipates the distribution of part and shares, itself presupposes a distribution of what is visible and is not, of what can be heard and what cannot (36).

Careful readers may have already noted the overlap with my earlier analysis of travel narrative (which constructs a logic of space) and articulation (which is a power of connection and distinction, of making things (in)visible, and producing effects of unity and separation). The capacity of the narrative form to configure the distribution of the sensible is thus what I, following from but expanding upon the work of Laclau and Mouffe, have identified as an *articulatory practice*. It is this form of articulation — this capacity for participating in the construction of the common — that distinguishes the discursivity of travel *narratives* from that of travel and from that of the form of writing that makes systematic, prolonged, repeated travel possible (which I will call the “writing of travel,” for simplicity). Writing, in this latter sense, is inseparable from travel of this sort because each element is conditional upon the presence of the other for their continued existence. Comprised primarily of itineraries, logs, maps, and description, the writing of travel organizes and supports movement, settlement, trade, and exchange. A prime example of such writing is the Italian and Portuguese *portulan* which guided mariners out of the Mediterranean and into the Atlantic in the 13th century.¹¹⁸ These were purpose-driven, utilitarian documents that remained immanent to localized,

¹¹⁸ See Part II, Chapter 9: Exploration.

more or less self-contained discourses, and as such produced effects that remained more or less contained by those discourses. They were distinct from the travel narratives of yore, which aspired to capture the moments of a common world for a broad readership; insofar as they embodied a sense of the common, it was that of private, specialized audiences whose commonality was in no way constituted by the writing in question.

By the 16th century, these two forms of writing had converged, combining travel, narrative, and writing in a manner that tied a knot between the real and the imagined, the seen and the thought, the journey and its record. These works almost invariably assumed a narrative form, either implicitly or explicitly. The most clearly narrational works were presented as an “eyewitness report of a voyage or ‘adventure’ in which the narrator proceeded chronologically, often beginning with the day his ship sailed,” writes Shapiro (70). Works that seemed to forsake the narrative form were often descriptive-chorographic (or, works of chorography), which “abandoned chronology for a cross-sectional description of a particular locale” (70), but they too they clearly follow the logic of movement, suspending any recounting of the traveller’s departure and return to elaborate the moment of encounter. It was also very common for writers and editors from this time to include maps, navigational charts, illustrations, itineraries, logs, and manifests in collections of travel writing as witness to the historical fact of travel — a practice that originated in Medieval navigational practices and coincided with (and contributed to) the rise of a concern for the “history of things” in a historical discourse previously dominated by a concern for the “deeds” of “Great Men.” Gradually these travelogues were recognized as a form of historical fact, “since they involved particular events or actions and merged easily with what might be called ‘contemporary history,’” suggests Shapiro (70). Thus, the “fact” of the journey lay in the publication and distribution of its written account, which gave narrative and non-narrative elements their equivalence.

This form of writing — the “travel writing” to which scholars of *Gulliver’s Travels* allude — is thus more properly defined in a manner analogous to Rancière’s definition of literature in the 18th century, as “a new system of identification of the art of writing.” It is an historically-specific “system

of relationships between practices, the forms of visibility of such practices, and modes of intelligibility.... A certain way of intervening in the sharing of the perceptible that defines the world we live in: the way in which the world is visible for us, and in which what is visible can be put into words, and the capacities and incapacities that reveal themselves accordingly” (*Literature* 7). Travel writing as such connected certain systems of words and images to certain systems of meaning to reveal the people, things, and places it described within particular spatial arrangements and inter-relationships, organizing the disorder of empirical reality into a narrative order organized by a clear logic of movement. This system of writing emerged, I argue, under a tripartite condition: when the *Inter caetera* articulated the civilizational discourse and land appropriation with exploration to form the doctrine of Discovery; when publication and wide-spread dissemination of Columbus’ account articulated the earlier narrative traditions of travel (in which Columbus was already participating) with Discovery; and when the structuring effects of Discovery began (re)organizing the rapidly expanding discursive terrain of Europe in a newly global context.

We saw in Chapter 9 that certain elements from this system of writing (e.g. the geographic realism of the *portulan* or the discursive preclusion of the Guanches, etc.) were already in place prior to this. Under Discovery, however, these elements entered the traditional plot of travel as moments of a newly articulated discourse of travel writing, which tied written and narrative forms contained within Columbus’ account to travel across the globe undertaken in the name of European land appropriations of non-European territories. *It was through this knot that the poetic task of discovery (as revealing) became tied to the political task of Discovery (as land appropriation), and the discourse of travel writing became a process of unveiling.* Works participating in this discourse were distinct from all that came before them because they were the first to be constituted by the doctrine of Discovery.

This transformation can be witnessed in the usage of the term “discovery” in titles of English travel works following England’s involvement in the appropriation of North America, as the concept moves from denoting “finding” (e.g. George Best’s 1578 “*True Discourse of the late voyages of*

discoverie, for the finding of a passage to Cathaya”) to “land appropriation” (e.g. George Peckham’s 1583 “*True reporte, of the late discoveries as possession taken in the right of the Crowne of Englande*”). Richard Hakluyt’s first work, from 1582, uses “discovery” in a way that suggests a form of “finding” designed for systematic repetition. The title, *Divers voyages touching the discovery of America [... with details] necessarie for such as shall hereafter make the like attempt*” suggests that the finding of the Americas can be repeated and that the reports of the travellers can be used by those who would “hereafter make like attempt.” Thus, in these titles we can observe that exploration has given way to repeated travel, finding to appropriation, and the European “movement beyond” that was initiated by the exploration of the Atlantic Ocean to a form of “movement towards” the land appropriations of non-European territories.

Historical Transformations in Travel Writing

Throughout this time there are a number of radical shifts within the plots of travel writing that correspond to those suggested by the titles above. The historical transformations are too complex to offer more than a cursory summary here, but they are nevertheless highly informative with even the briefest of treatments.

Before the advent of Discovery, and prior to the movement into the Atlantic, late-medieval travel accounts had been primarily focused upon religious pilgrimages and chivalric quests. In what I would describe as a *movement within* or a *return to*, the pilgrimage was a journey of moral or spiritual significance through which the traveller sought confirmation of existing beliefs. Chivalric quests, on the other hand, which may be characterized as a *movement towards* — namely, towards an historical moment (which never arrives) — or an *attainment of*, were journeys of romantic or courtly overtones that exemplified the characteristics “proper” to the Great Men of History. Constantly reiterating social codes and moral values, they were largely concerned with the deeds of the Great Men in service of Christian monarchs, church, and empire (Hulme and Youngs 24-25). Within a span of 200 years, between the 16th and 18th centuries, the world changed dramatically and travel writing

went along with it. This period, Hulme and Youngs suggest, is “sometimes characterized as a period in which the pilgrim gave way to the merchant, the explorer, and the philosopher” (21) — not to mention the scientist, settler, nationalist, and missionary.¹¹⁹

Once European explorers moved into the Atlantic, terrestrial journeys gave way to oceanic expeditions. Medieval accounts, such as Polo’s journey to China across the Silk Road, were without exception *overland* routes (with, of course, the occasional ferry from sea-port to sea-port) for which the Ocean remained an unnamed barrier. One could compare, for historical contrast, the 13th century missionary accounts of travel to India with the travelogue of Vasco da Gama, whose work stands among the first of a radically different sort of exploration: that of oceanic navigation. Mary Louise Pratt notes that such narratives gave rise to a form of “survival literature,” in which the trip is told as a survival story “complete with storms, sickness, brackish water, and threat of attack on the high seas” (43). Such themes also appeared regularly in a variety of travel works not solely dedicated to a narrative of survival, however.

With the rise of the nation-state, moral responsibility gave way to national responsibility: a cultural (and occasionally legal) obligation to “find out something that may be applicable to the publique utility of one’s own country,” as James Howell did (1642); or, to provide “useful knowledge” that will “tend to my country’s advantage,” as William Dampier did (qtd. in Jones 70-71); or, to do “publick Good” for one’s nation, as Lemuel Gulliver did (Swift 394; pt. 4, ch. 6). Works such as Hakluyt’s and Raleigh’s are often characterized by their explicitly nationalistic

¹¹⁹ This is in part why I have selected the term “travelling subject” to describe the travel-writer, as the narrator is no more stable a construct than the narrative. It also reminds us that this role is always discursive: the travelling subject is always a subject position within a particular discourse whose terms are rarely made visible by the travelling subject’s narration. Almost invariably, however, the travelling subject takes the form of the “young, typically male” men “of means” (“able to make the kinds of mercantile or clerical connections that provided the space and food on a ship or an income-producing appointment upon their arrival” [Mancall, *Narratives* 29]); the “European, male, secular, and lettered” planetary subject described by Pratt, whose consciousness belongs as much in the world abroad as in the world of print culture; the men “of learning” cast in a literary daguerreotype of the heroic figure, journeying “in search of fortune and renown” — an “explicitly gendered” image which “underpinned not only the great travel narratives of the [16th through 19th centuries], but much of the travel writing of the twentieth century also” (qtd. in Hulme and Youngs 225); a “notoriously male and patriarchal figure” (Sell 20 n20) whom Karen Lawrence suggests “women writers of travel have tended to mistrust” because of “the rhetoric of mastery, conquest, and quest that has funded a good deal of male fictional and non-fictional travel” (qtd. in Sell 20). Even with centuries of change in other regards, historical accounts of travel and exploration tend to leave us, therefore, with explicitly male representations of their encounters.

overtones, while travel writing generally contributes to an overtly and increasingly nationalistic discourse (Marchitello 98). When Hakluyt publishes his first collection in 1589, “there are already significant differences between an exploration in the service of particular *monarchical* interests — Columbus, for example, or Cortés, in the Spanish tradition — and exploration and its narrational production in the service of the nation, Marchitello notes. “For Hakluyt... the nation is no longer self-identical with the *kingdom*, and is therefore more removed from the monarch: in Hakluyt, the nation has clearly already become the *people* — particularly its adventurers and its merchants, its editors (including Hakluyt) and their readers” (99).

From here, the leap to “planting” is short, as colonialism becomes a major project for most European nations and a major plot point in a day in the life of many travellers. We have discussed at length examples of pro-colonial texts like those of Hakluyt and Purchas,¹²⁰ which were massively influential in initiating British expansionism. Once this process began, works like Thomas Harriot and John White’s *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588) became common fare. Exemplary of England’s focus on a thriving colony in Virginia following its failures in Newfoundland, Roanoke, and Guyana, the authors describe resources that may be exploited, foodstuffs that may be grown or readily procured, and building materials that would be required, before moving on to descriptions of the “nature and manners of the natives” in the vicinity (Hulme and Youngs 26). Equally common were works recounting romantic adventures of distant, exotic lands so as to arouse public interest in Discovery and attract investment and settlers for the colonies (30). Descriptions of the Indigenous populations that emphasized the “savagery” of their customs were very common in such works and are often attributed to the “aggressive agenda” of writers working in service of a colonial government. By the 18th century this practice would move to a new phase (Mancall, *Narrative* 10) that Edward Said famously described as “Orientalism,” in which the Other is exoticized to provide ideological justification for European expansionism.

¹²⁰ See Chapter 4: Toward a Typology of Travel Writing

Trade, which has always been linked with travel in one form or another, was also increasingly associated with the state during this time. Hakluyt's pro-colonial collection of travel writing, for instance, foregrounds accounts from the Muscovy Company's merchants in the 16th century. These voyages were carried out in the name of trade and motivated by profit, and so their accounts place a great deal of emphasis on mercantile travel (Hulme and Youngs 25). By the turn of the 18th century, France, Britain, and the Netherlands had all linked state and capitalist mercantile interests (qtd. in Hulme and Youngs 53). Whether lands were marked for "plantation" or commercial enterprise, the ultimate aim of monarchs and states across the Age of Discovery was control of space, resources, and the local populations who lived upon them. For this reason, I cannot help but conclude that land appropriation can include both commerce and colonialism, as the net effect is often the same.¹²¹

Like trade, the sciences have in various forms always been present in the movements of explorers, enabling the processes of exploration. Inventions of navigational technologies like the compass and the astrolabe (not to mention techniques of ship building and cartography — this list could go on almost indefinitely) and experiments such as those on the preservation of meat or the desalination of sea water allowed late-medieval voyagers to travel farther and farther from sight of land, providing as compensation for investors the data collected by travellers that would enable further scientific advances in turn (Ord 11). Melanie Ord observes that "this mutually supporting relationship between science and travel was repeatedly acknowledged in writings on natural philosophy," especially in the works of Francis Bacon, who found it no coincidence that "the circumnavigation of the world... and the increase of the sciences [have] come to pass in the same age" and that "it may seem they are ordained by God to be coevals, that is, to meet in one age" (12). In Bacon's time, travel was increasingly seen as a means of "providing the scientific facts on which to ground a revised natural philosophy" (11). Just as Christianity had set in motion a global

¹²¹ In this I agree with the analysis of Anna Neill, outlined in Chapter 7, which thoroughly establishes the link between geography, mercantilism, and state interests. Although, of course, my critique of her essentialist conception of economic space — that the economy governs "in the last instance" all other socio-historical processes — stands. Allowing for both commercial and juridical practices as forms of land appropriation enables us to theorize neo-colonial practices accordingly, without necessary recourse to the traditional forms of colonialism from the Age of Discovery and subsequent (so-called) Age of Empire.

movement of religious conversion wherever new peoples were found, so natural history “set in motion a secular, global labour that, among other things, made contact zones a site of intellectual as well as manual labour” in the collection of “facts” from around the world (Pratt 27). The old image of the “romantic” traveller therefore quickly diminished in the light of the new “baconian collector of specimens” (Mezciems 10-11), whose data became the bedrock of a new natural history.

Very quickly, however, it became apparent that the data collected had put the new natural history on shaky ground. Because it included the testimony of travellers whose perspective could not be cross-examined, whose observations could not be verified, and whose credibility was often in question, “the ‘facts’ of natural history, especially those reported for relatively untravelled or exotic locales, were, and would remain, something of an epistemological problem” (Shapiro 76). Much effort was directed at streamlining the reports of the travellers by promoting a systematic method for recording and organizing the “facts” observed abroad. Most notable in this endeavour was the Royal Society, which “defined its mission as the development of a natural history on which to build a secure natural philosophy” (72-3). The Royal Society instructed travellers to “record measures of longitude and latitude, the variations of the compass, seasonal alterations, herbs, mines, minerals, animals, the depths of seas and the extent of their navigability, climatic irregularities, and monstrous births” (Ord 17), which most post-Restoration travellers seemed quite happy to do (Shapiro 74). Later 17th century travel writing therefore “comes to show an increased concern with standards of observational accuracy, which includes an insistence on mathematical precision in measuring and weighing objects” (Ord 17). By the 18th century, “travel and travel writing would never be the same again.” Descriptions of flora and fauna that had appeared more as digressions in earlier work now took centre stage, and with Linnaeus’ founding of a “global classificatory project... the observing and cataloging of nature itself became narratable. It could constitute a sequence of events, or even produce a plot” (Pratt 28).

Like all writing constituted by Discovery, however, the plot that scientific writing produced was one that served the commercial and colonial aspirations of the European nation-state. As

mentioned above, Anna Neill establishes this connection thoroughly in *British Discovery Literature and the Rise of Global Commerce* (2002).¹²² Mary-Louise Pratt's analysis of the role of the sciences in Euro-imperialism is equally poignant, noting that scientific travel writing brought new knowledge into the public sphere as much as to scientific circles, creating and sustaining its value. Along with journalism, travel narratives "were essential mediators between the scientific network and a larger European public. They were central agents in legitimizing scientific authority and its global project alongside Europe's other ways of knowing the world, and being in it" (Pratt 29). In line with the "global" spatial aspirations initiated by the first formulation of Discovery (the *Inter caetera*), science "operated as a rich and multifaceted mirror onto which all Europe could project itself as an expanding 'planetary process' minus the competition, exploitation, and violence being carried out by commercial and political expansion and colonial domination" (34).

Among the moments of scientific discourse that served European interests were the travellers' ethnographic depictions of peoples they encountered abroad. Descriptions of peoples, including their customs, religion, political organization, languages, and other characteristics, became so prominent in travel writing that from the 16th century onwards that they appear "essential to the genre" (qtd. in Hulme and Youngs 242). Much of this information was at first embedded in chorographical works, with earliest precedents found in the works of Spanish and Portuguese travellers. "Although ethnographic observation in England became closely connected to Baconian natural history and the efforts of the Royal Society," writes Shapiro, "the tradition was also indebted to ambassadorial reports and to Hispanic accounts" (82). Fernández-Armesto adds that these descriptions also built on those of Europe's "internal primitives:" the "peripheral, pastoral, bog or mountain folk, like the Basques, Welsh, Irish, Slavs and pagan Scandinavians, whose cultures inspired mingled awe and contempt" (225). Unlike descriptions and classifications of plants, animals, and other physical features of the natural environment, reports on ethnographic, religious and cultural data were not subjected to any analytic scrutiny (Shapiro 83). Nevertheless, the ethnography of the "new world"

¹²² See Chapter 7: Gulliver's Travels in the Age of Discovery.

was given a scientific form and promoted by the Royal Society (83). The categories of Christian/non-Christian, European/non-European, and similar expressions of Otherness “provided minimal constructs” (84), organizing the peoples they described within the broader category of Discoverer/Discovered, which I have argued was central to the European territorial imaginary. The finding of the Americas, therefore “signaled a break from the previous proto-racial awareness by which Europe contemplated its ‘Others’ in a relatively disorganized fashion,” write Omi and Winant. “The ‘conquest of America’ was not simply an epochal historical event — however unparalleled in its importance. It was also the advent of a consolidated social structure of exploitation, appropriation, domination. Its representation, first in religious terms, but soon enough in scientific and political ones, initiated modern racial awareness” (62). We have already discussed how ethnographic descriptions were used in service of establishing plantations, how they were used to deny the “internal sovereignty” of the Guanches after the finding of the Canaries, and how Indigenous peoples “appeared” to Columbus. “In practice,” Omi and Winant argue, “the seizure of territories and goods, the introduction of slavery through the *encomienda* and other forms of coerced native labour, and then through the organization of the African slave trade — not to mention the practice of outright extermination — all presupposed a worldview which distinguished Europeans, as children of God, full-fledged human beings, etc. from ‘Others’” (62). And this worldview, we have seen, was informed primarily by the reports of travellers from abroad.

These are admittedly broad strokes at nuanced, complex historical transformations, but the general impression one gains from a deep study of travel writing from the 14th through 18th centuries is that the movement into the Atlantic, down the coast of Africa, and across the Pacific, marked the first moments of an age when the exploration, appropriation, and revealing of non-European territories across the globe became the overarching orientation for European nation-states. It is in these broader strokes that this re-orientation becomes apparent, as the structuring effects of Discovery traversed European space, reconstituting social practices towards an appropriative effect in its wake. The transformations in travel writing just outlined are symptomatic of this change,

appearing as a series of narrative and non-narrative elements (re)organized into interdependent moments that share this orientation towards a single, universal image of European global order: a hierarchically ordered whole without supplement; a uniform, systematized Christian European ideal.

The transformations witnessed in travel writing are, of course, a reflection of its discursive nature, which is also the key to the *intertextuality* exhibited in any works that take travel as their subject, fictional or not. Combining the articulatory powers of travel, narrative, and writing, travel writing offered Europeans a robust representational apparatus that doubled as a system of communication and repository of signs capable of injecting new content, articulating novel elements and re- or dis-articulating the moments of alternative discourses into new formations that (re)configured their content and meaning. For example, although chivalry and pilgrimage quickly fell out of fashion following the advent of works describing the exploration of the Atlantic and the finding of new lands therein, the basic language and themes of both the pilgrimage and the chivalric quest continued long after and provided travellers with a model for their travels (Hulme and Youngs 24). The chivalric quest was particularly influential for the Spanish colonial imaginary, as its sentiments “infuse[d] and animate[d] the story of the overseas expansion of Latin Christendom” (Fernández-Armesto 11). This is just one example in which narrative elements that had existed for centuries were, through re-articulation, constituted as moments of Discovery. Similar examples can be provided almost indefinitely, but for the sake of brevity I will offer just one more.

Thomas Harriot and John White’s *The Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588), mentioned above, was according to Peter Mancall “an ethnographic masterpiece that described one particular North American population” (an Eastern Algonquian group in the lands now known as North Carolina, in the United States) for its readers. Appearing simultaneously in Latin, German, English, and French, the work quickly became the most famous book that had ever been published about a single group of indigenous peoples. It remains to this day “the most authoritative guide to the appearance, architecture, beliefs, economy, and customs of a people who disappeared

soon after the book's publication" (*Narratives* 39).¹²³ At the end of this work, which outlined the social and cultural practices of these peoples in great detail, the reader is presented with a series of images that seem entirely unrelated to one another: a portrait of an Algonquian man whose back-tattoo is explained as a ritual of scarification, followed by a portrait of another man who stands naked and tattooed, with one severed human head at his feet and another in his hand, still dripping with blood. This latter portrait is one of five that confronts the reader to round out the "ethnographic masterpiece," completing a series of images of an ancient group indigenous to Britain, known as the Picts. Mancall interprets the juxtaposition of these images thusly:

The pictures themselves tell a story of humans in Europe in their savage [sic!] state, before the redemptive power of civilization had brought out their innate potential... These pictures existed to make a single point: Western Europe had once been populated by individuals as savage as any to be found in the Americas. Over time they had become "reduced" to civilization, as early modern writers often referred to the process of eradicating indigenous culture and replacing it with Protestant or Catholic forms of Christianity, European gender roles, and the benefits of a market economy. The account... became a tool for potential conquerors and colonists. (39-40)

In the context of our discussion here, this juxtaposition is best understood as an ensemble of equivalential images and descriptions that construct the supposed "savagery" of the Algonquian peoples through analogy to an established stereotype of Otherness, galvanizing the European social imaginary and spurring readers into collective action in the name of Civilization, plantation, trade, and Christianity.

Taken as a whole, works such as this constituted an historical force in the movement towards a Euro-imperial globalism through constructions of social and territorial imaginaries particular to the socio-spatial logic of Discovery. Intertextuality is therefore not merely referential, in the sense of being a practice in which reference is made by one author to the work of another; it is an expression of the articulatory nature of travel writing and the unity of travel writing as a discourse constituting the social fabric. Instances where writers, editors, publishers, or printers simply borrowed from other travel works, or when writers allude to other writers who have already provided an account of a

¹²³ A "disappearance" resulting from "infectious diseases, missionaries bent on eradicating natives' cosmos, and land-hungry colonizers who used descriptions in travel accounts to plan their conquest of new territory" (Mancall, *Narratives* 39).

particular subject, can be understood as a form of *re-iteration* that re-affirms and reinforces existing articulations. Identifying travel writing as an historically-specific system of writing reflects this role as a cultural form and social practice that produces the unity of Discovery and participates in the development, maintenance, and application of its governing logic. It is a practice of presentation that shapes and is shaped by the social imaginary. In this sense, travel writing may be understood as a particular in a differential position with other discourses constituting the social fabric — that is, as a moment of Discovery.

This is not to suggest, however, that the discursive terrain of travel writing was in any way homogeneous. The space of travel writing is structured as any political space, and so, like all political spaces, it is one crisscrossed with internal antagonisms — visible in divisions between the “ancients” and the “moderns” for instance, or embodied in the debate between Las Casas and Sepúlveda over the rights of the Discovered granted by the Discoverers. It is not difficult to select from among travel writing exemplars for one side or another of these (or many other) disjunctions and the values they represent. Combined, however, these works constructed an overwhelmingly *consensual* order. Even if an individual author countered a particular aspect of Discovery, the equivalential chains and nodal points established across the majority of works were strong enough to limit dis- and re-articulations threatening the structures that supported them. Meanwhile, other elements in their work that supported other moments of Discovery contributed to the dispersion of equivalences more broadly. Las Casas is a perfect example to illustrate this point, for although he fervently opposed Spanish atrocities in South America, still he maintained that the Crown was the legitimate ruler of the Indigenous peoples, accepting the *Inter caetera* as “the only possible legitimation of the Spanish presence in America” (Las Casas xv-xvi). It is highly significant, then, that the works in Swift’s library, such as those of Purchas, Hakluyt, Wafer, and Dampier, whose motifs appear to varying degrees as “targets” of his satire, were all produced during the historical period in which European practices of exploration and writing were bound up with land

appropriation and civilizational discourse. They were proponents of the social order constituted by Discovery, and their works participated in the sensorium that it maintained.

Travel Realism

The preceding discussion and conclusion bring us to a position from which we can begin to formulate a theory of travel realism, following the precedent of Frantz and Moore (Chapter 1), Sherbo, Wagner and Knowles (Chapter 3), and Mezciems and Jones (Chapter 5).¹²⁴

When Europeans moved into the Atlantic, they were confronted with an *aporia* resulting from the movement beyond the limits of their own systems of knowledge and understanding. Attempts to overcome this *aporia* were equally complicated by difficulties in corroborating the accounts of travel-writers as by the lies and hyperbole that have since become a regularly recognized and much discussed feature of their reports. These authorial issues were compounded by an underlying epistemological fault-line between the possible, the plausible, and the improbable. Travellers and arm-chair readers alike were torn between a will to believe in and a deep scepticism of the “strange” and “marvellous” objects, peoples, and creatures reported from abroad. In Guiana in the 1590s, for instance, Raleigh heard of monstrous peoples (with “their eyes in their shoulders, and their mouths in the middle of their breasts”) of a kind reported by Mandeville two centuries earlier. But while Mandeville’s report was widely regarded as a lie, Raleigh implores credulity from his reader because so many things thought incredible before the finding of the Americas had now proven true (Greenblatt 21-22).¹²⁵ Such reports led to a widespread interest in what was dubbed the “strange but true,” which is the inverse of what was widely hailed as “King Siam’s Problem” — a “cliché of the times... that the King of Siam did not believe reports of water becoming so hard it could be walked

¹²⁴ Not to be confused with the later artistic movements such as literary realism (taken up by Rancière), by “realism” I mean a sort of naïve realism in which it is assumed that language accurately represents a reality that exists independently of the language used to describe it (a philosophical argument directly at odds with the position taken up by this project). Such an assumption lies at the bottom of the social and physical sciences, and many of the social sciences as well. See, for example, Clifford Geertz (*Works and Lives*) on realism in ethnography.

¹²⁵ “Such a nation was written off by Mandeville, whose reports were holden for fables many yeeres, and yet since the East Indies were discovered, we find his relations true of such things as heretofore were held incredible,” Raleigh writes (qtd. in Greenblatt 22).

on, though it had been witnessed by countless Europeans” (Shapiro 71). In both examples we see an inability to separate true from false because of the volume of radically new facts and objects found during exploration and the failures of European representational apparatus in attempts to describe them.

In tension with this epistemological instability was travel realism, which broke with ancient authorities such as Ptolemy and Aristotle and asserted the “facts” of peoples, places, and things in the newly opened globe within the emerging structures of a modern, Euro-imperial paradigm. An increased concern with verity and the accuracy of representation can be observed across an array of European disciplines at least as early as the 15th century, such as in the ethnographic descriptions of the Guanches and the geographic detailing of the eastern Atlantic. It is most evident in the rise of scientific discourse, as observation and reason supplanted scholastic thought (Robinson 28) and the seeds of the scientific and philosophical revolutions of the 17th century were sown by a cultural emphasis on firsthand experience over received authority (Sell 22). Melanie Ord notes that this emphasis “accompanied a widespread objection to an over-reliance on textual authority and more specifically to the authority of the ancients” by writers “concerned to self-consciously privilege their own experiences over the knowledge contained in literature” (10). This was especially true of travel writing, where epistemological uncertainties left an engaged readership with little recourse except to trust that the reporter had reported what he had himself witnessed firsthand. Many writers and editors emphasized the importance of firsthand observation, including Purchas, who wrote in the 1625 introduction to *Purchas His Pilgrimes*: “What a World of Travellers have by their own eyes observed... is here... Delivered, not by one preferring Methodically to deliver the Historie of Nature according to the rules of Art, nor Philosophically to discuss and dispute; but as in way of Discourse, by each Traveller relating what is the kind he hath seen” (qtd. in Hulme and Youngs 4). In this way, the experience of the traveller became “not so much the text’s subject as its representational mode, its guarantee of authenticity and accuracy” (Greenblatt 129). This observation is mirrored in Marchitello’s analysis of Raleigh’s *Discovery of Guiana* (1596), wherein he argues that “it is

precisely the status as an eye-witness account that authorizes the content of the *Discovery*; Raleigh's is no dream of Guiana, but an historical record of his voyage there grounded in his own experience which serves to insure its accuracy and truthfulness" (107). The experience of the travelling subject, then, had gained an ontologically privileged position and become the guarantor of a new form of truth; and beneath the explorer's emphasis on fact is a privileging of the perspective of what I described in the last chapter as a knowing subject, who is here revealed as the travelling subject.

The threat of lies, hyperbole, and observational error were overcome in large part through the broader cultural project of synthesizing and organizing the data reported by travellers. In a stunning historical transformation, it had become a common assumption at this time that "under favourable conditions *ordinary persons* were capable of reporting the facts accurately and ordinary readers could understand and evaluate their reports" (Shapiro 64, emphasis mine). Whereas previously matters of historical or public record had been reserved for statesmen, sovereigns, or other such "great men" of antiquity, we see in this period a new horizontality among those authorized to speak and participate in these newly reconstituted discourses of "fact" (64). In this emerging "culture of fact" that travel writing helped to create, firsthand observation provided "proof" of authenticity to counter the uncertainties threatening the foundations of European epistemology; and where this "proof" fell short, it was generally accepted that the factual knowledge of other peoples and places would improve as reports multiplied (65).

Yet, it must be remembered that the "facts" reported by travellers and synthesized by philosophers, scientists, and statesmen alike, were organized around the binaries of the "civilized" and the "savage," the European and his Other, and the spatial divisions that located each on specific areas of the map. This points to an historically novel epistemology that brought a new stability to knowledge, following the uncertainty that resulted from the movement into the Atlantic: an epistemology rooted in the socio-spatial logic of Discovery, which divided the "civilized" from the "savage" and made ontological distinctions between European and non-European territories. Within this epistemology we find the source of the preclusion observed in Columbus' account: it follows

from a particular distribution of the sensible rooted in the civilizational discourse, which became a central moment of Discovery. This sensorium shows that there is no heterogeneity of peoples in the vast spaces of the Americas and Africa; there is only a homogeneous Other whose “savagery” is apparent in all the ways in which they are different from the travel-writers and readers alike. The precluded are thus, in what otherwise seems a contradictory manner, included as a sign of the outside, representatives of all that is not “inside” here with “us.” This sign points to an absence whose presence is firmly established in the structures of the narrative: the place of the excluded, included through their exclusion, their presence re-affirmed time and again as an absence.

Preclusion is therefore symptomatic of a “police order” — a concept of Rancière's that denotes a distribution of the sensible whose principle is the absence of void or supplement (*Dissensus* 36).¹²⁶ In travel writing, this order is expressed through a narrative modality that organizes the globe into a single field of discursivity, predicated upon the “civilizational” and “rational” superiority of Europeans against all Others — a whole whose parts can all find a place within this order, like a Great Chain of Being, from top to bottom. Through articulation and reiteration, this narrative mode draws and re-draws “the frame within which common objects are determined” and provides “sensory self-evidence of the ‘natural’ order” that pins down certain bodies to certain ways of doing, being, and saying, and to certain places on the map. It offers a framing of the world of common experience that provides definite configurations of what is given as real, “as the object of our perceptions and the field of our interventions” (Rancière, *Dissensus* 149).

This order, then, is the foundation for the supposed *verity* of reports — an overdetermined sense of the “reality” of that which is represented — increasingly demanded in the 17th century by historians in particular and readers generally, as the demarcation between history and fiction grew clearer (Shapiro 199). This demarcation opened a new space for “creating prose fiction modeled on the newly popular factual discourses,” such as travel writing, which in turn provided a framework for

¹²⁶ “In the 18th century, the French word *police* designates both the culture (one is *police* if civilized) and the order that it takes for granted,” writes De Certeau (188).

the fact-like fictions that came to dominate English-language literature of the time (199). As such, *verisimilitude* in fiction and poetry that took travel as its subject was modeled upon the verity of the travellers' reports, which leads us to the inescapable conclusion that *the verisimilitude of Gulliver's Travels is predicated upon the same paradigm that establishes the verity of the travelling subject*. And this paradigm, of course, is travel realism.

Against epistemological uncertainty, travel realism brought new stability through a process of (re)ordering embedded in the representational apparatus of Euro-imperial culture. Within travel writing, it presumed and produced the police order constructing European superiority and (dis)placed non-European Others through various forms of preclusion. It informs a specific practice of presentation that constitutes the "facts" of places and peoples through a realist paradigm, creating a new logic of connection between form and content, bodies and words, ways of speaking, doing, and being, while organizing the globe into a single field of discursivity predicated upon the "civilizational" and "rational" superiority of the European over Others. In short, these works participated in the construction of a deeply Euro-imperial image of the globe, following which all forms of Discovery (as exploration, appropriation, and revealing/unveiling) became a movement *towards* this imaginary — the direction I have until now described as the *orientation* of the age. This image is constantly (re)produced in the social imaginary through the concrete effects of Discovery and the articulations and re-iterations of travel writing: a dual-process that maintained European land appropriations through time by upholding the socio-spatial logic of Discovery and the (police) order it produces, continually (re)ordering the peoples, things, and places it (re)presents.

It is by this means — in the final synthesis of exploration, land appropriation, and revealing/unveiling — that Discovery gave rise to what Laclau and Mouffe describe as a *hegemonic formation* and what Gramsci describes as an *historical bloc*, which denotes the complete permeation of hegemony in a social field, when ideology sets the form and material forces the content of a social formation. The first step towards this hegemony began, I argue, when a sufficient proportion of Europeans internalized the global imaginary set forth by Euro-imperial culture to form a collective

will that propelled them across the globe in search of land and resources without restraint. Its second and final phase began when this image took root on non-European space and in non-European minds, constituting Discovery as a universal movement which would continue until the entire globe was revealed in the image of the European imaginary. But that is a topic for another project. In the meantime, we will conclude this discussion by revisiting *Gulliver's Travels*.

Part II: Theorizing Discovery

Chapter 12: *Gulliver's Travels* Revisited

One of the most profound contributions to literary theory in the 21st century, by my own personal estimation, is Rancière's realization that every discourse is specifiable by its poetic operations. His concept of the "distribution of the sensible," which is closely akin to what Wittgenstein describes as a language game and what Laclau and Mouffe describe as a discourse, reminds us that discourse is, at root, *paradigmatic*. Certain practices of presentation, like fiction for instance, are therefore also *paradigms* of presentation: they establish fields of visibility, temporality, spatiality, causality, and rationality. We can say that works of fiction participate in the social order — that they can "do" politics — because they partake of the distributions of the sensible that frame the world of shared objects and spaces as well as the subjective experiences upon which all communities are founded. Fiction, in this sense, is not "separate" from reality, and certainly not its opposite; it is, rather, constitutive of reality, circulating among multiple spheres of human activity.

Throughout the first half of this thesis I examined the ways in which the "fictional" *Gulliver's Travels* integrated elements from the "factual" discourse of travel writing to create the fact-like fictions that characterize the work's satirical form. When *Gulliver's Travels* adopts the tropes, conventions, and character models of travel writing particular to the Age of Discovery, it not only signals its position within that discourse, but also inhabits the sensorium that travel writing constructs by adopting its logic of connection between expression and content, words and things, and its orders of representation of bodies, peoples, and places. Yet the work also signals its own ambivalence towards this world, and its own distance from it — that it sits outside, looking in, just as much as it sits inside, looking out. Like its author, whose portrait confronts the reader in the first pages of the book, it tells the reader in no uncertain terms that it is "*splendide mendax*" — nobly untruthful. Despite its own pains to establish what a number of scholars have described as *travel realism* in the work, it nevertheless insists that it is a work of fictions.

In this concluding chapter I will suggest that the fictions in which *Gulliver's Travels* trades were those upholding a certain conception of reality that became part and parcel of the Age of Discovery. These fictions said that the peoples indigenous to Africa and the Americas were incapable of self-governance, or maintaining their own lands, or organizing themselves into meaningful communities, or recognizing the value of European social conventions — they were incapable, in short, of doing more than making noise and living a sort of bare life in unkempt conditions. Their land, and sometimes their lives, were therefore free for the taking. In this chapter I will be concerned to show that *Gulliver's Travels*, then, intervenes in this distribution of the sensible by utilizing the satirical form as a recomposing logic to upend the paradigm of travel realism and break away from the “sense” that it makes of the bodies, beings, and lands it re-presents.

Since Aristotle, it had been held that the fictions of poetry were in significant ways more philosophical than history because poetry was concerned with connecting all parts to a structural whole, which connected events by causal links of necessity or verisimilitude. History, on the other hand, only dealt with the succession of events as they occurred (Rancière, “Fiction” 3). This is what Rancière names the “poetic principle” behind fiction. It suggests that the verisimilitude of the poet is more “rational” than the mere description of facts, since the causal connections that verisimilitude establishes between these facts provides a model for ways of being, saying, and doing. Fiction not only “makes things, situations, and events perceptible”; it also “connect[s] an event with other events and make sense of that connection” (1).

Within this opposition between poetry and history, Rancière suggests, was also an opposition between two forms of life: that of the “great,” or “active,” men of classical history against that of the “passive” and “vulgar” men excluded from the sphere of “true” action. This opposition defined a certain politics of the poem:

Poetry was defined as a concatenation of actions, opposed to the mere historical succession of facts. But “action” is not the mere fact of doing something. Action is a sphere of existence. Concatenations of actions could only concern individuals who live in the sphere of action and are capable of conceiving great designs and of risking them in the confrontation with other great designs and with the strokes of Fortune. They could not concern people who are bogged

down in the condition of bare life, devoted to the sole task of infinite reproduction. (“Fiction” 4)

Verisimilitude in fiction was, therefore, not just concerned with relations of cause and effect, but of people and capacities — of “what can be expected from an individual living in this or that situation, what kind of perception, feeling, and behaviour can be attributed to him or her” (4). Kings were expected to act like Kings, freedmen like freedmen, and slaves like slaves, according to this Aristotelian principle. The rationality of poetic fiction was thus tied to a form of intelligibility of human action, “to a certain kind of affinity between ways of being, ways of doing, and ways of speaking” (*Literature* 10) predicated upon specific social divisions.

In the 18th century, the verisimilitude of fictional travel discourse (and those works that borrowed from it) was modeled after the verity of European travel reports authored during expeditions of Discovery. Although it was increasingly believed in European culture that “facts” could speak for themselves — that the “things” of this world, ranging from geological phenomena to the lives of “lesser” peoples, were themselves evidence of a state of affairs that had previously been denied historical status — the traveller’s firsthand experience of these things was still given the highest value. This value intensified over a period of centuries as the “verity” of the traveller’s account became increasingly grounded in a scientific realism that asserted the self-evidence of the language used to describe the subjects and objects encountered. The traveller’s job was to speak “plain truth, without ornamentation,” as if the reader, and traveller before her, had access to the “plain truth” of the peoples, places, and things being described. This is, of course, impossible. The relation of facts was itself framed by a poetic paradigm whose political core saw Europeans as the sole, privileged holder of all truth and knowledge.

Earlier I suggested that this poetic paradigm is what a number of scholars have identified as a form of *travel realism* framing *Gulliver’s Travels* and that it emerged from the *Inter Caetera*’s articulation of a civilizational discourse and the practice of land appropriation with exploration to form the doctrine of Discovery, in conjunction with the articulation of travel narrative, the writing of

travel, and Discovery effected by the wide-spread dissemination of Columbus' "Letter to Luis de Santangel." It was from these articulations that travel writing took on a new power to signify and act, a new relationship between words and things and the subjects who use or are used by them. This form of power is clearest in Columbus' renaming of the five Caribbean islands encountered in his trip across the Atlantic, which seems to have a sort of baptismal effect: the lands appear purified, regenerated, admitted into a blessed community of peoples, its inhabitants ready for (re)ordering. Just as Adam gains dominium over the animals of Eden through the act of naming, so too does Columbus seem to gain possession of a land almost entirely unknown to him through a single speech-act. Authorized by Pope and Crown, he is endowed with the ability to claim lands through what Rancière calls the "acting word," which had formerly been reserved for the master, priest, or general (159). This concept of Rancière's is derived from the orators of ancient Greece addressing the popular assembly, whose speech moved men to act. "Speaking was the act of the orator who persuades an assembly, of the general who harangues his troops or of the preacher who edifies souls," he suggests. The words of these men were linked to "the power of a hierarchy of speech, of a relationship of address regulated between speech-acts and defined audiences on whom these speech-acts were supposed to produce the effects of mobilizing thoughts, emotions and energies" (12). Speaking was thus for these men an act of will, and the power of speech one of agency and significance — the ability to *do* through saying, without space between word and action. When Columbus renames the islands, they become immediately apparent to the European reader; their form gradually appearing on the map of every European mind.

There are, however, two significant differences between ancient Greece and 18th century Europe, when *Gulliver's Travels* was written. The first is that anyone "endowed with courage and common sense" could assume the role of the travelling-subject. Columbus was himself the son of a middle-class weaver and cheese vendor; Dampier was a pirate *cum* Mercantile-scientific sea Captain; and travellers like Raleigh were able to produce accounts whose popularity far outweighed the failures of their journey. One no longer had to be a member of nobility to wield this power of speech.

The second difference is that in early modern Europe, *writing* had become a form of speech, as evinced by Purchas' introduction to *Purchas His Pilgrimes*:

By speech we utter our minds once, at the present, to the present, as present occasions move (and perhaps unadvisedly transport) us: by writing Man seems immortall, conferreth and consulteth with the Patriarks, Prophets, Apostles, Fathers, Philosophers, Historians, and learns the wisdome of the Sages which have been in all times before him; yea by translations or learning the Languages, in all places and Regions of the World: and lastly, by how owne writings surviveth himself, remains (*litera scripta manet*) thorow all ages a Teacher and Counsellor to the last of men: yea hereby God holds conference with men, and in his sacred Scriptures, as at first in the Tables of Stone, speakes to all. (qtd. in Greenblatt 10)

In addition to the spoken word, which Purchas also suggested “distinguishes man from the animals by uniting diverse individuals into a social community founded on reason” (9), writing enabled the author to transcend time and place to address an assembly attended by God herself. Writing was thus seen in early modern Europe as a “true” sphere of action, and the written word seemed, in some ways, more “real” than that which it described. When Columbus' letter regarding his “Discovery” of America was “ratified” (so to speak) by the *Inter caetera* and then disseminated across Europe, travel writing gained a new power of identification that enabled the writer to endow that which he described with new forms of visibility because he was authorized to describe the “facts” of peoples, places, and things over those peoples who lived in those places and among those things. Like its ancient antecedent, there was thus an opposition between two forms of life in the verisimilitude of travel realism, as well.

In ancient Greece there was a great divide between those of noble birth and those of the “lower” classes, but, in early modern Europe, rising literacy rates, access to machine-printed books, and the increasing ability for anyone to travel had extended this new sphere of action to “lesser men” of the lower classes. From Columbus as representative of the sovereign Crown under Papal mandate to Dampier as representative of his nation and its imperial-scientific institutions, there was an increasing potential for the travel reader to become a travel *writer*. The writer more frequently addressed his audience because it was a combination of popular opinion and official (financial) endorsement that became the source of the traveller's power. There was a new horizontality between

writer and reader because, despite their separation, the two had become *aligned* in a shared potential for wielding (and sharing in the benefits of) this new power of identification. The partition within the verisimilitude of travel discourse was thus one between those with a “voice” and those without, who in this instance happened to be those with writing and those without. Again, an excerpt from Purchas’ introduction is illuminating, wherein he writes that “amongst Men, some are accounted Civill, and more both Sociable and Religious, by the Use of letters and Writing, which others wanting are esteemed Brutish, Savage, Barbarous” (qtd. in Greenblatt 9-10). With his voice the travel-writer described a world in which there are those who describe the world and those within it who are described—where only the writer is qualified to speak because the mouths of Others are incapable of making more than mere noise. In the eyes of the reader, these people do not appear; they are only revealed through the writer’s descriptions.

This gave a certain sense to the world of empirical reality and brought everything in it into a clear order where nothing was out of place and any anomalies that appeared could be framed as “wonders” or “novelties” or particulars of some sort that would later be fit into a general schematic. These broad chains of difference and equivalence brought harmony to the plot of travel through a logic that maintained relations between parts and whole by constructing partitions between speech and noise, us and them, the civilized and the savage. This fictional order, however, was not “merely” confined to the worlds of books, we must recall: it extended across an ever-wider range of spheres of European discourses and disciplines. The fictions of travel realism upheld the “us” of European nations that was not the “them” who lived “beyond the line.” It produced the “freedom” of Other lands ready for the taking: a model of spatiality and rationality, of bodies and beings, of peoples and capacities, upon which the sovereign formed her decisions. There was thus a fairly clear motivation for maintaining the fictions of the traveller as fact. Stories of other worlds with other forms of peoples who had other forms of lifeways — other forms of “facts” fully capable of speaking for themselves — constantly threatened to overflow the narrative models supporting this discursive order. Travel realism maintained this partition by “speaking for the facts,” so to speak; by enabling

the travel-writer's words with the ability to assert their own self-evidence against the "fictions" and "noise" of all Others. The facts might flood in, but they could not be allowed to speak for themselves. Anyone could invoke this new power of identification circulating within the discourse of Discovery, so long as that anyone was European.

When Gulliver tries to invoke this power, however, it fails him. Gulliver is able to speak like a veteran mariner and convey with ease the most intricate of nautical details of his journey, but when a storm hits he is immediately at "the Mercy of the Waves" (Swift 33; pt. 1, ch. 1) and becomes irretrievably lost. He is able to offer corrections to Herman Moll (428), one of the most eminent cartographers of his day, yet his sense of geography is entirely inconsistent and disproportionate (Moore 220). A great deal of attention has been given to moments in *Gulliver's Travels* that were common to travel reports authored during expeditions of Discovery such as these. This has led critics to describe Gulliver variously as a "traveller," a "geographer" (Neill 116), and a "detached observer" of other cultures (26), among other labels, while his inability to properly execute any of these vocations has led others to describe him as an "everyman" (Real 297), an "average Englishman of his period" (Wagner 119) and an "allegorical representative of mankind" (Real 297). Barely mentioned is Gulliver's personal pre-occupation with Discovery that is everywhere in his account.

In the passage rallying against the doctrine of Discovery at the end of the text (the "Discovery passage," from here on), Gulliver famously concludes that "those countries which I have described do not appear to have a desire of being conquered, and enslaved, murdered, or driven out by Colonies." Yet he adds immediately afterwards that "if those whom it may concern, think fit to be of another Opinion, I am ready to depose, when I shall be lawfully called, That no *European* did ever visit these Countries before me" (Swift 442; pt. 4, ch. 12). What seems to be a denunciation of Discovery is actually the opposite, since Gulliver preserves his own claim to these lands as their Discoverer by registering the fact that he was there first. From the very first pages of *Gulliver's Travels* there are strong indications of a tarnished moral character beneath Gulliver's innocent veneer. Of the six years of travel that precedes the work, for instance, Gulliver casually mentions that he

sailed regularly between the East and West Indies — the latter of which was deeply implicated in the slave trade as a source of labour for European sugar plantations (31 n.15; pt. 1, ch. 1). In the very first journey to which the reader has access, before finding Lilliput, twelve of Gulliver’s crew die “by *immoderate Labour*, and ill Food” after being driven off-course by a storm, suggesting slaving conditions aboard his ship (32, my italics). These details are masked by biographical and nautical detail, which the narrator privileges through focalization effects to give them greater prominence over other aspects of his narration. Far from establishing the veracity of the text, it is the realistic detail from these passages that help to mask Gulliver’s true intentions.

That land appropriation would already have been in the minds of his readership is a fact that Gulliver takes for granted, as indicated by his mention at the end of his report that “the *only* Objection that can be raised against me” is that he did not claim the lands found (443; pt. 4, ch. 12). What the reader may have overlooked earlier, however, is that in Brobdingnag he tried. It may be recalled that, in the Discovery passage, Gulliver relates how “a Crew of Pyrates are driven by a Storm they know not whither,” a “Boy discovers Land from the Top-mast,” the crew “go on Shore to rob and plunder,” see “an harmless People,” and then “give the Country a new Name,” taking “Possession of it for the King” (441). In Part II this exact scene is foreshown almost point for point, with a single change at the end of the episode. *En route* to Surat (modern-day Gujarat, India), Gulliver’s ship passes through the “Streights of Madagascar,” which was strongly associated with slave-trading and piracy at the time (118 n7; pt. 2, ch. 1). He and his crew are driven off-course by a storm, “carried... about five hundred Leagues to the East, so that the oldest Sailor on Board could not tell in what part of the World we were.” When a “Boy on the Top-mast discovered Land,” Gulliver goes ashore with a dozen men “well armed.” He states clearly that he wants to go “make what Discoveries I could,” but is thwarted when he separates from his crew and then finds that they have abandoned him in their retreat from the giant Brobdingnagian farmhand (121-122). The would-be Discoverer is then himself “discovered” and left to the mercy of this giant race.

Connecting these two passages further implicates a third passage as well, when earlier in his memoir from Lilliput Gulliver expresses a desire to return to England with “a Dozen of the Natives” from that country (110; pt. 1, ch. 8).¹²⁷ This scene was also repeated in the Discovery passage, when the unnamed Discoverers “murder two or three Dozen of the Natives, bring away a Couple more by Force for a Sample, return home, and get their Pardon” (440-41; pt. 4, ch. 12). The semantics of the text, it seems, are moving backwards, even as Gulliver moves forwards: events only gain their full significance after the narrative has ended and the reader returns to review them, suggesting that the movement towards certainty in this text is a movement away from Gulliver’s travels.

Every time Gulliver approaches land in his four journeys he invokes the concept of Discovery, with clear correlations appearing between the success of his Discovery and the position of power he will assume while in that land. In Lilliput, Gulliver’s inability to “discover” the inhabitants leaves him at their mercy. Washed ashore after a violent storm capsized his boat, Gulliver notes that he could not “discover any Sign of Houses or Inhabitants” because of his weakened condition. He then falls asleep out of exhaustion and wakes to find that his “Arms and Legs were strongly fastened on each Side to the Ground” and that he is at the mercy of some 50 armed members of this tiny race (33-4; pt. 1, ch. 1). This asymmetrical power dynamic is never reversed, as Gulliver remains dependent upon the Lilliputians for sustenance necessary for survival throughout the story, and his continued subordination is made manifest through the terms of his “freedom” from house arrest, which read quite clearly as terms of enslavement (65; pt 1, ch. 3). What safety Gulliver has is preserved only by the privileges afforded to him for his continued subservience to the royal family, which, once lost, are only re-instated in Blefuscu when he transfers this allegiance to their King (106; pt. 1, ch. 7). Since Gulliver is revealed to the Lilliputians before he can Discover them, he is unable

¹²⁷ Noteworthy is Gulliver’s admission that this is “a thing the Emperor would by no Means permit; and *besides a diligent Search into my Pockets*, his Majesty engaged my Honour not to carry away any of his Subjects, although with their own Consent and Desire” (110; pt. 1, ch. 8). It seems the King of Lilliput was more aware of Gulliver’s evil potential than most of the critics who read his report afterward.

to assume a position of power over them; the “possessive gaze” of the Discoverer is left powerless and the Discoverer himself made vulnerable.

When approaching Brobdingnag, the land is “discovered” by a member of Gulliver’s crew, as mentioned above, but when Gulliver is separated from that crew he is, again, left powerless against those he encounters. Stranded, he is taken into the house of a man who showcases Gulliver as a novelty, compelling him to perform for profit almost to death. When taken into the care of the royal family, he is similarly kept as a novelty, this time for the amusement of the Queen. Throughout this tale, “normal” everyday tasks and events cause him injury or threaten his life. Just as he observes that those outside the carriages within the Queen’s procession are more threatened by beggars than those inside (158; pt.2, ch. 4), so too is he more protected by maintaining his current circumstance — even while being treated as a circus animal by the Queen and as a doll by his young caregiver, Glumdaclitch. Carried about in a sealed box (138), which is then upgraded to a locked box (148; pt. 2, ch. 2), the second book of *Gulliver’s Travels* portrays a series of adventures euphemistically described by the author in the chapter contents summary as “ridiculous and troublesome Accidents” caused by the narrator’s “Littleness” (163; pt. 2, ch. 5). Gulliver’s size, then, is indicative of a form of identification constituted by a certain logic of representation: in this case, a hierarchical order of superiority and inferiority. The diminutive stature of the travelling subject thus embodies the inferiority of his position, which suggests that the Lilliputians had only tied him down in Part I believing he was a threat to their own survival.

In his voyage to Laputa, Gulliver experiences an interesting reversal of fortunes when he “discover[s]” a series of islands that point him to Laputian territory (221; pt. 3, ch. 1), from whence Gulliver explains to the reader that the Laputians “plainly discovered me” (224) — an equality of position that is directly reflected in the success of the journeys that comprise the third book. Although the Laputian King quickly makes clear to Gulliver that he is not at all interested in stories of Gulliver’s travels or home country — that he is only interested in “Mathematicks and Musick” — upon their first encounter, this ultimately works in Gulliver’s favour. At the end of his visit, Gulliver

observes that “I cannot say I was ill treated in this Island” because his inability to contribute to the Laputan’s knowledge of math and music leads them to neglect him almost entirely (249; pt. 3, ch. 4). The Laputians are so preoccupied that they do not respond to touch or notice Gulliver’s “difference” from them any more than they notice the “shouts of the vulgar,” common people below (227-28; pt. 3, ch. 2). When Gulliver decides to leave it is because, in addition to “having seen all the Curiosities of the Island,” he is rarely addressed by anyone who might show him favour (249; pt. 3, ch. 4). During the next leg of his tour through this region, however, in Glubbudrib, this position is reversed when the Governor immediately expresses interest in Gulliver’s travels abroad (287; pt. 3, ch. 7). Gulliver then continues to garner attention as one who has travelled to “Countries very remote, of which they had never heard” (306; pt. 3, ch. 9) and is spoiled by the King of Traldragdubh (308), a small island of the region, because of his position as “a great Traveller” who “had seen all the World” (320; pt. 3, ch. 10). In Japan he is then treated like a minister because he is a “famous” traveller (323; pt. 3, ch. 11). The outcome of this series of journeys is therefore all the more noteworthy because the only “successful” voyage of any described by Gulliver throughout his four books occurs when both parties begin in equal positions of “discovery.”

In Houyhnhnm Land, the most explicitly and notoriously “colonial” encounters occur after mutineers indicate to Gulliver that they will “get rid of [him] in the first Place where they discovered Land” (333; pt. 3, ch. 11). This is the only sense of place given that might locate Gulliver on a map until he formulates a plan to go “deliver my self to the first Savages I should meet; and purchase my Life from them by some Bracelets, Glass Rings, and other Toys” (333), which are then later identified as the sort of “Toys, which Travellers usually carry for Presents to the Savage [sic] *Indians* of *America* and other Parts” (340; pt. 4, ch. 2). It is no coincidence, then, that the Yahoos appear to Gulliver in animalistic terms commonly ascribed by travellers to their “savage” Others (333-4): the “perfect human Figure” whose features are characteristic of the “Differences common to all savage Nations” (342; pt. 4, ch. 2). This implies that the land has already been Discovered prior to Gulliver’s arrival, and that the Yahoos embody the physical characteristics generally attributed to the

Discovered. Gulliver cannot therefore “discover” this land because he, too, is a Yahoo, and his attempts to differentiate himself from the Yahoos are in keeping with his efforts throughout the four books to maintain a privileged position by currying favour from the dominant group. The asymmetrical power dynamic between Gulliver and the Houyhnhnms is made immediately clear in his first encounter with two of their kind. Gulliver attempts to walk away from the Houyhnhnms, resolving “to go forward untill I could discover some House or Village,” but the dapple-grey horse “neighed after me... whereupon I turned back, and came near him, to expect his farther Commands” (337; pt. 4, ch. 1). Despite the fact that he cannot understand their language, Gulliver is prevented from attempting further “discovery” of the lands by representatives of the very group he does not yet know controls it.

In each of the four books, Gulliver’s inability to conquer the lands and peoples he encounters reflects the limits of the power of his decision to do so. In travel reports from the Canary Islands and the Americas, the Indigenous peoples are depicted as unable to speak or do more than gesture. They are presented as incapable of writing and organizing, of controlling their lands — incapable of the speech-acts that enact the sovereign decision — and seem only capable of receiving Christianity or accepting their new Sovereign. For Jacques Rancière, politics begin when this incapacity is challenged (*Literature 4*): when these people who cannot speak use their voice to show that they are speaking beings with rich and valuable lifeways, equally capable as anyone of participating in and contributing to the shared world and its orders. In *Gulliver’s Travels*, however, this moment never arrives. It is not the incapacity of the Other that is challenged, but the capacity of the traveller. No matter what Gulliver says or writes, words alone cannot help him. They grant him no “conference with God,” nor freedom from his captors. His power of speech only seems able to articulate the lies of the politician, the fantasies of the powerless. Say what he will, Gulliver cannot become the “favourite” in Brobdingnag; clothes cannot distinguish him from the “savage” Yahoos, nor fully align him with the “civilized” Houyhnhnms in Houyhnhnm Land. Travel realism, it turns out, is not a relation of words and action operating within a determined relationship of address, such as when

Columbus wrote to the Crown and Pope about his claim in their name to the islands of the Caribbean. It is, rather, a matter of pure signification operating independently of its referent and through an indeterminate relationship of address. Gulliver's words are not the speech-acts of Columbus, but the geometric forms of Laputa: free-floating apparitions, which, however captivating, are entirely divorced from the realities on the ground.

This failure of the acting word for Gulliver defines a new sense of the space between the words and actions of the travelling-subject that opens up a new distance between them in travel realism, marking a failure of the poetic operations of Discovery and the partitions they construct. The "civilized" traveller thus becomes the "pernicious... odious vermin" in Brobdingnag and the "savage" Other in Houyhnhnm Land. The ethnographer becomes object of ethnographic investigation in Lilliput (Neill 110) and of scientific investigation in Laputa (Spratt 145). Anyone can speak using this written form, but the European Yahoo is left silent when exiled from the land he holds dearest. Fact and fantasy collide throughout the four journeys, literalizing hyperbolic references of size and metaphors of animalism, collapsing through repeated intimations that the entire collection may well have been an illusion after all — that the brandy Gulliver drank before swimming to Lilliput might have "begat wild extravagant Imaginations" (Swift 376; pt. 4, ch. 6); that the sailors *en route* to Houyhnhnm Land died of "Calentures," which cause hallucinations (331; pt. 3, ch. 11); that Gulliver is suspiciously "very little Sunburnt by all my Travels" (131; pt. 2, ch. 1) — or that it was told by a liar, if the portrait that opens the book is to be believed. In all four parts that constitute the *Travels*, the determinacy of the nautical details that frame Gulliver's journeys is eradicated by the indeterminacy of his place and position when he is blown "off the map." His awkward, blundering attempts to reorient himself within these environments highlight the impossibility of trying to measure or describe accurately the spaces in which he finds himself (Neill 85). The logic of movement and narrative form can hold the sequence of events together, but the causal logic of travel realism cannot meaningfully organize or "make sense" of the peoples, places, and things within it.

As a would-be Discoverer, this heterogeneity of peoples, things, and places unassimilable to Gulliver's worldview suggest a growing proliferation of differences on the European horizon that Gulliver cannot contain. Where for Dampier, "both the epistemological coherence and the national identity of the travelling subject are secured by the growing congruity of the newly 'discovered' regions of the earth," for Gulliver it is exactly the opposite, and he remains "an incoherent traveller-subject in an incoherent global space" (Neill 84). The clear lines of difference and equivalence that police the boundaries of European global space under the discourse of Discovery have, it seems, broken down. Yet the fact that Discovery still anticipates the power-dynamics of Gulliver's encounters suggests that its spatial logic remains intact. The hierarchies that govern the constitution of subjects, the composition of action, and the appropriateness of expression particular to travel realism are preserved, but there is a break between the logic of expression and the content of the text reflected in the the *contingency* of the Discoverer's position. Here it is the *European* subject who continually finds himself in positions of subordination and domination, which has lead scholars such as Clement Hawes to note that the lens of the travel-writer in Gulliver's hand finds the "wrong target" — the "middle-class Englishman" — rather than Others abroad. This is the "wrong target" insofar as it is the "wrong" content: the "us" of European readership, instead of the "them" of European authorship. Unable to maintain the divisions between Self and Other, the work inverts the traditional targets of value: of who can name and who will be named, who can act and who will be acted upon.

The extreme precarity of Gulliver's position is thus most evident when the Others he encounters give him new names, like "Quinbus Flestrin" (the Man Mountain) in Lilliput, or "Grildrig" (the Dwarf) in Brobdingnag. Gulliver cannot be altogether *precluded* from travel discourse because he is the narrator, and the first privilege of the narrator is the fact of their being. The power of narration allows Gulliver to rewrite his encounters, hide his vulnerability, and project a sense of control to the reader. In effect, to control the narrative. Yet he cannot control those encounters, or prevent their control of him. This creates an incongruity between the written form of his encounters and the

content of his experiences. He thinks he is a top-notch traveler, but is constantly lost at sea. He thinks he is a favourite of the Royal Court of Brobdingnag, but is perceived as a toy. He thinks he is a Houyhnhnm, but is recognized as a Yahoo. From such incongruities there emerges two senses of the encounter: the sense of the traveling subject *cum* Discoverer, and that of Gulliver who lives and breathes and eats and has all the bodily functions standard to his biological equipment. In this separation, a knot is unfurled. Gulliver moves through a space that is two spaces: one a concatenation of actions defined by Discovery, the other a mere succession of events and incidents undertaken in the name of exploration; one a determinate order wherein the social body inscribes upon itself the words of the Discoverer and upon Others the forms of the Discovered, the other an indeterminate dispersion of spaces free from all causal logic through which the explorer moves.

This doubling challenges the causal link between the significance of words and the visibility of things in travel realism, disrupting the determined relationships of address between writer and reader that maintain the poetic divisions of Discovery, and opening an internal point for antagonism or re-articulation. This is what might be called the *satirical function* of *Gulliver's Travels*: a doubling of the spheres of experience and sensory perception organizing the peoples, things, and places that make up the European global imaginary to create a conflict between the sensory presentations of travel realism and the common ways in which sense is made of it. In effect, this produces a break within the sensory self-evidence of an order that assigns certain capacities to certain peoples in specific places, redrawing the frame through which common objects are determined. The politics of *Gulliver's Travels* is therefore this reframing of what is given as “natural” and inevitable by making new configurations between speech and noise to make a new form of “common sense” about the reports of travelers. The work does not attempt to give a voice to the Other; instead it re-frames the fabric of sensory experience upon which European subjectivity was predicated. This negates the literality of travel realism by unveiling its fictional foundations as a mode of intelligibility that constitutes the “European” subject through its difference from the “Non-European,” the “civilized” subject through its difference from the “savage,” and the “free land” of the “savage” peoples through

its difference from the occupied lands of the “civilized” — in short, as a rhetorical foundation of the concrete orders of Discovery.

If Gulliver is indeed the “everyman” of early modern Europe, raised on “the best Authors, ancient and modern” (31; pt. 1, ch. 1), who revels in the new capacity for ordinary men to ascend the social ladder and transcend the position for which they were destined, then he is also the slaver, the pirate, the Discoverer who became an invisible feature of early modern European society. He is the embodiment of the social whole. His story is one of the quest for wealth and privilege through the power of identification gained through superior position, and his corruption, therefore, manifests the substance of an entire way of life. So long as the legacy of Discovery continues, his journey is no longer a movement toward the some unknown land’s unveiling, but toward his own.

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Discography

3 songs, 10 albums, and 6 longer-form productions that accompanied the production of this thesis.

Songs

Hello - Axel Boman (2013)
 Snooze 4 Love - Todd Terje (2012)
 Deep Burnt - P  p   Bradock (1999)

Albums

Antonio Carlos Jobim - Stone Flower (1970)
 Bonobo - Migration (2017)
 Cedric (im) Brooks - Im Flash Forward (1977)
 DJ Ishy - Slow Down (2014)
 DJ Ishy - Piano Dreams (2015)
 Jimmy Smith - Midnight Special (1960)
 Kendrick Lamar - DAMN (2017)
 Kiasmos - Self Titled (2014)
 M.R. Shajarian & Kayhan Kalhor - Night Silence Desert (2000)
 Radiohead - A Moon Shaped Pool (2016)

Sets & Concerts

Kayhan Kalhor: NPR Music Tiny Desk Concert (2012)
 Moomin B2B Smallpeople - XLR8R Podcast (2015)
 Mano le Tough - Panorama Bar (02 02 2013)
 Nightmares on Wax - Boiler Room London mix (2013)
 Nu - SOL (2013)
 Roy Ayers: NPR Tiny Desk Concert (2018)