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BRITAIN'S EXTRATERRESTRIAL EMPIRE: COLONIAL AMBITION,
ANXIETY, AND AMBIVALENCE IN EARLY MODERN LITERATURE

by

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A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,
Marquette University,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

May 2022

ABSTRACT
BRITAIN'S EXTRATERRESTRIAL EMPIRE: COLONIAL AMBITION,
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Mark E. Wisniewski, B.A., M.A.

Marquette University, 2022

This project uses the context of early modern English colonialism and empire building to examine five British authors whose fiction focuses on extraterrestrial spaces: Edmund Spenser, Margaret Cavendish, Francis Godwin, Aphra Behn, and John Milton. I frame the relationship between extraterrestrial settings and British colonialism through Jeffery Knapp's conception of trifling, that even though early imperial England had little geopolitical power, the nation could differentiate itself as an otherworldly empire, both in origin and aim. Additionally, I build upon the connections drawn between colonialism and early modern literature by theorists such as Richard Helgerson, David Quint, and Stephen Greenblatt. I explore each text as the product of a specific moment in history, and use this foundational tenant of the new historicism to examine the primary texts in relation to the sociopolitical circumstance in England at the times of their writing. In addition, I compare each literary text with contemporary texts from other fields including, philosophy, science, theology, and history, which the authors either wrote, or in which they had a demonstrated interest. Applying this methodology, I find that the authors upon whom this study focuses represent a distinct pattern of possible ways early modern literature expressed colonial ambitions, anxieties, and ambivalences. Specifically, Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and Cavendish's *Blazing World* provide readings of British colonial ambition through the settings of faerie and parallel worlds. Godwin's *Man in the Moone* and Behn's *Emperor of the Moon* look to the lunar sphere as a method of questioning the plausibility and usefulness of an extraterrestrial empire. Finally, Milton's *Paradise Lost* suggests that some forms of colonialism are more appropriate models of empire for a British audience than others. While Milton remains anxious about Satan's conquest-based colonialism, which draws parallels to the imperial attitudes of the contemporary Spanish and Portuguese Empires, he also imagines the association between empire and Heaven or unfallen humans.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mark E. Wisniewski, B.A., M.A.

I would like to thank the committee members who helped me shape this project into its current form: Drs. John Curran, Amelia Zurcher, and Albert Rivero. A special thanks to every professor with whom I studied during my time at Marquette, particularly Drs. Amy Blair, Gerry Canavan, and Leah Flack, who designed coursework that allowed me to explore concepts that became the foundation for this dissertation. I would like to extend appreciation to the 2018 cohort of doctoral students who shared ideas and encouraged me to keep writing: Ibtisam Abujad, Holly Burgess, Liam Drislane, Catherine SImmerer, Peter Spaulding, and Amanda Zastrow. Dennis and Mary Ann Wisniewski deserve special mention for reading rough drafts and offering insight as to how arguments come across to readers who are not literary critics. Finally, I would like to mention the many others who helped make my time at Marquette a meaningful experience, including, but not limited to: Amylou Ahava, Katie Blank, Amy Cooper Carey, Bill Fliss, Dr. Steve Hartman Keiser, Heather James, Sharon Olsen, Dr. Brittany Pladek, Leslie Quade, Dr. Angela Sorby, Susan Stawicki-Vrobel, and Wendy Walsh.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	i
CHAPTER	
INTRODUCTION: IMAGINING THE COSMOS: THE CONQUEST OF SPACE AND PLACE.....	1
I. “OF OTHER WORLDES HE HAPPILY SHOULD HEARE”: EDMUND SPENSER’S FAERIELAND AS AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL EMPIRE.....	19
II. “[N]OBLE ATCHIEVMENTS”: REASON AND FANCY AS COLONIAL DEVICES IN MARGARET CAVENDISH’S <i>BLAZING WORLD</i>	78
III. <i>ORBIS NON SUFFICIT</i> : FRANCIS GODWIN’S EXTRATERRESTRIAL SPANIARD.....	123
IV. LUNATIC OBSESSIONS: APHRA BEHN AND THE QUESTIONABLE VALUE OF EMPIRE.....	165
V. “[T]O CREATE MORE WORLDS”: MILTON’S COLONIAL AMBIVALENCE IN THE PARADISE OF FOOLS AND THE ABYSS.....	192
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	249

Introduction: Imagining the Cosmos: The Conquest of Space and Place

We have no need for other worlds. We need mirrors. We don't know what to do with other worlds. A single world, our own, suffices us; but we can't accept it for what it is. We are searching for an ideal image of our own world: we go in quest of a planet, of a civilization superior to our own developed on the basis of a prototype of our primeval past.

--Stanislaw Lem¹

The period from 1590 to 1687 marked an extreme transitional period for the fledgling British Empire. Old methods of perceiving the world were quickly replaced with newer, more modern models of thought. Historians and literary critics alike often mark these changes by prefixing old labels with the word 'new': a New Science distanced from scholastic commentators, emphasizing experimentation and observation; the New Philosophy of Platonic Humanism; and the New Astronomy, now heliocentric, which prompted the first suggestions of an infinite universe that had crossed the English Channel from continental Europe. As if these changes were not enough to spark new methods of literary expression, this period also saw attempts at a global economy through mercantilism and some of the earliest, often unsuccessful, attempts to establish British colonies in the New World. Writers both in the British Isles and on the Continent were quick to explore the implications of these changes in their works, ready to explore what these changes meant for the lives of their readers and for themselves.

It should be noted that during this period the idea of a unified Britain was primarily a political fiction. Britain did not exist as a political entity until the 1707 Acts of Union. The idea of the unification of the British Isles into a single kingdom,

¹ *Solaris*, translated by Joanna Kilmartin and Steve Cox, Harcourt, 1987, p. 72.

however, is much older. England and Wales have been formally unified since the formation of the Kingdom of England in 927. In 1603 Scotland and England further strengthened their connections when James Stuart joined the crowns of the two nations. A major benefit of identifying sixteenth- and seventeenth-century imperialism as British rather than English is that the former label looks forward to the British Empire of the eighteenth to twentieth centuries.

Though the British Empire was technically a political fiction during the period I am examining, it was a fiction many people, from writers to colonizers, took seriously. As has been described by Walter Lim² and Christopher Hodgkins,³ many early modern writers were engaged in the project of separating English colonialism from the practices attributed to Spanish colonizers. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the narrative that Spanish colonists subjected indigenous people to the tyranny of bloody conquest had become known as the Black Legend. Most British authors writing about colonization found they must respond to the Black Legend, either as a way of distinguishing Britain's colonialism from Spain's or as a criticism that Britain had failed to distinguish its colonial practices from the Spanish.

One way English writers distinguished their empire from their colonial rivals was by imagining unique forms of British imperialism that was not conquest-based. Instead, the British Empire supposedly strove win colonies by providing a mutually beneficial relationship. A colony would provide the English with subjects and resources, while in exchange the crown would protect these colonies from rival

² *The Arts of Empire: The Poetics of Colonialism from Raleigh to Milton*, University of Delaware Press, 1998.

³ *Reforming Empire: Protestant Colonialism and Conscience in British Literature*, University of Missouri Press, 2002.

imperialists, and offer the natives trinkets ranging in value from glass beads to hatchets—gifts more valuable than iron tools appear to have been rare, leading most critics to question the ethics of such transactions. Such gifts came to be known as trifles, the process of distributing them, trifling. As might be expected, trifling quickly became a political act, especially helpful for smoothing relations between British explorers and merchants and the indigenous peoples they encountered in the colonies. Jeffery Knapp writes of the process, “English colonialism argued itself specially inclined to benignity and thus specifically dedicated to trifling.”⁴ Thus when Francis Drake and Humphrey Gilbert practice trifling, they are effectively distinguishing British colonialism from its Spanish counterpart.

Just as trifling could be a useful tool in colonial exchanges, some authors in the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries began to understand literature as a form of trifling. Philip Sidney, for instance, plays to the conventions of poetry as an “ink-wasting toy” in his *Apology for Poetry*,⁵ but such self-depreciation is inherently tongue-in-cheek appearing in a text primarily concerned with defending the value of poetry. In fact, Sidney saw poetry as another method to engage in colonial trifling, only instead of exchanging objects of little value for New World treasures, poetry becomes an important tool for spreading British cultural ideas. Even “the most barbarous and simple Indians,” Sidney writes, will be civilized by “the sweet delights of poetry.”⁶ Authors writing after Sidney became increasingly cognizant that literature’s ability to engage in trifling could do more than work to shape New World

⁴ *An Empire Nowhere: England, America, and Literature from Utopia to The Tempest*, University of California Press, 1992, p. 3.

⁵ Edited by Forrest G. Robinson, Bobbs Merrill, 1970, p. 87.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

thought patterns with a British mold—literature also had the power to affect British opinions about the colonial process. Authors like Edmund Spenser would use the power of trifling to their advantage, suggesting that the British Empire has not ultimately failed to establish a geopolitical dominion, but that imagined empire plays a role in the process of determining how any prospective British geopolitical empire should function.

Just like the practice of purchasing indigenous favor with glass beads, the literary trifle of the imagined empire is at constant risk of proving untenable. Where British trade in the New World depended on the inability of the indigenous people to properly value trifles, the process of literary trifling was open to similar accusations. Foremost among these accusations is the recognition that improper valuation of imperialism remains possible in narratives. Just as indigenous people lacked a context within which to value European trifles, it is not obvious that writers and readers are able to adequately value the influence of imagining empire as an alternative for, or a spur to, geopolitical imperialism. Perhaps the process of developing an imagined, extraterrestrial empire such as Faerieland, the Blazing World, or the lunar sphere is a misattribution of value on behalf of the writers engaged with projects of extraterrestrial empire. Yet writers took this risk of misevaluation because they understood imagined space as a low-stakes testing ground for imperial ideologies. Though they differ in their evaluation of imagined and geopolitical empire, each of the authors I examine in this dissertation follows Sidney in the belief that literary trifling is worthwhile. For the authors and imperialists I cover in the first two chapters, trifling came to characterize a method

of colonization that was distinctly British, and represented an alternative to Spanish conquest.

The idea that the British Empire should be able to mark itself as morally superior to the Spanish, while at the same time remaining legitimately competitive with their colonial empire, was of particular importance to authors in the late sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries. At this time, Britain's colonial project was at best a nascent desire, at worst a logistical failure. The Guiana colony, established in 1604, lasted only two years before it was abandoned. Colonies in St. Lucia (1605) and Grenada (1609) were no more successful. Even the Virginia Company maintained an uncertain future after its charter was revoked in 1624. In these early years of colonial uncertainty, it became important for authors like Spenser to present an extraterrestrial world that can suggest to readers an experience in which Britain can look like an effective empire and explore how the nation should pursue colonialism in the future.

In this study, I am particularly interested in the ways that the British authors Edmund Spenser, Margaret Cavendish, Francis Godwin, Aphra Behn, and John Milton wrote about extraterrestrial settings as a method of exploring their relationship with colonialism and imperialism. I chose these authors because they reflect the vast diversity of thought pertaining to colonialism in the early modern English canon. In addition, each of these authors is influential in Anglophone literary history, has written a text that incorporates an extraterrestrial otherworld as part of its primary conceit, and both text and author have a history of criticism linking them to British colonialism.

This study is deeply indebted to the models of interpreting empire, nation, and selfhood established by Knapp, Richard Helgerson, David Quint, and Stephen Greenblatt in their treatment of imaginative settings, nation, empire, and identity.⁷ These four authors represent the New Historicist foundation of my methodology for this study. Though the present study borrows from the methodology of New Historicism for its foundations, much of the language is borrowed or adapted from spatial theorists and geocritics such as Edward Soja,⁸ Robert Tally,⁹ and Bertrand Westphal.¹⁰ The resulting chimera of geocritical historicism combines the assumptions of the New Historicism¹¹ with the verbiage of spatial theory, such as secondspaces, and thirdspaces.¹² For instance, when Helgerson writes, “poets of

⁷ Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England*, University of Chicago Press, 1992; Quint, *Epic and Empire*, Princeton University Press, 1993; Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, University of Chicago Press, 1991.

⁸ *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, Blackwell, 1996.

⁹ *Spatiality*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2011.

¹⁰ *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*, translated by Robert Tally Jr., Palgrave MacMillan, 2011.

¹¹ Primarily the assumptions that: (1) literary and non-literary texts influence each other and should not be arbitrarily placed into separate discourses; (2) each text is the product of a cultural and historical moment; and (3) that the conclusions I draw in examining each text in this study are also the product of a cultural and historical moment.

¹² Soja argues that there are three types of spaces: real space (firstspace), imagined space (secondspace), and real-and-imagined space (thirdspace), *Thirdspace*, p. 57. Firstspace consists of a physical environment as it can be seen, experienced, and mapped. Secondspace, by contrast, is a mental construction in which space is perceived and thereby represented as a mental image. Thirdspace is a combination of the previous two spaces. It is the space-as-it-exists overlaid with the mental representations of an observer. As an example of all three spaces, if nobody observed the city of London it would continue to exist as a firstspace—that is it exists beyond human perception of it. London also exists as a mental model created by the mind to depict the firstspace. This mental model is a secondspace. When an observer interprets the firstspace of London with his or her secondspace model the city becomes a real-and-imagined space: a thirdspace. These definitions are helpful

laureate ambition, such as Spenser, Daniel, and Drayton [made] poetry itself serve, if not the state, then the nation,”¹³ I have expanded this analysis to how the secondspace settings of the poems created by these laureates express colonial ambition, anxiety, and even ambivalence in Britain’s pursuit of a geospace empire.

In addition to spatial theory and the New Historicism, the discourse on extraterrestrial empire has links to the critical dialogues of utopian and science fiction studies. Beyond Knapp’s *Empire Nowhere*, I have chosen to limit the influence of utopian studies because the concept of utopia fails to represent an extraterrestrial colony. Compared to utopian non-places, some extraterrestrial spaces are more clearly referential. It is difficult to imagine something like the moon as a non-existent place when it is visible in the night sky.¹⁴ More importantly, the idea of utopia is fundamentally based on a replicable process that teaches readers how to build an ideal society. Many extraterrestrial societies are not replicable because their utopianism is predicated upon the idea that extraterrestrial beings are not human, or are not tainted by original sin. No matter how dedicated an earthly society is to replicating this kind of extraterrestrial utopia, constructing such a society on Earth is impossible because of fundamental differences between human and extraterrestrial nature.

Questions of the non-human being and extraterrestrial space have traditionally been subject to the discourse of science fiction studies. By the early

in defining the categorical differences between extraterrestrial worlds such as Faerieland and the lunar sphere.

¹³ Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, p. 2.

¹⁴ A. G. H. Bachrach presents this idea in “*Luna Mendax: Some Reflections on Moon-Voyages in Early Seventeenth Century England*,” *Between Dream and Nature: Essays On Utopia and Dystopia*, edited by Dominic Baker-Smith and C. C. Barfoot, Brill, 1987, pp. 70-90, p. 71.

2000s, critics such as Adam Roberts¹⁵ and Ryan Vu¹⁶ had invoked Cavendish's *Blazing World*, Godwin's *Man in the Moone*, and occasionally Milton's *Paradise Lost* as precursors to science fiction. The recent attempts by science fiction critics to adopt these texts raise a major question about the importance of this criticism for evaluating the texts in the field of early modern studies. While I have made no attempt to be exhaustive in documenting the science fiction criticism, the analysis is valuable as the only criticism outside of utopian studies to critically examine non-places and extraterrestrial settings.

Just as utopian and science fiction studies show readers there are many ways to think about texts with extraterrestrial settings, so too are there many ways to think about how each of the authors in these texts take a slightly different approach to what expanding British influence means. Establishing colonies is only one approach to empire building. While colonialism is an aspect of the form of imperialism I call geopolitical imperialism, I also distinguish between three other forms of imperialism in this study: spiritual, cultural, and imagined empires.¹⁷ Geopolitical empire is perhaps the most familiar model, and an early modern European empire's geopolitical influence was often expanded by establishing colonies. Geopolitical empire is defined by the territorial conquest over what Bertrand Westphal calls

¹⁵ *The History of Science Fiction*, Taylor and Francis, 2000.

¹⁶ "Science Fiction Before Science Fiction: Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern SF." In *The Cambridge History of Science Fiction*, edited by Gerry Canavan and Eric Carl Link. Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 13-34.

¹⁷ This list is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to cover the forms of imperialism on which the following chapters focus most directly. There is certainly an economic component to imperialism, as Sarah Hogan clearly shows in *Other Englands: Utopia, Capital, and Empire in an Age of Transition*, e-book, Stanford University Press, 2018. Helgerson also describes the importance of colonialism's relationship with mercantilism, especially when both aligned with the interests of the ruling nobility. *Forms of Nationhood*, p. 2.

geospace, a term that distinguishes referential locations from their many non-existent counterparts described in literature. For example, Michael Drayton's literary creation of London as it is depicted in the *Poly-Olbion* corresponds to the geospace London in southeast England. Geopolitical empire is simply the process of constructing empires and colonies in geospace. Examples of British geopolitical colonialism in the seventeenth century include the establishment of American colonies and the conquest of Spanish Jamaica in the late 1650s.

Geopolitical imperialism is often closely associated with spiritual and cultural imperialism. Spiritual imperialism, as I am defining it, marks a governing body's religious influence on foreign and colonial territory. I say governing body rather than nation because religious influences are often transnational, relegating religious authority to a church. Spiritual imperialism often provides a useful justification for expanded geopolitical conquest. Returning to the example of the British conquest of Jamaica, the new-claimed territory gave the British Empire a foothold in the Caribbean under the geopolitical control of the Spanish, but also the spiritual authority of the Catholic Church. Taking an example of spiritual imperialism from the Spanish Empire, Ferdinand and Isabella were willing to take a risk on an ambitious, but poorly conceived, plan to reach Eastern Asia by sailing west in part because Columbus' voyage offered Spain the possibility not only of a new trade route, but also a method for expanding Catholicism's influence in the East Indies. Though Columbus famously arrived in the West Indies, he still found potential converts to Catholicism abundant.

Many early modern British authors perceived the spread of Spanish Catholicism in the Caribbean as a direct threat to British spiritual empire in the same

territory. Yet the idea that God supported a world-spanning British empire that would spread Anglicanism was rarely in doubt for the Isles' prominent thinkers. J. P. Colan uses the concept of nautical piety to show how writers and thinkers in the mid-seventeenth century were beginning to understand the ocean as a place where God shows His judgment, and suggests that one of the most important instances that showed a God who favored the British was the unlikely defeat of the Spanish Armada by a much smaller English force in 1588.¹⁸ Once established, the idea that God showed His favor to the British through nautical piety shows up again and again, often in association with the biblical *Book of Jonah*. One prominent example comes from George Abbot's sermon "An Exposition upon the Prophet Jonah."

Abbot writes:

[I]f God's hand anywhere do evidently appear, or if anywhere it be fearful, it is in being at sea, where, as the poet speaks (Juvenalis Satyra 12), a man is still within four, or at most seven inches of his death.... So then, if God be present anywhere to punish or to preserve, it is in the huge ocean.¹⁹

In a similar sermon, Tomas Fuller writes that Jonah's choice to flee from God to the sea was inadvisable because the sea is where "there appears the most evident demonstration of God's powerful presence."²⁰ The fact that an underpowered British force was able to defeat the most powerful navy in the world seemed to suggest the divine selection of Britain as an imperial world power.

¹⁸ J. P. Colan, "Milton's Anti-Imperial Epic," *Pacific Coast Philology*, vol. 33, no. 1, 1998, pp. 31-43, <https://jstor.org/stable/1316831>, p.31. Accessed 18 March 2021.

¹⁹ George Abbot, "Exposition Upon the Prophet Jonah," Robert Ogle and Oliver & Boyd, 1847, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=h7h&AN=43313668&site=eds-live&scope=site>, p. 44. Accessed 23 March 2021.

²⁰ Thomas Fuller, "Notes Upon Jonah," *A Collection of Sermons*, Printed for John Stafford, 1655, *ProQuest*, Early English Books Online, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat06952a&AN=mul.b2346840&site=eds-live&scope=site>, p. 13. Accessed 23 March 2021.

Yet the belief that God should support the expansion of the British Empire did not match the facts that British imperialism largely remained nascent until the middle of the seventeenth century. In *An Empire Nowhere*, Jeffrey Knapp examines the disparity between belief in a divine mandate to expand the British Empire and the current state of British colonialism by arguing that Elizabethan authors attempted to account for this discrepancy by displacing depictions of empire into literary non-spaces—nowheres.²¹

Because religion is an aspect of culture, spiritual imperialism might be said to be a sub-form of cultural imperialism. The definition of culture I am using here is fundamentally anthropological. In categorizing religion as an aspect of culture, I mean culture as Claude Lévi-Strauss defines it. For Lévi-Strauss, culture is a system of communication built from a series of symbols that, when combined, lays the foundation for the “complex structures” of human interaction.²² These complex structures include knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, and other customs.²³ Religion is, of course, one custom that should be considered an aspect of cultural imperialism. It is, however, far from the only set of symbols that an empire will attempt to export to other nations. Cultural imperialism, then, is the expansion of a nation’s norms, mores, practices, and symbols to colonies or foreign nations. As this is not a socio-anthropological study, I only invoke cultural imperialism in association with Milton’s colonial ambivalence, in which he does not directly reject geopolitical imperialism—so long as bringing new territories into the British Empire does not involve

²¹ Knapp, *An Empire Nowhere*, p. 7.

²² Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, edited and translated by Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf, 1963, Basic Books, 1976, p. 69.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

conquest—but clearly encourages colonies and foreign nations to imitate British culture.

The models of imperialism I have described above are each a different method of constructing and managing a geospace empire. Each of these approaches to imperialism begins with a mental model of how an empire should be established and participate in geopolitical affairs. I call this model imagined empire. An imagined empire is a constantly-evolving model, nor is there a single imagined empire that defines a nation. Spenser and Cavendish, for instance, both use literature to explore an ideal, albeit fictionalized, version of the British Empire, yet the imagined empires of Faerieland and the Blazing World have many fundamental differences in how they are organized. These differences will be covered in detail in Chapters one and two. In Chapters three through five, I explore how Godwin, Behn, and Milton use imagined empire to critique how Britain falls short of the model each has imagined.

What these five authors have in common is that each uses a fictional empire set in extraterrestrial space to explore their ideas about what the British Empire can and should be. Though authors who wrote about extraterrestrial spaces to explore their relationship with the developing British Empire hold a multitude of unique positions, I have found that most texts can be placed into one of three categories: authors who use an extraterrestrial setting to express colonial ambitions for the future of the Empire; those who express anxiety either that the Empire will fail to expand or that expansion requires hard reevaluation; and those who are ambivalent.

Spenser and Milton represent the canonical authorities with which most critics of early modern literature feel they must wrestle. The third author in this

typical literary trinity, William Shakespeare, does not appear as the primary subject of a chapter only because his plays do not emphasize empire in conjunction with extraterrestrial space. Because of Shakespeare's apparent interest in empire—as in *The Tempest*, *Coriolanus*, *Cymbeline*, and the history plays—the Bard's drama often helps contextualize the primary author explored in each chapter.

While Spenser and Milton exerted significant influence on many of the literary productions of the seventeenth century, they represent a privileged class of writers who were college-educated poets of laureate ambition. While Godwin, Cavendish, and Behn each maintained their own literary aspirations, each wrote under circumstances dramatically different from the poets. Godwin's influence survives primarily as a historian and disciple of William Camden. Cavendish was one of the first women to publish under her own name, and Behn was one of the first to support herself financially via her writing. The perspectives these three writers offer help develop a fuller picture of how early modern British authors wrote about extraterrestrial imperialism.

Godwin not only adds the perspective of a clergyman, he also allows us to explore a text that helped to popularize the lunar voyage motif in England, *The Man in the Moone*. Similarly, Cavendish and Behn offer opportunities to examine how extraterrestrial empire intersects with the emergent philosophy of empiricism, adapts to the seventeenth-century stage, and how early feminist thinkers interpret it. By including Behn, I have chosen a slightly broader timeframe than many studies on

empire in early modern literature. Such studies generally end with Milton,²⁴ or Marvell at the latest.²⁵ Yet, Behn is vitally important for presenting the vision of extraterrestrial empire that is most critical of British colonialism, and thus contributes significantly to the literary discourse.

Categorizing these authors based on the colonial ambition, anxiety, or ambivalence they express in their works leads to some unusual pairings. Comparisons such as reading Spenser against Cavendish or Godwin against Behn offer insights not often emphasized in existing criticism. Such pairings, while unusual, highlight the vast diversity of both colonial ambitions and anxieties. They also emphasize a few trends in authors' attempts to use extraterrestrial empires as a way to work through their relationship with empire as a concept. These trends have helped me create the following definitions of colonial ambition, anxiety, and ambivalence.

At its most basic, colonial ambition is an author's desire to see his or her nation succeed in establishing a world-spanning, geopolitical empire. Because the British Empire changed dramatically between the Elizabethan period and the Restoration, Spenser and Cavendish maintain very different aspirations for their nation's imperial and colonial future. Spenser's Britain was a nascent empire, plagued with transatlantic colonial failure. Yet, between the stunning defeat of the Spanish armada and the success of plantations in Ireland, imperialists such as

²⁴ Significant examples include Lim's *The Arts of Empire* and Willy Maley's *Nation, State, and Empire in English Renaissance Literature: Shakespeare to Milton*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2003.

²⁵ Such is the case in Donald Kimble Smith's *The Cartographic Imagination in Early Modern England: Rewriting the World in Marlowe, Spenser, Raleigh, and Marvell*, Ashgate, 2008.

Spenser were able to see signs that England was ascendant on the world stage. Spenser's optimism for a world-spanning British Empire shows that Faerieland is more than an allegory; it is also an idealization of England's future. Cavendish, on the other hand, wrote *The Blazing World* in a period when England is already well on its way to establishing a transatlantic empire. The relative colonial success of Restoration England allowed Cavendish to explore the relationship between empire and the emergent empiricism. Like Faerieland, the kingdom of the Blazing World is also a wish-fulfillment fantasy depicting what the British Empire may become if it continues to expand. One of Cavendish's fantasies is that the unification of the world under a single imperial rule will bring peace and stability, ending wars and allowing nations to devote their resources to the arts and sciences.

There exists a long history of critiquing European colonialism. Though the most well-known early critiques of colonialism, such as those by Kant, Smith, and Diderot, proliferate in the long eighteenth century, the Spanish tradition of questioning both imperialism and colonialism has a longer history dating back to sixteenth-century philosophers such as Bartolomé de Las Casas and Francisco de Victoria. The willingness to explore the ethics of colonialism aligns with the second of the two strands of colonial anxiety, which I discuss in Chapters three and four. Before covering that, however, there is another strand of colonial anxiety that is not commonly expressed in the extant literature. This form of anxiety, which I have linked with Godwin's *Man in the Moone*, is indeed a critique of the British colonial project. Rather than questioning the value or morality of colonialism, however, Godwin wonders whether the British Empire's early struggles to establish colonies will keep the Empire from rivaling the Spanish Empire in scale and political

influence. In other words, if the Spanish have already moved beyond terrestrial colonies and are now working on expanding this empire to the lunar sphere, readers must ask themselves if a colonial rivalry with Spain is either desirable or even feasible. I read *The Man in the Moone* as an argument that Godwin still believes a British colonial empire is desirable, but that it will not prove feasible unless the British immediately begin expanding their geopolitical empire. Meanwhile, Behn's *The Emperor of the Moon* can be read together with *Oroonoko* to display her anxiety that colonial imperialism may carry the negative connotations of trifling, that it is a frivolity, without bearing any of trifling's positive connotations. When Behn presents the lunar empire as an elaborate prank at Baliardo's expense in *Emperor*, she may be suggesting that the British attempt to establish geopolitical colonies is similarly a fool's errand.

Not all authors, however, fit readily into one of the two previous categories. John Milton's *Paradise Lost* is a key example of a text that projects complicated, and often seemingly contradictory, depictions of imperialism. While Milton expresses anxiety about elements of imperialism, at several points in the poem directly associating Satan with Spanish conquistadors, the work nonetheless advocates a form of Christian cultural imperialism. I suggest that the difficulty in parsing Milton's thoughts on imperialism, and especially colonialism, in *Paradise Lost* is the result of Milton's own ambivalence to colonialism as a practice.

Though I attempt to reconstruct how each of the five major authors listed above felt about the ethics and morality of empire and colonization, I am not

interested in critiquing such ethics—at least explicitly—myself.²⁶ Many authors have already written excellent studies that dedicate time and attention to the morality of colonialism.²⁷ Their work frees me to attempt to approach each author on his or her own terms and limit critiques of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century thinkers through twentieth- and twenty-first-century postcolonial theory. Also, while I have paid close attention to labeling indigenous cultures with their proper names, I occasionally use Eurocentric terminology such as ‘New World’ and ‘Age of Discovery’ without quotation marks. For this choice I offer the same rationale as Stephen Greenblatt in *Marvelous Possessions*: “in the texts I am considering such terms can never be detached from European projections.”²⁸

Further complicating any ethical judgment of early modern colonialism is the propagandistic zeal with which authors often presented their own nations as harbingers of modernity while their colonial rivals read like stock demons. By the middle of the seventeenth century, for example, a motif depicting most Spanish explorers, traders, and conquistadors as tyrants dominating and enslaving innocent peoples appeared with regularity. This Black Legend of Spanish colonialism is

²⁶ Just as the New Historicism recognizes the texts that I examine in this study as productions of specific cultural and historical moments, so too I recognize that my analysis is subject to similar influences. By forgoing ethical critique, I believe that I am better able to interpret the authors’ views on empire and maintain an awareness of how the discourse about colonialism in the twenty-first century impacts my analysis.

²⁷ See particularly Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, Pantheon Books, 1978, for his analysis of how literary and historical texts reflect and reinforce imperialism and also creates a method of characterizing Europe by contrasting it against Middle Eastern and Asian Others. Also, Abdul R. JanMohamed’s “The Economy of Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature,” *Race, Writing, and Difference*, edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr., University of Chicago Press, 1986.

²⁸ Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*, University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 8.

inevitably filtered through the cultural biases of the British authors in this study and should not necessarily be taken at face value.

Despite these caveats, this study does explore how the authors who write of imagined, extraterrestrial empires process the morality of colonialism. So long as we attempt to understand these authors within their own cultural contexts, their analyses remain a valuable asset for helping twenty-first century readers reflect on the history of colonialism. The extraterrestrial motif further emphasizes the gap between self and other, nation and barbarian, that those who seek to justify colonialism aim to exploit. In twenty-first-century science fiction studies, scholars recognize that the extraterrestrials we encounter in novels and film are rarely alien. These beings provide a way of writing about some aspect, perhaps aspirational, perhaps anxiety-invoking, of the human condition.²⁹ Similarly, beings from Spenser's elves to Milton's Satan participate in the human experiences that attend the process of colonization. Thus, in my reading of Spenser, Cavendish, Godwin, Behn, and Milton, the extraterrestrial is often a motif employed to forward an argument about the Other here on Earth, as well as how that other should be made part of the imperial self.

²⁹ See, for instance, Gordon Lichfield, Aubrie Adams, and Lonny J. Avi Brooks analysis, "The Aliens Are Us: The Limitation That the Nature of Fiction Imposes on Science Fiction About Aliens," *ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, vol. 72, no. 4, 2015, pp. 372-378, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44857465>. Accessed 27 November 2021. These authors emphasize that even the most thorough attempt to imagine a truly alien society is always limited by the fact that it is written for a human audience, and that aliens are generally used as "a technique for bringing questions about human values into sharper relief" (373).

Chapter 1: “Of other worldes he happily should heare”: Edmund Spenser’s Faerieland as an Extraterrestrial Empire

British authors like Spenser were well-practiced in imagining their nation as an alternative to continental European models of empire, religion, and culture. Since Julius Caesar made the first Roman forays into ancient England, authors have imagined the island as separated from the rest of the world. Virgil’s words, “*penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos*,” almost make the island sound otherworldly.³⁰ Shakespeare made repeated use of this theme, having further increased the metaphorical division between Britain and the rest of the world. In the third act of *Cymbeline*, Clotten claims that “Britain’s a world/ By itself.”³¹ The division is stated more potently by Imogen, who argues, “T’ th’ world’s volume/ Our Britain seems as of it, but not in’t.”³² Nor was Shakespeare’s concern with otherworldliness confined to a single play. In a famous scene from *Richard II*, John of Gaunt proclaims:

This royal throne of kings, this sceptered isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, *this little world*
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house
Against the envy of less happier lands.

³⁰ “*Eclogues*,” The Loeb Classical Library: *Eclogues, Goergics, Aenied Books 1-6*. Edited by Jeffrey Henderson, translated by H.R. Faircloth, revised by G.P. Goold, Harvard UP, 1999, pp. 23-88. Quote from *Ecloga Prima*, line 66. The translation is my own, as are all translations from Latin unless otherwise noted.

³¹ William Shakespeare, “*Cymbeline*,” *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., edited by Herschel Baker, Anne Barton, Frank Kermode, Harry Levin, Hallett Smith, and Marie Edel, Houghton Mifflin, 1997, pp. 1569-1608, III.i.12-13.

³² *Ibid.*, II.iv.137-138.

This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England.³³

Walter Lim reads *The Faerie Queene* as an argument for empire that parallels similar ideas of otherworldliness: “England’s [imperial] greatness is simultaneously here [in geospace] and nowhere [in Faerieland].”³⁴ Rather than treating Faerieland as a non-space, or reducing the setting to mere allegory, I treat it as an extraterrestrial space. Whether Faerieland is ‘real’ or not is less important than the recognition that it is not of the terrestrial sphere. If England can simultaneously be imagined as otherworldly and terrestrial, Spenser needs extrapolate slightly to suggest that extraterrestrial spaces can serve as temporary substitutions for Britain’s nascent geopolitical empire. In other words, the imaginative separation of the British Isles from the rest of the world was one of the first steps toward the literary infatuation with extraterrestrial space that I examine in this dissertation.

This reading of extraterrestrial spaces as colonial compensation for the nascent imperial ambitions of the British Empire follows the precedent set by Knapp when he makes the argument that otherworlds and nowhere are a response to the European discovery of the Americas.³⁵ As the owner of the Kilcolman estate, Spenser was always acutely aware of England’s lack of status as a geopolitical empire. His creation of the imagined, extraterrestrial empire of Faerieland could never serve him as an end in itself for British imperialism. Faerieland is a useful imperial tool in that it serves the double function of colonial wish fulfillment fantasy and provides a

³³ William Shakespeare, “Richard II,” *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., edited by Herschel Baker, Anne Barton, Frank Kermode, Harry Levin, Hallett Smith, and Marie Edel, Houghton Mifflin, 1997, pp. 1569-1608, II.i.40-50. Emphasis added.

³⁴ *The Arts of Empire*, p. 143.

³⁵ *An Empire Nowhere*, p. 18.

description of how a future British geopolitical empire might function, which quickly becomes a claim as to how such an empire *should* function.

Many influential critics have made a case that one or more books of *The Faerie Queene* advance an imperialist argument. Essays expounding this idea have become so common that well-cited interpretations of the poem as an apology for empire may be found for each of the poem's six books and the Mutabilitie Cantos. In one famous example, Jeffrey Knapp argues that Faerieland is so puzzling an imperial topic "that critics have tended to assume a true imperialism enters *The Faerie Queen* only when Fairyland begins to crumble" beneath the weight of the political allegory in Books IV-VI.³⁶ Knapp argues that Spenser intends Redcrosse Knight's encounter with Error to suggest that "not only Redcrosse and Spenser but England as a whole had recently escaped" the deluded ideal of the pastoral, which Knapp equates with trifling.³⁷ Having escaped from pastoral/trifling, England can now engage in the serious work of establishing geopolitical empire abroad. Books III-V have undergone similar colonial interpretations. Focusing on these sections, Kent R. Lenhnof argues that Spenser's depiction of incest, especially the relationship between Britomart and Artegall, is meant to privilege "endogamous relations as a way of warding off foreign invasion and contamination."³⁸ This corroborates Knapp's

³⁶ "Error As a Means of Empire in *The Faerie Queene* 1," *ELH*, vol. 54, no. 4, Winter 1987, pp. 801-834, <https://www.jstor.com/stable/2873099>, p. 801. Accessed 9 September 2020.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 811.

³⁸ "Incest and Empire in the 'Faerie Queene,'" *ELH*, vol. 73, no. 1, Spring 2006, pp. 215-243, <http://www.jstor.com/stable/30030008>, p. 216. Accessed 9 September 2020.

reading of Elizabethan insularity in *An Empire Nowhere*,³⁹ but adds the context of Henry VIII's repeated use of an incest motif to legitimize his separations from Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn. Of Book VI, Knapp writes that it "seems to admit the difficulty of living in a world unrealized, and depicts a Spenser so disillusioned with imperial prophecy that he reassumes the pastoral identity of Colin Clout," which in this case he no longer considers a delusion, "and figures his imperial theme as destructive of a sublime private visionariness."⁴⁰

Books II and V are not part of this summary. This is because the tales of Guyon and Artegall provide the context with which I will examine the way Spenser uses Faerieland as an extraterrestrial setting to explore his imperial aspirations before England had any established colonies. I have chosen to focus on these books in particular to follow the precedent set by James Nohrnberg, who treats Books II and V as an allegorical mirror. Nohrnberg argues that these books are representations of order—Guyon representing private order and Artegall representing public order.⁴¹ The books also share a special relationship in "opening with an extended allusion to the triumph of Mutabilitie," which groups the three sections into a fit unit for criticism.⁴² Moving through *The Faerie Queene* in narrative order, this chapter will examine these three sections of the poem, especially how each section represents the

³⁹ This particular argument can be found early in the introduction to *An Empire Nowhere*, when Knapp writes of English insularity that England's colonial failures and Spain's success in the New World helped create an attitude that "England's relation to the New World was essentially a frivolous one," and that the English then adopted an insular world view that their exclusion from world affairs affirmed their superior spirituality. With this mentality British writers did not see themselves as excluded from geopolitical empire, but removing their country from the spheres of conquest and colonization, p. 4.

⁴⁰ "Error As a Means of Empire in *The Faerie Queene* 1," p. 824.

⁴¹ *The Analogy of The Faerie Queene*, Princeton University Press, 1980, p. 285.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 287.

Otherworld of Faerieland, which is, at least in part, a surrogate for English colonial failures in Ireland. *The Faerie Queene's* allegory maintains that the English will establish an empire in Ireland and the New World in an imagined future. An Elizabethan poet like Spenser need not have looked far to observe the relative colonial success of his Iberian neighbors. One of Spenser's colonial goals in *The Faerie Queene*, however, is to imagine an empire that is founded upon a rejection of Spanish colonial practices including slavery and accepting worship from the indigenous peoples. Because Faerieland is an imperial space, but not a geopolitical space, it allows Spenser to experiment with his colonial vision in a way that he can develop this counter-Spanish imperialism, and can do so without risking English resources in the attempt. By invoking Faerieland as a substitute for geopolitical empire, Spenser attempts to convince his audience of British literati and intelligentsia that the Empire is ready to expand in the near future, even if Spenser found the Queen herself unwilling to engage in a full-scale subjection of Ireland.

Book II may be read as a comparison of British and Spanish colonial ideologies as represented by Guyon and Mammon, with a special focus on how Guyon's rejection of Mammon's offer of wealth and power presents an example of how British colonial empire might look different from its Spanish counterpart. For his success in Mammon's cave, however, Guyon overcompensates in his refusal of worldly power and goods when he, reduced to savagery, ravages the Bower of Bliss. The allegory of Book V shows practical examples of how Guyon's distinctly British colonialism can influence contemporary problems plaguing England, especially the Irish question (especially in the historical context of the recent Desmond Rebellions), and growing tensions with Spain (as allegorized in the figure of Grantorto). Book V

continues this theme by emphasizing the English intervention in the Dutch Revolt (as allegorized in the figure of Belge). Finally, the Mutabilitie Cantos begin to show a change in Spenser's imperialist paradigm. I will not go so far as some critics to say Spenser's experience in Munster over the last nineteen years of his life shifted his position to one of ambivalence⁴³; Spenser's later works, including *A View of the Present State of Ireland* and Book V of *The Faerie Queene* (the first written and the second published in 1596) are significant evidence against such a reading.

Let's begin the analysis of how the previous statements relate to extraterrestrial empire by taking a closer look at how Spenser depicts Faerieland as an extraterrestrial space. Book II begins with the famous proem in which Spenser defends the existence of Faerieland even though it cannot be located on a map:

But let that man with better sence aduize
That of the world least part to vs is red:
And dayly how through hardy enterprize,
Many great Regions are discovered,
Which to late age were neuer mentioned. (II.Proem.2.1-5)⁴⁴

⁴³ My reading of Spenser's potential colonial ambivalence is reserved for the Mutabilitie Cantos. The ambivalence here, however, seems to be founded in questioning the value of colonial ventures when the crown is unwilling to engage in the scorched earth methodologies of men like Grey and Pelham. Stephen Greenblatt has commented on this tendency in Spenser as follows: "Even when he most bitterly criticizes its abuses or records its brutalities, Spenser loves power and attempts to link his one art [the written word] ever more closely with its symbolic and literal embodiment." *Renaissance Self-fashioning*, pp. 173-4. Critics like Warren Tormey have read *The Faerie Queene* IV-VI as a portrayal of increasing uncertainty in the prospects of the Munster Plantation (141) and that these books likewise show an increasingly "ambivalent" colonial rhetoric (144). "On the Edges of Settlement: Propagandizing Colonial Hegemony and Realizing Social Mobility in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*." *Medieval Perspectives*, vol. 30, 2015, pp. 141-162, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hlh&AN=143065748&site=eds-live&scope=site>, p. 141. Accessed 31 August 2020.

⁴⁴ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, edited by Thomas P. Roche Jr. and C. Patrick O'Donnell Jr., Penguin Classics, 1987. All subsequent citations to *The Faerie Queene* are to this edition.

For Spenser, Faerieland's reality should be equivocated neither with its referentiality, nor a cartographer's ability to map the realm. How, then, should a reader consider the reality of Faerieland beyond the traditional label of allegory? I am not interested in mapping Faerieland in the tradition of Wayne Erickson⁴⁵ so much as how Spenser depicts Faerieland as a literary secondspace⁴⁶ for which no single geopolitical referent can be determined.

Attempting to view Faerieland through this methodological lens immediately brings to mind several questions: What benefit can Spenser hope to gain by imagining an empire without a geopolitical referent? How do authors use depictions of extraterrestrial spaces such as Faerieland to disseminate and re-inscribe their personal visions of empire? Can such a practice be used to critique imperialism as effectively as it can be implemented to support colonization?

Faerieland's lack of a single geospace referent may appear obvious, but the colonial implications of such an observation are more nuanced than many critics have heretofore argued. Some have tried to work around Faerieland's lack of clear referentiality by arguing one geospace or another should dominate our allegorical understanding of Faerieland. The three major readings of Faerieland as a geospace suggest that it may be a symbolic equivalent of Ireland⁴⁷, America⁴⁸, or even

⁴⁵ See *Mapping The Faerie Queene: Quest Structures and the World of the Poem*, Garland Publishing, 1996.

⁴⁶ See the introduction to this dissertation for a review of Edward Soja's spatial theory as it is portrayed in *Thirdspace*.

⁴⁷ The seminal example of the argument that Faerieland represents Ireland is Andrew Hadfield's *Spenser's Irish Experience: Wilde Fruit and Savage Soil*, Oxford University Press, 1997.

⁴⁸ Knapp makes a similar argument about the relocation of the American can colonies to a literary non-place in *An Empire Nowhere*.

England.⁴⁹ The last of these interpretations is almost always drawn from the third Commendatory Verse to *The Faerie Queene*, “To The Learned Shepeheard.” This poem’s author is confident that while *The Faerie Queene*’s allegory can be multivalent, Spenser intends for his literati audience to associate Faerieland with England: “So mought thy Redcrosse knight with happy hand/ victorious be in that faire Ilands right:/ Which thou dost vayne in Type of Faery land/ Elyzas blessed field, that Albion hight.”⁵⁰ Alternatively, Wayne Erickson depicts Faerieland as existing only in the human imagination.⁵¹ This argument accounts for the temporal contradictions in the narrative, such as the act of bringing together Arthur, a sixth century figure, with St. George, who lived in the third century.⁵²

Spenser realizes any non-literati readers may be skeptical of a world without a referent and therefore attempts to mollify potential critics and skeptics with the rhetoric of the proem to Book II. Because he can evoke a tradition of places that existed but previously had no British signifiers—such as the Americas—he maintains it must be possible that he can discover an unknown place by creating a signifier. The Faerieland-Americas association is made explicit in the proem to Book II, which includes the most perspicuous suggestion that Faerieland exists within geospace.

In response to the direct question “Where is that happy land of Faery,” (2.proem.1.7) Spenser deflects with a non-answer, arguing that only a limited portion of the world is read by (i.e. known to) the English. In other words, because Faerieland is identified and the signifier already in use, the reader will be able to

⁴⁹ Roche and O’Donnell’s introduction to Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, Penguin Classics, 1987, p. 20.

⁵⁰ Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, p. 20. Italics omitted.

⁵¹ *Mapping The Faerie Queene*, p. 32.

⁵² *Ibid.* pp. 72-73.

attach the referent to Faerieland upon its discovery. This logic does not hold. Spenser is not aiming to name just any land Faerieland, but is applying a signifier to a specific referent that will never be found. The point of the equivocations, however, is to pacify critics and skeptics without having them consider the possibility of an undiscovered Faerieland too closely. With the conflation of identifying Faerieland and its discovery, Spenser attempts to make the space English as an imagined colony.

Further, he imagines the world as both a map and a text, conflating the signifier with the signified just like Tamburlaine does in the first part of Christopher Marlowe's eponymous tragedy (1587). Spenser's narrator and Marlowe's Tamburlaine are both obsessively preoccupied with the blank spaces on the *mappa mundi*, and both attempt to conflate geopolitical exploration with creation through language. Like Spenser's narrator, Tamburlaine is obsessed with his future colonial empire to the extent he references unknown and undiscovered lands as locations that will be added to said empire. In other words, he invokes an unknown land and imagines its conquest merely by claiming it exists. For Tamburlaine, this imagined world is not a faerieland, but Mexico:

Those walled garrisons will I subdue,
 And write myself great lord of Africa:
 So from the east unto the furthest west
 Shall Tamburlaine extend his puissant arm.
 The galleys and those pilling brigantines,
 That yearly sail to the Venetian gulf
 And hover in the straits for Christian's wrack,
 Shall lie at anchor in the Isle Asant
 Until the Persian fleet and men-of-war,
 Sailing along the Oriental sea,
 Have fetched about the Indian continent
 Even from Persepolis to Mexico,
 And thence unto the straits of Jubalter,
 Where they shall meet and join their force in one,
 Keeping in awe the Bay of Portingale
 And all the ocean by the British shore;

And by this means I'll win the world at last. (3.3.244-60)⁵³

While Mexico exists in Christopher Marlowe's consciousness, it cannot exist in Tamburlaine's. This is because Marlowe has based Tamburlaine's character roughly on the life of Timur the Lame (Tamerlane) who founded the Timurid Empire, which controlled territory in and around present day Afghanistan. Timur lived for most of the fourteenth century and into the early years of the fifteenth (1336-1405). Timur lived before the existence of the Americas became common knowledge to Europeans and Asians as more than a world of icy northern islands explored by the Norse. Marlowe has Tamburlaine conflate the evocation of Mexico with its anachronistic discovery.

Meanwhile, Spenser invokes a similar strategy of equivocating the mention of territory with its discovery in the proem to Book II of *The Faerie Queene*. Where Marlowe suggests the New World has expanded the imperial map in a manner that defies history, Spenser has torn up the *mappa mundi* of "Many great Regions are discovered" altogether. What follows is the most direct statement on the nature of Faerieland's locality in the whole poem. Ironically, it is not a statement at all, but a series of three highly suggestive and leading questions:

Who euer heard of th'Indian *Peru*?
 Or who in venturous vessell measured
 The *Amazons* huge riuer now found trew?
 Or fruitfulest Virginia who did euer vew? (*The Faerie Queene* 2.proem.2. 6-9)

When the first three books of *The Faerie Queene* were published in 1590, Spain had held nominal claim of Peru for forty-seven years since the viceroyalty was established in 1543. This viceroyalty also accounts for Spanish colonial influence

⁵³ "Tamburlaine; Part One," *Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Plays*, edited by J. B. Steane, Penguin Books, 1986, pp. 101-178.

along the course of the Amazon. With modern borders, the Amazon runs easterly through Peru, Colombia, and Brazil. In 1590, where both the Colombian and Peruvian portions of the Amazon cut through the territory of the Spanish Viceroyalty, parts of what is now Brazil belonged to the Portuguese Empire.⁵⁴ Only after putting readers in mind of the Spanish and Portuguese Empires does Spenser finally mention a British holding. Spenser's optimism for Virginia is unfounded. The territory would never be 'fruitfullest' while he or Elizabeth was alive; the first English colony in North America was Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. Far from being fruitful, this colony was briefly abandoned in 1610 after 80 percent of the colonists died of starvation and disease. Even when the colony was reestablished later that year with the arrival of Thomas West's relief fleet, the fruitfulness of the colony was given over to growing tobacco. Although Virginia's relative failures occurred after Spenser's death, they reflect a pattern of nascent British colonialism.

Finally, Spenser uses the proem to offer readers the more radical possibility that Faerieland is not yet mappable because it does not exist on Earth: "What if within the Moones faire shining spheare?" Spenser asks the reader. "What if in euery other starre vnseen/ Of other worldes he happily should hear?" (2.proem.3.6-8) This time Spenser is uncharacteristically direct with his answer: "He wonder would much more: yet such to some appear" (2.proem.3.9). Spenser means that these stars are visible not with the naked eye, but only through new tools such as the telescope. Through the imagery of stars, Spenser marks the possibility that Faerieland is a truly extraterrestrial space, not an un- or recently-discovered land like Virginia, Peru, or

⁵⁴ It is worth mentioning that these borders are inconsistent between period maps and often reflect the nationality and biases of the cartographer as much as, if not more than, actual territorial claims.

the Amazon. The reference to worlds that populate the stars unseen may be a nod to Spenser's contemporary teacher at Oxford, Giordano Bruno, who believed that the universe was infinite, and could thus support an abundance of life on a plurality of worlds.⁵⁵ Ultimately, the possibility that Faerieland exists on a world circling a distant star is another example of a way in which a realm can be simultaneously real and otherworldly. Here, Spenser raises the possibility that Faerieland is extraterrestrial in the sense that modern readers are used to interacting with the term: Faerieland might exist in outer space.

⁵⁵ There is a respectable tradition of contrasting the conservative, geocentric cosmos Spenser depicts in *The Faerie Queene* with Bruno's infinite universe, which contains a plurality of worlds. See J. Murray, "Giordano Bruno in England," *Quarterly Review*, vol. 196, 1902, pp. 483-508. Accessed 2 November 2020. Murray points to several prominent connections between Bruno's *Spaccio* and the Mutabilitie Cantos, focusing especially on similarities in the authors' Neoplatonic philosophies. Later scholars, however, responded with skepticism that Spenser was familiar with Bruno's work at all. Ronald B. Levinson has responded to these arguments writing that Spenser's familiarity with Bruno should be designated as more than a mere possibility despite the lack of a documented history of Spenser reading Bruno. "Spenser and Bruno." *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. 43, no. 3, Sept. 1938, pp. 675-81, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/457493>, p. 675. Accessed 2 November 2020. Levinson also draws his major connection between Bruno and Spenser through Neoplatonism, citing commonalities in how both authors make distinctions between material and spiritual substances and the roles these substances can play in the physical world (680). I also find it likely that Spenser would have been familiar with Bruno's ideas considering the social circles in which they moved. First Bruno dedicated both the *Spaccio* and the *Eroici* to Philip Sidney, Spenser's friend and sometime patron. If this connection is not enough there is also the fact that Bruno was first translated into English by Thomas Digges, a prominent student of John Dee, who was closely acquainted with Spenser's good friend Walter Raleigh. For the purpose of the present argument, it is not necessary to prove that Spenser read Bruno or was intimately familiar with his work. All that is important for interpreting the lines 6-8 of the third stanza of the proem to the second book of *The Faerie Queene* is that the idea of other worlds in "euery other starre vnseen" was currently a conversation in England while Spenser was writing *The Faerie Queene*. Bruno offers one way of approaching the idea of the plurality of worlds Spenser is invoking in these lines.

The suggestion, however, can be quickly dismissed by attentive reading. As Erickson notes Faerieland has a spatial and temporal overlap with the earthly realm, but the relationship between the two spaces is never clearly defined. In one of the first examples of the relationship between Faerieland and Earth, readers encounter St. George, the Redcrosse Knight, who travels from fourth century Turkey to the seemingly atemporal Faerieland. Yet nothing about Redcrosse's travels suggests that Faerieland is a world orbiting another star. Instead there is ample evidence that Faerieland is within our solar system. At the beginning of Book I, Canto II, Ursa Major—colloquially known as Charles' Wain, which Spenser calls the "Northerne wagoner"-- is visible in the night sky (2.2.1.1-5). Further, the Mutabilite Cantos clearly describe a geocentric vision of Earth's solar system. This, however, is of limited use in establishing the nature of Faerieland as the action of the Cantos takes place at Arlo Hill, a stand-in for Galtymore near Spenser's Kilcolman estate.

The question of Faerieland's extraterrestrial location points to its function as an otherworld that is simultaneously a colonial space. In the lines "What if in euery other starre vnseen/ Of other worldes he happily should hear?" (2.proem.3.6-8) readers can see early glimpses of the idea that stars might be the locations of previously unimaginable worlds. These worlds sometimes exist in geospace, like the Americas, sometimes in super-terrestrial space, like the moon or other planets, and sometimes in non-referential extraterrestrial spaces like Faerieland. What authors like Spenser make clear is that an extraterrestrial space still has plenty to offer the Empire and can serve as a substitute target for the British colonializing impulse that has not yet led to a world-spanning English geopolitical empire.

As an instance of extraterrestrial empire, Faerieland can help to compensate for the nascent colonial ambitions of the emerging empire. As a colonial space, Faerieland offers an Elizabethan reader a way to justify the English Empire's colonial failure to launch successful colonies in the Americas as an exclusion *of* the world rather than an exclusion *from* the world, and creates a literary realm in which colonial thought experiments can be conducted.⁵⁶ For Charlotte Artese *The Faerie Queene* is “present in a gap posited between past and future, history and prophecy, and between Uther and Constantine...”⁵⁷ She argues that Spenser fills this gap with both Arthurian legend and the concept of America: “This gap in knowledge [can also be] called America, [it is] the space in which fictions become histories, [it] is also the space in which Spenser's project can exist and be legitimated.”⁵⁸ This project, of course, is the creation of a British national identity through the organization of its mythological past in the form of *The Faerie Queene*. This analysis closely follows Stephen Greenblatt's reading of accounts of the new world as the imagination at work. “Interpreters of literature,” he writes,

are trained to analyze the imagination at play; in most early European accounts of the New World we are dealing instead with the imagination at work. It would be foolish to conflate the two modes and to proceed as if interpretive practice could be the same with both...But the European encounter with the New World, with its radical displacements of routines, brought close to the surface of non-literary texts imaginative operations that are normally buried deep below their surface (unlike works of literature where these operations are prominently displayed).⁵⁹

⁵⁶ See Knapp, *An Empire Nowhere*, p. 99.

⁵⁷ “King Arthur in America: Making Space in History for *The Faerie Queene* and John Dee's *Brytanici Imperii Limites*,” *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, vol. 33, no. 1, Winter 2003, pp. 125-141, <https://www.doi.org/10.1215/10829636-33-1-125>, p. 131. Accessed 16 October 2020.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

⁵⁹ Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, p. 23.

Thus for both theorists, Spenser's Faerieland is a rhetorical construct aimed at fashioning identity. For Artese, this identity is national in the form of Arthurian mythology; for Greenblatt this identity is based on Spenser's stated goal to "fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline" (15, italics omitted).⁶⁰ Knapp picks up on this conversational thread by arguing that the process of writing was inherently colonial for Spenser in that he "hoped to see his books realized as colonies."⁶¹ This statement pairs well with Greenblatt's argument that "[e]ven when he most bitterly criticizes" imperial abuses, "Spenser loves power and attempts to link his one art ever more closely with its symbolic and literal embodiment."⁶²

The proem to Book II, however, is only the start of Spenser's imperial imagery in the book. In Canto vii we see Spenser trying to work through what makes English imperialism special, looking for a justification to claim that it will be the English who inherit the Earth. Book II, Canto vii provides Spenser's answer through contrasting the colonial methodologies of the Spanish and English using the characters of Mammon and Guyon as their respective symbols: the successful Spanish conquistador and miner, and the British Empire, that takes time to develop, but offers a human alternative to the Spanish colonialism that, as I will later show, is depicted by Las Casas.

David T. Read understands the image of Mammon's cave in Canto vii within this context. For him Mammon at least partially represents Spanish conquest aimed at the hoarding of New World gold. He begins this argument by challenging the assumption that *The Faerie Queene* has a clear colonial message, citing Knapp's

⁶⁰ *Renaissance Self-fashioning*, p. 169.

⁶¹ *An Empire Nowhere*, p. 219.

⁶² *Renaissance Self-fashioning*, p. 173-174.

reminder that in the late 1580s, when Spenser was drafting the first three books of the poem, England still did not have a single, permanent, colonial outpost. He concludes that the “New World certainly figures in the historical allegory of [*The Faerie Queene*], and the reader can in a number of places detect Spenser’s argument for the presence of the English in that world. Yet this argument is undertaken with great uncertainty and reaches no definite outcome...”⁶³ This English uncertainty is in stark contrast to Spenser’s depictions of the role the Spanish are playing in the colonization of the New World. Read offers several different interpretations of characters as allegorical representations of Spanish conquest. First it is Guyon who is Spanish, though “immaculately conceived.”⁶⁴ Mammon’s trial then becomes not a temptation against Guyon’s dominant attribute of temperance, but a transcendence of Spanish identity by upending the expectations British readers would have for a Spaniard in the presence of Mammon within a gold-filled cave, a symbol for which one referent may be a Spanish mine.⁶⁵

The more obvious reading, however, is that Mammon is meant to represent, at least in part, the Spanish desire for conquest and domination as a means toward riches.⁶⁶ This reading makes more sense when contextualized with Guyon’s argument that Mammon’s desire for abundance ultimately leads to disorder and slaughter:

⁶³ “Hunger of Gold: Guyon, Mammon’s Cave, and the New World Treasure,” *English Literary Renaissance*, vol. 20, no. 2, 1990, pp. 209-232, <https://0-www-jstor-org.libus.csd.mu.edu/stable/43447724>, pp. 210-211. Accessed 30 September 2020.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

⁶⁶ For the tradition of English authors depicting Spanish explorers and conquistadors as Satanic see Christopher Hodgkins, *Reforming Empire*, esp. Chapter 2 “Stooping to Conquer: Heathen Idolatry, Protestant Humility and the ‘White Legend’ of Drake,” pp. 77-112.

Ne thine be kingdoms, ne the scepters thine;
 But realms and rulers though doest both confound,
 And loyal truth to reason doest incline;
 Witnesse the guiltlesse bloud pourd oft on ground,
 The crowned often slaine, the slayer cround,
 The sacred Diademe in peeces rent,
 And purple robe gored with many a wound;
 Castles surprizd, great cities sackt and brent:
 So mak'st thou kings, & gaynest wrongful government. (2.7.13)

The previous passage is one of Spenser's most direct attempts at incorporating the black legend into the body of *The Faerie Queene*. The black legend, or *leyenda negra*, which imagines Spanish imperialists as conquerors bringing a reign of terror to the colonies whereas British colonists offer trade, trifles, and relations that are in the best interests of all parties involved, comes through in the results of Mammon's uncontrolled appetites. Mammon, like the conquistadors, might not desire the sacking and burning of castles and towns, but a parallel, uncontrolled lust for gold and worldly power is nonetheless the result of these actions.

These associations between Mammon and the Spanish suggest that Spenser would establish Guyon's rejection of the demon's riches as a symbolic rejection of Spanish colonial practices. One critic, as a play on words, has called the British alternative to the *leyenda negra* the 'white legend.' In *Reforming Empire: Protestant Colonialism and Conscience in British Literature*, Christopher Hodgkins argues that "actually making an empire required more than antiquarian claims and the Black Legend of a common religious enemy [i.e. Spain]; it required action, emboldened by a robust moral exceptionalism, the certainty that one's virtuous conduct validated one's cause" and that this need for an English mythology manifested around the image of Sir Frances Drake, who was famous in the English popular imagination for

refusing worship from the Miwok people of the American West Coast.⁶⁷ Other critics, however, have not as readily seen Drake as a symbolic opposition to the Spanish that had a profound impact on literature. Michael Allen has, for instance, argued that Drake's influence of English literatures developed only "gradually, obliquely, inconspicuously almost," and is most clearly visible in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Andrew Marvell's "Bermudas."⁶⁸

Where I differ from Read's analysis is in regard to Guyon's role in the Mammon's cave episode in Book II, Canto vii. I understand Guyon's temperance as a representation of an alternative vision for colonialism that allows readers to imagine British occupation of New World colonies as an acceptable interaction with indigenous peoples, in part because such colonies can protect natives from the perceived cruelties of Spanish conquistadors. When Hodgkins compares Drake's voyages to *The Faerie Queene*, he points to the sixth canto of the first book; after narrowly escaping Sansloy and the threat of rape, Una meets a community of woodland pagans. Like Drake, Una is similarly depicted winning the natives' love by redirecting their misplaced worship from herself to the Christian God:

Glad of such lucke, the luckelesse lucky maid,
 Did her content to please their feeble eyes,
 And long time with that saluage people staid,
 To gather breath in many miseries.
 During which time her gentle wit she plyes,
 To theach them truth, which worshipt her in vaine,
 And made her th'Image of Idolatryes;
 But when their bootlesse zeale she did restraine
 From her own worship, they her Asse would worship fayn. (1.6.19)

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 77-78.

⁶⁸ "Charles Fitzgeffrey's Commendatory Lamentation on the Death of Drake," *Sir Francis Drake and the Famous Voyage, 1577-1580*, edited by Norman Joseph William Thrower, University of California Press, 1984, pp. 99-111, pp. 109-110.

In contrast to Una and Drake, Spanish conquistadors were reported to regularly encourage and accept indigenous worship. The most popular example is the myth that Hernán Cortés took advantage of a cultural misunderstanding in which Montezuma believed him to be Quetzalcoatl. There is little evidence, however, that this example represents the truth of Cortés' ventures in Mesoamerica.⁶⁹ Many English authors used Francisco López de Gómara's account that Cortés accepted worship as the deity as inspiration for anti-Spanish propaganda. Thus when Spenser has Una, a symbol of the Protestant faith, reject worship from the 'savage people' of Faerieland, the episode is marked in response to narratives like that of Cortés. Cortés was far from the only conquistador that the British accused of accepting native worship. Hodgkins cites a probable reading list for Drake's knowledge of conquistadors including: Las Casas' *Brevissima Relación*, Antonio Pigafeta's *Primo Viaggio Intorno al Globo*, the anonymously written *Neue Zeitung von dem Lande das de*

⁶⁹ See Camilla Townsend, "No One Said it was Quetzalcoatl: Listening to the Indians in the Conquest of Mexico," *History Compass*, vol. 1, no. 1, January 2003, pp. 1-14, <http://www.doi.org/10.1111/1478-0542.034>. Accessed 1 October 2020. Elsewhere, Townsend has linked the narrative that the Aztecs believed the Spanish to be gods to Francisco López de Gómara's *Historia de la Conquista de México*. See Camilla Townsend, "Burying the White Gods: New Perspectives on the Conquest of Mexico," *The American Historical Review*, vol. 108, no. 3, 2003, pp. 659-687, <https://0-www-jstor-org.libus.csd.mu.edu/stable/10.1086/529592>. Accessed 1 October 2020. In particular she considers López de Gómara's claims that when the Spanish arrived on Mesoamerican shores, "[m]any [Aztecs] came to gape at the strange men, now so famous, and at their attire, arms and horses, and they said, 'These men are gods!'" This translation of López de Gómara's claim is from Lesley Byrd Simpson, trans. and ed., *Cortés: The Life of the Conqueror by His Secretary*, University of California Press, 1964, p. 137. Townsend links claims that the Aztecs believed the Spaniards to be of divine origin to Spanish propaganda, and attributes the staying power of the narrative to the lack of "a satisfactory alternative explanation for the [Spaniard's] conquest" ("Burying the White Gods" 660). Because it is difficult for modern readers to imagine Cortés' relatively small force of conquistadors dominating a Mesoamerican empire, even when accounting for the technological advantages of gunpowder and horsemanship, the narrative that Cortez was mistaken for a god provides an attractive explanation.

Spanier Funden Haben, Francisco López de Gómara's *Historia de la Conquisata de México*, the second edition of Giovanni Battista Ramusio's *Navigazioni e Viaggi*, Richard Eden's translation of Peter Martyr's *Decades of the New World*, and the *Relaçam Verdadeira*, written by one Gentleman of Elvas.⁷⁰ If this list is close to accurate, Hodgkins argues that Drake "almost certainly" knew not only that Cortés, but also Ferdinand Magellan and Hernando de Soto had been said to accept worship from the indigenous peoples of the New World.⁷¹

Like Drake and Una, Guyon understands that he must differentiate his actions from those modeled by the conquistadors and the black legend. He, however, needs not to reject worship, but the temptations of wealth and political power. This obviously means rejecting Mammon's gold, but almost as important is Guyon's reasoning for refusing temptation. Any Christian, whether Spanish Catholic or British Protestant, should refuse a worldly reward, such as gold, in hope of the spiritual rewards to come in the Kingdom of Heaven. Several bible verses including Colossians 3:2, Proverbs 11:28, Matthew 16:26, and Luke 8:14, among others, clearly make this point.

As Guyon approaches Mammon's cave, we see how British imperialism has been idle while rival empires like the Spanish, Portuguese, and French conquered the Americas, but should also focus on how he represents a colonial figure that rejects riches and conquest. To become the ideal of colonization, Guyon must overcome an additional temptation that has severely impacted the British imperial project: idleness. Instead of continuing his quest to reach Acrasia in the Bower of Bliss, the

⁷⁰ *Reforming Empire*, p. 85, n. 22.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

beginning of Canto vii finds Guyon alone in a little bark drifting over the waters of the Ydle Lake. Like Guyon, the transatlantic imperialism of Elizabethan England might be characterized by temporary idleness. On the this lake, imperial Guyon is simultaneously caught up in the glories of his past and capable of finding no adventure in the near future: he “euermore himself with comfort feedes/ Of his owne vertues, and prayse-worthy deeds,/ So long he yode, yet no aduenture found,/ Which fame of her shrill trompet worthy reedes...” (2.7.2.4-7). In much the same way Spenser’s England is looking at its Arthurian mythological past in which a heroic empire hangs over the inactive political state of the present. In his *Historia Regum Britanniae*, Geoffrey of Monmouth depicts Arthur’s sixth-century empire as much more expansive than that of Spenser’s England. Geoffrey records Arthurian conquests in Ireland, Iceland, and the Orkney Islands. Then, following twelve years of peace, Geoffrey depicts a second round of conquest in portions of Norway, Denmark, and Gaul. Spenser’s England, by contrast, controlled only Wales and portions of Ireland. If Elizabeth would not bring the nation to seek further adventure soon the British Empire might remain stuck in its own Ydle Lake of nascent colonialism.

Guyon’s position on the Ydle Lake represents a delicate balance between imperial idleness and an alternative form of colonialism to that advocated by the Spanish Empire, as represented by Mammon. Refusing Mammon’s temptations is a form of inaction, yet it cannot be allowed to become the idleness that Guyon experiences on the Ydle Lake. Still, it is possible Spenser understood even idleness as preferable to Mammon’s mining practices. Spenser describes Mammon’s cave as follows:

Soone as [Mammon] *Guyon* saw in great affright
 And hast he rose, for to remoue aside
 Those pretious hills [of treasure] from straungers enuious sight,
 And down them poured thorough an hole full wide,
 Into the hollow earth them there to hide. (2.7.6.1-5)

The ethics of New World gold mines such as Mammon's were intensely debated by early modern ethicists because of the awful conditions miners faced in the process of extracting gold. Las Casas offers a poignant explanation of the horrors that accompanied Spanish mines:

The labour that [the indigenous people who became involuntary miners] were put vnto, was to drawe golde, whereto they had need have men of iron. For they must turne the mountains 1000 times vpside downe, digging and hewing the rockes, and washing, and clensing the gold it selfe in the riuers, where they shall continually stand in the water vntill they brust, and rent their bodies even in pieces. Also when the mines peradventure doe flow with water, they must they also besides all other labours, drawe it out with their armes. To be briefe, the better to comprehend the labour that is emloyd about gathering golde and siluer, it may please your maiestie to consider, that the heathen Emperours (except to death) neuer condemned the Martyres to greater torments, then to mining for metal.⁷²

The miners' suffering takes on religious connotations, as they are compared to Christian martyrs who suffer and may eventually die from their work in the mines. The Spanish colonizers have become so far removed from Christianity in their colonial policy that not only does Las Casas compare non-Christians favorably to the Spanish, but also by invoking the martyrdom of the laborers, he suggests the colonized are more Christian than their diabolical overseers.

Like Las Casas, Spenser makes it clear that a just colonial ruler would not burden indigenous peoples with forced mining. While the introduction of Mammon and his mine may at first glance appear a standard rejection of wealth, worldly goods, and mining practices akin to slavery, a close reading also shows hints that Mammon's

⁷² *The Spanish Colonie, or Briefe Chronicle of the Acts of the Spaniards in the West Indies*, translated by David T. Read, London, 1583, qtd. in Read, "Hunger for Gold," p. 224.

accumulation of gold is directly associated with the accumulation of idolatrous worship. This is the case when Mammon calls himself “God of the world and worldlings” (2.7.8.1). Not only has Mammon made an idol of his gold, but also has depicted himself as worthy of worship because of his accumulation of “Riches, renoun, and principality, Honour estate, and all this worldes good” (2.7.8.5-6). Following Hodgkins’ argument that Francis Drake focused on enforcing a British colonialism that that would not make an idol of the empire by accepting worship from colonized peoples, we can find a parallel in Guyon’s refusal of Mammon’s treasure and the worldly worship that accompanies it. Not only does Guyon refuse New World gold, like Drake before him, he refuses the possibility of being perceived as divine. In Canto vii of the second book of *The Faerie Queene* Mammon effectively offers Guyon a position in Hell’s hierarchy when he offers to make Guyon his son-in-law through marriage with Philotime, of whom Mammon claims with idolatrous conviction that “Honor and dignitie from her alone,/ Deriued are...” (2.7.48.7-8). Mammon’s offer is a clear spur to idolatry, an offer of a place within the diabolical hierarchy, and an acceptance of worship based upon the traits of dubious honor and dignity, but Mammon frames the marriage as a temptation that Guyon and the British colonizer must reject. This time, Mammon adds another rhetorical trick to his repertoire—he pretends that his offer will increase Guyon’s virtue. “Thy spouse I will her [Philotime] make,” he declares, “if that thou lust,/ That she may thee aduance for works and merite iust” (2.7.49.7-9). It is clear, however, that such justice as could be found in Guyon’s new state would already be contaminated by the lust for worship Mammon cannot resist couching in his language. Conquistadors and explorers like Cortés, Magellan, and de Soto have symbolically embraced Philotime

by accepting worship from indigenous peoples, and therein, breaking the first commandment to put no false gods before Yahweh. They have fallen for Mammon's temptations. Guyon, however, refuses affiliation with the diabolic: "I, that am fraile flesh and earthly wight,/ Vnworthy match for such immortall mate/ My selfe well..." (2.7.50.3-5).

Guyon successfully rejects not colonialism, but Mammon's version of Spanish colonialism. As Greenblatt shows in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, a similar situation will present itself at the end of Book II in Acrasia's Bower of Bliss. For Greenblatt, Guyon is an image in which Spenser represents his version of selfhood—the constructed image of being fashioned a gentleman. He calls the destruction of Acrasia's bower a response to "the threat of absorption that triggers Guyon's climactic violence."⁷³ Taking his interpretation in the direction of sexual and colonial discourse, Greenblatt cites Freud's theory from *Civilization and its Discontents* that society is built on the repression of instincts. In Acrasia's bower these instincts are given full rein, which is why the island is so threatening to Guyon, and in turn to the ideal British colonist. In a New World parallel, European colonizers felt threatened by the behaviors of indigenous cultures they interpreted as idleness.⁷⁴ Consider what Peter Martyr writes of indigenous peoples freed from the imposition of hard labor by European colonizers who, upon being freed, return to their former pace of life: "For being idle and slothful, they wander up and down, and return to their old rites and ceremonies and foul and mischievous acts."⁷⁵ The second colonial parallel implicit in Acrasia's Bower is the looming suggestion that

⁷³ p. 172.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁷⁵ *De Orbe Novo Decades*, p. 628, qtd. in Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning*, p. 183.

Britain's transatlantic empire might be a non-entity when compared to the colonial empires of continental Europe because the British have been slothful and late in starting the process of colonization. Both possibilities allow the Bower to serve as a warning to readers that the nation should continue to expand their colonial empire, but must remain vigilant in distinguishing the process of colonization through trifling from the Spanish methodology of conquest through force. In this way, the destruction of the Bower represents Guyon's overcompensation in rejecting his perceptions of native idleness and the threat that idleness represents to himself. In Guyon's overcompensation, the destruction of the Bower becomes a reiteration of Spanish colonization through brute force.

The destruction of the Bower appears to be in direct contradiction to the image of the British empire as a mutually beneficial partnership constructed and represents both how Guyon and the British Empire can fall short of their original intentions if they are not careful to distinguish their colonial practices from those of rival empires. In his destructive rage, Guyon shows little distinction from the "barbarous and savage endless cruelties" Richard Hakluyt attributes to Spanish conquistadors.⁷⁶ Fortunately for both British colonizers and the indigenous peoples they colonized, Guyon's imperial overcompensation occurs in the imagined space of extraterrestrial empire. Faerieland offers an example of how too ardent British colonialism might hurt colonized peoples, even when, as is the case with Guyon's temperance the process that harms the colonized began with what the British considered good intentions. Where Guyon might have saved the inhabitants of

⁷⁶ "Discourse of Western Planting," qtd. in Knapp, *An Empire Nowhere*, p. 3.

Acrasia's Bower from their own idleness and allowed them to establish an industrious nation, he instead razes the isle.

But all those pleasant bowres and Pallace braue,
Guyon broke downe, with rigour pittillesse;
 Ne ought their goodly workmanship might saue
 Them from the temperst of his wrathfulnesse,
 But that their blisse he turn'd to balefulness:
 Their grouse he feld, their gardins did deface,
 Their arbers spoyle, their Cabinets suppressse,
 Their banket houses burn, their buildings race,
 And of the fairest late, now made the fowlest place. (2.12.83)

The imagery in 2.12.83 hints that Spenser, even with his extreme positions on the use of force to bring Ireland under British control, shows some sympathy for the razed isle. Even under the auspices of colonial reform there is no reason Guyon, as English colonizer, should cause suffering—no need to turn bliss into balefulness. If Guyon's reaction to the Bower were not an action of colonial overcompensation, there would be no need to focus on purposefully causing sorrow.

Spenser, as a colonial administrator in Ireland, is caught in a contradiction between the desire to differentiate British colonial activities from their Spanish counterparts and a similar process of incorporating the New World into European cultural hegemony. Spenser's colonial vision for Ireland makes this point clear enough. Therefore, where Guyon falls short of representing an idealized English Empire, Arthur and Artegall act as finer examples of the exertion of colonial power. They also offer the reader a more specific understanding of how the imagined empire of Faerieland can translate into a tool that assists in expanding England's geopolitical empire. Many critics have followed Andrew Hadfield's influential reading of Faerieland as a version of Elizabethan Ireland, especially when considering the function of Artegall, Knight of Justice, in the fifth book. Thus

Walter Lim writes that Book V is fundamentally a “poeticization of justice given in *A View of the Present State of Ireland*,” and argues that this book is an expression of the author’s disappointment in Elizabeth’s response to the Irish question and her handling of the English intrigue in the Low Countries during the Dutch revolt against the Habsburgs.⁷⁷

Applying the framework of extraterrestrial empire to Book V leads to a more nuanced reading of the relationship between Ireland, the Low Countries, and Faerieland. While Spenser is clearly using the imagined empire of Faerieland to comment on the colonization of the Emerald Isle and English intrigue in the Spanish Netherlands, his allegory is too complex to identify a one-to-one correspondence between Faerieland and the Low Countries. Yet Spenser is clearly using the complexity of his allegory to invoke such geospace locations as he imagines empire.⁷⁸

The history of English wars in Ireland helps to contextualize the interest in the island that would lead Spenser to write *A View of the Present State of Ireland* sometime in 1595 or 1596, his ideas show clear overlap with Book V of *The Faerie Queene*. Occurring in waves between 1569-1573 and again from 1579-1583, the rebellions of the Catholic Geraldines and their allies against the Protestant Elizabethan government in Ireland was largely motivated by the desire of the native

⁷⁷ “Figuring Justice: Imperial Ideology and the Discourse of Colonialism in Book V of *The Faerie Queene* and *A View of the Present State of Ireland*,” *Renaissance and Reformation*, vol. 19, no. 1, Winter 1995, pp. 45-70, <http://www.jstor.com/stable/43445034>, p. 46. Accessed 10 September 2020.

⁷⁸ Despite never going so far as to claim Faerieland is a symbolic Ireland, Hadfield several times equates symbolic elements of *The Faerie Queene* with what reviewer Julia Reinhard Lupton calls “explicitly Irish resignifications.” She critiques Hadfield’s argument that references to the savage nation in Book I is a reference to Ireland. Review of *Spenser’s Irish Experience: Wilde Fruit and Salvage Soyl*, by Andrew Hadfield, *Modern Philology*, vol. 97, no. 4, 2000, pp. 585-588, <https://0-www-jstor-org.libus.csd.mu.edu/stable/439074>, p. 586. Accessed 15 November 2020.

Irish to maintain independence from English feudal lords and religious antagonism. The fighting was brutal. In 1582, for example, Elizabeth finally recalled her Lord Deputy of Ireland, Arthur Grey, after an estimated 48,000 people (about 1/3 of the population of Munster) had been displaced or killed.⁷⁹ For Spenser, the move to recall Grey was an overreaction; despite his methods, Grey had succeeded in pacifying the rebels. The cost in lives and livelihoods was simply the price for English control of Ireland. If Spenser had any qualms about the way the rebels were treated, his Kilcolman estate, which had belonged to Sir John Fitzgerald of Desmond before it was confiscated by the English, provided him reason to overlook such considerations in favor of personal gain. Spenser was only able to purchase Kilcolman because this act of confiscation allowed the property to change hands several times before it became available for him to purchase, and he was later granted 3,028 acres of land and the estate's castle by a formal patent on October 26, 1590.⁸⁰

This example shows that Spenser was intimately concerned with the state of Ireland, or at least his new property in Munster, while he was putting the finishing touches on the first three books of *The Faerie Queene*.⁸¹ Yet where Ireland's influence have exerted a light touch on the first three books of *The Faerie Queene*, the Munster Plantation occupied much more of Spenser's mental energies as he was writing books IV-VI. Spenser, who by that time had lived at Kilcolman for the better part

⁷⁹ Anthony M. McCormack, *Earldom of Desmond 1463-1583: The Decline and Crisis of a Feudal Lordship*, Four Courts Press, 2005, p. 193-194.

⁸⁰ Thomas Herron, "Settlement at Kilcolman," *East Carolina University*, http://core.ecu.edu/umc/Munster/settlement_situation.html. Accessed 6 September 2020.

⁸¹ As he was penning book IV-VI of *The Faerie Queene* and *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, Spenser would have received updates on the Nine Year's War. The most violent fighting was limited to Ulster, however, far from Spenser's Kilcolman estate in Cork.

of six years, recognizes that the wars in Munster consisted of countless cruelties, but also expressed optimism that English overseers would improve the living conditions of the average Irishman enough to justify the extreme actions of men like Grey and Pelham:

In those late warrs in Mounster; for notwithstandinge that the same was a most ritch and plentyful countrie, full of corne and cattell, that you would have thought they could have beene hable to stand longe, yett eare one yeare and a half they weare brought to such wretchednes, as that any stonye herte would have rued the same. Out of everye corner of the woode and glenns they came creepinge forth upon their handes, for their legges could not beare them; they looked Anatomies [of] death, they spake like ghosts crying out of their graves; they did eate of the carrions, happye wheare they could find them, yea, and one another soone after, in soe much as the verye carcasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves; and if they found a plott of water-cresses or shamrockes, theyr they flocked as to a feast for the time, yett not able long to contynewe therewithall; that in a shorte space there were none almost left, and a most populous and plentyfull countrie suddenly left voyde of man or beast...⁸²

Spenser knew well the horrors of colonial Ireland, yet continued to advocate that the kingdom be brought under more direct English rule. Greenblatt has also connected Spenser's approach to the Irish question as important for interpreting imperial imagery throughout *The Faerie Queene*. Hiss reading of Spenser as an anti-Irish imperialist is unforgiving:

Spenser was an agent of and an apologist for massacre, the burning of mean hovels and of crops with the deliberate intention of starving the inhabitants, forced relocation of peoples, the manipulation of treason charges so as to facilitate the seizure of lands, the endless repetition of acts of military "justice" calculated to intimidate and break the spirit.⁸³

Greenblatt's analysis of the *View* succinctly cuts through the meat of imperialist positions Spenser attempts to make sound morally acceptable to his literati

⁸² "A Veue of the Present State of Ireland," *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Edmund Spenser*, edited by Alexander B. Grosart, vol. 9, Hazell, Watson, and Viney, 1884, pp. 13-256, pp. 161-162. All citations to the *View* are to this edition.

⁸³ *Renaissance Self-fashioning*, p. 186.

readership. Spenser's most effective strategies for advancing a harsh imperialist regime in geospace include couching colonial ambition in the language of good intentions, pointing to the Roman and Norman conquests of England as models for civilizing a barbarous nation, and attempting to connect the Irish to a lineage of Spanish blood. If a reader does not pay careful attention to the implications of Spenser's imperialist language, it is easy to become distracted by the recurring message of political unity. One such deceptive sentence from the *View* reads: "I meane...to settle an eternal peace in that country [Ireland], and also to make yt very profitable to her Magestie..." (212). Not much later, he argues that he "thinke[s] yt best by an unyon of maners, and conformyteye of minds, to bringe them [the English and Irish] to be one people..." (231). This portrayal of unity leads into the second strategy of using history in an effort to parallel the civilization of England by continental outsiders to an English civilization of Ireland. England was only successfully civilized through the process of being conquered first as a Roman province and the establishment of "the common lawes, being that which William of Normandy brought in with his conquest and layd upon the neck of England..." (*View* 17). If England owed its civilization to outside influence, the argument runs, they are now duty-bound to civilize Ireland by incorporating the kingdom into the Empire.

Spenser's England-as-civilizer brand of imperialism in Ireland became so blatantly expressed that Karl Marx took the idea so far as to call Spenser Elizabeth's ass-kissing poet.⁸⁴ While a more recent critic has interpreted this as a mostly fair

⁸⁴ *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx*, edited and translated by Lawrence Krader, 2nd ed., Van Gorcum, 1974, p. 305.

statement,⁸⁵ I maintain that Spenser's interest in empire cannot be confined to Elizabeth's interests.⁸⁶ As several critics have reminded readers, Spenser's colonial ideology was very different from Elizabeth's. The differences in their ideal Irish policies can be expressed through their opinions on the Grey's effectiveness. Where Elizabeth felt Grey too extreme, Spenser champions him in both the *View* and *The Faerie Queene*. In the former, Spenser uses the voice of Irenius to depict Grey as a master of military strategy who is responding realistically to the threat of the rebel Geraldines. Spenser's examples of Lord Grey's effectiveness at maintaining order in Ireland focus on military logistics rather than the human costs of those battles. Ultimately, housing 1,000 men in four garrisons, and the specific breakdown of those men into further statistics—footmen, horsemen, the numbers of each group sent to Ballincore, Knocklough, Arklo, Wicklo, Wexford, Dublin, etc.—becomes key to understanding Spenser's interpretation of Lord Grey. As Eudoxus offers in reply: "Surely this [Lord Grey's military strategy] semeth a plot of great reason, and small difficulty, which promiseth hope of a short end" (*View* 183). While Elizabeth similarly hoped for a quick end to the Second Desmond Rebellion with minimal difficulties, she was far less accepting of Grey's scorched earth warfare than was Spenser. Grey may have suited Elizabeth better than his predecessor in the position of Lord Deputy, Sir William Pelham, but both men were known for notorious brutality. Pelham remains famous for what has been named Pelham's Pardon in popular historical accounts. This 'pardon' pertains to Pelham's general position that no Irish rebel would be granted the right to surrender unless he first killed a rebel of

⁸⁵ Lenhof, "Incest and Empire in the 'Faerie Queene,'" p. 226.

⁸⁶ At the end of this chapter we will see that Spenser may use the *Mutabilitie Cantos* as a method of critiquing Elizabeth's colonial policy in Ireland.

a rank higher than his own. Despite his relative success in restoring English control over Ireland, Grey was recalled by the crown in 1582 when several of his actions were openly criticized for their brutality, including his refusal to take prisoners at the Siege of Smerwick and the execution of political figures under suspicion of connection to the Desmond Rebellions.

The tension between Spenser's Elizabethan ass kissing and his imperial philosophy that remains uncritical of the atrocities conducted under Pelham and Grey cannot be resolved using examples from the *Vien*. If it could, Faerieland would have not needed to be such an inherently colonial text and Grey would not have needed to be imagined through the alternate identity of Artegall.⁸⁷ By placing his colonial ideology in the otherworld of Faerieland, Spenser is able to eliminate the accidents of history that have limited the geopolitical growth of the British Empire, especially the repeated failures to establish transatlantic colonies and frustrations with the speed with which Elizabeth is bringing Ireland under English control. This is another way Faerieland becomes a wish-fulfillment towards prospective empire. By eliminating worldly constraints such as history and replacing them with imagined empire Spenser is able to show an idealized Britain for which imperial success is inevitable and will expand British geopolitical influence, meanwhile protecting Ireland from foreign influences. The irony that England is perhaps a foreign influence from which Ireland should be protected is lost on Spenser. What Spenser needs to balance his absolute submission to the crown with the significant differences in his own politics of imperialism is something he has already created:

⁸⁷ Roche and O'Donnell, "Notes," *The Faerie Queene*, pp. 1067-1244, p. 1190, n. Book V.Proem.11.9.

another world to conquer. This is why Faerieland, especially in Book V, is an idealized version of Britain that is incapable of sustaining lasting failure, colonial or otherwise.

Ultimately, Spenser finds he can only celebrate the idea of English greatness without an overseas empire by consolidating that greatness in another type of space. At the same time, Spenser is aware that the distinctly British geopolitical empire he imagines must be based on more than a mere rejection of standard Spanish imperial practices. If Spenser allows his model for prospective empire to be defined merely as a reaction against Mammon, he risks advocating an enterprise that would engage in the extreme act of destroying the Bower of Bliss in the name of temperance. Similarly, in Book V, Spenser imagines Artegall as his prototypical British imperialist because he, being the knight of justice, should recognize whether an act, such as razing the Bower, represents an overcompensation of rejecting other geopolitical ideologies, or if the action *is* in line with Spenser's depiction of British imperial justice.

As Artegall's role as the knight of justice suggests, the allegory of Book V plays an important role in how Spenser depicts British imperial greatness in *The Faerie Queene*. Many critics have already shown that Eirena and Grantorto serve as a representation of the potential Spanish and Catholic threats in Ireland and the role of Belge as a representation of the Habsburg Low Countries. I will synthesize the allegory to further explore the idea that Artegall is designed to convince readers that a British geopolitical empire can and should exist in the near future, and that until such an empire is viable, Faerieland will serve as a substitute for empire. It can be difficult to conceive how a territory with no single geospace referent might serve as

such a substitute for the desire to be a geopolitical empire. Imagined empires, such as Faerieland, are, however, of considerable use in geospace colonial projects. Not only do imagined empires model plausible colonial methodologies, but narratives that include such empires can also be used to garner support for a particular vision of future geospace empire. The secondspace empire, although not a precondition of British colonialism, helps Spenser assure that the empire he is advocating is distinct from other colonial models like that of the Spanish.

Spenser's conception of Artegal as justice is inseparable from the concepts of religion and empire. As we will see through figures like Grantorto and Belge, Spenser is responding to the perceived threat of Roman Catholicism to England in the 1580s. In the *View* Spenser presented Ireland as a potential ally for the Spanish because of the Catholic sympathies that had remained from the Desmond Rebellions. Mary, Queen of Scots, brought an additional Catholic threat from the north, and on the continent, France regularly shifted between Catholic and Protestant sympathies. Even more than these threats to British Protestantism, however, Spenser gives particular attention to the influence of Spanish Catholicism in Ireland because of increasing tensions between England and Spain that resulted in war by 1585. Even before the nations were not engaged in a direct confrontation, both manipulated alliances in an attempt to gain advantage in what would later become the Anglo-Spanish War. Just as the Spanish supported the goals of the Geraldines in the Desmond Rebellions, Elizabeth and her court attempted to stir Protestant sympathies in the Habsburg Spanish Netherlands to loosen Spanish control of the Low Countries.

Previously, I mentioned Walter Lim's reading of Book V as a poeticization of the same concepts Spenser expounds in the *View*. Ireland, however, is only part of the historical and imperial allegory from which Spenser has constructed Artegall's quest to save Eirena from the giant Grantorto. Roland Greene argues that Book V is unique in the poem because "[f]or most of *The Faerie Queene*, the national horizon of Faery Land is England, however indistinctly rendered in locales such as the House of Temperance and Mount Acidale. Book V, with its ambitious survey of European geopolitics, breaks that pattern..."⁸⁸ He and other critics have worked out detailed systems that chart the geopolitical allegory of Book V⁸⁹: Artegall is the knight of justice, who along with Talus (justice without clemency), must rescue Eirena (Ireland) from where she is held captive in Grantorto's (Spain's) castle. The latter two, however, may also be read as etymologically connected to 'peace' and 'great wrong' respectively. The etymological connection only serves to further the former reading as the peaceful Ireland must be rescued from the great wrongs of Philip II's attempts to sow chaos and discord.

Ultimately, a colonial reading of Book V must be framed by a question Lim raises when he emphasizes Spenser's interest in how justice may be delivered as an act of empire.⁹⁰ This reading establishes Book V as a commentary on Spenser's unease related to Ireland and the Low Countries. Thomas P. Roche and C. Patrick

⁸⁸ Roland Greene, "The 'Sciene' and the Channel: England and Spain in Book V of *The Faerie Queene*," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2009, Duke University Press, pp. 43-64, <https://doi.org/10.1215/10829636-2008-013>, p. 56. Accessed 7 September 2020.

⁸⁹ Roche and O'Donnell's notes on the allegory of *The Faerie Queene* have been particularly helpful for founding the present argument. See Roche and O'Donnell, "Notes: Book V," *The Faerie Queene*, pp. 1186-1211.

⁹⁰ "Figuring Justice," p. 43.

O'Donnell point to an instructional reading for Book V's allegory in their notes and commentary.⁹¹ According to them, Grantorto can represent Spain, the oppressive powers of Catholicism, the Papacy, Philip II, or a symbol of injustice. The name is suggestive of the Italian word *gran* (great) and the word *tort*, a legal term signifying recourse for damages caused. Grantorto, then, signifies a great wrong, or injustice.⁹² Thus Artegall, as an agent of British conquest, must correct injustice for the sake of Queen Mercilla, a symbolic representation of Elizabeth.

From the beginning of Book V Spenser clearly shows how Eirena and Grantorto are symbolic equivalents to Ireland and Spain, and that justice requires that Artegall act on behalf of Eirena. This is a direct parallel to Spenser's position in the *View*. Spain/Grantorto is depicted as a "strong tyrant [who] did vnjustly thrall" (5.1.3.7) the "distressed Dame" (5.1.3.6) of Ireland/Eirena. When Mercilla/Elizabeth asks Artegall to intervene on Eirena's behalf, the imperial implications are profound. As I have already alluded to, and will return to in the Mutabilitie Cantos, Spenser was often disappointed by Elizabeth's conservative colonial policy in Ireland. In an imagined, extraterrestrial empire, however, one of Elizabeth's stand-ins can easily justify a more expansive colonial policy for the sake of those who would be colonized. For Spenser, Elizabeth ought to be a Gloriana-figure who sends a knight like Artegall—perhaps Arthur Grey—to defeat Spain in Ireland and bring the isle under English control. English intervention in the form of Artegall's justice is the only way of protecting Eirena from Grantorto. We may remember from the *View*, however, that for Spenser the colonization of Ireland was

⁹¹ "Notes: Book V," *The Faerie Queene* pp. 1186-1211.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 1187.

not only to protect and improve that country, but also to prevent the Spanish from gaining a foothold in the British Isles. Commenting on Waterford and Cork, Irenius says, “I will tell you: those two cytties, above all the rest, do offer an ingate to the Spanyarde most fytlie...” (*View* 209). Reading the *View* and Book V side-by-side thus challenges Spenser’s depiction of the colonization of Ireland as justice, offering instead a reading of self-interest. Expanding this argument to include the extraterrestrial setting of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser is looking at colonial threats and opportunities in Ireland over which he has little control, and is shifting his imperial ambitions to the extraterrestrial realm of Faerieland, where at least he can encourage the future conquest of Ireland.

A prospective British Empire that includes Ireland does not, for Spenser, need to be relegated to some distant future. He can use the extraterrestrial empire of Faerieland in an attempt to encourage his fellow literati to favor English intervention in territories threatened with Spanish control so that their combined influence may have an impact on English colonial policy. Parallel to Artegall’s Eirena narrative, Spenser offers readers another take on the influence of the Catholic Spanish monarchy in a neighboring nation that would be Protestant by choice, and either independently republican or under English protectorateship. This is the quest Arthur accepts from Belge to slay the beast to whom Geryonoeco has been sacrificing her children. Where Eirena represents Ireland and the rebellions there in Spenser’s allegory, Belge represents the Low Countries of the Habsburg Netherlands. Belge offers another example of how Spain was an omnipresent colonial threat in Spenser’s poetry, this time considering the Dutch Revolt. The Dutch Revolt occurred between 1566-1648, ending with the Treaty of Münster splitting the Low Countries between a

sovereign Dutch Republic (modern Belgium) and the Spanish-controlled Southern Netherlands (modern Luxembourg). The two countries became very different in religious and cultural practices, the Dutch Republic rejecting monarchy as a form of government and adopting Calvinism while the Southern Netherlands remained under absolutist rule and were predominantly Catholic.

This state of affairs, however, was confined to the very end of the revolt. When Spenser was writing *The Faerie Queen* in the 1590s, the Revolt had been fomenting for only a little more than a quarter of a century. With the hindsight history offers we can see that the Eighty Years' War was far from over. For Elizabethans like Spenser, however, the status of the war was less clearly defined. What was obvious was that Protestants in the Low Countries had several qualms about Spanish rule, not all of which were religious. Though the presence of the Spanish Inquisition in the Low Countries in the early 1560s was a spur to Protestant rebellions in the area, those who advocated independence from Spain also argued that as a wealthy region, the Low Countries were unfairly taxed to support the constant religious wars of Continental Europe in the era. Nor did the nobles of the Low Countries, many of whom descended from merchant families, favor Philip II's attempts to centralize commercial law through the Spanish crown. As Spenser would eventually allegorize these gripes into the figures of a woman and her children tormented by a giant, Holinshed had already depicted the Low Countries as a beleaguered woman in his 1577 *Chronicles*:

The widow country wailing in her loose,
 Subject to soldiers and a strangers cross.
 By weeping hir misfortune, sits here alone,
 To thinke of hir pleasures past and gone,
 But after France and Spaine have doone their worst,
 Hir helpless young ones are by England nurst:

Blest be that virgine queene, that sent this good,
 And blest be her that comes to save our blood,
 Whom to our soules a buckler we maie call,
 And to our country we crie welcome all.⁹³

The similarities in Spenser's representation of Belge are noticeable, especially where she is represented as a widow tormented by the giant Geryoneo. In *The Faerie Queene*, Belge had once been "A Ladie of great worth and wealth.../And mother of a frutefull heritage,/ Euen seuenteen goodly sons..." (5.10.7.2-4). The symbolism is clear, the Low Countries were once seventeen wealthy provinces that made up the Habsburg Netherlands, but they have fallen on hard times because of the tyrannical rule of Geryoneo. Geryoneo abused Belge "of her widowhead/ Taking aduantage, and her yet fresh woes,/ Himselfe and seruice to her offered,/ Her to defend against all forrein foes/ That should their power against her right oppose" (5.10.12.1-5). In other words, what Spenser fears could happen as a result of Spanish sympathies in Ireland has already happened in the Low Countries. Charles V, father of Philip II, became ruler of the Low Countries when Mary Valois-Burgundy passed away in 1482. According to Spenser, all promises of peace in the region were lip service to justice as a tyrannical reign began. In reality, Philip II was the monarch the Dutch found untenable. Where his father was at least viewed as sympathetic to the concerns of the Protestants, Philip brought in troops in an attempt to crush rebellion.

It was Philip's crackdown on rebellion, however, that extended the revolt into the Eighty Years War. In Book V of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser clearly shows he

⁹³ London, 1807, vol. 4, p. 642, qtd. in Ivan L. Schulze, "Spenser's Belge Episode and the Pageants for Leicester in the Low Countries, 1585-86," *Studies in Philology*, vol. 28, no. 2, April 1931, pp. 235-240, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4172095>, p. 235. Accessed 18 November 2020.

believes England should become involved in the War for the same reasons that Ireland must be swiftly brought under British control: Spanish influence, and Catholic influence by extension, must be minimized. This is why Mercilla, another Elizabeth stand-in character along with Gloriana, Belphoebe, and potentially Mutabilitie, gets caught up in Geryoneo and Belge's affair. It also explains why just before Arthur accepts from Mercilla the enterprise of fighting for Belge, Spenser's epic voice praises the mercy of the queen in terms that are clearly meant to draw parallels to the mercy of Elizabeth Tudor.

Who then can thee, *Mercilla*, thoroughly prayse,
 That herein doest all earthly Princes pas?
 What heauenly Muse shall thy great honour rayse
 Vp to the skies, whence first deriu'd it was,
 And now on earth it self enlarged has,
 From th'vtmost brinke of the *Armericke* shore,
 Vnto the margent of the *Molucas*?
 Those Nations farre thy iustice doe adore:
 But thine owne people do they mercy prayse much more. (5.10.3)

The Habsburg Netherlands may not be so far away as the American shore, but Spenser's argument is that the rebels need help from the English crown if they are to throw off the tyrannical rule of Spain. The reference to America shows Spenser's awareness that the Habsburg threat in the Low Countries is not new, but a continuation of a colonial struggle between England and Spain that will repeatedly appear as a primary focus of literature that engages extraterrestrial empire. In Spenser's lifetime Britain had not yet established its American colonies, and found itself locked out of Caribbean and South American colonialism by the Iberian Union that controlled most of modern Mexico, nearly all of the Caribbean and Central America, the north and west coasts of South America spanning from Venezuela through the northern half of Chile, and the southern half of coastal Brazil. But the

Spanish colonial threat in the Americas was now overshadowed by tensions in a Habsburg colony much closer to England. The proximity of the Low Countries to England and the Protestant sympathies of the northern provinces that had been in open rebellion against Phillip II since the beginning of the Dutch Revolt in 1566 left Spenser convinced that Elizabeth should intervene on the rebels' behalf. Thus Belge "vnto gracious great *Mervilla* call[ed]/ For ayde, against that cruell Tyrant's theft,/ Ere all her children [the seventeen provinces] he from her reft" (5.10.14.3-5). This reading of the situation imagines Charles and Philip's control of the territories as a strategy designed to deny the Low Countries autonomy. Belge and her children should have the right to govern themselves rather than submit to Geryoneo's tyrannical rule. In the eleventh Canto, Belge comments specifically on Geryoneo's cruelty:

[I]n this Church hereby,
 There stands an Idol of great note and name,
 The which this Gyant reared first on hie,
 And his owne vaine fancies thought did frame:
 To whom for endlesse horror of his shame,
 He offred vp for daily sacrificize
 My children and my people, burnt in flame;
 With all the tortures, that he could deuize,
 The more t'aggrate his God with such blouddy guize. (5.11.19)

The tyrannical cruelty, more than anything else, is the deciding factor that causes Belge to request help from Mercilla.

Mercilla responds by sending Artegall and Arthur to solve the problem, by facing down Grantorto and Geryoneo respectively. Allegorically, the reading is that England's justice and the nation's idealized monarch owe the Low Countries, fellow Protestants, an intervention in their revolt. As far as Spenser was concerned, however, England would never live up to the idealizations of Artegall and Arthur.

The English did join the Dutch in the war as an ally in 1625, but that was well after Spenser or Elizabeth. In 1585, Elizabeth was willing to extend a protectorate over the Low Countries, sending Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who commanded 6,350 foot soldiers and 1,000 horsemen.⁹⁴ Despite early successes in occupying the cities of Gouda and Schoonhoven, however, Dudley was forced by his losses to return to England before the end of 1587. In the Low Countries, as in American colonization, the English once again found themselves intolerably behind their Spanish rivals' colonial head start.

The extraterrestrial world of *The Faerie Queene* allows Spenser to imagine an England that does not give up on Belge, and in this way the extraterrestrial space of Faerieland offers Spenser an approach to imagined imperial success in Ireland and the Low Countries, neither of which was assured in the geopolitical maneuvers of the late-sixteenth-century Empire. It is clear from the allegory of Book V that Spenser believed the British Empire should have claim to Ireland and that Protestant control over the Low Countries should be either autonomous or under an English protectorate. Concerning the New World, however, Spenser remains mostly silent. This is because while the Elizabethan poet can imagine wresting Ireland from the tentative Spanish influence, and can even go so far as to encourage intrigue to interrupt Catholic influence in the Protestant Low Countries, Spenser cannot escape Knapp's observation that Elizabethans were plagued by colonial failure. In *The Faerie Queene*, however, Knapp suggests that Spenser is able to break from this colonial failure by freeing "England from its embarrassingly credulous past, its former trifle-

⁹⁴ Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall 1477-1806*, Clarendon Press, 1995, p. 219-220.

love, not simply by destroying those trifles, but by *using* them, self-consciously and publicly, to new profit.”⁹⁵ Knapp is arguing that Faerieland is a trifle in the sense that it has the rhetorical power to advance Spenser’s ideas about colonialism to readers, but that there are also difficulties in applying trifling to the creation of imagined empire: the later books, especially VI, seem “to admit the difficulty of living in a world unrealized, and show a Spenser so disillusioned with imperial prophecy that he reassumes his pastoral identity of Colin Clout and figures his imperial theme as destructive of a sublime private visionariness.”⁹⁶ I disagree with Knapp on this interpretation. As the examples from Book V have shown, Spenser is still deeply committed to his vision of English colonialism in Ireland and a supporter of anti-Spanish intrigue in the Low Countries as he was plotting the narrative arc for Book V. Where I do agree with Knapp is that Spenser is using Faerieland as a compensation for previous colonial failures in the New World and as a space to show what an idealized English Empire would look like in relation to Ireland and the Low Countries. In a similar vein, Lim suggests that aspects of Book V can be read in terms of Spenser’s recuperation of narrative history through the alternative history poetry allows.⁹⁷ With elimination of past failures, the idealization of the present, and establishing Otherworlds themselves as a potentially colonizable space, Spenser shows readers multiple ways in which the trifling conquest of Faerieland is a serious imperial endeavor.

By the end of *The Faerie Queene* it is no longer so clear that Spenser maintains his whole-hearted support of the British colonization of Ireland and the

⁹⁵ “Error As a Means of Empire in *The Faerie Queene* 1,” p. 819.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 824.

⁹⁷ “Figuring Justice,” p. 50.

Low countries. In the *Mutabilitie Cantos* he uses lunar space to question if there were any reservations or critiques that accompanied what Greenblatt has called Spenser's agency and apology for the massacre of the native Irish.⁹⁸ The *Mutabilitie Cantos* are not an expression of imperial anxiety in the same way that Godwin and Behn will present it in the seventeenth century, but neither do they put as much emphasis on the same pro-imperial, pro-Elizabeth symbols of the previous books.⁹⁹ I believe Spenser uses the *Mutabilitie Cantos* to create a gray area between imperial ambition and anxiety, especially in portraying *Mutabilitie's* failure to establish her imperial domain in the heavens. This failure may be an indication that Spenser has become frustrated with Elizabeth's imperial policy and the relative lack of progress in Britain's colonization of both Ireland and the New World. As a colonist in Ireland and the English poet laureate, Spenser was subtle enough to air potential grievances through the allegory of the *Mutabilitie Cantos*, using symbolism to protect himself from accusations of anti-monarchical politics. By exchanging the geopolitical framework of Ireland and the Americas for that of the celestial spheres, especially the sphere of the moon, Spenser is able to suggest that Elizabeth is not willing to apply enough totalitarian force in colonial Ireland without directly critique.

Spenser's outlook in the *Mutabilitie Cantos* is, then, not one of anxiety, but rather frustration and disillusionment. The *Cantos* are Spenser's wish that Elizabeth's colonial policy matched the rapid subordination of the native Irish to the English crown that he has presented in the *View* and Book V of *The Faerie Queene*. They are the response of a poet who wants to believe in the importance of Britain's

⁹⁸ *Renaissance Self-fashioning*, p. 186.

⁹⁹ See *The Ethnological Notebooks*, p. 305.

role as a leading world empire, but has no reassurance from the crown that the monarchy shares his imperial ambitions. This argument is in line with the common critical reading of the Mutabilitie Cantos as an indication that Spenser is rethinking his imperial ideology and becoming increasingly ambivalent towards the role he expects Britain to play as a world empire. Many critics suggest that the Mutabilitie Cantos may actually point the reader in the direction that the imperial ambition suggested in the rest of *The Faerie Queene* can only be taken so far. Specifically, one function of the dual Cynthia narratives in Mutabilitie vi may be to suggest that overreaching is dangerous, and may indicate the beginning of some colonial anxieties for Spenser specifically related to the image of the moon in the new astronomy. These narratives are Mutabilitie's confrontation with Cynthia in the sphere of the moon in Canto vi, stanzas 11-18 and Spenser's reworking of the Actaeon myth with the characters of Cynthia and Faunus in Canto vi, stanzas 38-55. Critics have often made attempts to read the parallels of these two sections. Roche and O'Donnell advance a reading of the passages that recognizes Cynthia and Diana as the same character, parallels the functions of Mutabilitie and Faunus, and also compares the roles of Molanna and the reader.¹⁰⁰ These sections have a parallel structure: "an act of presumptuous rebellion, echoing the Christian myth of the fall... suggest[s] that Spenser wanted his retelling of the Actaeon myth to be an analogue of and commentary on the main narrative" of the Mutabilitie Cantos.¹⁰¹ I take the parallels one step further and propose that the second Cynthia narrative changes the reading of the first to suggest an implicit danger in Mutabilitie's desire to expand her empire

¹⁰⁰ Notes. *The Faerie Queene*, pp. 1235-36, n. 45.3.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1236, n. 45.3.

to the celestial spheres if she cannot maintain the imperial expansion she is instigating.

The geopolitical parallel to this extraterrestrial theme is represented by a history of failing plantations in Ireland. One prime example is the Enterprise of Ulster, a privately funded plantation just east of Ulster from 1571-1575, well before Ulster became a major plantation in its own right. A primary goal of the plantation was aimed at pacifying rebels and discontents, but became, according to one historian, a “costly and bloody episode which established no English plantations. It destabilized Ulster unnecessarily and, because of its semi-autonomous status, got minimal support from the Dublin government.”¹⁰² The plantation quickly failed. Elizabeth’s failure to colonize Ireland showed Spenser that England was not ready to expand its empire beyond the British Isles. To break from the parallel to the overreacher of Mutabilitie, Elizabeth would need to complete the colonization of the territories near England. Spenser, if the *View* is any indication, remains unsatisfied with this progress.

Like Elizabeth, Mutabilitie could not effectively colonize the closest territory beyond her current domain, which for the latter was the moon. This fact signals to readers that any imperial expansion beyond this near sphere is arrogance without the resources to support potential colonies. We shall see Mutabilitie’s vanity in her defense at the bar of nature when she claims a colonial right to all the heavens. As a personification of change, Mutabilitie would have been wise to start her arguments on a smaller scale. She could more easily reason that the moon, as a boundary

¹⁰² Hiram Morgan, “Enterprise of Ulster,” *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, 2nd ed., edited by Sean J. Connolly, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 177.

between the mutable terrestrial sphere and the ethereal heavens, and as a sphere that is subject to changes in lunar phase, should belong to her domain before attempting to expand further. Her failure to focus on and colonize the nearby lunar territory parallels the state of English colonization Spenser saw firsthand during his time at Kilcolman.

The encounter between Cynthia and Mutabilite in the sphere of the moon puts the reader in the mindset to recognize the moon and the goddess as interchangeable entities. The conflation of godhead and object is strongly suggested in Mutabilite.6.12.6 with Cynthia “[b]ending her horned browes.” The horns are, of course, both the sharp incline of a stern visage and the ends of the crescent moon. If Spenser is training the reader to think of Cynthia as the manifestation of the moon in this encounter, the reader is likely to carry the association to the encounter between Diana and Faunus in the retelling of the Actaeon myth.

Alternatively, some critics have offered a reading of the celestial imagery in the Cantos that argues Spenser is becoming less confident, though not quite ambivalent toward his imperial ideology as he continues to write *The Faerie Queene*. In this case, Mutabilite’s claims to celestial empire are not to be admired but scorned; her colonial failure is not to be ridiculed, but met with a sigh of relief. She was an overreacher who could not rule more than her own realm, and thus was kept to her own realm. This position is not among the more common readings of *The Faerie Queene*, but it has a significant presence in criticism and can be convincingly argued. Warren Tormey, for example, has argued that Books IV-VI of *The Faerie Queene* show a growing uncertainty with the scheme for the Munster Plantation which is not

present in Books I-III, published just six years prior.¹⁰³ Tormey writes that the Mutabilitie Cantos “represent the most conclusive expression of Spenser’s disenchantment with the failing English colonial policy, then breathing its last gasps in recently-subjugated Irish lands in the late years of the 16th century.”¹⁰⁴ He later argues that Spenser is writing about the mutability of Ireland as he watches the Munster Plantation become surrounded by increasing disarray, thieving, and general lawlessness: “As Spenser saw the environs around his estate becoming increasingly hostile and contested, so does Mutabilitie make her claim to her rightful estate in the woods of Arlo Hill.”¹⁰⁵

But Spenser is not reconsidering his colonial approach to Ireland; if anything he is reconsidering Elizabeth’s. A breakdown of the plot and imperial language of the Mutabilitie Cantos, as well as criticism that questions Mutabilitie and Nature’s role as female monarchs in the text, will show that the Cantos actually represent a critique of Elizabeth’s Irish policy for what Spenser views as a failure to embrace the extremist tactics of men like Arthur Grey, such as a refusal to take prisoners after sieges and the execution of political enemies.

The plot of the Mutabilitie Cantos bears out readings of Spenser as a man shying away from the idea of a poeticization of the fifth book of *The Faerie Queene*, but even more so it supports a reading that an empire could be established if the crown were willing to take the necessary actions. The action of the Cantos is not complicated, but the associations, symbolism, and allegory are multivalent. The plot has been called a sequel to the Titanomachia, a Greco-Roman legend in which the

¹⁰³ “On the Edges of Settlement,” p. 141.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 142.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 151.

Olympians emerge victorious in a celestial civil war against the titans.¹⁰⁶ In the literary present of the Cantos, Spenser adjusts genealogical connections to make Mutabilitie a titan by birth. For a member of the losing side of the Titanomachia, Mutabilitie retains a tremendous amount of authority, such as her ability to influence and control all sublunary events.¹⁰⁷ Dissatisfied with the limited empire of the earthly realm, however, Mutabilitie feels that Jupiter and the Olympians have stolen from her the throne on which to rule over the super-lunar, celestial empire. She first takes direct action, attacking Cynthia in the sphere of the moon. Mercury, fulfilling his duty as messenger of the gods, reports Mutabilitie's transgression to a council of Olympians gathered in Jove's sphere. Realizing she cannot claim the Ptolemaic spheres of the celestial empire through force where the combined strength of the titans had previously failed, Mutabilitie demands the rule of Heaven's empire be decided in a legal procedure judged by the incarnation of Nature. Nature ultimately determines that Jove is within his rights to claim the heavens as unchanging and Mutabilitie's empire is thus contained to the sublunary sphere.

Given the major role of the female characters Mutabilitie, Cynthia, Diana, Molana, and Nature in a fragment of a poem dedicated to a female monarch, it is not surprising that a large portion of recent critical work on the Mutabilitie Cantos has

¹⁰⁶ Many commentators have drawn this comparison, but have often followed it to different conclusions. Syrithé Pugh argues that Spenser has rewritten the Titanomachia as a legal battle that has contemporary political resonances with the legal battles following Elizabeth's claims to sovereignty over Ireland and James' claims in Scotland. She concludes that Spenser's refusal to let Jove evade judicial proceedings implies that Spenser was skeptical of such legal claims to authority. "Gods That Faine to Be: Political Euhemerism in Spenser's *Mutabilitie Cantos*," *English Literary Renaissance*, vol. 49, no. 1, Winter 2019, pp. 28-73, <https://doi.org/10.1086/700304>, pp. 52-53. Accessed 22 September 2020.

been conducted through the lens of feminism.¹⁰⁸ In fact, commentators are not likely to approach the topic of empire in the *Mutabilitie Cantos* without applying Elizabeth as the symbolic referent of either *Mutabilitie* or *Nature*. Jessica Dell equates Elizabeth with the former, connecting the tripartite Diana/Cynthia/*Mutabilitie* with the mythological context of the triple Hecate, goddess of the moon, hunt, and underworld. Dell's argument begins to blur the distinctions between feminism and imperial politics by ultimately arguing that the *Mutabilitie Cantos* reflect Spenser's struggle to come to terms with female rule in England.¹⁰⁹ Thus, she argues that the figure of *Mutabilitie* is a way for Spenser to

¹⁰⁸ See, for instance, Angus Fletcher's "Marvelous Progression: The Paradoxical Defense of Women in Spenser's 'Mutabilitie Cantos,'" *Modern Philology*, vol. 100, no. 1, 2002, pp. 5-23, <https://0-www-jstor-org.libus.csd.mu.edu/stable/1215580>. Accessed 21 September 2020. Fletcher uses the relationship between wonder and philosophy as practices for understanding the world in the sixteenth century as a starting point from which to argue that Spenser was interested in the philosophical potential of poetry to reverse the traditional tropes of misogyny associated with literary trials. By incorporating wonder into the philosophical potential of the *Mutabilitie Cantos*, Spenser is thus able to defend *Mutabilitie*'s femininity. Richard J. Berleth examines the sexual characterization of *Mutabilitie* against the prevalent Elizabethan anxiety that male society is dependent on the biology of women. "Fraile Woman, Foolish Gerle: Misogyny in Spenser's *Mutabilitie Cantos*," *Modern Philology*, vol. 93, no 1, August 1995, pp. 37-54, <https://www.doi.org/10.1086/392284>. Accessed 21 September 2020. Jennifer Laws has argued that *Nature* should be the focus of the *Mutabilitie Cantos* and reads *Mutabilitie* and *Jove* as two opposing aspects of the more encompassing *Nature*. Through the complication of *Nature*'s gender roles, and the view of *Mutabilitie* and *Jove* as opposite gender aspects of a larger whole, Spenser creates a complex system of sexual politics that creates no clearly superior or inferior position. Such a reworking of sexual politics allows the female monarch, Elizabeth I, to maintain authority and independence. "Sexual Politics and the Interpretation of *Nature* in Spenser's *Two Cantos of Mutabilitie*," *Renaissance and Reformation*, vol. 16, no. 2, Spring 1992, pp. 21-35, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43445590>. Accessed 21 September 2020.

¹⁰⁹ "Divided They Fall: (De)Constructing the Triple Hecate in Spenser's *Cantos of Mutabilitie*," *Early Modern Literary Studies: A Journal of Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century English Literature*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2012, <http://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/emlshome.html>. Accessed 21 September 2020.

critique Elizabeth, citing evidence from Spenser's letter to Raleigh in which Elizabeth Tudor is equated with the moon goddess:

In that Faery Queene I mean glory in my general intention, but in my particular I conceiue the most excellent and glorious person of our soueraine the Queene, and her kingdom in Faery land. And yet in some places els, I doe otherwise shadow her....I doe express in Belphœbe, fashioning her name according to your owne excellent concept of Cynthia, (Phœbe and Cynthia being both names of Diana.)¹¹⁰

Dell uses this connection to argue that the Mutabilitie Cantos are “one of [Spenser's] harshest critiques of female leadership by first creating and then divesting his literary version of the triple Hecate...of her very divinity.”¹¹¹

While Dell's focus is not expressly imperial, her argument does not rule out Spenser's criticism of Elizabeth in the Mutabilitie Cantos as a critique of her imperial policy. Such a reading would be particularly apt when applied to a parallel Dell draws between Diana's choice to vacate Kilcolman either with Elizabeth's unwillingness to support the occupation of Ireland financially, or her former willingness to support Lord Grey's governance through extreme force.¹¹² More recent research has tended to view Mutabilitie as a favorable critique of Elizabeth, however. Syrithe Pugh has argued that in equating Elizabeth with Mutabilitie, Spenser is effectively putting the queen's absolutist tendencies on trial at the bar of Nature.¹¹³ I am not inclined to follow Pugh's argument to all its conclusions; there is far too much surviving evidence that suggests Spenser was a devoted royalist and

¹¹⁰ Edmund Spenser, “A Letter of the Authors Expounding His Whole Intention in the Course of This Worke: Which for That it Giueth Great Light to the Reader, for the Better Vnderstanding Is Hereunto Annexed,” *The Faerie Queen*, edited by Thomas P. Roche Jr. and C. Patrick O'Donnell Jr., Penguin Classics, 1987, pp. 15-18. Spenser's reference to Raleigh's “concept of Cynthia” alludes to Raleigh's poem “The Ocean to Cynthia.”

¹¹¹ “Divided They Fall,” para. 2.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, para. 15.

¹¹³ See “Gods That Faine to Be.”

that evidence does not follow from Spenser's statements on the Irish problem as they are presented in the *View*.¹¹⁴ Combining Dell's and Pugh's arguments, however, leads to an approach that can yield new insights as to how Spenser expresses empire in the Mutabilitie Cantos. That is to say, Elizabeth/Mutabilitie is not on trial for absolutism, but for her imperial policy, or rather her failure to implement it effectively. This argument sidesteps the question of Spenser's political stance on whether the monarch creates the laws or is subject to them and replaces it with Spenser's much more obvious desire to expand British influence, which permeates both the *View* and *The Faerie Queene*.

Where in the *View* Spenser must be specific in both the methodology and the cost of colonizing Ireland, the shift to extraterrestrial empire in the Mutabilitie Cantos allows him to air his colonial grievances and aspirations without looking closely at the means of colonization. He can use the Mutabilite Cantos to argue that British colonialism will remain stalled as long as the Isles do not become one unified empire without carefully considering why Elizabeth and her advisors thought the costs, both financial and in human lives, for full colonial rule of Ireland were too high. Assured in Britain's colonial future despite the Empire's current shortcomings, Spenser places Elizabeth's imperial policy on trial in the Mutabilite Cantos when he

¹¹⁴ Most commentators now begin their arguments with the assumption that Spenser is pro-British Empire and therefore pro-Elizabeth by default. While it does not necessarily follow that Spenser agrees with Elizabeth as to how imperial policy gets implemented—and we have seen their positions in response to the Irish question varied greatly—Spenser's general loyalty to the crown was strong enough that he would write *The Faerie Queene* in honor of Elizabeth I. Perhaps Andrew Hadfield summarizes Spenser's pro-imperial bent in *The Faerie Queene* best when he writes, "[t]he poem is a vast and colonizing work trying to absorb all the representations it can and subject them to its own structure, familiarize and absorb the alien." Hadfield, *Spenser's Irish Experience*, pp. 200-201.

depicts Mutabilitie's complaints at the bar of Nature. I have gathered evidence that the Mutabilitie Cantos are concerned with the concept of empire at a fundamental level and will compare these sections of the poem with the policy disagreements between the poet and his queen, some of which, like the role of Lord Grey in Ireland, we have already discussed. Beginning with a broad review of the ways in which Spenser uses the narrative and plot to express Mutabilitie's endgame as imperial, where most of *The Faerie Queene*, and all of *The Blazing World*, concern the colonization of otherworlds parallel to earth, the Mutabilitie Cantos shift the imagery of conquest into the celestial spheres, and once more raise questions about empire, the right of conquest, and the role both will play in Britain's future. The imagery in the Cantos has shifted in another way as well: in addition to occupying a celestial setting rather than Faerieland, Spenser also offers the reader Mutabilitie as a clear stand-in for the process of imperialism, and, if we subscribe to Dell's and Pugh's readings, a symbol of frustration with the crown. Thus, unlike the previous books, the Mutabilitie Cantos do not represent an author staking imperial claim to an otherworld; they show Spenser's frustrations when the imperial claim to the otherworld fails to manifest as geospace empire. Thus the Cantos show readers that when an author's imperial ambitions are frustrated, he turns suddenly to critique a monarch whom he earlier approached with rhetoric bordering on sycophancy. In this way Mutabilitie becomes a reflection of Spenser as well as of Elizabeth, because like Mutabilitie, Spenser aims to claim a space for his empire that is radically not part of the world to which the English Empire belongs. Where Faerieland's relationship to geospace is ambiguous, the celestial spheres are a different world from the sublunary region that

follow a different series of laws, and thus are ultimately subject to the empires of neither Mutabilitie nor Elizabeth, and Spenser's Britain.

Yet Mutabilitie believes that she can change the laws of nature to make the heavens mutable. The old Aristotelian-Ptolemaic models of the universe that had long presented the heavens as changeless were breaking down even as Spenser was arguing Mutabilitie's claim, and we will see shortly that in addition to birthright, the switch to a Copernican cosmology that breaks clear distinctions between the Earth and heavenly spheres will factor into Mutabilitie's prosecution, even though Spenser does not put explicitly Copernican terminology in the Titaness' mouth. Thus, it does not matter to Mutabilitie that the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic conception of the heavens is changeless as in Aristotle's *De Caelo*. The rejection of long-held scholastic beliefs regarding the nature of the super-lunar realm gives Mutabilitie a justification for the expansion of her realm and she seizes it.¹¹⁵ Her goal to claim the heavens as her own domain, however, is repeatedly described in imperialist terms rather than in the terminology of the new philosophy of Copernicanism. Thus, while the new astronomy is an important interpretive device, Spenser is signaling that we should pay attention to the ways in which a female monarch aims to expand her realm.

¹¹⁵ See Alex Barnes' "Spenser's Spherical Imagery in in the *Mutabilitie Cantos*," *Rinascimento: Rivista dell'Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento*, vol. 34, no. 1, 1994, pp. 377-388, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=1995057135&site=eds-live&scope=site>. Accessed 23 September 2020. Barnes examines the ways in which the Mutabilitie Cantos were influenced by the rival world systems of Copernicanism and the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic system. While Copernicanism was not widely deemed heretical in England, nor even on the continent until the trial, conviction, and execution of Giordano Bruno (381), Barnes writes that Spenser has merged aspects of both systems for *The Faerie Queene*: "Spenser's universe is still clearly earth-centered, but in contrast to Ptolemy, the spheres outside of the orbit of the moon are no longer perfect nor timeless" (384).

The imperial imagery begins when the Titaness rears herself against the Olympians “and th’empire sought from them to beare” (6.1.9) to take “Rule and dominion to her selfe to gaine” (6.4.2). She strives for celestial empire for no reason other than her envy that the Olympians have control of this domain (6.10.6-9), so she sought all the celestial gods’ kingdoms (6.18.9). In stanza 21, Mutabilitie thrusts “faire *Phoebe* from her siuer bed,/ And eke our selues from heauens high Empire” (6.21.3-4). In the 33rd stanza Jove defends his right as ruler of the heavens by “Conquest of our [the gods] soueraine might,/ And by eternall doome of Fates decree,” thus introducing a double justification for the status quo of the heavens in both cosmic order and conquest-driven models of ownership (5-6).

The seventh canto is lighter on imperial imagery mostly because Spenser focuses so much time and attention on the trial of Mutabilitie v. Jove and the procession of the seasons, months, and hours to ultimately justify Jove’s confirmation in “his imperiall see” (7.59.7). This canto also poses the greatest challenge to traditional Aristotle-Ptolemaic models of the universe, thus suggesting Mutabilitie may have more right to a heavenly empire than Jove and the Olympians have thus far let on. Before the final confirmation of Jove’s imperial domain, however, the imaginary of conquest continues to build in the early stanzas of Canto vii. In stanza 7.1, Spenser’s epic voice labels Mutabilitie’s attempt to lay claim to the heavens as an attempt to “dispossesse...heauens Emprire” (9). Mutabilite makes her case before Nature thus:

To thee therefore of this same Ioue I plaine,
 And of his fellow gods that faine to be,
 That challenge to themselues the whole worlds raign;
 Of which, the greatest part is due to me,
 And heauen it selfe by heritage in Fee:
 For heauen and earth I both alike do deeme,

Sith heauen and earth are both alike to thee;
 And, gods no more then man though doest esteeme:
 For, euen the gods to the, as men to gods do seeme. (Mutabilitie.7.15.1-9)

I have included this stanza in its entirety because it shows the deeply ingrained connections between the new science, the possibility of imagining alternative worlds, and colonialism that are the foundations of this study. Mutabilitie's legal argument contends that Jove and the Olympians have overstepped their bounds, for their empire is the unchangeable heavens, yet they often intervene in earthly events.

Though Mutabilitie offers no specific examples in the following stanzas, Spenser is preparing the reader for his rewriting of the Actaeon myth he will introduce later in the canto. In Ovid's version of the Actaeon myth, the titular character is transformed into a deer and torn apart by his own hunting dogs after seeing Diana bathing in a pool. Spenser's version features Faunus rather than Actaeon. This minor deity convinces the River Molanna to allow him to watch Diana bathe in her waters by promising to unite her with Fanchin. As punishments for this transgression, Faunus eventually suffers Actaeon's fate and Molanna is stoned, but ultimately united with Fanchin. Their rivers are now "(both combin'd) themselues in one faire riuier spred" (Mutabilitie.6.53.9). Lim reads the Diana episode as critical to interpreting the Mutabilite Cantos. Her departure from Arlo Hill reduces Ireland to a "cultural wasteland."¹¹⁶ This diversion from the main narrative of the Mutabilite Cantos is marked by the regression of Spenser's epic voice into the Colin Clout persona, which also serves to enact "the myth of lost glory and degeneration" of Ireland.¹¹⁷ Through this framework we can connect back to

¹¹⁶ Lim, "Figuring Justice," p. 59.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 58.

Spenser's frustration with Elizabeth's colonial policy, favoring that of Arthur Grey, already described in this chapter. The colonial frustration is encapsulated in the image of Diana parting from Arlo Hill leaving behind a "heavy haplesse curse/...that Wolues, where she was want to space,/ Should harbour'd be, and all those Woods deface,/ And Thieues should rob and spoile that Coast around" (Mutabilitie.6.55.3-6). This is almost the same image as the one I noted earlier in which Spenser claims that Ireland is "annoyed greatly with robbers and outlawes..." (217). The Mutabilitie Cantos are offering a mythological reason why Cynthia/Diana has abandoned Arlo Hill, which in turn suggests a political reason why—Elizabeth has abandoned the fight to colonize Ireland when she pulls men like Grey and Pelham from their posts as Lord Deputies of Ireland.

The colonial imagery of the Cynthia/Diana figure also has extraterrestrial implications. As mentioned before, the role of Cynthia/Diana as goddess with the moon is still in the forefront of the reader's mind when she appears in the Actaeon myth. By suggesting Cynthia/Diana's proper sphere is the moon, Spenser subtly suggests that her love of the bathing spot in the Molanna, Spenser's imaginative name for the river Behanagh, is an overstep into Mutabilitie's earthly realm. This in turn plays on the ambiguity of pluralizing "worlds" in the third line of Mutabilite.6.15. Of course, these worlds are the sub- and super-lunary spheres, that is to say Mutabilitie and Jove's respective realms.

The pluralization of the celestial empires also suggests however that each of the planets circling Earth in the Ptolemaic system might be a world in itself, paralleling the suggestion of other worlds orbiting the stars unseen in the proem to Book II, giving the empire of the gods a far larger claim on existence than

Mutabilitie's own. Mutabilitie expands this argument near the end of her plaint by specifically listing how most of the celestial spheres are subject to change. Stanzas 50 through 52 argue the mutability of the heavens, making the case sphere by sphere, world by world. In stanza 50, Spenser recognizes that the moon follows a monthly cycle. The fifty-first stanza covers the next three spheres: Mercury changes hue (brightness) and alters its course across the night sky each year; Venus is bright as the evening star and duller as the morning star; eclipses darken the sun and fill the world with terror. Stanza 52 notes that Mars has the most convoluted course of any of the planets¹¹⁸. The Martian orbit was so notoriously difficult to chart it was not successfully mapped until Johannes Kepler was able to use Tycho Brahe's observations to determine the orbit was an ellipse in *Astronomia Nova*, published in 1609. Similar to Mars, celestial almanacs, i.e. the "lying books" of 7.52 were equally incapable of predicting Saturn's location (6). In stanza 53 Mutabilitie indicates that only Jupiter (i.e. Jove) has a constant course, yet we are reminded that he was born and raised in Crete or Thebes, depending on which mythological tradition one follows. Like all colonizers, Mutabilitie always has a ready justification for her actions. Perhaps Spenser would be satisfied if Elizabeth were as willing to justify the

¹¹⁸ Barnes also cites this stanza as justification for the argument in the previous note that Spenser's model of the universe is neither perfect, (384)

Now *Mars* that valiant man is changed most:
 For he some times so far runs out of square,
 That he his way doth seem quite to haue lost,
 And cleane without his vsuall sphere to fare;
 That euen these Star-gazers stonisht are
 As sight thereof, and damne their lying books... (VII.vii.52.1-6)

nor timeless

Then since within this wide great *Vniuerse*
 Nothing doth firme and permanent appeare,
 Butall things tost and turned by transuerse... (VII.vii.56.1-3)

occupation of Ireland as Mutabilitie is to rationalize conquest of the spheres.

Perhaps Spenser believes anyone but Elizabeth could obtain a favorable ruling from Nature. Jove had upset the natural order once when the Olympians overthrew the Titans, so it is clear Nature's response was not predetermined.

Chapter 2: “[N]oble atchievments”: Reason and Fancy as Colonial Devices in Margaret Cavendish’s *Blazing World*

Because Margaret Cavendish wrote her own depiction of an extraterrestrial empire, *The Blazing World*, in the Caroline context of an emergent empiricism, her text faced challenges with which Spenser need not concern himself. Though we might consider *The Blazing World* as a part of the empirical process because it is a world-creative thought experiment that allows Cavendish to explore the potential for a prospective, British geopolitical empire, the creative act of imagining worlds lacks the replicable method and measurable results of experiments run by natural philosophers such as Robert Hooke, Robert Boyle, and Isaac Newton. Where for Spenser the connotations of trifling were unambiguously positive, for Cavendish the process could easily pick up negative valences. At the end of the sixteenth century, Spenser’s allegory was enough to prove the value of literary trifling as an exercise. In an attempt to avoid the negative valences of trifling, Cavendish confronts the emergent philosophy of empiricism with a distinction between the literary functions of reason and fancy. In this chapter, I argue that for Cavendish the fanciful, imagined space she depicts in *The Blazing World* is of much greater importance to her colonial vision than reason and empiricism not only because it allows her to model British Empire, but also to imagine herself in a position of governmental authority, and consider how the imagination impacts the British Empire’s colonial reality.

Like Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, *The Blazing World* is deeply engaged in using rhetoric and fiction to formulate the British Empire as separate from the world, but also as an entity destined for geopolitical, colonial expansion. Where the empire Spenser imagines in *The Faerie Queene* has three major functions—to create a

substitute target for Britain's colonial ambitions, to argue that Britain can and will evolve into a world-spanning geopolitical empire, and to model the values a prospective empire should endorse—the beginning of British colonization in the Americas allowed Cavendish to focus on the second and third functions, essentially treating the *Blazing World* as Cavendish's idealization of what the British Empire should look like as it grows to world-spanning proportions. Thus *The Blazing World* becomes a type of thought experiment designed to convince potential readers that fancy and fiction can be valuable tools for modeling what geopolitical British colonialism should look like moving forward. In doing this, Cavendish attempts to dissociate *The Blazing World* with the negative valences of trifling, especially that the text does not function within the framework of empiricism and might thus be relegated to a folly. The primary evidence for this claim comes not from *The Blazing World*, but rather its sister text, *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy*. Early in *Observations*, Cavendish writes that

The truth is...that most men in these latter times, busy themselves with other worlds, than with this they live in, which to me seems strange, unless they could find out some art that would carry them into those celestial worlds, which I doubt will never be...I confess, I have but little faith in such arts, and as little in telecopical, microscopical, and the like inspections...¹¹⁹

This passage is a thinly-veiled critique of natural philosophers, like Galileo and Robert Hooke, who conducted optical experiments. Of Cavendish's many complaints about optics as a field, the one she presents here sheds the most light on how she thought about the *Blazing World* as a world-creative thought experiment that models her idealized depiction of British imperialism. Rather than focusing on her belief that telescopes and microscopes distort already flawed human senses, a

¹¹⁹ Edited by Eileen O'Neill, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 4.

point to which she turns repeatedly in *Observations*, Cavendish instead questions the usefulness of these instruments because they do not allow the experimenter to travel to the world observed. It may seem strange that Cavendish publishes this critique in the companion piece to *The Blazing World*, since she can no more travel there than Galileo can voyage to Jupiter's moons. Cavendish, however, explains away this inconsistency by noting that her tale is a work of fancy while the men who wrote of the microscopic and celestial worlds were less clear with the reader that their work was largely imaginative.

Yet the distinction between reason and fancy still does not necessarily assure readers that *The Blazing World's* relation to British colonialism is anything more than a Knappian trifle. To convince readers that *The Blazing World* has imperial value Cavendish must prove that the Otherworld is useful to readers and is able to teach them something about the world in which they live. Cavendish alludes to her discomfort at the inability of a book to portray something useful in the "Preface to the Ensuing Treatise" of *Observations*. "[I]here are many useless and superfluous books," she admits, "and perchance mine will add to the number of them..."¹²⁰ Here we begin to see a tension that will extend to *The Blazing World*: while the world-creative thought experiment offers a fantastical route to modeling an idealized British Empire, the process retains a glaring flaw. Because the thought experiment is an internal psychological process, it lacks the ability to replicate the experiment and observational results boasted by experimental philosophy. In response, Cavendish might suggest that *The Blazing World* benefits the expansion of British colonialism by depicting a model of how a world spanning empire should look.

¹²⁰ *Observations*, p. 8.

When paired with the motif of world creation Cavendish's definition of trifling becomes significantly revised and expanded from the ways in which I applied it to Spenser. In the previous chapter, I maintained Knapp's description of trifling, that

[t]he exceptional confidence of English colonialists in both the practical and ethical utility of trifling, then, could reflect a more general faith that the power of little England, other-worldly in both its origins and its aims, would be vindicated through the conquest of the New World—achieved by means of littleness.¹²¹

Cavendish, however, has no interest in the “littleness” of England as a means for its colonial rise. *The Blazing World* implies nothing short of the colonial domination of three separate worlds. Cavendish's tripartite colonial vision is expressed in (1) the Empress' ability to govern the Blazing World after her emigration there; (2) the conquest of the ESFI world so that the Empress may offer domination of that world to the king of her former home; (3) and, of course, the modeling function of the Otherworld I have already mentioned. The stakes of trifling, however, are set much higher than in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* at the domination of three worlds.¹²² This depiction of worldly conquest represents a complete break with the idea that Britain would achieve world empire despite its geopolitical limitations. Instead, Cavendish presents an image of English empire that is destined for geopolitical greatness.

Cavendish has also shifted the meaning of trifling not just as a colonial endeavor, but a colonial endeavor with an intertwined scientific mission. To reduce the imperial functions of *The Blazing World* to fancy without reason would be to ignore at least half of what Cavendish is arguing about the nature and uses of

¹²¹ *An Empire Nowhere*, p. 5.

¹²² Earth, the Blazing World, and the ESFI world.

human thought. Cavendish was also deeply interested in exploring the concept of reason. Through the expansion of natural philosophy and learned societies in the seventeenth century, reason reinforced British citizens' self-conceptions of their nation as a world power, and offered another way to make sense of, but also control the world in which they lived. Because reason allows a nation to develop a sense of their position compared to other nations, reason can have colonial implications equaling the power of fancy, in which world-creative modeling is more comparable to wish fulfillment.

In modeling explanations for natural phenomena and an idealized, world-spanning empire, the concepts of reason and fancy are not in opposition, any more than they are frivolous trifles. In fact, the concepts can be used cooperatively to offer an author access to unique insights. Yet Cavendish recognizes that some readers may require more convincing before accepting the value of fancy. Thus she paired *The Blazing World* with *Observations* as an attempt to emphasize the relationship between the texts. Many modern critics have commented on this strategy's success. One, for instance, has observed that the two texts are "difficult to perceive...as so emphatically different," that critics have often put them in conversation "by describing the 'work of fancy' as an imaginative illustration of scientific principles set forth in *Observations*."¹²³ Another has followed this with the claim that Cavendish always "casts doubt upon serious claims to knowledge of nature's secrets," and that

¹²³ Tessie Prakas, "A World of Her Own Invention: The Realm of Fancy in Margaret Cavendish's *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing World*," *Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2016, pp. 123-145, <https://0-www-jstor-org.libus.csd.mu.edu/stable/jearlmocultstud.16.1.123>, p. 124. Accessed 12 December 2020.

the concept of fancy allows her some “harmless retaliations”¹²⁴ at the expense of the Royal Society. As both critics also highlight, the choice to publish *The Blazing World* and *Observations* as a pair is also a strategic choice to protect the former from accusations of frivolity. What Cavendish has to say about the nature of fancy in the composition of fiction has major implications for understanding why she feels the need to create and conquer an entirely new world in the pursuit of truth and as a model of imperial success. The Duchess of Newcastle continues her reasoning with the major caveats that she did not attach *The Blazing World* to *Observations* as a “disparagement to philosophy” (123), nor is she claiming that experimental philosophy is itself a fiction. Much like Sidney, who in *The Defence of Poesy* maintains that poets are often closer to truth than other writers because the poet affirms nothing, “and therefore never lies,”¹²⁵ Cavendish acknowledges that while scientists often err in their conclusions, her own method of inquiry through world creation cannot be held to an empirical standard of truth because fancy does not affirm that standard. She does not maintain that the errors made by scientists invalidate experimentation and observation as scientific methodologies, yet neither is she satisfied with either method in the current state of experimental philosophy.

As we shall soon see, Cavendish likens the process of imagining the Blazing World to becoming a Caesar or Alexander. I would argue, however, that the process of world creation aligns Cavendish more closely with the position of a god than a monarch. She can, and has determined the physical laws of the Blazing World to fit

¹²⁴ Sylvia Bowerbank, “The Spider’s Delight: Margaret Cavendish and the ‘Female’ Imagination,” *English Literary Renaissance*, vol. 14, no. 3, 1984, pp. 392-408, <https://0-www-jstor-org.libus.csd.mu.edu/stable/43447314>, p. 406. Accessed 23 October 2020.

¹²⁵ p. 138.

her mechanical-vitalist worldview, allowing her to model her ideas about natural philosophy even as she depicts an idealization of the British Empire. One such major example she works to incorporate is her theory of distinctions between types of matter.¹²⁶ In *Observations*, Cavendish writes that

...animate matter, was nothing else but corporeal self-motion; and if any difference could be apprehended it was...between these two degrees, to wit, the animate and inanimate parts of matter...¹²⁷

Lisa Walters' description of Cavendish's quasi-vitalist beliefs helps to clarify this passage: the Duchess believes in three types of matter, rational, sensitive, and inanimate. Rather than having souls that are distinct from the body, humans' rationality comes from the fact that we are made up of rational matter. Some matter, like that which makes up plants and animals is sensitive—it can respond to its environment—but falls short of the distinction of rationality. Finally, inanimate matter is that which cannot think or respond to its environment by its own volition.¹²⁸ *The Blazing World* reinforces this view of matter as part of Cavendish's larger worldview that some critics have called Lucretian¹²⁹, and some mechanist-vitalist.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Jonathan L. Shaheen breaks down the distinctions between types of matter in Cavendish's "three-fold materialism" in "Part of Nature and Division in Margaret Cavendish's Materialism," *Synthese*, vol. 196, no. 9, September 2019, pp. 3551-3575, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-017-1326-y>. Accessed 21 December 2020.

¹²⁷ p. 35.

¹²⁸ Lisa Walters, "[N]ot Subject to Our Sense,: Margaret Cavendish's Fusion of Renaissance Science, Magic, and Fairy Lore," *Women's Writing*, vol. 17, no. 3, December 2018, pp. 413-431, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09699080903162039>, p. 422, Accessed 3 September 2020.

¹²⁹ See Jessie Hock, "Fanciful Poetics and Skeptical Epistemology in Margaret Cavendish's *Poems and Fancies*," *Studies in Philology*, vol. 115, no. 4, Fall 2018, pp. 766-802, <http://doi.org/10.1353/sip.2018.0029>. Accessed 12 November 2020.

¹³⁰ See Jay Stevenson, "The Mechanist-Vitalist Soul of Margaret Cavendish," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 36, no. 3, 1996, pp. 527-543, <http://0->

As we see here, Cavendish's vision of the universe is far from our own, and was in sharp contrast to the views of some of the members of the Royal Society. Cavendish understood the nature of the universe as mechanist-vitalist. Because mechanistic models of the universe are so deeply ingrained in twenty-first century thought, the best way to understand vitalism is through a contrast to the mechanistic school. The mechanist position is that "all natural (especially biological or mental) phenomena can be explained with reference to mechanical or chemical processes."¹³¹ Today, we often associate mechanist philosophy with John Locke and Isaac Newton, both of whom wrote during Cavendish's lifetime. Other famous mechanists with whom Cavendish would have been familiar include Rene Descartes, Francis Bacon, and Robert Hooke. One critic has compared Cavendish's mechanist-vitalist worldview to the materialist psychologist framework of Thomas Hobbes.¹³²

Even though she saw eye-to-eye with Hobbes on materialist psychology, Cavendish's skepticism of the new science is well-documented. She wrote about the ideas of her mechanist contemporaries such as Hooke as though their hypotheses imposed "constricting opinions on nature."¹³³ As I have already mentioned, Cavendish believed that instruments such as microscopes and telescopes served to further distort already faulty human senses, rather than improve an observer's

search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsjrs.10.2307.450797&site=eds-live&scope=site. Accessed 11 November 2020.

¹³¹ "mechanism, n., *philosophy*" *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2001, www.oed.com/view/Entry/115557. Accessed 12 August 2020.

¹³² Stevenson, "The Mechanist Vitalist Soul of Margaret Cavendish," p. 529.

¹³³ Oddvar Holmesland, *Utopian Negotiation: Aphra Behn and Margaret Cavendish*, e-book, Syracuse University Press, 2013, p. 95.

perceptions microscopic or distant bodies.¹³⁴ This belief was not due to ignorance of how such devices operated; in *Observations*, Cavendish clearly demonstrates that she was well read in the field of microscopy, intimately familiar with Robert Hooke and Henry Power's writing and experiments, and was one of the earliest readers of the latter.¹³⁵ In addition, the Cavendishes owned many microscopes, acquired during their exile to Paris in the 1640s, which strongly suggests practical experience with the instruments.¹³⁶ Cavendish further demonstrates her practical experience in *Observations* when she writes about the many flaws in the construction of early modern microscopes: "a glass that is flawed, cracked, or broke, or cut into the figure of lozanges, triangles, squares, or the like, will present numerous pictures of one object."¹³⁷ Nor were her objections to microscopy unfounded. Early microscopes often produced blurry, distorted, or multifaceted images that would support Cavendish's belief that they increased optical distortion as much as they assisted in viewing the microscopic world.

Building off the argument that Cavendish distrusted the role of experiments and observation on fallible human senses, Anne Thell compares the epistemological role of *The Blazing World* to *Observations*, arguing that the former is "a 'voluntary creation' of the mind, but one that stems from rationality and coexists with Reason. That is to say, the proposals of this new world are counterparts to her [Cavendish's] preceding scientific treatise [*Observations*]; they are a reconstruction of similar

¹³⁴ Ait-Touati, *Fictions of the Cosmos: Science and Literature in the Seventeenth Century*. Translated by Susan Emanuel, University of Chicago Press, 2011, p. 176.

¹³⁵ Emma Wilkins, "Margaret Cavendish and the Royal Society," *Notes & Records: The Royal Society Journal of the History of Science*, vol. 68, no. 3, 20 September 2014, pp. 245-260, <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsnr.2014.0015>, p. 247. Accessed 13 August 2020.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

¹³⁷ p. 50.

principles in a different form.”¹³⁸ Thell supports this claim by connecting the link between fancy and reason to the metaphor of worlds connected at the poles. By this logic, the choice to publish *Observations* and *The Blazing World* in a single edition provides the reader with a symbolic parallel for the world from which the empress came (a world of reason) to the world she now rules (a world of fancy).¹³⁹ The text of *The Blazing World* seems to support this reading when Cavendish writes that the need to “recreate the mind” through fancy, “and withdraw it from its more serious contemplations...is the reason, why I added this Piece of Fancy [i.e. *The Blazing World*] to my Philosophical Observations, and joined them as two Worlds at the ends of their Poles” (124).

By including *The Blazing World* as an attachment to *Observations*, Cavendish can use fiction as a medium to show the distinctions between mechanist theories of matter and her version of mechanist-vitalist Lucretian atomism, just as she will use fiction to model empire, with all the same drawbacks that using the world-creative thought experiment implies. Oddvar Holmesland understands *The Blazing World* as a narrative engaged “with an ambitious prospect of the new science: to dominate nature.”¹⁴⁰ Yet the individualism and democratization of world creation just discussed complicate any attempt by Cavendish to dominate nature itself through the creation of a secondspace colony, which in turn quickly becomes enmeshed with problems of epistemology and ontology. If natural laws can be dominated by the creator of a world, what value does the nature of the imagined empire have when the

¹³⁸ “The Power of Transport, the Transport of Power: Margaret Cavendish’s *Blazing World*.” *Women’s Studies*, vol. 37, no. 5, July-August 2008, pp. 441-463, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00497870802165429>, p. 444. Accessed 29 August 2020.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 445.

¹⁴⁰ *Utopian Negotiation*, p. 83.

conversation returns to geospace? In this case imagined extraterrestrial empire prompts the following questions as well: Does a world designed to dominate nature offer readers insight into why, though it is no longer nascent, the British Empire is far from the world-spanning empire Spenser imagined in *The Faerie Queene*? Also, does Cavendish's attempt to use extraterrestrial empire as a means of conflating thought experiment and self-actualization too individualized to support a depiction of a world-spanning empire?

The first question is tied to Knapp's answer that England's relation to the New World was frivolous, and that the English celebrated their failure to colonize as an exclusion of the world rather than an exclusion from the world, which allowed authors to focus instead on the spiritual nature of the British Empire. Thus Cavendish's attempt to dominate nature is another way the British nation has directed scientific efforts in ways that do not have immediate colonial ramifications. In answer to the second question, Cavendish is showing readers how open scientific exploration, even if the foundation of that exploration is vitalist, can lead to new military inventions and methods that will allow Britain to become a world-spanning empire following the model established by ESFI. As Holmesland writes, ESFI's importance as an imperial harbinger is that it allows Cavendish to imagine the "political domination of England over all nations of the world."¹⁴¹

Even with the text's optimistic stance that any scientific exploration will benefit the now-growing seventeenth-century British Empire, Cavendish still struggled to find a readership associated with the new science, especially among the Royal Society, which continued to damage her credibility as a natural philosopher.

¹⁴¹ Ait-Touati, *Fictions of the Cosmos*, p. 184.

Her visit to the Society on May 30, 1667 was framed as a piece of gossip rather than a historically significant moment when a woman first toured the Royal Society.

Samuel Pepys, for instance, later wrote in his diary that he had heard from secondhand sources that Cavendish did not “say any thing that was worth hearing,” during her Society visit, “but that she was full of admiration, all admiration.”¹⁴²

Having already admitted in the same entry that he is not fond of Cavendish, Pepys does what he can to present her as an unintelligent bystander, awed by “[s]everal fine experiments...of colours, loadstones, microscopes, and of liquors...” but with no worthwhile theories or ideas of her own to add even in polite conversation.¹⁴³ The publication of *Observations* the year before did little to help public perceptions of Cavendish as a natural philosopher. Samuel Mintz has remarked that *Observations* was “essentially a plea for more contemplation and less experimentation in science.”¹⁴⁴ This plea, of course, relates to Cavendish’s belief that human senses are not trustworthy, and that only pure reason is reliable in the pursuit of truth.

Thus where fancy’s relationship to imagined empire is direct, reason’s is more refined. For Cavendish, the non-referential secondspace of the Blazing World is not only a fantastic imperial thought experiment, but also a method of advocating her own mechanist-vitalist philosophy through the imagined space. As Frédérique Aït-Touati has argued, the goal of fiction that incorporates extraterrestrial spaces is not necessarily to test the plausibility of new hypotheses, but to help make sense of

¹⁴² “Wednesday 18 March 1668,” *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: Daily Entries from the 17th Century London Diary*, edited by Phil Gyford, <https://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1668/03/18/>. Accessed 12 November 2020.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ “The Duchess of Newcastle’s Visit to the Royal Society,” *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, vol. 51, no. 2, April 1952, pp. 168-176, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27713402>, p. 168. Accessed 27 August 2020.

the functions of the universe.¹⁴⁵ This is exactly what Cavendish does in creating and occupying the mental space provided by a fictional world. Ait-Touati understands *The Blazing World* not as a retreat by the authorial figure into a fictional world, but rather as a generative process aimed at restoring the equilibrium, harmony, and order that a figure of absolute authority provided for a royalist during Cromwell's protectorate.¹⁴⁶ Such a claim is deeply rooted in Cavendish's relationship to natural philosophy, but these commentators have not followed through on the imperial implications of their own language. They come close, however, when discussing Cavendish's political loyalties. Ait-Touati combines the ideas of science and royalist politics by arguing that "[t]hrough-out all her writings, Cavendish set the new philosophy side by side with the civil wars' destructions."¹⁴⁷ In the Empress' conquest of both the Blazing World and ESFI, Cavendish is using her model of fancy to create a world in which she can explore natural philosophy and also experiment with an idealized version of imperial Britain.

Beyond such examples, critics have been slow to consider *The Blazing World*, especially the ways in which Cavendish uses the text to model reason and fancy, with a focus on imperialism, historical and textual evidence suggests that Cavendish's colonial project is similar to Spenser's in the following ways. Spenser and Cavendish offered their respective monarchs the gifts of new kingdoms through literature. As we have already seen, Faerieland offered Elizabeth a new kingdom to compensate for the colonial failures of the gold Sir Walter Raleigh could not provide on his expeditions to Guiana. By the time Cavendish published *The Blazing World* in 1666,

¹⁴⁵ *Fictions of the Cosmos*, p. 12.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

¹⁴⁷ *Fictions of the Cosmos*, p. 177.

however, the British Empire found moderate success with trans-Atlantic colonial projects. Settlements established in St. Kitts (1624), Barbados (1627), and Nevis (1628) were some of the Empire's first long-term colonial projects outside of the British Isles.¹⁴⁸ While *The Blazing World* was being printed, England was in the process of annexing Jamaica from the Spanish. Trevor Owen Lloyd attributes the early-seventeenth-century shift in British colonial success to the adoption of Portuguese practices that depended on slave labor and increased trade with other mercantile empires including the Dutch.¹⁴⁹ The mechanics of colonial success and failure have been worked out elsewhere and need not be reiterated here, but a brief context describing the imperial expansions to which those mechanics led is helpful. While the 1660s was a decade of relative calm following the Restoration, it was also a period in which the British once again turned their thoughts to their nation's position as a world empire. The Royal African Company was established not long after Charles II regained the throne, which had the provision of labor for the underpopulated American colonies as one of its primary goals. Despite their relatively low populations, the colonies gained a major swath of land when the crown acquired New Amsterdam, renamed New York, in exchange for Suriname in 1666. While New York may have been too recent to have an impact on *The Blazing World*, the increasing importance of England's American colonies, the negotiation for New York, and the First and Second Anglo-Dutch wars that preceded those negotiations clearly establish an imperial context for the period in which Cavendish was composing *The Blazing World*.

¹⁴⁸ See Kenny, "Ireland and the British Empire: An Introduction," *Ireland and the British Empire*, E-book, Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 1-25 p. 2.

¹⁴⁹ *The British Empire 1558-1995*, Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 22-23.

The important fact here is that though the colonies had their share of problems, Cavendish did not live through the same series of colonial failures as Spenser, which allowed her to imagine a British Empire that was interested in the conquest of extraterrestrial and literary spaces not because the Empire did not have geopolitical territories to manage, but because of the rhetorical power that trifling, when considered through the lens of empiricism, has to convince readers that the model Cavendish imagines for British Imperialism is also the model to which they should ascribe. Considering the question of whether it is better to possess an imagined or a worldly empire, the Duchess of Newcastle (i.e. Margaret Cavendish the character) answers that, “since it is your power to create such a[n imaginary] world, what need you to venture life, reputation and tranquility, to conquer a gross material world?”¹⁵⁰ Here Cavendish is letting her readers know that *The Blazing World* is a text concerned with exposing readers to the idea the models for empire that they create through the imaginative process can later be transposed to become models of what a British colonial empire should be like, even if the authors will leave the process of geopolitical colonization to the English crown. It may sound like Cavendish is advocating for a rejection of geospace rather than modeling a way it might effectively be conquered, but this reading fails to match up with ESFT’s function in the text, as we shall see shortly. Readers should also recognize that Cavendish might appear to reject political authority in the material world precisely because she has regularly had difficulty cultivating geopolitical influence and standing. The ability to model colonial authority is especially evident in *The Blazing*

¹⁵⁰ Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World & Other Writings*. Edited by Kate Lilley, Penguin, 1992, p. 186. All citations from *The Blazing World* are from this edition.

World when the Empress and Duchess are discussing how the latter may become the ruler her own world with some immaterial spirits. “But is none of the worlds so weak,” the Empress asks, “that it may be surprised or conquered?” (185). When the spirits begin to hedge, arguing that such worlds do exist, but that they are often already conquered by another foreigner, the empress tells them plainly, “[I]t is not impossible to conquer a world” (185). The spirits agree that, no, it is not impossible, a statement the subsequent conquest of the ESFI world will prove at the end of this chapter.¹⁵¹

Even while Cavendish’s colonial methodology for her fiction follows a similar pattern to Spenser’s in creating an otherworldly space to model empire, Cavendish needed to address the question of how fiction, especially fantastical fiction, is a useful medium for imparting knowledge. This question is not new, nor is it unique to Cavendish. In 1581, Philip Sidney argued for the value of poesy stating that of all who write “the poet is the least liar.”¹⁵² Where many writers can be incorrect in their claims, the poet “he nothing affirms, and therefore never lies,” or, put more directly, the poet never attempts to “conjure you to believe for true what he writes.”¹⁵³ Cavendish picks up on Sidney’s defense of poetry as a justification of

¹⁵¹ The 1668 edition of *The Blazing World* reads, “Why, said the Empress, it is *not possible* to conquer a world” (emphasis added). The spirits advising her make the same response, “No...” The changes between the editions do not affect the meaning of the idea that Cavendish presents. In 1666, the spirits agree with a statement that it is not impossible to conquer a world. In 1668 the spirits correct the Empress, admitting that it is possible to conquer a world. In both cases, the meaning remains that it is possible to conquer a world. See Kate Lilley, editor, “Notes,” pp. 226-230, *The Blazing World & Other Writings*, by Margaret Cavendish, Penguin, 1994, p. 229, n. 23.

¹⁵² “The Defence of Poesy,” *Classic Writings on Poetry*, edited by William Harmon, pp. 117-152, e-book, Columbia University Press, 2003, p. 138.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

fancy in the prefatory materials to *The Blazing World*. In her “To the Reader,” Cavendish writes, “by *reason* I understand a rational search and enquiry into the causes of natural effects; and by *fancy* a voluntary creation or production of the mind, both being effects, or rather actions of the rational parts of matter...” (123-124). Even though Cavendish’s conception of reason does not conform to an empiricist framework, since she does not relate the concept anywhere in *The Blazing World* to observation or experimentation, it does seem to contrast the dichotic category of fancy that Cavendish sets up in this preface. This is one of the reasons *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy* helps determine the nuances of what Cavendish means by ‘reason,’ and how this intellectual exercise links back to the Blazing World as an experiment in imagined empire. The reason that Cavendish explores in *Observations* and the fancy in *The Blazing World* are both tied to a broader, overarching rationality, and for Cavendish both are legitimate means of pursuing truth, which she believes to be singular. “[T]here is but one truth in nature,” the Duchess writes, “all those that hit not this truth do err, some more, some less” (123), yet the epistemological distinction between truth and falsehood remains. Cavendish ends her first flighty sentence in “To the Reader” with the following thought:

nevertheless, all do ground their opinions upon reason...but *fictions* are an issue of man’s fancy, framed in his own mind, according as he pleases, without regard, whether the thing he fancies, be really existent without his mind or not; so that reason searches the depth of nature, and enquires after the true causes of natural effects; but fancy creates of its own accord whatsoever it pleases, and delights in its own work. (123)

Here we see Cavendish’s definition of fancy at its closest to Sidney’s conception of the poet being least the liar. While, as a work of fancy, fiction is not restrained by the Aristotelian accidents of existence or plausibility, it is still a legitimate method of

searching for truth. Even though Cavendish equates reason with truth in the passage above, she quickly continues to add that

when I distinguish fancy from reason; I mean not as if fancy were not made by the rational parts of matter; but by *reason* I understand a rational search and enquiry into the causes of natural effects; and by *fancy* a voluntary creation or production of the mind both being effects, or rather actions of the rational parts of matter... (123-124)

This is to say that although reason is linked with rational inquiry into natural philosophy, fancy, because it is ultimately based in rationalism, it is an acceptable form of inquiry into topics such as how to build and organize an empire. For Cavendish, a thought experiment like *The Blazing World* is perfect for critiquing ideas of emergent empiricism and simultaneously arguing how natural philosophers could reorganize their efforts for the benefit of that empire.

As if modeling an idealized version of the British Empire were not enough rhetorical work for fancy as it appears in *The Blazing World*, Cavendish also offers the following rhetorical uses: that the text provides a method of exploring questions experimental philosophy cannot approach, the variety and diversions offered by fancy reset the mind for serious work, and that the narrative allows Cavendish a space in which she can self-promote and share her writing through a publication process that was dominated by men. Cavendish's self-promotion becomes another way that world creation is linked to imperial ambition, because she is able to make her fictionalized counterpart, the Duchess, a key advisor to the Empress.

Aït-Touati has used Cavendish's distinctions between fiction and reason as a method for approaching truth, as well as the thoughts of other seventeenth-century writers such as Kepler, Godwin, Hook, Cyrano de Bergerac, Huygens, and Fontenelle, whose work establishes the nature of the cosmos as both setting and its

exploration a goal of the discourse. He argues that these authors are engaged in a project of using fiction to prove what contemporary empirical sciences of the time could not.¹⁵⁴ Unlike Cavendish, for many of these authors the literary experiment is centered upon the new astronomy, using fiction as a laboratory to work through the implications of Copernicanism and to convince readers that geocentrism is reasonable. Cavendish is also concerned with astronomy—when conversing with the birdmen she has the Empress ask several questions about the nature and composition of the sun, moon, and stars (136-138), but she is more concerned with how world creation allows her to explore how a government could be reorganized to create an ideal imperial power. In a modern discourse, we might attribute such imaginative modeling to the domains of sociology or political science. Cavendish, however, thought of them in terms of fancy and empire. Why, for instance, is imperialism so closely associated with the exploration of both natural philosophy and the imaginative faculty? How can an attempt to answer this question using fiction give the British Empire an advantage in becoming a geopolitical power?

Where Cavendish cannot find ways to make reason address these questions directly, she continues to explore the possibility that fancy might be the tool for the job. “The end of reason,” she writes, “is truth; the end of fancy, is fiction” (123). As Cavendish has already made clear, while fiction cannot equate with truth, it can be used as a method of pursuing it. She recognizes reason as both more “profitable” and a more “useful study,” as well as being more “laborious and difficult,” but also admits that “reason sometimes requires the help of fancy, to recreate the mind, and withdraw it from its more serious contemplations” (124). Because the end of fancy

¹⁵⁴ *Fictions of the Cosmos*, p. 7.

is fiction, this statement transitively argues that reason sometimes requires the help of fiction. How such assistance actually works is never specifically defined in *The Blazing World*. I would argue, however, that it links back to the ideas of modeling and thought experiment. This is why Cavendish uses her introduction to begin to cite examples of literary works that have used fiction to explore scientific possibilities. Both the sources she references here are narratives of lunar voyage, though she mentions neither by name, calling them only “Lucian’s, or the French-man’s world in the Moon” (124). The reference to Lucian could be *Vera Historia, Icaromenippus*, or both. The Frenchman, however, is clearly Savinien Cyrano de Bergerac; the text *L’autre Monde Ou les États et Empires de la Lune* was published in 1657. Cavendish is clearly trying to establish herself within the tradition of the cosmic voyage, which is strange because *The Blazing World* fits neatly into no single genre or literary tradition, an emphasis further defined by the fact that the same texts are also mentioned in *Observations*. Leslie Marina has argued that *The Blazing World* is simultaneously travel narrative, romance, utopia, epic, biography, cabala, Lucianic fable, Menippean satire, natural history, and morality play, finally concluding that it may be easier to name a tradition from which Cavendish does not borrow.¹⁵⁵ If this is true, it provides additional support for the argument that Cavendish is using these texts as models of fancy to explore questions of government and empire that she cannot approach via the emergent empiricism of her day.

¹⁵⁵ “Mind the Map: Fancy, Matter, and World Construction in Margaret Cavendish’s *Blazing World*,” *Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2012, pp. 85-112, <https://0-www-jstor-org.libus.csd.mu.edu/stable/43446299>, p. 85. Accessed 30 August 2020.

But Cavendish understands that fancy and fiction, even if they are useful for thought experiments, do not comply with the exacting standards of empiricism. A text like *The Blazing World* provides a reader with a diversion that is delightful, but is also productive in that the narrative prompts questions about natural philosophy, empire, and the overlap between the two. This is why Cavendish chose the fictional depiction of a new world to include with *Observations*: she argues that the exploration of a new world would be “agreeable to the subject treated in the former parts” and that *The Blazing World* is a “philosophical” text as well as a “romantical” and “fantastical” one (124).

Within the model of the Blazing World, questions of empire follow questions of science. World creation and imagined empire divert a reader’s thoughts from endeavors related to earthly empire, but in a way that reinscribes imperial ideology even as the reader is supposedly taking a break from it. Thus a reader concerned with Britain’s geopolitical empire can use *The Blazing World* as a productive diversion that ostensibly provides a distraction from mentally engaging with imperialism, while actually re-inscribing pro-colonial and pro-monarchical ideologies in the form of imagined empire. Just as the space of the Blazing World can be used to test questions of science, the non-referential secondspace also allows for thought experiments in which empire is the endgame.

Thus, Cavendish’s theory of fancy becomes productive for portraying a vision of what an idealized British Empire could and should be. Rather than being a mere mental break from aspects of worldly empire such as mercantilism, the spread of Anglican Protestantism, or outright conquest, fancy allows readers to continue to engage with colonial and imperial ideas even when they break for diversion.

Unfortunately, existing criticism has been slow to pursue this, or any connection to colonialism.¹⁵⁶ This is surprising not only because of Cavendish's ties to royalist circles and her life as a courtier, but also because the language and ideas she presents in *The Blazing World* are often inherently political. Thell offers one of the rare readings of *The Blazing World* that can be connected to colonialism. She understands the text as a narrative founded upon the idea of procurement, imperial or otherwise. Cavendish, she writes, has made "[t]he Empress's mode of operation one of absolute acquisition....The 'finder's keepers' mentality of the Age of Discovery figures large in *Blazing World*."¹⁵⁷ This is another way of saying the text is primarily concerned with the loci to which political and social power are distributed, or in Thell's own words, the "construct[ing] and dominate[ing] an entire literary, metaphoric, and mental world, but also to author and control a very real companion and critique to the world outside the text."¹⁵⁸ This reading is similar to my own, but reduces the importance of imperial and colonial imagery in *The Blazing World*. Certainly Cavendish is exploring the personal dimensions of power and fame, but several critics have argued that Cavendish's royalist politics make it difficult to separate the idea of her own personal advancement from the progress of larger social forces like

¹⁵⁶ Most criticism concerning Cavendish's colonial ideology can be found as secondary claims in support of more popular discussions within Cavendish scholarship such as the blending of generic conventions, social roles and the societal expectations of seventeenth-century women, and courtly power dynamics. The following statement from Anne Thell is one such example.

¹⁵⁷ "The Power of Transport, the Transport of Power," p. 450.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 441.

the monarchy and the Empire, especially if the Empress is read as a literary version of Cavendish herself.¹⁵⁹

Another reading of *The Blazing World* that fits within the framework of exploration and imperial expansion comes from Jennifer Mi-Young Park, who considers the image of the male discoverer, and argues that Cavendish rejects this image in favor of female world creation, and the exploration of the geospace world for access to an interior world of fancy.¹⁶⁰ This is not to say that Mi-Young Park codes Cavendish's interiority as a solely feminine trait, for she offers two alternative explanations of the turn to an interior world: a retreat from the horrors of the Second English Civil War and the regicide of Charles I, and a counter-Baconian belief that knowledge can be beneficial through delight rather than practicality. Whatever the reason for Cavendish's interior turn, Mi-Young Park makes the case

¹⁵⁹ Kate Lilley holds that Margaret Cavendish was both “devoted to personal excess” (xi) and deeply tied to the royalists through the circumstances of her early life, political ideology, and her marriage to the former commander of Charles I's northern forces, William Cavendish (ix). For Oddvar Holmesland Cavendish's Royalism is inseparable from her idea that freedom is the result of an absolute authority that can manage and control party mindedness and overreaches of individual ambition. Holmesland cannot separate Cavendish's desire for public stability and her desire for an individual freedom that must sometimes be controlled by an absolute authority and calls the positions contradictory, *Utopian Negotiation*, p. 84. This, however, is a failure of the neoliberal imagination to adopt a royalist ideology. I would argue that Cavendish saw public stability as the structure that allowed for most individual freedoms, and therefore only freedoms that threatened public stability must be checked. Tessie Prakas has also read *The Blazing World* as a document that propagates absolutist thought, arguing that although *The Blazing World* “champions independent, imaginative thought, Cavendish in fact uses such independence to author a fictive space of intellectual coercion.” “A World of Her Own Invention,” abstract. She later clarifies these comments by suggesting that Cavendish's theory of fancy suppresses both ideas of liberty and authority to personal advancement (125).

¹⁶⁰ “Navigating Past, Potential, and Paradise: The Gendered Epistemologies of Discovery and Creation in Francis Godwin's *Man in the Moone* and Margaret Cavendish's *Blazing World*,” *Renaissance and Reformation*, vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 113-138, <https://0-www-jstor-org.libus.csd.mu.edu/stable/43446300>, p. 114. Accessed 29 August 2020. The following statement is also from page 114.

that the Duchess separates herself from the male-dominated tradition of discovery and instead identifies the discovery of paradise with interiority.¹⁶¹ Here the argument ends without pressing further on what I believe to be a major complicating factor in determining Cavendish's imperial ideology: Does her turn toward interiority, world creation, and supposedly away from masculine discovery narratives actually mean that *The Blazing World* is not a text supportive of imperialism and colonization? I believe the argument that *The Blazing World* is a particularly imperial text can be made from evidence in the prefatory and closing materials, as well as the Blazing World's relationship with ESFI. Since we have already looked at Cavendish's definitions of reason and fancy in *The Blazing World's* "To the Reader," we should turn our attention to the other preface, William Cavendish's dedicatory poem.

William's poem moves beyond the legitimization of his wife's world creation to instead celebrate it as an artistic achievement. He writes:

Our Elder World with all their Sill and Arts
 Could but divide the World into three Parts:
 Columbus then for Navigation fam'd,
 Found a new World, America 'tis nam'd:
 Now this new World was found, it was not made,
 Only discovered, lying in Time's shade.
 Then what are You, having no Chaos found
 To Make a World, or any such least ground?
 But your creating Fancy, though it fit
 To make your World of Nothing, but pure Wit.
 Your Blazing –world, beyond the Stars mounts higher,
 Enlightens all with a Celestial Fire.¹⁶²

Based on the premises of Thell and Mi-Young Park, a close reading of the poem emphasizes the following imperial imagery. The first two lines depict the world of

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁶² William Cavendish, "To the Duchess of Newcastle, On Her New Blazing World," *The Blazing World & Other Writings*, By Margaret Cavendish, edited by Kate Lilley, Penguin, 1992, p. 121.

geospace as it was imagined before the Age of Discovery, static and tripartite, divided between the three continents the populations of which were each founded by one of Noah's sons after the deluge: Europe (Japheth), Asia (Shem), and Africa (Ham). In the third and fourth lines, the old model of the world has been called into doubt by none other than Christopher Columbus, who in sailing west to reach the Far East, had accidentally landed upon the shores of a new world, America.

The poem's narrator, however, is not impressed with Columbus' contribution to European empire. The discovery of the Americas was an accident, requiring no special skill. The land was "lying in Time's shade" ready to be introduced to European civilization whenever a sailor stumbled upon it. By contrast, Cavendish's world-creative project is much more ambitious in scope. Instead of advocating for planted claims on whatever land an explorer might happen to discover, the created status of the Blazing World suggests that empire building is a project that must be carefully planned and executed. While William presents creation as already more impressive than discovery, he also emphasizes that Margaret has been able to create *ex nihilo*. As I will discuss in greater detail with John Milton's vision of the cosmos, cosmogonies have a long tradition of presenting a reader with a primordial state of nature, Chaos, from which a divine power organized and created the universe. To suggest that Cavendish had no primordial Chaos is misleading. The Blazing World is not created *ex nihilo*, but borrows from the many literary traditions I mention earlier, plus several traditions concerned directly with Otherworlds such as faerie, the green world, and lunar and cosmic voyages. The suggestion that the Blazing World was created from nothing is true in that Cavendish was able to depict a secondspace world with no geospace referent. What is

important about William's claims of *ex nihilo* creation is that he emphasizes the skill required of Margaret to create an idealized model for how to govern a world-spanning empire. Compared to the difficult process of modeling empire, Columbus' discovery through navigation and conquest through proclamation begin to look insignificant by comparison. William's poem presents Columbus as a terrific navigator, but nothing more. Unlike Columbus, Cavendish actually has to consider how a world-spanning empire would function under one monarch, with one language and one religion.

In diminishing the colonial empires of their rivals, as William belittles the importance of Columbus' discoveries, British authors attempt to distinguish their national Empire as engaged in a fundamentally different type of colonialism. The importance of world creation is a prospectus as to how British imperialism will be different from the religious imperialisms of the Spanish, French, and Portuguese. Where in the Mammon episode of *The Faerie Queene* II.vii we see Guyon reject both worship from indigenous peoples and the riches of New World mines, *The Blazing World* shows readers a realm of new ideas and fabulous wealth that can be accepted and still provides the colonial benefit of a substitute, imagined target for British imperial aspirations. The riches of diamonds, gold, star-stones, and fire-stones only leave the Blazing World in the form of military technology, not as a transfer of wealth. While Cavendish tells readers that the Blazing World's navy sends ESFI reinforcement ships made entirely of gold, these boats are never dismantled for ESFI's national wealth, but remain a fleet of ships. The image of colonization offered by *The Blazing World* then becomes one where wealth is not stored for its own sake, but is used to create defensive military technologies such troop

transporting submarines, propagandistic displays with star-stone, and the destructive force of fire-stones.

While ESFI benefits from the military technology of the Blazing World, this fabulous wealth always remains in the hands of Blazing World natives. The Empress “would not enrich [the inhabitants of the ESFI world]; for said she, not only particular families or nations, but all the world, their natures are such that much gold, and great store of riches makes them mad, insomuch as they endeavor to destroy each other for gold, or riches’ sake” (217). In stark contrast to empires looking for gold, Cavendish offers a vision of colonies where resources can be used for British benefit, but ultimately remain in the possession of the colonized culture. Such a position is not as altruistic as it might seem; the decision to allow colonized cultures to maintain possession of their resources is not based on respect for indigenous people, but an effort to avoid financial damage to the colonizers.

By invoking Columbus, William is making a direct contrast, most specifically to Spanish imperialism. He is implicitly comparing his wife’s world creation to Columbus’ world discovery, even as such a comparison is explicitly rejected when William praises Margaret’s ability to create a world of nothing but pure wit. Margaret also draws a telling comparison between Columbus and the Empress in the second part of *The Blazing World*. In a description with several similarities to engravings of Columbus, Cavendish writes that the Empress was “dressed in her imperial robes, which were all of diamonds and carbuncles; in one hand she held a buckler...in the other hand a spear of one entire diamond; on her head she had a cap of diamonds,

and just upon the top of the crown, was a star made of star-stone” (211).¹⁶³

Cavendish’s feminine world creation is further contrasted with Columbus’ masculine discovery as William next comments on his wife’s terminology of ‘fancy’ and ‘wit.’ Here William uses the authority of his masculine voice to reinforce his wife’s justification for creating a fictional world, thus making sure that if Margaret is trifling where Columbus is not, then she must still make effective use of trifles like English explorers, to smooth the progress of empire and not waste her time playing with a worthless trinket in developing the Blazing World. William helped to provide early credibility for Margaret’s writing as he was an authoritative voice within the royalist circles where Margaret would have found the little readership she acquired during her life. Though he had fallen from favor with Charles II in the years leading up to *The Blazing World’s* publication, and he was burdened by the lasting impact of tremendous debts he acquired in an attempt to finance major portions of the First Civil War,¹⁶⁴ William was still respected as a former royalist captain-general who fought in Northern England. If Margaret had worried about the reception of her definition of her world-creating project, her husband’s justification of her efforts in his dedicatory poem must have helped to quell some of these reservations.

¹⁶³ Thell has made this observation in “The Power of Transport, the Transport of Power,” p. 444. Other editions of *The Blazing World* are more specific about the Empress’ imperial pose. See, for instance, Sylvia Bowerbank and Sara Mendelson’s, editors, edition of “The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing World (1666),” *Paper Bodies: A Margaret Cavendish Reader*, Broadview, 2000, pp. 151-251, p. 162. In this version, the Empress is described as such: “[I]n her left hand she held a Buckler, to signifie the Defence of her Dominions....In her right hand she carried a Spear made of white Diamond, cut like the tail of a Blazing-star, which signified that she was ready to assault those that proved her Enemies.”

¹⁶⁴ In Margaret Cavendish’s biography of her husband, *The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle*, she estimates her husband’s debts to be £941,303, edited by Charles Harding Firth, e-book, Scribner and Welford, 1886, p. 150.

This brings the analysis to the final couplet: “Your Blazing-world, beyond the Stars mounts higher,/ Enlightens all with a Celestial Fire.” This line prompts the reader to consider the role of fancy in the following text, thereby reinforcing Margaret’s definition of fancy in the “To the Reader.” William’s final statement suggests that he recognizes Margaret’s attempts to place *The Blazing World* in a tradition of fancy, in contrast to both *Observations* and empiricism. *The Blazing World* may be written from Margaret’s fancy rather than her reason, yet it can enlighten readers nonetheless, especially when she considers the Blazing World and ESFI as models for British imperialism.

There is a notable gap in the critical conversation about the function of ESFI as a response to William’s prompt for enlightenment. I believe Cavendish uses ESFI to symbolize how an imagined empire can impact the real world. Just as the Empress’ time spent in the Blazing World helps protect ESFI from its enemies in the narrative, so too can the work Cavendish accomplishes in imagining an empire help to advocate British colonial expansion and model how it might look. Such a reading becomes increasingly plausible if we consider that ESFI is a secondspace substitution for England, Scotland, France, and Ireland. When Cavendish makes her case that the Blazing World can help turn ESFI into a world-spanning empire, she is also making the symbolic case that imagined empire can do the same for Britain.

Few texts make such an ambitious argument for imagined empire.

Cavendish’s portrayal of herself¹⁶⁵ as an empress who can provide military support

¹⁶⁵ While Cavendish portrays herself within the text as the Duchess of Newcastle, she also identifies herself with the empress to some degree. See, for instance, her claim in the “Epilogue to the Reader”: “[I]f any should like the world I have made, and be

for ESFI is a clever rhetorical technique that she uses to advocate for colonial expansion of the British Empire: because the Blazing World was instrumental in turning ESFI into a world-spanning empire, the process of imagining empire may prove similarly important as the British look to solidify their transatlantic presence. A further benefit of Cavendish's imagined empire is that she can fulfill her desire to become an empress without breaking from her royalist politics and encouraging others who might rebel against the crown to find consolation in imagined worlds instead. Much like Spenser, Cavendish is often critical of the English power hierarchy, but never goes so far as to encourage rebellious behaviors along the lines of republicanism. Consider the Empress' speech to the rulers of the ESFI world. It is not difficult to hear the echoes of English Royalism from the Civil Wars:

Great, heroic, and famous monarchs: I came hither to assist the King of ESFI against his enemies, he being unjustly assaulted by many several nations, which would fain take away his hereditary rights and prerogatives of the narrow seas; at which injustice from Heaven was much displeased; and for the injuries he received from his enemies, [Heaven] rewarded him with an absolute power so that now he is become the head-monarch of all the world; which power, though you may envy, yet you can no ways hinder him; for all those that endeavor to resist his power shall only get loss for their labour, and no victory for their profit. Wherefore my advice to you all is, to pay him tribute justly and truly, that you may live peaceably and happily, and be rewarded with the blessings of Heaven, which I wish you from my soul.
(216, italics omitted)

Even as the Empress has become ruler of her own world, Cavendish does not make her break from the political alliance to her former country. In this particular passage the correspondence between the Empress and Cavendish is nearly one-to-one, as is also the case with the King of ESFI and Charles II. The Empress, like Cavendish prior to the Restoration, is a political refugee advocating for a threatened monarchy.

willing to be *my* subjects they may imagine themselves such" (224-225, emphasis added).

In the fiction of *The Blazing World* these threats are external, coming from the other nations of the ESFI world. In Civil-War England the threat to the monarchy came from the parliamentarians and regicides who deposed Charles I. According to the royalist philosophy to which Cavendish subscribes, this was an assault on the hereditary rights of the monarchy and the divine providence that had established the Stuart line. This passage assures royalist readers that providence will make Charles II, like the King of ESFI, head of a world-spanning empire—but only with the help of ingenious women like the Empress and the Duchess.

A conversation between the Duchess and the Empress suggests that Cavendish the author shares the imperial ambitions of her literary counterpart. “[M]y ambition is,” the character of Cavendish admits, “that I would fain be as you are, that is an Empress of a world, and I shall never be at quiet until I be one” (184). This quote propounds an idea introduced in the prefatory materials where Cavendish is candid in expressing her ambition and admitting that she has no means of fulfilling it in geospace:

I am not covetous, but as ambitious as every any of my sex was, is or can be; which makes, that though I cannot be *Henry* the Fifth, or *Charles* the Second, yet I endeavor to be *Margaret* the *First*; and although I have neither power, time nor occasion to conquer the world as *Alexander* and *Caesar* did; yet rather than not to be mistress of one, since Fortune and the Fates would give me none, I have made a world of my own: for which no body, I hope, will blame me, since it is in every one’s power to do the like. (124)

Because Cavendish was neither born into a position of absolute political power, nor had the resources or abilities to seize such power, she instead focuses on her own ability to imagine a world in which she can be Margaret I, simultaneously more and less influential than Henry or Charles.

At this point it is necessary to ask the following question again: If it is in every one's power to create an Otherworld empire, might it not suggest that transposition onto geopolitical empire is unnecessary? If every reader took Cavendish's suggestion and created their own imagined empire, it would benefit the British geopolitical empire by creating that many more models of what it ideally means to be a colonial power. All that Cavendish is saying in the prefatory materials to *The Blazing World* is that the creation of the Otherworld empire is a democratic task; anyone can participate. By imagining themselves as emperors and empresses of worlds, these authors continue to reinscribe the notion that a world empire is an important and desirable state of politics. If multiple authors explore diverse models of creating an idealized version of the British Empire, then people with real colonial authority have multiple models to choose from, with their advantages and disadvantages already laid out.

This is why Cavendish never views the fictional status of the Blazing World as a hindrance to either her personal or nationalistic ambition. In fact, as an imagined empire, the Blazing World offers Cavendish another opportunity to advance her imperialist argument: she can imagine personal advancement to an imperial throne without betraying her royalist political standing. The conflict between desire for political power and Cavendish's own political philosophy of subservience to the monarchy is why her self-representation in *The Blazing World*, the Duchess of Newcastle, later tell the Empress that her recent "melancholy proceeds from an extreme ambition" (183). As for the scope of this ambition, "neither [the Duchess] herself, nor no creature in the world was able to know either the height, depth or breadth of her ambition" (183). In her real life Cavendish's extreme

ambition was able to survive all circumstances she encountered, including her husband's fall from favor after his return to England.

Even earlier than William's falling out with Charles II, Cavendish knew firsthand the disruption brought upon by changes in government. The regicide of Charles I in 1649 might be an extreme example, but it is one about which Cavendish is surely thinking while writing *The Blazing World*, considering the Restoration had just ended her exile in France in 1660. A non-violent transition of power then becomes important to Cavendish's role in an imagined empire as a way of skirting contradictions to her royalist ideology. Though most critics argue that *The Blazing World* is a straightforward affirmation of Cavendish's Royalist politics, I think this overlooks the potential tension between Cavendish's desire to become empress of a world and her loyalty to the Stuart monarchy. Cavendish's imperial philosophy would become self-contradictory if she not only supported the expansion of the British Empire under Charles II, but also imagined herself as the proper monarch to reshape Earth into a society that mirrors the Blazing World. The Blazing World's fictional status allows her to imagine herself as an empress and simultaneously support the expansion of British colonies under Charles II's rule.

The Blazing World shows Cavendish's allegiance to the Stuart dynasty primarily by promoting the argument that a world unified under a single monarch would be superior to the warring governments of the seventeenth-century. For one thing, a world united under a single government would promote "civility and courtship" (127) between people whether they be the imagined races of the Blazing World or the real people on Earth. Unification is possible in the Blazing World because the Emperor has geopolitical mastery of his entire world, but the process of unification

does not end with territorial control. The Blazing World is also unified in language and culture: “[T]here was but one language,” Cavendish writes, “. . .nor more than one Emperor, to whom [all the people of the Blazing World] submitted with the greatest duty and obedience, which made them live in a continued peace and happiness, not acquainted with foreign wars, or home-bred insurrections” (128). The foreign wars Cavendish mentions are likely the Second Anglo-Dutch War, which was being fought even as *The Blazing World* was printed, but any attempt to link the phrase to historical events should recognize the reference might be a general allusion to the turbulent relations between England and other European powers since the beginning of the seventeenth century. Because she witnessed the destruction of the home-bred insurrections of the English Civil Wars, it is not surprising that Cavendish champions order and unity in *The Blazing World*. Cavendish takes the idea of a single world empire so far, that she has the Blazing World’s statesmen describe it as the natural and ideal state for a government:

[A]s it was natural for one body to have but one head, so it was also natural for a politic body to have but one governor; and that a commonwealth, which had many governors was like a monster with many heads: besides, said they, a monarchy is a divine form of government, and agrees most with our religion; for as there is but one God, whom we all unanimously worship and adore with one faith, so we are resolved to have but one Emperor, to whom we all submit with one obedience. (134)

In *The Blazing World*, Cavendish imagines colonial ambition as the natural state of all imperial powers: the Empress, for instance, admired “that not any particular state, kingdom or commonwealth, was contented with their own shares, but endeavored to encroach upon their neighbors, and that their greatest glory was in plunder and slaughter” (190). Not only does the creation of a fictional empire allow Cavendish to imagine herself as an empress without betraying her allegiance to the English crown,

it also gives her control over a world without the “disturbances” and “deaths” conquerors like Caesar and Alexander caused during their ascension to imperial power (224).

The sentiment that the desire to rule over a fictional world does not make Cavendish covetous also appears about four-fifths of the way through the first part of the text when the character of the Duchess says: “I had rather die in the adventure of noble achievements than live in obscure and sluggish security; since by the one, I may live in glorious Fame, and by the other I am buried in oblivion” (185). For Cavendish, becoming Margaret I is a necessary step toward individual immortality, and the only way to become a conqueror, since she has neither the power, time, nor occasion to create an empire in geospace, is to follow Spenser’s model of shifting the conquest to an imaginary secondspace. To blur the boundaries between the Blazing World and geospace Cavendish is continuously ambiguous in her distinctions between her role as author and her role as a voice in the text, a point significantly reinforced in “The Epilogue to the Reader.” Here Cavendish writes that, “[b]y this poetical description [i.e. *The Blazing World*], you may perceive, that my ambition is not only to be Empress, but Authoress of a whole world” (224). Even if Cavendish cannot be equated directly with the character of the Duchess, both share ideologies that match not only in regard to their imperial ambitions, but also in their royalism.

In the act of creating a world, Cavendish allows herself the personal ambition of ruling without suggesting a version of Earth where Charles II is either subordinate to her position or cast from the throne entirely. Thus within the text of *The Blazing World* Cavendish can imagine herself as an empress but also remind herself that she

should be content with her rank of duchess within the political hierarchy. When the character of the Duchess expresses the scope of her ambition to the Empress, the latter replies, “[S]o you are [a great princess], for you are a princess of the fourth or fifth degree, for a duke or duchess is the highest title of honor that a subject can arrive to, as being the next to a king’s title...” because a king’s sons and brothers are both hailed by the title of duke (183-184). Although this is an accurate description of Cavendish’s noble status, the idea that she cannot climb any higher in the ranks of nobility rings false for a woman who has just made herself empress of an entire world. Duchess was not the highest title at which she could arrive, only the highest at which she could arrive outside of imagined empire. This is not necessarily a contradiction because the Duchess and the Empress are describing two different types of worlds, both of which Cavendish, as author, is interested in engaging. In the extraterrestrial space of imagined empire, Cavendish can imagine a version of herself that becomes empress of a world. In geospace, however, she must be content with the rank she has obtained within the established hierarchy.

Cavendish also uses the epilogue to reaffirm that the creation of a fictional empire is preferable to the conquest of a worldly one (at least for her, a woman without royal claim to geopolitical authority) because imagined empire can be attained with little social disruption or loss of life. Once the experiment is completed, perhaps it will indicate how Britain can become a world-spanning empire with limited loss of life. Cavendish writes that the creation of the Blazing World “was more easily and suddenly effected than the conquests of the two famous monarchs of the world, Alexander and Caesar: neither have I made such disturbances, and caused so many dissolutions of particulars, otherwise named

deaths, as they did” (224). This invocation of Caesar and Alexander differs subtly from the parallel invocation of Henry V and Charles II. Unlike the prefatory materials, where Cavendish suggests she might have become an Alexander or Caesar if given the opportunity, Cavendish now shifts to professing the world creation of imagined empire superior to any conquests. She writes, “And in the formation of those [imagined] worlds, I take more delight and glory, than ever Alexander or Caesar did in conquering this terrestrial world” (224). The emphasis on the non-disruptive nature of imagined empire is not so much a critique of Alexander and Caesar’s methods as an admission of the divinely-inspired hierarchy of king and subjects. If Cavendish were to become a Caesar, it would mean betraying her king in an attempt to claim the world for herself, which seems to contradict her royalist politics. By emphasizing her difference from Alexander and Caesar by focusing on an imagined empire rather than one in geospace, however, Cavendish is able to sidestep the contradiction between her personal ambition and her politics. The main thrust of her imperial argument remains that Britain is destined to become a world-spanning empire modeled after the Blazing World, meanwhile the imagined empire allows Cavendish to imagine the personal satisfaction of being a monarch. That the process of imagining herself as an empress creates a model for geopolitical empire is an added bonus.

Distinctions of imagined and geopolitical monarchy aside, the Caesars’ invocation remains a politically complicated image. In one respect it is a direct homage to Charles II. Slightly more than fifty years before *The Blazing World’s* publication, British authors obsessively depicted England as the spiritual successor to the Roman Empire. Because the connections between Roman emperorship and

British kingship are fully explored elsewhere¹⁶⁶ I will not recap them here. What is important is that Cavendish invokes the imagery of Caesar and Alexander to connect England to the imagined empire of the Blazing World in the same way previous authors attempted to create an association with Imperial Rome. This is clearly an instance where Greenblatt is right and the authorial imagination is more at work than play.¹⁶⁷ The narrative of “The Second Part of the Description of the New Blazing World” is ‘working’ particularly hard when the Empress is able to use the military resources of the Blazing World not only to defend her home country of ESFI, but also to help that empire conquer its native world.

Finally we have come to the great imperial image in *The Blazing World*. ESFI, the Empress’ former world is threatened by the many other nations in that world. Fortunately for the Empress, she can use her newfound empire to provide military support for her former home, and simultaneously reshape the ESFI world so that it becomes a mirror of the idealized Blazing World. ESFI, as the fictional counterpart of geopolitical England, can be used to argue that Britain too can and should spread its influence to dominate the Earth, bringing the world together under one imperial head. In this way ESFI is ideal for understanding why Cavendish believes the process of imagining empire could have a real impact on geopolitical imperialism. One way such an empire might contribute becomes evident after the Empress

¹⁶⁶ See, for instance, H. A. MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons, and Anglosaxons*, University Press of New England, 1982; Lisa Hopkins, *The Cultural Uses of the Caesars on the English Renaissance Stage*, Ashgate, 2008; and John E. Curran Jr., *Roman Invasions: The British History, Protestant Anti-Romanism, and the Historical Imagination in England, 1530-1660*, University of Delaware Press, 2002.

¹⁶⁷ *Marvelous Possessions*, p. 23.

engages in the project of imagining her own world. After she has finished shaping her imagined world, the Empress discovers that she has

nothing else to do, unless she did dissolve her imaginary world, or made some alterations in the Blazing World she lived in, which yet she could hardly do, by reason it was so well ordered that it could not be mended... (189)

The passage brings the tension of world creation—within a text about world creation—to the center of the reader’s attention. Because the Empress links the idea of the perfect, imagined world with potential changes to the governance of the Blazing World, it is likely that Cavendish understands one function of imagined empire is to model how real empires might be improved. If the Blazing World were not already perfect, the Empress might have used the models she discovered while fashioning imagined worlds to make changes to her government.

Previously, the Empress had attempted to make several changes to the Blazing World, many of them framed by Cavendish’s displeasure with the Royal Society. This threatens to contradict the Empress’ statement that the Blazing World cannot be improved unless we consider that the world became perfectly ordered only after she made the appropriate changes.¹⁶⁸ After making a detailed account of each of the Blazing World’s learned societies, the Empress begins a massive

¹⁶⁸ There is one instance in *The Blazing World* that may not fit this theme. Near the end of the first part of the narrative the Duchess advises the Empress to dissolve all learned societies. Readers are presented with the following indirect discourse between the two:

The Empress told the Duchess, that she would willingly follow her advise [i.e. to dissolve the societies], but she thought it would be an eternal disgrace to her , to alter her own decrees, acts and laws. To which the Duchess answered, that it was so far from a disgrace...to return from a worse to a better [state of government]. (202)

I do not see this point as a challenge for my present argument because Cavendish never depicts the Empress following through with the advice, and the reorganization of the learned societies that the Empress has already affected will remain important in understanding how to interpret ESFI as a pro-imperial symbol.

reorganization effort, creating a new society for the architects, calling together the first ever convocation of astronomers, dissolving the society of geometers, and warning both the experimental scientists and orators that they should be dissolved lest “their disputes and quarrels should remain within their schools, and cause no factions or disturbances in state, or government” (142). She also barely refrains from dissolving the society of logicians.

The changes the Empress makes to the Blazing World’s learned societies has a direct impact on ESFI’s ability to defeat its political rivals by the second part of *The Blazing World*. When the Blazing World provides ESFI military technology and assistance, it is almost as if the former symbolically represents imagined empire and the later its geopolitical counterpart. One telling instance, which suggests *The Blazing World* is more than simply Cavendish’s personal act of wish-fulfillment, comes when the Empress addresses ESFI’s navy saying, “I come not, to make bargains with you, or to regard my own interest, more than your safety; but I intend to make you the most powerful nation of this world” (210, italics omitted). Here Cavendish removes the focus from personal ascension to power, the primary consideration of most of the text to this point, and firmly places the emphasis on a national rise. While the narrative threats against ESFI are nebulous, defined only as a war against all other nations, Cavendish had a much better idea of the dangers facing the English government. Most of these threats were coming from new and unexpected fronts, such as the English Civil Wars and the Anglo-Dutch wars. While Cavendish could do little to fend off religious or political strife, she could engage in the fictional war of wish fulfillment depicted in *The Blazing World*. As an author concerned about the new threats England faced as well as the country’s own colonial future, Cavendish

symbolically calls in her own armada from the Blazing World. The Blazing World's military serves ESFI as a *deus ex machina*, not always of divine protection, but certainly of otherworldly protection.

There are certainly some moments in *The Blazing World* where the universe is neither random nor arbitrary, and such assistance as circumstance provides is attributed to the gods.¹⁶⁹ An allusion to divine intervention makes its first appearance at the very beginning of the narrative when the woman who would become the Empress is kidnapped from ESFI. The cosmos responds with displeasure, and “frowning at [the] theft, raised such a tempest...[that the kidnappers' ship] did by assistance and favor of the Gods to the virtuous Lady, so turn and wind through those precipices” of ice that fill the Arctic Ocean (125). Shortly after this, Cavendish makes it clear that the Lady does not freeze to death, the fate of her kidnappers, because the “light of her beauty, the heat of her youth, and protection of the gods” (126). In passages like these, it is apparent that Cavendish wants readers to think of the Lady's transition to becoming the Empress as divinely inspired; she could not have become the empress of a world without the divine protection afforded to her.

By the end of the narrative, the Empress becomes a source of pseudo-divine, otherworldly protection for ESFI. Her melancholy, when she first learns of the threats surrounding her home nation, is easy to understand; the conceit of a nation fighting a war against an entire world retains all of its potency in the twenty-first

¹⁶⁹ Criticism on Cavendish's expression of the divine in *The Blazing World* varies greatly between authors. For a sense of the variety of criticism on Cavendish's relationship with the divine in her writing, see Brandie R. Siegfried and Lisa T. Sarasohn, editors, *God and Nature in the Thought of Margaret Cavendish*, Ashgate, 2014, for a collection of recent arguments on the subject.

century. Ultimately, the Empress is able to save her native country with the forces of an Otherworld gathered behind her. The protection she brings to ESFI is also encoded in divine language: upon her appearance all of the ESFI troops “cried out with one voice, that she [the Empress] was an angel sent from god to deliver them out of the hand of their enemies” (211). Because the gods created the conditions that brought the Empress to the Blazing World, these troops are correct in their assessment.

The link between the governmental modeling of imagined empire in which Cavendish participates when she reorganizes the her empire’s learned societies and the otherworldly protection her military offers ESFI is the weaponization of the Blazing World’s technologies for an interplanetary war. Of particular importance to the war effort was the Empress’ interest in volcanoes. To satisfy her curiosity, the Empress effectively redirects the research of her worm-men geologists, commanding them to “discover the cause of the eruption of that same fire” that pours out of an active volcano (163). In *The Blazing World* magma is created not by the liquefaction of rock by pressure and heat, but because of the properties of a certain stone “whose nature was such, that being wetted, it would grow excessively hot, and break forth into a flaming-fire” (163). These fire-stones are quickly used in the construction of two elaborate chapels, but do not appear in their full significance until they are weaponized. Drawing on the discovery of the fire-stones, the Duchess informs the Empress that to prepare for ESFI’s defense she:

must send a number of worm-men to the Burning Mountains...which must get a great quantity of fire-stone, whose property, you know, is, that it burns so long as it is wet; and the ships in the other world all being made of wood [the fish-men] may by that means set them all on fire. (207)

In practice the strategy proves brutally effective, as ship after enemy ship burns with no defense. If it were not for the outsider's perspective the Empress brought to the Blazing World's learned societies, the weaponization of fire-stones was unlikely to have come to fruition, for there is no previous mention in the text that any of the Blazing World's learned societies had an interest in volcanoes. The worm-men were not eager to pursue this type of research until directly questioned by the Empress. In this case, the Empress' interests led to the discovery of a new military technology that benefits the Blazing World in the process of inter-world imperialism.¹⁷⁰

If *The Blazing World* is part of an Otherworld tradition that shows Britain is on its way to becoming a world empire, Cavendish saw herself as an explorer in the literary sphere who would help bring about that empire by creating a model for it: a single empire that spans an entire world. Cavendish herself then becomes a type of colonist, not only because of her involvement in world creation as William shows when he compares her to Columbus in his dedicatory poem to *The Blazing World*, but also as an attempt to enter the male-dominated publishing space. Compared to the achievements of the Empress of the Blazing World—the governance of a worldwide empire and the conquest of the ESFI world—the process of publication becomes a minor task. Entering the publishing space was doubly important to Cavendish because she had no credibility in mainstream discourses concerning natural philosophy, especially the Royal Society. Scoffed at by the London intellectual elite

¹⁷⁰ I use inter-world imperialism, rather than extraterrestrial imperialism here because I have consistently associated the later with the imaginative possibility of empire. Within the narrative conceit of *The Blazing World*, however, the conquest of extraterrestrial space is actually performed by the Empress and her armies. This reasoning, along with the fact that the Blazing World itself is extraterrestrial, is why I distinguish between inter-world and extraterrestrial imperialism.

for her vitalist positions, Cavendish also suffered from gender discrimination as well. The Royal Society did not take kindly to her presence in their halls and laboratories, and many scholars have linked sexism and misogyny to the multiple attempts to depict Cavendish as an intellectual charlatan suffering from an ambiguous mental condition that was given the name melancholia. More recent scholarship has attempted to deconstruct the belief that Cavendish's eccentricities and self-promotion were the results of a poorly-defined madness.¹⁷¹

While she was never able to break into the intellectual ranks of the Royal Society, or keep anything resembling a mutually respectful correspondence with these natural philosophers, Cavendish found a way to turn the literary environment of the *Blazing World* into her laboratory for not only vitalist, but also colonial experiments. *The Blazing World* is a model of both conquest and self-actualization appropriate for the British desire to become a world-spanning geopolitical empire, as well as Cavendish's aspiration to find a world of her own where her vision and ideas are appreciated by her contemporaries.

Thus, just as the non-referential secondspace of the *Blazing World* gives Cavendish a world to conquer, and a method of thought experiment to test her hand at natural philosophy, it also allowed her to promote the image of herself as eccentric and ambitious. Through both fancy and reason Cavendish makes her case for her vision of a British Empire that is just starting to develop under the restored Stuart monarchy of Charles II. As a construct, fancy can assist in both the creation of

¹⁷¹ See Hero Chalmers, "Dismantling the Myth of 'Mad Madge': The Cultural Context of Margaret Cavendish's Authorial Self-Presentation," *Women's Writing*, vol. 4, no. 3, 1997, pp. 323-339, <https://doi.org.10.1080/09699089700200027>. Accessed 28 August 2020.

geopolitical empire and the pursuit of alternative understandings of the workings of the universe. Ultimately, the Otherworld of the Blazing World represents a space for Cavendish in which truth can be pursued both because the human senses cannot be trusted in observations on scientific experiments and because imperial experiments are often tenuous and high stakes.

Chapter 3: *Orbis Non Sufficit*: Francis Godwin's Extraterrestrial Spaniard

This chapter and the following now shift the focus on extraterrestrial space from one of colonial ambition to anxiety. Specifically, they explore the colonial anxieties Francis Godwin and Aphra Behn portray in their respective depictions of the lunar sphere. In the following two chapters, I use examples from *The Man in the Moone* and *The Emperor of the Moon* to propose a new reading of the lunar sphere in these texts. I argue that both authors consider the moon as a colonial space, and that both use the sphere of the moon to express anxieties about British colonialism. The anxieties that each author presents, however, are radically different. Godwin suggests that the British Empire may be already too far behind in the project of empire building to catch up with their colonial rivals, and will certainly never attain a geopolitical empire if the processes associated with colonialism do not begin immediately. Behn, on the other hand, presents readers with an opportunity to examine and critique the process of imagining empire. *The Emperor of the Moon* and *Oroonoko*, specifically, can be read as cautions that the pressure to develop a geopolitical empire in the near future must not be used to justify a colonial strategy similar to that of the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, or French. Once again, the process through which empire is pursued must be distinctly British.

Much like Spenser and Cavendish, Godwin and Behn are a rare pairing in literary criticism. Superficially, Behn may appear a better match for a conversation with Cavendish.¹⁷² The two women are both examples of early feminist thinking and

¹⁷² As Oddvar Holmesland does in *Utopian Negotiation* in which he focuses on how both Cavendish and Behn negotiate utopian motifs in their writing with seemingly contradictory aspects of their beliefs. One prominent example that works for both

politically conservative. Both were also what Sandra Harding calls “knowers who are not permitted to sit next to the scientist at their lab benches,” women who, cut off from the Royal Society’s approach to science, explored the natural world through literature.¹⁷³ Considering the *Emperor of the Moon* through the lens of imperialism, however, I see a common anxiety shared between Behn and Godwin in their exploration of how England may have fallen behind the colonial space-grabbing race, even if they differ as to how their nation ought to consider compensating for its early colonial failures.

Most critics who make any attempt to group Godwin and Behn focus on how both fit into the British depiction of the moon, and leave only hints of the colonial implications their texts can offer readers. Perhaps the most direct statement linking these lunar texts to the prospect of earthy colony comes from Marjorie Hope Nicolson, who writes that she “became aware even more strongly of the fact that the stirring of imagination in the seventeenth century under the influence of the discoveries of the new astronomy, was remarkably similar to the stirring of imagination in that earlier period in which unknown continents and unknown seas

authors is the attempt to negotiate their early feminist positions with their loyalties to a Royalist system of government that many critics have connected directly to patriarchy. See also, Fukushi Wataru, “Royalism and Feminism: Aphra Behn’s Dilemma in the Two Parts of the Rover,” *Shiron*, vol. 40, 2002, pp. 1-14, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db+mzh&AN=2003420387&site=eds-live&scope=site>, accessed 5 February 2020 and Margarete Rubik, “The House, the City, and the Colony in the Works of Aphra Behn: Gendered Spaces and the Freedoms and Dangers they Afford,” *SEDERI: Yearbook of the Spanish and Portuguese Society for English Renaissance Studies*, vol. 28, 2018, pp. 55-78, <https://www.doi.org/10.43136/sederi/2018.3>. Accessed 4 February 2021.

¹⁷³ *Objectivity and Diversity: Another Logic of Scientific Research*, University of Chicago press, 2015, p. xi.

beckoned from the maps on which their existence was surmised.”¹⁷⁴ Just as the discovery of the antipodes was quickly followed by Spanish colonialism, some British authors were keen to follow the discovery of a world in the moon with an imagined, extraterrestrial empire created through fiction. Nicolson emphasizes that the imagined lunar space was destined to parallel the course of colonialism in the Americas: “With characteristic imperialism, Britain set out to colonize the moon!”¹⁷⁵ David Cressy introduces a more nuanced iteration of this idea. He holds that lunar voyages are the direct successors of Columbus’ discovery of the New World and the Copernican Revolution.¹⁷⁶ In the following two chapters, the observations of both these critics help to frame Godwin’s anxiety that imagined extraterrestrial empire is no substitution for its geopolitical counterpart and Behn’s ethical concern that colonies lead to the kind of exploitation depicted in *Oroonoko*.

As these chapters will focus on colonial anxiety, and share an emphasis on lunar space, it is fitting that the moon has a long tradition as a symbolic harbinger of unease at least as long as the Ancient Greeks associated it with Hecate’s magic. By the seventeenth century, the context of the moon as a symbol for folly or insanity was regularly adapted from classical myths such as that the moon can cause strange behaviors or epilepsy. Perhaps the most recognized use of such symbolism in the early modern British context is Shakespeare’s playful use of lunar imagery in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, but the association was far more common appearing in texts as generically diverse as Ben Jonson’s *News from the New World Discovered in the*

¹⁷⁴ “Cosmic Voyages,” *ELH*, vol. 7, no. 2, June 1940, pp. 83-107, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2871717>, p. 95. Accessed 27 January 2021. The following quote is from p. 105.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

¹⁷⁶ “Early Modern Space Travel and the English Man in the Moon,” p. 962.

Moon, John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Behn's *The Emperor of the Moon*. For other authors such as Kepler, Galileo, and Wilkins, however, the moon represents a real space that can and should be explored as the setting for serious literary thought experiments.

The beginning of the seventeenth century was a period ripe for imaginative engagement with the lunar other, especially since it was then that the English were forced to reevaluate their ideas about the Scottish other when James Stuart became King of England, Wales, and Scotland in 1603. With three kingdoms paying tribute to the same crown, the process of incorporating new lands and peoples into a British Empire had become a reality for the English, and they could turn their attention to other spaces. Like Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, English colonizers were beginning to recognize that "There is a world elsewhere."¹⁷⁷

For *Coriolanus*, this other world was a mere 35 miles away in Antium; for English colonizers it was more remote. The distance from London to Jamestown, for instance, is greater than that from Rome to Antium by over a factor of a thousand. While the English imagined remote worlds in Jamestown or the lunar sphere, the Spanish had established more than a century's headstart on building their geopolitical imperium. Deeply tied to the *Reconquista*, the first embers of Spanish imperialism are to be found in the fires lit during the Fall of Islamic Granada. Charles V's successful reclamation of Granada from Islamic rule is usually overshadowed in colonial importance by Columbus' westward voyage in the same year. Both events are important for understanding why the Spanish geopolitical

¹⁷⁷ *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., edited by Herschel Baker, Anne Barton, Frank Kermode, Harry Levin, Hallett Smith, and Marie Edel, Houghton Mifflin, 1997, pp. 1444-1485, p. 1470, III.iii.133-5.

empire was significantly more advanced than its British counterpart by the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Fall of Granada was followed by Charles' imperial blitz in North Africa that would lead to some of the Spanish Empire's earliest experiences with colonial territory.

The English were left with nagging questions of why the beginning of their own geopolitical empire could not be as explosive as the Spanish. The Spanish imperial juggernaut had certainly become confident in their imperial prowess; the expansionist motto of Charles V, *plus ultra*, had given way to Philip II's more ambitious *orbis non sufficit*. These mottos are at what I believe to be the heart of Godwin's colonial anxiety. Considering what would suffice the Spanish Empire if the world would not, Godwin comes up with an original answer: as if channeling his own inner Coriolanus, Godwin reminds us that the moon is also a world elsewhere. He imagines that the lunar sphere is the next logical step for Spanish colonization and is a space that might satisfy Philip where Earth could not. Godwin's argument is subtle and connected largely to his choice of designating his protagonist Domingo Gonsales, a Spanish *picaro*. This choice represents Godwin's anxiety that the English will never have the opportunity to establish a world-spanning geopolitical empire if the first steps toward a British imperium are not taken immediately. If colonization is to be thought of as a space grabbing race, the British are at risk of losing this race not only in the Americas, Africa, and Asia, but in the heavens themselves. Godwin's moon, then, does not represent a space the Spanish *would* occupy, but is instead serves as an imagined empire for Spain the same way that Faerieland and the Blazing World serve British imperialism. Godwin's choice of a Spanish protagonist stresses

the fact that because Britain is only now taking the steps to imagine empire, they may be forever lagging behind their colonial rivals in creating a colonial empire.

Godwin's focus on lunar space as colonial territory is a massive imaginative leap, yet he has the lengthy tradition of the lunar voyage narrative to serve as his model.¹⁷⁸ Nicolson reminds us that the lunar voyage motif existed since at least the time of Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, and reemerged in the seventeenth century because the questions of the mutability of the heavens and Copernicanism were sweeping through Europe.¹⁷⁹ The seventeenth-century lunar voyage differed significantly from its literary forbearers as the moon was not always considered a place prior to Galileo's *Siderius Nuncius*. In Dante's *Paradiso*, the moon is not a world so much as a collection of celestial material. He writes of the moon:

It seemed to me a cloud as luminous
And dense and smoothly polished as diamond
Struck by a ray of sun enveloped us.
We were received into the elements
Of the eternal pearl as water takes
Light to itself, with no change in substance.¹⁸⁰

For some ancient and medieval authors the moon could not be a place because Aristotle had established celestial space as fundamentally different in composition from the terrestrial in his *De Caelo*. Where Aristotle's earth is composed of the four elements—earth, water, air, and fire—all celestial matter was composed of quintessential aether, moved in perfect circles around the earth, and because these orbits are permanent it is “a reasonable supposition that [all objects above the sphere

¹⁷⁸ Cressy, “Early Modern Space Travel and the English Man in the Moon,” p. 961.

¹⁷⁹ See *Voyages to the Moon*, Macmillan, 1948. Nicolson's organization is only loosely chronological, organized instead by the method of transport by which a character reaches the lunar world. I will note specific chapters of interest as I allude to them.

¹⁸⁰ *The Paradiso*, edited and translated by John Ciardi, Penguin, 2009, p. 15.

of the moon are] not subject to alteration either.”¹⁸¹ These faulty assumptions were the prime model for imagining extraterrestrial space for over a thousand years until Copernicus’ revised model of Aristarchian heliocentrism offered a significant challenge to the Aristotelian/Ptolemaic system. By the seventeenth century, however, the moon was becoming familiar as a world much like Earth with mountains and “seas” of its own. Galileo writes of the lunar surface in 1610:

I feel sure that the surface of the Moon is not perfectly smooth, free from inequalities and exactly spherical, as a large school of philosophers considers with regard to the Moon and the other heavenly bodies, but that, on the contrary it is full of inequalities...¹⁸²

Though the exact date of the composition of *The Man in the Moone* is unknown,¹⁸³ it was published posthumously in 1638, which means it established itself with British readers in the same year as Wilkins’ *Discovery of a World in the Moon*. This was only four years after Kepler published the *Somnium* in New Latin, and six years after Galileo’s *Dialogo Sopra i Due Massimi Sistemi del Mondo*.¹⁸⁴

A second factor that differentiated a lunar voyage such as that in *The Man in the Moone* from its ancient and medieval counterparts is that Godwin is actually concerned with how his Spaniard would realistically (by early modern standards)

¹⁸¹ *On the Heavens*, edited by E. H. Warmington, and translated by W. K. C. Guthrie, Harvard University Press, 1971, p. 23.

¹⁸² *The Sidereal Messenger of Galileo Galilei and a Part of the Preface to Kepler’s Dioptrics*, edited and translated by Edward Stafford Carlos, Kindle ed., Rivingtons, 1880.

¹⁸³ See McColley, “The Date of Godwin’s ‘Domingo Gonsales, for a summary of the arguments for dating *The Man in the Moone*.”

¹⁸⁴ For more on the Italian reception of Copernicanism, see Koeslter, *The Sleepwalkers*, esp. “Part Five: The Parting of the Ways” pp. 425-495. To understand the Italian and English reception of Copernicanism it is helpful to understand how Copernicus’ circle continued his work shortly after his death in 1543. For more on the Eastern European reception of Copernicanism, including Copernicus’ tense relationship with his colleague, Andreas Osiander, and how Georg Joachim Rheticus expanded on Copernicus’ work by developing trigonometric tables invaluable for observational astronomy, I recommend Dennis Danielson’s *The First Copernican: Georg Joachim Rheticus and the Rise of the Copernican Revolution*, Walker and Company, 2006.

travel to the moon. *Somnium Scipionus*, Dante's *Commedia*, and Christine de Pizan's *Le Livre du Chemin de Long Estude* all rely on a dream vision to deliver their protagonists to the lunar sphere. Other literary works, like Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, see their heroes escorted to the moon awake, but through supernatural or divine means.

For Godwin the moon was both clearly a place and one that could be reached through human ingenuity, but such ideas met with mixed success in Protestant Europe. The idea that the moon could be a world similar to the Earth is connected to Copernican decentering because both suggest that the Earth no longer holds a special, divinely-appointed place at the center of creation. Philip Melanchton wrote of Copernican astronomy that those who would move the Earth while keeping the sun stationary have defined their cosmology "either from love of novelty or from the desire to appear clever."¹⁸⁵ There is evidence, however, that Melanchthon's harsh critique of Copernican astronomy softened with time, as he later celebrated the ingenuity of Copernican theory in describing the phases and motions of the moon.¹⁸⁶ Not all Protestants were as bothered by the seeming contradictions between Copernicanism and biblical descriptions of the cosmos. Kepler is one of the great examples of a Lutheran who made major contributions to the new astronomy. In *Astronomia Nova*, he added to Copernican theory the law that states the orbit of each planet is an ellipse and that the Sun is always one of the two foci.

¹⁸⁵ *Initia Doctrinae Physicae, Dictata in Academia Witebergensi*, in CR 13, pp. 216 ff., MS PR 5974, in the Huntington Library, qtd. in Robert S. Westman, "The Melanchthon Circle, Rheticus, and the Wittenberg Interpretation of the Copernican Theory," *Isis*, vol. 66, no. 2, June 1975, pp. 164-193, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/229415>, p. 173. Accessed 9 May 2021.

¹⁸⁶ See Westman's "The Melachthon Circle, Rheticus, and the Wittenberg interpretation of the Copernican Theory," p. 173 for a more detailed analysis of Melachathon's manuscripts, as well as his critique and praise for Copernican Astronomy.

In Godwin's England, the Copernican theory was generally received with an open-mindedness similar to that of Kepler. Perhaps this was due in part to British interest in new worlds of all kinds, whether they were in the moon or across the Atlantic. Like the Americas, the moon was classified as a symbol of alterity in seventeenth-century England. It was "comfortingly familiar" in its visibility, and yet "achingly distant."¹⁸⁷ Despite this distance, it stood to reason that if a transatlantic colony could be managed then contact with a new world in the moon should also be theoretically possible. Godwin imagines the distance all too likely to be covered, and worried that if the English do not make a voyage to the lunar sphere, the Spanish will beat them to it.

Where authors like Spenser and Cavendish understood extraterrestrial space as a site in which they can produce a temporary alternative to empire, Godwin remained unconvinced that such a process was an effective colonial strategy. As it is presented in *The Man in the Moone*, the lunar sphere may offer a potential substitute space for empire, but it is a Spaniard who gets there first, and thus has the potential to establish a colony. That Godwin makes a Spaniard the protagonist of his lunar voyage narrative is a poignant reminder that Godwin's England was trailing Spain in both exploration and colonization to such an extent that a Spanish voyage to the moon would strike readers as more readily believable than the same voyage by an Englishman. Early seventeenth-century readers could not fail to notice the beginning of the new century was marked for England by the development of transatlantic British colonies that folded almost as quickly as they were established. For many of these readers, it would have been difficult to maintain an already fragile

¹⁸⁷ Cressy, "Early Modern Space Travel and the English Man in the Moon," p. 961.

confidence in the future of Britain's geopolitical empire when ephemeral colonies like Jamestown and Roanoke were put side-by-side with the conquests of Pizarro and Cortés. As a Spanish protagonist, Domingo Gonsales represents Godwin's anxiety that England is becoming locked out of geopolitical empire as the unclaimed spaces on the map continuously grow smaller. If the British are becoming effectively locked out of geopolitical empire, then suddenly the process of creating an imagined empire in an extraterrestrial space is stripped of most of its argumentative power, which is primarily to serve as a model and spur for prospective geopolitical empire. In this reading of Godwin's imperial positioning, *The Man in the Moone* is an attempt to work through the author's anxieties that the British have fallen, perhaps irrecoverably, behind the Spanish in the process of colonialism. It is a final warning that if the British do not stress the immediacy of geopolitical empire, the entire process of imagining an empire will have been for naught because the Spanish have already conquered the entire Earth and have moved on to extraterrestrial spaces such as the moon.

The moon represents a different category of extraterrestrial space than Faerieland or the Blazing World; it is referential extraterrestrial space that, like the Americas, may be colonized by the Spanish before the British attempt to stake their own claims.¹⁸⁸ While the moon is a referential space, it is not so different from

¹⁸⁸ Discussions on the colonization of the moon in literature are rare in Early Modern and Renaissance studies and have generally been reserved for science fiction studies. Though a detailed breakdown of the history of how similar issues have been treated in Science Fiction Studies is well outside the scope of this project, I have found the following texts useful in following recent developments in the discourse of extraterrestrial colonization in science fiction studies: John Rieder's *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*, e-book, Wesleyan University Press, 2008, and "Colonialism and Postcolonialism," *The Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction*, edited by

Faerieland or the Blazing World in that it is a secondspace. While it can be observed and experienced, the former can only be done from a distance, and the experience is largely relegated to the ways observers think about the lunar sphere. Because the moon is referential and could, theoretically at least, be traveled to, it has the potential to become a thirdspace should human kind establish a colony there. This makes the moon a more attractive imagined colony than the non-referential secondspaces because it could be occupied physically as well as imaginatively. The lunar sphere is simultaneously a less attractive imagined colony because that accessibility means that it could be colonized by a rival empire, a weakness Faerieland and the Blazing World do not share.

It should therefore be expected that reading Godwin produces a different set of challenges for an imperial reading from Spenser or Cavendish. With Spenser the extant scholarship on *The Faerie Queene* as a poem of empire is extensive; for Cavendish, a connection to empire is always accessible through her Royalist politics. One way to approach Godwin from a colonial perspective is through the context of his most famous historical text, *A Catalogue of the Bishops of England*. In the *Catalogue*, Godwin establishes himself as a prominent voice for a non-Roman or pre-Roman Christianity in England, thus establishing England as an independent spiritual empire rather than a colony of Rome. Godwin first cites written evidence that the apostles

Rob Latham, Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 486-497; as well as Greg Grewell, "Colonizing the Universe: Science Fictions Then, Now, and in the (Imagined) Future," *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*, vol. 55, no. 2, 2001, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1348255>, pp. 25-47, accessed 5 March 2021. The following texts discuss the some of the Early Modern lunar voyage narratives I have been discussing as part of the history of genre fiction: Brett M. Rogers and Benjamin Elton Stevens, editors, *Classical Tradition in Science Fiction*, Oxford University Press, 2015; Roberts, *The History of Science Fiction*; and Vu, "Science Fiction Before Science Fiction."

Peter, Paul, and Simon had traveled to England to convert the island to Christianity.

Well aware that the quality of this evidence left much to be desired, Godwin admits that

though we should account it a great glory to our nation, to derive the pedigree of our spirituall lineage, from so noble and excellent a father as *S. Peter*, yet reason of the one side, and want of authority on the other enforceth vs to rest persuaded, that *S. Peter* neuer saw this island.¹⁸⁹

However, Godwin feels he has more evidence to support a Pauline visit to England

because of a literalist reading of *Romans* 15:19. In this verse Paul proclaims,

“Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.”¹⁹⁰ Considering that the Roman Province of Illyricum existed west of

Jerusalem, a plausible interpretation, though a significantly strained one, is that Paul traveled around the entire world, including England, to end up there. After asserting the biblical authority to argue Paul had preached in England, Godwin barely tries to

supply evidence that Simon had made a similar voyage. It is easy for a reader to

forget Godwin’s seeming inability to present evidence for an apostolic visit to the

British Isles when he quickly moves onto a much richer tradition of apostolic

disciples and the forebears of Protestant thought connected to early Christian

Britain. Godwin is especially fond of the “clear and pregnant” testimonies that

¹⁸⁹ *A Catalogue of the Bishops of England, Since the First Planting of Christian Religion in This Island Together with a Briefe History of Their Lives and Memorable Actions, So Neere as Can Be Gathtered Out of Antiquity. VVhereunto is Prefixed a Discourse Concerning the First Conuersion of Our Britaine Vnto Christian Religion*, 2nd ed., printed by Eliot’s Court Press for Thomas Adams, 1615, *ProQuest*, <http://0-www-proquest-com.libus.csd.mu.edu/books/catalogue-bishops-engladn-since-first-planting/docview/2240876550/se-2?accountid=100>, p. 6.

¹⁹⁰ The Bible, King James Version, <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Romans-Chapter-15/#19>.

connect Joseph of Arimathea to England.¹⁹¹ Such testimonies allow Godwin to argue that Britain began the process of conversion to Christianity even earlier than Rome, making England an independent spiritual empire from the first century A.D.

For the purposes of the present study, the *Catalogue* shows that Godwin was interested in imagining England not only as an independent empire, and thus mitigating the importance of the nation's history as a Roman colony, but also in imagining England as an imperial rival with a history equal to any of the world's most famous empires. For Godwin, the dissonance between this history of national strength clashed with the nascent state of the British colonial empire, urging him to consider the implications colonial failure in the present would have for the shape of Britain's future. The anxieties this dissonance creates, particularly the fear that Britain is at risk of becoming locked out of geopolitical empire, are expressed in the symbolism of *The Man in the Moone*.

Though criticism considering *The Man in the Moone* is far less common than attempts to link Godwin's lunar voyage to the history of science or the evolution of genre fiction, commentators have made several inroads to approach the work from an imperial perspective. There are three major ways critics attempt to categorize *The Man in the Moone*: (1) as a utopian text, (2) as an example of proto-science fiction, or (3) as a picaresque satire. No matter the tradition from which a text derives, many critics touch on colonialism, but such is almost never the primary focus. Thus, I have constructed the following argument by compiling and interrogating the hints of the authors who looked at Godwin through these three traditions.

¹⁹¹ *A Catalogue of the Bishops of England*, p. 8.

The most common of the three traditions is *The Man in the Moone* as a utopia.¹⁹² Of course, my own definition of extraterrestrial empire excludes the possibility of utopia.¹⁹³ Utopia is possible on Earth, and, at least within the conceit of the narrative, can be achieved by any society that is willing to replicate its process.¹⁹⁴ A number of critics agree with my assessment that Godwin's moon is not a utopia, even if we differ on the specific reasons why this label is not appropriate.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² As early as 1940 Marjorie Nicolson labels Godwin's moon a "conventional Utopia." "Cosmic Voyages," p. 103. Mi-Young Park labels *The Man in the Moone* as an attempt at utopia-making that "reflects in large part the struggle to regain a lost paradise in the potential afforded by the discovery of the New World." "Navigating Past, Potential, and Paradise," p. 113. Cressy varies the utopian reading by emphasizing *The Man in the Moone's* connection to the literary tradition of Lucian and Ariosto, which would make Godwin's account a satire aimed at travel narratives as much as a utopian text. "Early Modern Space Travel and the English Man in the Moon," p. 963, 978. Cressy's reading shares some of the major themes of Thomas A. Copeland's. As we will see shortly, Copeland understands *The Man in the Moone* "not primarily as science fiction at all but a picaresque satire incorporating a utopian voyage." Thomas A. Copeland, "Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone*: A Picaresque Satire," *Extrapolation: A Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy*, vol. 16, no. 2, May 1975, pp. 156-163, pp. 157-158, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=1975104067&site=eds-live&scope=site>. Accessed 1 December 2020. William Poole links Godwin into the same utopian tradition as Henry Neville, Margaret Cavendish, and H. G. Wells. "Francis Godwin, Henry Neville, Margaret Cavendish, H. G. Wells: Some Utopian Debts," *ANQ*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2003, pp. 12-18, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08957690309598207>. Accessed 1 December 2020.

¹⁹³ See the introduction to this dissertation for the precise definition of how extraterrestrial space differs from terrestrial utopia.

¹⁹⁴ This idea is advanced in Tomas Monterry's "*The Man in the Moone*: Godwin's Narrative Experiment and the Scientific Revolution," *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*, vol. 50, April 2005, pp. 71-86, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=2006653555&site=eds-live&scope=site>, p. 76. Accessed 25 January 2020. The following ideas about Edenic Lunars are from p. 77.

¹⁹⁵ For Monterry, Earthlings cannot replicate Lunar society because the moon is unfallen and remains in an Edenic state. Taking a scientific approach rather than a theological one, Mary Baine Campbell argues that "[t]here are no utopias in Godwin's book, but the moon is in all ways better than any earthly place or culture, though this superiority seems to be a biological matter." "Impossible Voyages: Seventeenth Century Space Travel and the Impulse of Ethnology," *Literature and*

Perhaps it is reassuring to Godwin that his protagonist, a representative of Spain, cannot bring a utopian process home to Spain if he ever were to escape the Chinese custody in whose company he finds himself at the end of the narrative. The fiction already establishes the lunar sphere as rich in resources for future conquistadors to exploit including stones like Poleastis, Machrus, and Ebelus; the particularly delicious shrub to which the gansas led Gonsales upon landing on the moon; and, cloth of a color never before seen by human eyes. Adding a utopian process to those benefits would be less an anxiety that British colonization has lagged too far behind the rival Spanish Empire, but an expression of defeat, an admission that Britain never will surpass Gonsales' feats. By refusing to depict Lunar society as a true utopia, Godwin leaves the possibility of a British Empire that surpasses the Spanish one, no matter how unlikely it may seem in the early seventeenth century.

Expanding on the utopian reading of Godwin's lunar voyage, many critics have attached a label such as science fiction, or proto-science fiction to the text.¹⁹⁶

History, vol. 6, no. 2, Autumn 1997, pp. 1-17,

<https://doi.org/10.1177/030619700600202>, p. 6. Accessed 27 January 2021.

Finally, Bachrach writes that *The Man in the Moone* troubles the concept of utopia not because Lunar society lacks a replicable process, but, playing on the etymology of utopia, because the moon is hardly a no-place when it is present for all to see in the night, and often daytime sky. "*Luna Mendax: Some Reflections on Moon-Voyages in Early Seventeenth Century England*," p. 71.

¹⁹⁶ Some prominent examples include Antony Keen, who emphasizes not only Godwin's *The Man in the Moone*, but also Lucian's *Vera Hstoria* as early examples of lunar voyage narratives that would serve as models for H. G. Wells' seminal *The First Men in the Moon*, which helped to modernize the cosmic voyage and incorporate it into the genre of science fiction, "Mr. Lucian in Suburbia: Links Between the *True History* and *The First Men in the Moon*," *Classical Traditions in Science Fiction*, edited by Brett M. Rogers and Benjamin Eldon Stevens, Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 105-120. This is a similar argument to that of Poole when he attempts to connect Godwin to Wells through the concept of utopia. In an early attempt at making the link between Godwin and H. G. Wells, Robert Philmus traces the history of science fiction in part to Godwin's lunar narrative in *Into the Unknown: The Evolution of Science*

Their reasoning is understandable. H. G. Wells, with all his influence on the genre, certainly had Godwin in mind when writing *The First Men in the Moon* (1901) and the scientific aspects of Godwin's narrative are notable, especially those in defense of Copernicanism.¹⁹⁷ Although Gonsales did not perceive that “(according to the late opinion of *Copernicus*,) the Earth [sic] is carried about” (53), he did find evidence of many other scientific debates popular at the time. For instance, Gonsales confirms Galileo's telescopic observations that there is a world in the moon. Later in the narrative he observes that the Earth, as visible from the moon, undergoes phases just as the moon does when seen from Earth (88). Also, while Gonsales did not find absolute support of Copernicanism, neither did he find evidence to debunk the theory: “I will not go so farre as *Copernicus*, that maketh the Sunne the Center of the Earth, and unmoveable, neither will I define any thing one way or other” (60). As with Cavendish, the history of science is a useful lens through which to read *The Man in the Moone* and other Early Modern lunar voyage texts.

Fiction from Francis Godwin to H. G. Wells, University of California Press, 1970. Catherine Gimelli Martin likewise labels *The Man in the Moone* as among the earliest science fiction in “Sailing to the Moon: Francis Bacon, Francis Godwin and the First Science Fiction,” *Literature in the Age of Celestial Discovery: From Copernicus to Flamsteed*, edited by Judy A. Hayden, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, pp. 109-132. Even Poole has touched on the science fiction connection, “Kepler's *Somnium* and Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone*: Births of Science-Fiction 1593-1638,” *New Worlds Reflected: Travel and Utopia in the Early Modern Period*, edited by Chloë Houston, Ashgate, 2010, pp. 57-69.

¹⁹⁷ See Mark Brake and Neil Hook, “Science, Fiction and the Age of Discovery,” *Physics Education*, vol. 42, no. 3, May 2007, pp. 245-252, <https://doi.org/10.1088/0031-9120/42/3/002>. Accessed 4 March 2021. Godwin is linked to Copernicanism in two major ways. First, Copernicanism made the plurality of worlds possible by disrupting Aristotelian physics which suggested that the earth could be the only inhabitable world (247). Second, the moon is earthlike with mountains and seas as well as its own gravitational attraction (251).

More useful for reading Godwin through the lenses of imagined and extraterrestrial empire is the critical tendency to label *The Man in the Moone* a picaresque satire. Etymologically adapted from the Spanish *pícaro*, the picaresque features a rogue or adventurer of low birth and follows him on travels around the world and between social classes in an effort to survive. Thomas Copeland establishes such a reading of *The Man in the Moone* when he cites the opening of Godwin's novella as a bleak sketch of earthly affairs mainly as a contrast to the lunar paradise.¹⁹⁸ Copeland is right that the terrestrial scenes of *The Man in the Moone*, leading up to Gonsales' escape from an English fleet,¹⁹⁹ are bleak. Early in the narrative, the protagonist, Domingo Gonsales, leaves his studies at the University of Salamanca to attempt to make a name and riches fighting against an alliance composed of the Huguenots and the first William of Orange at Cambrai in what would become known as the Third War, part of the French Wars of Religion. Before Gonsales ever sets foot on the battlefield, however, he is ambushed and robbed. Without any money, Gonsales arrives at his secretarial post for the army but ends up in battle despite his small stature. Gonsales describes the skirmish as follows:

It was my good hap at that time to defeat a horseman of the enemy, by killing his horse with my pistoll, which falling upon his leg, so as he could not stirre, hee yeilded himself to my mercie; but I knowing mine own weaknesse of body, and seeing him a tall lustie fellow, thought it my surest way to dispatch him... (5)

¹⁹⁸ "Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone*: A Picaresque Satire," pp. 157-158. Many commentators have followed Copeland's classification including Bachrach and Baine Campbell.

¹⁹⁹ Godwin gives no further specifics upon the nature of the fleet, but given that the events described take place in 1599 (*The Man in the Moone* 32) it is likely that this fleet was part of the newly appointed Lord Admiral Charles Howard's navy.

Having murdered a prisoner of war, Gonsales is able to recoup his previous financial losses, claiming trophies worth 200 ducats.

Gonsales' actions, so easily overshadowed by the wonder of his lunar voyage in the second half of the text, are appropriately picaresque. Godwin would have expected little more from a Catholic or a Spaniard. In the *Annales of England*, a history of the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary I, Godwin is continuously critical of both Catholics and Spaniards. For example, he depicts Catholics as frauds who wrote of feigned miracles and other lies.²⁰⁰ If Catholic legends of earthly affairs are not to be trusted, then Gonsales' moon journey should be exceedingly dubious. This distrust of Catholics was compounded by the recent memory of Queen Mary's Marriage to Philip II of Spain, about which Godwin writes:

As soone as the Decree concerning these Nuptiall Compacts was divulged many out of a restles disposition misliking the present times, but especially traducing the intent of this Accord, as if by it the *Spaniard* were to become the Lord of all, who should have the free managing of all affaires, and abolishing our ancient Lawes and Customes, would impose an intolerable yoake, as on a conquered Nation.²⁰¹

We see here not only distaste for Spanish rule, but a fear of the power of their empire that helps inform any reading of Domingo Gonsales. Tomas Monterrey is one of the few scholars who have raised the direct question of why Godwin makes the hero of his lunar voyage a Spaniard. His argument is centered around the idea that because Spain held a vast colonial empire in the New World, "it was likely that a Spaniard [would] also [be] the first to reach and explore the moon," and draws attention to the parallels between Gonsales' life prior to the lunar voyage and

²⁰⁰ *Annales of England: Containing the Reignes of Henry the Eight, Edward the Sixt, Queene Mary*. Edited and translated by Morgan Godwin, A. Islip and W. Stansby, 1630, accessed via Google Books and The British Library, unpaginated.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 285-286.

Columbus' early career.²⁰² What should be added to Monterry's analysis is a stronger emphasis on the relationship between author and character. For instance, readers might ask if Godwin is affected by colonial envy and the sinking feeling that the British Empire will never rival the Spanish on this world or any other.

Although Godwin understands the Spanish as more likely to establish a lunar colony than the British, this anxiety is never paired with hopelessness. Godwin repeatedly gives readers opportunities to doubt the authenticity of Gonsales' journey, as a method of leaving open the hope that Spanish colonization is not really so far ahead of the British as the Spaniards would have them believe. It is important that the form of the picaresque satire establishes Gonsales as a rogue and a traitor to his kin. But the narrative of *The Man in the Moone* gives careful readers another reason to mistrust Gonsales' tale. At first glance, Gonsales' height is a plot device and a symbolic attempt to downplay the imperial stature of Spain in world affairs, even as they are built up through Gonsales' accomplishments. Upon closer inspection, however, Gonsales' own comments upon the correlation between height and intelligence further complicate the potential veracity of his narrative. Just after meeting Irdozuzur, the ancestor of the first "great monarch" (*The Man in the Moone* 76) of the moon, Gonzales comments on Irdozuzur's extraordinary height: "the taller people are of Stature, the more excellent they are for all indowments of mind, and the longer time do they live" (78). Pylonus, another Lunar aristocrat, is

²⁰² Monterry, "*The Man in the Moone*: Godwin's Narrative Experiment and the Scientific Revolution," p. 76, n. 10. This note is largely a recap of ideas from Monterry's essay in Spanish "*Temas Españoles y Elementos Realistas en 'The Man in the Moone'*," *Fifty Years of English Studies in Spain (1952-2002): A Commemorative Volume*, edited by Ignacio Palacios Martínez et al., Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, pp. 509-151.

described as being a “full 28 [feet] high” (74), and yet Irdonozur is taller still. As we marvel at the amazing statures of the Lunars we must also remember Gonsales’ previous comments about his own height, “I must acknowledge my stature to be so little, as no man there is living I think less” (6). This ends up suiting him well in allowing the gansas to carry him to the moon, for when Diego the blackamoor wants to ride in Gonsales’ gansas-powered engine, the latter replies “all my *Gansa’s* [sic] were not of sufficient strength to carry him, being a man, though of no great stature, yet twice my weight at least” (27).

Thus as a plot device, Gonsales’ stature is the only reason he can reach the moon by gansas-powered flight, but it also gives readers a reason to question Gonsales’ narrative. If Gonsales claims height is supposed to be equated with “indowments of mind” he has given the reader to question the endowments of his mind, a vital interpretive crux. Did Gonsales, the Spaniard, ever really go to the moon, even within the fiction of Godwin’s novel? Is Godwin’s narrator trustworthy, despite being a Spaniard and despite offering readers reason to question the authenticity of his narrative. Can Gonsales’ depiction of the lunar world be described with the same exclamation he offers to philosophers who had imagined a region of fire above the airy atmosphere: “O Vanities, fansies, Dreames!” (75)?

Even if Gonsales did travel to the moon he is not the obvious colonial figure, which may be why discussions of him in this context are relegated to hints and footnotes. While he is a willing colonizer, conquest and subjugation are never his original intent when he arrives at one of the two most potentially colonizable

spaces in the text—the island of St. Hellens and the lunar sphere.²⁰³ Indeed, he arrives at either potential colony of his own volition. Gonsales reaches St. Hellens and then the moon through a series of incidents in which he is more passive observer than conquistador. His entire journey begins as the result of his continued misbehavior after returning home from the religious wars in France. Gonsales skips several years in the narrative before he kills a kinsman in a duel. Figuring he must leave Spain until tempers cool and the consequences of his actions blow over, Gonsales endeavors to make his exile lucrative via a mercantile voyage on an unnamed carrack bound for the East Indies with a cargo of jewels including diamonds, emeralds, and pearls.

That Gonsales is depicted as a passive observer whose misbehavior leads him into adventures rather than a more traditional conquistador who sets out with the goal of empire building hints at Godwin's prejudice against the Spanish. Like Gonsales' experience with colonialism, Spain's rise to imperial power might be viewed as a series of accidents beginning with the Fall of Granada and Columbus' westward journey and culminating in the conquest of the Aztec and Inca Empires. Further, Spanish conquest in the New World was based not on superior military strategy, but a combination of European disease ravaging native communities with

²⁰³ There is, of course, also China, where Gonsales lands his gansas-driven engine on his return trip to Earth. Early Modern China was a dream of spiritual empire for the Catholic Church, a dream the Jesuits sought to actualize. The Society of Jesus attempted to reach China as early as 1552, but had little actual success with missionary Christianity until well into the nineteenth century. While Gonsales' landing in China has some colonial overtones, his actions in the East are not as explicitly colonial as those at St. Hellens, nor an attempt to establish political relations as they are with Irdonozur on the moon. The Chinese excursion does less to describe the anxieties associated with extraterrestrial empire than the previous two locales.

no natural resistance and the technological advantage of gunpowder. Both Gonsales and his nation have arrived at a new world in a position to expand the Spanish Empire not through strategy or providence. Each is merely caught up in a series of events.

In contrast to Spanish conquest in the New World, Gonsales' visit to the East Indies proves an interesting narrative choice when the New World/ new world was part of the sixteenth-century zeitgeist. We might expect Godwin to emphasize the New World/ new world distinction that authors such as Cyrano de Bergerac stress when his protagonist's early attempts at lunar flight bring him to New France. After creating a rough precursor to balloon travel, utilizing the process of the evaporation and bottles of captured dew to raise the narrator above the earth, Cyrano de Bergerac's eponymous narrator discovers his invention to be too effective, and must smash several of the bottles lest he miss his target destination of the moon and sail off deeper into the solar system. When Cyrano de Bergerac comes down he finds that the Earth has rotated on its axis beneath him, and he discovers himself in what is today Canada, though the exact location is never specified. While the New World or the West Indies represents a more obvious colonial choice for Godwin's Spaniard, the East Indies trade voyage has its own colonial implications, some of them even less subtle than Cyrano de Bergerac's voyage to New France.

The first of these colonial hints is the island upon which his fellow sailors cast Gonsales ashore when he becomes too sick to continue the voyage. Godwin calls this island St. Hellens, today known as St. Hellena, an island located about a

thousand miles off the coast of Angola in the southern Atlantic.²⁰⁴ Gonsales' description of the island as uninhabited, and with an abundance of resources including trees and fresh water, matches the historical accounts of the island's discovery by the Portuguese under the command of Garcia de Noronha.²⁰⁵ In his comments on St. Hellens, Gonsales shows his colonial mindset by writing:

I cannot but wonder that our King in his wisdom hath not thought fit to plant a Colony, and to fortifie in it, being a place so necessary for refreshing of all travaillers out of the *Indies*, so as it is hardly possible to make a Voyage thence, without touching there. (14)

Gonsales' desire to colonize St. Hellens begins to teach the reader to understand the upcoming narrative ventures as colonially tinted. This island is where he finds the local *gansas* that will eventually allow him to construct the flying contraption. But for Godwin the passage also serves a different function. The island is reminiscent of Eden; while not a utopia, it is a colonial paradise. Inhye Ha advances this reading, as well as the colonial reading that will follow, by calling St. Hellens a "metonym for the colonial paradise."²⁰⁶ Just as the island of St. Hellens trains readers to think of "the

²⁰⁴ After equating St. Hellens with St. Helena based on Godwin's description of the island and considering sixteenth-century trade routes to the East Indies, I discovered William Poole also makes this connection in his edition of *The Man in the Moon*, in which the name St. Hellens never appears. See William Poole's, editor, *The Man in the Moon*, by Francis Godwin, Firestone Books, 2017. The first example of this 'translation' occurs on p. 19.

²⁰⁵ Though Gonsales' account of St. Hellens matches well with Garcia de Noronha's narration, which was recorded by Gaspar Correia in *Lendas da Índia* there is contentious debate whether the island was discovered by de Noronha, or the Portuguese explorer João da Nova. The island was then discovered by English sailors in the late sixteenth century. The subsequent contentious claims for the island between the Portuguese, the English, and the Dutch would have made the island a regular talking point in late sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century colonial discourse.

²⁰⁶ "Up in the Air with Gansas: Plants, Animals, and Machines in Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone*," *British and American Fiction*, vol. 23, no. 3, Winter 2016, pp. 141-168, <https://0->

only paradise, I thinke, that the earth yeildeth” (*The Man in the Moone* 14), and thus prompts them to consider the moon in utopian terms, the island also nudges the reader to consider the lunar sphere as a colonial space. Baine Campbell reminds readers that the island of St. Helena was “a key watering hole for the ships of expanding empire.”²⁰⁷

While the colonial imagery of St. Hellens is relatively straightforward, there is subtler colonial imagery connected to the lunar sphere that to my knowledge critics have not yet emphasized. Like the Spanish conquistadors, whose hunger for gold and resources are emphasized in Guyon’s encounter with Mammon, Gonsales himself shows a barely suppressed esurient need for exotic goods. Although Gonsales experiences no hunger on his twelve-day journey to the moon—the cause of which he does not know for certain, but offers the possibility that it is due to the purity of the upper air—he is struck by the needs of his body as soon as the gansas set down on the moon. As soon as he lands, Gonsales takes stock of the local resources; he comments on trees “at least three times so high as ours, and five times as thick” (67) and beasts and birds with matching proportions. The gigantic sizes of the creatures, although a likely adaptation from Kepler’s *Somnium* in which “[w]hatever is born on the land or moves about on the land attains a monstrous size,”²⁰⁸ is also an apt symbol for the resource lust of a prospective colonist. While, with the exception of several bird species, Gonsales hesitates to elaborate on the moon’s native fauna, because he “found not any thing there, any *Species* either of

search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login/asp?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=2018140263&site=eds-live&scope=site, p. 145. Accessed 1 December 2020.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 196.

²⁰⁸ *Kepler’s Somnium*, edited and translated by Edward Rosen, University of Wisconsin Press, 1967, p. 27.

Beast or Bird that resembled ours any thing at all, except Swallowes Nightingales, Cuckooes,” etc. (67), he spends the most time on the resource potential of one inconspicuous leaf.

Without any supplies of his own, and no knowledge of the local flora, Gonsales takes note as his gansas flock around a lunar shrub and start making a meal of its leaves. Gonsales, desperately in need of sustenance, follows the lead of his fowls: “I put a leafe of it between my teeth: I cannot expresse the pleasure I found in the tast thereof; such it was I am sure as if I had not with great discretion moderated my appetite, I had surely surfetted upon the same” (70). Gonsales’ obsession with this shrub reads like a parody of the British desire to harvest resources like tobacco from the Americas. In one famous description, Henry Buttes wrote of the English consumption of tobacco that

[t]hus proceeded we by degrees, from simplicity and necessity, to variety and plenty, ending in luxury and superfluity. So that at last our bodies by surfeeding, being overflowne and drowned (as it were) in a surpleurisy or deluge of a superfluous raw humor.... Hence it is that we perfume and air our bodies with *Tobacco* smoke (by drying) preserving them from putrefaction.²⁰⁹

Much like Buttes, Gonsales focuses on the image of a new world resource as excess. New World resources like tobacco require will and moderation to avoid surfeiting with them. This addiction-like desire to consume, however, is what could make the lunar shrub a valuable resource. The discovery of the lunar shrub is a milestone at which Gonsales’ lunar voyage moves beyond the status of mere intellectual game, like *De Revolutionibus* or *Somnium*, and begins to represent a consequential speculation

²⁰⁹ *Dyets Dry Dinner Consisting of Eight Seuerall Courses*, London, 1632, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com/libus.csd.mu.edu/login.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cab06952a&AN=mul.b2308468&site=eds-live&scope=site>, unpaginated. This quote appears on the fifth and sixth pages of the prefatory “To My Worshipful and Especiall Friends.”

concerning the resources that could fall under Spanish control if there is no immediate change in the space-grabbing race.

Godwin shows the reader specific examples of tension between the English and Spanish in the narrative. For instance, early in the narrative, just after Gonsales has described his family's status and history, he makes an obscure reference to the West Indies in 1596:

This matter [Gonsales' murder of his kinsman, Pedro Delgrades] fell out in the Year 1596. even at that time that a certaine great Count of ours came home from the West-Indies, in triumphant manner, boasting and sending out his declarations in print, of a great victory he had obtained against the *English* near the *Isle of Pines*. (9-10)

The count is likely a reference to Bernardino González de Avellaneda y Delgadillo, First Count of Castrillo.²¹⁰ Even an indirect mention of Avellaneda brings to mind major transatlantic battles in the Anglo-Spanish War. Gonsales also mentions the Battle of the Isle of Pines, an island off the southwestern bank of Cuba, this time directly. In the seventeenth century the island was more commonly known as la Isla de Pinos; today it bears the name Isla de la Juventud. This battle saw Avellaneda lead a fleet of thirteen galleons against a British force of fourteen warships commanded by Thomas Baskerville. British forces suffered the worst of the scrimmage, losing one galleon and one patache to Spanish capture, with 325 men captured or killed, meanwhile sinking only one Spanish galleon and killing or wounding 80 men.²¹¹ Nor were the English ships fortunate in avoiding confrontations with Spaniards and storms after the battle. Out of the 28 ships Drake

²¹⁰ Avellaneda is best known in English history as the man charged with a mission to pursue Francis Drake and prevent him from launching a successful invasion of Puerto Rico. The invasion of the Spanish Caribbean is just one more way *The Man in the Moone* repeatedly hints at the themes of empire and colony.

²¹¹ David Marley, *Wars of the Americas: A Chronology of Armed Conflict in the New World, 1492 to the Present*, ABC-CLIO, 1998, p. 89.

led into the Spanish West Indies, and the 14 his lieutenant, Thomas Baskerville, led in the Battle of Pinos, only eight ever returned to England. The reference to Avellaneda in the text is yet another example of how the colonial David of Britain faces an imperial Goliath in Spain. Even without colonial rivals, however, the process of getting to a new world and establishing a colony was difficult in itself.

I have already touched briefly on some of the connections present in Elizabethan and Jacobean thought regarding the New World of the Americas and the possibility of a new world in the moon. The moon may appear an impossible colonial location to the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century British, but the Antipodes had appeared an equally impossible, or at least undesirable, location only a few hundred years before. Accusations cast against authors like Kepler and Godwin—especially those such as John Donne’s seemingly anti-Copernican *Ignatius, His Conclave*—that they use the lunar voyage motif as an intellectual game, a trifle, now have become problematized by the not so distant memory of a time when the Antipodes were considered in the same light. Just as the possibility of a world in the moon was considered by Cicero, Lucian, and Plutarch, but then quieted as medieval traditions changed the function of the lunar sphere to a Paradise for Fools, the Antipodes were long considered real science before becoming an intellectual game of their own. Ptolemy famously speculated on the possibility of the Antipodes in the *Almagest*, even if his version of the Antipodes is located north/south rather than east/west:

People say they believe there are human habitations under the equator; for, according to them, it is very temperate....But we could not say with any conviction what sort of habitations [the Antipodes] are; for up until now they have remained inaccessible to people from the part of the earth that is

inhabited by us, and what is said about them should be considered conjecture rather than true information.²¹²

Ptolemy's doubt is not that the Antipodes exist, but rather that any information reported concerning them is accurate. Similarly, authors in the seventeenth century were not as skeptical of the possibility of a world in the moon as depictions of what that world might be like or who its inhabitants might be.

Godwin aims to build upon Ptolemy's credibility by emphasizing the comparison between the Antipodes and the lunar world in the introduction to *The Man in the Moone*.²¹³ While cautioning that it is not the author's intention "to discourse thee [the reader] into a belief of each particular circumstance" the primary goal of the text is to present an "essay of Fancy, where Invention is shewed with Judgment" (i). The use of the Antipodes is a colonial analogy that helps readers suspend disbelief by showing that what is familiar in the present would have been

²¹²Edited by Mortimer J. Adler, Clifton Gadiman, & Philip W. Goetz, translated by R. Catesby Taliaferro, vol.15, 1952, Chicago, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1990, pp. 1-478, p. 40.

²¹³ Critics debate whether the introduction was written by Godwin, added by his son Morgan, or supplemented by someone else altogether. Much of the confusion around the authorship of *The Man in the Moone* that stemmed from the first edition being attributed only to Domingo Gonsales and not to Francis Godwin as part of the conceit that the narrative documents an actual journey carries over to the authorship of the epistolary "To the Reader." This epistle is signed only by the initials E. M. But is this E. M. a historical person or a mere fiction like Gonsales? The stationers' Register problematically identifies E. M. as Edward Mahon, the translator of the text from the original Spanish. See Poole, "Kepler's *Somnium* and Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone*." The confusion over the authenticity of E. M. is another attempt by Godwin to incorporate the narrative conceit of Gonsales' journey into the process of publication. Most critics accept that Edward Mahon is a fictional persona and Poole speculates that he might be the creation of one of Godwin's sons, likely either Thomas or Morgan Godwin. William Poole, Introduction, *The Man in the Moone*, by Francis Godwin, edited by William Poole, Broadview, 2009, pp. 13-62, p. 58. The fictional translator uses the Antipodes as an analogy to real world exploration to help justify the following narrative. Due to the current lack of evidence on the authorship of the introductory materials, I will treat them as if Godwin either wrote or approved these pages.

once equally difficult for the average British reader to imagine as a world in the moon is in the seventeenth century. Indeed, Godwin writes, “That there should be Antipodes was once thought as great a Paradox as now that the Moon should be habitable” (iii). The analogy of the moon to the Antipodes is strengthened by the invocation of Columbus. Just as the Antipodes represented the discovery of a New World, so too would Gonsales, a lunar Columbus, have the opportunity to make “a new discovery of a new world, which perchance may finde little better entertainment in thy opinion, than that of Columbus at first, in the esteeme of all men” (ii).

Between the similarities Gonsales and Columbus exhibit, and E. M.’s direct mention of Columbus, I find it surprising that more critics have not commented on the similarities, especially since, as A. G. H. Bachrach reminds us, Columbus was still immensely popular in Godwin’s day.²¹⁴

The most striking of these similarities between Gonsales and Columbus is their connection to Spain. In Ferdinand and Isabella, Columbus found willing sponsors to support his search for the Northwest Passage. This would strongly link Columbus with the Spanish crown in the minds of British readers. Yet, unlike Gonsales, Columbus was not Spanish by birth; he was Genoese, which of course still marked him as a Catholic. Though Columbus himself was Catholic, he was willing to find a sponsor for his westward voyage wherever possible. Before arriving at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, Columbus had already presented his plans to sail west to officials in England, who would not sponsor the expedition. Ferdinand and Isabella would finance his operation where the English would not, because they

²¹⁴ “*Luna Mendax*,” p. 75.

believed it would aid in the spread of Catholicism through the East Indies, at which Columbus expected to arrive.

Thus, for the honor of Spain, both Columbus and Gonsales set sail for a new world. An irony shared by the two innovators is that the search for a new world was in neither man's interests nor intentions. Gonsales was simply trying to make his way back to Spain after sickness held him for a long layover on the island of St. Hellens. When the ship that would return Gonsales to Spain is attacked by English pirates, and all attempts to flee or run the ship ashore fail, Gonsales attempts to save himself using his newly-invented *gansas*-engine. "I then betooke me to my *Gansa's*, put them upon my Engine, and my self upon it, trusting (as indeed it happily fell out) that when the Shippe should split, my Birds, although they wanted their Signall, of themselves...would make towards the Land..." (36-37). Thus far the escape by *gansas* is moderately successful. Gonsales reaches a small island and is able to keep the natives at bay only until he takes off once again. Upon the next flight, to Gonsales' surprise and amazement, his birds travel "bolt upright, and never did nine towring upward, and still upward, as I might guesse, of one whole hower" (46). Long before the twelve-day flight is over, Gonsales discovers what has happened. The *gansas* are following their pattern of seasonal migration. However, lacking the knowledge that birds fly south as modern zoology has describes, the *gansas* make their home in the lunar sphere!²¹⁵ Perhaps Columbus' discovery of an antipodal New World seems a mundane comparison, but for fifteenth century Europeans the

²¹⁵ As Nicolson reminds us while "[t]he sophisticated modern reader smiles...in this period ornithology was still in its infancy. Birds hibernate somewhere. Why not in the moon?" *Voyages to the Moon*, p. 76. Despite the tone, Nicolson's point that avian travel to the lunar sphere would have struck seventeenth-century readers as plausible is well taken.

dawning realization that Columbus had not visited the Indies, but the West Indies was shocking. Columbus provides a clear model for Godwin of the explorer who has accidentally discovered a new world.

Yet Gonsales is certainly not a direct representation of Columbus. First, Godwin spent most of his career on the Welsh border far from maritime concerns. Second, there is no surviving evidence Godwin ever read Columbus' *Diario* or studied it in detail. Finally, the adventures of Gonsales and Columbus have several notable differences. Columbus faced greater uncertainty in his voyage. Where Gonsales quickly discovers his gansas are headed for the moon, Columbus must motivate his crew through a technique of dual deceit, consistently promising the men that their ships are near land and regularly undercounting the daily total of leagues sailed. When Columbus finally does reach land he meets with natives that he insists could easily be made subjects of the Spanish crown. "They should be good servants and intelligent," Columbus writes on Thursday, the 11th of October, 1492, "for I observed that they quickly took in what was said to them, and I believe that they would easily be made Christians, as it appeared to me that they had no religion."²¹⁶ Columbus is, of course, seeing either what he wishes to, or what he believes will please his patrons, Ferdinand and Isabella. The Arawak, Ciboney, Taino, and Carib peoples native to the islands where Columbus landed likely practiced a variation of the local religions that emphasize traditions that would hardly have been recognizable to a Catholic Spaniard, including matrilineal lines of inheritance and

²¹⁶ "Journal of the First Voyage of Columbus," *The Journal of Christopher Columbus (during His First Voyage, 1492-93): And Documents Relating to the Voyages of John Cabot and Gaspar Corte Real*, e-book, edited and translated by Clements R. Markham, Ashgate, 2010, pp. 15-193, p. 38.

Shamans.²¹⁷ By contrast Gonsales finds the lunar inhabitants already Christian. Gonsales discovers this when he cries out the Lord's name in vain: "No sooner was the word *Jesus* out of my mouth, but young and old, fell all downe upon their knees, (at which I not a little was rejoiced) holding up both hands on high, and repeating certain words which I understood not" (73). This one moment actually does have a striking parallel in Columbus' *Diario* on Thursday, November the First, 1492. Columbus insists he has never seen the natives of the West Indies say any prayers, but they will imitate them: "they repeat the *Salve* and the *Ave Maria* with their hands raised to heaven, and they make the sign of the cross".²¹⁸ Whereas the natives Columbus encounters only imitate, the Lunars Gonsales encounters are actually Christians. These are all minor details, but clearly show that Gonsales and Columbus do not have a one-to-one correspondence.

The Columbus comparison is important to help draw out a second colonial association in *The Man in the Moone*: Godwin's lunar sphere is a representation of America in more ways than being a 'new world.' Where critics like Andrew Hadfield have been keen to equate Faerieland with Ireland, the same is not true for Godwin criticism. It would seem that because the moon is referential—because we can look up at the sky and observe it as a place—critics have been willing to treat the moon as a symbol of alterity,²¹⁹ but not as a signifier pointing to an earthly thirdspace. I

²¹⁷ Colin Graham Clarke et al., "The Pre-Columbian Period," *West Indies, Island Group, Atlantic Ocean*, *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, <https://www.britannica.com/place/West-Indies-island-group-Atlantic-Ocean>. Accessed 15 January 2020.

²¹⁸ "Journal of the First Voyage," p. 65.

²¹⁹ Ha makes this claim explicitly in "Up in the Air with Gansas," p. 161. Outside of Godwin scholarship, the moon draws focus as a symbol of alterity more often. Considering Behn's *Emperor of the Moon*, Ha focuses on the moon as an alternative

propose here that Godwin's moon represents, at least partially, the Spanish Americas.

Where Cavendish established characters that are fundamentally stand-ins for her own beliefs, reading Godwin requires more nuance. The primary difficulty is that Gonsales is not Godwin, but rather Godwin's attempt to make sense of the Spanish other. This means that *The Man in the Moone* must always be read at two levels. A reader must always consider the strategies that Godwin is using to comment on Gonsales' rhetoric, drawing conclusions about the character's rhetorical goals. Then the reader must step back and consider how Godwin attempts to frame the arguments his character is making. It is not always easy to parse the distinctions between how Gonsales frames Spanish colonialism and the way in which Godwin wants his readers to understand Gonsales' biases. For example, does Gonsales' belief that Spain is destined to become the supreme earthly empire necessarily mean that Godwin shares this belief? From the evidence of Godwin's *Annales* and the *Catalogue of English Bishops* the answer is obviously 'no.' It is Britain that is destined to become the supreme, world-spanning empire—to establish colonies in the Americas and throughout the world. In the course of Britain's colonial expansion the colonized will gain the tremendous, though unspecified, benefits of belonging to the British Empire. Godwin responds to Psalm 115, which the English version of *Annales* presents as "The heavens, euen the heavens are the Lords; but he hath giuen the earth to the sonnes of men," that it is foolish to believe that England "was giuen

space that allows spectators to reimagine the drama's more mundane settings and evaluate them with a critical eye. Inhye Ha, "Cosmic Blindness, Comic Blindness: The Lunar Imagination and Women's Place in Aphra Behn's *Emperor of the Moon*," *English Language and Literature*, vol. 62, no. 3, 2016, pp. 423-440, <https://doi.org/10.15794/jell.2016.62.3.006>, p. 434. Accessed 30 November 2020.

to Englishmen only, and that therefore it was not to be endured, that Aliens should enjoy any part thereof.”²²⁰ Even those born in the foreign countries England colonizes have an important place in the British Empire.

Is Morgan Godwin’s choice to translate his father’s Latin with the word ‘alien’ a connection to the extraterrestrials Gonsales finds on the moon? Although the word did not pick up its extraterrestrial connotations until the beginning of the twentieth century, the Lunars are aliens in the much older meaning of the word: they belong to a place not of one’s own, from elsewhere, or foreign.²²¹ Godwin seems to be encouraging this reading through *The Man in the Moone’s* invocation of the changeling myth. The changeling myth itself is old enough to defy attempts to determine a progenitor source, and is further complicated by existing in many regional variations. Most versions, however, follow the basic pattern Godwin applies in his lunar version of the myth: human children are stolen by faeries and a faerie child left in their place. The reason for the swap tends to vary by local tradition, but is often attributed to the inexplicable needs or desires of the fay. In Godwin’s version of the myth, however, fairies are replaced Lunars. Godwin’s phrasing asserts that the Lunars are not so interested in stealing a human child as they are in humanely ridding their society of a member of their species that will have a less than perfect disposition:

And because it is an inviolable decree amongst them, never to put any one to death, perceiving by the stature [again, size is linked to virtue], and some other note they have, who are likely to bee of a wicked or imperfect disposition, they send them away (I know not by what meanes) into the

²²⁰ p. 34, italics omitted.

²²¹ “alien, adj. and n.,” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2021, www.oed.com/view/Entry/4988. Accessed 26 April 2021.

Earth, and change them for other children before they shall have either ability or opportunity to do amiss among them. . . .

And their ordinary vent for them is a certain high hill in the North of *America*, whose people I can easily believe to be wholly descended of them. . . . (104-105).

Because the human children brought to the moon are never mentioned again, and because it is unclear whether they can reach the grandiose size of the Lunar upper classes, their own role in lunar society might be minimal. Gonsales himself is given respect despite his minuscule stature, but this may be only because he is an emissary from Earth. That the Lunars use an unnamed hill in North America does not suggest, as it may first appear, that the Lunars deem the indigenous cultures of North America superior to those in other parts of the world. If anything, Gonsales is attempting to establish a reading of North American indigenes as an inferior people. The popularity of this unspecified hill as a hub for changelings may suggest that the natives were once an exceptionally moral and upstanding people, but what Gonsales wants to emphasize is their current state as a society descended from Lunar outcasts. In other words, their society is built in large part of children the Lunar society rejected. While Gonsales does not claim the natives are now entirely descended from outcast Lunars he comes as close as he can, saying he “can easily believe” (105) that is the case. Labeling a foreign people as the rejects of a civilized society, however, does not mean for Godwin that these Native Americans are morally irredeemable, only that they would benefit from the moral authority British colonists could offer them—a moral authority Godwin believed that Spanish colonizers did not possess.

In a rare moment of bibliographic clarity, Gonsales cites sources that will verify the narrative of Lunar changelings, of which the English source adds

credibility to the changeling narrative that the potentially non-existent Spanish sources would not. These sources include William of Newburgh's *De Rebus Anglicis*, Inigo Mondejar's *Nueva Granata*, and Joseph Desia de Carana's *Mexico*. H. W. Lawton considered the implications of the passage in *De Rebus Anglicis* in his article "Bishop Godwin's Man in the Moon," so I will only briefly recount it here.²²² As for Mondejar and Desia de Carana, Lawton found no evidence of their existence at either Christ's Church or the Bodleian, where Godwin might have consulted them during his days as a student, nor the British Museum, nor the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid.²²³ I have done no better at locating these authors than Lawton, nor to my knowledge has any other scholar. The passage in Newburgh, however, is recognizable. It refers to a strange occurrence in the village of Wlfpittes, modern Woolpit. One day a young boy and girl with green skin and clothes of an unidentifiable material were discovered near the village. Over time their complexions faded to match the Woolpit natives' skin tones. Once the children learned English, both were questioned as to their native country. While Newburgh never suggests the children came from the moon, the description they give of their homeland makes little terrestrial sense. Though it was a Christian country, they insisted the sun does not rise there and that in the sky a "*terra quaedam lucida*," which Lawton translates as 'shining world' could be seen "surrounded on all sides by a great river." Some of the similarities between Newburgh's and Godwin's descriptions are

²²² "Bishop Godwin's Man in the Moone," *The Review of English Studies*, vol. 7, no. 25, January 1931, pp. 23-55, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/508383>. Accessed 28 February 2021.

²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 39, n. 3.

emphasized in the following section of *The Man in the Moone*. “There is a light of two sorts,” Godwin writes:

One of the *Sun* (which I might not endure to behold,) and another of the Earth...I then found the light there (though the Sunne were absent) equall unto that with us, in the day time, when the *Sun* is covered with clouds....

But much stranger is that which was reported unto me there, how that in the other Hemisphere of the *Moone*...they see not the sunne, and the Earth never appeareth unto them.... (88-89)

That the description matches the one given by Newburgh’s mystery children becomes more apparent when we consider that Godwin has his lunar details wrong. While it is true that the Earth never appears in the sky on the far side of the moon, the so-called dark side experiences a day and night cycle exactly similar to the hemisphere that is tidally locked with Earth. Lawton gets creative in suggesting that Godwin may have meant that the sun does rise, but the children cannot bear its heat and had to sleep during the extreme heat and brightness of the 354-hour day.

However he may have interpreted the Newburgh passage, it is important to remember that Godwin was not a scientist. *The Man in the Moone* is not Kepler’s *Somnium* when it comes to astronomical accuracy. In fact, Godwin is not even primarily known as a literary figure. Though I consider Godwin a literary figure for the methodological purposes of this study, Godwin would have considered himself, first and foremost, a historian and intellectual disciple of William Camden. In adhering to Newburgh’s record, Godwin is probably not only considering himself as participating in a literary tradition, but also as preserving and representing the historical record as it could relate to extraterrestrial beings. Keeping Godwin’s interest in history in mind while reading *The Man in the Moone* is a rewarding practice. With a colonial interpretation of the text, Godwin’s historical paradigm allows

readers to consider the potential of Spanish colonization of the moon as a threat to both the lunar inhabitants and the would-be colonial empire that is Britain. If, as I have been arguing, Godwin's moon is supposed to represent a colonial space akin to a second America, Spanish colonization of the lunar sphere represents a threat to Britain because the shift to colonize referential secondspaces like the moon suggests that the project of geopolitical colonization is complete and that the British are effectively locked out of earthly colonization. The one hope that Godwin supplies for British readers is that Gonsales is lying or exaggerating and that the Spanish process of colonizing the moon is much farther from completion than Gonsales suggests in the narrative. While Gonsales' interactions with the Lunars are diplomatic, we can remember that Columbus' first contact with the natives of the Caribbean were similarly unobtrusive, but later Spanish colonizers brought more rifles and used their technological advantage to practice forced labor and mandate conversion to Catholicism. Even though the Lunars are protected by a technology that is superior to that of the Spaniards—they regularly send children to Earth and possess stones that can turn the user invisible or annul the effects of gravity—the history of Spanish colonialism might not suggest a long-term peaceful relationship with Lunar society.

Thus far, I have not spent much time exploring how Godwin envisions Spanish colonialism as a historian, which directly affects his literary productions. In *Annales of England* Godwin writes about the nobility of undertaking the task to

consecrate part of his learned labours to the Eternitie of Britaine, not in reforming the obsolete Vergilian History, but in composing a new one; our Antiquaries may iustly be taxed of Slouth...who had rather suffer the famous Acts of the Ancestors to die eternally in silence, and so (as much as in them lieth) defraud their Country of its true and deserved Glory, then bestow any the least pains in commenting; that so the examples of most eminent Vertues

(whereof the harvest here hath ever been most plentiful) might not want the Record of their due Monuments.²²⁴

Godwin's language in the *Annales* is deeply concerned with Britain's position as a world empire not only in the present, but throughout its entire history. In this respect, Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historica* was an inadequate, "obsolete" project, and that English history must be written by the English. Only with a proper nationalist history can Britain become the united empire Godwin believes it once was and is destined to be again:

I could wish the like Vnion [of Wales and England in 1534] with *Scotland* That as wee all liue in one Island, professing one Faith, and speaking for the most part one Language, vnder the government of one and the same Prince; so we may become one Nation, all equally acknowledging our selues *Britains*, and so recouer our true Countrey *Britane*, lost as it were so many hundreds of years, by our divisions of it into *England*, *Scotland*, and *Wales*.

Godwin apparently sees no contradiction between the justification of his project as a nationalistic glorification of English history and his later claim that he will not be over-pious in his praise of Britain, but tells the truth as he understands it to be objective.²²⁵ In fact, one of the main issues he takes with non-British histories, specifically those of Catholics, is that Papists write of "fained miracles, impostures, and Legends patched up of lyes...that even in those things which are true they scarce gain belief." This passage has a direct bearing on any reading of *The Man in the Moone*, but it is not a citation I have encountered in the extant criticism. As Gonsales is a Spaniard, and Godwin's readers would thus automatically associate him with Catholicism, the character might represent a Spanish attempt to falsify the historical record with the feigned miracle of a moon landing. Perhaps the kingdom in the

²²⁴ Unpaginated. This quote appears on the second page of "The Authors [sic] Preface to the Reader."

²²⁵ Ibid., unpaginated.

moon is little more than another El Dorado, fostered by Papists, as might be suggested by the numerous hints that Gonsales is an unreliable or dishonest narrator. Such a suggestion is necessary if the British are to have any chance at establishing a geopolitical empire because if Spain has not yet reached the moon then the colonization of the Earth remains an unfinished project.

But is Godwin the Historian being any fairer in his depiction of the goals of the Spanish Empire than Godwin the author of a lunar voyage narrative? In *Epic and Empire*, David Quint offers readers a picture of Spanish imperialism that has little in common with how authors like Spenser and Godwin have aimed to depict it: “[u]nlike the other European nations engaged in imperial and colonial expansion in the New World, the Spaniards seriously worried about the legality and morality of their project.”²²⁶ Is it possible that Godwin is willing to overlook the moral aspects of colonialism that Spanish bureaucrats and churchmen agonized over while explorers and conquistadors brought smallpox and the sword across the Atlantic? Can the strength of the colonial anxiety that pushes the British to match Spanish imperial achievements lead British explorers to repeat some of their worst shortcomings? These are some of the questions that I will continue to address with Behn’s *Emperor of the Moon* in the following chapter. Godwin uses the potential for Spanish colonization of the lunar sphere to show readers that imagined empire as it is presented in Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* and, albeit well after Godwin’s own death, in Cavendish’s *The Blazing World* (i.e. a substitution for geopolitical empire that simultaneously helps to promote the creation of a geopolitical empire in the future) is not successfully attaining the second objective of creating the future empire. Even

²²⁶ *Epic and Empire*, p. 169.

as the British Empire expands to incorporate its first trans-Atlantic territories in the early seventeenth century, and Spanish colonialism slows under the reign of Philip III, the Spaniards still had an empire spanning over 7.5 million square miles. While *The Man in the Moone* may be an argument that imagined empire is not leading to the creation of geopolitical empire at a rate capable of keeping pace with rival empires like the Spaniards', Godwin offers little advice on how British readers should catch up in the space-grabbing race. The colonial argument of *The Man in the Moone* is to push British colonial expansion immediately because of the very real possibility that Spanish presence on the moon may already suggest that it is too late for geopolitical empire, and that British colonialism might no longer be feasible. If the British Empire is to hold a geopolitical stake, leaders must expand it now or be forever locked out of worldly colonization.

Where Godwin's colonial anxieties manifest in an argument for colonial expansion, such a position is well-tempered by the end of the seventeenth century. Aphra Behn's *The Emperor of the Moon* is another text that uses the extraterrestrial space of the moon to express anxieties about the state of Britain's geopolitical empire. Rather than following Godwin in demarcating the moon as a symbol of colonial and imperial progress, however, Behn questions the ability of imagined lunar empire to differentiate British colonization from the cruelty of the Spanish. In *The Emperor of the Moon*, Behn depicts Dr. Baliardo's interest in the moon as an obsession that is expressed as an absurd fixation with the distant imaginary that will actually distract from earthly governance. Behn believes that, like Baliardo, British authors including Godwin have become fixated on the territorial aspect of empire so that they miss the ethical component—that the colonized are people who, Behn believes,

the British Empire aims to help by protecting them from Iberian tyranny, improving the quality of their lives through trade and technology, and offering the true, Protestant gospel. The possibility of overlooking colonial ethics could easily create a version of the British Empire in which the English lust for land comes to match the Spanish hunger for gold. If Godwin's depiction of lunar empire leads to this kind of imperial expansion, then extraterrestrial empire will have done nothing more than create another imperial Mammon.

Chapter 4: Lunatic Obsessions: Aphra Behn and the Questionable Value of Empire

Aphra Behn lived a radically different life from Francis Godwin. Where Godwin is primarily remembered as an Elizabethan bishop and historian, Behn's own literary fame is as a Restoration dramatist and one of the first women to make a living with her pen. It should therefore come as no surprise that the two authors express different anxieties about the practicability of transposing the imagined empire of extraterrestrial space into a colonial endeavor overseas. For Behn, Godwin's concern that the British may be excluded from geopolitical empire if they do not start establishing American colonies is not necessarily a faulty conclusion, but that such a project should be carefully considered, and not reflexively executed in response to Spanish colonial success. In the largely ignored farce, *The Emperor of the Moon*, Behn uses the character of Dr. Baliardo to show how fixation upon the idea of an empire in an extraterrestrial sphere, championed by authors like Godwin, can lead to the conquest-based model of colonialism that authors like Spenser were so careful to avoid in their depictions of imagined empire. Where Godwin seems to imply that the need to begin colonization is immediate, Behn looks to her experiences in Surinam to suggest that British colonists are not keeping their end of the exchange that is trifling. Instead of enticing colonies to join the British Empire with the benefits such a membership offers, Behn depicts in *Oroonoko* the horrors of colonialism and the slave trade. By invoking the tradition of lunar empire in *Emperor*, she suggests that the immediacy that authors like Godwin attach to geopolitical colonization has led to the poor conditions and cruel management of colonies such as Surinam.

Another way to understand the differences between Godwin's and Behn's visions for colonialism is in how close each author sees Britain to becoming an imperial power capable of constructing a world-spanning empire. Godwin, who lived through the turbulence associated with the early Jacobean colonies, depicts in *The Man in the Moone* an England all too far from being able to claim status as a world empire. Behn, however, wrote in the more successful colonial climate following the Restoration, and recognized there was more than enough opportunity for Britain to forge a colonial empire in the Americas. Because Behn was politically a Royalist, and Charles II supported the development of American colonies through expansionary policies and the mercantilist Navigation Acts, readers will notice tension between her political convictions and an ethical anxiety that British colonialism is hurting rather than helping indigenous peoples. Her concern with oppression, marked in both *Emperor* and *Oroonoko*, is not only racialized, but is also explored in terms of gender and social status. Though most critics who have written on *Oroonoko* view the text as a generically complex tragedy about maligned royalty rather than a commentary on colonial brutality, I see it as a text that can help make sense of Behn's views on imperialism.

I have also chosen to focus on Behn because some critics have called *Emperor* a sequel to *The Man in the Moone*. Nicolson makes use of this label²²⁷ because Elaria mentions Godwin's narrative by name when Scaramouch asks her how Baliardo became infected with his lunar obsession:

[He became infected w]ith reading foolish Books, *Lucian's Dialogue of the Lofty Traveler*, who flew up to the Moon and thence to Heaven; an heroic Business,

²²⁷ *Voyages to the Moon*, p. 89.

call'd, *The man in the Moone* [sic], if you'll believe a Spaniard, who was carried thither, upon an Engine drawn by wild Geese..."²²⁸

Nor is this the sole reference to Godwin's "heroic Business." In the final scene of Act II, Charmante describes the properties of a stone called Ebula to Baliardo. According to the young suitor, the stone has the ability to "transform all they touch," apparently into whatever they desire (44). Baliardo believes that Ebula has allowed the Emperor of the Moon and the Prince of Thunderland to transform themselves into sections of the wall hangings behind which Charmante and Cinthio had made their exit from their mistress' chambers the previous night. When Baliardo recognizes Ebula, a corruption of Ebelus, from Godwin's book—"That wonderous *Ebula*, which *Gonzales* [sic] had?" (45)—the suitor must backpedal to ascribe the proper powers to the stone:

The same—by Virtue of which, all Weight was taken from him [Gonsales], and then with Ease the lofty Traveller flew from *Parnassus' Hill*, and from *Hymethus Mount*, and high *Gerania*, and *Acocorinthus*, thence to *Taygetus*, so to *Olympus Top*, from whence he had but one Step to the Moon. (45)

If Baliardo recognizes that Charmante's account does not match Godwin's, either in the additional powers of transformation granted to Ebula or the course of Gonsales' travels, he gives no indication.²²⁹ Later, in Act III, scene i, Scaramouch aims to resolve any inconsistencies between his statements, those of Charmante and

²²⁸ Behn, Aphra. *The Emperor of the Moon: Now Acting with Applause at the Theatre-Royal in Smock-Alley*. James Rudd, 1757. Eighteenth Century Collections Online, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat06952a&AN=mul.b2862685&site=eds-live>, p. 8. Accessed 15 Feb. 2020. All future references to *The Emperor of the Moon* are to this edition. Italics for each quote are preserved from the original unless otherwise noted.

²²⁹ In fact, Gonsales doesn't use the Ebelus to travel other than to help slow his descent from the moon as he lands in China. He could have used the stone to travel to the moon because it was obtained from Irdozuzur on the moon. Clearly Charmante's explanation is lacking, which adds to the humor that the lunar expert, Dr. Baliardo, does not recognize as much.

Cinthio, and what Godwin actually wrote by ingeniously claiming that Gonsales must necessarily have omitted details from his narrative for the sake of brevity.

Scaramouch makes this claim as a by-product of a larger claim that he possessed a map of the Lunar Mundus though he has never traveled to the moon in order to map it:

Not in *Propria Persona*, Signior, but by Speculation, and made most considerable Remarks on that incomparable *Terra Firma*, of which I have the compleatest Map in Christendom—and which *Gonzales* himself omitted in his *Cosmographia* of the *Lunar Mundus*. (49)

The most telling reference to Godwin, however, comes in Act I, Scene ii, when Charmante asks Baliardo with mock incredulity, “You never saw the Emperor of the Moon, Sir, the mighty Iretonozar?” (15).²³⁰ Iretonozar is, of course, the name Godwin gives to the moon’s “great Monarch” in *The Man in the Moone* (101), which Elaria has specified as a text with which her father is familiar just the scene before. Baliardo must recognize a prominent figure from one of the few texts mentioned by name as his inspiration for observing the moon, especially when he will so readily recognize Ebelus in Act II. What Behn is offering the reader, then, is a critique of fiction as a method for the acquisition of knowledge, and by extension the acquisition of empire. Baliardo does recognize the name Iretonozar—or at least pretends to—for he responds to Charmante’s question with the blatant lie, “Never [have I seen Iretonozar], Sir; his Court I have, but ’twas confusedly too” (15). ‘Confusedly’ is a telling term because what is happening in this scene is not that Baliardo fails to recognize a reference to Godwin, but rather he fails to separate fiction from reality. In the terms of the larger colonial argument presented in this

²³⁰ As Behn is consistent in her spelling of ‘Irdonozur’ as ‘Iretonozar,’ I will follow with her spelling when referring to the great lunar monarch in *The Emperor of the Moon*.

dissertation, Baliardo has given way to literary frivolity instead of the positively conveyed trifling.

As a response to Godwin's lunar voyage, *Emperor* makes the implicit argument that imagined empire, especially when it is depicted in the lunar sphere, is only meaningful—and not ridiculous—if it benefits colonized peoples nearly as much as the colonizers. Empires on the moon—such as the threat of Spanish lunar empire in *The Man in the Moone*—are typically written by men with no lived experience on a British colonial plantation. Because I am arguing that Behn exhibits an anxiety that Britain may act rashly in an attempt to establish a geopolitical empire on the scale of the Spanish, Portuguese, and French empires, my reading of *Emperor* is closest to those critics who understand Behn's work as subversive.²³¹ I do not mean to suggest that Behn actively seeks to undermine readers' and spectators' faith in the restored Stuart Monarchy. Ample evidence suggests Behn was a devout royalist and may have served as a spy for the crown. Despite her consistent political conservatism, however, Behn shows a willingness to question royalist nationalism. Specifically, her continued interest in representing the oppressed begins to

²³¹ For instance, Catherine Ingressia focuses on how Behn's experience in Surinam informed the writing of *The Emperor of the Moon* in how it represents women as captives of the patriarchy. "Aphra Behn, Captivity and *Emperor of the Moon*," *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700*, vol. 41, no. 2, Fall 2017, pp. 53-67. Accessed 24 November 2020. Such readings of captivity and human commodification are normally reserved for *Oroonoko*, which makes the application to *Emperor* particularly insightful. Any understanding of Behn as subversive to the status quo should be tempered against her Royalist politics. This has been a struggle for authors like Holmesland, who seek to theorize how an author like Behn can negotiate the seeming contradictions between her Royalism and proto-feminism. As in Holmesland's assessment, I believe it is fallacious to assume Behn must be either liberal or conservative in all her beliefs. All thinkers have nuanced worldviews. It is perfectly possible for Behn to be dissatisfied with the status quo regarding gender or race, but still owe ultimate alliance to the restored monarchy.

demonstrate a pervading anxiety about the colonial course on which her nation is embarked.

While Aphra Behn is not the only playwright whose work this study closely examines—Cavendish has at least 19 surviving plays credited to her—she is the only author in this study whose drama is directly engaged in the conversation of extraterrestrial empire. Little is known of Behn's life before she became a playwright. She is known, however, to have spent perhaps a year in her mid-twenties in colonial Surinam. Behn's time in Surinam likely had a profound impact on her future interest in the issues of colonization, captivity, and race, which she would pair with her interest in gender roles to produce some of her most acclaimed works including both parts of *The Rover* (1677 and 1681), *Oroonoko* (1688), her only tragedy, *Abdelazer, or The Moor's Revenge* (1676), and the farcical *Emperor of the Moon* (1687).

Though *The Emperor of the Moon* does not engage in the colonial discussion as obviously as Behn's more famous *Oroonoko*, it is a commentary on the potential lunacy associated with colonial ambition. Behn's colonial anxiety may be understood as a belief that the attempt to catch up with, and preferably overtake, the Spanish Empire in scope and scale, risks sacrificing the British colonial mission of differentiating from the conquest-based empire of Spain. *The Emperor of the Moon* allows spectators and readers the opportunity to reflect on the fixation with lunar empire Dr. Baliardo has developed, and how the infatuation with distant and powerful territories has led him to put aside the emotional needs and desires of his daughter and niece. Because Elaria and Bellemante are young women living on Baliardo's estate, their position is similar to that of those living under British colonial authority in places such as Surinam—they are subject to obey the laws established

for them rather than self-govern. In this chapter, I will show how Elaria and Bellemante's position has some parallels to Oroonoko's, and how in both cases Behn questions how British colonization is distinguishing itself from the imperialism of their Spanish rivals.

Behn's anxiety about the lack of difference between British and Spanish colonialism is depicted in *The Emperor of the Moon* through the image of lunar empire. Distancing herself from Godwin, however, Behn is adamantly clear that lunar empire is a fiction, and seems to express doubt that such a fiction can even benefit the British Empire. Where Godwin was primarily concerned with the ways in which the British Empire has fallen behind their Spanish rivals, Behn's focus on colonialism is more attentive to the conditions of the colonized. Although Godwin's territorial anxiety may seem to be of a different order from Behn's ethical anxieties, the two are ultimately different inflections of the same colonial concern. Both Godwin and Behn are supportive of British imperial expansion. Behn, however, takes the means of colonization into account where Godwin is more concerned with creating a spur for prospective geopolitical empire. Where Godwin does not spend much time exploring the lives of the colonized, the contrast between British interaction with the colonized and the colonial behavior of other empires is one of Behn's primary concerns.

While, for Behn, it remains imperative that the British match and eventually surpass rival continental empires, the Empire must accomplish this colonial expansion without repeating the atrocities documented by the Spanish Dominican, Bartolomé de Las Casas, in texts such as *A Brief Account of the Devastation of the Indies*. Overzealous British colonizers might, for instance, force native men to operate gold

mines in stygian conditions, leaving the women to till and manure the fields—none of them receiving much more to eat than a starvation diet. Las Casas reports that Spanish colonizers were responsible for this nightmare exactly as described in colonial Hispaniola. He even reports acts of barely imaginable cruelty: “Some [natives] they [Spanish colonizers] burn’d alive, they cut off the Arms and Legs of others, and made slaves of the rest.”²³² Those slaves were put to work on brutal projects, meanwhile suffering from a near starvation diet. As Las Casas reports the situation: The men were confined to the

Mines to get out Gold with incredible Toil and Labour; they us’d the Women for Husbandry and Tillage, tho this last was a Labour hard enough for men of the most robust and vigorous Constitution. They fed ‘em only with Herbs, or such like Food, that had but little Substance or Nourishment in it: So that the Milk dry’d up in the Breasts of the Women that gave suck, and their Children in a little time pin’d away and dyed with Faintness and Hunger.²³³

The anxiety that geopolitical empire might not be worth achieving if it means replicating the Spanish—and thus a reevaluation of the entire project of imagined, extraterrestrial empire—perhaps marks *The Emperor of the Moon* as a rejection of Godwin’s belief that the British should focus on catching up to their colonial rivals, presumably by whatever means are necessary.

The anxiety that imagined empires like the lunar sphere might lead to an overzealous pursuit of geopolitical imperialism is deeply interwoven with Behn’s

²³² *An Account of the First Voyages and Discoveries Made By the Spaniards in America Containing the Most Exact Relation Hetherto Publish’d, of Their Unparallel’d Cruelties on the Indians, in the Destruction of Above Forty Millions of People: With the Propositions Offer’d to the King of Spain to Prevent the Further Ruin of the West Indies*, printed by J. Darby for D. Brown, J. Harris, and Andr. Bell, 1699, Gale Primary Sources, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat06952a&AN=mul.b2755165&site=eds-live&scope=site>, p. 16. Accessed 25 February 2021. All of the above examples can be found on this page.

²³³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

choice to present *Emperor* as a farce. This genre choice also reaffirms how widespread interest in the lunar sphere had become by the end of the seventeenth century. Whether that interest becomes a frivolous use of time or a useful trifle is dependent on both the author and reader. Behn, however, seems to be suggesting that the moon as a setting, while it may be dressed in the guise of trifling, often gives way to frivolous pursuits when not managed with authorial care. This is especially true when the moon is considered as a colonial space. That Elaria, Bellemante, Cinthio, Charmante, and Scaramouch must cure Baliardo of his unhealthy obsession with the moon would have reminded spectators of the flood of seventeenth-century lunar fictions and philosophical treatises, which may well have seemed disconnected from everyday, earthly affairs. But Behn's rejection of Baliardo's obsession with the moon is not outright; she herself had a scientific interest in speculating about the heavens. The same year Behn published *Oroonoko* (1688), she also produced a translation of the influential French essayist Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle's *Entretiens sur la Pluralité des Mondes* (1686). Behn's interest in Fontenelle suggests that she did not consider Baliardo's interest in the moon worthy of scorn in itself, as she was still working on her translation of *Entretiens* when *Emperor* first hit the stage in 1687. It is when interest gives way to obsession, and critical thinking is replaced by a universal acceptance of whatever one reads or hears, that such an infatuation becomes worthy of scorn. In addition to the examples already covered, where Baliardo understands Domingo Gonsales' account of his voyage to the moon as a true history, the doctor regularly evidences a lack of skepticism in what Scaramouch tells him about the moon.

Where Scaramouch's belief that "the reading of Books is a pernicious Thing" (8) is understandable—he mocks *Mandeville's Travels* as an example of how books work to reproduce inaccurate information—Baliardo should better understand that knowledge must be paired with a healthy skepticism. In this way the inaccuracies in one book do not condemn the entire project of writing to understand the Earth's place in the cosmos. One of the more egregious examples of Baliardo's failure to apply scientific skepticism comes when Baliardo is questioning Scaramouch about the waters on a fictitious map of the lunar mundus.

Doct. Are any, Sir, of those admirable Mineral Waters there [depicted on the map], so frequent in our World?

Scar. In abundance, Sir, the famous *Garamanteen*, a young *Italian*, Sir, lately come from thence, gives an Account of an excellent *Scaturgio*, that has lately made an Ebulation there, in great Reputation with the Lunary Ladies. (50)

Baliardo ought to have read enough about the moon to recognize Scaramouch's response is techno-babble laced with puns at the doctor's expense. For instance, *Garamanteen* seems to be Scaramouch's creation, the name perhaps derived from the name of the ancient Libyan civilization of *Garamantes* as a loose connection to Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*.²³⁴ When Scaramouch insists that this young Italian provide an account of a *scaturgio*, or spring, on the moon, Behn's English-speaking

²³⁴ While the etymological speculation about the connection between *Garamanteen* and *Garamantes* is my own, the idea that *Garamanteen* never existed has been proposed by Florence March, "The Emperor of the Moon? (1687) d'Aphra Behn: Contribution Dramatique au Débat scientifique et Littéraire sur la Pluarlité des Mondes," *Représentations: La Revue Électronique du CERMA, Centre d'Etudes sur les Modes de la Représentation Anglophone*, vol. 3, 2016, pp. 1-12, <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01392137>, p. 6. Accessed 12 February 2020. March writes, "Sous couvert de rapporter les mots d'un *Garamanteen* qui n'existe probablement pas, Scaramouche s'improvise donc à la fois auteur et narrateur d'une parodie de récit de voyage cosmique..." (10). In English, "Under the cover of bringing back the words of a *Garamanteen*, who probably does not exist, Scaramouch improvises an author and narrator of a parody of a cosmic voyage..." This translation is my own.

audience would have been more likely to notice the scatological pun that suggests Baliardo's man is being less than truthful than the technical conversation about the potential for water to exist on the lunar surface. Finally, I believe that by "Ebulation" Scaramouch means 'ebullition'—which the OED defines as the "action of rushing forth in a state of agitation or boiling; said of water, and *transferred* of fire, lava, etc." for the period in which Behn wrote.²³⁵ Scaramouch's spelling, however, parallels his early corruption of Ebulus into Ebula. Therefore even as Scaramouch tells a story about a young Italian who discovers a volcanic spring bubbling forth from the surface of the moon, he is admitting to the audience that his use of such ideas in his speech is excremental.

Though Behn conveys a healthy skepticism—a skepticism Baliardo notably lacks—regarding most of the information she encounters regarding the moon, she nonetheless shows herself willing to engage intellectually in the discourse on the possibility of extraterrestrial life. Her key contribution to this discourse is her 1688 translation of Fontenelle's *Entrentiens*. Unlike Baliardo, Behn is unwilling to suggest that the moon might be a populated sphere, even in her prefatory remarks to the translation. Behn needs more evidence before she will draw any conclusion about extraterrestrial beings. In her "Translator's Preface," Behn writes that Fontenelle aims to argue

that there are thousands of Worlds inhabited by Animals, besides our Earth, and hath urged this Fancy too far: I shall not presume to defend his Opinion, but one may make a very good use of many things he hath expressed very finely, in endeavouring to assist his wild fancy...²³⁶

²³⁵ "ebullition, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2021, www.oed.com/view/Entry/59219. Accessed 4 September 2021.

²³⁶ *A Discovery of New Worlds from the French*, by Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle, e-book, Early English Books Online, William Canning, 1668, unpaginated. Accessed

Since no evidence confirms or denies the possibility of extraterrestrial life, Behn allows herself to enter the discourse about alien beings, but she does so as an interested skeptic. This strategy is fundamental for her interrogation of imagined, extraterrestrial empires as a substitute for the expanding Restoration British Empire, but is even more potent as a method of critiquing the prospective geopolitical empire toward which authors such as Spenser and Cavendish have used imagined empire as a springboard.

Several critics have used Behn's translation of *A Discovery of New Worlds* as a starting point to argue that *Emperor* was as engaged in Behn's interests in race, authority, gender, and captivity as her more often studied works.²³⁷ Line Cottegnies looks at Behn's interventions and translation choices and argues that she was often not comfortable with the casual racism and misogyny Fontenelle works into *Entrentiens*. Cottegnies asks readers to consider his literal translation of a passage from Fontenelle:

26 February 2021. The quote can be located on the tenth page of "The Translator's Preface."

²³⁷ The major examples of this intervention are Line Cottegnies, "The Translator as Critic: Aphra Behn's Translation of Fontenelle's 'Discovery of New Worlds (1688),' " *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700*, vol. 27, no. 1, Spring 2003, pp. 23-38, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43293732>, accessed 30 November 2020; Crystal Bartolovich, "Utopian Cosmopolitanism," *Shakespeare Studies*, vol. 35, 2007, pp. 47-57, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=2013397326&site=eds-live&scope=site>, accessed 13 February 2021; Judy A. Hayden, "Harlequin Science: Aphra Behn's *Emperor of the Moon* and the Plurality of Worlds," *Journal of the English Association*, vol. 64, no. 246, Autumn 2015, pp. 167-182, <https://doi.org/10.1093/english/efv015>, accessed 22 August 2020; Sarah Goodfellow, "Such Masculine Strokes': Aphra Behn as Translator of 'A Discovery of New Worlds,'" *Albion*, vol. 28, no. 2, 1996, pp. 229-250, <https://doi.org/10.2307/4052460>, accessed 1 March 2021; and Lisa Anscomb, "As Far as a Woman's Reasoning Can Go': Scientific Dialogue and Sexploitation," *History of European Ideas*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2005, pp. 193-208, <https://doi.org/10.2307/405460>, accessed 13 February 2021.

When traveling to some newly-discovered lands, one finds that their inhabitants are hardly human; they are animals with a human face—and even quite imperfect sometimes—but almost devoid of any reason; whoever could go as far as the Moon would undoubtedly not find men there.²³⁸

Behn's translation of the same passage places far less emphasis on the perceived inhumanity of indigenous peoples.

When one travels towards the new discovered World of America, &c., and finds the Inhabitants there to be hardly Men, but rather a kind of Brutes in human shape, and that not perfect neither, so that could we travel to the Orb of the Moon, I do not think we should find Men and Women there.²³⁹

While the translation is hardly more acceptable to modern readers, it does show that Behn was caught between a desire to translate accurately and her own experiences with indigenous peoples and slaves in Surinam. “Brutes in human shape” is more indicative of indigenous humanity than “animals with a human face,” and Behn gives women equal status to men in both populating the Americas and their absence from the lunar sphere.

Where Behn followed Fontenelle in understanding the Americas as alien worlds, she was much more critical of his belief that all worlds must be inhabited. “[F]or endeavouring to render [astronomy] familiar,” she writes in her translation of *Entrentiens*. Fontenelle

hath turned it to Ridicule, he hath pushed his wild Notion of the Plurality of Worlds to that height of Extravagancy that he most certainly will confound those Readers, who have not Judgement and Wit to distinguish between what is truly solid (or at least probable) and what is trifling and airy.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ “The Translator as Critic,” p. 32. The quote in the original French is “[q]uand on va vers de certaines Terres nouvellement découvertes, à peine sont-ce des Hommes qu'on y trouve; ce sont des Animaux à figure humaine, encore quelquefois assez imparfaite, mais Presque sans aucune raison humaine; qui pourroit pousser jusqu'à la Lune, assurément ce ne seroient plus des Hommes qu'on y trouveroit.” Qtd. in Cottagnies p. 38, n. 32.

²³⁹ Qtd. in Cottagnies, “The Translator as Critic,” p. 32.

²⁴⁰ *Discovery of New Worlds*. This quote appears on the ninth page of the “Translator's Preface”.

While it is possible some worlds might be inhabited, Fontenelle oversimplifies the inherent problems—theological and scientific—in regard to the plurality of inhabited worlds in order to make the ideas that appear in *Entrentiens* more accessible to the average reader. In allowing oversimplified access to the plurality of worlds debate, Behn fears that without the warning in her preface to the translation, Fontenelle could create more Baliardos who in their half-understanding of the lunar discourse turn the idea of a world in the moon from a serious scientific and theological discussion into a lunatic obsession best left for a farce like *Emperor*.

Even when the lunar sphere runs the risk of becoming ridiculous, carrying the negative connotations of trifling, Behn's use of it to inform readers about empire, colonialism, authority, and confinement here on Earth is serious. Where Godwin is interested in signaling that the British colonial empire has fallen so far behind foreign counterparts that the nation may never catch up and become the world-spanning empire, Behn wonders if the constant striving for more—more land, wealth, power, slaves, indigenous converts—has not actually led Britain to fall behind in other important aspects of becoming a Protestant empire. As Caius Martius Coriolanus' 'world elsewhere' helped frame the context within which I present Godwin's *Man in the Moone*, it is also a useful framework for discerning Behn's imperial positioning. In *Coriolanus*, when Martius accuses Sicinius of inciting the plebeians to riot the later responds with a piercing rhetorical question, "What is the city but the people?" (III.i.198). Behn might ask a similar question: 'What is an empire but the people who reside within its territorial bounds?' Framing Behn's line of questioning this way helps show that she is always interested in the status of those British colonialism has left behind—even when the space-grabbing race shifts from earthly to lunar

spheres. Aside from the final extraterrestrial shift, similar arguments have been made about the role of *Oroonoko* in Behn's corpus.

If we are to accept a reading of *The Emperor of the Moon* in which one of Behn's primary concerns is that the British Empire's colonial expansion has become little better than a continuation of the atrocities the fifteenth-century conquistadors committed in South and Central America, then the use of the lunar sphere becomes a condemnation of the absurdity of imagined empire. The way in which Behn records her experiences in Surinam provides evidence to support such a reading. According to Charles Gildon's *The Life and Memoirs*, Behn's father, Bartholomew Johnson, was familiar with Lord Francis Willoughby, who helped to found the Surinam colony in 1650. It was this relationship, Gildon writes, that drew Johnson to Surinam "for the advantageous Post of Lieutenant-General of many Isles, besides the Continent of Surinam..."²⁴¹ Most critics now place Behn's Surinam sojourn from 1663-1664. While it may be impossible to determine with precision or certainty the timeframe of Behn's life in colonial Surinam, there is a general consensus that the account she gives of her early life in *Oroonoko* is at least partially based on experience,²⁴² which helps explain Behn's continued interest in race, colony, and confinement, themes which would appear in many of her dramas.

²⁴¹ "The History of the Life and Memoirs of Mrs. Behn," *All the Histories and Novels Written by the Late Ingenious Mrs. Behn, Intire in One Volume*, by Aphra Behn, printed by J. D. for M. Wellington, at the King's-Head, against St. Clement's Church in the Strand, 1718, pp. 1-51, accessed via *The British Library*, Gale Primary Sources, p. 2.

²⁴² The exact length of and nature of Behn's Surinam interlude has been argued extensively. Early in the twentieth century Ernest Bernbaum was adamant that Behn had never been to Surinam and attempted to evidence the point repeatedly in his article "Mrs. Behn's Biography a Fiction," *PMLA*, vol. 28, no. 3, 1913, pp. 432-453, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/457030>. Accessed 30 January 2021. Many years later Eliane Campbell would attempt to refute Bernbaum's claims. "Aphra Behn's

Though critics have written much about how each of these issues is emphasized in the obvious colonial interpretations of *Oroonoko*, far fewer have noted that similar themes are a central focus of *The Emperor of the Moon*. This is unfortunate because I believe that reading the works together shows a more nuanced view of the way Behn conceives empire than reading either text on its own. Where *Emperor* serves as a representation of the way in which Behn views imagined empire, *Oroonoko* shows her interaction with the geopolitical realities of colonialism. Remembering that authors like Spenser, Cavendish, and even Godwin have used imagined empire as a method of substitution to avoid the humiliation of the nascent British geopolitical empire, as well as a method of establishing the rhetorical foundations necessary to begin the process of realizing a prospective geopolitical empire, I find

Surinam Interlude,” *Kunapipi*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1985, pp. 25-35, <https://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=1986035969&site=eds-live&scope=site>. Accessed 26 January 2021. Campbell emphasizes that although “in the absence of a firm and reliable biography the Surinam sojourn is clouded by conjecture” (25) it does not take a strenuous reading of *Oroonoko* and George Warren’s *An Impartial Description of Surinam* (1667) to realize Behn did not lift her depiction of Surinam from this source as Bernbaum surmises and may well have written from personal experience. She also points to a tradition of author writing about Surinam, including James Rodway’s *Chronological History of the Discovery and Settlement of Guiana* (1888), who has accepted the tradition that Behn lived in Surinam. This, however, does nothing more than prove there is an accepted tradition of Behn’s time in Surinam. Bernard Dhuicq understands Behn’s representation of her stay in Surinam as depicted in *Oroonoko* as autobiographical. “New Evidence of Aphra Behn’s Stay in Surinam,” *Notes and Queries*, vol. 42, no. 1, March 1995, pp. 40-41 <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=1979104709&site=eds-live&scope=site>, p 40. Accessed 5 January 2021. This backs up his previous arguments that claim there is enough evidence from early modern Surinam to show “the authenticity of the English settlers and plantations whose names appear in contemporary documents, and bear out the veracity of the events narrated in the novel. “Further Evidence on Aphra Behn’s Stay in Surinam,” *Notes and Queries*, vol. 26, no. 2, April 1979, pp. 525-526, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mxh&AN=1979104789&site=eds-live&scope=site>. Accessed 5 January 2021.

that with Behn we see a woman much more critical of imperialism. For Behn, *Oroonoko* depicts the British geopolitical empire at its worst. The tragic tyrannies Behn depicts include, but are not limited to, the execution of indigenous dissidents, English participation in the slave trade, and one-sided trade relations with the natives of Surinam. As a dramatist and author continually interested in the dynamics of race, gender, and power structures, it is not surprising that Behn worries about the value of imagined empire if the geopolitical empire it produces looks anything like the Surinam depicted in *Oroonoko*.

Where *Oroonoko* focuses on the results of geopolitical imperialism, *Emperor* suggests that imagined empire is a trifle, a low-cost investment in the production of geopolitical empire. But Behn goes further than Spenser, Cavendish, and Godwin in asking how the high return on this investment is being produced. Behn rejects the idea that the substitutions of extraterrestrial empire for the fledgling geopolitical British Empire can produce a prospective model of geopolitical empire that benefits both the colonizers and their colonial subjects. Instead, imagined empire is a kind of lunatic wish fulfillment that dehumanizes and mutilates the colonized just as the executioner dismembers Oroonoko. Like Baliardo, Behn believes that British authors would advocate for a superior form of empire if they were cured of their obsessions with otherworldly empires as a simple wish fulfillment and instead focus on how empire can benefit both the British and the indigenous peoples they encounter. Behn understood the colonial system in British Surinam to be corrosive to the morals and culture of the indigenous people. She shows as much when she writes that European colonization infringes on the natives' natural "justice, which knows no fraud; and they understand no vice, or cunning, but when they are taught

by the white men.”²⁴³ As one critic has commented, “[a]lthough Behn does not flinch from attacking the evils introduced by Europeans into their colonies, she invariably identifies the perpetrators of those evils to the lower classes.”²⁴⁴ This rhetorical move allows Behn space to criticize imperial practices without becoming equally critical of the monarchy and the British nobility. Still, some critics read into Behn’s work the specter of doubt that even an empire forged by staunch royalists will be free from the vice and exploitation she depicts in *Oroonoko*. Lee Morrissey has argued that Behn was poignantly aware of the ways in which the Surinam plantations were modeled after Elizabethan era plantations in colonial Ireland, specifically thinking about the ways in which the Irish plantations assisted in the transatlantic leap to American colonies.²⁴⁵ Almost a century after Spenser so desperately appealed for the colonization of Ireland to ignite the engines that he believed would drive a world empire, we see in Behn an early critique of the colonial process. Again, this is not to say that Behn was anti-colonial, especially as critics tend to define such an ideal today. Rather, she shows a basic concern about the impacts British colonialism, which may still be necessary or inevitable, will have on colonized peoples.

A quick search of the scholarship on Behn’s *Emperor* will inform any researcher that the limited number of critics connecting the play to imperialism

²⁴³ Aphra Behn, “Oroonoko,” *Oroonoko, The Rover, and Other Works*, edited by Janet Todd, Penguin, 2003, pp. 73-141, p. 77. All future citations from *Oroonoko* will be to this edition unless otherwise noted.

²⁴⁴ Albert J. Rivero, “Aphra Behn’s ‘Oroonoko’ and the ‘Blank Spaces’ of Colonial Fictions,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Summer 1999, pp. 443-462, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1556214>. Accessed 30 January 2021.

²⁴⁵ “Transplanting English Plantations in Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko*,” *The Global South* vol. 10, no. 2, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.2979/globalsouth.10.2.02>, p. 12. Accessed 30 December 2020.

stems not from a lack of relevance, but from the limited critical attention the play has received, especially as it appears in the shadow of Behn's more famous works like *Oroonoko* and *The Rover*. Al Coppola may have described the literary discussions surrounding Behn's final drama best when he wrote that "[m]odern critics often seem stymied when confronted with *The Emperor of the Moon*."²⁴⁶ This has led to commentators categorizing the play as light farce, not engaged with the themes of captivity, colony, or race found so abundantly in Behn's oeuvre. Derek Hughes, for instance, insists that the play "must not be overinterpreted."²⁴⁷ This is not surprising since depictions of the moon on the early modern stage were often the butt of low comedy. As one critic remarks, "[a]udiences from Shakespeare to Behn understood that they were engaged with a comedy whenever there was mention of 'the man in the moon.'"²⁴⁸ We see this not only in *Emperor* and the *Commedia dell'arte*, but also as a motif of thematic importance in Johnson's *News from the New World*, as well as Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*²⁴⁹ and *The Tempest*.²⁵⁰ Jane Spencer takes a similar tack, arguing that the play is an intellectually lightweight comedy as evidenced by "its reliance on visual rather than verbal effects."²⁵¹

²⁴⁶ "Retraining the Virtuoso's Gaze: Behn's *Emperor of the Moon*, The Royal Society, and the Spectacles of Science and Politics," *Eighteenth Century Studies*, vol. 4, no. 4, Summer 2008, pp. 481-506, p. 481. Accessed 24 November 2020.

²⁴⁷ *The Theater of Aphra Behn*, Palgrave 2001, p. 171.

²⁴⁸ Cressy, "Early Modern Space Travel and the English Man in the Moon," p. 987.

²⁴⁹ Consider Moonshine in Act V, Scene i.

²⁵⁰ See Act II, Scene ii for Stephano's claims that he has arrived on Caliban's island, "[o]ut o' th' moon, I do assure thee. I was the Man I' th' Moon, when time was" (II.ii.138-139). William Shakespeare, "The Tempest," *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., edited by Herschel Baker, Anne Barton, Frank Kermode, Harry Levin, Hallett Smith, and Marie Edel, Houghton Mifflin, 1997, pp. 979-1015.

²⁵¹ "Introduction to Aphra Behn," *The Rover and Other Plays*, Oxford University Press, 1995, p. xxi.

Only since the turn of the millennium have critics begun to establish a discourse in which Behn's most often read works can offer insight into overlooked texts like *Emperor*. In response to Spencer's willingness to brush off *Emperor* as an intellectual lightweight, Katherine Mannheimer reads the drama as deeply engaged with the interplay between the subjectivity of prose and the spectacle of performance, thus marking the play as inherently political in its use of farce.²⁵² Mannheimer's work builds off other critics' interpretations of *Emperor* that are equally political. For Coppola, the farcical nature of the play is inherently political, both in Baliardo's "fruitlessly voyeuristic"²⁵³ viewing of the moon through his telescope, and in the audiences' reaction to spectating the play. One of the functions of the play, then, is to stimulate "the viewer's uncritical gaze only to retrain it."²⁵⁴ The viewers' uncritical absorbing of the farce parallels Baliardo's uncritical search to spy out the *Emperor of the Moon* through his telescope. There is another parallel, however, brought forth from the way Behn responds to colonial issues in her oeuvre and how *Emperor* specifically is designed as a sequel to *The Man in the Moone*. It is not just the uncritical gaze at the moon, or at the farce, that must be retrained, but the uncritical gaze at the colony as well.

Colony in *Emperor* is complicated by the fact that Baliardo has no interest in advancing his political position through conquest or exploration. Instead, he would become a colonial subject of the Emperor of the Moon by marrying away his daughter. This is why Cinthio and Charmante's deception is so devastatingly

²⁵² "Celestial Bodies: Readerly Rapture as Theatrical Spectacle in Aphra Behn's 'Emperor of the Moon,'" *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2011, pp. 39-60. Accessed 24 November 2020.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 493.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 484.

effective. Baliardo is desperate to marry Elaria and Bellemante to politically powerful men, such as he perceives the courtiers' alter egos of Iretonozur and the Prince of Thunderland to be. Because Behn is regularly interested in exploring the role of women in social and marital relationships in her drama, several critics have written about the role of women in *Emperor*, sometimes making the connection of Elaria and Bellemante as subjects offered as a colonial token to a fictitious emperor, but rarely expanding upon it. Catherine Ingrassia advances such a reading when she argues that because Baliardo views the moon as a superior culture, his desire to have his daughter breed with lunar beings represents a kind of eugenics, and thus colonial power.²⁵⁵ In Baliardo's absurd insistence on interplanetary breeding, he goes as far as to say "Man was made for Woman," a thought which Charmante finishes for him: "Man was to have been immortaliz'd by Love and Conversation of these charming Silfs and Nymphs, and women by the Gomes and Salamanders, and to have stock'd the World with Demy-Gods, such as at this Day inhabit the Empire of the Moon" (13). Baliardo's desire to combine the earthly and celestial gene pools leads to a broader argument that *Emperor* is more closely engaged with colonial themes such as those that appear in *Oroonoko* than previous critics have noted. "Scholars have long relied on *Oroonoko*," Ingrassia writes, "to understand Behn's response to colonial practices in the West Indies...Behn's formative experiences in Suriname, however, shaped a much wider constellation of her texts..."²⁵⁶

For the few critics who do approach *Emperor* as a play engaged with empire, the emphasis rests almost entirely on the figure of Baliardo. For Inhey Ha, Baliardo

²⁵⁵ "Aphra Behn, Captivity and *Emperor of the Moon*," p. 54.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

is an authority figure serving the functions of the status quo and patriarchy through the confinement of his daughter and niece, as well as controlling their romantic and sexual lives.²⁵⁷ Far from being content with identifying his sphere of domestic influence, however, Ha reads Baliardo's fixation with the moon as one that goes side-by-side with control over other spaces. Though Ha never specifies colonial spaces, they easily fit within the poorly defined label of "other spaces."²⁵⁸ Thus Ha argues that the hints of fantastic voyage motif in *Emperor* is little more than a method of refocusing spectators' attention on the roles and positions of women on Earth through the process of defamiliarization. Through this process, "Behn carefully constructs dual spaces [the geospace of Baliardo's estate and the potential world in the moon] bordering on a fine line between the imagined and the real in order to attest to the possibility of rearticulating power relations within the patriarchy."²⁵⁹

Paula R. Baksheider also emphasizes Baliardo's implicit connection to status quo and patriarchy. *The Emperor of the Moon*, she writes, "is a fine example of political commentary and of an influential use of spectacle by women playwrights to admonish fathers, often through insisting upon similarities between them regardless of their level of governing."²⁶⁰ This is to say that although not every father exerts the control Baliardo holds over Elaria and Bellemante, Behn still recognizes the father figure as a symbol of control. For Baksheider, Baliardo is not the only one who is marked with colonial language. It is also Cinthio and Charmante who "demonstrate

²⁵⁷ "Cosmic Blindness, Comic Blindness," p. 426.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 429.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 423-424.

²⁶⁰ "From *The Emperor of the Moon* to the Sultan's Prison," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, vol. 43, 2014, pp. 1-26, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sec.2014.0023>, p. 12. Accessed 4 February 2021.

their right to colonize the women and gullible feminized men.”²⁶¹ The lovers’ claim to their beloved is not only a conquest over the women they are pursuing, but a matter of taking them from their paternal guardian and stripping Baliardo of his dreams of semi-divine grandchildren through lunar eugenics.

Each of the critics I have mentioned returns to the idea that, while Behn recognizes that the process of imagining alternative colonial spaces such as the moon simply might be colonial lunacy, she is able to invert the process of imagining a prospective empire to critique the geopolitical empire that lunar voyage narratives have helped to create. The most notable example of this process is once again Baliardo’s obsession with the moon. In his desire to disclose the secrets of the lunar sphere—and later marry his daughter and niece to the moon’s fictitious emperor and his brother, the Prince of Thunderland—Baliardo has neglected his role as patriarchal administrator of his own Neapolitan estate. He has become so infatuated with the illusion that Elaria and Bellemante might marry lunar royalty that he cannot see that the entire concept of lunar empire is a conceit crafted by his servant, Scaramouch, and that the Emperor and the Prince are the women’s thinly-disguised lovers, Cinthio and Charmante. With the Doctor ready to marry his daughter and niece to beings that don’t exist, the colonial power dynamics of Baliardo’s estate are brought into question. If the extraterrestrial empire is an absurd idea, should those who blindly pursue it have any say in constructing geospace colonies, even if they be as small as a Neapolitan estate? *Emperor’s* comedic impact relies on Cinthio and Charmante’s ability to imagine an alternate to the Neapolitan socio-political order in which they can be powerful figures and Baliardo’s inability to see through this ruse.

²⁶¹ Ibid., p. 16.

That Baliardo's lunar fantasies take such a hold of his mind that he no longer has control over his own estate—i.e. he attempts to marry his daughter and niece to disguised suitors that he had previously rejected—parallels a colonial anxiety. One of the risks of trifling, and imagining fictitious extraterrestrial worlds, is that the energy and effort spent may have been used in practical endeavors. As Baliardo neglects his estate for an imagined kingdom in the moon, the British Empire may risk ignoring colonies already under English control, such as Surinam. Fortunately, by the end of *Emperor*, Baliardo has been cured of his lunar infatuation and can return to the proper management of worldly affairs, even if he has reconsidered Elaria and Bellemante's desires for marriage.

Looking at the moon as a territory that can be controlled—whether it be a comparison to New World colonies or the colony of Baliardo's estate—brings with it an inherent difficulty. New perspective can threaten epistemological models once thought unassailable by opening them to novel criticism. Such is the case in an example covered in the previous chapters. Aristotle believed that a plurality of worlds was impossible because the elements needed to create terrestrial life—earth, water, air, and fire—would always fall to their natural spheres at the center of the universe. He marks this point most explicitly in *De Caelo* IV.iii with a thought experiment about moving the Earth: “If the earth were removed to where the moon is now, separate parts of it would not move toward the [moon], but towards the place where the [Earth] is now.”²⁶² From the Aristotelian view, extraterrestrial travel

²⁶² “On the Heavens.” *Great Books of the Western World*, edited by Mortimer J. Adler, Clifton Fadiman, & Philip W. Goetz. Translated by J.L. Stocks, vol. 7, 1952, Chicago, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1990, pp. 358-405, p. 345.

was a deed left only for fiction, as even violent motions could not keep beings made of earth and water long above the spheres of air and fire.

Yet when Galileo determined through his telescopic observations that the moon, far from ethereal, was a world much like the Earth, it allowed future authors like Fontenelle to imagine inhabitants of those worlds. Over two millennia of Aristotelian and five hundred years of traditional Scholastic thought were quickly being discarded. Much like Cavendish, Behn realizes that old epistemological models are now open for new interpretations. We see this in *Emperor* when Elaria tells Scaramouch her father's mind became infected with thoughts of the moon by reading Godwin and Lucian. He then expands his distrust to travel fiction and lunar voyage narratives by denigrating one of the best-known examples of the genre in the seventeenth century.

Sir John Mandeville, whom Scaramouch cites in his distrust of travel literature, may never have existed, nor did some of the cultures and traditions about which he wrote, but the book attributed to him nevertheless profoundly influenced Late Medieval and Early Modern conceptions of the world.²⁶³ Brian Stableford

²⁶³ While not of immediate importance to the present argument, John Mandeville's identity is the subject of significant academic debate. It is now generally agreed that no such person as John Mandeville existed. Historically, several traditions of alternative have held sway in different periods. One of the first such traditions was contemporary with Mandeville, in which Jean d'Outremeuse of Liège claimed that the local physician, Jean de Bourgogne was the author. Subsequent researchers have suggested that d'Outremeuse himself wrote the *Travels*, but modern findings have suggested this is also unlikely. Thus no consensus identification has ever been made. See Adam Augustyn, et al., "Sir John Mandeville," *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Mandeville>. Accessed 23 August 2020. Also Brian Stableford's "Sir John Mandeville," *Literary Reference Center*, <https://0-eds-b-ebshost-com.libus.csd.mu.edu/eds/detail/detail?vid=6&sid=5d39e58d-40d7-4845-9024-39859ce323e2%40sdc-v->

argues that the work is an “authentic Renaissance text, which helped to banish the final shadows of the Dark Ages with a deft combination of scholarship and imagination.”²⁶⁴ When Scaramouch questions the authenticity of Mandeville he shows that a healthy skepticism of the wisdom of the past—concerning the moon or Earth—has become a cliché. As exotic travel literature had lost its credibility by the early modern period, so too were scholastic models of thought, such as Aristotle’s astronomy, actively questioned and reexamined. By eliminating a center of the universe and a quintessential aether, authors like Behn, Godwin, Wilkins, and Fontenelle are able to imagine worlds.

If the old science no longer stands to reason, will the old ideas of empire taken from Alexander’s Greece and Caesar’s Rome fare any better against an ever-changing Early Modern world? As we have seen from Behn these models also are being interrogated and critiqued. They are not only failing the colonized like Elaria, Bellemante, and Oroonoko, but also the colonizers who become so caught up in their own lunatic ambitions that they can no longer effectively run the colony. There is hope, however, for the distracted colonial ruler—by the end of *Emperor* Baliardo is forced to confront the madness brought on by his lunar obsession, which directly improves Elaria and Bellemante’s lives by allowing them to marry their chosen lovers. Within the scope of the drama Baliardo is at his most sane when he realizes that the imagined empire of the lunar sphere is nothing more than a frivolous endeavor, and that it is not worth pursuing while there are problems with the colony-like estate he oversees just outside of Naples. But the improvement of his subjects’

[sessmgr01&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#AN=103331LM51419790304891&db=lfh](https://www.oxfordjournals.org/doi/full/10.1093/ajph/110.10.1500). Accessed 23 August 2020.

²⁶⁴ “Sir John Mandeville,” para. 4.

(in Baliardo's case his daughter and niece's) lives is not the only benefit of the discarded lunacy; Baliardo is now much happier as well. As soon as he realizes that the world in the moon and the emperor of it are what Charmante calls "Ridiculous Inventions" (70) Baliardo has an unexpectedly powerful reaction:

Burn all my Books, and let my Study blaze, Burn all to Ashes, and be sure the wind Scatter the vile contagious monstrous Lies. —Most noble Youths [Cinthio and Charmante]—...I invite you to-night to revel with me.—Come all and see my happy Recantation of all the Follies Fables have inspire'd till now. (70)

As we have seen through her translation of Fontenelle, knowledge, even of the extraterrestrial realm, is important for Behn. Yet a minimalistic investment in trifling can only lead to minimalist returns. Imagined empires such as Godwin's lunar world are laughable inventions of fancy—a conclusion far from the aspirations Margaret Cavendish had that fancy could be used as a rhetorical tool for prospective empire. The imagined empire as a substitute for a geopolitical domain is then a fool's errand because the concept of prospective geopolitical empire itself needs to be reconsidered so future British colonies do not repeat the brutality of plantation life Behn depicts in *Oroonoko*. Baliardo is a fool who is cured of his lunacy before wasting his life in search of a lunar paradise, but other figures in literature are not so lucky. We will now turn to a broader tradition of the moon as a fool's paradise and discuss whether the potential traps of extraterrestrial empire can be escaped, and whether the literary exercise of creating an extraterrestrial empire is as foolish for Milton as it is for Behn.

Chapter 5: “[T]o create more Worlds”: Milton’s Colonial Ambivalence in the Paradise of Fools and the Abyss

A common critical trend in Milton studies has been to frame Milton’s thoughts on colonialism through his liberal politics as a parliamentarian and regicide. In this chapter, I will argue that while Milton depicts colonization negatively at several points in *Paradise Lost*, he also defends a form of imperialism that is founded on cultural and religious influence rather than conquest. Books II, VII, and X of *Paradise Lost* offer a plethora of examples that seem to show Milton believed in a form of cultural imperialism that spread Christianity, even if he rejected conquest-based colonialism. *Paradise Lost* is, after all, a poem about three established empires—the “spacious Empire” of Chaos and Night (II.974), the “nether Empire” of Hell (II.296), and the celestial empire, of which the Father is “sovrain Planter” of the Eden colony (IV.691)—as well as the potential of human empire, which would eventually multiply and subdue the Earth.²⁶⁵ While forms of imperialism such as Satan’s conquest of Eden and Chaos’ desire to reclaim the terrestrial sphere imply a differentiation of British colonialism from the satanic imperialism of rival empires, Raphael’s suggestions that an unfallen Adam and Eve might have carried the Father’s spiritual empire to other worlds and universes prompt a different question. As representatives of divine empire, Adam and Eve offer the reader an opportunity to reflect on the workability of spiritual imperialism in a post-lapsarian world since their fallen nature may suggest Raphael’s imperial vision for humanity is untenable.

²⁶⁵ John Milton, “Paradise Lost,” *The Riverside Milton*, edited by Roy Flannagan, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998, pp. 353-710. All citations for *Paradise Lost* are to this edition.

The differences between these depictions of imperialism evince Milton's deeply embedded ambivalence concerning the prospects of British colonialism.²⁶⁶ Because the imperialism of Heaven is explicitly contrasted with Satan's schemes for a colonial Eden, Milton may have been amenable to non-conquest-oriented empire building, especially through the spread of Protestant Christianity. The problem with such a claim, however, is that Milton never used, or even had access to, terms like spiritual or cultural imperialism to describe his ideas. Though the lack of this vocabulary leaves Milton's exact stance on imperialism difficult to determine by modern standards, I argue that Milton is fundamentally ambivalent toward colonialism. In addition to raising the question if godly colonialism is tenable in a post-lapsarian world, Milton also questions whether the conquest-based model of imperialism represented by Satan can be avoided in British colonialism. However, Milton is consistently light on details as to how any system of alternative British colonialism could be defined or operated. The day-to-day functioning of such an empire did not appear to have interested him as much as the idea of England as the chosen land for a worldly empire. For every instance in which Raphael suggests the possibility of human colonization of the cosmos, we also see the vague empire that is Chaos—caught between Heaven and Hell and used for the purposes of both. Whether Milton feels that British colonists can represent divine empire, add to the chaos and confusion of worldly affairs, or repeat the bloody conquests of Satan and

²⁶⁶ This claim follows J. Martin Evans' argument that Milton's relationship with colonization was contingent upon who was building the empire: "[i]f the colonizing power was Spain, then colonization was unquestionably a diabolic act of oppression and exploitation. But if the colonizing power was England, the situation was deeply ambiguous." *Milton's Imperial Epic, Milton's Imperial Epic: Paradise Lost and the Discourse of Colonialism*, Cornell University Press, 1996, p. 146. The following citations are all to this edition, and are marked in the body text.

the Spaniards are questions to which I do not believe there are definitive answers. Yet even without an answer, a close examination of these questions can shed a significant amount of light on Milton's thoughts about imperialism.

Interest in reading *Paradise Lost* within an imperial or colonialist framework has been on the rise since the end of the twentieth century.²⁶⁷ Many critics have contrasted the anti-imperial argument they read into the poem with the imperial language of Genesis 1:28. J. P. Colan's summary of Milton's anti-imperialism can be taken as a common theme among these critics. He argues that *Paradise Lost* is a counter-argument to the imperialist bent found in the writing of Richard Hakluyt and William Bradford.²⁶⁸ Other critics would establish Milton in a broader anti-imperial tradition than the context of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century British authors. David Quint, Colin Burrow,²⁶⁹ and David Loewenstein²⁷⁰ all point out contrasts between *Paradise Lost* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. In *Epic and Empire*, Quint writes that *Paradise Lost* "conforms to a general movement of the seventeenth-century epic

²⁶⁷ See, for instance, Albert C. Labriola, "Chaos and Creation in Milton Studies: An Editor's Perspective," *Milton Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 2, May 1998, pp. 53-56, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24465419>. Accessed 16 March 2021. For examples of scholars who read Milton within the framework of postcolonialism, see Dirk Weimann, "From Forked Tongue to Forked Tongue: Rushdie and Milton in the Postcolonial Conversation," *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, vol. 42, no. 2, 2007, pp. 47-63, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021989407078586>, accessed 16 March 2021, and Colin Lahive, "Is this our boasted constitution? Is this our liberty?: Reading Milton in Ireland," *Literature Compass*, vol. 15, no. 11, November 2018, pp. 1-17, <https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12492>. Accessed 1 April 2021.

²⁶⁸ Colan, "Milton's Anti-Imperial Epic," p. 38.

²⁶⁹ Colin Burrow, "Virgils, from Dante to Milton," *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, e-book, edited by Charles Martindale, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 79-90, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL05214955393>. Accessed 18 March 2021.

²⁷⁰ David Loewenstein, "Writing Epic in the Aftermath of Civil War: *Paradise Lost*, the *Aeneid*, and the Politics of Contemporary History," *Milton Studies*, vol. 59, 2017, pp. 165-198, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/miltonstudies/559.2018.0165>. Accessed 5 April 2021.

in the direction of romance, an epic that appears increasingly unwilling or unable to celebrate the absolutist modern state and its centralizing institutions.”²⁷¹ For Quint the seventeenth-century epic no longer contains the nationalistic celebration of the author’s homeland that was conventional in the pre-modern world. Milton’s choice to write an epic about “our Grand Parents in that happy State” (*PL* I.29) rather than his previously planned *Arthuriad* supports Quint’s argument. In Book IX, Milton writes that the Christian epic is:

Not less but more Heroic then the wrauth
Of stern *Achilles* on his Foe Pursu’d
Thrice Fugitive about *Troy* Wall; or rage
Of *Turnus* for *Lavinia* disespous’d,
Or *Neptun*’s ire or *Juno*’s, that so long
Perplex’d the *Greek* and *Cytherea*’s Son... (I.14-19)

The argument of Milton’s new epic would not be

sedulous by Nature to indite
Warrs, hitherto the onely Argument
Heroic deem’d, chief maistrie to dissect
With long and tedious havoc fabl’d Knights
In Battle feign’d... (I.27-31)

Another common method for reading an anti-imperialist ideology into *Paradise Lost* is to contrast the poem with *Paradise Regained*, in which Milton is vocal about Christ’s rejection of geopolitical empire. Karen O’Brien sees the rejection of earthly empire as a cornerstone of Milton’s Christianity: “For Christ, imperialism is a moral evil incompatible with the flourishing of true civilisation, and empire is the opposite of peace, liberty, piety, and culture.”²⁷² Such a rejection of earthly empire, even if we see the same anti-imperial sentiment in *Paradise Lost*, is not necessarily a

²⁷¹ p. 13.

²⁷² Karen O’Brien, “Poetry Against Empire: Milton to Shelley,” *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. 88, no. 1, 2002, pp. 269-296, http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true*db=hia&AN=46700619&site=eds-live&scope=site, p. 270. Accessed 25 March 2021.

rejection of spiritual or imagined forms of empire, however. O'Brien anticipates this objection, that Milton understands God's rule in Heaven as a paradoxical kind of empire, "one which will integrate private spirituality with civic duty, and which will, of its very nature, represent a repudiation of all worldly structures of sovereignty to the extent that it might be better termed a universal anti-empire."²⁷³ I agree with O'Brien's description of the Empire of Heaven in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* until she comes to the word 'anti-empire.' Private spirituality is not necessarily anti-imperial, nor is the disavowal of worldly structures of sovereignty an abandonment of otherworldly or yet-to-be-invented forms of governance. Because Milton imagines the Father as a monarch, the repudiation of worldly authority for His sake appears closer to a switching of allegiances than a reimagination of imperial power. Still, it is fair to say Milton favored spiritual and cultural imperialism over its geopolitical counterpart, even if he never could decide how this type of empire should be defined. This choice makes sense in light of his adaptation of Matthew 6:24 in *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*: when "we could not serve two contrary maisters, God and the king" the Englishman's duty was first to the Divine.²⁷⁴

As convincing as anti-imperial arguments can be, critics who would interpret Milton's colonial positioning as completely anti-imperial often have a stake in associating him with this ideology.²⁷⁵ I find Milton's relationship with empire to be

²⁷³ Ibid., p. 270.

²⁷⁴ John Milton, "The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth," *The Riverside Milton*, edited by Roy Flannagan, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998, pp. 1136-1149, p. 1136.

²⁷⁵ Prominent examples of anti-imperial readings of Milton include Quint's *Epic and Empire*, Andrew Barnaby's "Another Rome in the West?": Milton and the Imperial

far more complex in its ambivalence towards colonization than critics such as those above have suggested. For instance, I read a colonial impulse into Raphael's suggestions that humanity might be destined to inhabit new worlds. Thus, I read *Paradise Lost* as a text that raises the following questions: (1) can the excess of Catholic imperialism—the constant desire for more gold, territory, and subjects—be avoided in the creation of British colonies; and (2) are spiritual and cultural imperialism tenable in a post-lapsarian world? Milton's refusal to offer a straight answer to either of these questions evidences his ambivalence toward both.

Critics who write about Milton through the framework of the history of science are already comfortable with the fact that Milton was not so modern a thinker as many would make him, and this realization has not damaged the reputation of *Paradise Lost*. Malabika Sarkar, for instance, argues that Milton is a watershed thinker when it comes to the New Science. "Milton never hesitates," she writes, "to put forward conflicting alternatives, not because he does not wish to take up a position, but because his mind is open to the possibility of the authenticity of alternative systems of belief."²⁷⁶ Milton's openness to alternative scientific traditions, which has the potential to threaten the sensibilities of critics who strive to preserve an understanding of Milton as a Copernican thinker, is now well-documented. Whether in choosing between a Ptolemaic-Aristotelian or a Brunonian-Copernican

Republic, 1654-1670," *Milton Studies*, vol. 30, 1993, pp. 67-84, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=1998060967&site=eds-live&scope=site>, accessed 28 February 2021, and Diane Kelsey McColley's "Ecology and Empire," *Milton and the Imperial Vision*, edited by Balachandra Rajan, Elizabeth Sauer, and Homi K. Bhabha, Duquesne University Press, 1999, pp. 112-129.

²⁷⁶ Malabika Sarkar, *Cosmos and Character in Paradise Lost*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p. 39.

model for the cosmos depicted in *Paradise Lost*,²⁷⁷ or establishing a position on Britain's colonial project, Milton's ambivalence causes him to put forth conflicting alternatives as he continues to explore these arguments through his poetry.

It is this imperial ambivalence that has allowed several critics to argue that Milton harbors some sympathy for empire building. Paul Stevens presents evidence that concerning Ireland, Milton's imperial ideology was similar to Spenser's—it was paramount for Cromwell to bring the nation under Protestant control.²⁷⁸ Many critics hold that, despite a lack of written evidence, Milton must have become horrified by Cromwell's actions as the Lord Protector assumed executive power, which Paul Rahe argues Milton may have understood as a “betrayal of the republican cause.”²⁷⁹ Indeed, within *Paradise Lost*, empire does not always associate with the satanic. Heaven is repeatedly described as an empire: God is described as a “soveran Planter” (IV.691); after casting out the fallen angels he proclaims “Heav'n yet populous retains/ Number sufficient to *possess* her Realms/ Though wide” (7.146-8, emphasis added); after the cosmogony, the angels sing in praise of the Father, “Who can impaire thee, mighty King, or bound/ Thy Empire?” (VII.608-609); and, finally,

²⁷⁷ For more information on Milton's cosmology and the Galilean Shift, see Danielson, *Paradise Lost and the Cosmological Revolution*, Cambridge University Press, 2014; and Catherine Gimelli Martin, “What if the Sun Be Centre to the World?: Milton's Epistemology, Cosmology, and Paradise of Fools Reconsidered,” *Modern Philology*, vol. 99, no. 2, November 2001, pp. 231-265, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/438970>, accessed 17 April 2021.

²⁷⁸ Paul Stevens, “Spenser and Milton on Ireland: Civility, Exclusion, and the politics of Wisdom,” *Ariel*, vol. 26, no. 4, October 1995, 151-167, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=1995063103&site=eds-live&scope=site>. Accessed 30 March 2021.

²⁷⁹ “The Classical Republicanism of John Milton,” *History of Political Thought*, vol. 25, no. 2, 2004, pp. 243-275, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26220163>. Accessed 31 March 2021.

Christ will add Earth to His heavenly empire “and bound his Reign/ With earth’s wide bounds” (XII.370-371).

J. Martin Evans takes a different approach, dividing *Paradise Lost* colonizers and colonized rather than trying to ferret out Milton’s colonial ideology (1). Evans marks Satan (28), humanity (105), and Angels (71) as figures who can be read as colonizers and Adam, Eve (80), Satan, and the fallen angels as figure who can be read as colonized (33). One of Evans’ most interesting claims that can be applied to the subject of extraterrestrial empire is that “[t]he discovery of America was tantamount to the discovery of another planet” (124). Though Evans is not interested in this context, the question of the plurality of inhabited worlds is on Milton’s mind, especially in Book VII when he writes that “every Starr [is] perhaps a World/ of destined habitation” (620-622). If, as Danielson emphasizes, the cosmology of *Paradise Lost* is a multiverse with the potential for the creation of new universes at any time,²⁸⁰ several new possibilities for the organization of Evans’ colonizer/colonized scheme emerge. With them several new questions materialize: Are humans meant to colonize and inhabit any new universes the Father creates from Chaos? Are the inhabitants of these universes meant to interact? Is the construction of new universes a colonial imposition on Chaos’ realm? A careful reading of *Paradise Lost* provides insight into how Milton intends these questions to be interpreted and answered.

As these questions begin to show, Milton is interested in a much broader form of extraterrestrial space than Spenser, Cavendish, Godwin, or Behn. The extraterrestrial empire Milton imagines spans the entire universe, Heaven, Hell, and

²⁸⁰ *Paradise Lost and the Cosmologic Revolution*, p. 38.

maybe even yet-to-be-created worlds. These extraterrestrial images are contrasted against the many hints from Raphael and the other angels that God expects or desires a Christian geopolitical empire. The major example to which Raphael alludes is *Genesis* 1:28—that humanity should “Be Fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.”²⁸¹ While this command seems to require a subjugation of terrestrial space to human whims, does it imply a similar outcome for extraterrestrial locales?²⁸² Perhaps even suggestions of cosmic empire are tempered, however, by Milton’s repeated questioning of whether humanity can properly implement such a divine empire, or if the Fall relegates the prospect of extraterrestrial imperialism to a satanic endeavor.

To understand Milton’s ambivalence in portraying extraterrestrial empire, we must first picture the cosmos as the seventeenth-century English reader might have imagined it. Seventeenth-century thinkers were not yet modern in their approach to natural philosophy, especially concerning alchemy, magic, astrology and astronomy. The seventeenth-century model of the universe looks vastly different from our own. The two differences that will be important for our present purposes are the special status given to the moon as a boundary between the heavens and the Earth, and the idea that a *chaos infintumex atomis* existed beyond the fixed stars. For Milton the lunar sphere seems to question the value of extraterrestrial empire with comparisons to the

²⁸¹ King James Version, <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Genesis-Chapter-1/#28>.

²⁸² In response to the common objection that the narrator of *Genesis* literally means the planet earth, I offer the original language of *Genesis* 1:28 in Hebrew:

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ
 וּכְבֹשׁוּהָ וּרְדוּ בְדֹגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל־חַיָּה הַרְמִשָּׁת עַל־הָאָרֶץ:

The word ‘הָאָרֶץ’ can be loosely translated to earth, in the sense of ground. The commandment, therefore, is an indication to spread humanity across all tillable ground, which leaves open the possibility of extraterrestrial colonization.

Paradise of Fools, while his adaptation of Chaos offers a more favorable reading of cultural imperialism because the epic voice suggests that the Father could use the material to expand his empire via the creation of new worlds.

In associating the moon with the Fool's Paradise, Milton picks up themes similar to those I have written about with Godwin and Behn. Although Copernicanism was beginning to chisel away at Ptolemy's crystalline spheres while Milton was composing *Paradise Lost*, the older, geocentric model of the universe, in which the moon could be a boundary between the elemental and the ethereal or a home for souls unworthy of Heaven yet not deserving of Hell, maintained poetic value for Milton. A memorable instance of the moon's poetic value in Milton's early career comes at the end of the *Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle* when the Spirit soliloquizes:

I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earths end,
Where the bow'd welkin slow doth bend,
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the Moon.
Mortals that would follow me,
Love vertue, she alone is free,
She can teach ye how to clime
Higher then the Spheary chime;
Or if Vertue feeble were,
Heav'n it self would stoop to her.²⁸³

Milton borrows both the association between height and moral rectitude and the destiny of virtuous souls to move beyond the physical universe from Dante's *Paradiso*. In Dante's universe, the heavens consist of a series of nine geocentric,

²⁸³ *The Riverside Milton*, edited by Roy Flannagan, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998, pp. 120-171, ll. 1013-1024.

crystalline spheres.²⁸⁴ Following a common theme in the *Commedia*, souls who have found salvation appear closer to the empyrean the more virtuously they acted during their tenure on Earth.²⁸⁵ Dante imagines the empyrean as a non-spatial realm beyond the border of the physical universe, the *Primum Mobile*. Milton's cosmos is similar in that the *Primum Mobile* determines the boundary of the terrestrial universe,²⁸⁶ but instead of locating the empyreal heaven just beyond this border, Milton imagines a "nether Ocean" (*PL* VII.624) surrounding the "outermost Orb" (II.Argument) of the terrestrial universe.

The placement of Chaos is not the only way Milton strays from Dante's depiction of the universe. Different from Dante's heavenly meritocracy, Milton's Protestant cosmos includes a God who brings heavenly Grace to Earth. As Roy Flannagan notes of the final lines of *Comus*, "According to [this] theological distinction, humankind does not deserve grace, but God freely condescends...or 'stoops' to extend it to us."²⁸⁷ In these final lines of *Comus*, Milton offers the first hints of extraterrestrial and colonial ambivalences that he will continue to explore in *Paradise Lost*. These lines suggest an author who is unwilling to commit to a single image of virtue's relationship with extraterrestrial space. The final five lines of the masque tell readers that virtue teaches a soul how to climb the celestial spheres (1020-1021), but also that humanity is dependent on divine Grace for salvation and

²⁸⁴ Each sphere appearing in its classical, pre-Copernican order: the moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the Fixed Stars, and the *Primum Mobile*.

²⁸⁵ Or, in Dante's vision of the Celestial Rose, seated closer to the center.

²⁸⁶ In this chapter, I use the term 'terrestrial universe' to describe the universe and its creation as described in Book VII. This is in contrast to any other universes the Father may choose to create from primordial Chaos.

²⁸⁷ Editor, "Comus," by John Milton, *The Riverside Milton*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998, pp. 120-171, p. 171, n. 636.

that any effort to reach the empyreal heaven must be brought down to us by God (1024).

Rather than working through the ambivalence in his depiction of the extraterrestrial cosmos, Milton's ideas about the celestial become increasingly difficult to pin to a single model as his poetic career advances. Milton refuses even to choose between a helio- or geocentric model for the universe depicted in *Paradise Lost*. "What if the Sun/ Be Centre to the World," Raphael asks Adam,

and other Starrs
By his attractive vertue and their own
Incited, dance about him various rounds?
...
The Planet Earth, so steadfast though she seem,
Insensibly three different Motions move? (VIII.122-130)

For Milton's predecessor John Donne, Copernicus' heliocentric and Giordano Bruno's infinite universe, both of which remove the Earth from its residence at the center of the universe, place the new astronomy in a precarious intellectual position. On one hand, the possibility of a plurality of worlds made possible by a non-geocentric cosmos may represent a frontier that can offer the British Empire new resources and territory in a process parallel to the American colonies. On the other, Donne argues that the new philosophy strips away all the certainty that natural philosophers and theologians once felt about humanity's place in the cosmos. Donne's specific astronomical complaints are that "The element of fire is quite put out;/ The sun is lost, and the earth, and no man's wit/ Can direct him where to look for it,"²⁸⁸ and that new stars, such as the Cassiopeiaen nova of 1572, helped debunk the long-held Aristotelian belief that the heavens were

²⁸⁸ "An Anatomy of the World," *The Major Works: Including Songs and Sonnets and Sermons*, Oxford World's Classics, Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 207-218, ll. 206-8.

immutable. Several critics have suggested that for Donne the new astronomy represented a metaphysical rupture that threatened the simplicity of the Christian doctrine of Salvation. Harold Brodbar has commented that Renaissance authors often struggled to accommodate a cosmological model in which humanity was not the ontological, not to mention literal, center.²⁸⁹ The theological threat of Bruno's infinite universe prompted early modern theologians to confront several uncomfortable questions about the unique nature of the Messiah and human salvation: if extraterrestrial beings exist, can any part of humanity continue to imagine itself as God's chosen people? Were extraterrestrials affected by original sin? Were they descended from Adam—an alien equivalent of Adam? Did Jesus' crucifixion on Earth allow for the salvation of alien beings? Would a messiah need to appear on every world? The universe that humanity believed it understood was threatening to slip into incomprehension, often leading to a sense of “metaphysical nihilism” in Donne's poetry.²⁹⁰ Anatole France clearly explicates the major problem with the possibility of a plurality of worlds for pre-modern thinkers: Prior to the new astronomy, “God had no other children than mankind, and all His creation was administered after a fashion at once puerile and poetic.”²⁹¹ Donne's concern over the new astronomy, however, was far from universal. Brodbar reminds us that “the

²⁸⁹ “Late Renaissance Astronomy and the ‘New Philosophy,’” *Forum a Journal of the Humanities and Fine Arts*, vol. 3, no. 12, 1963, pp. 19-27, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=1963103292&site=eds-live&scope=site>. Accessed 8 April 2020.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

²⁹¹ Anatole France, *The Garden of Epicurus*, edited and translated by Alfred Allinson, William Brendon and Son, 1908, Classic Reprint, 2009.

Italian literati greeted the new astronomical knowledge with paeans²⁹² rather than Donne's nihilism.

In his ambivalence toward the new astronomy, Milton is unlike both Donne and the Italian poets. Humanity's place in the universe of *Paradise Lost* is clear, even if that universe is much larger than those we have encountered in the previous chapters. To understand their place in the universe Adam and Eve must grow out of the childlike conception of the universe that France describes. A prime example comes in Book IV when Eve questions the appearance of the stars at night, "wherefore all night long shine these, for whom/ This glorious sight, when sleep hat shut all eyes?" (657-658). Adam must remind Eve that the world is not anthropocentric, but is shared by extraterrestrial beings: The stars "Shine not in vain, nor think, though men were none,/ That heav'n would want spectators, God want praise;/ Millions of spiritual Creatures walk the Earth/ Unseen..." (IV.675-678).

Unfortunately for the first humans, not all of these spiritual creatures are friendly to mankind; some would seek to conquer the human race. Several critics have already noted Satan's similarities to colonial explorers, especially in the conquest mentality he brings to Eden. David Quint summarizes previous commentary comparing Satan with Comões' depiction of Vasco da Gama as follows:

Scholars have noted how the initial comparison of the flying Satan to a fleet returning from "Bengala, or the isles/ of Ternate and Tidore" (*Paradise Lost* 2.638-39) and heading for the cape is balanced in Book 4 (4.159-65) by the simile that likens the archfiend outside Eden to "them who sail/ Beyond the

²⁹² Brodbar, "Late Renaissance Astronomy and the 'New Philosophy,'" p. 24.

Cape of Hope, and now are past/ Mozambic.’ These similes at either end of Satan’s trip invoke the Indian Ocean world of Camões’ epic [the *Lusiades*].²⁹³

Such a reading fits well with the satirical imagery that Milton introduces when Satan becomes temporarily mired in the Paradise of Fools. It is important to note that Milton moves beyond parody to condemnation. Many critics have seen sinister intent in the comparison between Satan and explorers like the da Gama of the *Lusiades*. Evans, for instance, has commented on how Satan’s rhetoric encourages such parallels. Satan seems to be channeling Vespucci, for instance, as he relates to his followers: “Long were to tell/ What I have don, what sufferd, with what paine/ Voyag’d th’ unreal, vast, unbounded deep” (X.469-71). Vespucci’s original version of this statement is thinly disguised in *Paradise Lost*:

But what we suffered on that vast expanse of sea, what perils of shipwreck, what discomforts of the body we endured, with what anxiety of mind we toiled, this I leave to the judgment of those who out of rich experience have well learned what it is to seek the uncertain and to attempt discoveries even though ignorant.²⁹⁴

Evans presents the relationship between Satan and colonial explorers as follows:

[I]n Book 1 [we learn] that ‘a fame in Heav’n’ has spread stories of ‘new Worlds’ (650-51) elsewhere in the universe. In Books 2 and 3 we then

²⁹³ *Epic and Empire*, p. 253. Some of the influential sources Quint is summarizing include three studies by James H. Sims: “Camoens’ ‘Lusiads’ and Milton’s ‘Paradise Lost’: Satan’s Voyage to Eden,” *Papers on Milton*, edited by Philip Mohone Griffith and Lester F. Zimmerman, University of Tulsa Press, 1969, pp. 36-46; “Christened Classicism in *Paradise Lost* and the *Lusiads*,” *Comparative Literature*, vol. 24, 1972, pp. 338-356, <https://jstor.org/stable/1769461>, accessed 20 March 2021; and “The Epic Narrator’s Mortal Voice in Camões and Milton,” *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, vol. 51, 1977, pp. 374-384, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=1980105868&site=eds-live&scope=site>, accessed 20 March 2021.

²⁹⁴ *The New World*, edited and translated by George T. Northrup, Princeton University Press, 1916, p. 2, qtd. in J. Martin Evans, *Milton’s Imperial Epic: Paradise Lost and the Discourse of Colonialism*, Cornell University Press, 1996, p. 62.

accompany him on the perilous 'voyage' (2.426, 919) across the 'gulf' (2.441) of chaos to 'the coast of Earth' (3.739).²⁹⁵

Evans' breakdown of the exploratory and colonial imagery in *Paradise Lost* highlights only a few of the notable examples. I shall add a few more. To reach the new world, Satan must, like Spanish conquistadors and European explorers, sail through a "hoarie deep, a dark Illimitable Ocean" (II.981-892). This ocean, however, is not made of water, but of Chaos. Aside from the parallels that Evans emphasizes between Satan and Portuguese explorers, Christopher Hodgkins has made the connection between Satan and Spanish colonialism. "Like Cortés," Hodgkins writes, "Milton's Satan succeeds against seemingly great odds by manipulating and mastering the native religious imagination..."²⁹⁶ Evans also notes that just as a major drive for Columbus' westward journey was to spread Catholicism through the Far East, Milton's Satan is also a missionary, the religion he spreads, idolatry.²⁹⁷ So like the Spanish, who were among the first Europeans to explore and chart the New World, Satan also strikes out for Eden in search of riches. As Milton's Mammon has shown readers in Book I of *Paradise Lost*, there is gold enough in Hell to keep the fallen angels satiated. The material riches of his new kingdom, however, do not impress Satan. Lucifer follows the advice of Milton's epic voice when it consoles, "Let none admire/ That riches grow in Hell..." (I.690-1). When Milton depicts Satan as a missionary and conquistador, it is almost as if he were anticipating Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's statement, "In all societies there are off-casts; this impure part serves as our precursors and pioneers.... Thus are our first steps trodden, thus are our first

²⁹⁵ *Milton's Imperial Epic*, p. 62.

²⁹⁶ *Reforming Empire*, p. 65.

²⁹⁷ *Milton's Imperial Epic*, p. 69.

trees felled, in general by the most vicious of our people...’’²⁹⁸ Milton would have us read the first of the fallen angels to reach the Earth, like the nations who established New World colonies before the British, as the greatest threat to the physical and spiritual health of indigenous peoples.

To pursue the new world’s treasure of human souls, Satan undertakes a perilous journey from the shores of the recently colonized Hell across a vast ocean of Chaos. When Satan finally crosses this ocean, he finds himself in the Limbo of Vanity, and briefly believes this broad shore on the outermost shell of the human universe is Eden. While the visit to the Paradise of Fools is part of a long tradition in epic poetry, Milton’s placement of his Limbo of Vanity is surprising because it is not located in the lunar sphere, as it is in prior epics such as Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*. Contrary to Ariosto’s Paradise of Fools, Milton places his own Limbo of Vanity, “Not in the neighboring Moon, as some have dreamd;/Those argent Fields more likely habitants,/ Translated Saints or middle Spirits hold” (III.459-461). Instead the Limbo of Vanity is located “above the starry Sphear” (III.417) between Chaos’ empire and the hard outer shell protecting the corporeal universe. I believe that Milton’s placement of the Fools’ Paradise outside the cosmos’ outer shell is related to the prelapsarian state of the corporeal universe. Unfallen, the cosmos Milton describes is still a perfectly-ordered machine. There were no seasons before the Fall

²⁹⁸ Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer. Describing Certain Provincial Situations, Manners, and Customs, Not Generally Known; And Conveying Some Idea of the Late and Present Interior Circumstances of the British Colonies in North America. Written, for the information of a friend in England.*, printed for Thomas Davies, in Russell-Street, Convent-Garden and Lockyr Davis, in Holborn, 1783, *Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale Primary Sources*, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat06952a&AN=mul.b2826241&site=eds-live&scope=site>, p. 68. Accessed 9 January 2020.

because the sun did not yet travel through the zodiac (X.651-656), which may be the result of the sun changing its course through the heavens (X.671-678) or because the Earth has gained an axial tilt (X.668-671). Just as there is no room within the prelapsarian universe for cosmological disorder, there was no room to suffer fools in a prefallen humanity; they are separated from the Empire of Heaven. To tie this to the colonial theme of my argument, God refuses to incorporate the Fools' paradise into His kingdom, so it must sit just outside the human cosmos.

Equally important to the location of the Fools' Paradise is its function, which is why Ariosto can have his on the moon, Dante under the Earth, and Milton on the outer shell of the universe. The most basic function of the Paradise of Fools as a Christian tradition is to provide an alternative afterlife beyond Heaven and Hell for souls who did not have the mental faculties to be held responsible for their actions in life. Comprehending neither the nature of their works or sins, such souls could not justly attain the eternal bliss of Heaven, nor be held responsible enough for damnation.

The Paradise of Fools thus created an afterlife which is not explicitly judgmental like Heaven and Hell, nor purgatorial, but is still implicitly judgmental in important ways. For example, if the souls seem to be rewarded in their enjoyment of empty pleasures, such indulgence comes only in the form of Dantean *contrapasso*. Just as these souls spent their lives caught up in hollow delights, their makeshift paradise reflects the nature of the worldly baubles to which their misguided attentions were drawn. Ebenezer Cobham Brewer documents three traditions concerning liminal afterlives between Heaven and Hell that are explicitly not purgatorial, and have a

direct relation to the Fool's Paradise.²⁹⁹ These three traditions include the following: The *Limbus* (Limbo); the *Limbus Fatuorum* (Paradise of Fools); and, the *Limbus* of the Moon. Limbo as depicted in Dante's *Inferno* and based on a longstanding Scholastic tradition, is where "spirits to whom the benefits of redemption did not apply through no fault of their own" reside.³⁰⁰ For Dante these souls include those whom John Ciardi calls the virtuous pagans, who were "born without the light of Christ's revelation, and, therefore, they cannot come into the light of God, but they are not tormented."³⁰¹ Second is the *Limbus Fatuorum*, the Paradise of Fools.³⁰² This is distinct from both Hell and Limbo because Scholastic philosophers maintained that those who did not understand their works could not be held responsible for them. This applies to punishment, thus allowing them to escape eternal torment, but also to Salvation, denying them entrance to Heaven. Finally, Brewer includes a variation of the Fool's Paradise that is of particular importance for this dissertation because it engages in the same tradition of extraterrestrial anxieties with which Godwin and Behn were concerned: the Limbus of the Moon. This is a tradition that holds that the moon is the halfway point between Earth and Heaven, similar to how natural philosophers who believed in an Aristotelian/Ptolemaic universe understood the moon as a demarcation point dividing the earthly sphere of the elements from the superlunary world of Aether, the ethereal world.³⁰³ It is at this halfway point that

²⁹⁹ *Wordsworth Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, e-book, Wordsworth Editions, 2001, p. 669.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 699.

³⁰¹ Editor and translator, *The Inferno*, by Dante Alighieri, Penguin, 2009, p. 25.

³⁰² Brewer, *Wordsworth Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, p. 669.

³⁰³ For a more detailed description of Scholastic beliefs that separated the universe into sub- and super-lunary spheres, see Dennis Danielson, "The Discarded Image,"

patriarchs and prophets who died before Christ's Redemption wait until Judgment Day, at which point they will be received into Heaven.³⁰⁴

Though Milton's Paradise of Fools is not located in the sphere of the moon, it draws from a tradition that does uphold the association, meanwhile offering us a small glimpse of the much larger cosmos Milton imagines, a concept to which we will return later in this chapter. Thus in response to Godwin, who worries the British might lose the moon as a potential colony, Milton reveals himself as more of a precursor to Behn: the Early Modern obsession with the extraterrestrial empire can easily become a fool's errand, a form of lunacy that distracts all explorers and conquistadors tempted by it. For Milton, the conflation of extraterrestrial space and the Paradise of Fools has come to represent a trifle of the worst kind, a bauble without value that has also been stripped of its rhetorical power to advance geopolitical and spiritual empires. If Milton had read *The Man in the Moone* he might have considered Gonsales a fool just as fortunate as Columbus, to be swept up by his passions into the *Limbus Fatuorum*, but the fear remains that the *Limbus* might turn out to be another America, filled with resources and opportunities where none had taken the trouble to look. I cannot speculate on what Milton may have thought about the presentation of empire in *The Emperor of the Moon*, as Milton's death predates the play's first performance by thirteen years.

When Satan finally arrives at the Paradise of Fools, he immediately searches for the New World's treasure of human souls, but finds the realm still empty:

So on this windie Sea of Land, the Fiend

Paradise Lost and the Cosmological Revolution, Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 1-26. See especially the description on p. 6 and fig. 1.1 on p. 7.

³⁰⁴ Brewer, *Wordsworth Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, p. 669.

Walk'd up and down alone bent on his prey,
 Alone, for other Creature in this place
 Living or liveless to be found was none,
 None yet, but store hereafter from the earth
 Up hither like Aereal vapours flew
 Of all things transitorie and vain, when Sin
 With vanity had filld the works of men... (III.440-7)

This is when Satan realizes that as an explorer he has been thrown off course, and is not in Eden after all. His journey must continue if he wants to colonize the human realm. By presenting Satan as a voyager, Milton adds a colonial element not present in previous models such as Dante's Limbo, or Ariosto's lunar sphere, yet they all share the common theme of ignorance that exploration motifs help to emphasize. Dante offers an access point for comparing Satan's colonial activities in *Paradise Lost* with another damned adventurer who may show that the concept of extraterrestrial empire in a referential location (such as the moon or earthly Paradise) always runs the risk of becoming a fool's errand. Yet, as Columbus, Ulysses, and Satan show, even fools can sometimes accomplish amazing feats. For Columbus the mathematics behind his estimate of the westward distance between Europe and the East Indies was atrociously bungled. By the navigator's own math, the distance from Iberia to India should be 70,000 stadia.³⁰⁵ This converts to about 8,000 miles.³⁰⁶ Considering the eastern distance from Spain to India is roughly 5,000 miles, Columbus' calculations for the circumference of the Earth represent barely more

³⁰⁵ See John Freely, *Before Galileo: The Birth of Modern Science in Medieval Europe*, e-book, Overlook, 2012, unpaginated, the section cited appears on the 34th page.

³⁰⁶ Here assuming a stadium equals 600 feet, though as Ernie Tretkoff remind us that scholars debate the exact value of the stadia, often placing it somewhere between 500 and 600 feet, "June, ca. 240 B.C. Eratosthenes Measures the Earth," edited by Alan Chodos and Jennifer Ouellette, *APS Physics*, vol. 15, no. 6, June 2006, <https://www.aps.org/publications/apsnews/200606/history.cfm#:~:text=By%20around%20500%20B.C.%2C%20most,method%20of%20estimating%20its%20circumference>, para. 10. Accessed 17 February 2021.

than half the actual distance (approximately 24,900 miles). Since the Greco-Libyan mathematician Eratosthenes had used the position of the sun and the angle of shadows to estimate the circumference of the Earth at about 250,000 stadia (a measurement that using the lowest possible estimate of the length of a stadium, 500 feet, comes to an astonishingly accurate 24,000 miles) by about 240 B.C., Columbus' sponsors had cause to be skeptical of the westward voyages' chances.

While the westward voyage paid off for Columbus simply because the American continents happened to be in the path of his navigation, Dante's Ulysses does not meet with as much success on his own westward colonial endeavor. We meet Ulysses in *Inferno* XXVI, where he spends eternity sharing a great double horn of flame with Diomedes in the eighth *bolgia*. Though Dante's placement of Ulysses suggests he suffers for his involvement in deceptive military practices in the Trojan War (especially assisting in the planning of the Trojan Horse), we also hear from Ulysses a story about how he was a would-be explorer. In the original legend that follows, Ulysses and a small crew sail beyond all known maps, west of the Pillars of Hercules, across what Dante believes to be endless ocean, until Ulysses spies a mountain in the distance. Then disaster strikes:

*Cinque volte racesso e tante casso
Lo lune era di sotto da la luna,
Poi che 'ntrati eravam ne l'alto passo,
Quando n'apparve una montagna, bruna
Per la distanze, e parvemi alta tanto
Quanto veduta non avèa alcuna.
Noi ci allegrammo, e tosto tornò in pianto;
Ché de la nova terra un turbo nacque
E percosse del legno il primo canto.
Tre volte il fé girar con tutte l'acque;
A la quarta levar la poppa in suso
E la prora ire in giù, com' altrui piacque,*

Infin che 'l mar fu sovra noi richiuso. (130-142)³⁰⁷

For Dante, Ulysses portrays a foolhardy wanderlust and a need to acquire knowledge beyond what is permitted to a living person. Dante's Earth consists of only one Ptolemaic Antipode, the Mount of Purgatory and the earthly Paradise. All else is ocean. When Ulysses sees a mountaintop in the distance it must be the Mount of Purgatory. For his transgression, an attempt to land a ship and explore, if not colonize Purgatory while alive, Ulysses and his crew suffer the closest experience that discovery and colonization have to a *contrapasso*: shipwreck. Where Columbus represents a foolish explorer who fortunately arrived on the shores of a New World, Ulysses is the prideful fool who goes down with his ship, "*com' altrui paicque*," a God he cannot call by name so deep in Hell.

Because he draws a comparison between Satan and Ulysses at the end of Book II, Milton seems to be encouraging these kinds of comparisons between archfiend and the archetypal explorer-colonizer.³⁰⁸ But it is the evocation of another Grecian navigator who would have suggested colonization for seventeenth-century

³⁰⁷ *The Inferno of Dante*, pp. 222, 224. The English translation appears on pp. 223, 225:

...The moon's low face glowed full
 Five times since we set course across the deep,
 And as many times was quenched invisible
 When dim in the distance we saw a mountaintop:
 It seemed the highest I had ever seen.
 We celebrated—but soon began to weep,
 For from the newfound land a storm had grown
 Rising to strike the forepart of the ship.
 It whirled the vessel round, and round again
 With all the waters three times, lifting up
 The stern the fourth—as pleased an Other—to press
 The prow beneath the surface, and did not stop
 Until the sea had closed up over us. (XXVI.124-136)

³⁰⁸ Ulysses is often considered a colonizer, especially in his voyages to the island of the cyclopes and Aeaea. For more details, see Irad Malkin, *The Returns of Odysseus: Colonization and Ethnicity*, University of California Press, 1998.

readers. Just as Satan leaves the court of Chaos and Night, he leaps into the Abyss and

wins his way; harder best
 And more endanger'd, than when Argo pass'd
 Through Bosphorus betwixt the jostling Rocks:
 Or when Ulysses on the Larbord shunn'd
 Charybdis, and by th'other whirlpool steer'd. (II.1016-1020)

The image of the Argo would have put Milton's contemporary readers in mind of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor. Charles was infatuated with the symbolism that Philip the Good had appropriated from Apollonius of Rhodes to found the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1430. Well before the beginning of the *Reconquista*, Philip understood the story of the Argonauts as a metaphoric crusade. The Lamb of God, symbolized by the Golden Fleece, must be rescued just as Jerusalem must be retaken from Muslim control.³⁰⁹ When Titian painted his patron on horseback in 1548, he chose to depict Charles V wearing the insignia of the Order of the Golden Fleece over his gilded armor.³¹⁰ The Argonauts and the Golden Fleece are two potent symbols that helped Spanish colonialism transition from imagined to geopolitical empire. By invoking the Argo in an epic simile that describes Satan's voyage through Chaos, Milton could intend a subtle suggestion that the crusader and conquistador

³⁰⁹ This reading of the symbolism with which Philip the Good imbued the Order of the Golden Fleece is that of Andrew Wheatcroft as he presents it in *The Habsburgs: Embodying Empire*, Viking, The Penguin Group, 1995, p. 109. Wheatcroft's interpretation is in turn built upon Johan Huizinga's more broadly focused investigation into mental framework of Late Medieval symbolism as presented in *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, translated by F. Hopman, Middx, 1972, see esp. p. 195.

³¹⁰ The portrait in question, Titian's *Emperor Charles V at Mühlberg*, is housed in the Museo del Prado in Madrid. A digital reproduction of the oil painting, as well as a brief historical description are available on the museum's website: Museo Nacional del Prado, "Emperor Charles V at Mühlberg," *Museo Nacional del Prado*, <https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/emperor-charles-v-at-muhlberg/c7c91aaa-b849-478c-a857-0bb58a6b6729>. Accessed 6 May 2021.

mentalities of the Habsburgs and the Order of the Golden Fleece are inherently connected with the satanic.

After the models of Columbus, Ulysses, Jason, and Charles V, Milton's Satan represents the colonial explorer who almost becomes a foolish explorer who fails, but ends up a Columbus figure, the explorer who succeeds only by chance. Satan almost becomes a Ulysses when he narrowly escapes his own 'shipwreck' in Book II. As Satan embarks on his flight across Chaos to reach the newly created Earth he quickly meets

A vast vacuitie: all unawares
Fluttering his pennons vain plumb down he drops
Ten thousand fadom deep, and to this hour
Down had been falling, had not by ill chance
The strong rebuff of som tumultuous cloud
Instinct with Fire and Nitre hurried him
As many miles aloft. (II.932-38)

While Satan's journey in this passage is continued by "ill chance" the real potential setback for his colonial journey to Earth comes when he lands in the Paradise of Fools, briefly thinking it is Eden³¹¹. The indications of Satan's confusion are subtle but present. As soon as the Fiend lands on the cosmos' outermost sphere he "Walk[s] up and down alone bent on his prey" (III.441). Because Adam and Eve, both of whom Satan knows to reside in Eden, are the prey in question, Satan seems to be confused about his current location. This fits well with his character, who

³¹¹ To reflect the full complexity of what this "ill chance" represents for Milton in the Father's divine plan, we should note Roy Flannagan advances a reading of this section arguing "God's providence allows this explosive updraft." In other words, although Satan's momentary success is unfortunate for humanity, the introduction of Sin and Death to the human world will begin the process of Christian Salvation through the person of the Son. Roy Flannagan, editor, "Paradise Lost," By John Milton, *The Riverside Milton*, edited by Roy Flannagan, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998, pp. 353-710, p. 408, n. 238.

would confuse the Limbo of Vanity with earthly Paradise, but it also links Satan's desire to colonize Eden with his layover in the Fool's Paradise.

When Satan lands in the Paradise of Fools, he finds nothing that would signify colonial value to a British reader. Instead he finds a plethora of what Frank Huntley calls "anti-Catholic"³¹² imagery, demarcating the Paradise of Fools as a final resting place for "All who have thir reward on Earth, the fruits/ Of painful Superstition and blind Zeal,/ Naught seeking but the praise of men, here find/ Fit retribution, emptie as thir deeds..." (III.451-454). This, of course, harks back to the idea of Satan as a conquistador, with the mission to spread his colonial religion of idolatry. Thus when Satan colonizes the Paradise of Fools by becoming its first inhabitant, he provides readers with an image of the folly of Catholic, especially Spanish, colonialism and a warning about what British imperialism could become without safeguards. As is the case with Behn, one such safeguard is the need constantly to distinguish between British and Spanish imperialism, by rejecting colonialism through conquest. The contrast between Satan's conquistador-like imperialism and what British readers should think about imagined, extraterrestrial empire is abundantly visible in the following passage, which describes the Paradise of Fools as the future home to:

Embryo's and Idiots, Eremites and Friers
White, Black, and Grey, with all thir trumperie.
Here Pilgrims roam, that stray'd so farr to seek
In Golgotha him dead, who lives in Heav'n;
And they who to be sure of Paradise
Dying put on the weeds of *Dominic*,
Or in *Franciscan* think to pass disguis'd;

³¹² Frank L. Huntley, "A Justification of Milton's 'Paradise of Fools' (P.L. III, 431-499)," *ELH*, vol. 21, no. 2, June 1954, pp. 107-113, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/28722019>. Accessed 29 December 2020.

They pass the Planets seven, and pass the fixt,
 And that Crystalline Sphear whose balance weighs
 The Trepidation talkt, and that first mov'd;
 And now Saint *Peter* at Heav'ns Wicket seems
 To wait them wait them with his Keys, and now at foot
 Of Heav'ns ascent they lift thir Feet, when loe
 A violent cross wind from either Coast
 Blows them transverse ten thousand Leagues awry
 Into the devious Air; then might ye see
 Cowles, Hoods and Habits with thir wearers tost
 And fluttered into Raggs, then Reliques, Beads,
 Indulgences, Dispenses, Pardons, Bulls,
 The sport of Winds: all these upwhirl'd aloft
 Fly o're the backside of the World farr off
 Into a *Limbo* large and broad, since called
 The Paradise of Fools, to few unknown
 Long after.... (III.474-497)

The passage is lengthy, but bears attention because it is the section of Book III that most clearly describes both the nature of the Paradise of Fools and shows numerous examples of the anti-Catholic imagery to which Huntley calls our attention. The passage shows that Milton believes that many Catholics, especially those connected with the Scholastic tradition—the white, black, and grey friars especially—have formed their own brand of spiritual imperialism, but that this imagined empire is little more than a fool's errand. The key parallel between Scholastic philosophers and a Catholic empire such as Spain relates to the attempt to harmonize dissident traditions. In Scholastic thought, harmonization began as the attempt to reconcile Christian theology with classical philosophy, especially that of Plato and Aristotle. The attempt to bring some of the major intellectual schools together into a single system of thought has a major parallel with European imperialism. Unlike Scholastic harmonization, however, the imperial attempt at resolving contradictions of nations like Spain and Portugal focused on homogenizing the world into Catholic empires, a

process that Milton has already associated with Satan through the heavy implication that the Archfiend is a prototype for Vasco da Gama in II.638-39 and IV.159-65.

Milton worried that, if the adherence to Scholasticism could trap Catholic philosophers in a Paradise of Fools, imagining extraterrestrial empires may lead English authors to a similar fate unless the definition of empire could be modernized, and therein stripped of its association with conquest, and be replaced by Milton's vision of cultural imperialism. Scholasticism has obvious connections to the Catholic Church, serving as the primary critical methodology of the Church's theistic curriculum in medieval universities. Scholasticism itself is not equivalent to a spiritual empire, but Europe's Catholic empires were quick to use this and similar logic to justify their colonial expansion, since they could now harmonize ancient philosophy with modern religious practices.

In sharp contrast to Scholastic deference to tradition, Milton's ideal model of education instead focuses on the following goals: (1) education must "fit a man to perform justly, skillfully and magnanimously all the offices both private and publicke, of peace and war"³¹³ and (2) to "repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the neerest by possessing our souls of true vertue..."³¹⁴ In other words, Milton's education program emphasized meeting worldly and spiritual challenges rather than preserving the appearances of tradition.³¹⁵

³¹³ "Of Education," *The Riverside Milton*, edited by Roy Flannagan, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998, pp. 353-710, p. 981.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 980.

³¹⁵ The brief context of the Scholastic tradition does not support a detailed evaluation of Milton's theory of education in the present argument. Fortunately, there is a wealth of commentary on Milton's educational ideology. See, for instance, Gauri

Because the process of developing an extraterrestrial empire on the moon is closely associated with the development of Copernican thought, the Scholastic reception of Copernicanism is a perfect example of how the Church used the imagined empire of the Aristotelian tradition to maintain geopolitical authority. Scholastic thinkers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries tended to believe that the Earth was located in the center of the universe because this is where Aristotle locates it in *De Caelo*, and because this cosmological model matches well with literal interpretations of geostaticism³¹⁶ in 1 Chronicles 16:30,³¹⁷ Psalm 93:1,³¹⁸ Psalm 96:10,³¹⁹ but especially Ecclesiastes 1:5 which states, “[t]he sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.”³²⁰ Evidence from both *Paradise Lost* and *Areopagitica* shows Milton’s interest in the cosmological debates of the early seventeenth century in which geostatism was beginning to flounder in competition with the more accurate calendar systems for which Copernican astronomy allowed. The Catholic Church worked to maintain geostatism, despite calendar reform,

Viswanathan, “Milton, Imperialism, and Education,” *Modern Language Quarterly: A Journal of Literary History*, vol. 59, no. 3, pp. 345-361, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00267929-59-3-345>. Accessed 18 March 2021.

³¹⁶ Though geostaticism technically only indicates that the earth has no movement—neither revolutionary, rotational, nor axial—the concept often implied geocentrism since the apparent motion of the celestial bodies that appear to circle the globe can easily be attributed to their orbits in a geocentric cosmology.

³¹⁷ “Fear before [the Lord], all the earth: the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved. The Bible, King James Version, <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/1-Chronicles-Chapter-16/#30>.

³¹⁸ “The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.” Ibid., <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Psalms-Chapter-93/>.

³¹⁹ “Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously. Ibid., <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Psalms-Chapter-96/#10>.

³²⁰ Ibid., <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Ecclesiastes-Chapter-1/#5>.

because it had invested the authority of its teaching on the literal interpretation of such Bible passages as those listed above. The tension between the functionality of Copernican astronomy and the authority of the Scholastic tradition is one of the primary reasons Copernicus' mathematical treatise, *De Revolution Orbium Coelestium*, was published with an introduction penned by Andreas Osiander. Osiander attempted to defuse this tension by claiming "it is not necessary that [Copernicus'] hypotheses should be true, or even probably; but it is enough if they provide a calculus which fits the observations..."³²¹ Tradition holds that Copernicus felt betrayed upon discovering the inclusion of Osiander's preface in the published edition of *De Revolutionibus*.

Milton's interest in the cosmological debates of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is apparent in the cosmology he depicts in *Paradise Lost*, his representation of Chaos and his references to Galileo in *Paradise Lost* and *Areopagitica*. Milton references Galileo during two memorable movements in *Paradise Lost*. In Book III it is his telescope that draws Milton's interest: "There lands the Fiend, a spot like which perhaps/ Astronomer in the Sun's lucent Orb/ Through his glaz'd Optic Tube yet never saw" (588-590). Dennis Danielson reminds readers that this passage is not only a reference to the telescope, but also a poetic image of Satan becoming the first observable sunspot, which suggests a familiarity with Galileo's collected letters on the subject, *Istoria e Dimostrazioni Intorno alle Macchie Solari*.³²² The second reference to Galileo is in Book V, where the Florentine astronomer gets the

³²¹ "To the Reader Concerning the Hypotheses of This Work," *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*, by Nicolaus Copernicus, edited by Mortimer J. Adler, Clifton Gadiman, and Philip W. Goetz, translated by Charles Glenn Wallis, vol. 15, 1990, Encyclopaedia Britannica, pp. 505-509, p. 505.

³²² *Paradise Lost and the Cosmological Revolution*, p. 142.

distinction of becoming Milton's only contemporary named in *Paradise Lost*: "As when by night the Glass/ Of *Galileo*, less assur'd, observes/ Imagind Lands and Regions in the Moon:/ Or Pilot from amidst the *Cyclades/ Delos* or *Samos* first appeering kenns/ A cloudy spot" (V.261-266).

While the Milton-Galileo relationship admittedly is complicated in *Paradise Lost*, Galileo appears as a more direct symbol of free thought stifled by the Catholic-Scholastic tradition in *Areopagitica*. In Milton's famous treatise on the freedom of the press he writes that in Tuscany he "visited the famous *Galileo* grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition for thinking in Astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought."³²³ These "licensers" may well be the same Dominicans and Franciscans Milton marks for future posts in the Paradise of Fools as Black and Grey Friars. Thus the very reliance on intellectual tradition and dialectic reasoning that forced the Roman Inquisition to condemn Galileo's heliocentrism, earns Milton's scorn in the description of the Paradise of Fools. Like the Church's participation in the Galileo Affair, Milton is arguing that Scholastic intellectualism leads to a similar reliance on abstract reasoning and tradition over more authoritative evidence. Souls who will find their final resting place in the Paradise of Fools are participating in the same intellectual error. This is what Milton means when he writes that the pilgrims who "stray'd so farr to seek/ In Golgotha him dead, who lives in Heav'n" (III.476-477) are "Embryo's and Idiots" (III.474). Thus Galileo represents a major example of how the seventeenth-century Catholic Church aimed to perpetuate the imagined empire of the Scholastic tradition. It is the

³²³ "Areopagitica," *The Riverside Milton*, edited by Roy Flannagan, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998, pp. 997-1024, p. 1014, original italics.

same reasoning that allowed the Church to insist on a geostatic universe that led to what Milton would perceive as spiritual mistakes such as looking for Christ through the practice of pilgrimages to Golgotha when God lives in Heaven—which, for my present purposes is another way of saying that God is non-referential (III.474-476).

As for how the imagined empire of the Catholic-Scholastic tradition drives souls to the Paradise of Fools, Milton provides wind imagery as a method of transport. E. L. Marilla argues that the wind imagery in the passage is directly associated with the anti-Catholic imagery, arguing that Milton is relying on a long tradition of wind imagery associated with the perceived folly and decadence of the Church.³²⁴ For Roy Flannagan the Limbo of Vanity emphasizes that “monastic behavior within the Catholic Church” appears in this section of *Paradise Lost* as a space “constituted similar to Hell, where everything is also monstrous, distorted, and unnatural.”³²⁵ The beginning of the passage quoted here is notably anti-Catholic in the catalogue of those who will soon reside there. Whereas the Catholic Church makes an important distinction between White Friars (Carmelites), Black Friars (Dominicans), and Grey Friars (Franciscans), for Milton the distinctions between their belief systems are reduced to the pilgrimaging to Golgotha for a Lord who is not bound to referential space, but lives in Heaven. The non-referentiality of Heaven as Milton presents it here provides a strong analogy for imagined extraterrestrial empire. Carmelites, Franciscans, and Dominicans are all looking for

³²⁴ “Milton’s Paradise of Fools,” *English Studies: A Journal of English Language and Literature*, vol. 42, pp. 159-164, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=1961003267&site=eds-live&scope=site>, esp. pp. 159 and 161. Accessed 5 January 2021.

³²⁵ Editor, “Paradise Lost,” p. 429, n. 120.

Christ on a geospace hill when they should have been looking towards another type of space altogether—in this case a non-referential secondspace.

Caught up with worldly rituals and an obsession with finding religious experience in geospace, these souls follow a charted journey to the gates of Heaven, only to be swept away by winds to the Paradise of Fools. Souls that take religious orders late in life to assure their path to Heaven ascend past the seven planets, the fixed stars, and the crystallinum. It is only when these souls arrive before Saint Peter at the gates of Heaven that they are blown awry by devious winds. The winds Milton mentions are, of course, symbolic of all “light things,” but they also serve once more to connect the ideas of exploration and navigation to the Paradise of Fools.³²⁶ The explicit connection between the “Reliques, Beads, Indulgences, Dispenses, Pardons, Bulls” and the winds that blow them is deeply tied to the Western tradition of fools being blown off course when they do not take the proper precautions.

The imagery of violent winds shaping the destinies of those too ignorant to control their passions has a long history in Western literature, dating all the way back to Homer’s *Odyssey*. In the *Odyssey*, the crew’s passion manifests itself as a desire for forbidden knowledge, represented by a pouch Odysseus received while the guest of Aeolus on the island of Aeolia. The sack contains “winds that howl from every quarter” (X.23), representative of control over nature and navigation, yet the sleeping

³²⁶ Perhaps Flannagan’s choice of wording, ‘light things,’ at least in part parallels Knapp’s concept of trifles. Perhaps Milton understands elaborate vestments, relics, rosary beads, papal bulls, dispensations, and indulgences as objects of little actual value, but ones that hold immense rhetorical power for the Catholic Church.

Odysseus' crew insists that the bag must contain "troves of gold and silver" (X.40).³²⁷ Disaster strikes when the crewmen release the silver cord from the ox-skin bag. The unleashed winds blow Odysseus all the way back to Aeolia, which Aeolus sees as not only a representation of folly on the part of Odysseus' crew, but also a sign the gods had turned against the journey. "Away from my island," Aeolus lets out, "fast—most cursed man alive!/ It is a crime to host a man or speed him on his way/ when the blessed deathless gods despise him so./ Crawling back like this—/ it proves the immortals hate you!" (X.79-83).

In Lucian's *Vera Historia* readers likewise follow a narrator who is swept up in the pursuit of a foolish sailing trip. This time the winds lead to an extraterrestrial space as a result. Like Dante's Ulysses, Lucian's narrator and his men are sailing beyond the Pillars of Hercules when "a whirlwind suddenly arose, spun the boat about, raised her into the air about three hundred furlongs and did not let her down into the sea again..."³²⁸ After seven days and seven nights adrift on the infinite sea of air, they sight "a great country... resembling an island, bright and round and shining with a great light."³²⁹ Upon reaching this country, the crew makes contact with Endymion, who welcomes them to the moon. Unlike Milton's Satan, Lucian's fools are writers who exaggerate the truth in travel literature and readers who believe such outlandish lies, but the function of the winds as a symbol of being swept away from original intents and purposes remains the same.

³²⁷ Homer, *The Odyssey*, edited and translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1997.

³²⁸ "A True Story (*Vera Historia*)," The Loeb Classical Library: *Lucian: With an English Translation by A.M. Harmon of Princeton University: In Eight Volumes: I*, edited by E. Capps, T.E. Page, and W.H.D. Rouse, translated by A.M. Harmon, Harvard University Press, 1927, pp. 247-357, p. 259.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

Whether in Homer or Lucian, winds can represent the passions that sweep up fools as they attempt to pursue what is better left alone. Similarly, for explorers, winds can represent chance and setback, giving them colonial implications. Winds were one of the major reasons few pre-Columbian explorers tried to sail west across the Atlantic. A ship setting sail from any port in Europe would need to fight westerlies in an attempt to reach the New World. The solution is to head south before sailing west, passing the Canary Islands and then sailing for the Caribbean. The battle against westerlies is now traded for the risk of intense tropical storms and hurricanes. Even with a carefully charted route and the implementation of an upwind sailing technique known as beating, which allows for slow and difficult travel against the prevailing winds, sailors could easily be waylaid or thrown off course. Columbus' return to Spain was plagued by repeated problems with strong winds. Even once his ships were well into the open Atlantic, Columbus continued to face dangers brought about by the winds. On February 13th, 1493, he faced "great trouble with the wind" which blew from "sunset until daylight."³³⁰ On the 14th, the winds got bad enough that members of the crew vowed to make a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Guadalupe and another to Our Lady of Loreto in Ancona. In an appeal to the problem of winds, the *Santa Maria's* crew took on ballast by filling empty wine and water barrels with seawater.

Thus winds may represent explorers swept up by passions. Whether those passions illustrate a Homeric desire for knowledge best left unpursued, a Lucianic satire at the expense of travel writers who stretch the truth for the sake of their narratives, or even the restless desire to explore, captured so well by Dante's Ulysses,

³³⁰ "Journal of the First Voyage of Columbus," p. 174.

matters little. While winds have the power to drive exploration and colonization, they can just as easily turn against the colonizer. For the Homeric Odysseus winds might represent the uncontrollable power of nature and the human vanity that would strive to master it. Such is the case when Odysseus is blown back from the waters near Ithaca all the way to Aeolia because his crewmen looked inside the bag of winds that Aeolus gifts him. Similarly, Columbus and his crew suffer great anxiety upon the waves, but in their case trepidation never translates into actual damages. These are the lucky instances, however. Whereas Homer's Odysseus survives his encounter with the bag of winds, and even the subsequent storms that destroy his raft on the way to Phaeacia, Dante's Ulysses is not so fortunate on his final journey. Ultimately, Milton's Satan is too clever to become trapped in the Paradise of Fools, but the message is clear that many are not.

When put together, the anti-Catholic imagery of *Paradise Lost* III.474-497 and the symbolic importance of winds, both representative of a human folly that is also deeply tied to the theme of exploration, give readers insight into Milton's belief that imagined, extraterrestrial empire is not functioning as Spenser or Cavendish had originally hoped because the colonization is conducted by the wrong party. In this case, Satan represents the excessive conquest and cruelty of Catholic imperialism. He remains ambivalent as to whether a geopolitical British empire can avoid similar excesses. If the British have a hope of participating in the process of imperialism that distinguishes them from Catholic empires it is that Protestantism will keep English colonies from replicating the Paradise of Fools. Milton keeps open the possibility that British colonists will not be swept up into a Limbo of Vanity as Catholic imperialists were with their relics, rosaries, indulgences, and papal bulls. Yet

keeping a possibility open is hardly the ringing endorsement of colonialism that imperialists would desire. Milton is far more interested in the question of whether the excesses of Catholicism can be avoided in a British empire than developing a definitive answer.

In seeking to expand their spiritual and geopolitical empire to the lunar sphere and beyond, Catholic empires have just as effectively lost themselves on their journeys as Columbus, Ulysses, and Satan. They may seem to gain an immediate advantage in national power from their colonial holdings, but Milton continues to question if this advantage is real or exists in appearance only. If post-lapsarian human empires are in constant danger of replicating the Limbo of Vanity, might an abstract empire, such as the Protestant spiritual empire, be a more successful approach to imperialism? Again, Milton gives us no answer, only raises the question for our consideration.

Despite the lack of an obvious answer to the previous question, Milton is clear that not every attempt at imperialism will end in a Paradise of Fools, especially multinational empires selected by God's providence, such as the abstract idea of a Christian empire made up of all believers. Even while such empires might not perpetuate the eternal follies of Satan's conquest-based colonialism, Milton remains ambivalent as to what England can hope to accomplish through the creation of geopolitical and imagined empires. If Milton's feelings about extraterrestrial empire did not expand beyond anxiety, he would not have Raphael suggest that each of the stars may become a world that is populated either by extraterrestrial beings, or will become populated by unfallen humans in VII.621-22. Yet as the Fruit of Knowledge removed Adam and Eve from the prelapsarian state about which Raphael speculates,

Milton's Christian imperialism will need to be content with a Christian empire on Earth during life, and in the new Earth and Heaven of Revelation 21:1. Thus Milton's questioning of imperialism shifts from an interrogation of colonial identity to an investigation of colonial feasibility in a fallen world.

This is evident in *Paradise Lost* when God's divine empire suggests some instances of imperialism are acceptable or appropriate. One such instance is when the Father's empire is expanded by the creation of the terrestrial universe. When the Father commands, "[R]ide forth, and bid the Deep/ Within appointed bounds be Heav'n and Earth" the Son complies (VII.166-168).

[T]he fervid Wheelles [of His chariot], and in his hand
 He took the golden Compasses, prepar'd
 In Gods Eternal store, to circumscribe
 This Universe, and all created things:
 One foot he center'd, and the other turn'd
 Round through the vast profunditie obscure,
 And said, thus farr extend, thus farr thy bounds,
 This be thus just Circumference, O World. (VII.224-231)

By circumscribing a portion of Chaos' realm to demarcate the boundaries of the terrestrial universe, the Son effectively colonizes extraterrestrial space.

Many readers will question how circumscription is a form of colonization, especially if the materials of the Abyss were created *ex deo* from the Father's own essence. What belongs to God by definition cannot be colonized by God. This is a logical objection. But it is not safe to assume that the Abyss itself is part of God's domain. In Book VII, Raphael relates to Adam the Father's own words about His decision to withhold His presence from the Abyss: "I uncircumscrib'd myself retire,/ And put not forth my goodness" (VII.170-171). Both the Bible and *Paradise Lost* occasionally suggest that God can withhold his influence and presence from a space, though these passages are often countered with contradictory verses in other

portions of the texts. In the Bible, the idea that Hell is the absence of God in Matthew 25:41³³¹ and 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9³³² is seemingly irreconcilable with verses such as Revelation 14:10.³³³ Because God withholds his presence from the Abyss, it is possible to argue that the Father created the realm but then left it fallow. During this period of abandonment, Chaos and his court set up their realm in the Abyss. Because the Father created Chaos, it seems reasonable for the latter to assume the Abyss is to be his realm. When the Son arrives to create the terrestrial universe, however, it may appear, to Chaos or to readers, as an act of colonization. There are several other examples in *Paradise Lost* where Milton describes a colonial act positively. Each of these instances is connected to God's Christian empire, suggesting that, for Milton, the main goal of British imperialism for Milton is to spread Protestant Christianity. After the Creation, God's empire has been expanded to include not only Heaven, but the terrestrial universe where Chaos once held sway.

To be clear, Milton does not imagine a British empire that sets forth with a chariot and creative power. Any colonial ambitions he harbors for a British geopolitical empire seem to be related to cultural imperialism rather than a colonial

³³¹ "Then shall [God] say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels..." King James Version, <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Matthew-Chapter-25/#41>.

³³² "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power..." King James Version, <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/2-Thessalonians-Chapter-1>.

³³³ "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb..." King James Version, <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Revelation-Chapter-14/#10>.

enterprise. Milton's ideas that I compare to cultural imperialism are described in *Of Education* when he imagines that "other nations will be glad to visit us for their breeding, or else to imitate us in their own country."³³⁴ In addition to cultural imperialism, I have already suggested that *Paradise Lost* shows Milton's concern with the spread of Protestantism. The most straightforward way to imagine spiritual imperialism is to combine the concept with geopolitical empire. In such a case Milton would not be concerned with the British colonization of the Americas, Africa, and Asia, but rather is interested in seeing Protestantism spread over the face of the globe. The nations of these continents would then come to imitate the religious and cultural practices that Milton has declared ideal for England, after which they would continue to govern themselves as improved, yet independent nations. Beyond the notion of improvement, Milton reveals no specific vision for how the governance of his cultural imperialism would work. He is more interested in how the process of cultural education works than the process of expanding England's geopolitical authority. Imagining a large-scale project while paying little attention to how the end goal should be evaluated and managed is nothing new to Milton—he is similarly vague as to how freedoms of speech and press should be administrated and enforced in *Areopagitica*:

What would be best advis'd then, if it be found so hurtfull and so unequall to supresse opinions for the newness, or the unsutableness to a customary acceptance, will not be my task to say...³³⁵

If, however, we consider the implications of extraterrestrial imperialism in *Paradise Lost*, a reading of Miltonic colonialism with actual human colonies presents itself. The catch is that these colonies would not be geopolitical in that they are not

³³⁴ p. 986.

³³⁵ p. 1021.

on Earth. Just as Godwin imagines the potential for Spain to visit and colonize the moon, Milton offers hints that Christians may have an opportunity to colonize other planets, and even other universes. Such an argument faces several obstacles, not the least of which is that it asks readers to consider Milton in a framework few have yet attempted. When William Empson wrote of John Donne that all of his best love poetry is focused on getting to and colonizing a planet of the lovers' own, he found himself disappointed by the lack of support for his interpretation among early modern scholars.³³⁶ As is not the case with Donne, however, Milton allows Raphael to speculate explicitly about the possibility of humans ascending through extraterrestrial space. If they were to remain unfallen, humans might

at last turn all to Spirit,
Improv'd by tract of time, and wingd ascend
Ethereal, as wee, or may at choice
Here or in Heav'nly Paradises dwell... (V.497-500)

Though Raphael is not sure exactly how humans might come to inhabit extraterrestrial space, he reports having heard from the Father that humanity's ascension to Heaven is inevitable so long as Adam and Eve remain unfallen.

Humanity will dwell on Earth,

Not here, [i.e. in Heaven] till by degrees of merit rais'd
They open to themselves at length the way
Up hither, under long obedience tri'd... (VII.157-159)

The idea that unfallen humans will eventually rise to extraterrestrial space pairs well with Raphael's later claim that the universe is composed of "Starr's/ Numerous, and every Starr perhaps a World/ Of destind habitation" (VII.620-622). The syntax of these claims, however, is ambiguous. Does Raphael really mean to suggest Adam

³³⁶ *Essays on Renaissance Literature: Volume 1: Donne and the New Philosophy*, edited by John Haffenden, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 78.

and Eve will be able to fly to these other worlds? The pluralization of “Paradises” in V.500 seems to support such a reading. Conversely, because he is recounting the cosmogony, Raphael could mean that each world may be home to beings like Adam and Eve, though not descended from them. Ultimately, there is not enough evidence in *Paradise Lost* to choose between the interpretations. It seems as though Raphael’s explanation about the cosmos is shifting from his original ‘what if’ questions about the cosmos (e.g. “What if the Sun/ Be Centre to the World” (VIII.122-123)) to questions of in what way is the universe populated and traversable (e.g. “other Suns perhaps/ With thir attendant Moons thou wilt descie/ Communicating Male and Female Light,/ Which two great Sexes animate the World, Stor’d in each Orb perhaps with some that live (VIII.148-152)). Not long after these questions, however, Raphael takes a step back from his prior interpretation, encouraging Adam to focus on the present and leave the hypothetical possibility of other worlds for the future: “Dream not of other Worlds, what Creatures there/ Live, in what state, condition or degree,/ Contented that thus far hat been reveal’/ Not of Earth only but of Highest Heav’n” (175-178). Now it seems as if Raphael has whetted Adam’s curiosity about extraterrestrial worlds in Book VII only to douse it in Book VIII. This could well be an indication that Raphael does not want Adam distracted during Satan’s coming temptation. Book VII suggests the fruits of obedience while Book VIII reminds readers that such rewards would only be available to an unfallen humanity. For the possibility of a future with interplanetary travel, Adam should have heeded Raphael’s warning that “Heav’n is for thee too high/ To know what passes there; be lowlie wise” (VIII.172-173). Thus when Adam and Eve do Fall, speculation about their potential for extraterrestrial travel

becomes severely limited. Because their bodies are now subject to death rather than improvement, the pair will make no physical flights to heavenly paradises, and will not become colonizers beyond the terrestrial sphere.

Raphael's vision of humanity ascendant is by no means original to Milton; the theme of unfallen humans traveling to other worlds was a popular motif in early modern literature. Other than *Paradise Lost*, one of the most famous instances of this motif comes from *Discovery of a World in the Moon*, where Wilkins writes "'tis likely all Men should have lived [on the moon] if *Adam* had not fell."³³⁷ The Fall is what keeps empires bound to Earth. Sensing the lack of a real extraterrestrial empire that might have been afforded to an obedient humanity, Milton's readers can think about how they make up for the first humans' failures by distinguishing their geopolitical methodology from that of Satan and the excesses of Catholic empire.

Where Raphael imagines humans could become extraterrestrial colonists in the future, Satan, on his first journey to Eden, wonders if humanity can already make its way between the stars. Asking Uriel to point out the fixed seat of humankind, Satan qualifies his request:

or [if] fixed seat [humanity] hath none,
But all these shining Orbes his choice to dwell;
That I may find him, and with secret gaze,
Or open admiration him behold
On whom the great Creator hath bestowed

³³⁷ "That the Moon May Be a World," *The Mathematical and Philosophical Works of the Right Reverend John Wilkins, Late Lord Bishop of Chester*, printed for J. Nicholson, at the King's-Arms in Little Britain, A. Bell, at the Cross-Keys in Cornhill, B. Tooke, at the Middle-Temple-Gate in Fleetstreet, and R. Smith under the Piazza's of the Royal Exchange, 1708, Gale Primary Sources, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat06952a&AN=mul.b2917068&site=eds-live&scope=site>, pp. 1-135, p. 112. Accessed 4 March 2021.

Worlds... (III.669-674)

It is not difficult to imagine humans, improved by the tract of time, making flights between stars when Milton depicts angels making the journey with significant ease. When Uriel descends to Earth he does so “On a Sun beam, swift as a shooting star” (IV.556). Raphael makes his own descent by setting off “up-springing light/ [to fly] through the midst of Heav’n” and makes his way to Earth (V.250-251). “Down thither prone in flight/ He speeds, and through the vast Ethereal Sky/ Sails Between worlds and worlds, with steady wing,” (V.266-268) until he arrives on the eastern cliff of Paradise. If Raphael’s speculation is correct, human population of the terrestrial universe via flights between stars would be a possible method of spreading God’s Christian empire throughout extraterrestrial space.

While speculation about space travel and extraterrestrial colonization is fascinating in its own right, it becomes truly meaningful when it can be used to contextualize the way Milton thought about the British geopolitical colonial project. Unfallen humans colonizing the galaxy, traveling to other worlds on winged flight is quite different from the post-lapsarian world Milton and his readers inhabit. While the Fall precludes the possibility of literally visiting Heaven and other worlds with a living body that has been turned all to spirit, the type of cultural imperialism for which Milton advocates in *Of Education* leaves open the possibility of an ascent to Heaven as members of the elect after the Final Judgment. The expansion of God’s empire into extraterrestrial space by the travels of unfallen humans parallels the work of seventeenth-century priests and missionaries, who reconstruct the lost possibility of the ascent to Heaven, albeit after death, by teaching the gospel and providing a path for Salvation. Milton is well aware of the potential dangers inherent in a belief

that may encourage a conquest mentality, to which missionaries could be prone. Just as Milton cannot be sure what would have been in store for unfallen humans, he does not have a clear sense of how such beings would spread the Father's spiritual empire. The Spanish imperialists who followed Columbus believed they were justified in colonization because they were engaged in the process of saving souls, yet their brand of imperialist conquest was akin to Satan's detour in the Paradise of Fools. The major difference is that British colonists must show indigenous peoples why it is in their interest to imitate British practices, convert to Christianity, and potentially even associate themselves directly with the British Empire. In this way, Milton's ideal colonists have much in common with Raphael—they are messengers who explain what goods their empire has to offer, provide protection against rival imperialists, and offer both knowledge and spiritual guidance freely without the expectation of anything in return. Only as a last resort does Raphael warn Adam what can happen if he associates himself with Satan's empire by eating from the Tree of Knowledge.

The imaginative possibility of colonizing extraterrestrial planets is only part of the colonial potential Milton imagines for extraterrestrial space in *Paradise Lost*. Because the terrestrial universe is only one of a potential multitude of cosmos the Father may choose to create from primordial Chaos, the next logical step is to imagine that unfallen humans would have the ability to embark on flights between the terrestrial and other universes. That Milton suggests the terrestrial universe is not the only universe the Father may choose to create is now garnering increased

critical attention.³³⁸ When Danielson comments on just such a possibility he cites the following passage:

Into this wilde Abyss,
The Womb of nature and perhaps her Grave,
Of neither Sea, nor Shore, nor Air, nor Fire,
But all these in thir pregnant causes mixt
Confus'dly, and which thus must ever fight
Unless th' Almighty Maker them ordain
His dark materials to create more Worlds... (II.910-916)

In Danielson's reading of the passage the word 'worlds' does not refer to planets, but rather to the terrestrial universe and the possibility that He may create others from Chaos, a concept Danielson refers to as the multiverse.³³⁹

Danielson is well within historical precedent for using a term modern readers tend to associate with science fiction to describe a seventeenth-century picture of the universe. He borrows the idea directly from Christoph Sheiner and Johan George Locher's *Disquisitiones Mathematicae* in which the authors write:

*Mathematici plerique, Vniuersum infinitum esse statuerent, inque duas tribuerunt portiones, quarum alteram Mundum hunc aut Mundos fecerunt, singulos quidem finitos mole, infinitos tamen numero; è quibus & mundi facti alerentur, & noui identidem fierent.*³⁴⁰

³³⁸ The second chapter of Dennis Danielson's *Paradise Lost and the Cosmologic Revolution*, "Multiverse, Chaos, Cosmos," is one of the first studies to examine the possibility that the Father may follow the cosmogony with subsequent creations of other universes to populate the Chaos between Heaven and Hell.

³³⁹ *Paradise Lost and the Cosmologic Revolution*, p. 38.

³⁴⁰ *Disquisitiones Mathematicae, de Controversiis et Novitatibus Astronomicis*, Ingolstadt, 1614, accessed via Google Books, https://www.google.com/books/edition/Disquisitiones_Mathematicae_De_Control/hRtRAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0, p. 16. Accessed 3 July 2021. Danielson has offered the following translation for this passage: within the infinite universe, astronomers

have distinguished two parts, one of which they assert to be this world or rather worlds, separate and finite in mass yet infinite in number; the other dispersed beyond this this world, an infinite great heap of atoms, from which both already-created worlds might be fed and new worlds might from time to time be made.

Sheiner and Locher themselves borrowed their cosmological model from far older sources. The depiction of an infinite Chaos from which universes are born can be traced back over 2,300 years. One of the most famous examples of the ancient multiverse can be found in Aristotle's *De Caelo*:

Even if the total mass [in existence] is not infinite, it may yet be great enough to admit a plurality of universes. The question might possibly be raised whether there is any obstacle to our believing that there are other universes composed on the pattern of our own, more than one, though stopping short of infinity.³⁴¹

While Lucretius does not follow Aristotle's belief in a plurality of universes, he imagines a single universe that is infinite in scope:

*Principio nobis in cunctas undique partis
et latere ex utroque <supra> supterque per omne
nulla est finis...*

...

*nullo iam pacto veri simile esse putandumst
undique cum vorsum spatium vacet infinitum
seminaque innumero numero summaque profunda
multimodis volitent aeterno percita motu,
hunc unum terrarum orbem caelumque creatum,
nil agree illa foris tot corpora materialia...*³⁴²

Paradise Lost and the Cosmological Revolution, p. 40.

³⁴¹ "On the Heavens," p. 365. A more literal translation may be found in the Loeb Classical Library edition:

[I]t will be necessary to inquire whether, even if the sum total of matter [in the universe] is not infinite, it may yet be sufficiently great for the existence of several worlds: for it might be raised as a difficulty that there is no reason against other worlds being formed similarly to the one around us, many, though not infinite in number.

On the Heavens p. 53. I prefer the previous translation for its simplicity, yet it is important to recognize Stocks takes some liberties in making the English idiomatic. Note also that, as in *Paradise Lost*, the terms 'worlds' and 'universes' are here interchangeable.

³⁴² Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, edited by William Augustus Merrill, American Book Company, 1907, ll. II.1048-1057. In idiomatic English the passage reads, "In all directions alike, on this side or that, upward or downward through the universe, there is no end... Granted, then, that empty space extends without limit in every direction and that the seeds innumerable in number are rushing on in countless courses through an unfathomable universe under the impulse of perpetual motion, *it*

While both Aristotle's and Lucretius' universes were influential models for men like Milton, Scheiner, Locher, and Bruno, it was Lucretius' model that was more authoritative for them. In the passage above, we can see an early model of Bruno's infinite universe, Scheiner and Locher's *chaos infintumex atomis*, and the wild and ungoverned nature of Miltonic Chaos.

Danielson's claim that Chaos remains a creative material that God could use in the construction of future universes establishes Danielson within a tradition of critics who equate the Chaos of *Paradise Lost* with the original matter Milton describes in *De Doctrina Christiana*.³⁴³ While some of the most recent criticism has begun to move away from previous attempts to link Chaos with Milton's original matter,³⁴⁴ I find the similarities between the substances too similar to ignore. Linking the Chaos of *Paradise Lost* with the *prima materia* of *De Doctrina* also establishes Milton within a philosophic discourse, popular in mid-seventeenth century England, aimed at Christianizing the primordial Chaos depicted by respected ancient authorities.

is in the highest degree unlikely that this earth and sky is the only one to have been created and that all those particles of matter outside are accomplishing nothing." This translation is from R.E. Latham, editor and translator, *On the Nature of the Universe*, Penguin, 1994, pp. 63-64, ll. II.1048-1058, *original italics*.

³⁴³ See the following: A. B. Chambers, "Chaos in Paradise Lost"; Regina Schwartz, "Milton's Hostile Chaos: '...And the Sea Was No More,'" *ELH*, vol. 52, no. 2, 1985, pp. 337-343, <https://www.jstor.com/stable/2872841>, accessed 30 December 2018; John Rumrich, "Milton's God and the Matter of Chaos," *PMLA*, vol. 110, no. 5, 1995, pp. 31-55, <https://doi.org/10.1353/mlt.2018.002>, accessed 14 September 2021; Walter Clyde Curry, *Milton's Ontology, Cosmology, and Physics*, University Press of Kentucky, 1957; and Malabika Sarkar's *Cosmos and Character in Paradise Lost*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

³⁴⁴ Some of the most recent criticism, however, has begun to move away from the tradition of connecting Milton's prime matter with the *Chaos of Paradise Lost*, as has Sarah Smith, "The Ecology of Chaos in *Paradise Lost*," *Milton Studies*, vol. 59, 2017, pp. 31-55, <https://doi.org/10.1353/mlt/2018.002>. Accessed 30 December 2018. Smith argues that Chaos is more "contradictory" and "foreboding" than the primordial matter described in *De Doctrina*, writing instead that Chaos should be defined by its inherent disorder rather than its materials (36-37).

Ralph Cudworth, one of Milton's contemporaries and a fellow Cambridge alumnus, maintained an active interest in the topic. He is best remembered for his defense of natural morality and human freedom in the *True Intellectual System*. In this book, Cudworth argues that the idea of cosmogony from Chaos is a universal tradition amongst the pagan religions, and therefore represents a misinterpretation of Christian Truth. It cannot be doubted, Cudworth argues, that the tradition of Chaos

was originally Mosaical, and indeed at first a Divine revelation...Wherefore those Pagan Cosmogonists, who were Theists, being Polytheists and Theogonists also, and asserting, besides the one supreme unmade Deity, other inferior mundane gods, generated together with the world...they must needs, according to the tenor of that tradition, suppose them, as to their corporeal parts at least, to have been juniors to Night and Chaos, and the offspring of them, because they were all made out of an antecedent dark chaos.³⁴⁵

Milton never says much about Night and Chaos as mundane gods. They appear as entities in Books II and X, but often leave the reader with more questions than answers. What, for instance, makes Milton's Night "unoriginal" (X.477)? Does this mean that Night is uncreated as Orgel and Goldberg had interpreted it,³⁴⁶ or that unoriginal means not original and therefore is an unintentional admission by Satan that God is the source of all things?³⁴⁷ How does Chaos the entity relate to the cosmological state of uncreated matter? In imperial terms, is the Father claiming sections of Chaos' realm to form colony universes? Though the mundane gods may leave readers with more enigmas than insights, critics have written much more

³⁴⁵ *The True Intellectual System of the Universe: Wherein All the Reason of Philosophy of Atheism is Confuted, and Its Impossibility Demonstrated. A Treatise on Immutable Morality; with a Discourse Concerning the True Notion of the Lord's Supper: and Two Sermons on 1. John 2:3, 4, and 1 Cor. 15:27*, edited by Thomas Birch, vol. 1, Gould & Newman, 1837, pp. 344-345.

³⁴⁶ Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg, editors, *The Oxford Authors John Milton*, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 910, n.

³⁴⁷ Roy Flannagan, editor, *The Riverside Milton*, Houghton-Mifflin, 1998, p. 638, n. 178.

frequently on the role of Chaos as the original matter from which the Father created the corporeal universe. As is the case with many of the critics listed above, it is common to draw a connection between the Chaos depicted in *Paradise Lost* and Milton's original matter, as it is described in *De Doctrina Christiana*. The seventh chapter of *De Doctrina*, "Of the Creation" focuses on resolving what Milton viewed as logical contradictions in the cosmogony depicted in *Genesis*. One of the major contradictions Milton grapples with is the idea that God could create the universe *ex nihilo*, "not because of any defect of power or omnipotence on his part, but because it was necessary that something should have existed previously" (1176). In this passage Milton has subtly redefined omnipotence. Rather than following the word's etymological roots, Milton treats God's omnipotence as a willingness to conform to logical principles, meaning that even an all-powerful God cannot create matter from nothing, because this action does not conform to logic. This argument is in concordance with Raphael's statement that the soul is composed by "Faculties that serve Reason as chief" (V.102). In Book IX of *Paradise Lost*, Milton reminds us that reason is not a limitation on humanity, but rather the route to freedom: "But God left free the Will, for what obeyes/ Reason, is free" (351-352). By acting in accordance with the logic that something cannot be created from nothing, Milton's God is exhibiting true omnipotence and freedom. Still, Milton needs an explanation for how God could create the universe if it could not appear *ex nihilo*. Another option is that the universe was created from a material that existed co-eternal with God, but this argument is directly opposed to Christian doctrine. The explanation Milton prefers is that the *prima materia* had "originated from God at some point in time" (*De Doctrina* 1177). Milton calls the process of God creating the material

universe from himself *creatio ex deo*. Though the process, *creatio ex deo* populates the universe with original matter, God has not yet shaped this matter into the terrestrial universe.³⁴⁸ He first creates the Son,³⁴⁹ then Heaven and the angels (1175), then Hell, and finally the terrestrial universe to repopulate Heaven after the Civil War. The state of the terrestrial universe prior to its creation appears in *Paradise Lost* much as it does in Genesis 1:2: “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.”³⁵⁰

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton uses the names Chaos, the Deep, and the Abyss to refer to the primordial state of existence prior to the Creation. Though Milton gives few details concerning the nature of Chaos, readers can piece together a few facts about this enigmatic realm and persona. Most important for the present argument is that Chaos is “The Womb of nature and perhaps her grave” (II.911), which may signify that it is the material from which the Son shaped the terrestrial universe and that, at its end, the universe could return to its primordial state. Satan also suggests the terrestrial universe will return to Chaos when he says “if I that Region lost [i.e. the terrestrial universe after the creation],/ All usurpation thence expell’d, reduce/
To her original darkness and your sway/ (Which is my present journey) and once more/
Erect the Standard there of *ancient Night*;/ Yours be th’ advantage all, mine the

³⁴⁸ Although Milton opens the seventh chapter of *De Doctrina* with an early claim that “[a]nyone who asks what God did before the creation of the world is a fool; and anyone who answers him is not much wiser” (1174), this claim does not contradict my statement here. For Milton, the creation begins with the separation of original matter from the essence of God. Thus the preparation for shaping the universe from Chaos is part of the Creation rather than a precursor to it.

³⁴⁹ The Greek grammar in the New Testament “make[s] it absolutely clear” that “the Son of God was *the first born of all created things*” (*De Doctrina* 1175). The emphasis is original, and serves to show Milton is quoting from Colossians 1:15.

³⁵⁰ *The Bible*, King James Version.

revenge” (II.982-987). Here Satan pretends that he is not a would-be colonizer, and that he would assist Chaos and Night reclaim a realm diminished by a colonial God. In addition to Satan’s suggestion that he can help Chaos reconquering his original realms by returning the terrestrial universe to its uncreated state, readers also get hints that Heaven and Hell were created from Chaos. As the personification of Chaos says to Satan, “[I]f all I can will serve/ That little which is left so to defend/ Encroacht on still through our intestine broils/ Weak’ning the Scepter of old Night: first Hell/ Your dungeon stretching far and wide beneath;/ Now lately Heaven and Earth, another World/ Hung o’re my realm” (II.999-1005). Chaos considers each reduction of his realm a colonial offense, and may be concerned that more and more of his realm will be continuously stripped away to create more worlds.

Milton never explicitly calls Chaos an emperor; the Abyss over which he rules is coded as an empire (II.974). Rather than emperor, Chaos is an “umpire” (II.907) with the trappings of a ruler. He sits on a throne (II.959), has a royal consort in Sable-vested Night (II.962-963), and presides over a court of monstrosities including Orcus, Ades, Demogorgon, Rumor, Chance, Tumult, Confusion, and Discord (II.964-967). Because Chaos can be loosely defined as an imperial power in its own right, its status as colonized space is complicated. Yet, unlike God, Chaos cannot colonize. Despite what Satan argues, there is no explicit evidence in *Paradise Lost* that Chaos can revert creation back to its primordial state. While II.911 might suggest it is technically possible for Chaos to prove the grave of nature, the line does not state that it is Chaos himself who sends nature to her grave. It is just as likely that Milton has *Revelation* 21:1 in mind, in which St. John is shown a vision of a new Heaven and a new Earth, “for the first heaven and the first earth was

passed away...³⁵¹ Ultimately, Chaos can only wait for more of his primordial realm to fall under control of either Heaven or Hell.

Though critics have approached Miltonic Chaos with a wide variety of critical methodologies, few have considered it through the framework of imperialism. Instead, most critics are concerned with whether they should consider Milton's Christianization of Chaos as theologically conventional or radical. A.S.P. Woodhouse favors the former, despite Chaos' *ex deo* origin. Milton frames his depiction of the Abyss within the tradition of Greco-Roman and Babylonian cosmogonies from primordial Chaos.³⁵² Woodhouse understands even the doctrinal implications of Miltonic Chaos as traditionalist. For him, Milton's presentation of the Abyss implies that Creation could only be understood through the assistance of divine revelation—a function fulfilled by Raphael in *Paradise Lost*—and that the Father's decision to create the corporeal universe was voluntary.³⁵³

Chambers' reading of Chaos as fundamentally good³⁵⁴ goes against the “[l]arge portions of scholarship [which] have viewed matter as inherently evil or

³⁵¹ King James Version, <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Revelation-Chapter-21/>. The final lines of this verse, however, introduce a seemingly insoluble interpretive dilemma for Milton's vision of Chaos. *Revelation* 21:1 concludes, “and there was no more sea.” If this sea is meant to represent the waters of *Genesis* 1:2, which Milton clearly states should be equated with Chaos and the Abyss in *Paradise Lost* I.21, how can chaos be both the grave of nature and non-existent. My suggestion is that the epic voice is wrong to suggest Chaos could be the grave of nature, unless nature is reduced to Chaos before being reformed into the new Heaven and the New Earth.

³⁵² A. S. P. Woodhouse, “Notes on Milton's Views on the Creation: The Initial Phases,” *Philological Quarterly*, no. 28, 1949, pp. 211-237, <https://0-search-proquest-com.libus.csd.mu.edu/docview/1290912664?accountid=100>, p. 211. Accessed 24 April 2021.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 211-212.

³⁵⁴ Chambers, “Chaos in *Paradise Lost*,” p. 68.

negative.”³⁵⁵ The logic behind this statement is that if matter was indeed formed *ex deo*, it would have been created in goodness and only later corruption could turn away from its original goodness. This position establishes Chaos as a receptacle of morality rather than as a moral entity in itself.³⁵⁶ Chaos is capable of creating both the Earth and the bridge to Hell, depending on the entity that acts upon it. This makes Chaos, much like Eden, a colonial space for the empires of Heaven and Hell. If diabolic forces build with the material of Chaos’ empire, Milton depicts the action as an evil colonialism. However, when God circumscribes and orders the terrestrial universe, the act of Creation is portrayed as a creative force condoned by divine love. In the case of sin and death, Milton uses an epic simile to compare the pair with opportunistic explorers searching for the Northern passage:

As when two Polar Winds blowing adverse
 Upon the *Cronian* Sea, together drive
 Mountains of Ice, that stop th’ imagined way
 Beyond *Petsora* Eastward, to the rich
Cathaian Coast. The aggregated Soyle
 Death with his Mace petrific, cold and dry,
 As with a trident smote, and fix’t as firm... (X.289-295)

When Sin and Death seek dominion over Chaos, Milton depicts this colonial act as a major source of the evils found on Earth that makes the way to hell “easie” and “inoffensive” (X.305). However, when God claims territory from Chaos, the act is praised by the heavenly choir. Sin and Death’s colonization of Chaos is only a perverse imitation of God’s creation: Where the Holy Spirit “Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss” (I.21), Satan’s children too, create by “Hovering upon the Waters” (X.285). Rather than aggravating the primordial soil up into a form, God purifies the Abyss through his intervention. He infuses primeval matter with a

³⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 67.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 69.

vital virtue, “a vital warmth/ Throughout the fluid Mass, but downward purg’d/ The black tartareous cold Infernal dregs/ Adverse to life” (VII.236-239).

I sense the dissonance between the diabolic and divine colonizations of Chaos’ realm is meant to suggest that imperialism may be an appropriate endeavor for the British or Christian empires, but only under the condition that the process is focused on making the colony profitable and productive, as well as offering the possibility of spiritual salvation by expanding the influence of Christianity. By circumscribing a portion of the Abyss, God is coded as a colonist who does just this. For these reasons, God maintains a right to colonize Chaos’ realm, even if He had previously left the Abyss fallow, while Sin and Death are mere usurpers. If God were to create additional universes as Danielson suggests, Milton would find Him within his colonial rights to do so.

Expanding on Danielson’s arguments, I find it nearly impossible that Milton’s God would not create additional universes—as mentioned previously, the Book of Revelations describes at least two new promised worlds—because Chaos and the Abyss need a reason to exist within the text. It is clear from Book VII that one of the fundamental purposes of Miltonic Chaos is the creation of the terrestrial universe. Because Milton’s God in *Paradise Lost* is omniscient (VII.123) and omnipotent (VII.136), it seems unlikely that He would create so much more Chaos than was necessary for the creation of a single universe. Part of divine perfection must be perfect planning. My suggestion is that rather than arguing God’s planning for the cosmogony is imperfect, it is more reasonable to suggest that the remaining Chaos exists for future cosmogonies.

Thus, God was not only within His rights to colonize Chaos and create the terrestrial universe, He will be within His rights to create any and all future universes from the *prima materia*. If Adam and Eve had refrained from eating of the Tree of Knowledge, they too would likely be able to visit, if not colonize universe after universe. Since *Paradise Lost* is a story “Of Mans First Disobedience” (I.1), however, humanity must be content with spreading Christian empire over the face of a single world. Milton recognizes that any attempt to spread Christianity to the Americas, Asia, and Africa is a form of cultural imperialism. Yet he maintains that such an empire is justified because it will improve foreign nations by teaching them Christian Truth, and because Milton understand reason and freedom as deeply interconnected, offer nations more freedom than if they had not encountered Britain’s cultural imperialism.

Between the obvious rejection of Satan’s conquest-based imperialism, Adam and Eve’s biblically-sanctioned impulse to be fruitful and multiply, and the Father’s righteous reclamation of the Abyss from which He withheld His presence, Milton shows his reaction to empire to be both ambivalent and situational. These examples suggest that Milton is less concerned with who establishes colonial power, but focuses rather on what is done with imperial authority. Satan and Chaos think of their empires only in terms of conquest. Both seek to control Earth and establish it as part of their empire. As a messenger of the Father, however, Raphael does not exert authority over Adam and Eve. Instead, he shares with them the possibilities that might await humanity if they remain incorporated as an unfallen portion of God’s empire. That Adam and Eve fall to Satan’s temptation is not a failure of divine imperial authority; it is instead the Father’s willingness to allow the humans to

choose how they will participate in Christian empire, an opportunity He extends to them through the Son even after the Fall.

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