

FOIGNY'S *TERRA INCOGNITA AUSTRALIS*. DISCOVERING A NEW LAND, BUILDING UP THE NOVEL GENRE*

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ABSTRACT

From the late fifteenth century to the seventeenth century, travellers from different European countries tried to reach an unknown southern continent supposedly situated somewhere between the African and American lands. One of the most popular accounts dealing with this continent produced in England in the late seventeenth century was Gabriel de Foigny's *A New Discovery of Terra Incognita Australis, or the Southern World*, published in 1693 by John Dunton, and, in fact, a translation from the 1692 French version. Although this piece of early prose fiction in English has been recorded by several scholars, little critical work has been done on the English version. Consequently, the aim of this paper is to bring to the light the relevance of this novel by, on the one hand, considering this fictional work within the tradition of both travel literature and utopian novels in seventeenth-century England and, on the other, exploring those elements in the story that may have contributed to the establishment of the budding genre of the novel.

KEYWORDS: Gabriel de Foigny, Australia, Restoration fiction, utopian literature, travel narratives, hermaphroditism.

TERRA INCOGNITA AUSTRALIS DE FOIGNY. EL DESCUBRIMIENTO DE UNA NUEVA TIERRA, EL DESARROLLO DE LA NOVELA

RESUMEN

Desde finales del siglo xv al xvii, viajeros de diferentes países europeos intentaron llegar a un continente austral desconocido, supuestamente situado en algún lugar entre las tierras africanas y americanas. Una de las narraciones más populares sobre este continente en Inglaterra a finales del siglo xvii fue *A New Discovery of Terra Incognita Australis, or the Southern World*, de Gabriel de Foigny, publicada en 1693 por John Dunton y, de hecho, una traducción de la versión francesa de 1692. Aunque esta obra de la novela inglesa temprana es citada por varios estudiosos, se ha realizado poco trabajo crítico sobre la versión inglesa. En consecuencia, el objetivo de este artículo es sacar a la luz la relevancia de esta novela, por una parte, al considerar esta obra de ficción dentro de la tradición tanto de la literatura de viajes como de las novelas utópicas del siglo xvii en Inglaterra y, por otra, examinar aquellos elementos de la historia que pueden haber contribuido al establecimiento del emergente género de la novela.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Gabriel de Foigny, Australia, novela de la Restauración, literatura utópica, narraciones de viajes, hermafroditismo.

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1. IN SEARCH OF THE *TERRA AUSTRALIS*

Speculations about the existence of a southern continent, a *terra incognita australis*, had been first introduced by Pythagoras in the fifth century BC (Dousset 43) and taken up again by Aristotle a couple of centuries later (Keene 131), but it was Ptolemy –the great Greek cartographer rediscovered during the Renaissance– who expanded this idea in the second century of the modern era; and some medieval tales and legends –like Sinbad the Sailor– also mentioned this continent (Phillips 127-128). However, it was Marco Polo who, in the account of his journeys in 1485, first spoke of a number of islands in the Pacific (Java and Sumatra, among others) and hinted at the existence of a vast continent (Bovetti 374). Many European maps of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries already depicted a southern unknown land yet to be discovered and, as Dousset argues (44), the graphical representation of this land in maps became a proof of its existence as well as a stimulus for the exploration and later colonization of the Pacific. It could be said, then, that Australia was real in the minds of many Europeans even before it was actually reached by them (Dousset 44, Dutton 192, 193). This representation, though, constituted the largest blank on all European maps at the time (Phillips 125), as can be appreciated on, for instance, the Abraham Ortelius map of the world *Typus Orbis Terrarum* within his collection of maps *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, first published in Antwerp in 1570.

The French had been interested in the idea of this hypothetical *Terra Australis* as a place that could be conquered by them, since the Spaniards and the Portuguese had arrived first in the conquest of the American continent. So Lancelot Voisin de La Popelinière introduced this idea in his treatise *Les Trois Mondes* (1582) (Sankey 42), although in 1503-1504 Binot Paumier de Gonville, whose journey account would not be published until 1663, had already visited the coast of South America, calling it “third world” or “Terra Australe unknown” (Bovetti 374, Sankey 42). In 1605-1606, Pedro Fernandes de Queiros, a Portuguese-born navigator who worked most of his life in the service of Spain, led an expedition across the Pacific searching for the *Terra Australis*. In the account of his journey, first published in Latin (1612-1613) and later in French (1617), he described a rich, fertile land inhabited by tall unclothed natives drinking a liquor more pleasant than wine (Keene 131); however, Queiros had not reached Australia but what was later known as the New Hebrides and is currently Vanuatu, although it has been argued that he might have also reached the northern part of Australia (Bovetti 375).

During the seventeenth century, various Dutch navigators encountered Australian coastal waters and some of their experiences were published and incorporated into contemporary maps. Both Phillips (180) and Dutton (191) contend that Willem Jansz was the first European to reach the coast of Australia in 1605

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and document it in different maps, although not in a journal. Jansz was followed by many other countrymen (Dick Hartog, Jan Carstensz, François Pelsaert, and Abel Tasman, among others) who, one way or another, contributed to drawing the geography of this part of the southern hemisphere and to enlarging the legend of a fertile, wealthy land, with mild weather. However, the Australian coast remained a vague outline until 1770, when James Cook made his first Australian voyage (1768-1772) and landed both in New Zealand and Australia. Further journeys were made by French and, especially, English navigators providing further details and a more accurate map of Australia.

At the same time, this unknown land became an ideal setting for Utopian writings: while the American continent was by now relatively well known, more distant places, like a journey to the moon, were too unrealistic (Bovetti 376), despite the fact that some writers had already sent their characters to the Earth's satellite. Although in the Preface to his work Foigny mentioned the reports of earlier travellers who claimed to have reached Australia, or at least some kind of southern continent: Marco Polo, Magellan, and Fernandes de Queiros, among others, most probably wishing to create an idea of verisimilitude, he presented his protagonist, Sadeur, as if he were the first European to reach Australia and survive to tell his trip: "Tis therefore to our *Sadeur*, whose Relation here follows, that we are wholly obliged for the Discovery of this before *Unknown Country*."

2. FOIGNY AND *LA TERRE AUSTRALE CONNUE*

Little is known about the life of Gabriel de Foigny, but he was probably born into a Catholic family in Picardy in 1630. After receiving an education, he entered a strict Observant Franciscan Order and became a preacher although, due to his scandalous behaviour, he was forced to abandon this in 1666. Since defrocked monks were regarded unfavorably in Catholic France (Phillips 228), life became difficult for him there and he decided to go to Geneva, "the utopian city of the Calvinist faith" (Keene 130), where he abjured Catholicism and became a Protestant. In Geneva he worked, among other things, as a teacher of music but, once again, due to his inadequate behaviour, he was invited to leave the city. He went to Lausanne, where he married a widow of bad repute, Lea Ducrest (Bovetti 368). Later he went to Berne and tried to scratch a living as a teacher of French, Latin, Geography and Music. However, thanks to the influence of the families of some of his students he became Dean of the school at Morges, but once again he was fired for immoral behaviour, as well as for drunkenness. Only the earnest defence of his orthodox character by some of his friends made it possible for him to go back to Geneva with his wife and children (Keene 131). There, he earned a living teaching privately and also devoted some of his time to writing.

During his stay in Lausanne, he had written a religious treatise but, lacking the support of a prestigious theologian, he failed to get permission for publication. Eventually, however, he published the book without permission, thereby angering the religious authorities (Lachèvre 9). In order to facilitate the learning of both



languages, when at Morges, he had written a species of Latin and French grammar, which he published now in Geneva; and he continued publishing other minor works, occasionally having problems with publication. However, Foigny was fully convinced of his worth as a scholar and a writer and he aimed to become famous with the publication of his next book, *La Terre Australe Connue* (1676), a reflection on the political, social and religious mores of the time. Foigny, fearing a bad reception of the book by the religious authorities in Geneva, tried to conceal his authorship and even the real place of publication. With the help of the Genevan printer La Pierre, Foigny used the imprint of an imaginary French printer, a certain Jaques Verneuil, at Vannes (Keene 132). But this subterfuge was soon discovered by the members of the *Vénérable Compagnie*, a non-political clerical body consisting of all the ministers responsible for ecclesiastical affairs, who considered the book to be full of dangerous ideas. He initially denied being the author of the book; but was eventually imprisoned in 1677, although he was soon freed and allowed to stay in Geneva teaching. According to the real editor, La Pierre, five hundred copies of the book were printed. However, Storer (143) argues that the book must have had little diffusion since it was not until ten months after it came off the press that the *Vénérable Compagnie* demanded an investigation into its contents. Moreover, the theologians entrusted with the examination of the book seem to have had problems obtaining copies.

No further great scandals in the life of Foigny are known between 1678 and 1683; however, in 1684 he was in trouble again. A widower by then, Foigny was accused of getting his maidservant, Jeanne Berlie, pregnant and was taken to prison. Still in Geneva, he reconverted to Catholicism and was eventually allowed to return to France with some of his children. At some point, he retired to a monastery in Savoy, where he died in 1692. In June that year, the Abbot François Ragueneau published a posthumous second edition of the book in Paris with the title *Les Aventures de Jacques Sadeur dans la découverte et le voyage de la Terre Australe*, heavily abridged and bowdlerized (Bleiler 228). It has been argued (Bovetti 370) that this version was probably the work of Foigny himself, who wanted somehow to repair his bad reputation. On this occasion, the book seems to have sold well (Storer 146) and it was also made popular by the inclusion of an entry about 'Sadeur' as the author of the 1692 edition in Pierre Bayle's *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique*, first published in 1697 (Baczko 359). This edition served as the basis for the English translation of 1693, as well as for translations into some other languages.

3. *TERRA INCOGNITA AUSTRALIS*: ITS PLACE IN THE EARLY MODERN ENGLISH LITERARY SCENE

The English version with the title *A New Discovery of Terra Incognita Australis or the Southern World* was published in 1693 by John Dunton and printed by Charles Hern. Dunton produced over 600 titles throughout his life in the printing and bookselling business including devotional materials and sermons, political treatises, travel literature and inexpensive chapbooks. In the 1690s, he developed the popular periodical formats especially focused on women readers, for whom



he also published *The Ladies Dictionary* (1694) (Ezell 466). In 1691, Dunton had written and published his own travel fiction, *Voyage Round the World*, with one Don Kainophilus as protagonist, and he was always attracted to unorthodox books provided they were presented in a commercially attractive format (Keene 135), which probably explains his interest in Foigny's work.

By merely looking at the title page, we immediately learn that this is the story of James Sadeur, a Frenchman, who "Being Cast [in the *Terra Incognita Australis*] by a Shipwrack, lived 35 years in that Country, and gives a particular Description of the *Manners, Customs, Religion, Laws, Studies, and Wars*, of those Southern People; and of some *Animals* peculiar to that Place: with several other Rarities." The story draws on a manuscript that Foigny had allegedly received from Sadeur himself. It tells us about Sadeur's birth at sea, a first shipwreck in which his parents perish, his education in Portugal in the Countess of Villafranca's household, his capture by pirates on his way to the University of Coimbra, a second shipwreck from which he is saved by some Portuguese seamen on their way to India, a short stay in Congo with the description of strange fish and animals, a storm, and another shipwreck near the coast of Madagascar. Sadeur's adventures thus far are quite credible and strive for realism to the point of imitating contemporary accounts of voyages (Bleier 228, Bovetti 377). Now begins the extraordinary part: Sadeur gets to an island which is in fact the back of a huge whale; then "two prodigious flying Beasts" (34)¹ appear and, after fighting against them, he arrives on the shore of a new continent inhabited by an isolated nation of hermaphrodites who have developed their own peculiar culture. He is accepted among these people because, on the one hand, he has proved his courage by fighting against the giant birds and, on the other, Sadeur himself is a hermaphrodite (10). After a few months, Sadeur learns the language of the country and this enables him to discuss with Suains, a "venerable old man" (64), issues such as sexual dimorphism versus hermaphroditism, the differences between animal and man, nudity and the sense of shame, reason and right, natural religion and revelation, personal immortality, and the ultimate meaning of life. Furthermore, the natural history of the land, the language they speak, and the daily life of the Australians are also described. This turns out to be an ideal society in which almost all potential sources of trouble have been removed: because of hermaphroditism, there are no sexual impulses or oppression of women; there is no inequality of rank or drive for power or wealth since there is absolute uniformity and communism of property; there are no serious illnesses, fear of death, and emotional isolation; neither are there any religious disputes, as they all believe in a sort of deism based on natural revelation; and, rather than in immortality, they believe in a form of transmigration. Indeed, some of the elements in the book could be considered as a mirror of Sadeur's own experience and way of thinking, as well as of the social and cultural atmosphere of the time (Bleiler 229).

Several authors have classified Foigny's *Terra Incognita Australis* as a social satire; some place it within the tradition of utopian satire, along with Thomas

¹ Pages refer to the 1693 edition published by Dunton, available on the EEBO website.



More and Cyrano de Bergerac (Keene 130); while others consider it to be more of a political satire following authors such as Rabelais, and paving the way for future writers like Swift (Kapferer 817). Additionally, there are those who consider the book to be a precursor of socialism and communism, as well as a disseminator of rationalist thinking (Bovetti 366-367).

Something that should allow little discussion, though, is the fact that *Terra Incognita Australis* has a place within both English and European utopian literature. There had been several previous works that were either set in or around Australia or had hermaphrodites as protagonists.² In 1605, Joseph Hall published his *Mundus Alter et Idem* (The Other and the Same World), initiating a tradition of anti-utopia that was later developed by, among others, Swift. It is set in *Terra Australis incognita*, and the book is “a carnivalesque satire on the futility of utopian hope” (Pohl 63). That same year, Thomas Artus brought out his novel *Description de l’Isle of Hermaphrodites nouvellement découverte* (The Island of the Hermaphrodites newly discovered) in which the author describes the main characteristics and habits of the people in this land, and hermaphroditism consists in the lack of manly virtues (Bovetti 380), rather than as the means of presenting an equalitarian society, as Foigny did. Although the book seems to denounce the vices of the court of the French King Henry IV, these actually refer to the court of the previous king, Henry III. *Histoire du grand et admirable royaume d’Antangil* (History of the great and admirable Kingdom of Antangil), published anonymously, although attributed to Jean de Moncy, saw the light in France, in 1616. Once again, there is an imaginary journey to the Kingdom of Antangil, supposedly near Java; there, the traveller will find a society based on rigid hierarchies and full of splendour and theatrical display. In 1668, Henry Neville wrote *The Isle of Pines*, a libertine fantasy that became very popular and was translated into several languages, including French. Here a fictional Dutchman, Henry Cornelius van Sloetten, writes a letter to a friend in London declaring the truth of his journey and the discovery of an island of *Terra Australis*. This “truth” consists of the story of an Elizabethan adventurer, George Pine who was shipwrecked with four young women on this idyllic island which produces abundant food with no effort; he also enjoys a leisurely existence and engages in sexual activity with all four women, producing well over 500 offspring in a period of forty years (Keene 132). It is worth mentioning that, similarly to what had happened to Foigny, both Joseph Hall, who was a bishop, and Henry Neville were punished for writing these extraordinary voyages: the former was imprisoned in the Tower of London and the latter was banished (Phillips 124, 180). In 1677, Denis Vairasse (also spelt Veiras) d’Allais published his *Histoire des Sévarambes, peuples qui habitent une partie du troisième continent ordinairement appelé Terre Australe*. The first part of the book, though, had been previously published in

² Jacqueline Dutton (192) remarks that the first European writers dealing with stories set in this unknown southern land would emphasize its antipodean geographical situation by creating an inversion of European society represented in the signs of alterity characteristic of its inhabitants, such as humans with animal heads, hermaphrodites and flying men.



London and in English in 1675 with the title *The History of the Sevarites or Sevarambi, a nation inhabiting part of the third continent commonly called Terrae australis incognitae* (Bovetti 365, Fokkema 139).³ This book coincides with Foigny's in being a social satire, but also in the invention and full description of the language spoken by the inhabitants of the island. The invention of these ideal languages does not seem to be an exception and they are to be found in accounts of several French and English imaginary voyages of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries thus reflecting a contemporary preoccupation (Knowlson 270).

According to Carey (227), in utopian fiction there is little narrative, apart from the opening description of the circumstances that make possible finding an alternative society. These circumstances usually consist of a sea voyage in which the protagonist(s) will have to face storms, attacks from pirates, native peoples or strange creatures, as well as some other adventure motifs and events that will divert the journey from their original destiny and discover a new land. Characterization is also limited, although there are abundant descriptions of the new land and its inhabitants, if there were any. Once in the new land, the traveller will usually be offered a guided tour of this society during which he or she will be explained the social, political, economic and religious organisation of the place. These explanations are usually structured around a series of questions for which some authority will provide an answer in some kind of philosophical dialogue. The island motif is often used in this kind of work as it supplies both the detachment and the coherence necessary to create a different society (Carey 228). Of course, eventually, the traveller will return to his or her own country in order to be able to spread the word about this new and better society.

This classical structure or "grammar" of utopian fiction as described by several authors (Carey 227, Parrinder 155-156, Vieira 7, Dutton 195, among many others): Journey, often by sea, of a traveller to an unknown place, guided tour with explanations of the organisation of the place by means of a dialogue with some kind of sage, settling down for some time in the new society, in which the communal sharing of work and property is a core principle, and leaving to take the message to his or her original countrymen, is closely followed by Foigny in his *Terra Incognita Australis*. Just by perusing the Table of Chapters preceding the story, we can easily see the structure of the story. Chapter 1 is devoted to telling us about the protagonist's birth and education, and in chapters 2 and 3 the eventful voyage that took him to Australia is described. In the following chapters descriptions of the island (chapter 4), its people (chapter 5), their religion (chapter 6), their opinions on life and death (chapter 7), their daily activities (chapter 8), their language (chapter 9) and the animals inhabiting the island (chapter 10) are provided. Chapter 11, in turn, introduces the reader to some "Australian commodities" that, not existing in Europe, could be useful there. Chapter 12 is devoted to explaining some of the confrontations Australians have with their enemies, the Fondins. And the two last chapters, 13 and 14, deal

³ The second part would be published in England in 1679.



with the way in which Sadeur manages to escape from Australia, where he has been sentenced to death, and his stay in Madagascar on his journey back to Europe.

Sadeur spends thirty-five years in Australia (title page, 171) and he is 57 when he eventually leaves the island (172); throughout these many years he has long conversations with Suains, the venerable old man, who becomes his guide and counsellor so that he can learn the ways of the country and survive there. As explained above, these conversations are philosophical discussions, made of questions and answers, by means of which some of Foigny's own concerns as well as those of the society of his time are addressed. He discovers several idyllic settings, first in Congo (20-31), where he also comes across some fantastic creatures, and then when he reaches Australia (61-62). And throughout his account there are continuous comparisons between Australia/ns and Europe/ans, mostly to the advantage of the new continent. The Preface already mentions that Australia is a "Country much more Fertile and Populous than any in *Europe*"; and the "*Inhabitants* [of Australia] rejoice in the possession of a Happiness, which all the *Northern* People are destitute of" (60). It is often that Sadeur admires "*a Conduct so apposite to our defective one*" (78), and he also compares the kind of food and the eating habits taken by the members of both societies to the disadvantage of the Europeans.

One of the outstanding elements in the book is the fact that Australian society is made up of hermaphrodites and that the protagonist himself happens to be a hermaphrodite too. The fact that Sadeur has such a condition is disclosed very early in the novel, when he remembers a Portuguese matron who "profest a great desire of serving me till she found that I was of two *Sexes*, I would say an *Hermaphrodite*" (10). At the very beginning of chapter 5 we are told that "All the *Australians* are of both *Sexes*, or *Hermaphrodites*" (63), and the same aversion that the matron had displayed for Sadeur, is shown now by the Australians towards those who are not hermaphrodites and "if happens that a Child is born but of one [sex], they strangle him as a Monster" (63). However, for the rest of the chapter we are told of the advantages of this hermaphroditism as it prevents carnal and brutal love among them (70), as well as the "power which man had usurped over Woman" (72) in European societies. Bovetti (379) contends that the creation of this hermaphrodite society is not the mere fantasy of a libertine, but responds to an internal logic of Foigny's utopia. At the same time the legend of hermaphroditism is very old, and this story may remind us of the Amazons of the Greek mythology and the androgynous beings in Plato. For Keene, however, even if Foigny probably drew on those models, he presented in Sadeur a more heroic and humanised hermaphrodite, in contrast to a previous "transcendent otherworldly figure or an actual monstrous embodiment" (130). Nevertheless, the creation of this kind of sexually inverted society was a way Foigny contrived to criticise contemporary European society (Bovetti 381, Keene 140).

Hermaphroditism had also been reported by travellers in their accounts of journeys both to America and India (Bovetti 379). In fact, utopia has been associated to travel literature since the time of More, who used its conventions and adapted them to his aims (Vieira 7). Utopia is also inseparable from the imaginary voyage (Pohl 53) and the very idea of the term utopia has always been associated with a spatial dimension that created imaginary geographies. Indeed, utopias situated their ideal worlds in distant



countries and undiscovered islands, or even the moon, and they were unmistakably influenced by contemporary quests of discovery and colonisation. Travel accounts also prove to be critical to some extent since, by contrasting the far-away lands and the European countries and enhancing the happiness and prosperity of the countries visited, they are somehow criticising what they have at home (Bovetti 371-372). It is also worth noting how the information given by travellers was often subjective and lacking real foundation, something that did not seem to worry the readers of the seventeenth century who took them as real (Bovetti 373). Phillips argues (124) that, despite all the extravagant adventures present, Sadeur's journey is broadly realistic and that even if most of what happens in it may appear fantastic and incredible to a modern reader, these adventures were realistic by seventeenth century standards. Pirates, terrible storms and consequent shipwrecks, as well as flying beasts and hermaphrodites were relatively common elements in medieval and Renaissance travel writing.

4. *TERRA INCOGNITA AUSTRALIS*: BECOMING PART OF THE NOVEL GENRE

Utopian fiction has been associated with different genres: travel literature, for instance, has already been mentioned in the previous section. Parrinder makes the connection between utopian writing and romance and he argues that "if romance is an expression of the yearning for the unattainable, then utopia is that which cannot be attained" (154). While in romance there is a happy ending for that particular story and situation, in utopia, the happy ending affects a whole society. In Parrinder's opinion, some of the improbable and extraordinary events of utopias would also link them with romances; however, the systematic description of a new world and society often found in utopias, also relates them to the realistic novel. Parrinder also contends (155) that, on close analysis, the long-established difference between romance and novel disappears since all novels will contain romance elements and most fictional plotting relies on improbable coincidences. As Carey puts it (242), the coupling of utopian form with other forms like romance and travel accounts was part of the hybridising process that marked this period and also contributed to the emergence of the novel genre.

One of the aims the novel genre strove for was verisimilitude. In the case of Foigny's *Terra Incognita Australis*, the narrative device used is the one so often adopted by utopian writers, that is, the miraculous finding or chance transmission of a manuscript telling the story of a traveller to strange lands. In Foigny's case he had received the manuscript from Sadeur's own hand and it is presented as his authentic memoirs: "These are the contents of *Sadeurs Memoirs* written with his own hand" (186).⁴ The author of the Preface, that is Foigny, warns the reader that extraordinary

⁴ In the 1676 French version there is a far more detailed explanation of how the manuscript is transmitted from Sadeur to Foigny (Lachèvre 65-67). In Bovetti's opinion, after such a detailed



things are going to be presented; however, “the Reader will not much scruple to believe them, when he shall be informed, that a *Southern unknown Land* has been talkt of these 200 Years.” And he goes on to describe the several attempts to reach the Australian continent thus emphasizing the verisimilitude of the story. At the same time, by addressing the readers, he brings them into the game that implies a kind of pact between the writer and the readers; the former writes about a society that does not exist and the latter, despite the awareness that such a society does not exist, act as if they believed the author (Vieira 8).

Another way in which Foigny emphasizes verisimilitude is through the realistic geographical imagery he uses in his story. On several pages, he provides in as accurate detail as possible his whereabouts: “having applied my self to find out the Elevation of the Sun, I judged that I was 33 deg. Lat. South, but I knew not the Longitude” (34); “the place where *I* might be, which *I* found to be about 35 deg. *South*” (40). More specifically, on page 48 he says, “I have here therefore set down the best account of the *Australian Territories* that I could get either by the relations of others, or cou’d describe according to the Meridan of *Ptolemy*,” and then he moves on to describe the geography of the continent for a few more pages. Regarding this point, Romano reports (72) that Sadeur used the meridian of Ptolemy to describe in detail all the different parts of the *Terra Australis* from the meridian 340° to the 160°, that is, land from the Indian Ocean to the American Pacific coast. And Phillips (181), quoting Fausett, contends that Foigny used as geographical sources two cosmographies by Gaston Jean-Baptiste, Baron de Renty, published in Paris in 1645 and 1657. A final note on the issue of verisimilitude is that, even if utopian writers describe completely invented worlds, in order to be able to do this, they are bound to depart from the observation of the society in which they live and work. Hence, it could be said (Vieira 8) that the imagined society is a kind of inverted image of the real one.

Despite the criticisms of some authors (Carey 228, 232) regarding the lack of narrative in utopian writings in general and in Foigny’s work in particular (Bovetti 397), *Terra Incognita Australis* deploys some narrative techniques worth commenting on. Probably, one of the most outstanding techniques is the use of the frame narrative. As mentioned above when speaking about verisimilitude, Foigny, by means of the preface, becomes an extradiegetic narrator who introduces a second narrative level in which Sadeur emerges as the intradiegetic narrator. Throughout the story, further narrative levels are created; thus, Sadeur knows about his birth and childhood thanks to the fact that he “receiv’d a Memoir from a Father Jesuit of *Lisbon in Portugal*, when I was at *Villa Franca*, which contains an Account of my Birth, and the *Adventures of my younger Years*” (2) thereby becoming the reader / narratee of the telling of his own story. And some of the protagonists of his story will also become occasional narrators; such is the case of Monsieur de Sarre who

description of the finding of the manuscript, the reader will have no doubt as to the authenticity of the rest of the book (376-377).



“after his arrival, began to particularize his adventures to his Wife” (7). Towards the end of the book, once Sadeur is in Madagascar, he recounts his story on several occasions, not directly to the reader of his memoirs, but through his narration to several people he meets there:

I recounted to [the Captain] the History of my Birth, of my Education, of my Shipwracks, and of my Arrival in *Australia*. (178)

I was obliged to begin my History again, and recount as well as I could possibly, the particulars of the *Australian* Countrey, the Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants, and the rest. (179)

Here again I recounted my History at length to the Governour. (181)

I told him all my History, my Shipwracks, my Arrival in *Australia*, the stay I had made there, and the manner of my escape. (183)

Thus, his audience, that is, his narratees –being part of the story told– are intradiegetic. Another interesting point regarding narration is that, even if Sadeur is telling us a past story from a present moment, which would turn him into a kind of omniscient narrator, when writing his memoirs, he presents the events sometimes as an actual witness, “Thus passed the first Battle of the *Australians* against the *Fondins*, at which I was present, and which I accordingly describe, as an Eye-witness” (145), and sometimes as a reporter of what he has been told by others: “I apprehended sometime afterwards, that some Guards from the Sea saw part of this Combat, and that four were come in a little Shalop to see if they could know who I was” (44).

The text also contains some metafictional elements by means of which Sadeur makes explicit his role as a writer and the process of writing. As pointed out above, he starts by making the presence of the reader explicit at the very beginning of the Preface, and even challenges the reader regarding what can be taken to be true in the story. In other parts of the book, the author also wants to make himself present and refers explicitly to the text he is writing: “[this account] I am about to relate” (2); “this History that I am writing” (45); “And now to proceed with our *Narration*” (104); “I Write that which follows of the Isle of *Madagascar*, and I begin to flatter my self, that this History may go home with me, even to mine own Country” (163). And at some point (73), he will introduce a side note in order to clarify who the *Fondins* are, emphasizing once more the process of writing.

The last aspect I would like to linger on is the use the author makes of the narrative time. To start with, the whole narration is a huge analepsis since a past story is told from the present moment; many subsequent analepses will be found in the text as we come across several characters, or Sadeur himself, telling past stories. Additionally, Sadeur skillfully introduces some prolepses scattered throughout the text intended to keep the interest of the reader: “*I was Conceived in America and brought forth upon the Ocean*, an infallible presage of the miseries which were to attend me during my whole Life” (3); “this was but the beginning of a Tragedy, which I have now continued for about fifty five Years” (6); “That what I sought most



eagerly to shun, the Evil wherewith I was threatned did justly render it inevitable” (13); “both Sexes were necessary for me under pain of being destroyed at my arrival, as I shall show in the sequel of my Story” (45). In utopian fiction, as hinted at above, narration is replaced by description and digression, thus decelerating the story. The description of the landscape in Congo occupies over ten pages (20-31), although it includes some brief narrative episodes, since the protagonist moves around the country; and then many of the chapters, as explained in section 3, are devoted to the description of different aspects of the life on the island. However, the opposite phenomenon also takes place as, in the course of our story, 57 years –the age of the protagonist– have gone by, of which 35 have been spent on the island, and we are hardly aware of that, except for Sadeur himself telling us. And in the first three chapters, in which things actually happen: an account of Sadeur’s eventful birth, childhood and youth, his voyage to several places in Africa and finally the incidents which took him to the southern world, ellipsis and summaries are frequently used. Finally, regarding frequency in narrative time, that is the relation between the number of times an event appears in the story and the number of times it is narrated, just to mention that some of the few events taking place in the story are told more than once in the text; for instance: “I have told you already of the tenderness which I shewed to a pretty *Fondin Lady*” (165) or the examples given above of how Sadeur retells his story over and over again to different people when in Madagascar.

5. CONCLUSION

The lack of artistic quality of Foigny’s *Terra Incognita Australis* has been pointed out by some authors (Bovetti 397). The book is presented as something loose and discontinuous, as Foigny fails to artistically combine the adventure and exotic elements with the philosophical issues. Allegedly, this would be due to the fact that his rational mind is not filled by the creative and artistic spirit. However, Foigny’s work has been considered as a radical critique of some of the basic principles and institutions of European society (Phillips 120); and, by introducing an egalitarian world, with no ranks or differences, he was rejecting the existing European hierarchies of the time (Kapferer 817). Religious institutions are also attacked when he describes how Australian morals are “inspir’d by the only light of Nature and Reason” (73) and states that religion is a personal matter (Phillips 124). And by creating a society with no gender division, he was consequently attacking the contemporary notion of patriarchy (Keene 130). Thus, Foigny posed fundamental questions concerning the social and religious orders of his time. Moreover, the book had some influence on utopias and imaginary journeys published years later and was acknowledged by scholars in the area of the history of ideas due to its philosophical, political and social contents (Bovetti 397). Finally, as remarked in the previous section, Foigny’s novel also made a contribution to the development of the budding novel genre.

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