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**Fictive Possessions: English Utopian Writing and the Colonial
Promotion of Madagascar as the “Greatest Island in the World”
(1640 – 1668)**

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Abstract

Prior to the travel, diplomacy, and violence that often marked the establishment of colonies, distant lands were first owned on European soil as fictive possessions in the grandiose stories of colonial advertisements. Stakeholders in colonial ventures had to be convinced of the ease, glory, and profitability of their enterprise before they set sail to the New World. Exotic eyewitness accounts of explorers and travellers were commissioned to detail the abundant wonders to be harvested on foreign shores. Between 1635 and 1650, proposals to establish an English colony in Madagascar - known then as 'the largest island in the world' - had led to a short-lived colonial expedition whose members had to be evacuated from the big island after facing numerous casualties. Far from reflecting the geographical and social realities of the island, promotional literature overwhelmingly reported that Madagascar was a New World paradise.

This thesis examines the shifting modes of idealisation employed by promotional works about Madagascar by reading them alongside the colonial discourse of early modern utopian exemplars such as Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), and Henry Neville's *Isle of Pines* (1668).

Specifically, this thesis examines two sets of texts at an intersection of literary and rhetorical genres, with a focus on their contrarian tendencies. Walter Hamond's *A Paradox* (1640) and *Madagascar, the richest and most fruitfull island in the world* (1643) are read as noteworthy colonial advertisements that critique the acquisitive excesses driving colonial ventures. Investigating the ironic nature of this set of texts by assessing it within the Renaissance tradition of the paradox

reveals that Hamond's choice of rhetorical modes was deliberate and aimed to mitigate his audience's anxieties towards setting up a colony in Madagascar. This is followed by an exploration of the intertextual echoes in Henry Neville's utopian hoax, the *Isle of Pines* with respect to the question of the titular isle's location. It is argued that the imprints of various contemporary European accounts of Madagascar in Neville's work allow it to be read as a parable of English colonial folly.

In bringing together the worlds of early modern travel narratives and utopian fiction, this thesis aims to open new perspectives in both domains. By mapping the various idealised depictions of Madagascar to the distinct colonial models found in early modern utopian literature, this dissertation argues that the contradictions encountered in promotional literature were rooted in the confluence of historical contingencies, ideological concerns, and the rhetorical forms that shaped the 'ideal politics' of seventeenth-century English colonial ventures.

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sources related to historical writing on Madagascar. I would like to thank Tiago for his translation of the Portuguese sources that figure in Chapter Four; Miguel and Helena, for their warmth and lovely company; Bhisma, for his hospitality on many a trip to Reading; and Joppan, for kindred conversation. I am thankful to Martina, Paola, Liam, Tommy and Blake for having read parts of the thesis; their comments made me think, and much improved my drafts. Ragu's Skype presence brought a familial comfort. Adil's reassuring clarity and friendship have always been a valuable guide. Rajiv's unrelenting generosity and passion for poetry introduced me to the joys of being a humanities researcher.

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The responsibility for the deficiencies and errors in this thesis remain my own.

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Introduction

Sebastian. I think he will carry this island home in his pocket, and give it to his son for an apple.

Antonio. And, sowing the kernels of it in the sea, bring forth more islands.

--William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*¹

Empire Follows Art & Not Vice Versa as Englishmen suppose

--William Blake²

Gonzalo's gambit: A carefree fantasy of an island colony

Gonzalo - the "honest old Councillor" - is at the receiving end of Sebastian and Antonio's malicious barbs.³ Castaways on distant and unknown shores, the two mock the courtier's sudden penchant for idyllic island visions. Being usurpers well versed in the art of dissimulation, both Sebastian and Antonio recognise that Gonzalo's "honesty" lies more in being a peddler of "honour" and "sumptuous" visions than in his commitment to truthfulness.⁴ While adrift on the ocean,

¹ *The Tempest: The Cambridge Dover Wilson Shakespeare*, ed. John Dover Wilson. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2.1.89--92. References are to act, scene, and line.

² William Blake, "Annotations to Sir Joshua Reynolds' 'Discourses'" (c. 1808), in Geoffrey Keynes, ed., *The Complete Writings of William Blake* (Oxford, 1966), 445, quoted in David Armitage, "Literature and Empire," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Origins of Empire: Volume 1*, ed. Nicholas Canny (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 99.

³ Gonzalo is listed in the dramatis personae as "an honest old Councillor" (*ibid.*, 2).

⁴ Contradictions can be observed within the various senses of 'honest' as laid out in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Some uses of the word, now obsolete, but in currency during Shakespeare's time, emphasise material wealth, rank and appearance. The word could either be used to qualify "a feast" that was "sumptuous; stately, splendid" or with "reference to appearance: presentable, decent, respectable," and also to speak well of those "holding a position of honour; distinguished, noble." While these connotations emphasised external appearance and socially defined roles, they were contrary to other senses of the word such as being of "good moral character; virtuous,

Gonzalo yearns “for an acre of barren ground...long heath, brown furze, anything...The wills above be done, but I would fain die a dry death!”⁵ Yet, after being cast unto the island, he still finds the need to project, to exclaim “How lush and lusty the grass looks! how green!” while the cynical Antonio is able to see that “(t)he ground, indeed, is tawny.”⁶ A buoyant Gonzalo regards his sea-drenched garments “their freshness and glosses rather new dyed than stained,” “as fresh as when we put them on first” while Antonio counters him by pointing to the stench: “If but one of his pockets could speak, would it not say he lies?”⁷ The former’s sunny speech arises not just from his sanguine disposition, but also from his line of work as a counsellor, a trade that relies heavily on the practice of praise. This is reflected in Antonio’s wry observation of Gonzalo, “what a spendthrift is he of his tongue”, and similarly in Sebastian’s needling, “Look, he's winding up the watch of his wit - by and by it will strike.”⁸ How did someone like Gonzalo utilise his courtly wit - that simultaneous capacity to amuse, excite and be wise - to foster visions of an island dream? Thomas More’s *Utopia*, as its long title indicates - “A truly golden handbook, no less beneficial than entertaining, on the best state of a commonwealth and the new island of Utopia” - is the epitome of such a pursuit.⁹

upright” or of “an action, feeling, etc.: done with or expressive of truthfulness, fairness, or integrity of character or intention; free from deceit; genuine, sincere.” *OED Online*, s. v. “honest, adj. and adv.”

⁵ *The Tempest*, 1.1.66-68.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.1.52-4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.1.62-3, 2.1.68-9, 2.1.65-6.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.1.23, 2.1.12-3.

⁹ Thomas More, *Libellus vere aureus nec minus salutaris quam festivus de optimo reipublicae statu, deque nova insula Utopia* (Dierk Martens: Louvain, 1516). The English translation of the long title is from Carlo Ginzburg, *No Island is an Island: Four Glances at English Literature in a World Perspective*, trans. John Tedeschi (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 5. In his essay, *Sir Thomas More's Utopia and the language of Renaissance humanism*, Quentin Skinner approaches “the main interpretative puzzle” at the heart of More’s *Utopia* - “Did the author intend his intend us to take the description of Utopia in Book II as an account of a commonwealth in its best state?” - by playing close attention to the phrase *optimus status reipublicae* included in the title of More’s work. Skinner traces the principles and institutions of government referenced in *Utopia* to Ciceronian-humanist conceptions of civic life and the ideal commonwealth. See Quentin Skinner, “Sir Thomas More's Utopia and the language of Renaissance humanism,” in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 123--59. Ginzburg expands on the clues to be found in the

More references his island description as a report from one of Amerigo Vespucci's forays into the New World.¹⁰ For *The Tempest*, Shakespeare looks to William Strachey's description of Bermuda in *A true reportory of the wracke* for the stage-setting transition from a "most dreadful tempest" to an island marooning.¹¹ While the fictional islands of these literary texts were inspired by the descriptions contained within travel literature produced during the so-called Age of Discovery, my inquiry moves in the opposite direction. This thesis explores the fictive and utopian dimensions of mid-seventeenth century English travel accounts of Madagascar that were commissioned to promote the island as a paradisiacal colony.¹²

Before we move to the specificity of these travel accounts, let us return to the example of Shakespeare's Gonzalo who, through his island eulogy, helps us better understand how Madagascar came to be a fictive possession in the minds of

long title of More's *Utopia*. Ginzburg provides a syncretic solution to the main interpretative puzzle of More's work by elaborating on the "*nec minus salutaris quam festivus*" section of the long title to argue that the instructive and entertaining aspects of More's work were codependent rather than merely coterminous. Instead of restricting oneself to sober political discussions while tracing More's intentions, Ginzburg advises that the various seemingly contradictory elements in *Utopia* are better understood as an inheritance from Lucian's *Opuscula*, a carnivalesque set of tales employing humour and irony to tackle more serious issues such as social injustice and inequality. See Ginzburg, *No Island is an Island*, 1--25. As shown later, Walter Hamond, one of Madagascar's promoters was anxious to calibrate his wit by combining reportage and the rhetorical genre of the paradox in a bid to entertain, and thereby, persuade his audience of the suitability of the proposed venture.

¹⁰ According to More's work, Raphael Hythlodæus, the explorer who gives an eyewitness account of the island of Utopia, is said to have come across the unknown isle while accompanying Amerigo Vespucci in his voyages to the New World. See Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. and ed. George M. Logan (New York: Norton, 2011), 11. Subsequent page references to *Utopia* are indexed to this edition.

¹¹ William Strachey, "A true reportory of the wracke, and redemption of Sir Thomas Gates," in Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his pilgrimes* (London: Printed for Henrie Fetherstone, 1625), 1735, accessed October 9, 2017. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>. Strachey's report refers to the author of the first description of the Bermudas, the Spainard, Gonzalus Ferdinandus Oviedus. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare alludes to Strachey's work by naming two of his characters - Gonzalo and Ferdinand - based on the latter's reference to the Spanish explorer. See Strachey, "A true reportory of the wracke," 1739.

¹² For an extensive collection of studies observing the mutually reinforcing connections between seventeenth century travel writing and utopian literature in England, see Chloë Houston, ed., *New Worlds Reflected: Travel and Utopia in the Early Modern Period* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010).

English merchants and colonists long before they set sail for the island. Stranded on foreign shores, the foul-tempered duo of Sebastian and Antonio curse their predicament, their attitudes contrasting starkly with that of the earnest and witty counsellor. Gonzalo, that pocketeer and bringer-forth of islands, takes recourse to soliloquy where he voices his dreams of an ideal colony:

Had I plantation of this isle, my lord,—
And were the king on't, what would I do?
I'th' commonwealth I would by contraries
Execute all things: for no kind of traffic
Would I admit: no name of magistrate:
Letters should not be known: riches, poverty,
And use of service—none: contract, succession,
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard—none:
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil:
No occupation, all men idle, all:
And women too, but innocent and pure:
No sovereignty--¹³

Gonzalo's speech begins with an act of fictive possession, of "having" the island and being "the king on't" Merely being fictive, Gonzalo was free to wish away those burdensome social institutions that guaranteed the continuance of power in its various guises - the lettered law, private property, trade, and the "sweat" of labour. Even the instruments of war - "Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine" - are not reserved as a means of protecting sovereignty.¹⁴ As Antonio observes in his pithy summary of the counsellor's speech, "(t)he latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning".¹⁵ The idle paradise depicted in Gonzalo's soliloquy owed its virtuous disavowal to a few lines in Montaigne's essay *Of Cannibals*.¹⁶ This essay idealises the "originall naturalitie" of a New World

¹³ *The Tempest*, 2.1.143-55.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.1.160.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.1.157.

¹⁶ The close resemblance of Gonzalo's speech to Montaigne's inventory of carefreedom is a revealing example of Shakespeare's ease and efficacy in incorporating influences. The latter uses

community that, according to the retired French statesman, had “received very-little fashion from humane wit”.¹⁷ If there is a hint of parody in Shakespeare bestowing Montaigne’s romanticism to the panglossian voice of Gonzalo, the latter is also not oblivious to the contradictions he espouses while speaking of his imagined colony. Rather, Gonzalo indulges himself in these anomalies, stating that it is “by contraries” that he would “execute all things” in his purported “commonwealth”.¹⁸ The use of Montaigne’s *On Cannibals* - a discourse that argues for the contentment of New World natives by contrasting it against the inequity and the acquisitiveness of European societies - as a prop for a colonial vision is by itself a contrary appropriation. That Gonzalo is able to inhabit these contradictions with ease lies at the core of his “spirit of persuasion”, which primes him for his role as the promoter of colonies in Shakespeare’s play.¹⁹

Every act of possession requires fictive instruments, the imagination involved in either conceiving, maintaining or justifying the relation between proprietor and object. Gonzalo’s fictive possession is marked by a fundamental entitlement, to the pocketing of an unknown island in its entirety. This was part of a larger entitlement exercised by European empires as evident in the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas, where even unknown parts of the New World were carved up between

the following extract in John Florio’s 1603 English translation of Montaigne’s essay to voice Gonzalo: “It is a nation, would I answer *Plato*, that hath no kinde of traffike, no knowledge of traffike, no knowledge of Letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate, nor of politike superiorities, no use of service, of riches, or of poverty, no contracts, no successions, no dividences, no occupation, [...]”. See Michel de Montaigne, “Of the Canniballes,” in *The Essayes*, trans. John Florio (London: Printed for Edward Blount, 1603), 102, accessed October 13, 2017. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ *The Tempest* (Dover Wilson), 2.1.146-7.

¹⁹ Ibid., 2.1.232. Gonzalo’s role as a promoter of colonies is acknowledged by Prospero who considers him as the “master of this design,” that made the latter the lord of his island realm. See Ibid., 1.2.163.

the Spanish and Portuguese sovereigns.²⁰ The unknown could be mapped and owned even before a substantive representation of a particular place was available. And so does Gonzalo ‘bring forth’ his island, sown from a kernel of fancy, one where his imaginary reign would “excel the golden age”.²¹ By laying out the island with his imaginary of an ideal society, the courtier was also, to use Sebastian’s metaphor, making an ‘apple’ of it, readying it for consumption and enjoyment.²² Gonzalo was not alone in entreating an audience to imagine the possession of an island, an elsewhere artless and abundant.

According to Neil Kennedy, English colonists in the early decades of the seventeenth century were disposed towards “island colonies” as they “appeared to offer an integrity, coherence, and permanence that mainland footholds seemed then to lack”.²³ Michael Jarvis observes that in “the 1620s, successful Bermuda, rather than struggling Virginia, provided the model that most English expansionists followed. With the exception of the religiously motivated colonisation of New England and Maryland, English colonial efforts focused

²⁰ Jeppe Strandsbjerg argues that the development of scientific cartography in Renaissance Europe made it possible “to represent space as autonomous” which in turn allowed “territorial divisions of areas that were unknown” enabling “a division of territories to be” as was the case with the Treaty of Tordesillas. As Strandsbjerg explains, the treaty “set up a system in which territorial claims were based on and legitimised by cartography” and the world was divided “according to a longitudinal boundary in purely abstract terms meaning that nobody knew exactly where the boundary was running nor what existed on either side of the boundary; but these were issues that were, in principle, going to be solved through cartography.” See Jeppe Strandsbjerg, “Cartopolitics, Geopolitics and Boundaries in the Arctic,” *Geopolitics* 17, no. 4 (2012): 827--28.

²¹ *The Tempest* (Dover Wilson), 2.1.166.

²² In the seventeenth century, the term ‘apple’ often carried the sense of ‘fruit’ in general, especially those globular in shape. Sebastian’s metaphor of Gonzalo “appling” the island could be interpreted more in terms of a treat, a commodity purchased from the market in order to be enjoyed.

²³ Neil Kennedy, “William Crashaw’s Bridge: Bermuda and the Origins of the English Atlantic, 1609- 1624,” in *English Atlantics Revisited: Essays Honouring Ian K. Steele*, ed. Nancy L. Rhoden (McGill: Queen’s Press, 2007), 128.

exclusively on islands”.²⁴ According to Jarvis, islands were desired by colonists as they were “small and contained compared to open-ended mainland ventures”; the former also serving “as privateer bases for raiding Spanish and French colonies”.²⁵ This study examines the colonial allure of one such island, Madagascar, known then to the English as “the greatest island in the world”.²⁶

Utopian mastery: Dreaming up an English colony in Madagascar

In the brief period between 1635 and 1650, the island of Madagascar excited a range of characters some of whom included an exiled Prince Rupert impatient to rise in the English royal order, the merchant William Courten heavily in debt, and the ship-surgeon and aspiring wit Walter Hamond. For these adventurers and go-betweens, the big island beckoned as the staging post in which some could gain and some recover fame, rank and fortune. Before dominion could be asserted, the island venture had to first gain favour from the monarch and his retinue, potential settlers had to be recruited and funds procured from investors. Madagascar was advertised in various forms that included a painting, an epic poem, and several pamphlets. In 1638, the Royalist courtier and patron, Endymion Porter asked the poet laureate William Davenant to compose *Madagascar* to honour Charles I’s nephew, Prince Rupert of the Rhine.²⁷ In the poem, meant to be both eulogy and portent, the poet is transported to the island in a dream to witness Rupert dazzle the natives into submission and, in triumphal

²⁴ Jarvis provides the following list of English island colonies during this period: “Newfoundland (1621), St. Christopher (1624), Barbados (1627), Nevis (1628), Providence (1629), Antigua and Montserrat (1632)”. See Michael J. Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade: Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680-1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 37.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ For a discussion of references where Madagascar’s greatness is discussed, see page 256--7 of this thesis.

²⁷ William Davenant, *Madagascar; with other poems* (London: John Haviland for Thomas Walkly, 1638), 1-21, accessed October 9, 2017. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>.

violence, defeat his Spanish rivals to conquer the island.²⁸ Rupert's grand island reckoning was abandoned soon after Davenant's composition was published. In 1639, Porter revived the Madagascar project when the Earl of Arundel offered to replace the prince. Arundel commissioned Anthony Van Dyck for a painting to promote the colonial scheme.



Fig 1.1 , Anthony Van Dyck, *Madagascar Portrait*, 1639, Oil on canvas, Arundel Castle, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thomas_Howard_comte_d%27Arundel_Antoine_van_Dyck.jpg.

The painting featured Lady Arundel pointing a compass to a giant globe centred on Madagascar, and the Earl on the other side discussing the design with an air of

²⁸ Prior to his role as a prominent Royalist commander during the English Civil War, Prince Rupert's stay in England was spent preparing to avenge his family's defeat in his native kingdom. In 1636, two years before *Madagascar* was published, Rupert sought the assistance of Charles I for restoring his family's reign over the Electorate of the Palatinate. The reign of Rupert's father, Frederick V over Bohemia had lasted for less than a year. After being defeated by Emperor Ferdinand II, Spanish and Bavarian forces occupied the Platinate in 1620. In the same year, his family had a narrow escape from Spanish forces at Prague. Davenant's fantasy of Prince Rupert's bravado against the Spanish in an imaginary conquest of Madagascar is an attempt to compensate for that previous hurt. Spain had no serious colonial interest in Madagascar at the time. See John Stubbs, *Reprobates: The Cavaliers of the English Civil War* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), 229--32.

imperial scrutiny (Fig 1.1). Arundel too abandoned his plan for various reasons, only to be followed by another aborted attempt in 1640. This latter attempt would have an English admiral, William Monson, promoting the island as a safe investment, one that promised greater yield than the English settlements in America.²⁹

This thesis is interested in the Madagascar pamphlets published thereafter. After the aborted attempts attached to Rupert, Arundel and Monson, Porter would persevere with the island design, advocating Charles I to grant a patent for Madagascar to the merchant William Courten and his associates. At the behest of Courten, the former East India Company ship surgeon Hamond would author two promotional pamphlets for planting a settlement in Madagascar. If one were to put aside the pamphlets' justification of a colonial project and their explicit pursuit of a settlement, the contents of Hamond's texts were mostly indistinguishable from the descriptions that populated travel writing in his time. He employed various strategies to claim that his report was a true geographical description in order to counter possible suspicion from his readers and allegations of dishonesty from the East India Company, who were vehemently against Courten's design. Unsurprisingly, where claims to truth are vigorously repeated, fidelity was most absent. Hamond's credentials for providing a truthful report of the island rested on being an eyewitness given the four months he spent in 1630 at Augustine Bay, located in the south-western coast of Madagascar. However, most of his report about the island and its inhabitants belonged to the

²⁹ See William Monson, "Advice how to plant the Island of St. Lawrence, the greatest Island in the World, and reckoned a Port of Africa," in *The Naval Tracts of Sir William Monson in Six Books*, ed. M. Oppenheim, vol. 4 of *Publications of the Navy Records Society* 45 (1913), 434--39. For a discussion of Monson's preference for Madagascar over English colonial ventures in the Atlantic, cf. Games, *The Web of Empire*, 190--91.

realm of the fictive rather than the true, with Hamond drawing upon a range of rhetorical and literary commonplaces to advance his case. These later Madagascar pamphlets, I suggest, constitute a salient group of works, as instances of what Robert Appelbaum has called a “utopian mastery,” i.e. “the power a subject may exert over an ideal society, whether as the author or as the imaginary founder or ruler of an ideal political world.”³⁰ He elaborates:

To think and write about an ideal society on any of a number of models (the earthly paradise, the millenarian future, the ancient Age of Gold, the happy constitutional democracy, the world turned upside down, the primitive Church, the ideally munificent court of the ideal monarch) and to assert, while thinking and writing about an ideal society, a sense of one’s potential mastery over a social or natural world were goals toward which a surprising number of people in the seventeenth century aspired.³¹

Hamond was a ship surgeon aspiring to become a man of letters. Like Shakespeare’s Gonzalo, Hamond exercises utopian mastery in his Madagascar pamphlets through a display of rhetorical prowess. This involved setting up a contrast where the island’s inhabitants were presented as an ideal society while European luxury and learning were given a dystopian treatment. In 1640, three decades after the first known production of *The Tempest*, the arguments defining Gonzalo’s gambit would echo in the ship surgeon’s initial pamphlet promoting the establishment of an English colony in the island of Madagascar.³² As was common with such texts, Hamond set out his pitch by prefixing a description of the island

³⁰ Robert Appelbaum, *Literature and Utopian Politics in Seventeenth Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

³² According to the accounts of the Revels Office, the first recorded performance of *The Tempest* took place before King James on the “Hallowmass nyght” of 1611 in the recently constructed, indoor and candle-lit Blackfriars theatre.

with “the most probable arguments of a hopefull and fit plantation of a colony.”³³ More unusual, however, was his use of the main subject as indicated in the pamphlet’s title: *A paradox Prooving that the inhabitants of the isle called Madagascar, or St. Laurence, (in temporall things) are the happiest people in the world*. In the paradox, Hamond puts forward reasons “to preferre this poore, naked, and simple Ignorant people” of Madagascar, “before the rich Gallant, understanding men of Europe”.³⁴ Like Montaigne (and Gonzalo) before him, Hamond’s idealisation of the natives was for the most part based on negation, where the New World was praised for *not* having those social institutions that the writers believed had had disastrous effects for the societies to which they belonged. The ironic charge of Hamond’s arguments are in line with those advanced by Montaigne in his imaginary address to the Greek philosopher: “It is a nation, would I answer *Plato*, that hathe no kind of traffike, no knowledge of letters, no intelligence of numbers, [...] How dissonant would hee finde his imaginary common-wealth from this perfection?”³⁵ Montaigne held this beneficent lack to be possible because the natives had been so abundantly provided for by nature that “they desire no more, then what their natural necessities direct them: whatsoever is beyond it, is to them superfluous”.³⁶ Similarly in Hamond, Madagascar’s islanders, “have no need of any forraign commodity, Nature having sufficiently supplied their necessities, wherewith they remain contented”.³⁷

³³ Walter Hamond, *A paradox Prooving that the inhabitants of the isle called Madagascar, or St. Laurence, (in temporall things) are the happiest people in the world* (London: Printed for Nathaniell Butter, 1640), frontispiece, accessed October 13, 2017. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. D2r.

³⁵ Montaigne, “Of the Canniballes,” 102.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 104.

³⁷ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. F3v.

Montaigne imagined the natural sustenance of the New World as leaving the natives with no interest in “the gaining of new landes”, for “in such plenteous abundance [...] they need not enlarge their limites”.³⁸ Here, abundance is envisioned as enabling a satiation that inhibited the drive for conquest. Unlike the French essayist and more akin to Gonzalo, Hamond presented Madagascar’s natural abundance as the basis for colonial desire.³⁹ In a subsequent pamphlet by Hamond, Madagascar’s resources are portrayed as inexhaustible; “For what will bee our wealth, will no way impoverish them; and what will enable us at our returne, cannot make their treasure one graine the lighter”.⁴⁰ In Hamond’s *A Paradox*, the islanders’ virtues are emphasised by contrasting their fulfilment with English avariciousness for whom “the whole world being scarce sufficient [...] whilst we impoverish the land, air and water, to in rich a privat Table”.⁴¹ And yet, the opening plea, within the same text, to plant a settlement in the island - where the English “may enjoy the first fruits of a most plentiful Harvest, which is better than the gleanings of America” - typifies the very acquisitiveness that Hamond rails against in the concluding section of his pamphlet.⁴² Like an ouroborosian serpent eating its own tail, Hamond’s utopian mastery had turned on itself; like Gonzalo’s imaginary commonwealth, the latter end of Hamond’s pamphlet forgets the beginning.

³⁸ Montaigne, “Of the Cannibales,” 104.

³⁹ Gonzalo dispenses with the need for an abundance resulting from institutionally governed growth. In the airy visions of the counselor, the New World landscape did not require human forethought and planning given that, “nature should bring forth/ Of it own kind, all foison, all abundance/ To feed my innocent people”. See *The Tempest* (Dover Wilson), 2.1.161-3.

⁴⁰ Walter Hamond, *Madagascar, The Richest and most Fruitfull Island in the World* (London: Printed for Nicolas Bourne, 1643), sig. Av, accessed October 12, 2016. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>.

⁴¹ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. Fr.

⁴² *Ibid.*, sig. Dv.

As Howard Mumford Jones observed, “contradiction was inevitable” in colonial promotional literature due to competing needs among different sections of its intended audience.⁴³ As Jones explains:

Reasons which might move statesmen were not necessarily identical with those advanced by an explorer who wanted backing for some hazardous enterprise; and the interests of noble or mercantile investors in a joint-stock colonization scheme were not the same as those of the actual colonists. Ministers talked about the plantations from one point of view; military strategists from another; politicians from a third. The theories of an arm-chair writer, even if he were as well informed as the elder Hakluyt, differed *toto caelo* from the practical needs set forth by hard-bitten heads of actual settlements, like Captain John Smith.⁴⁴

As we will see later, the divergent needs of Hamond’s imagined audience do play a role in the surgeon painting himself into a corner while tackling the normativity of colonisation. However, my enquiry into Hamond’s contradictions begins with the rhetorical resources he chooses to employ. Hamond framed his advertisement for an island colony with a rhetorical paradox where two extremes are pitted against each other. Like Gonzalo, he had hoped to persuade through the use of contraries; a eulogy of the natives against dispraise of the “rich, gallant, understanding men of Europe”. The resultant contradictions within the pamphlet beg a few questions. Why did Hamond employ the genre of the paradox for the task of colonial promotion? In a pamphlet purposed to promote an English colony, why does Hamond advance a discourse that clearly critiques the excesses of empire? How was it received by its intended audience? Three years after the publication of *A Paradox*, Hamond brings out a second pamphlet titled *Madagascar, the richest and most fruitfull island in the world* which adds to the anomalies of the preceding pamphlet it was intended to replace. In the second pamphlet, the emphasis shifts from the happiness of the islanders to the island’s

⁴³ H. M. Jones, “The Colonial Impulse: An Analysis of the ‘Promotion’ Literature of Colonization,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 90 (1946), 131–61.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 131.

riches. Why does Hamond pursue a significantly different manner of idealisation in his next Madagascar pamphlet? Can this move away from one utopian mode to another in Hamond's texts suggest a larger transition in the "ideal politics" employed to promote and justify early modern colonial projects?⁴⁵ These questions form the basis of my exploration into Hamond's Madagascar pamphlets, the central node of my dissertation. The English dream for Madagascar, though, does not end with Hamond's island praise. The fictive possession of the island had to now be translated into the physical and often violent ordeal of practical possession, of claiming dominion on ground. The Madagascar project was soon abandoned when practical possession proved impossible, when colonial dreams turned into a colonist's nightmare. Prior to this eventuality, however, more pamphlets relating to the profitability of the island venture were published. I extend my historical and literary enquiry into the utopian aspects of Hamond's promotion to these texts as well.

In 1646, Richard Boothby, a merchant with serious grievances against the East India Company, published his pamphlet, *A briefe discovery or description of the most famous island of Madagascar*.⁴⁶ Boothby's mercantile occupation defined his utopian mastery of the island. Madagascar was idealised as the "chiefest place in the world to enrich men by Trade", the island schematised in terms of the

⁴⁵ Appelbaum frames "ideal politics" and "utopian mastery" as a pair of complementary phenomena in order to investigate the utopian disposition that constantly features in texts and political movements across seventeenth century England. He defines "ideal politics" as a "discourse in any number of forms which generates the image of an ideal society - a society that exists predominantly in the imagination and usually in the shape of an optimal alternative to a real society in the here and now". See Appelbaum, *Literature and Utopian Politics*, 1.

⁴⁶ As Games elaborates, "Boothby was a merchant with a profound sense of injury against the Company and his hostility permeated his pamphlet. He had been imprisoned by the East India Company in 1629, when he had been the principal merchant at the factory at Brodera (Vadodara in western India). The charges included private trade (which everyone engaged in, despite prohibitions, but discretion was important) and even having an objectionable personality at a dinner party". See Games, *The Web of Empire*, 195.

various commodities it could possibly produce or store.⁴⁷ But Boothby's financial fantasy was late in its coming. In 1644, a year after the publication of Hamond's second pamphlet, three ships with a total crew of 140 passengers set sail for Madagascar in a colonial expedition led by John Smart. By the time one of the ships, named the *James*, reached Augustine Bay, most of the crew were under the grip of sickness and starvation. On land, their privations did not subside. The planters found the weather and soil unsuitable for agriculture. Apart from disease, what seemed initially like an agreement with local communities quickly broke down and violence and killing ensued between both parties. By the month of May, in the year 1646 - the year Boothby's pamphlet appeared - only sixty from the original 140 survived. In only a little more than a year after setting up residence on the island, these survivors had to be evacuated after disease, conflict and starvation took a heavy toll on the fledgling colony. Soon after his exit from the island, John Smart would die in Aceh from a "flux" (suspected to have been dysentery) contracted in Madagascar.⁴⁸ This disastrous turn of events was not sudden. Long before his settlers had to vacate the island, Smart complained to his cousin Thomas Kynnaston about the intelligence reports gathered by the Courten Associates, concluding that the prospects mentioned therein, of a flourishing trade to be had from Madagascar was nothing but "ribble, rabble" and "meere chimeras."⁴⁹ Despite this failing enterprise, the Courten Association persisted with Boothby's idealised depiction of Madagascar believing that future attempts to profit from the island were still possible.

⁴⁷ Richard Boothby, *A Breife Discovery or Description of the most Famous Island of Madagascar or St. Lawrence in Asia neare unto East-India* (London: Printed for John Hardesty, 1647), frontispiece, accessed October 13, 2017. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>

⁴⁸ Games, *The Web of Empire*, 208.

⁴⁹ John Smart to Thomas Kynnaston, 15 December 1645, Add. 14,037, fol. 17recto– verso, BL, quoted in Games, *The Web of Empire*, 197.

In 1649, Courten's detractors, the East India Company commissioned Powle Waldegrave, one of the survivors from the failed venture to publish *An Answer to Mr Boothbies Book, of the Description of the Island of Madagascar*.⁵⁰ In what was a post-mortem report of the colonial disaster, blame was squarely placed on Hamond's and Boothby's deceitfully rosy visions of the island. The main purpose of the pamphlet was to vindicate the East India Company's opposition to the Courten's Madagascar design. Waldegrave railed against Hamond and provided a point-by-point rebuttal to each of Boothby's spurious claims regarding the island's healthfulness and profitability. Dystopian portrayals and the exercise of "utopian mastery" were not mutually exclusive. Hamond had characterised England and Europe as a debauched and unhappy society, denouncing its culture of consumption so that he could in turn heighten the virtues and contentment of Madagascar's people. If Hamond and Boothby gave voice to the dream of Madagascar, Waldegrave made sure to recollect the nightmarish sequence of events that unfolded in the island. The latter references the Courten promoters - including Boothby who evokes the island's "pleasantness and fertility" as "comparable with Canaan" and Hamond's "simple conception, that what Prince soever of Christendom that were seated there, and really possess of it, may be the Emperor of all India" - only to bitterly dismiss their promises.⁵¹ The island in Waldegrave's experience was "a cursed Golgotha, then pleasant *Canaan*", its people worshipping "God only in name, and the Devil by true and faithfull (s)ervices; witness their treacherous dealing in seeking to murder us, and so exact

⁵⁰ Powle Waldegrave, *An Answer to Mr Boothbies Book, of the Description of the Island of Madagascar*. In *Vindication of the Honorable Society of Merchants trading to East-India, from the many Aspersion laid upon them by the said Boothbie* (London: Printed for the Author, 1649), accessed October 13, 2017. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 6--7.

theevery”.⁵² English prospects for Madagascar were a tale of extremes, starting out as a utopian parallel to the biblical riches of Canaan, and eventually, after the failed expedition, drawing comparisons to Golgotha, that site for the condemned. As with the fate of other lost colonies, the English dream of Madagascar was relegated to near oblivion.

‘The blink of an eye’: Recent evaluations of the failed English colony in Madagascar

As Alison Games notes, “(i)n the context of European colonization schemes around the globe”, short-lived ventures such as England’s attempt to plant a settlement on the big island were “the equivalent of the blink of an eye”.⁵³ Correspondingly, scholarly interest in England’s grandiose projections and the subsequent failure to colonise Madagascar has been rather limited, though a few recent studies have examined the various historical entanglements guiding the motives and actions that defined this episode. Robert Brenner evaluates the Courtens’ push for a settlement in Madagascar as part of an “entirely new system of production” put in place by a “New-Merchant Leadership” whose colonisation efforts emerged in the period between the dissolution of the Virginia Company in 1624 and the outbreak of the English Civil War.⁵⁴ For Brenner, the ventures initiated during this period were a breakthrough for English colonisation as colonies were “permanently established, and only from that time did colonization and colonial production come to be carried on in a sustained and accelerating manner”.⁵⁵ The various groups of traders who represented this shift in approach to English colonisation were “new men” in that they were of the “middling sort”,

⁵² Ibid., 13.

⁵³ Games, *The Web of Empire*, 190--91.

⁵⁴ Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London’s Overseas Traders, 1550–1653* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 113--99.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 113.

with few of them belonging to the upper ranks of either rural or London society. They were usually, as Brenner notes, “the younger sons of minor gentry or prosperous yeomen”.⁵⁶ This was the case with the relatively modest upbringing of the new merchants who eventually financed the Courten Association’s Madagascar expedition led by John Smart.⁵⁷ Following his father’s death in 1637, William Courten the younger inherited the island venture along with large debts accrued from the former’s investment in a series of failed East Indian voyages. The debts increased as William tried to offset his losses by investing more money into the East Indian trade. Brenner argues that these circumstances led William to forfeit control over his interloping enterprise to a set of new-merchant leaders led by Maurice Thompson and his trading partner Jeremy Blackman.⁵⁸ These new merchants envisioned the Madagascar venture as “the focal point of a complex, multilateral trading network, encompassing not only the local port-to-port commerce with India, East Africa, and the Indies, but stretching as far away as the English colonies in America”.⁵⁹ While interest in the big island continued for a brief period after Smart’s expedition, it soon lost steam when the new-merchant

⁵⁶ Ibid., 114.

⁵⁷ Sir William Courten, who would go onto become one of London’s esteemed merchant-princes, was born into a protestant family of Flemish tailors who fled to England after facing religious persecution at the hands of Spanish authorities. Courten’s wealth and access to trading networks increased as a result of marrying the daughter of Peter Cromling, a Dutch merchant. After his death in 1636, his son (also named William) would inherit the Association’s project of planting a settlement in Madagascar. The other main players in the consortium at the the initial stages of the Madagascar design included the merchant Thomas Kynaston, John Weddell and Nathaniel Mountney - the latter two being former employees of the East India Company. The courtier Endymion Porter, slated to earn a quarter of the venture’s profits, played a crucial role in liaising with the monarch. In 1637, Charles I granted a royal patent to Courten’s syndicate to carry out trade in those parts of the East not yet exploited by the East India Company.

⁵⁸ The merchant John Darell registers the desperation and resentment that might have accompanied the loss of William the younger’s hold over his company. In his pamphlet, *Strange News from the Indies*, Darell attempts to mitigate the role of William in the company’s collapse by stating that the latter “was so weakened in his estate, that (for the better support of his trade) about Anno 1642, he was constrained thereby as well as by advice of his friends to associate with Mr. M.T. [Maurice Thomson] and J.B. [Jeremy Blackman] and other adventurers who were altogether strangers in that trade, but made such use of his necessity...by clandestine, private and prejudicial contracts”. See John Darell, *Strange News from the Indies* (London, 1652), 24, quoted in Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 175.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 177.

leadership focused its efforts on gaining influence in East-Indian trade by exerting pressure on a crisis-ridden East India Company.⁶⁰

Brenner employs the Madagascar expedition as an example of the dynamics of pre-Civil War overseas commercial development in England. He argues that such instances set the precedent for the installation of the numerous English colonies that followed thereafter. Similarly, Alison Games casts Madagascar alongside early English colonial efforts in the Amazon, Bermuda, Ireland and Tangier as precursors to “the centers of commerce, plantation production, and strategic power the English ultimately established in the Caribbean, the North American mainland, the Mediterranean, and the East Indies”.⁶¹ Rather than looking solely at the transactions, intrigues and projections within the mercantile establishments in England, Games views these early colonial developments from the vantage point of cosmopolitanism. Plans for Madagascar were drawn up in a period of colonial experimentation. Games addresses the models on which the short-lived English settlements in Madagascar were based. While Boothby sought an emulation of Dutch successes in Batavia, a later attempt to colonise the riverine island of Assada, situated in the south-west of Madagascar, was based on recent English success in Barbadoes.⁶² These models, a result of “the transoceanic global perspectives that men derived through their travels from one

⁶⁰ Ibid., 178--82.

⁶¹ Games, *The Web of Empire*, 14.

⁶² Soon after the settlement headed by John Smart collapsed, plans for Assada, a riverine island in Madagascar, were formally set out. The Courten Association was not involved in the latter attempt. Initially coordinated by a group called the Assada Adventurers, the East India Company would soon take over the project. This venture was to be headed by Robert Hunt, previously the governor of Providence Island, who sought, as Games observes, “to recreate Barbados in the Indian Ocean”. See Games, *The Web of Empire*, 210. Barbados was a recent success story for the English and Hunt intended to employ its reputation in order to entice potential investors and settlers to Assada. Hunt also believed the business model of Barbadoes, a slave plantation focused on the production of sugar, would work well for Assada and also gather interest from colonists with previous experience in the Caribbean.

ocean basin to another”, would eventually have a bearing on the island colony’s fate.⁶³

Other studies have followed Games’s perspective in exploring English colonial interest in the island of Madagascar from a transoceanic perspective. Like Games, Kevin P. McDonald showcases the English settlement at Madagascar as part of a larger project that questions the frontiers of the early modern Atlantic world.⁶⁴ McDonald views the English presence in Madagascar as part of an Indo-Atlantic framework consisting of “an integrated circum-Atlantic/Western Indian Ocean zone of trans-cultural social and economic interactions”.⁶⁵ According to McDonald, Indo-Atlantic connections are to be seen in instances such as Boothby’s assessment of Madagascar’s prospects as far exceeding “all other countries in Asia, Africa, and America”, and in the island’s subsequent pirate settlements where “most of the pirate-settlers were veteran buccaneers and privateers from the Atlantic”.⁶⁶ Building on the work of Games and McDonald, Edmond J. Smith too employs the seventeenth-century English settlement at Madagascar to demonstrate the colonial traffic between the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds. According to Smith, “Africa has often been seen as a barrier between oceanic systems, and a dividing line within English imperial activity – with colonialism a key strategy to the west and trading favoured to the east of the continent”.⁶⁷ Smith argues that the Madagascan colony can be viewed as a “region

⁶³ Ibid., 7.

⁶⁴ Kevin P. McDonald, “The Dream of Madagascar’: English Disasters and Pirate Utopias of the Early Modern Indo-Atlantic World,” in *New Worlds Reflected: Travel and Utopia in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Chloë Houston (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 95--114.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 96.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 98.

⁶⁷ Edmond J Smith, “Canaanising Madagascar’: Africa in English imperial imagination, 1635–1650,” *Itinerario* 39, no. 2 (2015): 277.

of Africa” that “was conceived as part of Atlantic and Indian Ocean systems rather than a barrier between them, a location connecting the diverse expansion of English trade around the world”.⁶⁸ Games, McDonald and Smith adeptly recruit the Courten Association’s fleeting settlement at Madagascar to elucidate the mid-seventeenth century dynamics of English colonisation. However, these studies overemphasise the role of the exaggerations and misinformation contained within Hamond’s and Boothby’s promotional texts in the failure of the Madagascan colony.

Games, McDonald and Smith, to varying extents, hold the misinformation found in Hamond and Boothby’s promotional pamphlets to be responsible for the island settlement’s rapid failure. McDonald asserts that “the lack of fundamental knowledge about the island and its people would eventually contribute to the colonial disasters that followed”, while Games surmises that “the burden of lofty expectations” imposed by Hamond and Boothby was an important factor in the ensuing collapse as “they forced inhabitants to deny the real circumstances in which they lived and instead to seek alternative realities”.⁶⁹ McDonald points to the discrepancy between the healthfulness of the island reported by Hamond versus the large number of colonists at the Augustine Bay colony who died as a result of disease; ditto for Hamond endorsing the islanders aversion to thievery while Smart’s settlers would have their cattle stolen by the very tribe that sold it to them. Cattle raiding was a common practice among the various Malagasy tribes that inhabited the island. It is safe to assume that Hamond and Boothby were probably ignorant (or deceiving) of both these impediments given that they

⁶⁸ Ibid., 279.

⁶⁹ McDonald, “The Dream of Madagascar,” 97; Games, *The Web of Empire*, 192.

hardly ventured onto land during their respective stops at the island. In a similar vein, Smith, while discussing the failed settlement, notes that “information was a vital commodity in the developing English empire, and poor information was just as damaging as good information could be profitable”.⁷⁰ Given the ship surgeon's and merchant's repeated assertions to truth-telling and their stated aim of providing a manual to set up the prospective island colony, it is understandable that these scholars evaluate the texts in terms of their explicitly stated functions and the diametrically opposing circumstances encountered by the settlers. This conception is bolstered by the statements of the colony's survivors such as Smart and Waldegrave, who seem to assign blame to Hamond and Boothby in particular. Yet evaluating promotional texts in terms of their explicitly stated functions or the responses of those unfortunate enough to have taken their instructions seriously, allows at best a partial understanding.

It was not as if misinformation was the only factor that could cause a colonial venture to sink or sustain. A comparison between Smart's island expedition and the early settlers of New England would be instructive here. Smart and his crew were not unique in their predicament of arriving at a distant shore only to be rudely disabused of the vision of plenitude pitched to them before setting sail from England. A few decades earlier, John Smith had presented a geographical eulogy of “the Coast of the *Massachusetts*” in his *A Description of New England* (1616), where:

we saw so planted with Gardens and Corne fields, and so well inhabited with a goodly, strong and well proportioned people, besides the greatnesse of the Timber growing on them, the greatnesse of the fish and the moderate temper of the ayre

⁷⁰ Smith, “Canaanising Madagascar,” 293.

(for of twentie fiue, not any was sicke, but two that were many yeares diseased before they went, notwithstanding our bad lodging and accidentall diet) who can but approue this a most excellent place, both for health & fertility? And of all the foure parts of the world that I haue yet seene not inhabited, could I haue but meanes to transport a Colonie, I would rather liue here then any where. ⁷¹

Like Hamond, Smith had showcased the health and fertility of his New World paradise. Both their marketing efforts presented them as desirous consumers committed enough to relocate to these foreign lands. In both cases, the travellers were largely ignorant of local particulars, given their limited excursions into the lands they described (though this only added to their flight of fancy).⁷² Among Smith's readers were the Pilgrims who were the first European settlers in New England. They found that their own experience was very different from the inviting descriptions they were served; the much-touted seafood made them sick, and the unexpectedly cold climate killed a few.⁷³ While some Plymouth settlers later reflected on their initial months in laudatory tones, the colony's governor, William Bradford in one instance would describe their new home as "a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men."⁷⁴ But unlike their

⁷¹ John Smith, "A Description of New England (1616): An Online Electronic Text Edition," ed. Paul Royster, in *Electronic Texts in American Studies: Paper 4*: 24--5, <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/4>.

⁷² As Zachary McLeod Hutchins notes, Smith's praise of "Massachusetts as an Eden in waiting" was composed "from a ship-side perspective. Smith made only limited and inconclusive forays inland, a fact that his praise for the fisheries and harbors off the New England coast often obscures". See Zachary McLeod Hutchins, *Inventing Eden: Primitivism, Millennialism, and the Making of New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 35. Elsewhere in his *A Description*, Smith admits as much stating, "As for the goodness and true substances of the Land, wee are for most part yet altogether ignorant of them, unlesse it bee those parts about the Bay of Chisapeack and Sagadahock: but onely here and there we touched or have seene a little the edges of those large dominions". See Smith, *A Description of New England*, 20--21.

⁷³ The booklet more commonly (and erroneously) cited as *Mourt's relation*, authored by the William Bradford among others, records some of the discrepancies between travel reports of the region and the experience of the settlers. As Bradford recounted, "We found great Mussels, and very fat and full of Sea pearle, but we could not eat them, for they made vs all sicke that did eat, as well saylers as passengers." In the same page, he would also note the less than salubrious air, "which caused many to get colds and coughs, for it was many times freezing cold weather." See William Bradford, *A relation or iournall of the beginning and proceedings of the English plantation settled at Plimoth in New England* (London: Iohn Bellamie, 1622), sig. C2v.

⁷⁴ William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, ed. Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 2002), 62, quoted in Hutchins, "Promoting Paradise, Ordering Wilderness," 36.

Madagascan counterparts, the Plymouth settlers did not have to face a situation of impending annihilation. Left with more options than just helplessly decrying the falsity of Smith's projections, they shifted their utopian horizons: from the pleasures to be had in the moment, to a future in which material and spiritual redemption awaited. As Zachary Hutchins argues in her study on the role of Edenic ideologies in the colonial history of New England, "(a)fter two decades in which English order and invention failed to cultivate this second Eden into existence, colonists blamed their agricultural failures on Native American uprisings and their own religious declension, relinquishing the possibility of a present paradise for hope in recovering a future, eschatological Eden."⁷⁵ Their religious mission enabled them to reformulate their utopian horizons beyond merely the desire for a settlement based solely on colonial intelligence. The New England settlers could then better endure their privations and continue their quest to seize Native American territories, despite the misinformation contained in the promotional literature. Smart's Madagascar colony, on the other hand, was made up of labourers and craftsmen stationed to set up a grand factory rather than a settler community united, like the Pilgrims, by an eschatological mission. Its narrow mercantile outlook limited the wherewithal of both investor and the colonist to endure and outlast the many obstacles involved in securing the settlement. For the Courtens looking for quick returns, it would have been more expedient to abandon the venture altogether.

In his concluding assessment of the failed Madagascar colony, Edmund Smith asserts that by "Canaanising Madagascar, proponents of English colonisation in Africa obtained the support necessary to launch their settlements, but as a

⁷⁵ Hutchins, *Inventing Eden*, 36--37.

consequence of misinformation regarding Madagascar, settlers were unprepared and unable to make the colony a success”.⁷⁶ This statement reveals a fundamental incongruity between the intentions of these pamphlets and their explicitly-stated functions. The promotion helped launch the expedition by conjuring an idealised fictive possession that could stoke the interest of its funders and convince potential settlers of future benefits. Aside from marketing the expedition, these narratives also had an important ceremonial and ideological purpose. The pamphlets commemorated and validated the venture by characterising it as a just and virtuous enterprise. The task of the “great bulk of ‘promotion literature’”, as Jones has noted, was to provide a “report of the exploratory voyage or voyages, which usually stressed the economic plenitude of the new settlement, the excellence of its climate, the healthiness of its situation, and the gentleness of the natives”.⁷⁷ This a priori optimism often precluded the incorporation of information crucial for securing the dominion of the settlement. Observations about problems to be faced by incoming colonists, their financial and human costs, and useful strategies for mitigation would struggle to find a place in such a promotional discourse. Information about these hindrances, though useful to the planning of the expedition, would have made the potential settlement seem a risky prospect, discouraging investors. Therefore, the requirements of fictive possession were diametrically opposed to those of practical possession. As participants in this economy of fictive possessions, Hamond’s and Boothby’s pamphlets did not seriously intend themselves to be reconnaissance manuals, despite their repeated self-endorsements as true ‘reports’. By drawing attention to the contradiction built into these promotional endeavours, we are able to see that

⁷⁶ Smith, “Canaanising Madagascar,” 294.

⁷⁷ Jones, “The Colonial Impulse,” 132.

the task of promotion and reportage were at odds with each other, two motive forces destined to collide.

Utopian aspects of colonial promotional literature: A lesson in the uses of contradiction

Rather than limiting the discussion to the truth and falsity of the grandiose claims made in these Madagascar pamphlets, this thesis addresses the fundamentally contrarian nature of these promotional works. I read Hamond's *A Paradox* as a lesson in the uses of contradiction; the rhetorical genre of the paradox allowed Hamond to present as minimal any threat from Madagascar's native islanders while staging a display of his own erudition. I argue that the contrary space of the colonial advertisement allowed the likes of Hamond and Boothby to deploy literary and rhetorical resources in order to fashion themselves as brokers or utopian masters of a colonial vision. To come to terms with the concerns behind the shifting idealised colonial visions they sought in their fictive geographies, I analyse their rhetorical moves alongside the colonial models advanced by early modern utopian fiction, a class of texts that combined the practices of geography and ideal politics to great effect. I do not cover the entire extensive corpus of utopian writing of the period as that would be beyond the scope of this study.⁷⁸ Moreover, I am in agreement with Appelbaum's conclusion that "there is little stability to the genre of utopian fiction in the seventeenth century, that what it

⁷⁸ The most comprehensive listing of early modern utopian writing in English can be found in Lyman Tower Sargent, *British and American Utopian Literature 1516-1986: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland, 1998). A recently updated version of this bibliography is now available as an online resource at <http://openpublishing.psu.edu/utopia/>. For a useful starting point regarding the diversity of disciplinary concerns that animate utopian studies see Gregory Claey's, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Given the slippery etymology of the word utopia, the interdisciplinary project of utopian studies is understandably occupied by the difficulty of assigning strict definitions and criteria to its object of study. For an account of these difficulties and possible workarounds, see Ruth Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia*, 2nd ed. (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010).

means to be utopian, to write a utopian fiction, or to expand the imagination utopistically is subject to continual dispute and variation throughout the century”.⁷⁹ I focus on three early modern utopian texts that best illuminate the fictive moves registered in the advertisements promoting an English colony in Madagascar.

At the very end of the seventeenth century, an anonymous gentleman - only identified by the initials B.E - published what was the first English dictionary of slang entitled *A New Dictionary of the Terms Ancient and Modern of the Canting Crew, In its several Tribes, of Gypsies, Beggars, Thieves, Cheats* (1699). Like More’s *Utopia* - it claimed to be both useful (“for all sorts of People, (especially Foreigners) to secure their Money and preserve their Lives”) - and amusing, (“Diverting and Entertaining, being wholly New”).⁸⁰ The new world of *Utopia* was a curiosity for its readers; curious were the marginal classes of a burgeoning London for the readers of *A New Dictionary*, the former stereotyped as an exotic criminal underworld by the middle and upper classes.⁸¹ If More’s *Utopia* rendered an imaginary foreign geography, *A New Dictionary* indexed an imaginary exotic lexicon, consisting mostly of sham references pretending to be an authentic rogue jargon. It is fitting then, that featured among its various glosses is “*Utopia, Fairy Land, a new Atlantis, or Isle of Pines*”.⁸² The three texts referenced here as fairylands are not a random assortment of utopian fictions; rather they include what are arguably the most popular and significant

⁷⁹ Appelbaum, *Literature and Utopian Politics*, 2.

⁸⁰ B.E., *A new dictionary of the canting crew in its several tribes of gypsies, beggars, thieves, cheats &c., with an addition of some proverbs, phrases, figurative speeches &c. : useful for all sorts of people (especially foreigners) to secure their money and preserve their lives* (London: Printed for W. Hawes et al., 1699), frontispiece.

⁸¹ See John Simpson, “Introduction to the 2010 Edition,” in *The First English Dictionary of Slang 1699* (Oxford: Bodleian Library Publishing, 2010), 5--73.

⁸² B.E., *A New Dictionary*, n.p. See the dictionary entry filed under UT.

representatives of the genre. While *Utopia* and Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* have enjoyed a wide readership and extensive scholarly scrutiny from their publication to the present day, Henry Neville's *Isle of Pines* (1668) was in its own day an early example of a text gone viral with numerous editions published in several languages and disseminated across the continent only a few months after it was first published in London.⁸³ This trio of texts is also brought together in Susan Bruce's compilation of three early modern utopias. For Bruce, these texts are interesting as each of them involve a "discourse of origins".⁸⁴ Not only do all of them involve a origin story of an ideal society located in a distant and secret part of the New World, these works are able to articulate and juxtapose problems and commentaries fundamental to early modern experience including, as Bruce argues, "questions concerning authority and truth, social behaviour and individual virtue".⁸⁵ Among the various issues traversed by these texts, each of them tackles different aspects of English colonial idealisation. If *Utopia* provides a classically informed template for justifying the establishment of colonies, the *Isle of Pines* foregrounds the uses and the follies of the cornucopian imagination undergirding colonial ventures, while the *New Atlantis* idealises the reporting and gathering of colonial intelligence. When the utopian treatment of colony and empire in these works are brought to bear upon the promotion of Madagascar, they illuminate not just the antithetical nature of Hamond's pamphlets but also the shifting colonial models employed across the various advertisements for the island colony.

⁸³ For a meticulous survey of the various editions of *The Isle of Pines*, see Gaby M. Mahlberg, "Authors Losing Control: The European Transformations of Henry Neville's *The Isle of Pines* (1668)," *Book History* 15, no. 1 (2012): 1--25.

⁸⁴ Thomas More, Francis Bacon and Henry Neville, *Three Early Modern Utopias*, ed. Susan Bruce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), ix.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, xvi.

The colonial impulse in *Utopia* and *New Atlantis* is not explicitly tied to a desire for conquest and expansion. In fact, these texts figure as utopian solutions to fundamental social problems as apprehended through the lens of a particular intellectual project. J. C. Davis defines utopia in the early modern context by contrasting its outlook on socio-economic questions against four coexisting varieties of ideal societies, namely Cockayne, Arcadia, the perfect moral commonwealth and the Millennium.⁸⁶ According to Davis, each type of ideal society differs in its conception and approach to the ‘collective problem’. The collective problem involves laying out solutions for managing possibly unlimited wants against a finite supply of satisfactions and also the institutional means for steering the activities and desires of individuals towards the fulfilment of a prescribed set of social norms and public goods.⁸⁷ While Cockayne narratives sidestep the problem by describing a state of infinite supply, arcadian visions posit a harmony between man and nature where an abundant (though not infinite) supply exists alongside denizens who have self-evidently moderate needs. Moderation was not self-evident for the perfect moral commonwealth, rather it was achieved through stricture. As Davis elaborates, “in the perfect moral commonwealth the collective problem was solved, not by increasing the range or quantity of satisfactions available, but by a personal limitation of appetite to what existed for every group and individual”⁸⁸. For the millenarian on the other hand, the collective problem is “consigned out of his own hands, and out of the hands of men” and projected onto a future state of salvation where an Arcadia or a perfect commonwealth awaits.⁸⁹ For Davis, prototypical early modern utopias such as *Utopia* and *New Atlantis* differ from these four anterior

⁸⁶ See J. C. Davis, *Utopia and the Ideal Society: A study of English utopian writing 1516-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 1--41.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 19--20.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁸⁹ This would be the case with the earlier reference to the Plymouth settlers.

forms of ideal societies; where the latter is prone to “tampering with the problem” or “wishing the problem away”, the former concerns itself with “the social problems that the collective problem can lead to - crime, instability, poverty, rioting, war, exploitation and vice” and “seeks to ‘solve’ the collective problem collectively, that is by the reorganisation of society and its institutions, by education, by laws and by sanctions.”⁹⁰ Colonisation in *Utopia* and *New Atlantis* is a practical and moral imperative that emerges as a part of the solution to the collective problem.

In *Utopia* hardly a moment passes where its norms and practices do not regulate the lives of its denizens, so as to not distract from their clockwork like pursuit of productivity and virtue. Unsurprisingly, given More’s staunch Catholicism, there is no policy to check the population of the utopians. Colonisation is advanced as the remedy for any shortfall in resources if the growth in population was to get out of hand. The appropriation of neighbouring territories is put forward as the solution to a central aspect of the collective problem with More setting forth the following *jus ad bellum*:

But if a city has too many people, the extra persons serve to make up the shortage of population in other cities. And if the population throughout the entire island exceeds the quota, they enrol citizens out of every city and plant a colony under their own laws on the mainland near them, wherever the natives have plenty of unoccupied and uncultivated land. Those natives who want to live with the Utopians are adopted by them. When such a merger occurs, the two peoples gradually and easily blend together, sharing the same way of life and customs, much to the advantage of both. For by their policies the Utopians make the land yield an abundance for all, though previously it had seemed too poor and barren

⁹⁰ Davis, *Utopia and the Ideal Society*, 37--38. Davis observes that non-utopian ideal societies such as those following a Millenarian framework resort to the employment of a *deus e machina* in order to provide resolution to their social problems. While the texts that Davis characterises strictly as early modern utopias do bring a policy-based approach to their problems they are not entirely free of the use of a *deus e machina* device. In More’s utopia for instance, most citizens do not need to be disciplined as they are automatically invested in utilising their leisure for learning. This propensity for domestic occupation and virtue forecloses the kinds of problems that utopian writers such as More would otherwise have to address.

even to support the natives. But those who refuse to live under their laws they drive out of the land they claim for themselves; and against those who resist them, they wage war. They think it is perfectly justifiable to make war on people who leave their land idle and waste yet forbid the use and possession of it to others who, by the law of nature, ought to be supported from it.⁹¹

In order to justify pre-emptive warfare and territorial acquisition in a colonial context, More marshals a pithy yet multi-faceted argumentative scheme with legal, economic, demographic and altruistic dimensions. The urban management of *Utopia* is marked by a Platonic symmetry where the maximum population of a city is fixed at ten thousand.⁹² This pretend-technocratic formulation of an optimal count provides the material context for discussing the Utopian policy on colonisation. The law of nature invoked at the end provides a rational-legal authority for war in case a consensus between coloniser and native was not to be reached. Colonial possession - and native dispossession - hinged on the right to occupy unused land. In effect, More was repurposing the Roman or Quiritarian principle of *Usucapio* - the acquisition of ownership by use - for justifying the colonisation of territories in the New World.⁹³ Towards the end of the seventeenth century, John Locke too recruited the language of natural law to elaborate on these connections in his *Two Treatises of Government* arguing that it is the exertion of labour over land that originally gives rise to the right or entitlement that constitutes property. As a secretary to the Earl of Shaftesbury

⁹¹ More, *Utopia*, 49.

⁹² As Logan observes in the footnote accompanying the above quoted passage from *Utopia*, “the closest parallel to the Utopian arrangements for population control is found in Plato’s *Laws* (5.740A-741A) where the set figure of 5,040 households for the city-state is maintained by redistributing children, manipulating the birthrate (using such techniques as enforced abstinence for the overly fertile and rewards or censure to stimulate underbreeders), and establishing colonies”. See More, *Utopia*, 49.

⁹³ For a preliminary account of the Roman legal instruments of *Usucapio*, see Andrew M. Riggsby, *Roman Law and the Legal World of the Romans* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 135--43. The doctrine of adverse possession of property was formalised in English common law in 1632. For a detailed historical account of English property laws regarding acquisitive prescription and their derivation and divergence from Roman legal doctrines such as *usucapio*, see Thomas Arnold Herbert, *The History of the Law of Prescription in England* (1891; repr., Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2013).

who was the Chief Lord Proprietor of the Carolina Colony, Locke was mounting a defence for his patron's right to occupy what was characterised as America's vast expanses of *Vacuum domicillium* or waste land. But the authority of natural law is only one aspect of More's humanist approach to justifying colonisation.⁹⁴ As Andrew Fitzmaurice explains, "What may cause surprise is that humanists were deeply sceptical of profit and nervous of foreign possessions at the same time that they saw both as possible sources of glory".⁹⁵ More takes great pains to not rely solely on the power of fiat; rather he frames colonisation as an honourable enterprise which is beneficial to both coloniser and native. This civic-minded aspect of More's utopian discourse on colonisation can serve as an entry-point into Hamond's display of Madagascar as an island possession in *A Paradox*.

More's concerns over demography and the management of resources were not shared by Hamond who presented Madagascar and its islanders through an arcadian lens. Economising was not a concern for Hamond as it was in his interest to report the island's resources as plentiful. He adopted the Morean approach by framing the planting of a settlement in Madagascar as a civil encounter with a native populace who would be more than willing to accept English demands. In his first pamphlet, Hamond reassured his readers that Madagascar's islanders posed little threat to incoming settlers by painting the natives as an honourable

⁹⁴ In an essay on the humanism philosophy of Vasco de Quiroga, Anthony Pagden clarifies that there were theologically liberal humanists such as Erasmus and More who were more concerned with personal development and the place of man in the world. This was distinct from the "legal humanism, the humanism of Alciato and Connan, rather than the humanism of Valla and Bruni". This latter strand of humanism gave importance to the Roman legal tradition and Ciceronian discourses on civic virtue, domains in which positive law took precedence over natural law. See Anthony Pagden, "The Humanism of Vasco de Quiroga's 'Información en derecho,'" in *Humanismus und Neve Welt*, ed. Wolfgang Reinhard (Weinheim: VCH Acta Humaniora, 1987), 133--43.

⁹⁵ Andrew Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America: An Intellectual History of English Colonisation, 1500-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.

and peaceful race in contrast to the fickle and rapacious nature of his own countrymen. In his second advertisement, this self-disdain gave way to a conception of England as an incarnation of imperial Rome, a people who were well-placed, like More's Utopians, to adopt, tutor and better the lives of Madagascar's islanders. Where the islanders were celebrated in the former pamphlet for their happiness, the island is idealised in the latter for its riches. Hamond's changes to the presentation of the colony can be better understood if we are to contrast More's treatment of colonisation in *Utopia* to Francis Bacon's preoccupations with the gathering of colonial intelligence in *New Atlantis*. Within Salomon's house, the secret laboratory at the heart of Bacon's utopia, most fellowship positions are reserved for the twelve spies who "sail into foreign countries, under the names of other nations (for our own we conceal); who bring us the books, and abstracts and patterns of experiments of all other parts. These we call Merchants of Light".⁹⁶ Bacon's utopian fiction related the mercantile projects of travel, exploration and traffic with the scientific exploits of the New Science. Where More emphasised the justification of colonial enterprise, Bacon - writing at a time when English colonial ambitions were in full sway - was preoccupied with the gathering of colonial intelligence, the reporting of riches.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Francis Bacon, "New Atlantis," in *The Major Works*, ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 486.

⁹⁷ The fellows of Saloman's house in Bacon's *New Atlantis* seem completely preoccupied with either the inventorying of knowledge gathered from far flung places or with the use and development of that information for gaining technological mastery over prevailing natural and social constraints. But the overseas exploits of the New Atlanteans are suffused with fantasies more relevant to the overseas commercial enterprise. Not for nothing are the knowledge gatherers who travel from one foreign shore to another called 'merchants' of light. In the galleries of Saloman's house are placed the statues of the principal inventors; of whom the first to be named is "Columbus, that discovered the West Indies", followed by the "inventor of ships". The conception of science and invention in *New Atlantis* belonged as much to the priorities of the world of colonial exploration and commerce as it did to the fellowship of learned societies. See Bacon, "New Atlantis," 487. When the shipwrecked narrator's encounter one of the Fathers of Saloman's house leading a procession, he is dressed in luxurious garb. Unlike More's Utopians who prefer modest habits, the Father's dress is described in minute detail, including undergarments of "excellent white linen", "gloves that were curious, and set with stone" and a hat "like a helmet, or Spanish Montera", all such accessories indicating a personage outfitting himself with the spoils of a thriving overseas trade. In the procession, the Father's chariot is followed by "all the officers and

In his dual attempts to hawk the island of Madagascar, Hamond used the rhetorical form of the paradox to foreground his characterization of the islanders as a happy people whose mores put the virtues of courage, moderation and justice at the forefront. The paradox is discarded later in favour of headlining the commodities and riches to be borne by the island. This transition from happiness to riches was reflective of a larger shift in the English self-understanding of empire at a time where the discourse of colonial glory over profit became increasingly irrelevant.

In Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Saloman's house periodically dispatched spies for reconnaissance expeditions across the globe. They were provided with a "good quantity of treasure" to "maintain a trade, not for gold, silver, or jewels; nor for silks; nor for spices; nor any other commodity of matter; but only for God's first creature, which was *Light*".⁹⁸ These 'Merchants of Light' were to provide Saloman's house with "knowledge of the affairs and state of those countries to which they were designed, and especially of the sciences, arts, manufactures, and inventions; and withal to bring unto us books, instruments, and patterns in every kind".⁹⁹ This 'light' or intelligence was compiled and interpreted by the fellows of Salomon's house for their grand project to enlarge "the bounds of Human Empire, to the effecting of all things possible".¹⁰⁰ That the Merchants of Light consisted of twelve spies suggests additionally another aspect of knowledge and empire. Bacon's allusion to the biblical allegory of twelve spies is worthy of some

principals of the Companies of the City" (ibid., 478--79). Bacon's references in *New Atlantis* to the world of trade leads Christopher Kendrick to conclude that the organisation of Saloman's house is similar to "a state joint-stock guild". See Christopher Kendrick, "The Imperial Laboratory: Discovering Forms in The New Atlantis," *ELH* 70, no. 4 (2003): 1021--42.

⁹⁸ Bacon, "New Atlantis," 471--72.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 480.

reflection, especially in the context of colonial promotional literature. In the bible, twelve spies - one from each Israelite tribe - are sent on a colonial reconnaissance mission to Canaan to report on the strength of the natives and the abundance of the land. While they brought back pomegranates, a giant cluster of grapes and other artefacts testifying to the riches of the land, they also returned with news of the formidable fortresses of Canaanite cities and the strength of the native inhabitants, among whom some were “the sons of Anak, which come of the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight”.¹⁰¹ The only exceptions were Joshua and Caleb who provided a positive report where the land was pronounced abundant and the natives easily surmountable. Believing (and fearing) the overwhelmingly negative report, the Israelites turn on Joshua and Caleb. Subsequently, the young spies - except for Joshua and Caleb - are punished by God to wandering the desert for forty years, and their fathers condemned to witnessing the fate of their children, all for doubting the divine prophecy that the Israelites were destined to occupy Canaan. While the spies were initially sent out to seek a true report of their future settlement, the truth it seems was already decided beforehand. The positive report detailing abundance and a vulnerable native population was preordained to be true - irrespective of the information that might be gathered by the spies - while a negative report had to be already condemned as false. This episode from the bible illustrates the double-bind that defined the communicative space of colonial advertisements and correspondingly, the rhetorical manoeuvres that had to be performed by colonial promoters like Hamond and Boothby.

¹⁰¹ Num. 13:33 (KJV)

In consonance with the parable of the twelve spies, Hamond centred his reporting on the island's riches and the surmountability of the natives; he disguised the latter argument within a paean to the islander's noble (and outmoded) conduct of war. Boothby went so far as to declare Madagascar a new Canaan. To cope with the paradoxical demands of providing a truthful report while simultaneously compelled to present the island as rich and acquiescent, Hamond fittingly chose the rhetorical form of the paradox. But no rhetorical form could wish away the conditions of starvation, disease and violent conflict that greeted the Courten Association's colonists in Augustine Bay. Unlike the episode of the twelve spies, the duplicity of the colonial advertisements was not underwritten by an omnipotent power. In the case of colonial failures such as Madagascar, it is not surprising that the contrarian business of fictive possessions could descend into a dangerous farce. The utopian rendering of colonies played out in a stage suspended between the true and the false, between glory and folly. As evinced in More's *Utopia*, utopian writing could also be fundamentally self-reflexive. This allowed the form, in the hands of a gifted practitioner, to accommodate within its repertoire irony and hubris just as well as it did praise and triumph. Henry Neville's *Isle of Pines*, this thesis argues, is just such an ironic undertaking, a utopian fiction presenting itself as a true account while simultaneously reflecting on the thwarting of English imperial ambitions. Written barely two decades after the English fiasco in Madagascar, Neville composed a series of pamphlets that concerned itself with the discovery of an arcadian island amidst the uncharted waters surrounding Terra Australis. Given that Neville presented his pamphlets as true reports, there was a flurry of speculation across coffee houses, ports and scientific societies in Europe as to whether the island really existed and whether there was a possibility of staking claims on this fictional possession. In Neville's

travel forgery, the island was populated by native (English-speaking) tribes descended from a marooned English sailor who found himself washed up on its shores in the middle of a failed Asiatic voyage. Through the fate of the English descendants in this land of abundance, Neville satirises the myopic and foolhardy outlook that underlined colonial visions of plenitude. As the final chapter of this thesis demonstrates, Neville used European accounts of Madagascar - including those written by Hamond and Boothby - as a palimpsest to compose his island tale. In Neville's pamphlets, the worlds of utopian fiction and travel writing merged to such an extent that they were, at least initially, received as one and the same.

Madagascar as Paradise, Paradox and Hoax: Tracing a Colonial Dream

Madagascar's widespread reputation as the largest island in the world was in no small way responsible for the interest it garnered in England. English colonial promoters, in search of avenues to praise the island, paid tributes to the conduct of its inhabitants, the fertility of its soil, its air and climate, and the endless commodities that could be harvested there. Like in most instances of early modern utopian literature, the island form appeared in these promotions as a spatial metaphor through which their depictions of Madagascar's uncorrupted abundance could be foregrounded. In *Chapter One*, I begin with a preliminary exploration of the role of the island form in the utopian and colonial imagination before turning to the specific uses of Madagascar's island form in various colonial advertisements for an English settlement on the big island. The great expectations that inaugurated the colonial venture in Madagascar are eventually tempered by the failure of the the first expedition to the island. I trace the fate of colonial expectations over time in the shifting deployments of the island trope across the

various advertisements. The island form is used initially to emphasise the uncorrupted ways of the noble savage; then projected as a vast trade factory and waystation destined to secure English dominance in the Asiatic trade; later used to emphasise Madagascar's isolation offering a natural fortification for a slave plantation; and finally framed as a site of damnation for its hapless colonists. Charting this journey from utopia to dystopia, we can catch a glimpse of the intertwined spatial ideologies that governed the colonial and utopian imagination in early modern England.

If the island-form was malleable to the contingencies of the colonial venture, so were the selling points of the proposed island colony. Promoters employed different narrative lenses to accentuate those aspects of the colonial venture they thought would appeal most to their audience. In *Chapter Two*, after providing a background to the commissioning of Hamond's colonial advertisements, I analyse the dichotomous nature of his first Madagascar pamphlet *A Paradox*. The pamphlet consists of two parts: (i) a description of Madagascar and its suitability as a colony; and (ii) a paradox comparing and preferring the lifestyle of the native islanders over that of the denizens of England. Hamond's account sought to report and entertain in equal measure. The legitimacy of the observations contained in the first part is claimed by a repeated professing to plainness while the latter aspires to showmanship by undertaking a provocative rhetorical proof. By mapping the contrary discourses of plainness and proof to the differing functions attributed to science and rhetoric in an Aristotelian framework, I argue that Hamond employed a dual framework to highlight different aspects of the island's saleability. One consequence of this disjointed approach is that the latter part, the paradox, brings forth arguments irreconcilable with the case made

initially in the description for a colonial settlement. *Chapter Three* investigates Hamond's marketing blunder by placing his rhetorical display in the context of a Renaissance proclivity for paradoxes. I argue that Hamond, seeking to advance his writerly ambitions, chose the form of the paradox as it was especially suited to demonstrating one's oratorical prowess. While the form allowed a display of utopian mastery veering between encomium and critique, its gamut could also prove a distraction. The omission of the paradox in Hamond's next promotion, *Madagascar as the Richest and most Fruitful Island* only three years later can be read as an indication that this advertising strategy had few takers. The entertaining diversion that was the paradox vitiated the purpose of Hamond's commission: to persuade potential investors, colonists and other go-betweens of the advantages of an English colony in Madagascar. The remainder of the chapter compares the shifting modes of idealisation - from happiness to riches - employed between each of Hamond's promotional works. Through this comparison, I argue that Hamond's move from one mode of idealisation to another can be seen as representative of shifts in English colonial ideology at large.

While the earlier studies that have addressed Hamond's Madagascar pamphlets mainly evaluated the latter's veracity as historical sources, the second and third chapters of this thesis move beyond these concerns. By closely attending to the literary and discursive shifts within Hamond's pamphlets, these chapters focus on the anomalies and omissions within the pamphlets to reveal the particular anxieties that Madagascar's promoters sought to dissipate among their readers. The chapters also make the case for a more general interest in Hamond's pamphlets as an object lesson on the early modern idealisation of colonies; and

the ties between fictive possessions - the imagining of colonies - and rhetorical and scientific discourse. While the first three chapters explore the colonial prospects and utopian depictions of Madagascar, the fourth and final chapter takes a wide-ranging look at sources beyond the immediate seventeenth-century preoccupations with the big island, to provide a new reading of Henry Neville's *Isle of Pines* as a commentary on the folly of colonial visions of utopian abundance. Upon initial inspection, there is little or no connection between the English dream of Madagascar and Neville's *Isle of Pines* given the latter's location in faraway Terra Australis. But Neville's utopian fiction is a textual trickster with a bawdy exterior concealing a wealth of readings, borrowings, and deceptions. By bringing together obscure sources - ranging from an error made by a French cartographer, a Jesuit priest's recounting of a rumour overheard while imprisoned by the Dutch in Bantam, the dissemination of the priest's account in Europe via the histories of João de Barros and a Luso-Malay explorer's attempt to falsely relocate this account as having happened in Terra Australis - I argue that Neville was employing sixteenth and seventeenth century travel accounts of Madagascar to furnish his island myth. These intertextual connections include striking parallels and borrowings between some aspects of Hamond and Boothby's promotional literature and Neville's work. If Davenant's epic poem *Madagascar* was the preface to the English dream of Madagascar, it is only appropriate that the *Isle of Pines* - a tale of colonial hubris - was to be its coda.

Possessing the ‘greatest island in the world’: Early Modern English Utopian Writing on Madagascar

The Madagascar plan: A totalitarian proposal

Madagascar was formally deemed a French colony in 1897, after having been a French protectorate since 1880. Around this time, the island also featured as a focal object of totalitarian intent for European national governments and anti-Semitic organisations. An underpopulated island of incredible size, Madagascar was presented as offering a wealth of space. Negotiations with the French government were attempted for the use of the island for projects that would siphon off demographic “excesses” of various territories, and potentially “adjust” or “purify” their balance of population. In 1926, the Polish government, ostensibly concerned about rural overpopulation, held deliberations with the French government for the use of Madagascar as a labour camp.¹⁰² Setting out the Polish argument to Marcel Olivier, the Governor General of Madagascar, the Polish delegate Comte Chaplowski argued that such a plan was appropriate since toil, adaptability and movement came naturally to the Polish class of migrant labour. Rejecting the proposal, Olivier said that he was "obliged to oppose this enquiry

¹⁰² The Polish government’s requests for a labour colony preceded by a decade the Franco-Polish plan to evacuate the Jewish population to Madagascar. Though both these proposals seem different from each other, Sophie Watt argues that they were part of a larger campaign by the French Third Republic government to construct and control minority identity. Sophie Laurence Watt, “Constructions of Minority Identity in Late Third Republic France” (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2008), 1-22.

not with moral or political objections but simply with biological ones."¹⁰³ He contended that environmental and climatic conditions in the island did not suit Europeans and that heavy manual labour could even prove fatal. In the following year, he rejected a similar proposal by the Japanese government citing similar grounds. After he had left the island, Olivier remarked that Madagascar "would never be carelessly chosen again as a land for asylum. I did not think, I admit, of a case of proscription."¹⁰⁴

Olivier's statement alludes to his ignorance of various plans - most of them proposed in confidential meetings - that aimed to expel European Jews to the island of Madagascar. As early as 1885, Paul De Lagarde, a German religious scholar and anti-semitic ideologue, advocated German expansion into Madagascar so that Jews from Germany could be proscribed to that distant island. Lagarde's proposal resurfaced in later decades as a part of a call for a *Der Voll Zionismus* (Complete Zionism).¹⁰⁵ One such example is a 1931 pamphlet titled *Arische Rasse, Christliche Kultur, und das Judenproblem* (Aryan Race, Christian Culture and the Jewish Problem) which featured on its cover an outline of the island. The pamphlet repeated Lagarde's ideas calling for a German occupation of Eastern Europe and proposed an ejection of the Eastern Jewish population to Madagascar. The pamphlet was circulated in 1927 with the title *Der Voll Zionismus* in an anti-Jewish conference in Budapest. It declared that "the entire Jewish Nation, sooner or later must be confined to an island. This would

¹⁰³ Chaplowski's petition and Olivier's response were laid out by Olivier in a newspaper article. 'Madagascar: Terre d'Asile?', *L' Illustration*, 198-199, February 19, 1938, No.4955, Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, Paris (CDJC), 18744, quoted and translated in Watt, "Constructions of Minority Identity," 2.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ For a history of the various efforts for a "complete Zionism" see Magnus Brechtken, *Madagaskar Für Die Juden: Antisemitische Idee Und Politische Praxis 1885-1945*, Studien zur Zeitgeschichte, Band 53, 2nd ed. (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998).

afford the possibility of control and minimise the danger of infection.”¹⁰⁶ The island geography was also seen as suitable from a surveillance perspective since patrolling the waters around the island would prevent potential escape. These penitentiary projections of isolation, command and surveillance would later be appropriated and substantiated in the 1937 Franco-Polish Madagascar Plan, in which the island was recommended as an enclosure for the Jewish minority of the two nations.¹⁰⁷ The plan was taken over by the German government in 1938 and would remain under consideration until 1945. German versions of the plan estimated a capacity of 4 to 15 million Jewish inmates.¹⁰⁸ The plans were ultimately aborted given Germany’s eventual fate in World War Two, and other factors including intense press campaigns opposing the plan from within Madagascar and protests from the growing Malagasy nationalist movement that sought to overthrow the French administration.¹⁰⁹

As the above account of Madagascar’s significance to twentieth-century Europe illustrates, island geography has had an abiding relevance for Continental

¹⁰⁶ Egon von Wingheue, *Arische Rasse, christliche Kultur und das Juden-problem*, cited and translated in Eugene Hevesi, “Hitler’s Plan for Madagascar,” in *Contemporary Jewish Record* 4 (1914), 381--95. Also quoted in Leni Yahil, “Madagascar: Phantom of a Solution for the Jewish Question,” in *Jews and Non-Jews in Eastern Europe, 1918–1945*, eds. George Mosse and Bela Vago, (New York: Wiley, 1974), 319--20. Yahil surmises that the pamphlet author’s name -- Egon von Wingheue -- is a pseudonym. Watt unearths the use of the text in the conference and argues that the forum might have allowed the pamphlet to “have circulated amongst Nazi circles close to Himmler who informed Hitler.” See Watt, “Constructions of Minority Identity,” 4.

¹⁰⁷ See Adam L. Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion: Promised Lands Before Israel* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 117--49.

¹⁰⁸ For an account of the relation between the plan and the Nazi program of a “Final Solution” see Christopher R. Browning and Jürgen Matthäus, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004). The authors propose that the Madagascar Plan was only the “penultimate” solution to the final solution of “total extermination” as envisaged by Nazi policy. Ironically, the Madagascar Plan was used as evidence to deny the Holocaust through the argument that Nazi policy was concerned with internment rather than extermination.

¹⁰⁹ Eric T. Jennings, “Writing Madagascar Back into the Madagascar Plan,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 21, no.2 (2007): 187--217.

regimes.¹¹⁰ Save its apparent distance, size and insularity, no concrete reasons were forwarded as to why Madagascar was the chosen location for detention of Jewish people. However, Eric Jennings argues that late nineteenth- and early twentieth- century anthropological writings tracing the origins of the Malagasy people to Jews significantly shaped designs to appoint Madagascar as the destination for their exile and detention.¹¹¹ The location of Madagascar was far from arbitrary; its appointment foregrounds the role of originary narratives being produced in Europe which declared the island to be the Jewish homeland.

These writings in turn borrowed from accounts by early modern colonists.

Étienne de Flacourt, the French East India Company's Governor of Madagascar, surmised in his *Histoire de la grande isle de Madagascar* (1658) that the first settlers of the island came "during the first migration of Jews, and that they descend from the most ancient of Ismaelite [sic] families from even before the captivity of Babylon, or from those who might have stayed in Egypt around the time of the departure of the children of Israel. They bear the names Moses, Isaac, Joseph, Jacob, and Noah."¹¹² Another instance of this originary myth from the same period is to be found in Boothby's 1647 account *A Breife Discovery or Description of the Most Famous Island of Madagascar*, which aimed to promote the settling of an English colony in Madagascar. Regretting that the island was as

¹¹⁰ The tropological implications of the island form continue to "haunt" present-day practices of nation states as they continue to employ islands as sites of exclusion, detention or evasion. As Alison Mountz explains, powerful nation states such as the United States, Australia and Canada employ islands due to their "extraterritoriality" -- notably, for instance, the US's use of Guantánamo Bay due to its "sub-national jurisdictional status" allows contraventions of national laws, Australia's use of Christmas Island and other locations to deflect migrants from its mainland, and the emergence of small island nations such as Jersey and Canary Islands as destinations for tax evasions. Alison Mountz, "The Enforcement Archipelago: Detention, Haunting, and Asylum on Islands," *Political Geography* 30, no. 3 (2011): 118--28.

¹¹¹ Jennings, "Writing Madagascar," 187-217.

¹¹² Etienne de Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle de Madagascar* (1658; repr., Paris: INALCO, 1995), 96, quoted and translated in Jennings, "Writing Madagascar," 192.

yet devoid of a suitably “civil” and “Christian” habitation, Boothby advances the following genealogy of its native inhabitants :

so pleasant and plentiful a Country should not be inhabited with civil people or rather Christians; and that so brave a Nation of person and countenance (onely black or tauny) should be so blindly lead in their devotions being as some suppose Mahometans in regard of their manners and customes of circumcision, or rather as some suppose descended from Abraham by his Wife, or Concubine, Keturah, whose children begotten of her because they should not be a let or impediment to the promised seed by Isaack: Abraham did send them away to inhabit in the East (as Scripture mentioneth).¹¹³

While Boothby envisioned an island emptied of its Jewish or Islamic vestiges and replenished with (Christian and European) civility, nationalist fronts of later centuries conversely saw the island as a site to contain Europe’s Jews.¹¹⁴ Despite the inverse relations these projections have to each other, the lineaments of the various plans for Madagascar can be traced to an imperial imagination, which employed the biblical frames pervasive in early modern geography to legitimate a large scale effort of displacement. Maps of the Holy Land with an index of biblical events and place-names formed an important part of the cartographical corpus since the medieval period. The transposition and mapping of biblical legends played a significant role in creating a divinely pre-ordained ground to colonise territories that emerged in map making. As Rachel Havrelock concludes, though driven largely by imperial prospects, “European maps simultaneously granted themselves sanctity and legitimacy by appealing to a christian sense of purpose”

¹¹³ Boothby, *A Briefe Discovery*, sig.18D2

¹¹⁴ Boothby might have borrowed his sense of entitlement from Samuel Purchas, who in his *Pilgrimage* notes that Madagascar “deserueth to haue better Inhabitants, if Linschoten iudge rightly, hauing many faire and fresh Riuers, safe harbours, plenty of fruits and cattell; therein are foure gouernements, each fighting against other. They vse not themselues to trade with others, nor suffer others to traffique with them.” Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimage. Or Relations of the vworld and the religions obserued in all ages and places discovered, from the Creation unto this present In foure partes. This first containeth a theologicall and geographicall historie of Asia, Africa, and America, with the ilands adiacent* (London: William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1613), 595, accessed October 8, 2016. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>.

and “implied that exploration was primarily Christian, rather than economic, in its aims.”¹¹⁵ As we will see, Madagascar in the seventeenth century would be described as a new “Canaan” by Boothby and “(a)n Earth, like that of Eden” by Hamond.¹¹⁶

If Madagascar was the promised land or biblical paradise in the seventeenth century, the inheritance of an imperial teleology based on biblical invocations could easily have inverse implication when employed by later powers. In the twentieth century, Madagascar was no longer a promised land but rather an island of exile. The language of Zion in this later context was no longer a promise but a justification that made it possible to consider entire communities as mere numeric swarms that could be shifted or contained by diktat. The sequestration of the Jewish population was to be reified in the island form of Madagascar, a colony that would at once maintain the “purity” of the European mainland and serve as a heterotopic coordinate of the distant other.¹¹⁷ In its graphic simplicity and the malevolent pursuit of a purported symmetry, the outline of the early twentieth-

¹¹⁵ Rachel Havrelock, “The Jordan River in Ancient and Modern Maps,” in *Art and Identity at the Water’s Edge*, ed. Tricia Cusack (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 112--113.

¹¹⁶ Hamond, *Madagascar, the richest island*, sig. A3; Boothby, *A Breife Discovery*, sig. A5.

¹¹⁷ The Madagascar plan provided European nationalist fronts a spatial dimension for their exterminatory impulses, one where their aims could be achieved through large scale evacuation and displacement. Michel Foucault recognised the significance of such spatial ideologies, which he characterizes as the “problem of the human site or living space” which “is not simply that of knowing whether there will be enough space for men in the world—a problem that is certainly quite important—but also that of knowing what relations of propinquity, what type of storage, circulation, marking, and classification of human elements should be adopted in a given situation in order to achieve a given end”. Societies address such concerns by constructing heterotopias, which, unlike utopias, those “sites with no place”, are sites “that have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invent the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect”. Madagascar was in the eyes of anti-semitic ideologues to serve as what Foucault called a heterotopia of deviation: “those in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed”. See Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” in *The Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff, 2nd. Ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 232. But it was race and ethnicity, and not behaviour strictly, that were seen as deviations in the Germany of the early twentieth century. The exclusionary tendencies of totalitarian regimes, from this vantage point, can be seen as methods of constructing control. Without the banishment of others, they are left wholly devoid of purpose. Plans for internment like the The Madagascar Plan invents and solidifies the set of exclusionary relations that are being sought by a regime.

century Madagascar Plan displays affinity to both the religious arguments and the conceptions of islands outlined in early modern utopian thinking.

On the one hand, islands were imagined as an abundant realm of nature in its uncorrupted purity. On the other, the idea of “isolation” associated with the modes of imagining islands could very quickly consolidate into a vision for a penal colony’s natural fortress. The Polish attempt to move nomadic peasant communities to combat rural overpopulation is comparable to discussions of excess population in early modern England in which “excess” was equated with expendability. The expendables, when specified, consisted of those classified as landless, unemployed, “vagrant”, or criminal.¹¹⁸ In these cases, even the most superficial commitment to a more just redistribution of resources among various social strata is absent. What starts out as an abstract numerical problem of excess becomes deliberate in constructing those forced into the margins as objects of a coerced migration. Possession here did not begin with conquest but was first claimed in the utopian (or dystopian) imagination available to the various stakeholders who undertook such projects under the guise of alleviating existing domestic ills. While in the 20th century Madagascar becomes important for Western European powers as a possible candidate for a Jewish colony, in the early modern period it attracted mercantile and colonial interest. This was due to its proximity to the Cape of Good Hope, brought to prominence by Vasco Da Gama’s voyage as a profitable sea route that would enable European trading powers to reach India and the East Indies without having to be liable for the hefty

¹¹⁸ As Patricia Fumerton explains, the legal definition of who constitutes a vagrant differed from the practice of those arrested or “judged” or culturally classed as vagrant with the latter category including large swathes of the unsettled poor. Like the Polish migrant labourers who were thought as expendable enough to be shipped to Madagascar, the early modern English population deemed as dispensable included itinerant labourers, rural folk who were a part of “the proliferation of dispossessed labourers in Elizabethan and Jacobean England”. See Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 5--6.

taxes which they had to pay on overland routes. That the location of Madagascar would bear the burden of Continental colonial design and desire is foreshadowed by the sixteenth-century attempts by Portuguese priests from the diocese of Goa to convert local rulers in the island's southeast coast to Christianity.

The present chapter prepares the ground for the following three chapters, which evaluate the plans and consequences of the varying utopian modes used in seventeenth-century England to promote a colonial settlement in Madagascar. To come to terms with one aspect of colonial desire set out in those narratives, this chapter explores the fundamental connections between early modern utopia and island geography. By exploring the location of early modern utopian fictions in islands, we can also understand the particular ways in which islands came to be desired as colonial possessions. More specifically, we will see the various ways in which the island form of Madagascar is employed by seventeenth-century English promoters such as Hamond, Boothby and Robert Hunt, to present it as a utopian colony. Each of these writers idealises Madagascar differently given their various backgrounds and the changing attitudes of colonial stakeholders towards the island. Through these shifts, we can observe how the “poetic” geography of an island is determined by the historical contingencies which shape it as an object of desire.

Why are utopias located on islands?

Offering a comprehensive treatment of narrative devices employed by early modern utopias, Artur Blaim, in his monograph *Gazing in Useless Wonder* argues that: “the entire period can usefully be analysed as forming a single more or less stable synchrony in the history of utopian fiction-making, especially as

there was no major change in the pattern that defined the poetics of utopian fictions before the end of the eighteenth century.”¹¹⁹ Some of these common literary frames include the dichotomous presentation in which there is a “confrontation of the author’s world (shown as evil, or at least highly imperfect) and the ideal state”; or the ethnographic and hierarchically-arranged topics of description such as “the manners and customs of the people”, the “laws of the land”, “weapons” and the “military practices” of utopian denizens.¹²⁰ Blaim goes on to suggest that the characteristic patterns of early modern utopian fiction emerged as the result of simplified readings of Thomas More’s *Utopia*, and did not deviate much from this initial model. This can be seen, he says, in the relatively stable patterns of utopian fiction even in the face of several “momentous events” such as the beheading of Charles I, the establishment of the Commonwealth, the Restoration and the Glorious Revolution, all of which had “a surprisingly limited impact on the ways the concurrent and subsequent utopian fictions came to be constructed.”¹²¹

While it is difficult to ascertain the breadth of influence More’s *Utopia* at large, it is easy to see its pervasive influence on the narrative frames of the genre of utopian fiction in early modern England. One of the fundamental inheritances of More’s utopian poetics is the island location of utopia. Nothing in the etymology of “utopia” (ou/eu/topos) -- in which are encompassed intertwined notions of space, plausibility, virtue and desire -- indicates that it necessarily has to be located in islands. Yet a majority of early modern literary utopias were located in islands. However, the persistence of the island as a formal template of choice

¹¹⁹ Artur Blaim, *Gazing in Useless Wonder: English Utopian Fictions, 1516-1800* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2013), 4.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid., 279.

cannot be explained merely as a citation of stylistic adherence. The island form, as we will see, was particularly suited to literary utopian explorations. In More's *Utopia* and Bacon's *New Atlantis*, the islands are distant and out of reach from other powers. Yet the island also looks outwards, the islanders' near-omniscience gained from their awareness of the world either by learning from unintended visits by seamen (as in the case of More's *Utopia*), or through systematic cunning and secret knowledge-gathering (as in the case of Bacon's *New Atlantis*). They do not appreciate the commerce of other nations unless it is on their own terms. In this sense, though contact with and appropriation of the other is rampant, there is very little that could be understood as a dialogue between different cultures in these utopian texts. This is to be most clearly seen in Bacon's *New Atlantis* in which a priest outlines in a prophetic tone the activities of Saloman's House to the shipwrecked visitors, in a narration that can be characterised as a soliloquy. Any desire for knowledge about the others is merely instrumental, and once already achieved, leaves little room for mutual conversation. The insularity of their islands, then, is not one of innocence but one of mastery fulfilled. The island in both these instances present as a fortification, and its seas are open only to uni-directional traffic. The isle of *Utopia* is, to use Aristotle's image of the *polis*, "difficult of access to enemies, and easy of egress to its inhabitants."¹²² The crescent isle is filled with a large bay "with shallows on one side and rocks on the other."¹²³ The topography of these channels, framed between perilous rocks and placid waters, is known only to the Utopians; the ships of any intruding party are left prone to splintering upon advance.

Islanded locations, however, were not to be coveted in utopian fiction merely for their strategic strengths. The question of geography here is also to be understood

¹²² Aristotle, *The Politics and the Constitution of Athens*, ed. Stephen Everson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 174.

¹²³More, *Utopia*, 41.

metaphorically. Rod Edmond and Vanessa Smith state that “the island” is “a figure for figuration itself,” “the most graspable and slippery of subjects.”¹²⁴ Islands were ideal sites for utopian settlements as their ambiguous insularity mirrored the conceptual core of utopias, allowing them to function as contrarian spaces. The island could be both prison and paradise, a space in which opposites could be imagined to coexist. Rod Edmond and Vanessa Smith see the tropological possibilities of islands as consisting in the ways they accommodate paradox, in which “(o)n the one hand, they constitute a bounded, and therefore manageable, space” and:

(o)n the other hand, they are fragments, threatening to vanish beneath rising tides or erupting out of the deep, linked by networks of exchange even as they appear to be emblems of self-sufficiency. Encapsulating both the comfort of finitude and the tease of endless proliferation, islands beg and resist interpretation. They are at once microcosm and excess, the original and supplement of continents.¹²⁵

What Edmond and Smith say of islands in general can be said of More’s island of *Utopia*, which too is an artificial construction, and a reflection of humanist mastery. More’s utopians could simultaneously be well-versed in the skills and techniques of other lands and yet be unaffected by their own corruption and unreason.

Like the book in which More seeks to contain *Utopia*, it is the book that gives Prospero his powers in *The Tempest*. In both instances, the island features as the topographical analogue of the book, a space in which the stage is set and mastery made manifest. We can begin to understand the island’s hold on narratives

¹²⁴ Rod Edmond and Vanessa Smith, eds., *Islands in History and Representation* (London: Routledge, 2003), 5.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

seeking domination if we consider it, in Michael Taussig's words, as a "tabula rasa awaiting the reenactment of human - meaning European - history" with time "framed in a spatial image."¹²⁶ Taussig likens the island to "the puppet theatre or the play within the play, miniaturisation in the form of an island allows one to hold the world in one's hands, play with it, observe it from different angles, and provide it with different fates."¹²⁷

According to John Gillis, the sixteenth century was particularly well suited to such appropriations in which "islands became the favoured places for locating paradise and utopia," though only a century later:

these imagined islands were gradually displaced from the charts by those whose value was more economic than speculative. In the seventeenth century, mainland colonies of plunder and extraction were overshadowed by sea-borne empires in which islands played a central role economically and strategically.¹²⁸

This transition from the imaginary domination of islands to their material "plunder and extraction" highlights the ways in which colonial possession did not always begin with conquest but was preceded by the configurations of desire in narratives where various utopian strategies were deployed. If islands were meta-theatrical objects, it was as James Hamilton Paterson points out, not "just because of the desire to possess what is paradisaal or utopian, but because islands,

¹²⁶ Michael Taussig, *My cocaine museum* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 294.

¹²⁷ Ibid. We can see this hold in the development of intellectual fields of study such as anthropology and evolutionary biology. As Edmond and Smith tell us, "[t]he beginnings of evolutionary science in Darwin's voyage to the Galapagos island and Wallace's exploration of the Malay Archipelago demonstrated the capacity of islands to serve as laboratory environments, whose life forms preserved in delicate equilibrium evidence of a developmental trajectory." (Edmond and Smith, *Islands in History*, 3).

¹²⁸ John R. Gillis, "Taking history offshore: Atlantic islands in European minds, 1400-1800," in *Islands in History and Representation*, eds. Rod Edmond and Vanessa Smith (London: Routledge, 2003), 19.

unlike continents, look like property.”¹²⁹ What Paterson says above of smaller islands also holds for the approach of voyagers towards larger islands in which a “unit of land which fits within the retina of the approaching eye is a token of desire.”¹³⁰ The island has no boundaries to dispute, fences to erect, and ditches to dig. Where estates are concerned, what Lena Orlin says of the English “dream for the castle that circulated in the sixteenth-and-seventeenth century city, may, in fact, attest to frustrated yearning for clear boundaries and impregnable perimeters” could apply to the colonist’s interest in islands.¹³¹ It is to be noted here that specific contexts complicate the colonial figuration of islands. As Sujith Sivasundaram has shown in the case of Sri Lanka, in which conflict between various colonial stakeholders - in this case the Crown in Sri Lanka and the East-India company in India - lead to a case of “islanding” where “in governmental terms, the island was cast off from the mainland by the 1830’s” where previously they participated in a shared economic, political and cultural life.¹³²

Further east, in the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago that lies off the Indian mainland, the colonial administration figures the island as a penal colony, a panopticon cellular jail in which, as a per a early twentieth-century British administrator’s poem:

Britannia gathers India’s sons of crime

¹²⁹ Edmond and Smith, *Islands in History*, 3.

¹³⁰ James Hamilton-Paterson, *Seven-Tenths: The Sea and its Thresholds* (London: Vintage, 1993), 63. As Edmond and Smith put it, “[t]he defining idea of an island is its boundedness. When a landmass surrounded by water becomes as large as Australia it loses this characteristic and must be thought of instead as a continent. Boundedness makes islands graspable, able to be held in the mind’s eye and imagined as places of possibility and promise.” (Edmond and Smith, *Islands in History*, 2).

¹³¹ Lena Cowen Orlin discusses the various boundary disputes that one might experience in early modern England. For further information see Lena Cowen Orlin, *Material London, ca. 1600* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 372

¹³² Sujit Sivasundaram, *Islanded: Britain, Sri Lanka, and the Bounds of an Indian Ocean Colony* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 13--4.

Not theirs to pine in dungeons or in chains
Chilled in the cold, or mouldering in the rains;
Here must they toil, but free, or all but free
Their only prison-wall the girdling sea!
Toil, but in hope; for wisdom bids them learn
The sweets of honest effort, and to earn
The stipend of their labor, until time.¹³³

With the island a natural prison, the colonial administrator's exclamation mark expresses relief that geography accomplishes the tasks of punishment and banishment that were otherwise possible only through total human vigilance. This colonial (and continental) fetish for islands is by no means an *a priori* perspective. Epeli Hau'ofa' evokes the Pacific islanders' conception of their geographical belonging as one of belonging to a "sea of islands" rather than to a small island in a distant ocean.¹³⁴

Islands and colonies: Early English visions of Madagascar

In Britain's case, colonial ambitions emerged in tandem with a turn away from an inward-looking pastoral identity to one as a globally-significant maritime power. In seeking to boost the maritime and colonial activity of Britain, Elizabethan proponents of navigation such as Walter Raleigh, Richard Hakluyt and John Dee sought to establish a stronger identity as "islanders" -- an image that could supplant in the cultural imagination what Jonathan Scott has called "a nation of landlubbers by whom the sea has barely been noticed."¹³⁵ They attempted to move

¹³³ Saunders A. Dryers, "The Andaman Islands," *Calcutta Review* 116 (1903), 260--91, quoted in Aparna Vaidik, *Imperial Andamans: Colonial Encounter and Island History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), iv.

¹³⁴ Epeli Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands," *The Contemporary Pacific* 6, no. 1 (1994): 152--3. The tropes of isolation and purity that mark the figuration of a continental and colonial desire for islands is counter to what Grant McCall terms a "nissology," "the study of islands on their own terms." See Grant McCall, "Nissology: the Study of Islands," *Journal of the Pacific Society* 17, no. 2-3 (1994): 1.

¹³⁵ Jonathan Scott, *When the Waves Ruled Britannia: Geography and Political Identities, 1500--1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 31. During the sixteenth century England

the English from living within the land towards taking advantage of the sea.

Hakluyt called for “the advancing of navigation, the very walles of this our island, as the oracle is reported to have spoken of the sea forces of Athens.”¹³⁶

To some extent the English desire to colonise Madagascar, known then as the greatest island in the World, might have been shaped by England’s imagination of itself as a great island. As John Speed declares in his geography *The theatre of the empire of Great Britaine* (1611/12), “The Iland of Great Britaine” is from many an account “the greatest Island in the World,” though he qualifies that “the Orientall Nauigators” bestow that title on “Madagascar, the Island of S. Laurence.”¹³⁷ He is not interested in taking up such a contention since he would rather occupy himself “with her other praises greater then her Greatnes.”¹³⁸ Thomas Gainsford, in another indigenous geography *The Glory of England* (1618), is content with current intelligence or “the best received opinions of this Monarchy” that “Madagascar, which now compareth with Britaine for magnitude, as containing 600. mile in length, but say what deuises can, ours is the greatest Iland of the world.”¹³⁹ Speed goes on to string together praises of his island nation from

was significantly under urbanised compared to Mainland Europe. Even the large export of woollen textiles to Flanders and the Baltic region was carried out in ships operated by Flemish and Dutch sailors.

¹³⁶ Richard Hakluyt, *The principall navigations, voiages and discoveries of the English nation, made by sea or over land, to the most remote and farthest distant quarters of the earth at any time within the compasse of these 1500 yeeres* (London : Bishop & R Newberie, 1589), 3. As Jonathan Scott has shown, Jon Dee’s rallying call for an “Art of Navigation” which required “Thousands of Soldyers” derived from a much earlier call made in Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War* where the Athenian captain Pericles asks the senators to imagine “ourselves as islanders; we must abandon our land and our houses, and safeguard the sea and the city.” John Dee, *General and Rare Memorials pertaining to the Perfecte Arte of Navigation* (London, 1577), 4--5 and Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner (Harmondsworth, 1972), 121--2, quoted in Scott, *When the Waves Ruled Britannia*, 44.

¹³⁷ John Speed, *The theatre of the empire of Great Britaine presenting an exact geography of the kingdomes of England, Scotland, Ireland, and the iles adioyning: with the shires, hundreds, cities and shire-townes, within ye kingdome of England, divided and described by Iohn Speed* (London: William Hall, 1612), 1, accessed October 25, 2016. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Thomas Gainsford, *The glory of England, or A true description of many excellent prerogatiues and remarkeable blessings, whereby she triumpheth ouer all the nations of the world vvith a iustifiable comparison betweene the eminent kingdomes of the earth, and herselfe: plainly manifesting the defects of them all in regard of her sufficiencie and fulnesse of happinesse* (London: T.G., 1618), 41, accessed November 1, 2016. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>.

sources in antiquity up to its current state as a triumphant “mighty Empire” raised from the savage “wildernesse” in “ancient times” of an island that was once “Vnpeopled, vnmanurd, vnproude, vnpraisde.”¹⁴⁰

Acknowledging Madagascar’s greatness allows a link to be established between Britain’s own “vnmanurd” past as mirroring the present state of the former. Similarly, Hamond’s *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island* (1643) urges England to be a new Rome and pass unto Madagascar an ancient favour, one where “our owne had the Honour to be invaded by the greatest Caesar”, a legacy that “hath reformed us to the Excellency we now so much glory in”.¹⁴¹ English encounters with Madagascar are known to have started almost a century after the first European visit to the island. In the decades following the 1506 voyaging exploration by the Portuguese sailor Fernando Soares, parties of Dutch, Portuguese, and French sailors found themselves marooned in the island due to shipwreck or anchored their ships in order to carry out trade. Many of the resulting encounters with the island’s coastal inhabitants led to massacres on both sides.¹⁴² In 1599, English sailor John Davis landed in St Augustine Bay as a part of a returning Dutch fleet commanded by Cornelius van Houtman. This landing was a part of a failed trading attempt in which the sailors had only one cow and some milk to show for the five weeks in which their ships were anchored.

¹⁴⁰ Speed, *The theatre of the empire*, 1.

¹⁴¹ Hamond, *Madagascar, The Richest and most Fruitfull Island*, sig. A2r

¹⁴² The “discovery” and the naming of the island however happened earlier. In 1500, a Portuguese vessel captained by Diego Diaz was separated from the fleet of Pedro Alvarez Cabral at the Cape of Good Hope due to storms and while moving northwards for safety, Diaz was able to land on Madagascar’s south eastern coast, in the region of Anosy. Diaz named the island as São Lourenço after the saint on whose feast day he had come upon the island. For a list of encounters between the coastal tribes and the Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese, see Mike Parker Pearson, “Close Encounters of the Worst Kind: Malagasy Resistance and Colonial Disasters in Southern Madagascar,” *World Archaeology* 28, no. 3 (1997): 395--96. For an account of Malagasy-European encounters see Pier M. Larson, “Colonies Lost: God, Hunger, and Conflict in Anosy (Madagascar) to 1674,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 2 (2007): 345--66.

Yet this first English association with Madagascar did not deter the English East India company from making the Bay a regular pit stop for ships bound to India and Southeast Asian islands. The next forty years saw company ships establishing trade links with various indigenous parties; in exchange for silver dollars or red cornelian beads sourced from India, they were able to stock eastbound ships with provisions of sheep, chicken, fish, milk and oranges.

Even though the modest traffic with the island generated limited experience and evidence, Madagascar was often subject to grand visionary projections which saw it as a potential plantation and factory that would dominate Euro-Asiatic trade.

William D’Avenant’s 1638 epic poem *Madagascar* would speak of:

An isle so seated for predominance,
Where navall strength its power can so advance,
That it may tribute take of what the East
Shall ever send in traffique to the West.¹⁴³

As D’Avenant compares Madagascar favourably against “traffique to the West”, the failures and difficulties of establishing profitable colonies in America towards the middle of the seventeenth century cast the option of Madagascar in a somewhat favourable light. Another promoter, the merchant Richard Boothby, would compare the colonial potential of the island to the Dutch possession of Batavia and declare that “He that is Lord of Madagascar may easily in good time be Emperour of all India”.¹⁴⁴ The colonial expeditions promoted by Boothby would soon be abandoned. Robert Hunt, the erstwhile governor of the Caribbean

¹⁴³ William D’Avenant, *The Works of Sr William D’avenant Kt consisting of those which were formerly printed, and those which he design’d for the press: now published out of the authors originall copies* (London: T. N. for Henry Herringman, 1673), 211.

¹⁴⁴ Boothby, *A Briefe Discovery*, 1.

colony of Providence, would take this lack of colonial interest in the Madagascan interiors as an opportunity to plant a similar projection for Assada, a smaller island adjacent to the north western coast of the Madagascar, by touting it to be for the English “as Batavia is to the Dutch, and Goa to the Portingalls.”¹⁴⁵ The promise of Madagascar is posited with respect to the contemporary (un)profitability of English investments in America and the need to catch up with their European competitors in Asia. The eventual English settlement in Madagascar after a decade of grandiloquent promotion lasted for a little more than a year. In March 1645, a starving crew of a hundred and forty aboard the *James* landed at Augustine Bay. As the Captain John Smart recounted in a letter home: “most of their people [were] sicke, and had she contynued at sea but one weeke longer (without Gods great mercy they had all perished).”¹⁴⁶ Once on the island, their progress was more tortuous as they were without steady supplies of food, with diseases spreading, and the colonists often fatally involved in the volatile political contests between various regional tribes.¹⁴⁷ By the month of May the following year, the sixty surviving members of the expedition were evacuated. It is difficult to imagine how consensus over the project might have been achieved given the vast gulf that separated the visions of a prosperous English colony at Madagascar and the harsh conditions that awaited the foot soldiers of Courten’s enterprise. Juxtaposing the English “dream” of Madagascar with the French efforts to plant a colony in Madagascar around the same time might help us understand the political context that drew the English establishment to the big island.

¹⁴⁵ Robert Hunt, *The island of Assada, neere Madagascar impartially defined, being a succinct, yet plenary discription of the situation, fertility and people therein inhabiting* (London: Printed for Nicholas Bourne, 1650), 4, accessed October 9, 2017. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>.

¹⁴⁶ Copy of a general letter sent from Soldana Bay to England, January 27, 1645; Letter for England from Captain Smart, 18 August 1645, BL, Add. 14,037, fols. 4–5, 12v, quoted in Games, *The Web of Empire*, 200.

¹⁴⁷ Games, *The Web of Empire*, 200--06.

Less than three years prior to the Courtens' expedition captained by John Smart landing at Augustine Bay, a French crew commandeered by governor Jacques Pronis landed at Manafiafy Bay along the Anosy coast on the southeast of the big island. Not very far from the rag-tag settlement where Smart situated his failing enterprise, a parallel set of events played out. Many of Pronis' crew died within the first two months leaving only fourteen survivors from an initial group of forty. Like their counterparts on Augustine Bay, many of these deaths were caused by malaria; the rest died in a skirmish with neighbouring tribesmen while scouting for supplies. Pronis moved his remaining crew southwards to Tolagnare where they constructed Fort Dauphin with shrubs and other material ready at hand. This initial mishap did not deter the French, like it did the English, and they continued their attempts to establish their presence on the island.

In the arid coasts of Anosy, where subsistence itself was a struggle, the subsequent governorship of the settlement under Étienne de Flacourt was marked by extreme violence. The French, equipped with more effective killing machines, burnt hundreds of Malagasy villages and oversaw a campaign of unencumbered violence and murder. To take one such instance, in the year 1664, a French priest known as Étienne was executed by the chief Dian Manangue as punishment for wrenching the king's jewels from his neck. One of the French participants recounted the French response in which "(d)uring six days more than 150 villages were burnt and more than 1000 people killed, men as well as women

and children, and we took at least 4000 cattle.”¹⁴⁸ Over a period of three decades (between 1642 and 1674), the French colonists at Anosy operated what Pier Larson terms “a political economy of murder and plunder.”¹⁴⁹ For the French, then, Anosy was a disaster, with the settlers perpetrating all manner of struggles merely in order to survive. The fact of their continued presence could be attributed not to the daily realities of living on the island but on the grand ambitions projected from the continental mainland. The funding of the prolonged stake-out of the island was stewarded by Jean-Baptiste Colbert who headed the Conseil des Finances and was responsible for chartering the various Compagnies des Indes Orientales which were granted exclusive trading rights in the Indian ocean.¹⁵⁰

Colbert’s efforts in Madagascar were a part of a much larger overseas offensive against the Dutch. As Julia Adams points out, he was able “to mount this unprecedented mercantile and colonial effort because it took place when Louis XIV’s bellicose policies of dynastic territorial expansion in Europe coincided with Colbert’s mercantilist vision.”¹⁵¹ By the mid seventeenth-century, the French, like the English, were in a rush to compete for dominance in the ports that encircled the Indian Ocean. Their relative inexperience in the region and their humiliation from being at the receiving end of territorial conflicts with the Dutch, led them to look for easy shortcuts in order to make a mark in the Asian markets. In a sense their impotence vis-a-vis the Dutch fuelled both the English and the French to

¹⁴⁸ Carpeau du Saussay, *Voyage de Madagascar, connu aussi sous le nom de l’Isle de St Laurent. Par M. de V. . . . Commissaire Provincial de l’Artillerie de France. Dedié à S. A. S. M. le Prince de Conty.* (Paris: Chez Jean-Luc Nyon, Libraire au premier Pavillon des Quatre Nations, à Sainte Monique, 1722), quoted in Larson, *Colonies Lost*, 359.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 360.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 357.

¹⁵¹ Julia Adams, *The Familial State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2007), 119.

construct a grand vision of Madagascar. Adams tells us that the French Compagnie des Indes was in “economic hot water” due to a “situation exacerbated by ignorant and disastrous policy decisions, such as the unsuccessful attempts to colonise Madagascar, ill-suited for the purpose, and convert it into an entrepot that would rival Dutch Batavia.”¹⁵² This mirrored the Courtens’ pitch from few decades earlier, which had argued for a colony in Madagascar by citing as a model the thriving Dutch colony in Batavia, the capital of the Dutch East Indies.

However, Batavia’s suitability as a colonial trading centre could not have been more different than the coasts of Madagascar. The former had thrived as a seaport for centuries and had established trading ties with European players such as the Portuguese more than a century before the Dutch razed the port city into submission. In geo-strategic terms, Madagascar consisted of tribal kingdoms ruled by various *Roandriana* who preferred to have residences in the interior. This enabled them to scupper the initiative of any party attempting invasion from the coast by forcing them to move into a terrain strategically advantageous to the natives.¹⁵³ Courtens’ promoters, Hamond and Boothby, took considerable creative licence in depicting Madagascar in paradisiacal terms and using it to stoke the flames of national and mercantile ambition. Both these writers had not touched upon the island’s difficult terrain nor did they warn of the resistance settlers might have to face from various native groups who were more than shrewd and experienced in combat. In their descriptions of the island they resorted to what

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ For the organisation of the *Roandriana* and for the geo-strategic location of the various tribal residences in the island, see Larson, *Colonies Lost*, 348-9.

John Gillies has termed a “poetic geography.”¹⁵⁴ Where Hamond framed Madagascar as “(a)n Earth, like that of Eden,” Boothby’s praise deemed “the Island comparable with the land of Canaan.”¹⁵⁵ Along with these biblical themes, the duo also employed Madagascar’s islandhood to cast their geography in utopian terms.

‘A spacious Country found’: The literary uses of Madagascar’s island geography

In William D’Avenant’s *Madagascar*, the soul of the poet is transported “unto an Isle” that lay between “the Southern Tropick and the Line” where Prince Rupert is victorious in a battle with both the island’s inhabitants and an armed Spanish naval unit.¹⁵⁶ In D’Avenant’s vision, the prince’s glory was to consist in killing his opponents so ruthlessly that “the Neighb’ring Rivers need No Springs to make them flow, but what they bleed.”¹⁵⁷ The poem is appropriately an elegy for a colony that was to only to be espied in a dream. D’Avenant justifies the usurpation of the island by resorting to the symbology of biblical events in which conquest is seen as the spreading of Adam’s race whose increasing progeny are “So num’rous” that the bloodshed carried out by Rupert is “now the best excuse of Nature” to “make new off-spring roome.”¹⁵⁸ And yet, for the poet to not take the furniture of biblical reality literally would be to sully its sacredness. In D’Avenant’s prophecy, the Bible is also an ancient geography which allows him to anoint the isle of Madagascar as Adam’s true residence:

¹⁵⁴ John Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 4--5.

¹⁵⁵ Hamond, *Madagascar, the richest island*, sig. A3; Boothby, *A Breife Discovery*, sig. A5

¹⁵⁶ D’Avenant, *The works of Sr William D’avenant*, 205.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 210.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Eden, which God did this first Prince allow,
But as his Privie-garden then, is now
A spacious Country found; else wee supplie
With dreames, not truth, long lost Geographie ¹⁵⁹

But dreams more than suffice for D’Avenant despite his claims to the contrary. Likewise, Hamond and Boothby follow by supplying their geography with dreams paying little attention to their experience on the island.¹⁶⁰ In his first pamphlet promoting Madagascar, “the greatest known, Island in the World,” Hamond envisions an island where nature is preserved, pure and abundant, cut away from the corrupting influence of human artifice.¹⁶¹ “And may not their ignorance in the Art of Navigation,” Hamond asks, “be deservedly accounted an happinesse. Certainly by this means they are not contaminated with the vices and evill customes of strangers.”¹⁶² He wistfully observes their edenic simplicity, saying: “Besides, those happy people have no need of any forraign commodity, Nature having sufficiently supplied their necessities.”¹⁶³ Hamond’s island tale pivots on a rhetorical overlay in which the geographical isolation and cultural limits of the island’s inhabitants are transformed into virtues.¹⁶⁴ With his commissioners at the Courten Association looking for investments in order to expand their colonial expedition to Madagascar, Hamond is more pragmatic in representing the islanded aspect of Madagascar in his subsequent pamphlet. In his *Madagascar, the richest and most frvitfull island in the world* (1643) the island is a site of

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Both Boothby and Hamond hardly venture out to the islands in their visit. They stay on their ships for reasons of safety and go onto the coast during the day.

¹⁶¹ Hamond, *A paradox*, sig. A4

¹⁶² Ibid., sig. F2

¹⁶³ Ibid., sig. F3

¹⁶⁴ The Malagasy tribes had trade with neighbouring islands such as Mauritius. Their trading zone was limited by the range of their boats. The origin of the various Malagasy people were to be found in trading parties from the Eastern coast of Africa, East Asia and Arabs who were the first visitors to the island. Hamond, given his central argument about the isolation of the islanders does not engage with history of exchange though contemporary English cosmographies did recognise albeit inaccurately, the mixed origins of the malagasy people.

respite where “the English Ships bound for India” are provided with “Wood, Water, and other Provisions; chiefly to refresh and Cure their sick people, where commonly their longest stay is but for five or six dayes, in which time they are perfectly cured.”¹⁶⁵ Between the two pamphlets, Madagascar shifts from a space of incorruptible isolation to the island as a conduit for traffic.

With “servent zeale and affection,” Boothby accentuates Hamond’s vision of the island as a trading hub further, putting forward an “incouragement for a plantation at Madagascar, and the assured great benefit by trade from thence to all parts of the world, by making or settling there a Magazine or store house for trade into all Christian and heathen Kingdomes.”¹⁶⁶ The island is idealised as a gargantuan mercantile factory, one that could at one stroke grant England colonial supremacy over its European competitors. In his task of representing Madagascar, he goes onto deploy his utopian mastery by projecting two other staples of early modern utopias. The island is touted as a new Canaan and, in a related vein, as a site of redemption for bishops fleeing religious persecution. Madagascar is compared with the promised land of the Old Testament, the island worthy of as much praise “as Moses did the land of Canaan, it’s a good land, a Land in the which Rivers of waters and Fountaines spring out of vallies and Mountaines, a Land of Wheat and Barley, of Vineyards, of Fig-trees and Pomgranets, a Land of Oile Olive and Honey, a Land wherein thou shalt eat without scarcity, neither shalt lack any thing therein, a Land whose stones are Iron, and out of whose Mountains thou shalt dig Brasse.”¹⁶⁷ This passage appears

¹⁶⁵ Hamond, *Madagascar, the richest island*, sig. A4.

¹⁶⁶ Boothby, *A briefe discovery*, unpaginated (the quote is to be found in the section “To the Reader”).

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. 15.

after Boothby has elaborated on how to equip the island with the facilities that are required to make it a maritime centre and right before he meticulously lists the array of commodities that are to be already found in the island and the various other crops and trades that can be introduced “so that English merchants need not to carry any Mony out of England into India.”¹⁶⁸ For a brief instant, Boothby has discarded his persona of the astute merchant, and the geography of the island becomes a palimpsest to overwrite the proposed colonial undertaking as a biblical quest. Here, a roster of commodities, a routine task of maritime intelligence is mapped onto a more symbolic plane of commodification, of the land of milk and honey that serve as the horizon of the Israelites’ quest.

Transposing a biblical imagery onto Madagascar, Boothby is also able to project the island as a solution to contemporary domestic crises, especially the religio-political controversies around the passage of the Bishops Exclusion Act. Passed by both houses of Parliament in 1642, this act would prohibit Bishops and priests from sitting in the House of Lords and participating in “secular jurisdiction.”¹⁶⁹ Boothby recounts a suggestion that “if the Bishops of England (lately dismissed from voting in Parliament, and tyrannizing in temporall authority) should still continue in disrespect with King and Parliament, they or most part of them would goe and plant a Colony in Madagascar, or in Saint Laurence, and indeavour to reduce those ignorant soules to Christianity.”¹⁷⁰ He prays that “such a pious

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., sig. 7.

¹⁶⁹ “Charles I, 1640: An Act for disinabling all persons in Holy Orders to exercise any temporall jurisdicc[i]on or authoritie.,” in *Statutes of the Realm: Volume 5, 1628-80*, ed. John Raithby (s.l: Great Britain Record Commission, 1819), 138, *British History Online*, accessedo January 9, 2017, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol5/p138>.

¹⁷⁰ Boothby, *A briefe discovery*, 18. Boothby also qualifies that the religious conflicts breaking out between puritans and the Church of England in colonies such as Virginia could be avoided in Madagascar given the benefit of hindsight. He references the situation in order to argue that the island could serve as a clean slate where only one particular faction is allowed in order to avoid the

designe may speedily take effect” with the island serving as “speciall receptacles and succours to truly religious English Protestants, if it shall please God to punish the Nation for the crying sinnes thereof, by the prevalence of Malignants tirannous Papists which God avert.”¹⁷¹ The enclosed geography of the island becomes a receptacle that would provide both succour and purpose to priests fleeing persecution. By presenting the island through three different ideal schemes, that of a global trading factory, a biblical paradise, and as a refuge for the faithful, Boothby introduced a range of options to strengthen his case for a colony in Madagascar and possibly to tap into multiple channels of investors.¹⁷²

Though Boothby’s pamphlet was intended to be released prior to the 1644 expedition that the Courten’s Association sent out to Madagascar it was delayed for various reasons.¹⁷³ By the time of its publication in 1647, the Courtens’ dream of a colony in Madagascar was no more. It remains unclear why the pamphlet was

situation of the American colony where he alleges the various religious factions to have “taken up armes one side against the other, and slaine of themselves or killed by the Natives 1700 which is doubted the Virginians will make use of such discention and cut all their throats on both sides.” In the 1640s, the period that Boothby seems to refer to, there were well documented tensions between the state established Anglican church and Puritans from within the Virginia colony.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. Boothby frames the problem of sectarian division in terms of commercial loss, giving the example of Virginia where religious conflicts could lead to a “losse unrecoverable to this Kingdome, of that famous plantation; and excellently accommodated, after 40 or 50 yeares, or more hard durance of many the first Planters, (which God forbid) and grant better newes to succeed.”

¹⁷² Depending on whether it was a charter or a proprietary colony, the religious arrangement of the potential colony could be a strong reason for investors of a Puritan faith to be interested in a colonial venture.

¹⁷³ Boothby states that the delay in publication was due to “my owne weaknesse of body: the hinderance of a captious licencer, blameing the rudenesse of the stile and my placing Madagascar in Asia, which he would needs have to be in Affrica, but whether in Asia or Affrica I yet rest unresolved”. Boothby, *A brieve discovery*, n.p. The controversy over attributing a regional affiliation to Madagascar, according to Smith, suggests “that the island was difficult to identify as part of one of the traditional continents, and perhaps explains why the many accounts about the island position it in a number of different geographical contexts”. Smith, “‘Canaanising Madagascar’,” 289.

brought out even when its original function had ceased.¹⁷⁴ The late publication of Boothby's promotion indicates that English interest in the location of Madagascar must have persisted in some quarters despite the failure of John Smart's expedition. Maurice Thompson would take over Courten's consortium with the larger objective of creating an empire in Asia that was akin to the English colonies in the Atlantic and the Caribbean. Acting within the purview of Courten's Madagascar patent, Thomson would set up the Assada Merchants to plant a colony in the island of Assada adjoining the coast of Madagascar. In 1650, Robert Hunt, on behalf of Thomson, would bring out *The Island of Assada* which would be the final English advertisement for a colony in Madagascar. Hunt uses the instance of "the dissolving of the Plantation at Augustine's Bay," in which there was "neither good fresh water, nor wood to build withall, nor Provision, nor Gardens for mans use" as "an encouragement to proceed in this designe," Assada being abundant in all that was deficient at Augustine Bay.¹⁷⁵

After the disaster for the English at Augustine Bay, Hunt's prospects for Assada are more modest than Boothby's global outlook for Madagascar. The choice of Assada, an island off Madagascar's heavily contested terrain, might have been seen as a better chance at maintaining colonial sovereignty given the natural barrier between the small island and the big island's warring tribes. Though Hunt does mention in passing that if given time Assada could aspire to be "as Batavia is to the Dutch, and Goa to the Portingalls," the colonial analogue guiding his pitch

¹⁷⁴ Only the first half of Boothby's *A Briefe Discovery* is occupied with promoting the Courten's Madagascar venture. The remainder of the pamphlet provides all manners of international news and mercantile intelligence regarding European trade in the Indian Ocean.

¹⁷⁵ Hunt, *The island of Assada*, 5.

throughout are the brutal English slave plantations in Barbados.¹⁷⁶ Hunt's pamphlet contains a table that demonstrates to investors how much cheaper it would be to purchase land, slaves and provisions in comparison to Barbados. Hunt's proposal posits a central role to slave labour for the economy of Assada. This marks a significant shift from his predecessors in terms of promotional strategy. Hamond was keen to point out the fecundity of Madagascar, "(a)n Earth, like that of Eden, pleasant without artifice, and plentiful without labour," possibly to avoid the questioning of the financial and administrative viability of the project. In line with the island's abundance was his stated policy towards the islanders where "how happy soever our fortune may be, they will share at least with us, and perhaps precede us: For what will be our wealth, will no way impoverish them; and what will enable us at our returne, cannot make their treasure one graine the lighter".¹⁷⁷ In Hamond's view, settlement was mainly to be an affair where the island's already existing riches were to be harvested and diverted for trade.

Boothby's vision for Madagascar, on the other hand, sees the island "being well planted with Artificers and manufactors will outstrip all others in the world for manufactures."¹⁷⁸ He is keen on employing English labour for reasons akin to the colonial argument in More's *Utopia*. He is particular to not "give encouragement to imploy men therein, to the hurt of my native country" and speaks of the benefit to the "Commonwealth" if "poor people" were to be employed from England so that his countrymen could "disburden our own of many unnecessary idle vagrant people, which think themselves born for no other use but Natus consumere

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 4.

¹⁷⁷ Hamond, *Madagascar, the richest island*, A3--4.

¹⁷⁸ Boothby, *A briefe discovery*, 29.

fruges, and to live upon Industrious mens labours”.¹⁷⁹ As with his earlier suggestion regarding the island as a religious refuge, Madagascar becomes a site for deflecting England’s domestic ills, that of vagrancy and unemployment. The uses of religion for the labour-force Hunt seeks to govern at the Assada colony are very different from the mercantile inclinations of Boothby or the airy designs of Hamond. Religion has an instrumental purpose for Hunt who intends “to settle two or three Godly men as Agents, at the King of the North end of Madagascars Court, whose worke shall be to indeavour to informe him and his people in the knowledge of the Gospell of Jesus Christ and to keepe a loving and peaceable correspondency with them”.¹⁸⁰ He imagines that such a facility would cause the “greatest encouragement” for “Adventurers; and for the better carrying on this worke” which is to “endeavour the Settlement of an honest and just Government”.¹⁸¹ Here, Hunt hopes, like the Portuguese friars of the previous decades, that the conversion of the local ruler and his people would be able to facilitate greater influence within Madagascar.¹⁸²

Hunt’s role for priests within the Assada colony also had another related purpose. Their indoctrinating role was meant to complement the political arithmetic he envisioned for the plantation. He intended to source labour, “some to be free men, others servants” from “Arabia Madagascar, Africa, and India” of which “(o)ne English man will governe ten of those Nations: thus may Men, Women, and children be bred up in the knowledge of God, and in time this Island lying so well for Trade, may be a scale of Trade to the English, for those parts of the

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 29--30.

¹⁸⁰ Hunt, *The island of Assada*, 2.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² For an account of the Portuguese Jesuit missions from Goa that sought to convert Madagascan royalty, See Larson, *Colonies Lost*, 354--57.

World, as Batavia is to the Dutch, and Go(a) to the Portingalls".¹⁸³ Religious doctrine and the proportional distribution of English labourers vis-à-vis those brought in as slaves are seen as crucial in order to maintain control of the plantation and prevent possible insurrections.¹⁸⁴ Hunt adds that Batavia and Goa "have 20, times their number of Strangers live amongst them, and under their Government", in order to argue that the favourable power ratio ensured that Assada is a secure investment.¹⁸⁵

Hunt's promotional tract is a more mature sales pitch, given that it is preceded by the disastrously paradisiacal visions of Boothby and Hamond. Hunt does not have the luxury of tapping into English unfamiliarity with the island that had earlier allowed for an exotic portrayal of Madagascar. Possibly, Hamond and Boothby could also afford to paint grand dreams as their commissioners, the Courtens, were essentially interlopers operating with relatively low overheads looking to make Madagascar a respectable front for their piracy operations.¹⁸⁶ Hunt, given

¹⁸³ Hunt, *The island of Assada*, 2.

¹⁸⁴ James C. Armstrong in his study of the slave trade in seventeenth-century Madagascar reports that there is no evidence of "significant slaving interest in Madagascar by the English until 1664". James C. Armstrong, "Madagascar and the slave trade in the seventeenth century," *Omalý Sy Anio* 17-19 (1984), 217. Due to the monopoly on African slave trade granted to the Royal African Company, individual traders began to look to Madagascar for trading opportunities.

¹⁸⁵ Hunt, *The island of Assada*, 4. Hunt's pamphlet is addressed to both funders and potential settlers, including those signing up as indentured labour. Boothby and Hamond only address the former group.

¹⁸⁶ In his *An Answer to Mr Boothbies Book*, Waldegrave doubts the intention of the Courten promoters given that their efforts were led by the Earl of Arundel and Endimion Porter, the latter two who he accuses of being involved in "connivance at Court" which "formerly did earnestly endeavour suffrance of piracy in and near the Gulf of Arabia". Waldegrave argues that the sponsors of his pamphlet, the East India Company (from their factory base in Surat), had to compensate for the losses interloping operations inflicted upon "Merchants of *Moors* trading thither from *India*" by seizing English pirate ships so as to guarantee their own security and trading privileges in the area. According to Waldegrave the Madagascar promoters looked to the island as a base for piracy operations given that there were "few places to lurk in, save Johanna, Majotta, and Mohelia, three small islands; this crotchet of St. Lawrence or Madagascar was hatcht from this consideration, rather than any hopes of inland benefit, that as they thought themselves free from Gods, so there they might conceive they could fortifie against mans questioning, and still persist in the dishonoring of God and the English Nation by theft and robbery". See Waldegrave, *An Answer to Mr Boothbies Book*, 5.

his previous experience as the governor of Providence Island in the Caribbean modelled his pitch for Assada on the realities of colonial Barbados, a real and ongoing venture. The prospects for Assada are centred around the control of labour rather than a purported harvest that awaits arriving colonists. Yet for all of Hunt's domain expertise, disaster follows the English to Assada. When the colony does get underway it does not last for very long. Within less than six months of Hunt's arrival on the island, Charles Wilde, the purser of the ship *Bonito* that voyaged to Assada in order to supply the plantation with labourers, would report that Hunt, the governor of the island and nine of his men were killed by local tribesmen.¹⁸⁷

In the decade between 1640 and 1650, the nature of English colonial encounters with Madagascar's difficult terrain varied little. What kept changing, however, were the ways in which its island form was appropriated for the various prospectuses that preceded the colonial expeditions. In Hamond's first pamphlet, the island preserves nature in its utmost purity with even its people uncorrupted by artifice. As the following chapter will explore, the commercial pressures exerted by his commissioner force him to remodel the island form when he brings out his second Madagascar pamphlet three years later. In the latter piece, Madagascar was to be "the richest and most fruitful island in the world in the world," a New Britain awaiting a new Caesar. Boothby, writing on the behalf of the same employers as Hamond, takes the purported commodiousness of the island a step further declaring it grandly to be the most desirous colonial possession Europe could lay its hand on, a land that "farre transcends and exceeds all other Countries in Asia, Affrica and America, planted by English,

¹⁸⁷ Games, *The Web of Empire*, 213.

French, Dutch, Portugall and Spaniards: and is likely to prove of farre greater value and esteeme to that Christian Prince and Nation that shall plant and settle a sure habitation therein".¹⁸⁸ He also hawks the island as a religious refuge which could put English vagrants on the path to productive activity. With the actual colony folding up almost as soon as it was formed, Hunt moves the object of colonial desire to neighbouring Assada where he puts out a more modest and calculated vision of an island encircling a slave plantation. In these figurative shifts of Madagascar from Edenic paradise to global trade centre, and religious refuge to slave plantation, it is possible to trace a trajectory of the imperial imagination and appropriation of islands. Three centuries later, this spatial ideology was once again at work when Madagascar featured within the genocidal discourse of fin de siècle Europe as the world's largest detention centre.

¹⁸⁸ Boothby, *A briefe discovery*, 5.

‘So farre as my weake capacity shall enable mee’: Plainness and proof, or the two faces of Walter Hamond’s *A Paradox*

The great *Rukh* and the deception of the multiplying glass

In the year 1298, three years after his return to the continent, Marco Polo gave shape to his famous travels in a Genoese prison, dictating his legendary journeys to his scribe and fellow prisoner, Rusticello of Pisa. Soon after Polo’s death, the figure of a ruffian-like clown representing “Il Milione” or “Marco of the millions” is said to have made regular appearances in Venetian carnivals.¹⁸⁹ The satire no doubt addressed the magnitude of Marco Polo’s claims regarding the riches and monstrosities that inhabited the world outside Europe. One of Polo’s many “millions” are to be found in his account “of the Great Island of Madagascar” where during a particular time of the year, the great “Rukh,” a giant bird with the likeness of an eagle, descends onto the island; its size “being so large and strong as to seize an elephant with its talons, and to lift it into the air, in order to drop it to the ground and in this way kill it.”¹⁹⁰ Polo tells us that Kublai Khan, enraptured by his account of the event, sent messengers to the island. To the emperor’s delight, they brought back “a feather of the rukh, positively affirmed to have measured ninety spans, and the quill part to have been two palms in circumference.”¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Manuel Komroff, “Introduction,” in *The Travels of Marco Polo, The Venetian*, ed. Komroff (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2002), xxiv.

¹⁹⁰ Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo, The Venetian*, ed. Manuel Komroff (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2002), 313.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 314.

Tantalisingly poised at the center of Vasco Da Gama's maritime trade route between Europe and Asia, Madagascar would continue to host a range of gigantic creatures that would transform and disperse in various European travel texts in the centuries to come. In one such instance, an English account of a voyage of the East-Indies written in 1682 remarked on the heft of the island's sheep to highlight its resources for the sustenance of potential trading voyagers, saying that they were "so fat, that their Tayles weigh from twenty to five and twenty Pounds."¹⁹² As is the case with such incredible reports, this rumour in turn was a translation of a quasi-fictional account by a Dutch seamen Jans Janszoon Struys.¹⁹³

The spread and metamorphoses of Polo's *Travels*, composed in an age before the printing press, is more difficult to fathom, with a hundred and forty extant manuscripts that predate the several printed versions that would appear during the early modern period.¹⁹⁴ In England, important medieval travel texts such as Mandeville's *Travels* borrowed heavily from Polo, whose own work is itself best considered "a culmination of medieval speculation on the Extra European world with all its fabulous distortions and wild speculations."¹⁹⁵ Polo's fabulation of the great "Rukh" would continue to register a presence in England during the seventeenth century, even though the creature was either used for hypothesis or marked out as untrue. The Rukh figured in John Wilkins' *A discourse concerning a new world & another planet* (1640). Contemplating the flight of bodies, Wilkins

¹⁹² Mr. Glanius, *A new voyage to the East-Indies containing an account of several of those rich countries* (London: Printed for H. Rodes, 1682), 31, accessed April 23, 2014. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>.

¹⁹³ Jan Janszoon Struys, *The voriages and travels of John Struys through Italy, Greece, Muscovy, Tartary, Media, Persia, East-India, Japan, and other countries in Europe, Africa and Asia*. (London: printed for Abel Swalle by John Morrison, 1684), 16.

¹⁹⁴ O. R. Dathorne, *Imagining the World: Mythical Belief Versus Reality in Global Encounters* (Westport: Bergin and Garvey, 1994), 106--118. For an account of Polo's travels see John Larner, *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

¹⁹⁵ Dathorne, *Imagining the World*, 108.

concludes that there is no relation between the largeness of bodies and their capacity for flight, giving the example of the “great Ruck in Madagascar, as Marcus Polus the Venetian mentions, the feathers in whose wings are twelve foot long, which can scoope up a horse and his rider, or an elephant, as our kites doe a mouse; why then tis but teaching one of these to carry a man, and he may ride up thither, as Ganymed dos upon an eagle.”¹⁹⁶ The utopian mastery that framed Wilkins’ textual endeavours were so expansive as to conflate within its ambit the classical myth of a winged Ganymede, the mechanics of flight, and the plausibility of the Great Rukh. Wilkins’ eclectic planes of inquiry and belief are to be contrasted with the simultaneous existence of suspicion towards the possibilities that lay in the New World.

In his popular 1613 travel compendium *Purchas his pilgrimage*, Samuel Purchas is sceptical when he mentions “That which Polo saith, he heard of a Bird in this Iland, called Ruch, so bigge as it could take up an Elephant, hath no likelihood of truth.”¹⁹⁷ In the previous page, Purchas, probably to add to the credence of his own work, feigns disinterest in the extraordinary and links the tendency to augment or inflate, with utopian modes of writing. He equates the classical cosmographic myth of Iambulos’ voyage to the ‘islands of the sun’ to “savour more of an *Utopia*, and *Plato's* common-wealth, then of true historie.”¹⁹⁸ Like the figure of the pilgrim, Purchas positions truth as that which resides in modesty. Where the Rukh was too big to be true, Purchas tells us in a marginal note that More’s *Utopia* was “(f)aining a countrie and common-wealth in manner too good

¹⁹⁶ John Wilkins, *A discourse concerning a new world & another planet in 2 bookes* (London: Printed by John Norton and R. Hearne, 1640), 238, accessed November 13, 2014. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>.

¹⁹⁷ Purchas, *Purchas his pilgrimage*, 595.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 594.

to be true.”¹⁹⁹

While Purchas is unequivocal in his dismissal of the rukh, this is not the case for the reference to the great bird to be found among the cascade of references interwoven in Robert Burton’s *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). Like the example of Wilkins above, the utopian ambit of Burton encompasses imaginary horizons that frame remedies for more immediate concerns, in this case, a cure for the universal affliction of melancholy. Among the several factors listed as a cause for melancholy such as inappropriate diet, lack of exercise and the “perturbations of the mind”, Burton includes the “unhealthfulness of air.” In the second partition of his treatise in which he considers the “rectification” of air, the narrator “having now come at last into these spacious fields of Aire” abruptly announces a digression where he wanders “round about the world”. This narratorial transport offers a vantage point from which the world “those aetheriall orbis and celestiall spheres” that Burton knows from the relation of explorers can at last be verified, where he “should soone perceave whether Marcus Polus the Venetians narration bee true or false.”²⁰⁰ But the scepticism that leads to a need to verify gives way to credulity, a dialectic which characterizes the tension that allowed utopian writing to cohabit the realm of what counted as description. Here, the “Spaniards discovery of Terra Australis Incognitaor Magellanica,” is “as true as that of Mercurius Britannicus, or his of Utopia, or his of Lusia. And yet in all likelyhood it may bee true.”²⁰¹ It is in this context that the soaring narrator of Burton’s work, simultaneously traversing continents and works of cosmography, passes Madagascar where “I would see that great bird Rucke that

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Robert Burton, *The anatomy of melancholy vvat it is* (Oxford: Printed by Iohn Lichfield and James Short, 1621), 316-19, accessed January 13, 2015. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 318.

can carry a man and horse, or an elephant.”²⁰²

Unlike Burton’s initial impulse to imagine an enquiry which can verify if the extraordinary reports were true or false, it is more interesting to consider here the reasons for the persistence of the rukh in these early modern works. How did the myth of the rukh continue to hold sway, occupying various positions ranging from plausibility to falsehood, more than three centuries after it was first referenced? An interesting aside made by the courtier Thomas Herbert in his revised and enlarged 1638 edition of the travelogue, *Some yeares travels into divers parts of Asia and Afrique*, is enlightening. Having stopped at the Cape of Good Hope and now setting out for Madagascar, Herbert reports his inability to locate the existence of an island which Marco Polo had described, sarcastically noting “which Venetus (perhaps from an Optick glasse upon a Tarrase beyond Tartary) descried in this sea and about this place; where we find none resembling.”²⁰³

Here, Polo’s reports are not merely held as an exaggeration, a magnification of an object as viewed through a lens, but rather as a fiction produced from an impossible vantage point, a terrace beyond the distant and inaccessible kingdom of the Tartars. The figure of the lens is then extended onto the Great Rukh which Herbert refers to as an illusion, a “phantasma”. Polo, Herbert tells us, “not only assures an Ile, but saw a bird there (his multiplying glasse deceived him) so big as a Ship, and so strong as in her tallons can easily gripe and trusse up an Elephant.”²⁰⁴ In the latter instance, there is a subtle change bracketed within Herbert’s commentary, in which the tone shifts from accusing Polo of

²⁰² Ibid., 318-19.

²⁰³ Venetus, here is referring to Polo. Thomas Herbert, *Some yeares travels into divers parts of Asia and Afrique Describing especially the two famous empires, the Persian, and the great Mogull* (London: Printed by R[ichard] Bi[sho]p, 1638), 20.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 20.

manufacturing of an outright lie to a jocular suggestion that Polo himself was prey to the oblique refractions and the ocular illusions produced by that strange and recent device, the “multiplying glass.”

The “natural magic” of the lens was intimately connected to utopian endeavours of “world-making.” Experiments with light and vision were undertaken by projectors such as the German Jesuit scholar Athanasius Kircher, who sought to demystify and rationalise the projection of images while at the same time broadening physical enquiry by proving that “all things seen by us are other than what they seem.”²⁰⁵ As Stuart Clark notes, Kircher was so impressed by “the power of the telescope to re-present the visual world” that he proposed to construct “a “panto-parastatical machine” that would achieve the ultimate in representational magic: “mountains, rivers, seas, immense plains of the countryside, huge chazamas, lakes, forests, and in these all kinds of animals.”²⁰⁶ The possibilities of the “multiplying glass” were thus seen in this instance as a medium through which the world could not only be re-presented, but one where other worlds could be simulated. In this light, the figure of the lens can be seen as the ocular analogue of the narratorial worlds presented by writers such as Polo.

But if Polo’s rukh was the product of a telescopic gaze, what is the nature of the lens we speak of here, and what is the status of the viewer and its objects? Is the feather that was presented to Kublai Khan, an exaggerated reference to the *Aepyornis maximus* - the large flightless “elephant bird” that grows to a height of three metres - which is said to have resided in Madagascar until its extinction in

²⁰⁵ Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 102.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

the eighteenth century?²⁰⁷ Even the confirmation of such associations does not begin to tackle the fundamental role that the writing traditions inherited by Polo played in framing narratives such as those describing the *Rukh*. It was the commonplaces, rhetorical devices, classical allusions and the transport of legends populating travel literature that constructed the lens through which Polo envisaged the rukh. Herbert once again provides further clues to substantiate this connection. In the fourth edition of *Some yeares travels into divers parts of Africa and Asia* brought out in 1677, Herbert supposes that Polo's overstatement or "hyberbole" was the result of revising earlier legends.²⁰⁸ He remarks that Polo might have employed the classical histories of Roman and Greek rhetoricians such as Strabo and Aelianus, who write "concerning flying Dragons in *AETHiopia* which kill elephants," or an Arabian legend "of a very large bird, bigger than either *Eagle* or *Vultur*, which they call *Rucha*."²⁰⁹ Herbert goes on to note the mention of an elephant-slaying dragon in a more recent book of emblems brought out in Antwerp by Hungarian writer Johanness Sambucus in 1564.²¹⁰

We can infer from Herbert's genealogical exploration that it is the stock of descriptions and generic patterns of classical histories and travel writing that would provide the narratorial "lens" and the "furniture" for Polo's contrivance of the Rukh. This manner of enquiry, where the shape of an "utopian lens" and its uses are traced to its textual forbears, can also be extended to an exploration of how idealised representations of the great bird's abode, the island of Madagascar, came to be in seventeenth-century England. In tracing these narratorial lenses,

²⁰⁷ Étienne de Flacourt, the governor of the French colonies in Madagascar, writes about how these birds haunt the island. Étienne de Flacourt, *Ou Les Origines de la Colonisation Française a Madagascar, 1648-1661*, ed. Arthur Malotet (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1898), 198--9.

²⁰⁸ Herbert, *Some yeares travels*, 20.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ See Johannes Sambucus, *Emblemata, cum aliquot nummis antiqui operis, Ioannis Sambuci Tirnauiensis Pannonii* (Antwerp: ex officina Christophori Plantini, 1564).

we can also come to understand the reasons behind the various shifting utopian registers that would be adopted by English writers to promote Madagascar as an ideal colonial venture. The following two chapters will take a close look at the utopian modes employed by Hamond in his Madagascar pamphlets where he sets out to promote an English settlement in the island. In these two pamphlets - *A Paradox proving that the inhabitants of the isle called Madagascar, or St. Laurence, (in temporall things) are the happiest people in the world* (1640) and *Madagascar, the richest and most fruitfull island in the world* (1643), Hamond uses various strategies to present Madagascar as an ideal colony and a profitable venture.

Hamond divides his first pamphlet *A Paradox* into two distinct parts: (i) a description of the island, where he employs the rhetoric of “plainness” to present a report of the island and its inhabitants as pliable to colonial exploits and (ii) a rhetorical proof in the form of a paradox where he attempts to extend an oratorical flourish to his ethnography of Madagascar's natives. Here, he incorporates classical discussions of virtue and nature in order to argue his case regarding the uncorrupted and purportedly impressionable nature of the island's inhabitants. In a later and less ambitious pamphlet brought out in 1643, Hamond omits the paradox and limits his rhetorical repertoire to a “description” of the island's benefits for merchants and colonists where Madagascar is presented as “the richest and most fruitfull island in the world.” Here, he declares England to be a new Rome. This is a colonial analogy where Madagascar, a place where “the Sun in all his progresse doth not behold a richer and sweeter Countrey,” was to take the place of an England past, a former colonial outpost of Rome.²¹¹

²¹¹ Ibid., sig. A3r

In Marco Polo's sighting of the rukh, the lens consisted of, among other things, the classical histories of Greek and Roman rhetoricians. In Hamond's case, the lens mainly consists of the textual modes - the paradox and the description - these modes determining the shape or manner in which the island of Madagascar was presented and idealised. In these two texts written between 1640 and 1643, the emphasis in the utopian presentation of Madagascar shifts from the virtue of its native inhabitants to its potential as an ideal English colony. These promotional accounts sought to garner investment for an English settlement in Madagascar by rendering utopian accounts of the island.

The utopian treatment of the island of Madagascar is different in each of these instances with the manner of idealisation depending on the type of narratorial lens employed. These utopian lenses, in turn, were most likely to have been adjusted or discarded according to the varying needs of the pamphlet's commissioners and their changing perspectives on what they thought would appeal to their potential audience and investors. Observing the relations between these parts will allow us to speculate on the significance of Hamond's text for understanding the contingencies that determined the use of the various modes that populated early modern colonial rhetoric. Like the image of the Great *Rukh* which would later be mocked as a distortion produced by a looking glass, Hamond would be accused of deliberately and grossly exaggerating the prospects of settling an English colony in Madagascar. I will also argue that Hamond's paradox was a strained effort that would later be discontinued because he sought to present the island of Madagascar, within the space of a single text, under two incompatible rhetorical lenses. Before we look closely at Hamond's promotional

pamphlets, it would be useful to acquaint ourselves with the context surrounding the Courten Association's wager on the island of Madagascar.

The Courten's wager

In 1630, Walter Hamond, a ship's surgeon, spent four months in Madagascar as a part of the crew to the Charles and the *Jonas*. Both ships were under the service of the East India Company, with Hamond serving in the *Jonas* under Captain John Wedell. In 1635, Wedell left the East India Company to command the fleet of a recently formed rival trading consortium, the Courten Association. Wedell had left the EIC upset by the manner in which he was treated by his employers on his return home after he had lost a ship to fire. Adding to his rancour was his disagreement with a recent truce the company had signed with the Portuguese *Estado Da India*.²¹² The Association headed by William Courten and Endymion Porter was an appropriate home for EIC dissenters like Wedell. Courten and Porter had been granted a trading license in 1635 by Charles I to trade in Goa, China, Japan, Malabar, and other parts of the East Indies, those areas in the Asiatic zone where the EIC had not managed to establish trade or erect fortifications.²¹³

²¹² Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce: Southern India 1500-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 234-236; *Ibid.*, 246; *Ibid.*, 290 - 292; Anita McConnell, "Hamond, Walter (d. 1648)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed August 28, 2015, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12167>. cf. Kirti N. Chaudhuri, *The English East India Company: The Study of an Early Joint-stock Company 1600-1640* (Abingdon on Thames: Taylor & Francis, 1965), 73; and Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 69--70.

²¹³ A copy of the original grant can be found in John Darell, *Strange news from th' Indies, or, East India passages further discovered : ... partly discovering the manner and tenour of East-India-trade hitherto, together, with part of the ... sufferings of William Courten Esquire, &c. / written ... by a constant well-willer, and continuall sufferer for truth, and publike good* (London : Printed for Stephen Bowtel, 1652), 4. Courten and Porter were able to persuade Charles I that their entry would lead to new sources of revenue as they would set up fortifications as well as assist the crown strategy to check, control and exploit the monopoly and privileges that the East

Not only did the Courten Association threaten the EIC's monopoly, its members presented a different business model, which emphasised the setting up of colonies or plantations, unlike the EIC's strategies, which were geared towards the setting up of trade factories. As Alison Games notes, there were significant differences between these two strategies as "(t)rade factories were cheap to set up, requiring only a small population of traders in residence" whereas colonisation was "expensive: it forced investors to part with their money with little expectation of a return on their investment for years. New settlers depended on supplies from England or elsewhere—costly both to purchase and to ship—until they could support themselves."²¹⁴ And yet, the Courtens were successful in staking out a royal charter by persuading Charles I that the benefits of colonial settlement outweighed its risks in a scenario of fierce inter-colonial competition. They argued that settlements were necessary to counter a situation in which English trading factions were enfeebled by the advances made by their Portuguese and Dutch counterparts in the trading stations of India and the East Indies.

John Darell would recount this winning proposition of the Courtens in his 1652 *Strange News from th'Indies: or, East-India Passages further discovered*.

Though he had written this news pamphlet after the association's plans for Madagascar ended in disaster, Darell writes in a tone that is extremely conciliatory towards the Courten faction (and rather critical of the EIC). Despite this apparent bias, Darrel's *Strange News* allows us a peek into the statements

India Company had acquired. With the crown out of money and unable to acquire funds due to the dissolution of Parliament between 1629 and 1640, it employed its political clout to renege on a few large transactions with the East India Company. In 1654 the crown would force the EIC to sell all its pepper holdings on unfavourable terms. See William Foster, "Charles I and the East India Company," *The English Historical Review* 19, no. 75 (1904): 456–63.

²¹⁴ Games, *The Web of Empire*, 185.

through which the Courten consortium's proposals gained favour. He contrasts the fate of the English EIC in the East-Indies with that of their Dutch counterparts, who are shown to have overtaken the former even though the English were the first to set up trade in the region through Francis Drake who "after his return from the South seas Anno 1580" had "divulged his discovery and treaty there with the King of Ternatte."²¹⁵ The rest of Darrel's overview is taken up with accounting for how "a vigilant fore-seeing neighbour Dutch-Nation (who, like wise Merchants, and carefull parents, providing for childrens portions and posterity) tooke the opportunity of advantage of the negligent and inconsiderate English, then and after, altogether for the present."²¹⁶ He also praises the Dutch for gaining "almost the whole European Trade of East-India" in the forty years since Drake's first passage to the East Indies and claims that their East India Company had managed to build "about thirty impregnable Cities, Towns and Castles, besides Conquest and Command of about 30000 miles" from "the coasts of China, Japan, and Phillippeen Islands Northwards, all along to Cape bon Esperanze Southwards, the whole contents of the Old-East-India Companies Patent or Monopoly."²¹⁷

The "negligent and inconsiderate English" EIC are criticised by Darell for their "bad government" and "contrary constitution" whereby they were "mis-employing or mis-spending" in massive amounts compared to the Dutch, who had purportedly made returns that were several times their initial investment.²¹⁸ Among Darell's various litanies against the EIC, such as "impoverishing the

²¹⁵ Darell, *Strange News from th'Indies*, 1.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 2.

Nation and Natives by transporting much Bulloigne, and native coine” for “onely enriching a few at home and abroad”, he blames their monopolistic designs through which “generall Adventurers were altogether discouraged” with the company holding “unlimited arbitrary power over all Adventurers, and an absolute restraint of the whole Nation” only to “damnifie and destroy our owne, and enrich all others with the riches and dignities of those vast and glorious Kingdomes and Countries.”²¹⁹ In the forty years of the EIC’s operation in the region, Darell points to the lack of infrastructure, the company not having “provided in India with one port, or place of their owne for a Rendezvouze, or so much as to secure a Ship or Pinnace.”²²⁰ It is against the background of such arguments that the Courten’s Madagascar venture would gain allure.

The EIC, Darell claims, found itself in a “low, languishing and desperate condition,” and could not provide Charles I with satisfactory proposals to revive the potential losses accrued from losing trading advantages to the Dutch EIC. The Courtens association, Darell goes onto recount, enter the fray in order to resolve this impasse in England’s overseas trade caused by EIC’s monopolistic stagnation with the “late King and Councell” seeking to “admit of another Company to plant and trade in such places onely where the old Company were not, or did not trade, and there at their discretion to settle Factories and plant Collonies after the Dutch manner (and intended practise of the new modelers from that example) the one not to interloop, intrude or intrench upon, or into the Ports and places of the other, as by Letters-patents, or otherwise may plainly appear.”²²¹ The Courten

²¹⁹ Ibid., 3.

²²⁰ Ibid., 2. Darell’s polemic is not reliable as the EIC had already managed to establish trading posts in Surat and Madras prior to the publication of Hamond’s Madagascar pamphlets in 1640.

²²¹ Ibid., 4.

Association's plans for settling a colony in Madagascar was in concord with Darrell's later arguments. In sum, the Courtens' entry took care of three obstacles at the same time: a) it loosened EIC's monopolistic grip on Asiatic trade; b) Madagascar could serve as a potential rendezvous port for English ships trading in India and the East Indies, and c) by settling colonies in the Dutch manner, the English could strive to replicate the success of rival European colonial powers.

But in order to dispel the quixotic reputation surrounding the initial plans for colonising Madagascar that had preceded Courten's own venture, the fledgeling company sought proposals 'by travellers and men of experience' who could 'truly inform' and attest the profitability of the enterprise.²²² It is probably against this backdrop that Captain Wedell, now employed by the Courten Association, would have recruited Hamond to compose a report that could cast Madagascar as both an ideal colonial settlement, and as a gateway between Europe and the trading ports of Asia. Boothby understood the task specified by the company to both himself and "that honest able person master Hamond" as that of delivering "further encouragement of the worthy adventurers and planters that shall thinke good to adventure their purses and persons in that right worthy and famous action."²²³ Hamond, having visited the island in 1630, was approached to write a pamphlet on Madagascar due to the authority that was to be gained from his status as an eyewitness and also due to his literary inclinations. In 1617, Hamond had composed the English translation of Ambroise Paré's groundbreaking 1551 surgical treatise of *Method of Treating Wounds Made by Arquebuses and other*

²²² Darrell refers to the commissioning of descriptions and promotional literature regarding Madagascar where "it so happened, that the late King and Councill were (by travellers and men of experience) truly informed thereof." See Ibid.

²²³ Boothby, *A briefe discovery*, sig. A2v--r.

Firearms, so that it could be used as a training manual for local students and apprentice surgeons.²²⁴

Hamond's description of Madagascar

The framework, arguments, and rhetorical modes -- or the "lens" -- which Hamond had to adopt in his promotional efforts were crucial, but by no means straightforward. This is most clearly seen in the inconsistencies and contradictions that would emerge when Hamond employs a dichotomous approach to his first Madagascar pamphlet *A Paradox. Prooving, That the Inhabitants of the Isle called Madagascar, or St. Lawrence . . . are the happiest People in the World*. The frontispiece of this pamphlet on Madagascar makes explicit the division of the pamphlet into two distinct parts: i) "a briefe and true description of that island," and ii) a rhetorically laden proof that "the inhabitants of the isle called Madagascar, or St. Laurence, (in temporall things) are the happiest people in the world."²²⁵ The distinction is clearly marked out within the design of the pamphlet, with a divisional title page for the paradox partitioning the latter "book" of Hamond's pamphlet (fig. 3.1). More importantly, this distinction is apparent in terms of content, style and purpose. As we will conclude later, both halves seek to describe the same object, the island of Madagascar and its people, by employing different modes to ends that are mutually exclusive.

²²⁴ Like Hamond, Ambroise Paré was a barber surgeon though the Frenchman's radical surgical techniques in the battlefield would elevate him to royal service in the latter half of his career. Previously, the dominant treatment of gunshot wounds involved cauterization, i.e. burning the injured sections of the body in order to prevent bleeding and infection. In an early example of a controlled trial, Paré treated two groups of patients, one with a cauterization method involving boiling oil and the other with a dressing of ointment containing turpentine, egg and herbal oils. This test provided conclusive results regarding the recovery enabled by the latter and the agony and inefficacy of the cauterization method.

²²⁵ Hamond, *A paradox*, frontispiece.

Though the main title is entirely taken up by the paradox, the pamphlet's long title, which also serves as a précis of the pamphlet, is devoted to outlining only the contents of the first section. The confusion in the front matter about what constitutes the main subject of the pamphlet would be indicative of a larger narratorial incongruity that characterised Hamond's rhetorical efforts.

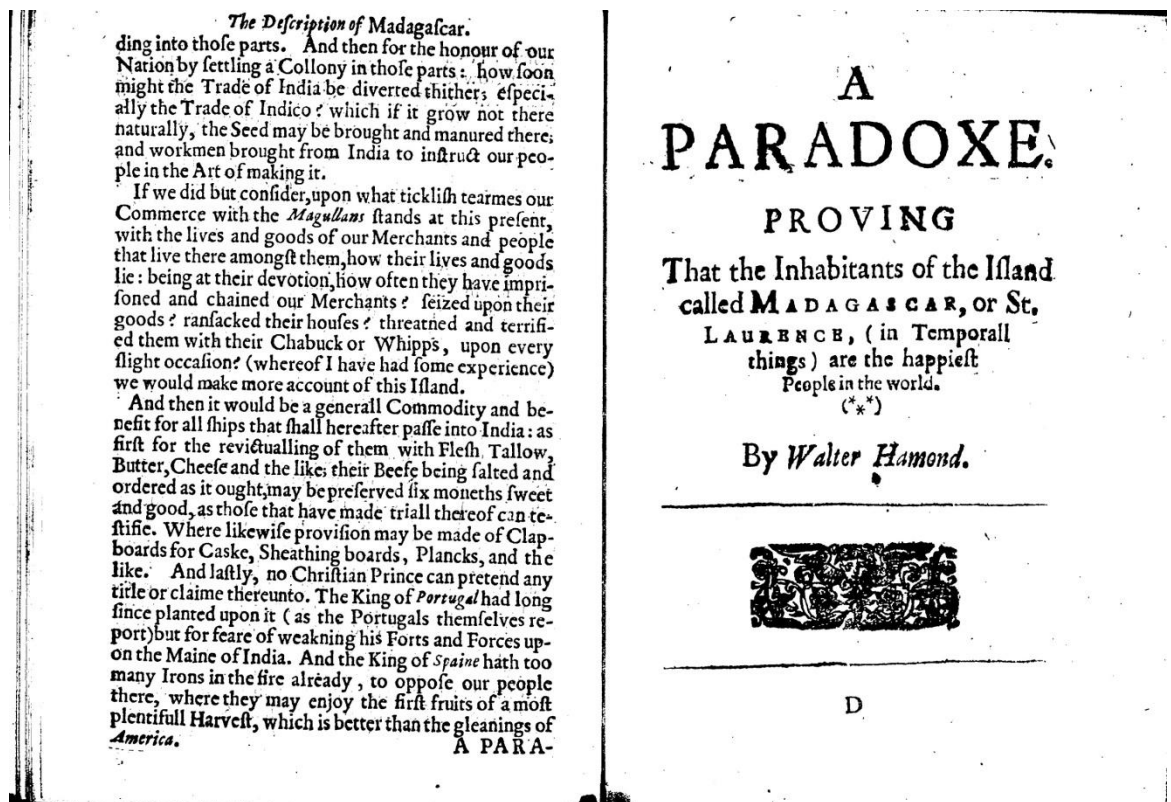


Fig. 3.1, Walter Hamond, *A Paradox Proving that the inhabitants of the isle called Madagascar, or St. Laurence, (in temporall things) are the happiest people in the world.* 1640, Divisional title page in printed pamphlet. The British Library, London. Available from: <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/> (accessed October 8, 2016).

In the first half, the ethnographically-oriented “description” of Madagascar, we find listed topics such as “the nature of the climate, and condition of the inhabitants, and their speciall affection to the English above other nations.”²²⁶

Also mentioned is its purpose: to provide the “most probable arguments of a

²²⁶ Ibid.

hopefull and fit plantation of a colony there, in respect of the fruitfulness of the soyle, the benignity of the ayre, and the relieving of our English ships, both to and from the East-Indies.”²²⁷ It is understandable that the contents of the synopsis in the frontispiece are entirely taken up by the “description” and its aims, rather than the “paradox,” as the former’s purpose and inventory of themes are most relevant to the interests of the intended audience whom the pamphlet was commissioned to address (fig 3.2).

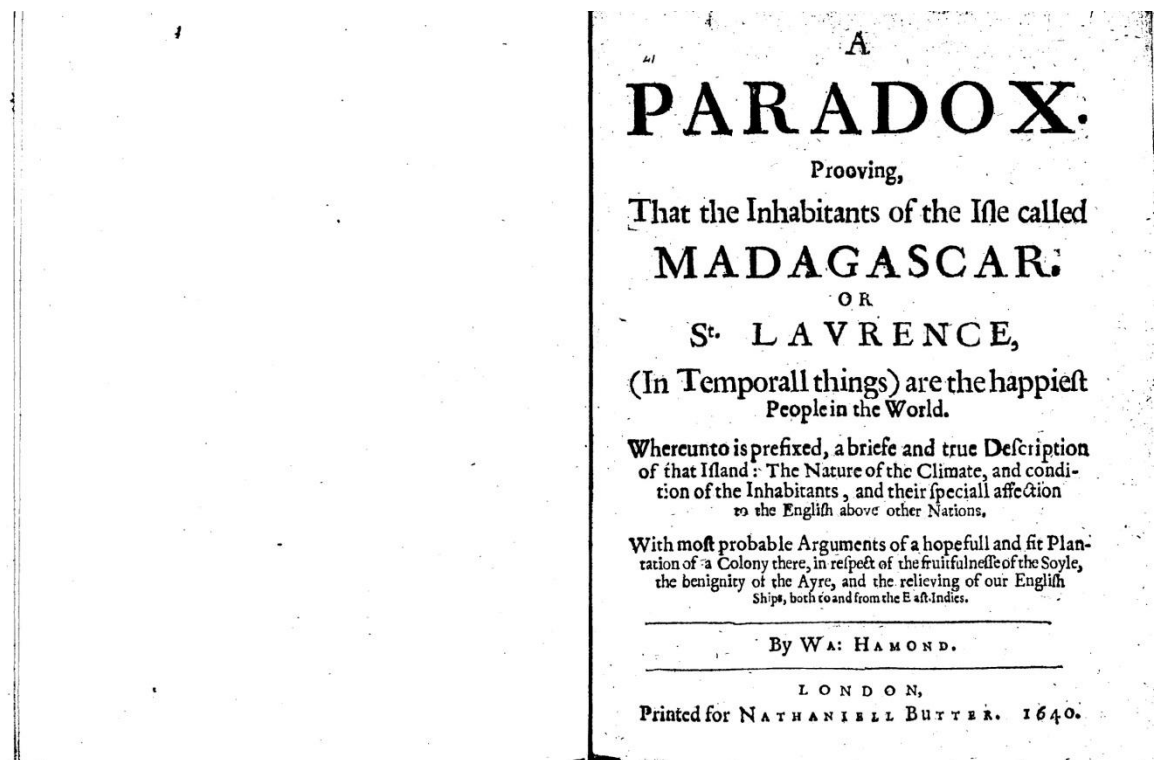


Fig. 3.2, Hamond, *A Paradox*, frontispiece.

In the description, Hamond posits Madagascar as a pristine island that does not need to be transformed by human effort or devices. The island is said to be ideal both for respite and settlement, suited to the purposes of travellers and planters alike. For voyagers from England who navigate the dangers of scarce provisions and the vast and heaving expanse of the Atlantic Ocean en route to Asia, the bay

²²⁷ Ibid.

of Augustine lying at the southwest of Madagascar offers relief with its “excellent harbours for shipping...where most commonly all the ships, bound for India

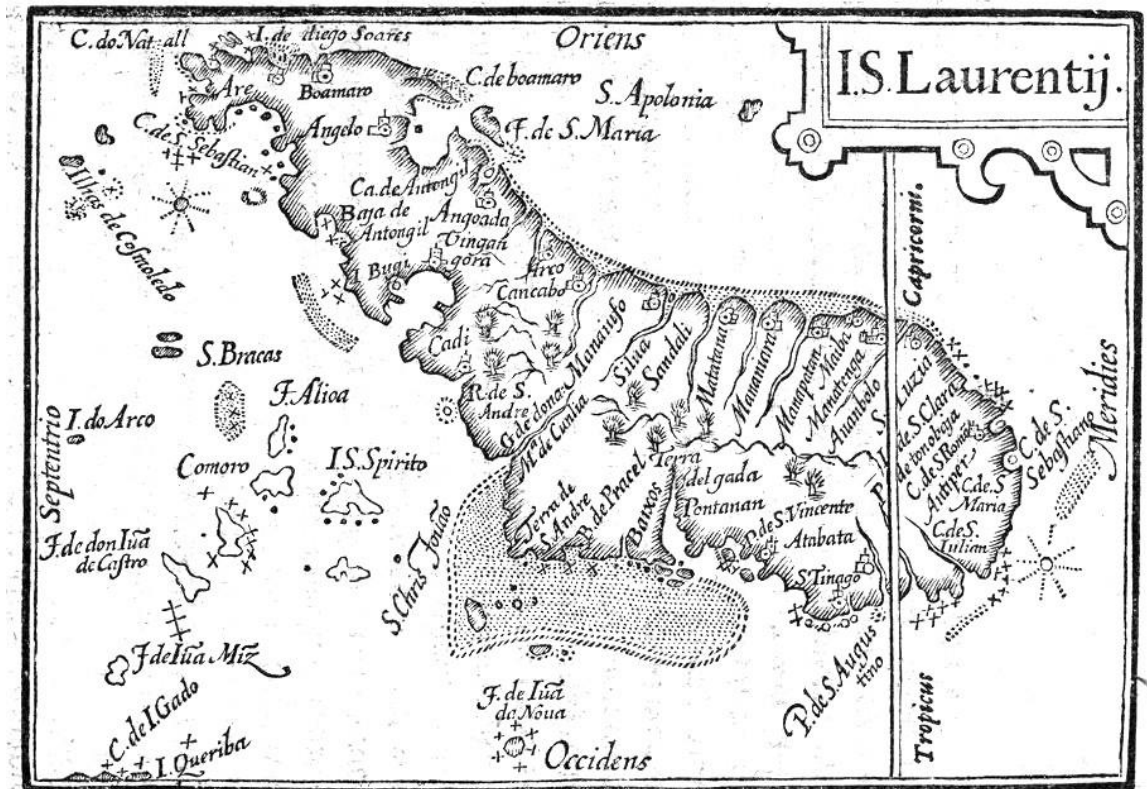


Fig. 3.3, *The Island of St. Lawrence*. 1598, Map in Early Printed Book. The British Library. From: *The Description of a Voyage Made By Certain Ships of Holland into the East Indies* (London, 1598) reproduced in Games, *The Web of Empire*, Fig. 6.2. As Games points out, this map “shows English access to information about Madagascar well before any interest in settlement there.” The bay of St. Augustine is marked in the bottom right corner (immediately leftwards of the Tropic of Capricorn) as *P. de S. Augustino*.

touch; making it their first Port to winter and refresh and cure their sicke men, the ayre being so good that in the space of 7. or 8. dayes (which is the time of their longest stay) they are perfectly recovered”²²⁸ (see fig.4 above). Even as he promotes Madagascar as an ideal resting stop for trading voyagers, Hamond prioritises the island’s capacities for plantation and settlement. As with the purportedly therapeutic air of Madagascar, Hamond’s description finds the island’s fecundity to be most interesting to potential investors.

²²⁸ Ibid., sig. Bv.

Unlike the case of More's *Utopia* or Bacon's *New Atlantis*, the utopian mastery by promotional writers such as Hamond did not emphasise mastery of material, technical or social arrangements. More's island dwellers learned "every single useful art of the Roman empire" making "themselves masters of all our useful inventions."²²⁹ Among the most highlighted "inventions" are the Utopians highly developed agricultural practices which serve as the basis of their prerogative to colonise the "unoccupied and uncultivated land" of their neighbours so that "by their policies the Utopians make the land yield an abundance for all, though previously it had seemed too barren even to support the natives."²³⁰ Bacon's utopian work too is concerned with overcoming "the Weaknesse of the Soil", a problematic that features in his *Sylva Sylvarum*, the work to which the *New Atlantis* is appended.²³¹ The epistemological obsessions of the New Atlantians have led to "Making rich composts for the earth", and the acceleration of the processes of "maturations", "putrefaction", "germination" and "clarifications".²³² In Salomon's House, the "orchards, and gardens, trees and Flowers" are by "art greater much then their Nature" and can be made to "come earlier or later than their seasons".²³³ This species of utopian mastery which seeks the "Acceleration of Germination," and the "Acceleration of Time in Maturations" would not have appealed to the potential colonial proprietors and stakeholders that Hamond's text addressed as it only meant extra expense effort and specialised labour that would have to be spent on agricultural experiments. Given the high expenses

²²⁹ More, *Utopia*, 39--40.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 54.

²³¹ Francis Bacon, *Sylva sylvarum: or A naturall historie In ten centuries* (London: Printed for William Rawley, 1627), 122.

²³² Bacon, "New Atlantis," 489.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 482.

already involved merely in getting shipping expeditions to distant islands, leave alone planting, investors would have been drawn in by more promising visions of plenitude. At the very least, Hamond allows them this benefit within the printed page. Here, Madagascar is an island in which “(w)oods abound with excellent Timber, trees of divers kinds, all unknowne to us...which is most to be admired, there is none that beareth not fruit serving for food for the Creatures, according to their severall kinds.”²³⁴ If “Art” is greater than “Nature” in *New Atlantis*, it is certainly not so in Hamond’s *A Paradox* where “Nature will not be exceeded, or out done by Art.”²³⁵

For Hamond, the fertility of Madagascar, “which though untill'd and unmanur'd, yeelds all necessaries for life, even to superfluity,” was to provide relief from the art of planting which was burdensome and laborious.²³⁶ Scarcity and frost were on the rise in Northern England in the seventeenth century. In Scotland, for instance, marginal lands such as marshes, bogs, muirs and dry lands were being taken up for cultivation.²³⁷ Previously unyielding, new agricultural techniques were introduced in order to attempt an increase in productivity. With advances made elsewhere in the continent and agriculture becoming an important area of exploration under the “New Science”, these methods would spread and develop during this period. They came to feature in works such as Walter Blith’s 1652 *The English improver improved or the survey of husbandry surveyed discovering*

²³⁴ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig.Bv

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ See Ian D. Whyte, "Rural Settlement 2. 1500-1770s," in *Oxford Companion to Scottish History* ed. Michael Lynch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 542---43. R. B. Outhwaite remarks that “cultivation was extended into forests and other marginal lands - especially in the north and the west - there was a veritable explosion of small holdings.” See R. B. Outhwaite, “Progress and Backwardness in English Agriculture, 1500-1650,” *Economic History Review*, 2nd series 39 (1986): 9.

the improueableness of all lands. In the decades prior to the publication of Blith's manual, trepidations about colonial investments increased given the financial loss, deaths and failure that accompanied early English colonies in America, including the famously short-lived "lost colony" of Roanoke (1587-90). Among the many factors that informed the uncertainty of investing in colonies was the fertility of the soil and the extent to which it would require labour and the provisions of supplies from abroad. Hamond anticipates and mitigates the potential fears of his readers about a colonial settlement at Madagascar by countering "what our Northerne Geoponicks labour for, by cultivating the earth, by planting and transplanting, by ingraffing and inoculating, groweth here naturally."²³⁸

Like Hamond, Walter Blith -- a landed officer and surveyor in the Cromwellian republic and a member of the Hartlib circle -- presents his horticultural endeavours and farming advice as a paradox:

The toying tenant to estate may rise,
The poor may be enricht, England supplyd
For twice so many people to provide;
Though this a Paradox may seem to you,
Experience and Reason proves it true;
By floating dry, and purging Boggy Land ²³⁹

Blith invokes the paradox to present the exceptional nature of his transformations, in which what might have been an apparently "absurd"

²³⁸ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. Bv

²³⁹ Walter Blith, *The English Improver, or a New survey of husbandry discovering to the kingdome that some land, both arrable and pasture, may be advanced double or treble; other land to a five or tenfold: and some to a twenty fold improvement, etc* (London: John Wright, 1653), 3.

proposition would “nevertheless prove to be well-founded or true.”²⁴⁰ This mirrors one of the possible appeals that the form of the paradox might have held for Hamond’s own promotional efforts. Prince Rupert’s attempt to colonise Madagascar had been abandoned prematurely when his mother, the Queen of Bohemia, sought to “putt such windmills out of the Prince’s head” so as to banish what she perceived as a Quixotic project.²⁴¹ It is, perhaps, this climate of skeptical attitudes that informs Hamond’s impulse to *prove* in the shape of a paradox, that an ostensibly far-fetched plan could be viable and even desirable.

The inventories and numbers that make up Hamond’s *description* of Madagascar, however, borrow from a different practice. Hamond begins his description by noting the various names of the island and other details like its latitude and the various dominions (“on the West side lye the Kingdoms of Sofala, Mosambique, and all the maine Land of Africa: On the East the Land of Mascaravos, or, as it is now stiled Mauritius, On the North, is the Island of Comero, and on the South, the maine Ocean”) that bound it.²⁴² A beneficial island geography is laid out with its eastern side pronounced “a Plaine and Champion Countrey” and its western face “more mountainous; full of Navigable River's, and excellent harbours for shipping; the principall whereof, best knowne to the English, is the Bay of Augustine.”²⁴³ The “fruitfulness of the soyle” that was indicated in the title page is elaborated and listed with “Woods abound with excellent Timber, trees of divers kinds,” of which “there is none that beareth not fruit serving for food for the

²⁴⁰ "Paradox, N. And Adj", *the Oxford English Dictionary Online* 2017.

²⁴¹ Everett Green, *Life of Elizabeth of Bohemia*, 325, quoted in Mary Frederica Sophia Hervey, *The life, correspondence & collections of Thomas Howard, earl of Arundel* (Brentwood: Oakley Press, 2008), 416.

²⁴² Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. Ar.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, sig. Bv.

Creatures, according to their severall kinds.”²⁴⁴ Among the fruits listed, Hamond mentions “a kinde of Palmito, called by the Portugals, Corodima[...], which is said to be admirable vertuous, and not unproperly, the Inhabitants feeding on it instead of Bread”.²⁴⁵ Here, Hamond can be seen as transcribing the biblical figure of “bread” onto his tropical geography so as to provide an appealing image of subsistence. The island’s supply of animals is as abundant as its plentiful plant life. Hamond notes, “The Plaines afford excellent Pasturage; as may appear by the largenesse of their Cattle. Their Rivers are plentifully stored with Fish, and Fowle of all kindes. Cattle they have in such abundance, that the Inhabitants seeme all of them to be Grasiers: they being their chiefest livelyhood.”²⁴⁶ This is followed by a report on the social and demographic arrangements of the island’s inhabitants with their habitations, diet, apparel, religion, naval and shipping prowess and their weaponry briefly enumerated.

Many of the details to be found in Hamond’s account are framed by a tradition of ethnographic reports, which were regularly gathered by colonial intelligencers. This project of description is most salient in documents such as the *Relaciones Geograficas* of the Spanish Indies compiled in the sixteenth century. As Howard F. Cline tells us, the *Relaciones* were “replies by local officials in Middle and South America and apparently the Philippines to a standard questionnaire developed by imperial bureaucrats in Madrid, making fifty broad queries” designed to “elicit basic information about diverse regions” within or neighbouring “overseas realms” of the Spanish empire.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., sig. Bv--r.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., sig. Br.

²⁴⁷ Howard F. Cline, “The Relaciones Geograficas of the Spanish Indies, 1577-1586,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 44, no. 3 (1964), 341.

These set of fifty questions were to to be completed by local officials on the order of Philip II and were initially compiled in 1577 by Juan Lopez de Velasco, the first to hold the office of “Cronista-Cosmografo” in the Council of the Indies.²⁴⁸ These queries begin with general questions about the origins of place names, languages spoken within a region and the spread of human settlements, physical terrain, climatic conditions, and the variety of plants and animals found within a particular area. They are followed by questions about the inhabitants’ political and demographic arrangements, their temperaments, health, capacity for navigation, religious affiliations and customs, and their arms. The comprehensive coverage of the physical geography and social activity enabled by these questions were well suited to the purpose of a colonial intelligence mission that sought to maintain or to extend the Spanish conquest and its spoils.²⁴⁹

The uses of plainness

Apart from the eventual reality of “unsettlement” that awaited the first wave of English colonists who landed on Madagascar, the elevated visions of Hamond faced a prior obstacle: the skepticism of his audience. Since the promotional pamphlet was written in the manner of a travel report, it was subject to the suspicions with which travelogues were commonly received in its time. Travelers and the revelations they offered were understood and assimilated in a variety of ways. If we go by the categories suggested by Peter Womack, the figure of the

²⁴⁸ The set of fifty questions were actually a paring down of a set of 200 queries put together by Velasco’s previous employer Juan de Ovando y Godoy who was appointed in 1569 as the “Visitor to the Council of Indies” in order to survey Spanish colonies overseas and overhaul the organisation of the Council of the Indies. These *Relaciones Geograficas*, initially developed for acquiring information of Spanish colonies in the Americas would eventually be employed by Philip II for gathering information about provinces within Spain.

²⁴⁹ An English translation of the Velasco’s questionnaire titled “Memorandum Of The Things To Which Responses Are To Be Made And Concerning How The Report Shall Be Prepared” can be found in Cline, “The Relaciones Geograficas,” 365--71.

travel writer could be understood as an assemblage of various contrarian archetypes. He (as was overwhelmingly the case) was at once a “bearer of strange news,” a “truth-teller,” a “liar,” a “servant of god,” and a “fool.”²⁵⁰ Reports would therefore be met with responses ranging from disbelief and irony, to amazement and mirth, disdain or even reverence in the form of wonder.

For Hamond’s pamphlet, the efficacy of affecting a “true description” was central to determining the extent to which his “most probable Arguments of a hopefull and fit Plantation of a Colony” would have any bearing.²⁵¹ In order to position himself as a “truth-teller,” Hamond undertakes what Kenneth Graham terms a “performance of conviction” in which he disavows rhetorical competence and instead occupies a topos of humility through which he sets “downe briefly, plainely, and truly, the description of this Island so farre as my weake capacity shall enable mee.”²⁵² Projectors such as Hamond and Boothby, writing in the cheaper, coarser and less-regarded format of the pamphlet, took recourse to humility to frame, and even temper their grandiose visions. As Joad Raymond tells us, pamphlets were often considered “small, insignificant, ephemeral, disposable, untrustworthy, unruly, noisy, deceitful, poorly printed, addictive, a waste of time.”²⁵³ Since the late sixteenth century, the pamphlet carried largely deprecatory connotations in the context of the libel laws in Elizabethan England.

²⁵⁰ Peter Womack, “The Writing of Travel,” in *A New Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. Michael Hattaway (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 528--40.

²⁵¹ Hamond, *A Paradox*, frontispiece.

²⁵² Kenneth John Emerson Graham, *The Performance of Conviction: Plainness and Rhetoric in the Early English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1994), 1--24; Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. A3r.

²⁵³ Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 10.

The purportedly crude space of the pamphlet made it more vulnerable to accusations of falsehood.

Hamond's assertion of plainness, truth, and lack of capacity for artifice was consonant with the contingencies that surrounded the emerging culture of printed news. The first English language newspapers were produced in the seventeenth century; what previously counted for "news" in the public realm (as opposed to news transmitted between individuals in the form of letters) was either conveyed orally or "by rituals that established credibility by their communal, public performance."²⁵⁴ Given the scepticism regarding "new tidings" and contradictory reports of the same event, David Randall argues that the "ensuing development of commercial and printed news, public, anonymous, and vulgar, required yet a new standard of credibility."²⁵⁵ One such mode of credibility was the declaration of "plainness" in language, as we can see in an instance of a military intelligencer who in 1622 declares that the style and purpose of writing news was to "send summons, not orations, and their owne necessity perswades the vanquished to yeeld, and not the victors Rhetoricke: but if it be plaine, plainnesse best sets forth truth, as this is."²⁵⁶ But while military news was under pressure to force the report of a probable victory, promotional pamphlets, such as the description in *A Paradox*, simultaneously acted as a reconnaissance report for a potential colony *and* as an advertisement demonstrating the efficacy of colonial

²⁵⁴ David Randall, *Credibility in Elizabethan and Early Stuart Military News* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 3. The earliest surviving English newspaper or "coranto" is the *The New Tydings Out of Italie Are Not Yet Come* (2 December 1620).

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ S. W., "The Appologie of the Illustrious Prince Ernestus, Earl of Mansfield" (1622), iii-iv, quoted in Randall, *Credibility in Military News*, 99.

settlement by idealising and exaggerating the strange wonders of that distant land.

Hamond's strategy to deal with these contrary pressures is to pre-empt suspicion while drawing attention to the wondrous possibilities that were to be encountered in Madagascar. He reports of "a Tree, which wee named the Flesh-tree; because being cut whilst it groweth, it bleedeth a certaine Sapp, or Liquor, like unto blood: the inward part thereof is soft and tender, even like musculous flesh".²⁵⁷ By enlisting this "bleeding-tree," Hamond echoes writers like Mandeville, who sought the attention of their readers through images of transmutation that featured various permutations of the animal, human and plant worlds such as for instance the existence of a human tribe with the head of dogs . Hamond too stokes wonder, but is quick to qualify that his claim is more credible than other similar claims found elsewhere by adding: "It might easily have transcended my believe, had I not seene it: and now reporting it I might bee thought to use a Travellers authority, were not many surviving in this Kingdome, to confirme it."²⁵⁸ In invoking his authority as first-hand witness, Hamond attempts to defend himself against the possible charge, characterised by a contemporary proverb, that a "traveler may lie with authority."²⁵⁹ Previously reserved for the tales of pilgrims, the proverb adapts itself to travel accounts of the New World, in which the distinction between hoax and sincerity often wore thin.²⁶⁰ Hamond is anxious to avoid the pejorative reputation of a traveler, exemplified in Shakespeare's *All's*

²⁵⁷ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. Br.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Anthony Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 133.

²⁶⁰ For citations of this phrase, see Morris Palmer Tilley, *Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), T476.

Well that Ends Well as “one that lies three-thirds, and uses a known truth to pass a thousand nothings.”²⁶¹ While the authority of the traveler would often invite skepticism, its avowal was a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for a descriptive account to be taken seriously. Having traveled to Madagascar, Hamond could provide the *oculis testis* or the eyewitness testimony for the Courtens’ colonial proposal, a testimony more authoritative than the secondary information gathered by an armchair compiler of overseas news. This imperative is important enough for Hamond to preface his pamphlet with a declaration of his expertise: “having beene there diverse times in the Honourable East India Companies Service: And once resident there Foure Moneths together. In which time I observed all such principall passages as fell within the Circle of my Condition, according to my ability.”²⁶² Plainness is argued for in the description since it is also the preferred register of the eyewitness testimony.

If Hamond’s description was solely to have fulfilled its explicitly-stated pragmatic aims of providing colonists with “true,” or at least the best available, information (such as the reports required from Velasco’s questionnaire) for negotiating the inhabitants and the terrain of the potential colony, it would not be nearly as univocal in its Edenic portrayal of Madagascar. But such efforts at truthful presentation would also run counter to the designs of promotional literature, which foster the lofty utopian imperative at the root of descriptions of potential colonies. Thus, it is possible to see the project of *description* encountered in colonial promotional literature as serving two contradictory functions: that of *possessing* and *being possessed*. Pamphlets such as Hamond’s *Paradox* were to

²⁶¹ William Shakespeare, *The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare, Volume 1*, ed. George Steevens (Philadelphia: M’Carty & Davis, 1824), 239.

²⁶² Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. A3r--Av.

provide voyagers and colonists with practical advice of taking possession of the island; at the same time, they had to captivate or *possess* potential investors, patrons and authorities with idealised accounts of the island's natural wealth so that crews, funds, and patents could be recruited. In order to fulfil his commissioners' brief, Hamond had to contrive a conjunction between taking possession (knowledge as instrumental to ownership) and being possessed (persuaded by the felicity of the rhetoric). In performing this task, Hamond employs different approaches for the description and the paradox.

Hamond lays out the description of Madagascar and its inhabitants to offer the “most probable Arguments of a hopefull and fit Plantation of a Colony there, in respect of the fruitfulness of the Soyle, the benignity of the Ayre, and the relieving of our English Ships, both to and from the East-Indies”.²⁶³ These reasons and advantages of Madagascar as a trade or colonial settlement focus on: (i) exploiting the intrinsic merits of the island, (ii) the feasibility of the investment compared to the risks presented by other colonial and trading hubs, and (iii) the absence of rivalry and conflict with other colonial powers. Hamond is unequivocal when he confirms the island's merits by stating: “the commodities and riches of this Island, (which every man is willing to hearken after) I may truly affirme, that for wealth and riches, no Island in the world can be preferred before it” and lists the rarities to be found within, of “Gold, Silver, Pearle, and precious Jems, questionlesse the Island is plentifully stored with them. And of Iron there is abundance.”²⁶⁴ More importantly, he assuages his readers' anxieties by

²⁶³ Hamond, *A Paradox*, frontispiece.

²⁶⁴ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. B4v. Hamond speaks of the presence of gold despite not having seen any evidence. A similar report is provided by Boothby. Just like the Spaniards hunt for gold in the Americas, there seems to be a compulsion to report on the presence of gold as that would guarantee the greatest interest. It is possible that Hamond was merely repeating geographical

persuading them that the settlers incursions will not have to suffer hostilities from the island's inhabitants as they are "a People with whom for the space of 30 or 40. years, wee have had Commerce: and are therefore acquainted with our civill customs, and peaceable demeanours: and being now no strangers unto us, are willing to put themselves under our protection."²⁶⁵ This discounting of conflict with the island's inhabitants, asserted in terms of a friendship between two communities (or conversely in terms of their ineffectual weaponry) will be elaborated in a more grandiose manner in the paradox.

In terms of the advantages of Madagascar vis-a-vis other colonies and trading factories, the "most plentiful harvest" of the island's offerings are posited as "better than the gleanings of America" or India.²⁶⁶ Hamond pursues the comparison with India in some detail, listing the shorter journey, the lower cost of procuring commodities, and the greater political capital that is to be had by the English in Madagascar. Hamond's enticing proposition is for "the Trade of India be diverted" to the island as "What abundance of treasure is yeerely transported out of Europe into India only for leavs and blossoms of trees; I mean for Indico and cloth of Cotton-Wooll, whereof the first (for ought I know) may grow there already; or if not, it may easily be brought thether."²⁶⁷ Additionally, the islanders' friendly and non-antagonistic nature presents a contrast to the EIC's fraught relations with the Mughals in India where:

legends about the region in circulation before he published his pamphlet. In 1600, Hakluyt mentions the African port of Cefala, "accounted to be the place where the noble and wise king Salomon did fetch his gold". Hakluyt references this legend in his discussion of the Portuguese discovery of Madagascar and locates Cefala as being westwards from the Iland of S. Laurence. See Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, And Discoveries Of The English Nation*, ed. Edmund Goldsmid, vol. 13, America, part II (Edinburgh: printed for E. and G. Goldsmid), 33.

²⁶⁵ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. B4r.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., sig. Dv.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., n.p.

If we did but consider, upon what ticklish tearmes our Commerce with the Magullans stands at this present, with the lives and goods of our Merchants and people that live there amongst them, how their lives and goods lie: being at their devotion, how often they have imprisoned and chained our Merchants? seized upon their goods? ransacked their houses? threatened and terrified them with their Chabuck or Whipps, upon every slight occasion? (whereof I have had some experience) we would make more account of this Island.²⁶⁸

Lest Hamond's grand proposal of replacing the ports of India with Madagascar were to not be taken seriously, he also positions the island as a conduit to India where "it would be a generall Commodity and benefit for all ships that shall hereafter passe into India: as first for the revictualling of them with Flesh Tallow, Butter, Cheese and the like."²⁶⁹ Finally, Hamond favours the relative anonymity of the island where the severe impediments and risks that are posed by the designs of other colonial powers are absent. In Madagascar, he argues, "no Christian Prince can pretend any title or claime thereunto. The King of Portugal had long since planted upon it (as the Portugals themselves report) but for feare of weakning his Forts and Forces upon the Maine of India. And the King of Spaine hath too many Irons in the fire already."²⁷⁰ As concise and inviting as these arguments might have seemed, Hamond wanted to make a deeper impression

²⁶⁸ Ibid., sig.Dv. Hamond is probably referring to the various frustrations recorded by EIC officials while attempting to establish trade in Surat. Sir Thomas Roe's account of his long-winded attempts to gain an audience with the emperor Jahangir was a widely read instance of early English complaints with the Mughal administration. Roe details the divergence between the interests of the local governor of Surat - who was more disposed towards the Portuguese and constantly seeking occasions to appropriate bribes from the EIC traders - and Jahangir who was more welcoming of the English ambassador's proposals. Roe disembarks in Surat on September 19, 1615 with the intention of meeting the emperor first but the former's journey to the Mughal court is constantly interrupted due to differences with the governor of Surat and he is only able to attend Jahangir's Durbar on January 11, 1616. See Thomas Roe, *The embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the court of the Great Mogul, 1615-1619, as narrated in his journal and correspondence*, ed. William Foster (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1899), 41-108. A digitised version of this book is available at: <https://archive.org/details/embassysirthoma00fostgoog>.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

with his presentation of the island colony, not wanting his promotional endeavour to end with mere description.

Two sides of the same pamphlet: Madagascar as a paradox

In order to boost the persuasive capacity of his colonial promotion, Hamond combines two modes of presentation: (i) a description intended to serve as guidance for a plantation at Madagascar wherein the various commodities that can be harvested on the island are listed; (ii) composing a paradox “proving, that the Inhabitants of the Isle called Madagascar are the happiest People in the World.”²⁷¹ Hamond did not limit himself to the description because he was concerned not merely with the substance of arguments, but also with the larger aims of the Aristotelian theory of rhetoric which Angus Gowland characterises as “a practice geared towards the production of conviction (*pistis*) in an audience, achieved by the quality of persuasiveness in argument.”²⁷² Hamond did not feel that the description was sufficient for fulfilling the rhetorical objectives of his pamphlet. Hamond’s need to accompany his description of Madagascar with a paradox may be better understood when viewed through the prism of Aristotelian rhetoric. As Gowland relates, Classical and Renaissance writers, many of whom worked within an Aristotelian epistemological framework, were “generally in agreement that there is little to be gained from applying rhetorical argumentative methods to the domain of scientific investigation, since the ends of science and rhetoric are different (science instructs, whereas rhetoric persuades) and the nature of the knowledge to which they relate is distinct.”²⁷³ Ultimately, what

²⁷¹ Ibid., frontispiece.

²⁷² Angus Gowland, “Ancient and Renaissance rhetoric and the history of concepts,” *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought* 6 (2002), 68.

²⁷³ Ibid., 69.

Daniel Carey notes of templates used for travel writing like Robert Boyle's 1666 *General Heads For a Natural History of a Countrey, Great or Small* also applies to Hamond's description, in that these guides strived to fulfill "the elusive goal of disciplining travel, making it useful and coherent in order to advance the cause of knowledge and the exploitation of nature."²⁷⁴ The "description" derived from a practice of guidance issued to travelers so that they could provide comprehensive reports on their journeys. This gathering of intelligence - that could also take the form of "inquiries" or "interrogatories" or "directions" - was closely allied to the "science" of natural history and the projects of the "new science."²⁷⁵

In his treatment of the ideology of rhetoric in the Renaissance, Gowland relates the distinction that was made between "the objects of scientific investigation" - a status to which Hamond's description of Madagascar aspires - and "the problems for which rhetoric is appropriate or useful."²⁷⁶ The issues that belong to the realm of rhetoric are "those about which we deliberate," which "admit of solutions that are not certain, but only probable, or which may command assent through plausibility."²⁷⁷ As Boothby mentions in his own promotional work, Hamond's commission to promote the island, was to deliver "further encouragement of the worthy adventurers and planters that shall thinke good to adventure their purses

²⁷⁴ Daniel Carey, "Inquiries, Heads, and Directions: Orienting Early Modern Travel" in *Travel Narratives, the New Science, and Literary Discourse, 1569-1750*, ed. Judy A. Hayden (London: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2013), 26.

²⁷⁵ See Judy A. Hayden, "Intersections and Cross-Fertilization" in *Travel Narratives, the New Science, and Literary Discourse, 1569-1750*, ed. Judy A. Hayden (London: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2013), 8. Michael McKeon has posited that "the seventeenth century marks a critical stage of transition" for the travel narrative, as it moved from a pilgrimage narrative with its attention on salvation to a secular narrative in "alliance with the new philosophy." Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 2002), 101.

²⁷⁶ Gowland, "Ancient and Renaissance rhetoric," 70.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

and persons in that right worthy and famous action”.²⁷⁸ As Gowland observes, the domain of *philosophia practica* consisted of topics and themes which were “practical, particularistic and by nature imprecise, rather than speculative, scientific, or universalist”, whose reasoning had to be “supplemented by rhetoric in order to make one’s argument truly effective.”²⁷⁹

The requirements of a *philosophia practica* could be extended to the practice of colonial promotion whose tasks fit squarely within the machinations of rhetoric. Hamond must have felt that what he sought to demonstrate in the description by reasoning, he must supplement with the paradox. Colonial promotion required eloquence as it was an advertorial undertaking. Since rhetoric was geared towards making plausible that which was by nature uncertain, early modern rhetorical education laid an emphasis on enabling one “to prove opposites or argue both sides of a case.”²⁸⁰ This capacity to argue for or against a position, a rhetorician’s technical commitment “to the potential reversibility of any proposition,” is epitomised in the literary genre of the paradox.²⁸¹ The paradox was an early modern rhetorical staple which did not limit itself to philosophical or logical riddles but could also be a “statement or tenet contrary to received opinion”

²⁷⁸ Boothby, *A briefe discovery*, 2--3.

²⁷⁹ Gowland, “Ancient and Renaissance rhetoric,” 70.

²⁸⁰ Ibid. Gowland provides the following elaboration on the necessity for the method of *in utramque partem* (to argue in both directions): “For, as the Stoic Zeno suggests, if there are not two sides to the question then there can be no need to deliberate on it, and it would be possible simply to demonstrate conclusively that one side is right or true. It is impossible, therefore, to have two valid arguments from true premises to opposite conclusions. This important postulate, originating in the *dissoi logoi* (two-fold arguments) of the sophists, gives rise in the Roman rhetorical tradition to the argument in *utramque partem*, a technique which becomes one of the standard procedures in an early modern rhetorical education.” Ann Vasaly summarises the ends of training to speak or write *in utramque partem* as “designed to anticipate the arguments of one’s opponent, and of the existence of commonplaces providing negative and positive positions on the same subject”. See Ann Vasaly, *Representations: Images of the World in Ciceronian Oratory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 187.

²⁸¹ Gowland, “Ancient and Renaissance rhetoric,” 70.

(though not necessarily contrary to reason) that is put forth eloquently.²⁸² If the abundance of nature had left little place for art in Madagascar, so it was with Hamond's explicitly-stated stance about his own writing, in which rude observation claimed to take on the dimensions of a truthful presentation that occluded rhetoric's artifice. This explicit stand was of course a rhetorical move in itself, one which contradicted his paradox which occupies the latter and longer half of Hamond's pamphlet.

Hamond prefaces his pamphlet by stating that his Description acts as a "preparative" to his Paradox.²⁸³ There is little by way of new information in the paradox, but the details that make up Hamond's description of Madagascar undergo a complete transformation in this latter and dominant half of the pamphlet. It is interesting to note how the treatment of the island's inhabitants changes when the description is incorporated into the structure of the paradox. The very same information furnishes two very different texts, presenting, as we will see, two very different kinds of arguments. While the description initially characterises Madagascar's inhabitants with the Latin epithet "*Terra bona, gens mala*" as they are deemed to be "a sluggish and slothful people, they will neither plant, nor sowe, yet live plentifully by the fat of the Soil," the paradox describes an island community of noble savages humble in their ways and means, possessing an undefiled innocence whose "nakednesse, poverty and simplicity" approached "nearest to the greatest perfection of Mankind."²⁸⁴

²⁸² "paradox, n. and adj." "Paradox, N. And Adj", *the Oxford English Dictionary Online* 2017. Web. 19 June 2015.

²⁸³ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig.A3r

²⁸⁴ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig.Bv; *Ibid.*, sig.D3v.

It should be qualified that Hamond is not entirely critical while reporting on the island's inhabitants in the description as it is not in his best interests to do so. As Hamond notes, "two discouragements which may dissuade the transporting of a Colony hither: the condition of the Natives; and the Passage: but they are a People with whom for the space of 30 or 40. years, wee have had Commerce."²⁸⁵ To present the potential colony in as lucrative light as possible, Hamond paints a cooperative picture of the natives as "Barbarisme civilized: we beyond expectation, found them very affable, courteous, and just in their dealings, and lived among them about four moneths, with that familiarity and friendship, as if we had beene all of one Nation, and their Countrey had beene our owne."²⁸⁶ In order to allay anxieties regarding the possible insubordination of the natives, Hamond portrays them as easily disarmed in both combat and in cunning. He shows their weaponry to be benign and cumbersome. Of their weapons, he says, "Bowes and Arrows they know not: and as for Gunnes, the report of a Musquet, will make an hundred of them flee."²⁸⁷ Hamond also reports a trading encounter between the English seamen and the islanders where the latter are dispossessed of their weaponry: "wee bought up most of their Lances and Darts, for a few Beads; and so utterly disarmed them: for although the Men doe nothing else but make Darts; yet for want of Tools they cannot make one in 10. dayes: so that for a months space we could not see 20 Darts amongst them."²⁸⁸ He recommends a determined stance while negotiating with the natives, citing an incident where his hosts attempt to maintain their trade exclusively (withholding access to neighbouring tribes) and "cunningly seeke to perswade us from trading with them; making signes that they were his, and our enemies, Man-eaters, and the

²⁸⁵ Ibid., n.p.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., sig.B2v

²⁸⁷ Ibid., sig.B3v

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

like: but when he saw our resolution to goe over the River unto them: (for they durst not come without his permission,) then would hee make the price himselfe, and give them what hee listed.”²⁸⁹ The inhabitants, portrayed as sluggish, cunning and impotent in the description, are in the Paradox transformed into a people entirely free of acquisitiveness as they live in the wisdom “that Nature is contented with a little, and that it is not those outward things, which make the Possessour, any thing the better. They know that the inordinate desire of riches is the Root of all mischief.”²⁹⁰ Their lack of weapons is now celebrated; Hamond praises them as they “have no other Armour than their own valour; nor Forts, but fortitude and courage.”²⁹¹

The utopian dimensions of Hamond’s Paradox are most clear in his characterisation of the people of Madagascar as “the happiest people in the world.”²⁹² Hamond makes sure to qualify that his buoyant ethnography is only valid for the “temporal” aspects of the life of Madagascar’s coastal inhabitants. He disapproves of their sacral practices, calling them “miserable Idolators” who had in “every one of their Townes, or Stations, where they lived, certaine Images, rudely carved, sprinkled over with blood and fat, which we judged to be offered to the Idoll, when they killed a beast.”²⁹³ If the spiritual customs of Madagascar’s inhabitants fail to approach “the light of reason”, Hamond seeks to demonstrate that their earthly pursuits “which are supposed to consist in their Nakednesse,

²⁸⁹ Ibid., sig.B3r

²⁹⁰ Ibid., sig.Ev--r

²⁹¹ Ibid., sig.F3v

²⁹² Ibid., sig.D2r

²⁹³ Ibid., n.p.

Poverty, and Simplicity” are constitutive of their happiness.²⁹⁴ He fears that his audience might take these qualities to be “defects” in their material lifestyle, and launches the Paradox as a defence of these virtues. His defence poses the following question: “Will you take upon you to preferre this poore, naked, and simple Ignorant people before the rich Gallant, understanding men of Europe. These are naked, wee are cloathed. These are poore and miserable, wee are rich and wealthy. These are simple Innocents, we have hearing and Experience of many things, wherein they are altogether ignorant.”²⁹⁵ For each of the themes that Hamond delineates - be it their nakedness, poverty or simplicity - he contrasts the contentment of the islanders with the excesses of the culture of his imagined interlocutors -- “the rich Gallant, understanding men of Europe.”²⁹⁶

Hamond attributes the European preoccupation with attire -- “the raggess of Dissimulation” -- with a need to “cover our soares and deformities, or like Masking sutes wherein wee act, not what wee are, but what wee seeme to be.”²⁹⁷ On the other hand, Madagascar’s naked inhabitants are, because of their nakedness, “happy, as approaching nearest to the greatest perfection of Mankind. For Adam in the state of Innocency was Naked, Sinne and Apparell entred both together.”²⁹⁸ In More’s *Utopia*, the denizens in their simple cotton habits mock the ostentatious furs worn by visiting dignitaries. *A paradox’s* attitude towards the English social fixation on attire takes this criticism further where “the effects

²⁹⁴ Ibid., sig.D3v. Hamond contrasts the islanders’ worship of idols unfavourably even against Islamic practices which are viewed more in line with Christianity as they approach what Hamond considers religious or theistic belief. Hamond goes on to observe that some of the islanders’ customs resemble religion going onto list the ritual practices like “circumcision, and abstinence from Swines flesh” that they might have borrowed from the “Mahometisme” given “their neere neighbour-hood with the Moores.” See Ibid., n.p.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., sig.D2r--D3v

²⁹⁶ Ibid., sig.D2r

²⁹⁷ Ibid., n.p; Ibid., sig.D3v

²⁹⁸ Ibid., sig.D3v

of this monstrous pride in Apparrell” is derided as demand for it have “growne to that excesse,” in which “the soyle of a whole Lordship, is scarce sufficient to cloath vs,” culminating in “the Ruine of many noble Families, the decay of Hospitality, the ushering in of Oppression, Bribery, and Extortion, Theft, Murder, Cousening and deceit, and in the end Beggery, or which is worse, a death with Ignominie.”²⁹⁹ The natives are also projected as simple given the state of their houses that are “but simple Sheddes,” their diet that is “grosse and ill cooked,” and their drink that is “water simply which is common to them and their Beasts alike.”³⁰⁰ They are ignorant “of many Sciences, wherein the well beeing of a Commonwealth doth consist; as the Art of Navigation.”³⁰¹ Once again, Hamond lays out his defence of “simplicity” by comparing the social distress inherent in the weighty property relations of the Europeans. Unlike the latter, the islanders “feare not the oppression of a covetous Landlord, nor the danger of a crackt title, his quarters rackt rent, rends not his sleepe, nor takes he care for the renewing of his old Lease.”³⁰² In contrast to the anxieties produced by established settlements - “what are our Houses, but so many strong Prisons, wherein the Owner lyes bound in severall actions of Debt” - Hamond praises Madagascar’s inhabitants for their litheness in attitudes towards property where even “upon a suddaine, suspecting us as Enemies, in the space of halfe an houre, they have planted and removed their dwellings.”³⁰³

Hamond follows a similar line of argument in dealing with the excesses caused by the European penchant for riches and knowledge, as he admires the capacity of

²⁹⁹Ibid., n.p.--sig.Ev

³⁰⁰ Ibid., sig.E3r

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Ibid., n.p.

³⁰³ Ibid., n.p.

the islanders to subsist within the limits of their material consumption and technical mastery of the world. He approaches the opposition between poverty and riches through a witticism which inverts the utopian motif of the golden age. The Europeans are said to inhabit an epoch that “may be truly call'd the Age of Gold/ For it both honour, love, and Friends are sold.”³⁰⁴ While the English live in an golden age which is so-called for “the Estimation, or predomination that Gold had in the Hearts of men,” the islanders live in that other golden age “much celebrated by ancient Writers,” where they are a Happy people unto whom the desire of Gold hath not yet arrived.”³⁰⁵ The islanders “doe at this present” enjoy the “happy age” of antiquity where “Love and Concord flourished, then Rapine, Theft, Extortion and Oppression were not knowne, which happy Age.”³⁰⁶ In delineating two very different attitudes towards gold, he invites another parallel to More's *Utopia*. The islanders' views of gold complement both in tenor and theme the Utopians' stance towards the precious metal. Hamond's employment of gold is in the context of a larger comparative discourse on attitudes towards riches where, true to the endeavour of the paradox, he demonstrates that the limited needs of the islanders betray an inner richness while the endless hankering of the Europeans suggests a perpetual state of poverty. The islanders, he notes, “want no necessary thing for the use of this present life, I hope there is no man that will judge them poore, but will pronounce us poore, who are always complaining of want, and them rich, which in their imagined pouerty expresse no token of discontent.”³⁰⁷

³⁰⁴ Ibid., sig.E2v

³⁰⁵ Ibid., sig.E2v; Ibid., sig.Er

³⁰⁶ Ibid., sig.E2v

³⁰⁷ Ibid., sig.Ev

There are strong parallels to be drawn between Hamond's utopian conception of happiness, of a community which thrives on its self-sufficiency by keeping their needs in harmony with nature, and Aristotle's presentation of "happiness" in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Where the islanders "respecteth another" "for his inward vertue, and naturall Endowmens," practicing virtue whether it is courage in the use of arms, or moderation in their diet and other material pursuits, the Europeans tend towards the excesses of prodigality, vanity, and envy as a result of their temporal practices.³⁰⁸ While the practice of virtue plays a role in Aristotle's discussion of happiness, it is by no means entirely constitutive of it. According to Aristotle, the nature of happiness and virtue are similar in that we can desire each for their own sake but the two diverge when they are brought in relation to each other. Where the practice of virtue, can be pursued for its own sake or can also be pursued for the sake of happiness, happiness cannot be pursued for any other end than its own sake. Contained within the *Ethics* is the following passage:

Happiness seems to be most like this, since it we always choose because of itself and never because of something else. But honor, pleasure, understanding, and every virtue, though we do choose them because of themselves as well (since if they had no further consequences, we would still take each of them), we also choose for the sake of happiness, supposing that because of them we shall be happy. Happiness, on the other hand, no one chooses for the sake of these things or because of anything else in general.³⁰⁹

As Ronna Burger points out, one of the important turns Aristotle's contends with in his inquiry into happiness is "the debate over the inclusive versus exclusive conception of happiness."³¹⁰ Given his assertion that "Happiness, on the other hand, no one chooses for the sake of these things or because of anything else in

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. and ed. C D C Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2014), 1097a, 37--1097b, 5.

³¹⁰ Ronna Burger, *Aristotle's Dialogue with Socrates: On the "Nicomachean Ethics"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 34.

general”, Aristotle views happiness as a “complete good” that is “self-sufficient”, and “on its own, makes a life choice-worthy and lacking in nothing”.³¹¹ This self-sufficient conception of happiness is opposed to an inclusive notion of happiness where the greater the number of goods possessed by a person, the greater his happiness is likely to be. The Greek philosopher contrasts these notions by reasoning that happiness “is the most choiceworthy of all things, when not counted among them—for if it is counted among them, it clearly would be more choiceworthy with the addition of the least of goods. For what is added would bring about a superabundance of goods, and of goods, the greater one is always more choiceworthy”³¹²

Opposed to the glut that is to result from or is necessary to an inclusive notion, Aristotle understands the need to conceive it in terms of exclusion, as a capacity which does not need to *include* any other thing to increase its efficacy. At this instance of the text, he concludes that happiness “is apparently something complete and self-sufficient, since it is the end of what is doable in action”.³¹³ As Burger explains, “In the finality ascribed to it, happiness would be that which puts an end to one desire for the sake of another; in its self-sufficiency, it would put an end to the possibility that life could always be better with some other good added to it. The issue in the one case concerns the relation of means and end, in the other the relation of part and whole, but in both the demand for some kind of closure that would preclude an endless series.”³¹⁴ It is the excessive culture of consumption with its propensity towards an endless series of wants that Hamond

³¹¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1097b, 6--14.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 1097b, 16--19.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 1097b, 19--20

³¹⁴ Burger, *Aristotle's Dialogue with Socrates*, 29.

denounces in his critique of Europe's "gallant" men as he celebrates the contentment inherent in the islanders' "Nakedness, Poverty, and Simplicity."³¹⁵

Though Hamond's Paradox, with its utopian conceit of happiness, functions as a rhetorical overture and an eloquent foil to the Description's brief recounting, it seems at first glance a strange choice for a colonial promotional text. It is not entirely clear how the paradox -- a genre that was commonly home to the aspirations and dabbling of university wits or satirists with ironic titles such as "A paradoxe, prouing by reason and example, that baldnesse is much better than bushie haire" or "The mirrour of madnes, or a paradoxe maintayning madnes to be most excellent" -- would promote the advantages of a potential colony or trade settlement to investors and patrons.³¹⁶ Here, the etymology of the paradox -- beyond ("para") / opinion ("doxon") -- can possibly suggest the reasons for which Hamond might have recruited the paradox for promotional ends. Rosalie Colie outlines the rhetorical paradox as a "formal defense, organised along the lines of traditional *encomia*, of an unexpected, unworthy, or indefensible subject" and further identifies a subset where the paradox was employed for "the defense of a proposition officially disapproved in public opinion".³¹⁷

³¹⁵ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. D2r--D3v

³¹⁶ See James Sandford, *Mirrour of madnes. Paradoxe maintayning madnes to be most excellent* (London, 1576); Abraham Fleming, *A paradoxe, prouing by reason and example, that baldnesse is much better than bushie haire* (London, 1579). The genre can be traced to the development of the mock-encomia that goes back as far back as those written by Claudian in the 4th century. Around the same time, Synesius of Cyrene would write *Praise of Baldness* which would become a popular item of circulation during the Renaissance. See Robert S. Miola, "Comedy and the comic," in *The Classical Tradition*, eds. Anthony Grafton, Glenn W Most and Salvatore Settis (London: Harvard University Press, 2010), 217-221.

³¹⁷ Rosalie L. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 3--4.

In his *The Garden of Eloquence* (1593), Henry Peacham foregrounds the unorthodox nature of the paradox by defining it as “a forme of speech by which the Orator affirmeth something to be true, by saying he would not haue beleueed it, or that it is so straunge, so great, or so wonderfull, that it may appeare to be incredible”, going onto make a recommendation that the form is “to be vsed, when the thing which is to be taught is new, straunge, incredible, and repugnant to the opinion of the hearer.”³¹⁸ It is only fitting then that Peacham advises that the use of the figure of the paradox “is well resembled in two kindes of men, that is, in old men and travellers” with the traveller, those “Ambassadors of farre places” using the figure for “the frute of Geographie”.³¹⁹ Hamond used the paradox to report on the farre place of Madagascar both because it was far and because the audience were reluctant to accept that the island was ideally placed for an English settlement.

‘This pernicious and cruell engine’: Hamond’s naive discourse on the noble and atavistic valour of natives

The project of planting a colony in Madagascar faced stiff resistance from the East India Company, with travellers warning against the hostile nature of the island’s inhabitants. John Darell would recall how Hamond’s patron “Mr. Courten was often molested with sundry frivolous complaints, and diuers prejudiciall, and vexatious informations at Councel-board before this Parliament, as when the Plantations of Mauritius and Madagascar were prevented.”³²⁰ The reasons for injunctions to be issued against Madagascar in the context of trade and

³¹⁸ Henry Peacham, *The garden of eloquence conteining the most excellent ornaments, exornations, lightes, flowers, and formes of speech* (London: Printed for H Jackson, 1593) 112--3.

³¹⁹ Peacham, *The garden of eloquence*, 113.

³²⁰ Darell, *Strange News from th’Indies*, 11.

settlement were those various incidents in which trading parties lost lives either as a result of non navigable waters or the deprivations that awaited explorers once they landed on the island and also the hostilities exchanged with the communities that resided around Augustine Bay.

In 1602, Dutch traders left a stone inscription at the Bay commemorating the loss of two hundred lives while Cornelius Van Houtman - a Dutch explorer who would later be ruthless in his dealings with the Malagasy - would lose more than a hundred members of his crew in his first visit to the bay. Houtman would term Madagascar *Coeimeterium Batovarum*, “the graveyard of the Dutch.”³²¹ In 1609, the ship of the captain Richard Rowles was separated from the main East India fleet. One merchant and two other crew members were killed by natives living near Augustine Bay. Rowles fled towards the Comores only to have strong winds pull his vessel back the northwest coast of Madagascar. The local ruler of the area invited him ashore but the encounter escalated into conflict and ended in bloodshed.³²² In 1637, Thomas Roe confirmed the fears of Elizabeth, the queen of Bohemia, regarding her son Rupert’s attempt to plant a colony in Madagascar by reporting that a “blunt merchant called to deliver his opinion, said it was a gallant design, but such as wherein he would be loth to venture his younger son.”³²³

³²¹ Mervyn Brown, *Madagascar rediscovered: a history from early times to independence* (North Haven: Archon books, 1979), 37.

³²² See Brown, *Madagascar Rediscovered*, 37--38. According to Brown’s narration, the hostile encounter began with Rowles accepting the invitation to come ashore along with five of his crew members. The local inhabitants would then hold Rowles and his five crew members prisoners while they pursued Rowle’s vessels with canoes. Samuel Bradshaw assumed control of the ship and fired its cannons destroying the canoes while seven of his crew would be killed by poison arrows. Before departing, Bradshaw would move closer to the shore and firing on all guns leaving after having, as Brown remarks, “littered the ground with corpses.” The Portuguese Jesuit friar Luis Mariano who visited this region of the island five years later would learn that the king had executed the English due to an earlier incident where his son was taken captive by sailors he believed belonged to the East India fleet.

³²³ Thomas Roe to Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, May 8, 1637, CSPD, 1637, 82, quoted in Games, *The Web of Empire*, 187.

Hamond's benign portrait of Madagascar's inhabitants and their congenial relations with the English obscures or undermines the concerns presented by earlier reports.

Hamond is keen to minimise any perception of risk surrounding the colonial venture and works this into the paradox. A celebration of the islanders' atavistic weaponry rhetorically holds up Hamond's encomium to the natives in the paradox; yet, at a practical level, he effects a *tacit* dismissal of their military prowess against the Europeans. As seen earlier in the description, Hamond intimates his readers about the ease with which their potential rivals could be disarmed, portraying them as a gullible lot willing to part with their entire armoury for a few red cornelian beads. In the Paradox, within the section entitled "their arms," the matter of fact tone of the Description is modified to better suit the panegyrist undertaking in the latter half of the promotion. Here, the islanders' "ignorance in the Military profession", in which "they be not trained up in the practise of those Arms our Moderns have lately invented", is not seen as an impediment since "they retain the use of those Weapons which have been in use from all Antiquity, I mean the Lance and Dart, wherein they have attained to such perfection, that therein I beleieve no Nation in the World doth equall, I am sure cannot exceed them."³²⁴ Within this format of praise, Hamond's evaluation of arms begins not with their killing prowess -- or the lack of it, as the islanders' primitive weapons fall short of the more obviously superior modern inventions -- but with a comparison of the calisthenic possibilities of and the codes of honor admitted by different types of arms.

³²⁴Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig.F3v

The islanders' lack of protection, by sheaths or fortifications, is seen as a sign of virtuous character. Hamond naively asserts that the islanders do not need "defensive Armour, and places of strength, and retirement" as "they have no other Armour than their own valour; nor Forts, but fortitude and courage; who, like the Parthians, fight flying, making their retreat as dangerous to the Enemy, as their first encounter."³²⁵ Their valour is contrasted against the use of "powder and shot" by the Europeans, which is seen as "being one of the most damnable inventions that ever was forged in the Devils Conclave: against the fury whereof, neither the courage of the valiant, nor the strength of the mighty can prevail."³²⁶ Nostalgically evoking the Roman images of the Parthian shot and "Sampson, whom the Scriptures truly deliver for the strongest of men" to characterise the valour and courage of his hosts, Hamond locates even the military practice of the natives within a roster of virtue that had thus far included the nakedness, poverty, and simplicity of their modes of sustenance.³²⁷ The islanders are neither aware nor desirous of firearms, that "pernicious and cruell Engine," which has hastened the "Ruine of Mankinde"; this testimony of their isolation and purity is projected as one of the main reasons for them being "happy also above all other Nations."³²⁸ This portrayal can be seen as either too disingenuously arcadian, or grossly ignorant of the realities of Malagasy-European contact.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Malagasy kingdoms were in constant conflict, with chiefs scrambling to encroach on the territory of their

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid., sig.F3v--F3r

³²⁷ Ibid., sig.F3r

³²⁸ Ibid.

rivals. In a study on the history of the slave trade in Madagascar, Arne Bialuschewski observes that “a second stage of political consolidation began in the second half of the 17th century when many chiefdoms in the coastal regions were fused into larger polities”.³²⁹ In the description, Hamond reports that “(t)hese severall Tribes have warres one with another, which commonly is for pasturage and watering places for their cattell; the captives they take they sell for small prizes (cheaper then their beasts) to the Portugals which come thither once a yeere for that purpose.”³³⁰ Firearms were a recent import and the key method of violence by which one local warring party could subjugate the other. European trading parties, who controlled the traffic of firearms, assumed a brokering role within this regional strife where they could barter the advantage of firepower in exchange for captives from defeated local tribes who were sold as slaves.

With sparse archival records on the Euro-Malagasy trade of firepower for slaves, this important transformation in Madagascar’s political landscape is largely clouded in doubt or silence. Kevin P McDonald estimates the total number of slaves to be taken captive from Madagascar in English vessels between 1663 and 1731 to number 16,000. Of this total, 13,100 slaves were transported to plantations in Jamaica and Barbados and other Atlantic colonies.³³¹ McDonald qualifies his count to be extremely conservative given the illegal nature of the slave trade in Madagascar mainly conducted by interlopers looking to bypass the monopoly granted to the Royal African Company for shipping slaves to colonial

³²⁹ Arne Bialuschewski p.403, *Pirates, Slavers, and The Indigenous Population in Madagascar*, c. 1690-1715*

³³⁰ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig.B2r

³³¹ See Appendix 2 of McDonald’s doctoral dissertation for a table listing all the voyages that constituted the Anglo-Madagascar Slave Trade between 1663 and 1731. McDonald, “‘The Dream of Madagascar’,” 182-6.

plantations located in the Atlantic. As we saw earlier, the final English attempt to settle a colony in Madagascar involved Robert Hunt's quickly aborted proposal to establish a plantation in Assada. His was the only Madagascar promotion that mentioned the relative affordability and ease of operating a slave plantation in comparison to the Atlantic colonies. Given that he was governor of the Caribbean colony of Providence, it can be surmised that he was familiar with the slave markets of Madagascar and was interested in the riverine island of Assada, given its proximity to a black market of enslaved labour (and its isolation from threats posed by native armies).

However, the discourses of Hamond and Boothby are far too congenial in their approach to representing the island and its future settlers to explicitly mention such pragmatic and unsavoury matters. It is difficult to gauge the extent to which Madagascar's contraband slave trade might have been a motivating factor for commissioning Hamond and Boothby's promotions given that neither of these authors make any explicit mention of it in their pamphlets. As Boothby informs us in his preface to the reader, he intended to publish his Madagascar promotion in "August, anno 1644" but was prevented from doing so until 1647.³³² Among other reasons, he attributes this three year delay to "the hinderance of a captious licencer, blameing the rudenesse of the stile and my placeing Madagascar in Asia, which he would needs have to be in Affrica, but whether in Asia or Affrica I yet rest unresolved, by the opinion of some Sea-men accounting it in Asia".³³³ The censor might have halted the divulging of Boothby's relation for mercantile rather than geographical specificities. Were Madagascar to be designated as being in

³³² Boothby, *A Briefe Discovery*, n.p.

³³³ *Ibid.*

Asia rather than Africa, interlopers such as the Courteen association could then legally bypass the Royal African Company's patent for the slave trade in Africa and position their island procurements as conducting business in Asia. As with Boothby, Hamond's work too must have involved similar such silences.

Hamond's ignorance, feigned or real, of the central role firearms played in the evolution of Malagasy societies does not stop here. The firearms sold to the natives were of poor quality and often exploded mid-use. As Bialuschewski explains, "the history of warfare in Africa indicates that, when it came to actual combat, traditional spears generally proved more reliable and effective than imported muskets. Although the introduction of the flintlock brought some improvements, firearms remained inefficient and frequently failed in action".³³⁴ Firearms were most likely not used for their efficacy in maiming or killing. One of the more successful Madagascan kings towards the end of the seventeenth century, the Sakalava emperor Simanoto, had conquered most of the northwestern coast in his reign. His imperial politics assigned a central role to firearms, which were believed to contain a spiritual force or *hasina*. As Bialuschewski elaborates, "(o)ne key to the rise of the Sakalava kingdoms lay in the fact that their leaders managed to incorporate imported technology and skills into a traditional sociocultural framework", wherein "the introduction of firearms in northwestern Madagascar, similar to the situation in the south, primarily destroyed the confidence of opposing warriors, who, after the first encounters with Simanoto's musketeers, took refuge in flight or surrendered without offering much resistance".³³⁵ It was not the code of valour that dictated the islanders'

³³⁴ Bialuschewski, "Pirates, Slavers, And The Indigenous Population", 418.

³³⁵ Ibid.

preference of spears over firearms; firearms were respected enough to be considered sacred.

Given the traditional context of the islanders, how (and why) did Hamond manage to present such a contrasting picture of native innocence? With this question, this chapter ends where it began. Just as Marco Polo employed references to classical legends to concoct his own legend of a giant bird residing in Madagascar, Hamond trained his lens on the island with little concern for fidelity, depicting an island people whose lives were harmonious with nature. Hamond's own lens was made up of texts and aspirations familiar to him. As we will see in the next chapter, Hamond borrowed his discourse on the natives' arms from his previous literary effort, an English translation of a French surgical treatise making waves in the seventeenth-century European medical community for introducing a radical treatment of gunshot wounds.

From Happiness to Riches: The omission of *A Paradox* and the shifting utopian lens of Walter Hamond's Madagascar pamphlets

In order to incorporate an element of spectacle into his commission for composing a colonial promotion of Madagascar, Walter Hamond drew upon a series of encomiums, vituperations and rhetorical commonplaces familiar to him. This allowed him to render a paradox filled with arguments of praise (and dispraise) on a series of subjects including property, poverty, apparel, diet, appetites, trade and knowledge. He deployed these cogitations to either praise the conduct of Madagascar's natives or denounce the manners of his countrymen. That he would choose to foreground his capacity for rhetorical maneuvers rather than the accounting of geographical and strategic information regarding the island, hints at a personal agenda where Hamond sought to promote his wit without hesitation over whether it would interfere with the function that his promotional advertisement was supposed to serve.

This chapter begins by focusing on the clearest instance of Hamond's digressions, a discourse on arms borrowed from a French surgical treatise. I argue that this example of utopian borrowing indicates that Hamond saw the composing of *A Paradox* as an opportunity to showcase his rhetorical competence, a necessary skill for anyone with courtly aspirations. Since the ouroborosian form of the paradox often resulted in self-contradiction which in turn diluted his advertisement's persuasive capacity, Hamond had to eventually replace his pamphlet with a subsequent promotion which took a different approach to

idealising Madagascar. The central subject was no longer the happiness of Madagascar's natives, rather it was an inventorying of its riches. These two advertisements, when read alongside each other, provide evidence of a shift in the idealisation of colonies. This shift from happiness to riches is seen in a larger intellectual context where the humanist preoccupation with colonial glory is giving way to colonial intelligence gathering, a project whose descriptive propensities are more in line with the Bacon's project of a new science.

Utopian borrowings: Hamond's use of Ambroise Paré's discourse on the evil of firearms

Where the weapons of the natives were upheld to a nostalgic vision of martial valour and grace, modern firearms had entirely undermined the capacity for virtue on the battlefield. Hamond complains that even "a childe might kill with a Pistoll the strongest of men" such as "Hercules himself."³³⁶ This plaint is similar to the one issued by Cervantes' chivalric epitome, Don Quixote, who curses "the dreadful fury of those diabolical engines," calling it "an invention that allows a base and cowardly hand to take the life of a brave knight."³³⁷ The "evil" of firearms becomes, for Hamond, the antithesis of the islanders' weapons. To bolster this contrast, he digresses into a discourse on "the invention, state, and progresse of this pernicious and cruell Engine," in which "the first invention was but rude and simple, but Time and the wickednesse of men, have added to the first project, even to the mounting them upon wheels, that they might be the

³³⁶ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. F3r

³³⁷ Miguel de Cervantes, *The Adventures of Don Quixote*, trans. J. M. Cohen (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981), 470--1, quoted in Christopher Braider, *Refiguring the Real: Picture and Modernity in Word and Image, 1400-1700* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 126.

easier transported, and run (as it were) to the Ruine of Mankinde.”³³⁸ Here, Hamond inventories the various kinds of firepower: from the names of different canons, to the “lesser engines” (“but of greater danger”) of “the dags and the pistol.”³³⁹ He observes that “invention” -- rather than courage -- was the prized commodity in this new arena of war, in which the person capable of inventing “the most wicked, cruell and execrable project to destroy men withall, is held the most worthy to receive the greatest honour, respect and reward.”³⁴⁰ This advance from the thrust of a rapier to the powder-shot, marked a larger transition in the codes of civility that governed military conflict where began individual displays of personal virtue began to be under-emphasised. As Paul Scannell notes, “the medieval system of honour relied on morale,” but the increased use of firepower in the battlefield caused mechanical controls and technique to “claim ascendancy over chivalry.”³⁴¹

In the context of utopian expression, the technological projects that constitute Hamond’s regret were earlier a cause for celebration in the utopian miscellany “Magnalia Naturae,” which concluded Bacon’s *New Atlantis*. Among the various enterprises deemed beneficial to mankind and listed in Bacon’s text are the “instruments of destruction, as of war and poison.”³⁴² However, where Bacon sees invention as a recovery of nature and a discovery of its secrets, Hamond posits this advance in weaponry as an imitation which diabolically exceeds nature in force and precision. Outlining how firepower dangerously exceeds nature, he

³³⁸ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. F3r.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., sig. F4v.

³⁴¹ Paul Scannell, *Conflict and Soldiers’ Literature in Early Modern Europe: The Reality of War* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), PDF e-book.

³⁴² Bacon, “New Atlantis,” 489.

compares those who use these machines to the mythical Salmonians, who possessed a device that could imitate thunder and lightning. Natural forces, the argument went, had their geographical and seasonal limits, caused damage to nature as a whole and only accidentally to man. Guns and cannons went beyond the limits of nature in terms of intent and precision; Hamond emphasises that the use of firearms are “guided by the malice of man, aims onely at man, to whose destruction it is wholly directed” and whose evil cannot be escaped by warning or natural constraint.³⁴³ Firepower is for Hamond “the most wicked, cruell and execrable project to destroy men,” and “now, if ever, it may truly be said, Homo homini Demon; one man is a Devill to another.”³⁴⁴ In this abrupt departure from the task of presenting the paradox to a diatribe on firepower and its history, we can read Hamond’s promotion of his own capacity as a writer and erudite thinker.

Attributing the creation of firearms to the devil had precedents as far back as 1390, when John Mirfield likened the firearm to an “instrumento illo bellico sive diabolico.”³⁴⁵ Petrarch was among the earliest to associate firearms with the devil’s work in his *De remediis utriusque fortunae* (1366). In a dialogue from the text, Joy revels in the possession of firearms and their capacity for destruction. Counseling it, Reason regrets: “what used to be thrust forth by the clouds of heaven is now being thrust forth by a machine conceived in hell.”³⁴⁶ Hamond’s digression on the dangers of gunfire shares much with Petrarch’s line of thinking. This is because much of Hamond’s rhetoric on arms, down even to the exact

³⁴³ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. F4v.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Harl. MS. 3261, John Mirfield, c. 1390 quoted in J. R. Hale, *Renaissance War Studies* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1983), 394.

³⁴⁶ Conrad H. Rawski, *Petrarch’s Remedies for Fortune Fair and Foul: Book I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 270.

phrasing, is directly borrowed from a surgical treatise on the treatment of gun wounds by Ambroise Paré, who shared Petrarch's opinion of the evils of mechanic weaponry.

While diatribes against firepower were often used as poetic license and had little impact on the widespread adoption of these technologies in the field of combat, they do find an appropriate home in Paré's treatise. Paré had revolutionised the "art of churgerie" across Europe by making widely-accessible new surgical techniques which he developed by close observation and practice rather than through extant medical dogma. Among his first discoveries in his role as a military surgeon was a method of treating gunshot wounds: he did away with the painful and ineffective practice of cauterizing the wounds with scalding oil and replaced it with a simple dressing. This treatment and various other surgical procedures for treating gun wounds were outlined in the 1545 handbook *Method of Treating Wounds*. Across the continent, this handbook soon became a *vade mecum* for surgeons on the battlefield.³⁴⁷ In England, the barber-surgeon Hamond was the first to translate Paré's treatise from French into "our home-spun English" in 1617.³⁴⁸ His discourse on arms in *A Paradox* is an abridgement of Paré's preface. The latter begins with a history of gunpowder, saying "Artillery was first invented by an Alleman of base condition."³⁴⁹ It lists the sinister etymology of the different firearms and outlines their destructive potency, along with the ways in which they exceed the force of thunder. In *A Paradox*, Hamond

³⁴⁷ John G. Simmons, *Doctors and Discoveries: Lives That Created Today's Medicine* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002), 119; Leo M. Zimmerman and Ilza Veith, *Great Ideas in the History of Surgery* (Novato: Norman Publishing, 1993), 182.

³⁴⁸ Ambroise Paré, *The method of curing vvounds made by gun-shot*, trans. Walter Hamond (London: William Jaggard, 1616), sig. A3v.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. Br.

hints at this borrowing in the marginalia when he references “*Pareus, lib. 1. in Praef*” as evidence for the claim that “a German monk was the first inventor.”³⁵⁰ Paré is more elaborate than Hamond in discussing differences between the natural force of thunder and the “miserable shop and Magazin of cruelty” that is gunfire, though Hamond retains parts of his translation of Paré’s preface verbatim.³⁵¹ Petrarch wrote: “[T]he earth itself thunders now and the flash that cannot be imitated, as Virgil said, is now being imitated by human frenzy”; Paré (and Hamond) shifts this analogy by arguing that firepower represents a devilish excess of thunder.³⁵²

Paré’s preface demonstrates the direct relationship between the practice of medicine and the uses of rhetoric, common to the contemporary practice of “physicke.”³⁵³ However, this exercise of polemical skill does not just frame the treatise on surgical techniques but is present across his broader oeuvre, which includes the famous tetralogical miscellany of curiosities, *On Monsters and Marvels* (1573). In this richly-illustrated work, he curates and investigates old and contemporary references to “monsters,” those “things that lie outside the course

³⁵⁰ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. F3r.

³⁵¹ Paré, *The method of curing vvounds*, sig. B3v. Some of Paré’s phrases retained near verbatim by Hamond in *A Paradox* are: “but this thundereth in striking, and striketh in thunder, sending the mortall Bullet, as soon into our bowels, as the sound into our ears” and “pernicious invention”. Compare Paré, *The method of curing vvounds*, sig. Cv and the penultimate page in Hamond, *A Paradox*.

³⁵² Rawski, *Petrarch’s Remedies*, 270.

³⁵³As a surgeon, Hamond might have been familiar with the notion of the “paradox” that was employed in the context of the discoveries of new diseases and systems of treatments. In late sixteenth-century Europe, as Agnieszka Steczowicz observes, a causal connection was made between “the so-called new diseases (‘paradoxi morbi’) and unorthodox medical thinkers (‘paradoxi medici’)” when “the word ‘paradox’ had the meaning of ‘unheard of’ and it was closely associated with novelty and wonder.” See Agnieszka Steczowicz, “Paradoxical Diseases in the late Renaissance: the case of Syphilis and Plague,” in *Framing and Imagining Disease in Cultural History*, eds. George Sebastian Rousseau et al, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 271. See also Stephen Pender and Nancy S. Struever, *Rhetoric and Medicine in Early Modern Europe* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012) for an account of the involvement of rhetoric in the practice of “physicke,” especially in relation to the central problems of uncertainty about the curative capacity for a specific course of treatment and ailments that arose as perturbations of the mind.

of nature.”³⁵⁴ Ironically, it is Paré’s obsession with the “normal” over the superstitious or the supernatural that leads him into the heart of Mandevillian territory. In the pacifism of Paré’s preface to the *Method of Treating Wounds*, and his encyclopaedic antipodean undertaking in *On Monsters*, we can see that utopian mastery -- the propensity to maximise the idealisation or rejection of a given stance -- was not merely limited to literary utopias. Rather, it marked just about any project in which the services of rhetoric were sought for the ends of improvement or justification. This modular aspect of utopian rendering applies equally to the case of Hamond, who borrows Paré’s critique of arms to bolster his own utopian proof. This shift within *A Paradox* from a proof of the happiness of Madagascar’s inhabitants to a brief digest of firearms and the evil they cause to man, I suggest, is evidence that the scope of Hamond’s utopian rendering extended beyond the promotional nature of his commission. The discourse on European firepower is not used just as an opposing tack to the grace with which the natives possess their antiquated lance and dart; it acts as a supplement to the paradox intended to convey Hamond’s own capacity for ornament and elaboration.

Hamond’s *A Paradox*: A vehicle for an “aspiring gallant”

If Hamond picked the paradox as a stage for his rhetorical prowess and capacity for disputation, he was far from making an uncommon choice. Rosalie Colie introduces the paradox by stating that it was “an ancient form designed as *epideixis* to show off the skill of an orator and arouse the admiration of an audience, both at the outlandishness of the subject and the technical brilliance of

³⁵⁴ Ambroise Paré, *On Monsters and Marvels*, trans. Janis L. Pallister (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 3.

the rhetorician.”³⁵⁵ Entering the stage during the Gray’s Inn’s Revels of 1618, the figure of the Paradox offers this definition: “I pray you what is a parradox? it is a ... straine of witt and invention, scrued above the vulgar concept, to begett admiration.”³⁵⁶ As with the extensive use of any trope, the paradox too is subject to the strain of overuse, to a dulling of novelty and affect. This excess, which Colie characterises as a Renaissance “epidemic of paradoxy”, is captured to great effect in Thomas Dekker’s (1600) *The Pleasant Comedie of Old Fortunatus*.³⁵⁷ In the second act of Dekker’s play, a prodigal Andelocia has appropriated the last remnants of his father’s largesse from his wise and virtuous brother Ampedo after losing his own share to dice. Ampedo chastises his wasteful brother for the “wanton revelling” that has inevitably led him to the “point of wreck.”³⁵⁸ Andelocia, simultaneously circumspect of his own debauchery and mocking of his brothers’ high moral tone and prudence, addresses his comic sidekick Shadow:

Andelocia: Thanks for my crowns. Shadow, I am villainous hungry, to hear one of the seven wise masters talk thus emptily.

Shadow: I am a villain, master, if I am not hungry.

Andelocia: Because I’ll save this gold sirrah Shadow, we’ll feed ourselves with paradoxes.

Shadow: Oh rare: what meat’s that?

Andelocia: Meat, you gull: ’tis no meat: a dish of paradoxes is a feast of strange opinion, ’tis an ordinary that our greatest gallants haunt nowadays, because they would be held for statesmen.

Shadow: I shall never fill my belly with opinions.

Andelocia: In despite of sway-bellies, gluttons, and sweet mouthed epicures, I’ll have thee maintain a paradox in commendations of hunger³⁵⁹

³⁵⁵ Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica*, 3.

³⁵⁶ John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth* (London: John Nichols and Sons, 1823) 3:337, quoted in Peter G. Platt, *Shakespeare and the Culture of Paradox, Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2013), 20.

³⁵⁷ Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica*, 33.

³⁵⁸ Thomas Dekker, *The Pleasant Comedie of Old Fortunatus* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1900). HTML e-text, <http://www.luminarium.org/editions/fortunatus.htm>.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

Andelocia seeks in Shadow, a companion for his “villainous” hunger while attempting to make a case for the substantive and necessary nature of his desires. The counterpoint to the urgency of his yearning, and to the needs of Shadow’s belly, are his brothers’ homilies. He likens his brothers’ platitudes to the “empty” talk of the seven wise masters, a cycle of stories popular in European lore, whose contrary tales seek to defer rather than confront that which is immediate. Epitomising the vacuity of wisdom are “a dish of paradoxes” which Andelocia sarcastically imagines to fulfill his hunger while Shadow likens the confuted commonplaces worked within a paradox to rumour or opinion rather than truth. The tricks of a paradox are seen to be detached from reality, merely ironic given that one can maintain “a paradox in commendations of hunger despite “the existence of “sway-bellies, gluttons, and sweet mouthed epicures.”³⁶⁰ Andelocia trains his wits on the paradox in particular while satirising the adequacy of wisdom, due to an earlier (paradoxical) barb directed to him by his brother that “twere better that you still lived poor. Want would make wisdom rich.”³⁶¹

Apart from characterising the paradox as a spout for the tautologies and cliches that constitute wisdom, Dekker also locates it in its courtly guise where its skilful use indicated the wit and persuasive capacity of an aspiring courtier or counselor. He glosses the paradox as “a feast of strange opinion, 'tis an ordinary that our greatest gallants haunt nowadays, because they would be held for statesmen.”³⁶² The rhetorical figure is addressed not just in terms of its intended effect (viz. to provoke strangeness) but also in terms of its social currency for aspiring statesmen. Almost a century prior to Dekker, Castiglione makes a similar

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Ibid.

observation in *The Book of the Courtier*.³⁶³ After going into a lengthy discourse on the qualities of the favourable courtier, Castiglione's Federico is exhausted and hesitates when lady Emilia's requests him to talk until her bedtime. Having previously displayed his skill for praise on a range of topics like virtue, noble birth, music, sonnets and the court of Urbino, he asks "And what if I have nothing to saye (madam)? Howe then?"³⁶⁴ Lady Emilia teases Federico by issuing the following challenge:

We shall nowe trie your wit. And if al be true I have heard, there have bene men so wittie and eloquent, that thei have not wanted matter to make a booke in the praise of a flie, other in the praise of a quartaine fever, an other in the praise of bauldnes, doth not your hert serve you to finde oute om what to saie for one nyghte of Courting?³⁶⁵

Lady Emilia's refers here to one form of the renaissance paradox, the mock encomia. To use Colie's definition, a mock-encomia was a type of rhetorical genre where "an unexpected, unworthy, or indefensible subject," is proven as worthy of praise.³⁶⁶ Emilia's test is a response to Federico's assertion that while many conversational techniques may be imparted to the budding courtier, the crucial qualities of a "gentle and lovyng behaviour in his daily conversation" could not be taught as "it is a hrd matter to geve anye maner rule, for the infinit and sundry matters that happen in practising one with an other: forsomuch as emong al the men in the world, there are not two to be found that in every point agree in mind together".³⁶⁷ For the budding courtier, the paradox might have afforded the stage

³⁶³ Castiglione's book was translated by Thomas Hoby into English in 1561 and was very popular with the English upper classes.

³⁶⁴ Conte Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Thomas Hoby (1561;repr., London: David Nutt, 1900). A PDF e-book of this edition was accessed on November 2, 2017 from <http://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/671>.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica*, 3.

³⁶⁷ Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 84.

to demonstrate a malleability, and an ability to shift the winds of discourse on any given topic in different contexts.

Hamond's rhetorical pliability is attested by Waldegrave in his pamphlet where he counters the false and grandiose claims of the Courten Association's designs on Madagascar. Waldegrave concludes his diatribe on "The Esquire Courten's enterprise", by singling out "the misguiding and lying information of some at home, and particularly of Hamond the Chirurgeon."³⁶⁸ Though he is quick to qualify that Hamond "the Gentlemen I shall ever reverence him as he was once my worthy Master, and do pity that so sweet a nature and such accomplishments, should have ever been abused by false speaking projectors for *Madagascar*."³⁶⁹ Like Federico's touted ideal of "gentle and lovyng behaviour," Hamond too is seen as a gentleman with "so sweet a nature" whose "accomplishments" could be put to the services of a lobbying group such as the Courten's. But where the notion of "bad counsel" was often employed to deflect responsibility from the pressures and consequences that might arise from a controversial executive decision, Waldegrave here imputes "the misguiding" to the patron rather than to Hamond in his authorial role as eye-witness and counsel. It is a disingenuous claim that Hamond is not responsible for his glowing report of the island given that Hamond's role as eye witness was essential to the language game of colonial promotion. In a later pamphlet, Hamond once again involves his personal authority by stating that he wants to move to the Madagascar colony once its established.

³⁶⁸ Waldegrave, *An Answer to Mr Boothbies Book*, 25.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

The paradox as a template for a utopian critique of overseas colonial ventures

Composing the utopian paradox in the context of courtly aspirations, Hamond was pursuing a path famously signalled earlier by Thomas More's *Utopia*. The relation between utopian mastery and the capability of a counselor features in a key episode in Book One of *Utopia* soon after Raphael Hythlodæus masterfully debates with the Cardinal's coterie on the corrosive effects to English society of shifting land use from agriculture to pasturage. With the practice of enclosure becoming a ubiquitous feature of the agricultural landscape in sixteenth century England, the decline in agriculture, Hythlodæus argues, had led to pervasive social problems such as unemployment, vagrancy and theft. Hythlodæus is wary of the role of counsel in matters of state and disapproving of the cliquishness and subordination rampant in a courtly milieu. Lamenting to Thomas More of the resultant dishonesty with which opinions are voiced, he says: "they went so far in their flattery that they indulged and almost took seriously ideas that their master tolerated only as the clowning of a parasite. From this episode you can see how little courtiers would value me or my advice".³⁷⁰ But the more worldly More, impressed by the wisdom and wit of Hythlodæus' oratory, draws on a Ciceronian imperative to dissuade him from his "aversion to court life".³⁷¹ More is convinced that Hythlodæus' advice to a prince would be of the greatest advantage to the public welfare, saying: "No part of a good man's duty -- and that means yours -- is more important than this."³⁷² Hythlodæus is sceptical of whether kings can take heed of good counsel especially when the covetousness of imperial authority is at cross purposes with the moderation of good counsel. He is normative in his

³⁷⁰ More, *Utopia*, 27.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 27--8. See also Skinner, "Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*," 130.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

consideration of counsel, which he idealises as a discursive space that ought to be untainted in its efficacy and earnestness, and concludes that “there is no place for philosophy in the councils of kings.”³⁷³ More counters Hythlodæus by stating that the world of courtly deliberation has no place for the latter’s sophomoric notion of counsel, which he equates to a “school philosophy which supposes every topic suitable for every occasion.”³⁷⁴ More akin to Castiglione’s Federico, More propounds “another philosophy”, that is better suited for the role of a citizen, “that takes its cue, adapts itself to the drama in hand and acts its part neatly and appropriately.”³⁷⁵ Here, More tells Hythlodæus that while a regard for the good of the commonwealth is necessary for an esteemed counselor, his approach ought not to *begin* from the ideal horizons one has envisaged in philosophical learning. Instead, those ends need to be broached through the dirt and dint of daily affairs. As More says of a prince’s council: “ If you cannot pluck up bad ideas by the root, or cure long-standing evils to your heart’s content, you must not therefore abandon the commonwealth.”³⁷⁶ He recommends “an indirect approach” in which “you must strive and struggle as best you can to handle everything tactfully -- and thus what you cannot turn to good, you may at least make as little bad as possible.”³⁷⁷ Here, More’s pragmatic tenor towards counsel ignores the practical dimensions - and social currency - of learning and practising “school philosophy” which were needed to advance in a career at court at the time. In *Utopia*, the utopian mastery of More the writer is framed by the courtly commonplace of the *optimus status reipublic* -- the question of what constitutes

³⁷³ Ibid., 34.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 36.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 34--5.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 35.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

the best state of the commonwealth -- a thematic which was, as Quentin Skinner observes, “a standard subject of debate throughout the era of the Renaissance.”³⁷⁸

As with Dekker’s “dish of paradoxes,” gallants and statesmen would have mined the formulae of the optimal republic to put forward their case. In fact, it could be argued that the statecraft of More’s *Utopia* was itself rendered in the form of a paradox. Jack H. Hexter’s chronology of *Utopia*’s composition holds More’s work to have at first consisted of only the second half, which laid out the model commonwealth of the Utopians.³⁷⁹ If we agree with Hexter, More’s initial project was more along the lines of the panegyric dimensions of the Renaissance paradox, which was often synonymous with the encomium. Book one of *Utopia*, in which England’s social ills are critiqued, formed the *vituperatio* to the *laudatio* of the latter part, a report on the wisdom and rectitude of the island commonwealth of Utopia. *Utopia*’s dual pursuit is akin to the rhetorical paradox in that its subject of praise is contrasted with the dispraise of its opposite. Similar to Hamond’s treatment of the islanders’ poverty, nakedness and simplicity, More’s paradoxical utopia too frames itself as a critical utopia involved in what Bill Ashcroft has called “the critique of those present conditions that make utopia necessary.”³⁸⁰ In More’s England, the rising use of land for enclosure has created and has left in its wake the devastation and depopulation of “fields, houses and towns.”³⁸¹ In Hamond’s England too a culture defined by an excessive thirst for wealth and its trappings has led to “the Ruine of many noble Families, the decay of Hospitality,

³⁷⁸ Skinner, “Sir Thomas More’s *Utopia*,” 125.

³⁷⁹ See Jack H. Hexter, *More’s Utopia: The Biography of an Idea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), 18--21.

³⁸⁰ Bill Ashcroft, “Critical Utopias,” *Textual Practice* 21, no. 3 (2007), 419

³⁸¹ More, *Utopia*, 18.

the ushering in of Oppression, Bribery, and Extortion, Theft, Murder, Cousening and deceit, and in the end Beggery, or which is worse, a death with Ignominie.”³⁸²

In Hythlodæus’ complaint that the region’s sheep “that commonly are so meek and eat so little,” have “become so greedy and fierce that they devour human beings themselves,” and Hamond’s vision of a nation reeling in excess, a critique of England is put forward in order to present the picture of a better society elsewhere.³⁸³ The paradox founded on contrast lends a heightened tone to both praise and dispraise. In maximising such contrast, both More and Hamond hoped their discourse would have the effect of displaying wisdom. Noting the exaggerative contrariness of paradoxes, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe finds the extremes of “contradicting or surprising opinion” contributing to the perception of wisdom.³⁸⁴ The surprising contradiction, he says, “implies a passing to the extreme, a sort of ‘maximization,’ where the formula for the paradox is always that of the double superlative: the more mad it is, the more wise it is; the maddest is the wisest.”³⁸⁵ But where More achieves a complex effect with the antipodean extremes of the paradox, suspending the reader between esteem and incredulity at Hythlodæus’ utopian tale, it is precisely this maximality that would prove to be Hamond’s undoing.

By framing his overture on the easy pickings of Madagascar in the guise of a paradox eulogising its inhabitants, Hamond had set in motion what Lacoue-

³⁸² Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. D4r--E1v.

³⁸³ More, *Utopia*, 18.

³⁸⁴ Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography, Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics*, ed. by Christopher Fynsk, trans. by Eugenio Donato, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 252.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Labarthe describes as a “a hyperbolic movement by which the equivalence of contraries is established.”³⁸⁶ If the inhabitants of Madagascar are to be “the happiest people in the world,” correspondingly England’s denizens needed to be an epitome of avarice and violence, belonging to a place where “now, if ever, it may truly be said, Homo homini Demon; one man is a Devill to another.”³⁸⁷ Here, what started out for Hamond as an idyllic advertisement takes on the dimensions of a fatuous and ultimately self-consuming exercise.

Perhaps if Hamond had restricted his vitriol to more indigenous matters that dealt with the dispraise, for instance, of English attitudes to diet, apparel, arms, and property, his patrons and readers might have been able to regard his hyperbole with mirth or indifference. It would have been simple enough to distinguish those sections in which Hamond digressed away from the ends of promoting the island. But Hamond’s censure extended to the very nature of the colonial project at large. These judgements, however ironic, were effectively defeating for Hamond’s promotional pitch. These fragments of commentary glossed in the margins as “miseries of sea-faring men,” outline the fatal, futile and unabating acquisitiveness that are purported to drive overseas trade and colonial ventures, and the dangers of cultural contamination that the English feared would come from travelling far.³⁸⁸

In a brief passage, Hamond sketches the travails of maritime labour. Hamond’s opinion of colonisation in *A Paradox* was very different from the position Richard

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. F4v.

³⁸⁸ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. E2r.

Hakluyt adopted in his *Discourse of Western Planting*, where he pronounces the colonisation of the New World as a national project which will be both an act of glory and a practical solution to many of England's difficult domestic problems. Were England to adopt a colonial mission with zeal, Hakluyt argues, the greatness of this venture would consist in "the enlargement of the gospel of Christ", "supply the wants of all our decayed trades", "the manifold employment of numbers of idle men", enlarge "the revenues and customs of her Majesty", and increase the "maintenance and safety of our navy".³⁸⁹ While, Hakluyt's edicts betray an indifference to the difficulties of maritime prospecting, Hamond is likely to have channeled the difficulties of the sailing life, in his capacity as ship-surgeon, to effect a critique of overseas ventures. According to Hamond, the impetus for maritime ventures is not motivated by the pursuit of honour, courage or nobility but by the baser designs of his contemporaries, who Hamond indicts as belonging to "the Age of Gold, For it both honour, love, and Friends are sold."³⁹⁰ Voyaging is equated with mining, in which "men began to dive into the Bowels of the Earth to make descents as it were downe into Hell to fetch this glittering Oare."³⁹¹ Hamond does not hold back when listing the by-products of these excavations: "along with it came up Contention, Deceit Lying, Swearing, Theft, Murder, and all the seven Capitall sinnes; as Pride, Covetousnesse; Wrath, Gluttony, and the rest."³⁹² In evaluating the efforts expended in extracting gold, Hamond wonders what could justify such a perilous undertaking: "Wee are contented daily to expose our selves, to a thousand perils, to suffer a thousand injuries, in hope to enjoy it; and yet scarce one in a thousand, attaineth to the end of his labour."³⁹³ Gold is then

³⁸⁹ Richard Hakluyt, *Discourse of Western Planting 1584*, eds. David B. Quinn and Alison M. Quinn (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1993), 4:1--5:50.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. E2v.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*

³⁹² *Ibid.*, sig. E2v--r.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, sig. E2r.

implied to be the singular end of maritime prospecting, valued as if it were a primordial commodity, a fetish upon which any kind of excess converges. He further details the problems of a ship's voyage and wonders whether it is worthwhile to be "contented to be imprisoned in a nasty Ship, to expose our lives to the tempestuous furie of the mercilesse Elemenés, and to expose our bodies to the rage of the Enemies thundring Ordinance, where through Heate, Cold, Hunger, Thirst, Watching, ill Lodging, bad Diet, infected Ayre, and a thousand other inconveniences, we not onely endanger our Lives every minute, but sometimes loose them."³⁹⁴ The voyage is framed as a futile search for treasure with Hamond lamenting "For this doe we suffer a voluntary Exile from our native Countrey."³⁹⁵

It is at this juncture that we find Hamond's "dream" of Madagascar beginning to resemble the dystopian tone of Waldegrave's island sojourn, which was more a cursed "Golgotha, than pleasent Canaan" where men are "forced to eat dogs, and cow-hides" and their bodies "are debilitated by fluxes and feavers."³⁹⁶ Though Waldegrave's pamphlet was premised on disproving Hamond's utopian proposition, this overlap occurs in a moment when the latter digresses from the promotion of the island to sketch the difficult conditions that befell maritime prospectors and their crew. Thus configured, colonial promotion, despite being an impetus for voyaging, was inevitably at odds with the reality of sailing and planting; Hamond's rhetorical overreach brought together two aspects of colonial prospecting -- the advertorial and the experiential -- to produce an incongruous

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Waldegrave, *An Answer to Mr Boothbies Book*, 6--14.

affect. Paradoxically, the promotion of a colonial venture had become its own diatribe.

Hamond does not stop at the futility and arduousness of planting and trading and outlines the fears and insecurities that await even success. In two particularly fear-filled paragraphs, the following situations are related:

But grant that wee doe escape all these perils, and obtaine in some measure what we have so dearely purchased, it will be so confessed, there is more care and danger in the keeping of them, then in the attaining of them. For this doe Theeves lye in waite to robbe us, friends to entrap us, and our enemies to betray us; Nay, suppose we doe escape all these outward casualties, our inward vices, our disordered affections, and our evill Concupiscences, doe all threaten to ruine us.

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The paradox had done its work. The desire for riches could lead to a life begotten with betrayals. After having achieved the desired inversion, Hamond then proceeds to pronounce the very enterprise of trade as a culturally corrupting practice.

In Hamond's paradoxical treatment, trade is not wholeheartedly celebrated. Here, trade is not a peaceful means of increasing national influence, a space for universal congregation and love, nor is it a harmonious transport of produce to the destination where it is required.³⁹⁸ Instead, the merchant and the planter are both seen as figures of ruin, their faculties unduly strained by the forces required to maintain possession.

³⁹⁷ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. E2r--E3v.

³⁹⁸ For a summary of the different extremes which representations of trade could take in sixteenth and seventeenth century texts, see Joshua Scodel, *Excess and the mean in early modern English literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 111.

Hamond's choice of a commonplace -- "that if it were put to her choice, to suffer the extremity of fortune in Prosperity or Adversity: Shee would chuse adversity; because the former was never without Danger, nor the latter without Comfort" -- aptly summarises the kernel of his rhetoric in which the islanders with their elementary lifestyle are in a kingdom of comfort whereas his own nation is a dominion riven by greed and excess.³⁹⁹ By stripping colonial trade of its lofty national and cosmopolitan aspirations, Hamond sees the global spread of trade residing in a voluptuous appetite in which "the whole world being scarce sufficient to make a Bacchanalian sacrifice for that Deity, the Belly: France, Spain, Italy, the Indies, yea and the Molluques must be ransackt, to make sauce for our meat; whilst we impoverish the land, air and water, to in rich a privat Table."⁴⁰⁰ But Hamond is not restricting his vituperative critique of mercantile and colonial enterprise solely to issues regarding consumption. He also goes on to diagnose technological excess as the cause of this "disease" of gluttony and posits cultural contamination as one of its accompanying effects.

Of the islanders, Hamond asks: "And may not their ignorance in the Art of Navigation, be deservedly accounted an happinesse."⁴⁰¹ This is diametrically opposed to the Bacon's (and Hakluyt's) celebration of increased knowledge. In the title page to Bacon's 1620 edition of the *Instauratio magna*, we see the image of a ship sailing through the pillars of Hercules illustrating the accompanying Latin quotation from the Book of Daniel: "many will pass through and knowledge will be increased".⁴⁰² Here, the art of navigation makes possible the passage beyond the frontiers of classical dogma; the 'discovery' of the new world and the form of

³⁹⁹ Hamond attributes this quote to the late Tudor queen Catherine, see *A Paradox*, sig. E3v.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. F1r.

⁴⁰¹ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. F2r.

⁴⁰² Francis Bacon, *Franciscy De Verulamio, Summi Angliae Cancellarij Instauratio magna* (London: Apud [Bonham Norton and] Ioannem Billium typographum regium), 1620, frontispiece.

the voyage become symbols for the discovering of nature and its secrets. In Bacon's conception of knowledge, its method and its outcomes were geared towards gaining power over nature and man.

In the utopian context of *New Atlantis*, we see a fundamental role being assigned to the act of collection. Of the nine different kinds of fellows employed at Saloman's House, the first three groups are involved in collecting. The first and most significant group are 'the merchants of light' who "sail into foreign countries, under the names of other nations, (for our own we conceal); who bring us the books, and abstracts, and patterns of experiments of all other parts".⁴⁰³ They operate in a maritime scenario of competing colonial powers pursuing supremacy through practices of secrecy and naval prowess. Their excessive drive for collecting in *New Atlantis* could be seen as bordering on an encyclopedic mania in which, as their interlocutors remark, "it seemed to us a condition and propriety of divine powers and beings, to be hidden and unseen to others, and yet to have others open and as in a light to them."⁴⁰⁴

Through their twelve appointed spies, the New Atlanteans maintain a rather specific trade, which is "not for gold, silver, or jewels; nor for silks; nor for spices; nor any other commodity of matter; but only for God's first creature, which was Light: to have light (I say) of the growth of all parts of the world."⁴⁰⁵ This light consists in "the knowledge of the affairs and state", and "especially of the sciences, arts, manufactures, and inventions of all the world; and withal to bring

⁴⁰³ Bacon, "New Atlantis," 486.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 466.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., 472.

unto us books, instruments, and patterns in every kind.”⁴⁰⁶ Evidently for these utopian denizens, the pursuit of light was in effect a license to appropriate knowledge, through any means possible, for the exercise of power. Where Bacon’s utopia prescribes the trade of gold as a means to acquiring light, Hamond inverts this design to indicate that the knowledge of the arts of navigation serve only as a means to acquire “toys and vanities, which we might well be without, and serve but as fomenta luxuriosa, stirrers up of Pride, luxury and wantonnesse.”⁴⁰⁷ In Hamond’s paradox, the art of navigation and its many purveyors are a promise run awry, and have made his people become “compelled like famisht Wolves, to range the world about for our living, to the hazard both of our souls and bodies.”⁴⁰⁸ Ever the surgeon, he likens the influence of foreign customs to the transport of diseases “as the Pocks, brought into England by the first discovery of America.”⁴⁰⁹

Not very unlike the mind-healer in Richard Bromes play *The Antipodes* who treats the protagonist Peregrine’s travel fantasies as an affliction of the mind; Hamond views the cultural exposure resulting from travel as a disease that ravages both the the soul and the body.⁴¹⁰ For Hamond, the islanders in their solitude and ignorance are better off and untainted by “the vices and evill

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 471.

⁴⁰⁷ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. F2r.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., sig. F3v.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., sig. F2r.

⁴¹⁰ Brome’s play contains one of the earliest references to a psychotherapist like figure. Richard Brome, *The Antipodes*, eds. Richard Allen Cave and Eleanor Lowe, Richard Brome Online (<http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/brome>, accessed January 13, 2018). The desire to travel is presented in the form of a mania afflicting the protagonist. Travel becomes a stage to enact various psychic displacements that take place in the domestic sphere. For a rewarding Freudian interpretation of Brome’s drama, see Miguel Ramallete Gomes, “The Early Modern Couch: Richard Brome’s *The Antipodes* as Freudian Material,” in *English Literature and the Disciplines of Knowledge, Early Modern to Eighteenth Century: A Trade for Light*, eds. Jorge Bastos da Silva and Miguel Ramallete Gomes (Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2018), 56--76.

customs of strangers: when we have derived to our selves, with our commerce with forraign Nations, with their wares and commodities, their vices and evill conditions.”⁴¹¹ Hamond was not unique in his criticism of imperial expansion. As Andrew Hadfield has shown, “what we often take to be signs of confident and assertive imperial propaganda were invariably desperate and defensive arguments about the need for an empire,” which even in the case of Richard Hakluyt’s “mighty enterprise,” was “an attempt to persuade the authorities that unless an empire was established, the Spanish would overwhelm the Protestant nation.”⁴¹² Listing several stereotypes, Hamond imagines an uncontaminated England that has not had to deal with the following inheritances from foreigners:

our drunkenesse and rudenesse from the Germans; our fashions and factions from the French; our insolence from the Spaniards; our Machiavillianisme from the Italians; our levity and inconstancie from the Greeks; our usury and extortion from the Iews; our Atheisme and impiety from the Turks and Moors; and our voluptuous luxury from the Persians and Indians;⁴¹³

In this inventory of the cultural vices that might result from travelling abroad, Hamond is channeling an Elizabethan aversion to travel prior to the heyday of travel literature. Satirical works such as Thomas Nashe’s *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594) questioned the merits of the education and experience that travel begets. In Nashe’s work, a banished English earl pontificates to the protagonist, the itinerant page Jack Wilton, on the futility and danger of travel: “What is there in France to be learned more than in England, but falsehood in fellowship, perfect slovenry, to love no man but for my pleasure”.⁴¹⁴ The earl goes

⁴¹¹ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig.F2r

⁴¹² Andrew Hadfield, “The benefits of a warm study: the resistance to travel before empire,” in *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion*, ed. Jyotsna G. Singh (Chichester: Blackwell, 2009), 101. Hadfield argues that the positivity animating discourses of empire were actually a compensatory reaction to a historical situation where colonial ventures were actually struggling to attract people and funds.

⁴¹³Hamond, *A Paradox*, F2r.

⁴¹⁴ Thomas Nashe, *The Unfortunate Traveller*, ed. John Barry Steane, rev.ed (New York: Penguin Classics, 1972), 344--5.

on to list the deficiencies to be had from each nation, where “from Spain what bringeth our traveller? A skull-crowned hat of the fashion of an old deep porringer, a diminutive alderman’s ruff with short strings like the droppings of a man’s nose”, while Italy “the paradise of the earth and the epicure’s heaven, how doth it form our young master? It makes him to kiss his hand like an ape, cringe his neck like a starveling [...] the art of atheism, the art of epicurising, the art of whoring, the art of poisoning, the art of sodomitry”.⁴¹⁵

Nashe’s manner of compendious stereotyping is quite similar to Hamond’s litany. As Hadfield has shown in the case of Nashe, these stereotypes were not based on ethnographic types but were most likely drawn from literary works that circulated in the period such as Spanish Picaresque novels, or from English works about Italian travels such as Thomas Painter’s *Palace of Pleasure* (1566), or George Pettie’s *A Petite Palace of Pettie His Pleasure* (1576).⁴¹⁶ Emphasising the various narrative and textual forces at play in the arena of travel, Nashe impels the reader to question if it is the experience or the representation of travel that serves as an education. While Hamond invokes a fear of travel to bolster his paradoxical comparison between Madagascar’s wilful isolation and Britain’s island traffic, he shares with Nashe’s banished English earl the sense of exile and unfamiliarity as a colonial voyager. For Madagascar’s islanders, isolation is possible as they “have no need of any forraign commodity.”⁴¹⁷ Hamond wholeheartedly endorses those nations that “are forbidden to have any commerce or traffick with strangers” giving the example of “the Chineses, who will suffer no stranger to come into their country.”⁴¹⁸ In endorsing the outlawing of traffic, Hamond’s text takes itself a paradox too far, leaving us with a text that contradicts itself: a text

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ See Ibid., 107.

⁴¹⁷ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. F3v.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., sig. F2r--F3v.

commissioned for planting a colony in order to serve English traffic in Asia ends up articulating a position favouring the avoidance of trade altogether.

The undoing of Hamond's *A Paradox*: An incongruity between form and function

The incongruity between Hamond's commission and its outcome is apparent in the risks the paradox highlights for the potential planter or funder, despite the description earlier noting the ease with which an abundant Madagascar could be harvested. Was Hamond aware of the ambiguous message presented to his readers? One of the advantages of employing paradoxical conceits was that it allowed a stated position to be evaded were it to invite scrutiny. An awareness of the vacillation allowed by the structure of the paradox bookends Hamond's pamphlet as well. The pamphlet begins by the following statement: "I Confesse (worthy Sir) that I have undertaken an Argument, which at the first sight, will seeme to most Men, Idle and Impertinent, although I might answer for my excuse; that I was therefore idle, because I would not bee idle."⁴¹⁹ Hamond defends against accusations of frivolity by arguing that it is precisely through the pursuit of what seems trivial or inappropriate that he can put forth an educative argument.

This paradoxical opening is reminiscent of Erasmus, who writes in his prefatory letter to the *Morae Encomium*: "And yet I am apt to believe I have not praised

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., sig. D2r.

folly in a way altogether foolish.”⁴²⁰ As Annette H. Tomarken notes, writers like Erasmus were “willing to devote so much ‘labour’ to such slight subjects as the flea, gout, and folly” (or, in the case of Hamond, the praise of nakedness, poverty and ignorance) due to “the multifaceted quality of the mock encomium.”⁴²¹ Along with the rhetorical challenge it posed for a writer, the mock encomium and the paradox exhibited “a simultaneous fluidity and recognizability, two features that permitted a great variety of development while providing a measure of protection for the satirists’ bolder statements.”⁴²² Some measure of this protection must have been sought by Hamond when he tries to offset any anticipated controversy by underlining in his conclusion the ironic character of his rhetorical-paradoxical game. Hamond’s final statement -- “And here I cease not presuming to advise Kings and Princes (this being but a Paradox)” -- is, then, an insurance.⁴²³

The protection that irony provides comes with its own drawbacks. Here too, Tomarken’s conclusions on the mock-encomium are worth noting. She concludes that though the genre was “challenging and intriguing when well executed,” the constant shifts of perspective “can also be confusing”.⁴²⁴ As Tomarken further notes, this was a genre where writers were prone to lose focus, that by “showing the fruitful and thought-provoking ‘doubleness’ so important to paradox, they sometime indicate a loss of control or even an unconscious drift towards parody.”⁴²⁵ Since the protection the paradox provides consists in its irresolution,

⁴²⁰ Erasmus, *Moriae Encomium or a panegyric upon folly*, trans. White Kennett (London: Stephen Austen, 1726), quoted in Annette H. Tomarken, *The Smile of Truth: The French Satirical Eulogy and Its Antecedents* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 230.

⁴²¹ Tomarken, *The Smile of Truth*, 230.

⁴²² *Ibid.*

⁴²³ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. F4v--r.

⁴²⁴ Tomarken, *The Smile of Truth*, 231.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*

this advantage could also prove to be its undoing. Montaigne, in his essay *Apology for Raymond Seibond*, likens the self-injury of the paradox to the “final fencer's trick [i.e., the paradox]”, and cautions against its use by saying that it “should not be employed except as a last resource. It is a desperate thrust, in which you have to abandon your weapon in order to disarm your adversary, and a secret ruse which should be practised seldom and with reserve. It is a very foolhardy thing to lose your life in order to kill another.”⁴²⁶ In the context of colonial promotion, one of Hamond’s primary tasks was to persuade potential patrons and participants that the venture was averse to financial and military risks. The description of Madagascar in the first part of the pamphlet performed this function faithfully. But what started out as a competent descriptive rendering ends up in confutation when the paradox is introduced. In employing the paradox, Hamond did not take into account what Colie regards as the form’s tendency towards “concomitant detachment and postponement of commitment.”⁴²⁷ As Colie further notes, the engagement of formal rhetorical paradoxes is with themselves: “they are, and are supposed to be, ultimately self-regarding and self-referential. Though they must call forth ‘wonder’ from their audience, paradoxes do not require—indeed, normally they repel—identification on the part of their audience.”⁴²⁸ These constraints of genre would have prevented Hamond’s readers from identifying with the prospect of an English colony in Madagascar, as their attention would have been drawn more to the paradox rather than to its purported function.

⁴²⁶ Michel de Montaigne, *The essays: Volume 1*, trans. Emil Julius Trechmann (New York: Modern Library, 1946), 481.

⁴²⁷ Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica*, 480.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*

Given its disposition as a genre, Hamond's dichotomous narrative did not bode well for the reception of *A Paradox* as a colonial advertisement. In the description, Hamond spoke of an island whose "ayre being so good that in the space of 7. or 8. Dayes" even "sicke men" are "perfectly recovered" and whose people were "very affable, courteous, and just in their dealings."⁴²⁹ What was one to make of this pitch when in the latter half he warns of the "rage of the Enemies thundring Ordinance" and the "Heate, Cold, Hunger, Thirst, Watching, ill Lodging, bad Diet, infected Ayre, and a thousand other inconvenience" that are to be encountered in a voyage.⁴³⁰ It would not be surprising if Hamond's readers had a complaint similar to Horatio's regarding the figure of the satirist in Bernard Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees*: "But who knows what to make of a man, who recommends a thing very seriously in one page, and ridicules it in the next?"⁴³¹ Despite these incongruities, it could be held that this text might have managed to gather interest as a curiosity, if not as an enticing proposal for a venture. While that remains unknown, there is some evidence to suggest that the pamphlet did not gather enough, or at least the right kind of attention.

A Paradox was printed in 1640. The first attempt at settlement in Madagascar took place four years hence when Courten's company sent three ships with a crew of 140 to sail out and set anchor at Augustine Bay. In the interim period, Hamond brought out a second island pamphlet called *Madagascar, The Richest and most Fruitfull Island in the World* (1643) in which the elaborate conceit of the paradox was no longer retained. Not only was the rhetorical conceit dropped, many of the

⁴²⁹ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. B1v.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. E2r.

⁴³¹ Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees: Or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits* (Edinburgh: T. Ostell, & Mundel, 1806), 332.

arguments made through the paradox were outright inverted in the subsequent pamphlet. That Hamond would have had to redraft and reverse many of his earlier positions is a strong indication that his stakeholders were not satisfied with the earlier outcome. In the context of European overseas colonisation at large, Alison Games assesses the place of the “failed” Madagascar ventures of the Courtens as the equivalent of the blink of an eye.⁴³² Similarly, in the grand designs of early modern utopian literature or the imperial prefaces of colonial writing, Hamond’s works are only marginally relevant, as the ephemera to a failed colonial expedition. Yet these two texts, when read alongside each other, might provide a window to historical deliberations outside the purview of more well-known works. It could be argued that in the transition from Hamond’s *A Paradox* to *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, at stake were competing ideas of what counted as proof and persuasion in the game of promoting a colonial project.

Where *A Paradox* was concerned with the more nascent phase of presenting the “most probable arguments of a hopefull and fit plantation of a colony,” *The Richest and most Fruitfull Island* is no longer merely a proposal.⁴³³ With the patent approved for the Courten’s island venture, the latter pamphlet is “dedicated to the Honourable John Bond, governour of the island, whose proceeding is authorized for this expedition, both by the king and Parliament.”⁴³⁴ It was no small feat that the Courtens had managed to get the patent despite the stiff opposition and the powerful lobbying of the East India Company. The resistance that preceded the granting of the patent was noteworthy enough to be mentioned in Hamond’s dedication. Using the parlance of the voyage, he

⁴³² Games, *The Web of Empire*, 181.

⁴³³ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. A1r.

⁴³⁴ Hamond, *The Richest and most Fruitfull Island*, frontispiece.

addresses Bond: “Before you could set saile, you met with a rough storme at Land, and your Fleet was in danger of Wrack, before it lanch't forth.”⁴³⁵ The hostility to the Courtens’ island venture seems to have hastened a conclusive judgement from the King in favour of Hamond’s patrons. On the remainder of the episode,

Hamond recounts:

[B]ut the opposition became your advantage, and who laboured the ruine of your expedition, rais'd it up, and confirm'd it on that height, that no Envy now can undermine it, nor can it lye open to any future question. The Parliament after full debate found how Just and Honourable to the Kingdome was his Majesties Favour to you, and by their approbation added a second kind of Seale to your Patent.⁴³⁶

Given all the documentation associated with a colonial venture -- such as detailed maps, legal contracts between stakeholders, royal charters, promissory notes for procuring supplies and promotional pamphlets to attract investments and colonists -- it is difficult to gauge the influence promotional pamphlets had on the entire process.⁴³⁷ While the King’s patent to the Courten Association for settling a colony in Madagascar was not thwarted by Hamond’s text, a reworking might have been required in the hope that this would reel in more investors willing to adventure their purses.

Shifting the utopian lens from happiness to riches: Hamond’s second Madagascar promotion

⁴³⁵ Ibid., sig. A2r.

⁴³⁶ Ibid., sig. A2r--A3v.

⁴³⁷ I borrow this “paper-trail that is involved in the launching of a colonial venture” from Alison Games. See Games, *The Web of Empire*, 188.

By dividing his first pamphlet into the paradox as the main subject and the description as its supplement, Hamond had sought to satisfy the advertorial needs of his commissioners while employing, and possibly even prioritising a display of his felicitous eloquence. This source of conflict or confusion was eliminated when he brought out *The Richest and most Fruitfull Island*. The title and the description signal the similarities and differences between the two versions. The description of the island's geography, in terms of "the temperature of the clymate, the nature of the inhabitants, the commodities of the countrie and the facility and benefit of a plantation by our people", is shared by both pamphlets.⁴³⁸ However, the same can not be said for the primacy accorded to the description itself. In Hamond's *A Paradox*, the description is "briefe" and "prefixed"; the selling point of the 1643 edition is that it is "compendious and truly described".⁴³⁹ The description is now the principal subject, its designated function is to catalogue "the commodities" of "Madagascar, The Richest and most Fruitfull Island in the World".⁴⁴⁰ The paradox, through which Hamond's first pamphlet had sought to project a rhetorical sophistication, is no longer present.

In this shift from 'happiness' to 'riches', Hamond's approach to Madagascar too undergoes a complete transformation. The utopian conceit shifts from the object of desire (a noble and cooperative savage community), to the desiring audience (potential colonial investors, now cloaked in beneficence). Hamond's *A Paradox* is arranged around a panegyric to the peaceful and honourable ways of the native inhabitants, which imply that the colonists could expect a courteous reception or an easily-vanquished potential threat. The later pamphlet foregrounds the island

⁴³⁸ Hamond, *The Richest and most Fruitfull Island*, frontispiece.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

as a potential acquisition and focuses on the fruits of ownership for sustenance and for trade in England and Asia. In terms of utopian modes, the happiness that comes from arcadian self-sufficiency gives way to the riches of a cornucopian mercantilism. A similar contrast presents itself in the shift from the agrarian moderation of More's *Utopia* to the mercantilist excess and bibliomania characterising the activities of Bacon's *New Atlantis*. In Hamond's work, this contrast is most salient in the treatment of travel and empire in *The Richest and most Fruitfull Island*. An isolationist approach to islandhood is replaced by an ode to traffic, the initial distaste for 'ransack' and plunder makes way for a classical identification with the colonial exploits of the Roman empire.

As noted earlier, in order to highlight the variety of Madagascar's uncultivated abundance, *A Paradox* declared it to be a place where "Nature will not be exceeded, or out done by Art".⁴⁴¹ The preeminence of nature over artifice and human invention is also crucial for Hamond's paradoxical proof, in which he attempted to argue that the islanders' nakedness, poverty and ignorance accounted for their happiness. The pairing of nature/art is a commonplace with a very long history. During the Renaissance, the nature-art relation was employed in various ways, based on the discursive needs of its purveyor, who could draw on numerous precedents either to accentuate or negate the distinction between these categories.⁴⁴² This was possible due to the variety of contradictory

⁴⁴¹ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. Bv.

⁴⁴² For a survey of the "innumerable and sometimes contradictory ways" in which the categories of nature and art were combined, see Edward William Tayler, *Nature and Art in Renaissance Literature: Some Literary Consequences of a Philosophical Idea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964).

significations each of these terms came to carry.⁴⁴³ However, Hamond's style is one of extremes over nuance, in which a blurring of the distinction between nature and art is not to be expected. Between the two pamphlets, he only reverses the polarities these categories hold. In *A Paradox*, 'nature', to use Edward William Tayler's characterisation of these extremes, "signifies the original, the unspoiled, the transcendent, or even the perfect", whereas 'art' "is "viewed pejoratively -- as mere imitation, falsification, reprehensible counterfeit, or even perversion".⁴⁴⁴ When the polarity is switched in the *The Richest and most Fruitfull Island*, it is art that is, to use Tayler's inverse characterisation, "viewed eulogistically - as the product of man's 'erected wit' while nature "signifies the unformed, the inchoate, the imperfect".⁴⁴⁵

"Nature imprisons the Natives of our Country within the Seas", Hamond writes in his preface to *The Richest and most Fruitfull Island*, "but Art revengeth the injury, and by the Invention of Shipping, makes us free of the whole World, and joynes our Island to the remotest continent".⁴⁴⁶ Where we earlier noted a critique of travellers, *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island* asks venturers to boldly travel in the noble pursuit of free trade. In this conception of freedom, England does not aspire to Madagascar's island contentment, nor are the surrounding waters seen

⁴⁴³ See Derek Attridge, *Peculiar Language: Literature as Difference from the Renaissance to James Joyce* (1988; repr., London: Routledge, 2004), 17--46. Attridge uses Puttenham's text as an exemplar of the various ways in which the merit and mechanism of poetic language was contrarily portrayed either in terms of artifice or nature. He likens this conceptual pairing to Jacques Derrida's observation on the supplement, a concept where opposite connotations coexisted in use. More recently, Jenny Mann has identified the use of a similar such paradoxical notion in Renaissance textual cultures. Mann looks at rhetorical manuals and their treatment of the category of *Parenthesis* and the concomitant "impossibility of distinguishing between necessary and disposable pieces of text". See Jenny C. Mann, "Sidney's 'Insertour': Arcadia, Parenthesis, and the Formation of English Eloquence," *English Literary Renaissance* 39, no. 3 (2009): 460--98.

⁴⁴⁴ Tayler, *Nature and Art in Renaissance Literature*, 36.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Hamond, *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, sig. A3r.

as a defense against Continental vices. The gains from developments in navigational techniques and shipping are only one part of the liberty sought in the arena of colonial trade. Advocacy for free trade was often framed by specific domestic or international constraints. The commitments enunciated might have been universalist -- notably, for instance, in the Spanish theologian Francisco de Vitoria's conception of the 'whole world' or *totus orbis*, or his call for peaceful coexistence through an *ius communicationis* -- which included the duty of local rulers to respect trade between nations and the right to travel over land and sea.⁴⁴⁷ Yet freedom was often invoked in the context of specific mercantile anxieties with respect to a domineering domestic or foreign competitor.⁴⁴⁸ And so it is with Hamond, who puts forward England's aspirations as a global trading power by first declaring that the "sun doth neither set nor rise, but where we are admitted, or make our selves free denizens," and then qualifying this universalist sentiment with the aggressive boast that "farthest Nations acknowledge us either with veneration or terrour".⁴⁴⁹

Hamond declares that this show of strength follows as a reaction to "the scornfull folly of our Neighbours reproacheth us with the name of Islanders".⁴⁵⁰ He portrays the emergence of navigation as a national project as a triumph achieved in the face of continental condescension: "we have enlarged our victories on the maine Lande, and by being immured with the water, gained the

⁴⁴⁷ See Martin C. Ortega, "Vitoria and the Universalist Conception of International Relations," in *Classical Theories of International Relations*, eds. Ian Clark and Iver B. Neumann (London: Macmillan, 1996), 99--119.

⁴⁴⁸ William Pettigrew develops this argument in relation to the rhetoric of freedom as developed by competing slave traders who opposed the monopoly of the Royal African Company. See William Pettigrew, *Freedom's Debt: The Royal African Company and the Politics of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1672-1752* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

⁴⁴⁹ Hamond, *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, sig. A3r.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

privilege to be Chief Masters of that Element”.⁴⁵¹ While nature required acceptance of what it ventured forth, the art of navigation facilitated the creation of the very wealth previously derided in *A Paradox*. The poetic geography is inverted, with an emphasis now on the island’s potential as a conduit for ‘free’ trade.

In the pursuit of navigation as a means to trade, Hamond positions England as worthy emulators to the Romans “our forefathers” who “in their discoveries left us a noble envie of their fortunate attempts”.⁴⁵² This praise moves in a direction counter to the vision in *A Paradox* of travel and trade as an exercise in bacchanalian excess and debauchery. The anti-imperial image of overseas ambitions as a path to excess or futile overreach was often put forward using the decline of the Roman empire as an exemplary case.⁴⁵³ In *the Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, overstretching boundaries is not a sure path to degeneracy. Rather, by projecting Madagascar, England is fulfilling its destiny of becoming an empire to be reckoned with, an erstwhile Roman outpost realising itself as a New Rome. Hamond uses this colonial analogy to broaden his pitch on several fronts. In order to assuage doubts regarding the profitability of planting at the relatively untrodden shores of Madagascar, he harkens back to the scant prospects that greeted “the Romans, in that glorious Age” who “employed their most famed Generals; in discovery of remotest Islands, and our owne had the Honour to be invaded by the greatest Caesar”.⁴⁵⁴ Underlying Hamond’s invocation of Britain’s

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ See Hadfield, “The Benefits of a Warm Study,” 101. Cf. David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 127--129.

⁴⁵⁴ Hamond, *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, sig. A2r.

past was a vision of the island's pre-civilised beginnings echoed in Edmund

Spenser's *Fairie Queene*:

Ne was it Iland then, ne was it paisde
Amid the Ocean waves, ne was it sought
Of Merchants far, for profits therein praised,
But was all desolate, & of some thought ⁴⁵⁵

But where Britain was at first sparse in its prospects, Hamond is also certain that Madagascar is not in the same position. “the largenesse and fertility of the Island of Madagascar,” he says, “promiseth you a far more rich returne”.⁴⁵⁶ The colonial analogy is then employed to plead minimal interference from the East India Company, which opposes the Courtens' ambitions at Madagascar. Hamond does this by warning about the negative consequences such domestic rivalry between trading factions would have for England's might in the arena of international competition. Since Madagascar is presented only as an intermediate goal in the larger horizon of English aspirations to dominate Indian and East Indian trading ports, Hamond warns that “the Indies can afford no people more divided in it selfe then we were; more weake in fortresses on land or ships at Sea”.⁴⁵⁷ Finally, in Britain's own example, in which “time” has taken the path of progress initiated by the Romans who “hath reformed us to the Excellency we now so much glory in”, is replicated in the desire for England's civilisational mission in Madagascar.⁴⁵⁸ This mission allows Courten's commission to transcend its strategic purpose and adopt the language of honour in the dedication, which states: “Captaine Bond (to whom I dedicate this weak Description of the Island, as

⁴⁵⁵ *The Faerie Queene* Book 2, Canto 10, stanza 5, quoted in John Speed, *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine* (London: Printed for Iohn Sudbury and George Humble, 1611), 1.

⁴⁵⁶ Hamond, *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, sig. A2r.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

I am confident the Island shortly will it selfe) is now following their glorious tracke, and may arrive to be an equall wonder to after History”.⁴⁵⁹ Madagascar is advanced as a subject of imperial reform by analogising contemporary English designs for empire with the Roman takeover of Britain.

Since Madagascar’s inhabitants are now seen as in need of improvement, the narrative stance towards them undergoes a significant shift. In *A Paradox*, Madagascar’s islanders are lauded for their noble self-sufficiency, and their concord with nature is deemed worthy enough to be recommended to Hamond’s compatriots. In the subsequent pamphlet, the communal existence of the islanders is no longer described independently of the needs of the potential colonisers. They are framed entirely as subservients, whether as a resource or as a deficiency which needs to be suppressed and subjected to the regime of future settlers. The instrumental nature of the colonial gaze that had remained tacit in the ethnographic description of *A Paradox* is now made explicit. *A Paradox* contrasted the attitudes of the English and the inhabitants of Madagascar on the utopian themes of knowledge, wealth, property and diet. As a rhetorical proof, it advanced arguments within a framework of virtue. These virtues constitute a prelapsarian lifestyle that was in harmony with nature and were assumed to bear a wisdom which transcends context. In *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, the virtues of the islanders no longer possess an universal appeal. They are given the status of a cultural difference, a matter of opinion that is a good because it profits the English settlers. ‘Gold’ is not seen - like it is in *A Paradox* - as the gateway to the “seaven Capitall sinnes; as Pride, Covetousnesse; Wrath, Gluttony, and the

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., sig. A3r.

rest” as it was in *A Paradox*.⁴⁶⁰ Rather, Hamond regards particular desires as nothing more than a specific cultural attribute in which “opinion” is the “Common judge of Riches, and what in the West is of highest value, as gold and precious gems, among them are esteemed trifles, as our beades and other low-prized vanities, are their riches”.⁴⁶¹

While Hamond’s first advertisement saw the islanders’ nakedness as manifesting “their Innocency and freedome of Nature”, the emphasis in *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island* shifts to the effect that the nakedness might have on English eyes. “Nor did their nakednesse any way tempt us to any uncivill action,” Hamond notes while qualifying the effect the islanders’ nudity had upon the English.⁴⁶² Hamond makes the following observation, “at the first our curiosity made our eyes unchast, but after one weeke they conversed with us, with the same observation as we behold ordinarily our Cattel, and I doe beleeve that apparell and the dresse of Women, alures more then their nakednesse”.⁴⁶³ In this attempt to assure his readers of a chaste settlement, Hamond is invoking a topos of nakedness prevalent in travel writing where a Christian disavowal of temptation and sin was interspersed with the belief that nakedness was a social practice indicative of sexual proclivity and unruliness.⁴⁶⁴ In the second pamphlet, the ethnographically-themed paragraphs engage with only three other topics -- their practices of justice, equity and fidelity -- all of which Hamond records as being beneficial for settlers’ future transactions with native inhabitants. *The Richest and most Fruitful Island* still does retain an Edenic imagery, to demonstrate for

⁴⁶⁰ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. E2r.

⁴⁶¹ Hamond, *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, sig. Av.

⁴⁶² Ibid., sig. B3v.

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ See Kim M. Phillips, *Before Orientalism: Asian Peoples and Cultures in European Travel Writing, 1245-1510* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 125--28.

“the Adventurers the most plentiful return, being furnisht with such Commodities as no other Plantation ever afforded” and also to assure them of the natives’ character as “a people approaching in some degree neere Adam, naked without guilt, and innocent, not by a forc’t vertue, but by ignorance of evill”.⁴⁶⁵ “But”, Hamond makes sure to qualify, “what particularly perswades us to this Honourable Expedition, nature hath ingrafted in their soules a strange affection towards our nation, & by their submisse enterteining us, seemes to prophesie the easinesse of that victory we are even courted to”.⁴⁶⁶ From these statements, and from the underlying emphasis in *A paradox*, we can infer that the financial risks of resistance from the islanders seem to be as much of a concern as the commodiousness of the island.

Hamond makes the case that the English are in a special position of receiving the islanders ‘affection’ as they actively seek the protection of the former. While nature is a good in that it provides “the commodities and riches of this island”, Art takes precedence as it alone knows how to make the most ‘judicious’ use of nature. The English as the purveyors of ‘art’ are then well placed to reap the island’s advantages. While the inhabitants are “lazier”, preferring neither to plant or sow, Hamond ascribes to the English the judiciousness to discern Madagascar’s best uses. He writes: “we sayle not to this Island to plant, but to reape, and no sooner shall we arrive but we shall find our harvest, so many wealthy Commodities there attending onely the leasure of the happie Adventurer, and perishing for want of the Iudicious, who know how to distinguish what Nature hath so liberally enlarged”.⁴⁶⁷ Before Hamond, Bacon’s epistemological

⁴⁶⁵ Hamond, *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, sig. A3r.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. A3r--sig. Av.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

emphasis on discernment and the concomitant manipulation of nature culminated in the utopian institution of Saloman's House in *New Atlantis*, with the following designs: "the knowledge of causes, and secret motions of things; and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire, to the effecting of all things possible".⁴⁶⁸ The mercantile impetus for gathering geographical knowledge for strategic and financial use overlapped with the intellectual project of 'enlarging the bounds of human' empire. In this regard, the scientist, the merchant and the imperial agent shared similar endaeuvres. The motive - and capacity - to exercise judicious discernment over an unspoilt nature would serve the justification and self-understanding of colonial missions that sought to enlarge the bounds of an English empire.

After justifying the imperial claim over the island's harvest, Hamond turns to the treatment of its denizens. His phrase -- "this Virgin Island of Madagascar" -- refers to both its geography and its inhabitants.⁴⁶⁹ The associated figuration of the island as a feminine, 'unspoilt' virgin calls forth what Shankar Raman describes as the "sexualised image of the land as a woman waiting for, even desiring, her own deflowering", which in turn "underscores both the masculinist construction of colonial agency and the misogyny that was its ineluctable counterpart."⁴⁷⁰

Hamond seeks to mitigate any sense of entitlement by mentioning the ways the islanders may benefit from conquest. He notes:

⁴⁶⁸ Bacon, "New Atlantis," 480.

⁴⁶⁹ Hamond, *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, sig. 14v.

⁴⁷⁰ Shankar Raman, *Renaissance Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 38. Raman employs this argument in the context of Walter Raleigh's virginal description of Guiana.

But we intend not to betray them to servitude, though conquest lyes open to us: Religion and the Arts wee shall instruct them in, will be sufficient gaine to them, for whatsoever riches their Country shall afford us. But how happy soever our fortune may be, they will share at least with us, and perhaps preceed us: For what will bee our wealth, will no way impoverish them; and what will enable us at our returne, cannot make their treasure one graine the lighter. ⁴⁷¹

This announcement of a colonial quid pro quo is reminiscent of the utopians' colonial design in More's *Utopia* undertaken in the shadow of an ultimatum to violence, in which the natives will have benefits accrued to them only from being colonised. The change of tone from *A Paradox* is remarkable; Hamond's emphasis shifts from assuring that the islanders would pose no threat to the colonial expedition to presiding over the terms by which the English pose a threat to the islanders. In *A Paradox*, the makeshift housing of the islanders -- in which "in the space of halfe an houre, they have planted and removed their dwellings" -- was celebrated for "their free Estate and condition, using them but as Tabernacles for the present".⁴⁷² The writer who had previously admired the "noothing to loose" attitude of inhabitants not oppressed by a "covetous Landlord" was, by the subsequent pamphlet, ready to effectively dispossess them.⁴⁷³ Their land is now viewed as virginal, neither planted upon nor sown and therefore unclaimed. Subsequently, the only significant question that remains is which European colonial power has the prerogative to possess the island. The special 'affection' of the islanders for the English over the Portuguese, and their resultant willingness to convert to 'superior' English ways is invoked to make this claim.

⁴⁷¹ Hamond, *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, sig. Av.

⁴⁷² Hamond, *A Paradox*, n.p.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, n.p.

However, at the very end of his pamphlet's proposition, Hamond turns from the More-like hypothesis of the benefits to the colonised islanders. Now the natives of Madagascar themselves seek redemption from a Satanic regime by appealing to the English colonists. About the natives seeking a Christian fellowship, Hamond concludes:

This Virgin Island of Madagascar, doth here by me friendly and lovingly invite our Nation to take some compassion of her Nakednesse, her Poverty, and her Simplicity, both Corporall, and Spirituall, and doth earnestly and affectionately, even beg of us to Redeeme her out of her miserable thraldome, under the Tyranny of Satan, to be united with us into the fellowship of the Sons of God, by our Union in Christ Jesus.⁴⁷⁴

With the inversion of *A Paradox* now complete, the circle has run its course. Hamond had started his paradox by seeking to disprove the notion that the islanders' nakedness, poverty and simplicity were defects. He argued that precisely these so-called defects allowed them to "injoy the happiest-condition which Mankind can live in" while the English in their clothing, wealth and learning had succumbed to a "Gluttony" which "hath killed more than the sword".⁴⁷⁵ In the conclusion to *The Richest and Most Fruitful island*, Hamond reverts to stating precisely what he had undertaken to disprove in *A Paradox*. He does this even more insistently by claiming that the islanders understood themselves through this dichotomy and desired to emancipate themselves from the defects that had left them in thrall of the English. If wonder was a mode through which the English had encountered the New World, we see here that it was also projected onto the natives of Madagascar who, as claimed, were

⁴⁷⁴ Hamond, *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, sig. Av.

⁴⁷⁵ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. F2v.

possessed by the superior customs of the English.⁴⁷⁶ Like the cornucopian image in the folk utopia of Cockayne, in which the pig walks with a knife attached to its hide so that the glutton may partake of it, the natives of Madagascar too seem willingly to invite the English to usurp their habitation.

Witnessing and counting the island's riches: Madagascar as mercantilist utopia

Hamond's call to plant was an artful one, in which the ability to optimally exploit resources provided the grounds on which they could discursively take possession of the land. The conceit of *A Paradox* was particularly ill-suited for such a purpose as it sought to garner attention through a display of rhetorical ironism, the declarations of which would take on an anti-colonial tenor. But if the paradox did not suit the purposes of the commission, then what did the commissioners require of their promoter? Quite simply, Hamond was broadly required to serve as a reporter. His reports of the island's prospects would gain credibility because of his status as an eyewitness, which in turn derived from the stopovers he made at the island while traveling as a ship surgeon. The description of the island in *A Paradox* mentions his role as traveler familiar with the island, having visited it "diverse times in the Honourable East India Companies Service: And once resident there Foure Moneths together".⁴⁷⁷ In *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, Hamond's role as witness is foregrounded and even worked into the scheme of the pamphlet.

⁴⁷⁶ See Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991).

⁴⁷⁷ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. A3r.

In a painting for an earlier promotion of Madagascar, the Earl of Arundel aims a compass at the globe, pointing to the outline of the great island as an impassive Lady Arundel looks on. In the act of locating, the Earl was simultaneously discovering, possessing, and making a gift of the island. Similarly, Hamond in his dedication to John Bond writes:

I here present you with the Island you aime at, drawne in a little Tablet, the Cloath course, and the colours poore, and ill laid, but it may challenge the better reception, in regard it was taken to the life by me an eye witsse, in whom the memory of that fruitfull and pleasant Countrey so far prevailes, that it makes me ambitious to forsake my Native, and wait upon you thither: if you will please to admit me.⁴⁷⁸

Like the Earl of Arundel, Bond is aiming at locating the island in a chart, as preliminary gesture that initiates possession. Hamond's construction of the witness involves an avowal of simplicity in its presentation of memory. His insistence on reducing the estimation of his writing is better understood through Montaigne's essay *On Cannibals*. Here, Montaigne seeks to validate his commentary on the people of the New World by characterising his informant as "a simple and rough-hewen fellow: a condition fit to yeelde a true testimony".⁴⁷⁹ Montaigne believes the sincere report to be one that is delivered by "a man so simple, that he may have no invention to builde-upon, and to give a true likelyhoode unto false devises, and be not wedded to his own will".⁴⁸⁰ Hamond's eyewitness account also involves desire; not the desire of the prospector guided by the future of his investment, but that of the famished traveler who has chanced upon an oasis, and is willing enough to forsake his own land in order to live in another more abundant one.

⁴⁷⁸ Hamond, *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, sig. A3v.

⁴⁷⁹ Montaigne, "Of the Canniballes," 101.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

Unlike a proof, which claims its efficacy through the construction of its arguments, Hamond's testimony sought to impress upon its readers that this was a recountal dictated by sight rather than by the machinations of language and reason. The appearance of guilelessness was important. But what manner of writing could put forward such an appearance? Again, Montaigne offers an prototype, writing in *On Cannibals*:

I would have every man write what he knowes, and no more: not onely in that, but in all other subjects. For one may have particular knowledge of the nature of one river, and experience of the qualitie of one fountaine, that in other things knowes no more then another man: who neverthelesse to publish this little scantling, will undertake to write of all the Phisickes. From which vice proceede divers great inconveniences.⁴⁸¹

In his earlier guise as paradox-monger and aspiring gallant, Hamond had overreached by undertaking to write a treatise on happiness over and beyond the very specific object of his supposed expertise: a survey of Madagascar's prospects. In *A Paradox*, dense with the commonplaces of wisdom literature, Hamond had transacted in generalities vague enough to avoid contestation. In his second pamphlet, however, as if following Montaigne's advice he emphasises the listing of the island's particulars.

The scheme of Hamond's printed work could be evinced from its marginal notes. Printed marginalia in English Renaissance books, as William Slights has remarked, were used either as "maps that could be used to navigate its terrain and to patrol its boundaries" or for providing "either buttressing support or portals for

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

access”.⁴⁸² In terms of function, *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island* mainly uses side notes for emphasis, to direct attention to important points for readers as they evaluated the viability of the Courten project. In *A paradox*, the printer chose not to insert side notes for the part containing the description of Madagascar, employing it only in the section of the paradox either to indicate when a particular stage of the argument was introduced (for instance, ‘nakedness defended’), or to draw attention to commonplaces and to furnish examples. *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island* had a different printer, and the marginalia reflect the change in the purpose of the pamphlet.⁴⁸³ The sidenotes are now not geared to facilitate the argument but are mostly pragmatic in that they either assure investors about the island’s bounty or inform settlers about what to expect while setting up a colony.

There are mainly two distinct types of marginalia in *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*. First, they act as an index of details about the island central to the feasibility of settlement, for instance ‘Augustine Bay’ (that part of the coast which was suited for building the harbour and the colony), or ‘the wholesomenes of the Aire’.⁴⁸⁴ Mirroring Montaigne's advice, there is a pointer drawing attention to ‘a large river discovered to the north of Augustine Bay’.⁴⁸⁵ The ethnographic sections relating to the description of the islanders clearly take on a functional description when the indicators are related to the strategic interests of investors regarding trade (‘An example of their fidelity’, ‘Our first trades with them’) and

⁴⁸² William W E Slights, *Managing Readers: Printed Marginalia in English Renaissance Books* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 20.

⁴⁸³ Between the two pamphlets, Hamond’s printers changed from Nathaniel Butter to Nicholas Bourne. Butter and Bourne as a team had held a publishers’ monopoly on the news-from-abroad trade. At some point during the years between the two pamphlets, Butter was imprisoned, causing Bond to take over the business.

⁴⁸⁴ Hamond, *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, sig. Ar, sig.Bv.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. 9r.

combat ('Their maner of Fight').⁴⁸⁶ The most number of marginalia are reserved for indicating every commodity mentioned in the pamphlet, such as livestock ('cattell', 'oxen' and 'Hogges'), food ('Pepper, cloves & Nutmegs'), or materials ('White Marble' 'Gold. Silver. Copper. Brasse. Iron').⁴⁸⁷ In one instance, in order to support his claim that "Oranges and Limons are here in abundance", Hamond mentions a co-witness 'George Gosnell Purser' in the marginalia, presumably to contest the earlier report that the citrus-bearing fruits so precious to voyagers were not to be found on the island.⁴⁸⁸ Between the two pamphlets, the role of marginalia changes. By the second pamphlet, marginal notes become a way to view the extant commodities at a glance, presumably to aid readers who may not want to peruse the text but merely scan it for business prospects.

However, both *A Paradox* and *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island* share their emphasis on the ends of *plausibility*, seeking in their proofs, the affect of honesty rather than accuracy of portrayal. This plausibility was established through the scientific veneer which could be obtained from geographical manuals such as Robert Boyle's *General heads for the natural history of a country great or small drawn out for the use of travellers and navigators*.⁴⁸⁹ The opposing pressures to be a truth-teller while having to idealise and exaggerate in the process of promoting a colonial venture recalls the biblical episode of the twelve spies. This biblical allegory is invoked in the fable of the twelve spies known as the 'Merchants of Light' in Bacon's *New Atlantis*. The biblical spies are sent on their reconnaissance mission to Canaan and report on the bountiful returns (milk,

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., sig. 8v, sig. B3r.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., sig. B2r, sig. C, sig. Bv.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., sig. Br.

⁴⁸⁹ See Carey, "Inquiries, Heads, and Directions" 25--51.

honey and a giant cluster of grapes), and on the formidable resistance (gigantic inhabitants) that would be encountered were a colony to be planted there. Unwittingly, the spies were meant to reinforce conclusions which had already been determined beforehand. They are at the receiving end of the wrath of an ominous and powerful God, who will not reveal the nature of the game and yet does not hesitate to punish those who flout its rules. This is not the case with Hamond, who as it would turn out, was playing a game of truth-telling without necessarily telling the truth. In 1649, six years after *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, when Robert Waldegrave returns from the island, he rails against Hamond's pamphlet in *Answer to Mr. Boothbie's Book* and calls out "the untruth of it".⁴⁹⁰ In this light, it is not merely a coincidence that Richard Boothby, while promoting the Madagascar venture, would constantly refer to the island as a new 'Canaan'.

Adapting to the winds of discourse: A Humanist pursuit of glory and wit vs. the simpler needs of colonial ventures

In employing the pseudo antithesis, *A Paradox* located its argument in the realm of rhetoric, while *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island* sought plausibility in the realm of mercantilist scrutiny, one where the experience and character of the traveller was evaluated. In the first pamphlet, the reconnaissance report was a mere preparative for the rhetoric of the paradox that was to follow. In the second pamphlet, the advertisement for Madagascar as a colony relied on attracting interest by foregrounding the practicalities of settlement and the potential for extracting commodities. In the trading docks, information was the discursive currency rather than a display of erudition. An advertisement was effective in this

⁴⁹⁰ Waldegrave, *An Answer to Mr Boothbies Book*, 6.

setting when it could idealise or exaggerate the promise of a venture employing the criterion of information used by the investors themselves. The paradox as a utopian form was being outmoded by the end of the seventeenth century.

Tomarken writes about a larger trend, in which,

The vogue for composing paradoxical encomia as independent works seems largely to have passed by the end of the Renaissance. Although still popular in England in drama, in most of Europe the traditional type of mock encomium was preserved chiefly by way of editions and anthologies of older works. The existence of a series of these anthologies was preserved chiefly by way of editions and anthologies of older works.⁴⁹¹

The popularity and eventual decline of the paradox can be traced to the kind of truths it purported to communicate. Like More's *Utopia*, the paradox often aimed to be *nec minus slautaris quam festivus*: 'no less beneficial than entertaining'. In a letter to the theologian Maarten van Dorp, Erasmus addressed Dorp's regret over the publication of *The Praise of Folly* by elaborating that good counsel made in jest was just as effective as one delivered in seriousness. He invokes Horace: "To tell truth with a smile', he [Horace] asks, "does aught forbid?"⁴⁹² Erasmus goes onto explain the uses of humour to make truth agreeable, and writes:

And long ago some very wise men perceived this and thought fit to set out the principles of a good life in fables which are humorous and at first sight childish, because truth by itself is a trifle astringent, and when this made palatable finds an easier entrance into the minds of mortal men.⁴⁹³

Hamond was writing in the context of proprietary colonisation, in which travel reports in particular did not have to aspire to the manner of its classical

⁴⁹¹ Tomarken, *The Smile of Truth*, 231.

⁴⁹² Desiderius Erasmus, "Letter to Dorp," in *The Erasmus Reader*, ed. Erika Rummel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 172.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*

counterparts who were, to use Tomarken's phrase, telling 'the truth smilingly'.⁴⁹⁴ The classical practise of writing travels and cosmographies with a tendency to shock and entertain had been questioned by figures such as Francis Bacon who were central in moving the projects that constituted the new science. In the preface to Bacon's *Sylva Sylvarum*, his admiring editor William Rawley writes:

And the Difference betweene this Naturall History, and others. For those Naturall Histories, which are Extant, being gathered for Delight and Vse, are full of pleasant Descriptions and Pictures; and affect and seeke after Admiration, Rarities, and Secrets. But contrariwise, the Scope which his Lordship intendeth, is to write such a Naturall History, as may be Fundamentall to the Erecting and Building of a true Philosophy: For the Illumination of the Vnderstanding; the Extracting of Axiomes; and the producing of many Noble Works, and Effects. For he hopeth, by this meanes, to acquit Himselfe of that, for which hee taketh Himselfe in a sort bound; And that is, the Aduancement of all Learning and Sciences.⁴⁹⁵

Here Bacon -- or, through him, Rawley -- is keen not to view the project of his natural history as *nec minus slautaris quam festivus*, being staged for "Delight and Vse". And yet this compendium of natural history had appended to it Bacon's grand utopian fiction, *New Atlantis*. There is good reason to believe that the pairing of these works was not arbitrary, they complemented each other despite their obvious differences in style and purpose. While the *Sylva Sylvarum*, a compendium of observations, methods and experiments, displayed what was possible with a new natural philosophical outlook, *New Atlantis* provided a fantasy of a society centred around this knowledge mission. In studying the relation between these two texts, David Colcough notes that "the two texts' shared concern with the organization of knowledge and the management and

⁴⁹⁴ See Tomarken, *The Smile of Truth*, 32.

⁴⁹⁵ Bacon, *Sylva sylvarum*, sig. A2v.

transmission of data: in pursuing this concern they both illuminate and question each other”.⁴⁹⁶

The construction of the new knowledge enterprise is said to be purposed for the “Illumination of the Vnderstanding”. This illumination was said to consist in “the Extracting of Axiomes; and the producing of many Noble Works, and Effects” all of which are seen as a counterweight to “Admiration, Rarities, and Secrets”. Natural history was intimately connected to the practices of cosmography and geography, and therefore to travel writing. In the context of overseas exploration, the imperative for ‘axioms’ gave rise to the aid of manuals such as Robert Boyle’s *General heads for the natural history* (1692).⁴⁹⁷ These axioms were thought to form the basis of the results, the ‘many noble works and effects’ that were to be achieved by these experiments. The expansion of an overseas empire through new colonies and trade factories were part of the ‘works and effects’ to be achieved in *New Atlantis*, highlighting the utopian work’s mercantile interests. Hamond’s *A Paradox* sought to make an impression through ‘delight’, ‘admiration’ and ‘rarities’, but his commissioners, to quote Dryden, found “(e)v’n wit’s a burthen when it talks too long”.⁴⁹⁸ Consequently, the emphasis shifted to ‘many Noble works, and effects’ that were to accrue from settling at the *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*.

⁴⁹⁶ David Colclough, “‘The Materialls for the Building’: Reuniting Francis Bacon’s *Sylva Sylvarum* and *New Atlantis*,” *Intellectual History Review* 20, no. 2 (2010): 191.

⁴⁹⁷ It should be qualified that the notion of Axiom was specially restricted by Bacon to mean empirical laws whereas Boyles work is basically a set of principles for description.

⁴⁹⁸ John Dryden, “Juvenal: Satyr VI,” (573), quotation from John Dryden, *The Works of John Dryden: vol. 4, 1693--1696*, eds. A. B. Chambers, William Frost and Vinton A. Dearing (Los Angeles: University of California Press), 183.

Bacon's preferential projection of natural history exemplifies the resistance to what some thinkers saw as the untruth and linguistic trickery of the paradox.⁴⁹⁹ When Bacon railed against intellectual undertakings that used 'admiration, rarities and secrets' to 'delight and use', he may well have been directing his ire at the paradox -- the rhetorical form that epitomises this description. As Peter Platt explains, there existed in the contemporary glossaries and handbooks of the English Renaissance a "nexus of paradox, wonder, and knowledge".⁵⁰⁰ John Florio defined the paradox (*paradoso*) as "a marvellous, wonderfull and strange thinge to heare, and a contrarie to the common received opinion"; similarly George Puttenham saw it as the figure of the 'the Wondrer' employed "to report of a thing that is maruelous, and then he will seeme not to speake it simply but with some signe of admiration."⁵⁰¹ In Stephen Greenblatt's view, European expressions of wonder were the outcome of language being tested at its limits in the face of the experiential and conceptual incommensurability that was thrown up by the New world.⁵⁰² However, it is also possible to locate the affectation of wonder in classical and humanist rhetorical practices, as Andrew Fitzmaurice has done with respect to colonial promotion in America. Studying the role of humanist political philosophy and rhetoric in colonial promotion, Fitzmaurice notes that wonder served two purposes: one, to shock or fear readers with images of the unfamiliar in order to draw their attention; and two, to create an amplified environment so that the audience may agree more easily with the propositions

⁴⁹⁹ For a look at how various Renaissance thinkers such as Locke, Hobbes, and Galileo were opposed to the paradox as a model of truth, see Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica*, 508--20.

⁵⁰⁰ Platt, *Shakespeare and the Culture of Paradox*, 19.

⁵⁰¹ John Florio, *A worlde of wordes, or Most copious, and exact dictionarie in Italian and English* (London: Printed for Edward Blount, 1598), 257; George Puttenham, *The arte of English poesie Contriuied into three bookes* (London: n.p, 1589), 189.

⁵⁰² Greenblatt likens the European reaction to initial New World encounters to a "startle" reflex which was negotiated through the notion of wonder. See Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, 14.

put forward.⁵⁰³ In seeking to provoke strangeness, Hamond perhaps hoped that Erasmus would be proven correct in saying that “(t)he more unfamiliar the things are the more pleasure the description will give and the longer one may dwell on it”.⁵⁰⁴ Transposing Puttenham’s characterisation of the paradox as the ‘reporter of the marvellous’ onto Hamond, we must wonder what was that “thing that is marvelous” which Hamond’s *A Paradox* reported?

The topic of virtue lies at the heart of Hamond’s presentation. Wonder was to be provoked by proving that virtue was present where it was least expected and vice versa. Hamond set himself the task of proving that the inhabitants of Madagascar were the happiest people in the world despite their poverty, nakedness and ignorance. This proposition by itself might have been deemed curious enough to set in motion the game between wit and reader. Working within the auspices of the paradox, Hamond went a step further by setting up a contrast between the virtuous lifestyle of the islanders, and the material corruption afflicting his countrymen, the so-called ‘rich Gallant, understanding men of Europe’. This dichotomy was elaborated around the virtues of courage, moderation and honour on the one hand, and the excesses of greed and violence on the other. This interplay between virtue and corruption as the organising principle of Hamond’s discourse derived from a colonial outlook shaped by humanist values and traditions. As Fitzmaurice’s study demonstrates, authors of promotional pamphlets “possessed certain distinctive attitudes, or conventional sentiments, to a field of related political values, including glory, honour, virtue,

⁵⁰³ Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America*, 123--24.

⁵⁰⁴ Desiderius Erasmus, “De copia,” in *Collected works of Erasmus*, ed. Craig R Thompson, vol. 24 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 582, quoted in Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America*, 123.

duty, corruption, profit or advantage, possession, fear, violence and persuasion”.⁵⁰⁵ These attitudes comprised the core of sixteenth century political discourse and were adapted to aid the conception and promotion of colonies. Until the first quarter of the seventeenth century, Fitzmaurice notes, “Humanism shaped colonisation in characteristic ways. The highest aim of the projects was honour and glory. It was consistently argued that expedience, and profit, should be subordinated to honour and the common good”.⁵⁰⁶ As Fitzmaurice argues, for “early English would-be colonisers”, “glory had to be separated from profit and allied to the exercise of virtues such as courage in death, temperance in subduing desire”.⁵⁰⁷ But unlike the stark contrasts contained in paradoxes, the sixteenth-century humanist promoter argued for a “Ciceronian humanist balance of honour and profit in the pursuit of glory”.⁵⁰⁸ Profit was justified as a legitimate aim if “it was subordinate to the pursuit of honourable and pious ends”.⁵⁰⁹ For his part, Hamond had failed to maintain, or to convey such a balance in *A Paradox*. In his next pamphlet, Hamond remedied some of these deficiencies.

Hamond’s subsequent pamphlet undid the contrasts and aimed to unite honor, glory and virtue with the worldlier concerns for profit, expedience and wealth. “The highest aim of humanism,” Fitzmaurice writes, “was glory, and what better way to achieve glory, promoters of colonies asked, than to conquer barbarian lands?”⁵¹⁰ In *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island* Hamond writes glory into the proposed colony of Madagascar by promising to “Redeeme her out of her

⁵⁰⁵ Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America*, 13.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

miserable thraldome, under the Tyranny of Satan, to be united with us into the fellowship of the Sons of God, by our Union in Christ Jesus”.⁵¹¹ As with More’s colonising utopians, the proposed intervention was posed as a virtuous exchange. Hamond clarifies: “We intend not to betray them to servitude, though conquest lyes open to us: Religion and the Arts wee shall instruct them in, will be sufficient gaine to them, for whatsoever riches their Country shall afford us”.⁵¹²

Fitzmaurice’s interpretation of early European colonial activity holds that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century colonial projects were not entirely motivated by commerce. “It was”, he writes, “a Renaissance preoccupation with the pursuit of glory that motivated colonisers and a concern with corruption that lent their designs a distinctive nervousness and that inspired their opponents”.⁵¹³

Interpreting Hamond in terms of the frame offered by Fitzmaurice, we can see the argument of *The Richest and most Fruitful island* as prioritising “the platform for an empire of commerce”, even as the discourse of glory and honour featured as a salient presence.⁵¹⁴

Fitzmaurice singles out John Smith’s epitaph to More’s *Utopia* as an example of a “new colonial ideology” in which “expedience, including profit, could be elevated above honour and virtue as the motive for colonising.”⁵¹⁵ Writing in 1624 as the Virginia Company was being folded up, Smith declared: ‘I am not so simple to thinke that ever any other motive than wealth will ever erect there a

⁵¹¹ Hamond, *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, sig. 14.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, sig. Av.

⁵¹³ Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America*, 187.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 194.

commonwealth.’⁵¹⁶ In his study *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, David Armitage tracks the emergence of trade as an affair to be included within the discourse of state to the years following the Restoration. Commerce would become the prime mover of colonial discourse for early modern overseas possessions, whose imperial status was vastly different from the Roman and Neo-Roman understanding of empire. The earlier focus on the classical dilemma that existed between the contrary principles of liberty and empire were diluted to such an extent that William Wood would declare in 1718 that “the Theory of TRADE is a Princely Science, and the true Regulation of it the Key of Empire”.⁵¹⁷

As an apprentice- turned-surgeon, Hamond was ultimately a low-ranking participant in this transition from honour to profit. This transition, though borne out in the commissions and omissions of the two Madagascar pamphlets, is never explicitly stated. The pamphlets’ scope is local and refers only to a minor colonial venture rather than to colonial ideology at large. Hamond’s pamphlets also lack the argumentative sophistication that might be encountered in the more learned utopian commentators such as More or Bacon. Yet, the two advertisements taken together can be seen as a litmus test for the varying ideological justifications that had appealed to colonial stakeholders at a particular historical moment. They display diametrically opposite changes in both tenor and message. The extensive overhaul carried out in Hamond’s latter pamphlet implies that the promotional strategies undertaken in *A Paradox* were rejected. While an emphasis on honour is more markedly present in *A Paradox*, in both pamphlets what was sought was

⁵¹⁶ John Smith, *The Generall History of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles* (London, 1624), 219, quoted in Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America*, 194.

⁵¹⁷ William Wood, *A Survey of Trade* (London, 1718), vi, quoted in Armitage, *The Ideological Origins*, 146.

not so much a balance between honour and profit, rather the presence of honour was required, and summoned, to make profit look respectable.

In Hamond's *A Paradox*, the description was deemed as the preparative, secondary to the chief subject of the paradox. There was the additional anomaly that the honour was reserved not for the colonisers but for the natives. If the paradox dealt with virtue and honour, the 'description' was a deliberation on commerce, an enumeration of strategic knowledge that would help persuade how profit could be made. In *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, these priorities are reversed. The component dealing with honour and glory (viz. the colonial analogy touting England as the new Rome ready to civilise Madagascar) features only in a brief dedication, while the discourse about profit (viz. a description of the island's riches) forms the main text. In Hamond's first pamphlet, the plainness of the description acted as a preparative to the rhetorical sections, whereas in the second the rhetoric of the colonial analogy acted as a preparative to the plainness of the island's inventory of its commodities.

Honour and profit formed two parallel tracks, the avowal of the former allowing the pursuit of the latter. In the transition from Hamond's *A Paradox* to *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, Madagascar's projection moved from being a realm of happiness to being a trove of riches. One type of utopian vision replaced another; the More-like emphasis on a harmonious state driven by the practices of virtue and moderation gave way to the desire for a cornucopian island-paradise fired up by mercantilist designs. This transition demonstrates the shifting utopian lenses employed to idealise the colony. Were this shift to be cast in the vocabulary

of classical statecraft, the move from ‘happiness’ to ‘riches’ can be seen as one where the colony went from being idealised as a ‘polis’ (in which colonisation is envisioned as providing a superior government) to being idealised as an ‘emporia’ (in which the colony is celebrated as a peripheral resource in terms of its uses for the imperial centre).

That Madagascar was conceptualised as an ‘emporia’ in Hamond’s scheme is indicated by a set of statements towards the end of *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*. Hamond seems aware that his audience would be suspicious that such a large, well-situated, and purportedly bountiful island would have already been occupied by one of their fellow European colonial rivals. He lets his readers know, “(n)or can either Spaniard or Portugall here claime any title, having had never any footing here, much lesse that they should any way oppose us, they having more Forts in India already then they are able to hold, and are almost beaten off of their Trades since the English and Dutch used those Seas”.⁵¹⁸ Soon after, he presents the Portuguese colonisation of the island of Ormus as a model for colonial enterprise, where “Ormus a barren Island, or rather a Rock of salt, yet by the industry of the Portugalls in a few yeares; by forcing the Indian trade thither, it became the greatest Mart in the world”.⁵¹⁹ Where its prior attraction derived from its inhabitants being the ‘happiest people in the world’, Madagascar is now positioned to emulate ‘the greatest mart in the world’. The emporia is now the new desirable template for the idealisation of the colony. This decisive turn is also suggested by the forthcoming promotional pamphlets for Madagascar. The next Madagascar pamphlet -- composed by the merchant Richard Boothby -- was to

⁵¹⁸ Hamond, *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island*, sig. 14.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

follow four years after Hamond's *The Richest and Most Fruitful Island* was published. Boothby presented the island as the "chiefest place in the world to enrich men by Trade, to and from India, Persia Moco, Achine, China, and other rich Easterne Kingdomes. It being the fittest place for a Magazine or Store-house of Trade between Europe and Asia, farre exceeding all other Plantations in America or elsewhere".⁵²⁰ But positive reports of Madagascar's viability as a colony ended with Boothby's merchant fantasy of the island.

In the decades following the Courten Company's failure to settle a colony in Madagascar, the big island did not feature as the principal subject of any English textual project. In England, the dream of Madagascar was withdrawn from circulation. William Courten's legacy suffered a similar fate after his death in 1636; George Carew, an associate of Courten was appointed by Charles II to administer the Courten estate. In a pamphlet of remonstrance, Carew made an appeal for action against the Dutch East India company for capturing the *Bona Esperanza* and *Henry Bonaventura*, two vessels sent out by Courten's son William esq. for trade in the East Indies. The merchant John Darrell included his testimony in Carew's complaint and listed a series of failed ventures, of the "great Debts contracted" by Courten "in the Factories, places of Trade, Customs, and Plantations of Dabull, Jettapore, Goa, Cocheen, Coulan, Batticalla, and Allepore, along the Sea-coast of India and Mallabar, with Vizipore, Rabagg, Harripore and Rajapore, up-land, also Acheen upon Sumatra in the Straights of Malacca, and Bellasore in the bottom of the Bay of Bengala, together with China Trade, and

⁵²⁰ Boothby, *A Briefe Discovery*, frontispiece.

[the] Madagascar plantation” .⁵²¹ The loss of the “*Madagascar* plantation”, is included among other losses accrued by the Courten family, a circumstance that Carew dubs as an “inestimable Losse of the whole Kingdome”.⁵²² Similarly, French failure in Madagascar was mentioned in an anonymous pamphlet printed on behalf of an English merchant involved in an overseas trade dispute with a French merchant. The complaint advised “that the French Secretary of State hath forty Thousand Livers stock with the Marshall de Mill Ree, in that unluckie Madagascar designe”.⁵²³ Other than such fragmentary reminders of the colonies that were not to be, references to Madagascar were once again relegated to fleeting mentions in works of cosmography, navigational handbooks and mercantile newsbooks. The next chapter retrieves the significance of Madagascar in a popular Restoration-era pamphlet of dubious authenticity, Henry Neville’s *The Isle of Pines*. As we will see, Neville’s utopian fantasy betrays an awareness of the Courten Association’s failed expedition to Madagascar and the grand promotions that preceded it. Given that Neville’s text was also a satirical commentary on English colonial hubris, it is only fitting that the vicissitudes of Hamond’s grand design finds a place in it.

⁵²¹ John Darell’s attestation is included in George Carew, *Fraud and violence discovered and detected, or, A remonstrance of the interested in the ships Bona Esperanza and Henry Bona Adventura of London* (London: Printed for George Carew, 1662), 138.

⁵²² *Ibid.*

⁵²³ Robert Oxwick, *A Remonstrance or narrative by way of complaint to the Kings most excellent Majesty, and the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament in behalf of Robert Oxwicke and company* (London, 1660), 3.

“Wat Eylant is dit?”: Locating the utopian motifs of Henry Neville’s *The Isle of Pines* in early modern accounts of Madagascar

In the wake of Madagascar’s failed colonisation in the seventeenth century, its potential as a playground for paradoxes had seemingly dwindled. Writing in 1649, Waldegrave provided a fitting conclusion, excoriating Boothby and Hamond for their “Canaanizing and Paradising” projections.⁵²⁴ However, there was one exception. Madagascar would appear as a stray yet significant reference in a pamphlet of anonymous authorship, *The Isle of Pines; or, A late Discovery of a fourth Island in Terra Australis, Incognita* published in June 1668. The interest generated by the pamphlet’s curious contents was such that by the end of the year there were at least four editions in English, an equal number of versions (translated or abridged) in Dutch and French, three in Italian, two in Danish, and thirteen in German.⁵²⁵ In this report -- or tale -- of discovery, a Dutch ship bound for the East Indies in 1667 halts at Madagascar to trade with native islanders.⁵²⁶ As they leave the island, they are caught in violent storms that force them across the ocean onto uncharted territory; their ship eventually happens upon an island

⁵²⁴ Waldegrave, *An answer to Mr. Boothbies book*, 5.

⁵²⁵ For a survey of the various editions of *The Isle of Pines*, see Mahlberg, “Authors Losing Control,” 1--25.

⁵²⁶ One of the earliest composite editions of *The Isle of Pines* is included in Worthington Chauncey Ford, *The Isle of Pines 1668: An Essay in Bibliography* (Boston: The Club of Odd Volumes, 1920). More recent editions of *The Isle of Pines* are to be found in Derek Hughes, ed., *Versions of Blackness: Key Texts on Slavery from the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Gregory Claeys, ed., *Restoration and Augustan British Utopias* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 115--30; and Susan Bruce, ed., *Three Renaissance Utopias: Utopia, New Atlantis, The Isle of Pines* (Oxford: World’s Classics, 1999). For this chapter, all quotes are referenced to Gaby Mahlberg’s collated edition of *The Isle of Pines*. This edition is chosen as it is both coherent as a single text and comprehensive in accounting for the variations that are to be found in all the three English editions of Neville’s text that were published in 1668. See Henry Neville, “The Isle of Pines: Texts,” *Utopian Studies* 17, no. 1 (2006): 21--75.

“near to the Coast of Terra Australis, Incognita,” where they are greeted by a strange welcome party.⁵²⁷

In the English editions from July 1668, Cornelius Van Sloetten, the captain of the Dutch vessel, is named as the author of the discovery. Addressing the reader, he notes the islanders’ unabashed wonder at seeing the Dutch ship. He writes: “you would have blest your self to see how the naked Islanders flocked unto us, so wondering at our ship, as if it had been the greatest miracle of Nature in whole World.”⁵²⁸ The Dutch too were struck with reciprocal wonder and disbelief, but not because they had encountered something akin to a Mandevillian curiosity. They had to contend with something even more baffling: their courteous hosts were fair-skinned, English-speaking people who looked much like them. Van Sloetten speaks of the islanders admiring “our Cloaths which we did wear, as we on the other side did to find in such a strange place, so many that could speak English, and yet go naked.”⁵²⁹ In their first meal on the island, the Dutch crew are served “such food as that Countrey afforded,” “the Flesh both of Beasts, and Fowls,” and “for bread we had the inside or Kernel of a great Nut as big as an Apple, which was very wholesome, and sound for the body, and tasted to the Pallat very delicious.”⁵³⁰ Between that anomalous image of naked European islanders as New World natives and the attractively plentiful provisions Madagascar is once again implicated in a nexus of paradox and desire; if not as its central object, then as the one known orbit of an unknown isle. Soon after its publication, it was revealed that the unknown isle of the pamphlet was imagined

⁵²⁷ Neville, “The Isle of Pines: Texts,” 25.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*

rather than real, an *ou-topos*, a no-place. The English antiquarian Anthony Wood glossed the margins of his copy of the pamphlet with a scribble on the title page that revealed politician, Republican writer and coffee-house wit Henry Neville as its true author (see Fig 5.1). Below this note, Wood adds another stating that when the text was “first published twas look’d upon as a sham.”⁵³¹

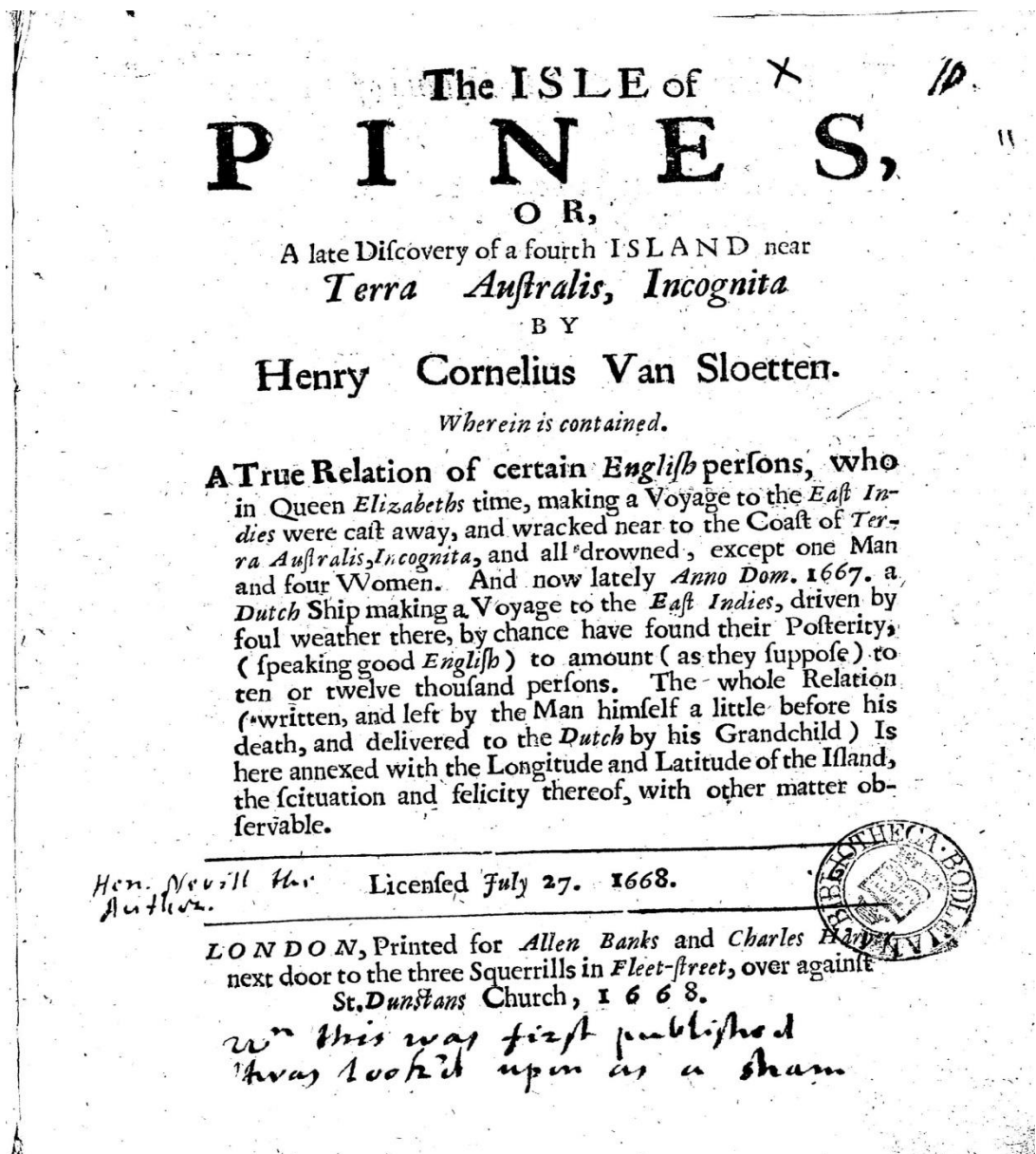


Fig. 5.1, Title-page of Anthony Wood’s copy of *The Isle of Pines* with readers marginalia. 1668, Printed Pamphlet. The Bodleian Library. From: Henry Neville, *The Isle of Pines, or, A late discovery of a fourth island near Terra Australis Incognita* (London: Printed for Allen Banks and Charles Harper, 1668).

⁵³¹ As can be seen in Fig. 3.1, the title page of Wood’s copy of *The Isle of Pines* currently held in the Bodleian Library (Wing N506) contains the reader’s note stating: “Hen. Nevill the Author”

For English colonists, Madagascar, first presented in Adamic overtones had turned out to be a doomed Eden, or as Waldegrave concluded “a cursed Golgotha, than pleasant Canaan”.⁵³² Was the big island now merely an exotic signpost, a port of entry into the fictional possibilities of Terra incognita? This chapter engages with the question of Madagascar’s location with respect to *The Isle of Pines*. It is my contention that Madagascar was more than just a ‘real’ place that camouflaged the elaborate hoax of *The Isle of Pines*; it becomes a multifaceted figure which structures Neville’s utopian imagination and enables us to see the work as participating in a layered commentary on colonial exploration in its time. Neville’s work, I argue, engages with England’s disastrous attempt to colonise Madagascar and presents an origin tale that can also be read as a parable on colonial hubris.

The satirical possibilities and international fame of *The Isle of Pines* can be traced to the ways in which news reports about Madagascar were employed to layer Neville’s utopian report of the island. This chapter responds to Kenneth Knowles Ruthven’s call to produce “archivally based ‘thick descriptions’”, the microhistory of a particular literary forgery.⁵³³ In what follows, I explore an instance where a cartographical error that can be traced to the sixteenth century reemerges as the purported location of *The Isle of Pines* in a seventeenth-century French map. This instance points to the significance of locational concerns that can account for the interest in Neville’s fictional island. Thereafter, I compare two seventeenth-century Portuguese sources reporting a stop made by a Dutch ship at Madagascar to note the remarkable similarities it bears to Neville’s island tale. Returning from

⁵³² Waldegrave, *An answer to Mr. Boothbies book*, 13.

⁵³³ Kenneth Knowles Ruthven, *Faking Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 60.

the world of Iberian sources to the mid-seventeenth century colonial literature of England, I go on to observe similarities between Hamond's *A Paradox* and Neville's treatment of specific themes and passages, especially those concerning colonial promotion. Exploring these intertextual echoes, I argue that reports dealing with Madagascar are crucial to Neville's utopian imagination and the framing of his satirical objects: the lasciviousness and impotence of Restoration monarchical rule in England. The New World, however, was more than just a convenient elsewhere stage for the veiled projection of domestic matters; overseas news reports could actively constitute the ways in which domestic events could come to be viewed and, in Neville's case, lampooned. Tracing connections between Madagascar and *The Isle of Pines* eventually allows us to read Neville's work as a critical commentary on the proposition of abundance that sustained the desire for colonial exploration.

The study of literary forgery, as Anthony Grafton has shown, can stimulate "the development of a richer sense of what the past was really like."⁵³⁴ This chapter draws on a rich array of characters who either a) produce texts whose subject matter eventually figure in Neville's travel hoax, b) employ geographical trajectories similar to those encountered in *The Isle of Pines*, and c) read, interpret and engage with the colonial dimensions of Neville's pamphlets. They include a Portuguese friar Athanasios who writes a letter to the Archbishop of Goa relating a strange incident concerning a Dutch shipwreck in Madagascar, and João de Barros, the official compiler of the Portuguese empire in Asia who includes the friar's letters in his well-known *Decades of Asia*. The cultural

⁵³⁴ Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 6.

imposter Manuel Godinho de Erédia, a mixed race Luso-Malay cosmographer, like Neville shifts the incident reported by Athanasios and Barros from its original location in Madagascar to Terra Australis. In England, Neville reads and borrows from the colonial advertisements for Madagascar authored by Hamond and Boothby. Moving on from these instances that pre-date the printing of *The Isle of Pines*, we will look at responses to Neville's hoax. The French cartographer Pierre Du Val takes the island for a real location and includes it in one of his world maps. His compatriot and scientist Henri Justel deems the report of *The Isle of Pines* to be plausible and writes to the English Royal Society for more details about the island. Finally, more than a century after Neville's text is first published, the British naturalist Joseph Banks procures a copy of *The Isle of Pines* which he intriguingly incorporates within a sammelband that contained more serious scientific texts. In order to understand how these instances, traversing centuries and continents, are cast unto the web spun by *The Isle of Pines*, we need to briefly familiarise ourselves with the contents of Neville's pamphlets, its publication history and its reception.

“Being more a Seaman then a Scholler”: Introducing the plot, publication and reception of Neville's *The Isle of Pines*

In Neville's tale, the island sojourn of the Dutch seafarers is going rather well. After their welcome meal, they are invited to the palace-hut of the native prince, William Pine. As with Bacon's *New Atlantis*, once the appetites of the famished sailors are satisfied, they request their hosts for an account of their origins: “to know of him something concerning their Original and how that people speaking the Language of such a remote Countrey should come to inhabit there, having not,

as we could see, any ships or Boats amongst them the means to bring them thither”.⁵³⁵ William resolves their puzzlement by reading a written account left behind by his grandfather, George Pine, the first person to have set foot on the island, “whose native Countrey was a place called *England*, far distant from this our Land.”⁵³⁶ In the account, George starts out as a bookkeeper to an English merchant who had obtained a permit from Queen Elizabeth in 1569 to establish a factory in East “India”. The merchant takes his entire household, including George Pines, on an Asiatic voyage in a bid to start his new venture. En route, they are within “sight of St. Laurence, an Island so called, one of the greatest in the world,” where - much like the later journey of the Dutch seamen - they are caught up in a great windy storm. The vessel drifts on the ocean for days before being thrust upon an island, leaving the ship and the long boat battered on its rocky shore.⁵³⁷ The crew perishes, but for five survivors who manage to reach the island. George Pine now finds himself marooned on an uninhabited island with four women: his master’s daughter, two servants and “one Negro female slave.”⁵³⁸

For Pine, the island proves to be a Cockaigne-like paradise. The survivors lack no food and, given the balmy weather, need few clothes. Pine proceeds to sleep with all the women in an increasingly licentious manner, and their rotational procreation populates the island. The isle seems to make all its denizens highly fertile. Like the livestock, the hens and cocks that made it from the ship onto the island, Pines and his company too breed exceedingly well and quickly produce forty-seven children between them. The following generations are so prodigiously

⁵³⁵ Neville, “The Isle of Pines: Texts,” 31.

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., 32.

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

fertile that an eighty-year-old Pines counted “one thousand seven hundred eighty-nine children” as the island’s total population.⁵³⁹

Each of Pines’ descendants is named into one of four tribes, the “English,” the “Sparks,” the “Trevors,” and the “Phills” based on which one of Pines’ four wives they originally descended from. With a lone surviving Bible, Pines instructs his subjects on the precepts of the Christian religion and asks them to maintain English as their language and keep the manners of Europe in their conduct. But, as William Pines observes, with “multitudes disorders will grow.”⁵⁴⁰ After the recounting of George Pines’ island tale, the Dutch return from a tour of the island’s countryside to find themselves amidst a factional conflict between two of the four tribes. The head of the *Phils*, the tribe that descended from Pines’ slave-wife, assaults the wife of the principal *Trevor*. William requests the Dutch for armed assistance, and the mere discharge of the latter’s guns are able to scare the *Phils* into submission. After their island excursion, the Dutch set out to trade in India and the East Indies, making one final pit-stop in Madagascar before returning to Europe with their ships “richly laden.”⁵⁴¹

This base narrative of Pine’s tale appeared through several pamphlets, each with variations in format that ended up framing different aspects of the story. In English, the first version appeared as an anonymous pamphlet of nine pages featuring George Pine’s voice recounting his role in founding his island kingdom after the shipwreck. It was licensed on June 27, 1668, though evidence suggests that three to four printings of the same “core text” appeared in London through

⁵³⁹ Ibid., 38.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., 39.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

the summer of 1668.⁵⁴² A second pamphlet published on July 22, 1668 featured Van Sloetten as the discoverer of the island and the bearer of Pine's tale. This version was sparser in that it left out Pine's relation altogether, presenting only a letter from Van Sloetten in which he narrates his voyage to the East Indies when he chances upon a hitherto undiscovered island. The declaration in the frontispiece did not foreground the actual tale itself; it read much like an ethnographic guide common to the travel literature of the time describing "the Scituation of the Country, the temperature of the Climate" and "the Longitude and Latitude of the Island."⁵⁴³ The text itself related the story of the island's discovery and its present state as gathered through an encounter with its current governor, William Pines, while adding information about the ship's return journey and a postscript detailing an anecdote of the natives reaction to a bagpipe.⁵⁴⁴ A third version dated July 27, 1668 incorporated George Pine's relation and other prefatory material to the previous text. The declaration of the pamphlet foregrounded the tale as a "true relation of certain English persons" who have survived a shipwreck and populated the island "(as they suppose) to ten or twelve thousand persons" presenting Van Sloetten as much as a voyaging discoverer as a designated narrator of Pines' story.⁵⁴⁵ As a visual index, it also added a panel of four drawings as a frontispiece to denote the sequence of the plot. The illustrations started with the cast-away ship, followed on to the survivors salvaging the remains of the shipwreck, George Pine numbering his people, and finally the Dutch leaving for Europe with Pine's tale in hand (see Fig. 5.2). While the first three illustrations indicate that the publishers were catering

⁵⁴² Peter G. Stillman, "A Note on the Texts," *Utopian studies* 17, no 1 (2006): 11. Cf Gaby Mahlberg, "The Publishing History of The Isle of Pines," *Utopian studies* 17, no 1 (2006): 93--98.

⁵⁴³ Neville, "The Isle of Pines: Texts," 23.

⁵⁴⁴ Mahlberg notes that this encounter is borrowed from a scene in the anonymously authored travel account *The Golden Coast* (1665) where island natives take a bagpipe for a living creature. See note nr. 9 in Mahlberg, "Authors Losing Control," 4. Cf. *The Golden Coast; or, A description of Guinney* (London, 1665), 80.

⁵⁴⁵ Neville, "The Isle of Pines: Texts," 25.

to the appetite for the fantastical plot regarding Pines and his ever-multiplying descendants, the last panel featuring the Dutch sailors highlights the narratives claim to be a real rather than fictional encounter in an unknown region of the New World.

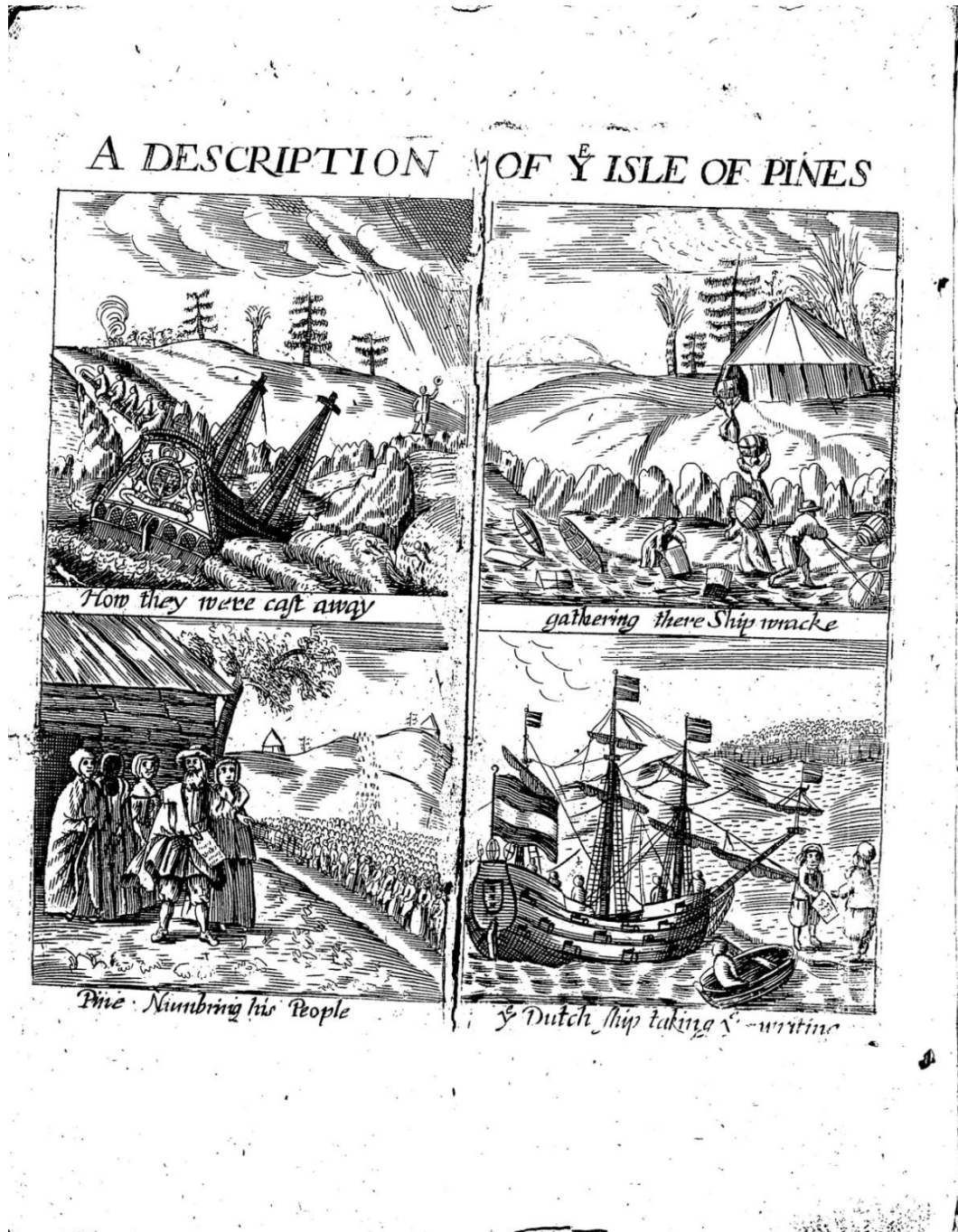


Fig. 5.2, Frontispiece of the July edition of *The Isle of Pines*. 1668, Printed Pamphlet. The Bodleian Library. From: Henry Neville, *The Isle of Pines, or, A late discovery of a fourth island near Terra Australis Incognita* (London: Printed for Allen Banks and Charles Harper, 1668). These editions followed each other in quick succession, with each version

increasingly incorporating the epistolary format and rhetoric of colonial

exploration and international news. Where the Dutch sailors only feature in the title of the first text, Captain Van Sloetten is the lead narrator in the second version. The third edition even features “Two Letters concerning the Island of Pines to a Credible person in Covent Garden” from an Abraham Keek -- the name of a radical-sympathiser Dutch Merchant.⁵⁴⁶ The first letter informed about a trustworthy source that had heard of a French ship which came upon the island, while the second letter promised that further enquiries would be made.

At its very least, *The Isle of Pines* was a widely-circulated pamphlet, a shipwreck tale, a bawdy curiosity, a possibly true report of discovery of hitherto unseen lands, as well as a possible hoax. Underlining the “true” nature of his narrative, Van Sloetten, the purported custodian of Pine’s legacy, said that his disposition was one “so hateful to divulge Falsities.”⁵⁴⁷ A part of his truth-telling strategy involved anticipating his report as “a thing so strange as will hardly be credited by some, although perhaps knowing persons, especially considering our last age being so full of Discoveries, that this Place should lie Dormant for so long a space of time.”⁵⁴⁸ The tension between the apparent strangeness of the tale and Neville’s claims of a truthful description animated the scholarly evaluation of the pamphlet to such an extent that its truth or falsity remained a central preoccupation well until the latter half of the twentieth century. The more recent critical reception of *The Isle of Pines* reflects the confusions and complexities involved in the text and its transmissions. It has been seen variously as a satire that critiques English republican culture, an exemplary case of Restoration literary forgery, a possible forerunner to the Robinsonade, a moral tale on racial discrimination and colonial violence, a literary stage for enacting Anglo-Dutch colonial rivalries, and even as

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., 26--7.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., 48.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

an early instance of post-colonial critique.⁵⁴⁹ In all of these varied responses which focus on distinct aspects of the narrative, the text is seen as a sign of its times.

In 1994, Daniel Carey remarked on the difficulty of decisively interpreting what Neville's pamphlets could mean. "The Isle of Pines," Carey writes, "has baffled twentieth-century critics in search of an authoritative interpretation. Neville's authorship and intention remain hidden and in the absence of clear rhetorical indications from the implied author, nothing certain has been concluded about the meaning of the texts."⁵⁵⁰ Due to a renewed interest in *The Isle of Pines* in the following years, many convincing studies have detailed various aspects of the text's multiple, if by no means "certain" meanings. Apart from a special issue of the journal *Utopian Studies* dedicated to *The Isle of Pines*, the first critical monograph completely devoted to the text has been published. Among these noteworthy efforts is Gaby Mahlberg's interpretation of Neville's text as a story

⁵⁴⁹ For an exploration of Neville's text in the light of pornographic motifs in seventeenth century political pamphlets see Susan Wiseman, "Adam, the Father of all Flesh/ Porno-Political Rhetoric and Political Theory in and After the English Civil War," in *Pamphlet Wars: Prose in the English Revolution*, ed. James Holstun (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 134--57. A good case arguing for Neville's text to be treated as a satire of restoration monarchy can be found in Gaby Mahlberg, *Henry Neville and English republican culture in the seventeenth century : dreaming of another game* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009). Neville's text was part of a thriving English culture of literary forgery and features as part of a larger cast of hoaxers in Katherine Loveman, "Shamming Readers: Deception in English Literary and Political Culture c. 1640-1740," (PhD diss., Cambridge University, 2003). David Fausett sees the peregrinating context of *The Isle of Pines* as a crucial forerunner for William Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and the rise of the modern novel in David Fausett, *The Strange Surprising Sources of Robinson Crusoe* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994). Amy Boesky sees *The Isle of Pines* as reflecting on the racial and gendered dimensions of early modern colonial violence. See Amy Boesky, *Founding Fictions: Utopias in Early Modern England* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996). *The Isle of Pines* can also be read as a commentary on the relation between two colonial competitors, the English and the Dutch. Neville depicts an encounter between a confident and ascendant Dutch colonial party and a community of English colonists who have reverted to an anterior and uncivilised state. Considering Neville's pamphlets were published soon after the second Anglo-Dutch war, this is a significant connection. It is first worked out in Adam R. Beach, "A Profound Pessimism about Empire: The Isle of Pines, English Degeneracy, and Dutch Supremacy," *The Eighteenth Century* 41, no. 1 (2000): 21--36. In his monograph length study of *The Isle of Pines*, John Scheckter examines Neville's narrative through a postcolonial lens, arguing that the Dutch intrusion into a native community and the clashes between the various tribes that mark the end of the tale suggest spaces for contemplating about the contestations that characterised European colonial ventures. See John Scheckter, *The Isle of Pines, 1668: Henry Neville's Uncertain Utopia* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2011).

⁵⁵⁰ Daniel Carey, "Henry Neville's The Isle of Pines: Travel, Forgery, and the Problem of Genre," *Angelaki* 1 (1996): 29.

used “to satirize the Restoration regime in England and the failures of its foreign policy after the defeat in the recent Anglo-Dutch War (1665–1667). By depicting the patriarchal ruler of a remote island who preferred “sexual relations with women to looking after his political affairs,” Mahlberg argues, “it ridiculed both the depraved morals of the Stuart court and the patriarchal political theory used by Charles II to defend his authority by divine right.”⁵⁵¹ Interpreted as satire, the various texts that constitute *The Isle of Pines* have been thrown open to vast interpretive possibilities. As with any satire, the preliminary critical task entails decoding an authorial encoding, to lay bare the system of ciphers a given text employs. As themes and allusions are singled out and related to contemporary political events in England, the text is evaluated less on the grounds of its superficial claims of veracity and more on its political import.

The Isle of Pines' negotiations with the prevalent Anglo-Dutch relations of the time have been highlighted by Adam Beach. Read in the context of Dutch supremacy over the English, the text is placed within a significant moment of colonial rivalry in the late sixteenth century. Beach provides another access point to the satirical allusions of the text by interpreting the portrayal of the near-naked English inhabitants of the Isle as a contrast to the enterprising and technologically-superior Dutch, one which throws into relief the folly of English colonial ambitions. Such contrast acquires significance in the broader atmosphere of colonial competition and is also topical in the wake of the English defeat in the Second Anglo-Dutch War of 1665-67. Beach substantiates his assertion that Neville's satire was more than just localised ribaldry about Charles II's debauchery by alluding to the author's political beliefs. Neville was a known supporter of English imperial expansion and commerce, was involved in the anti-

⁵⁵¹ Mahlberg, “Authors Losing Control,” 1.

Stuart renunciation as part of the Parliament, and worried that the Restoration represented the impotence characterising the early Stuart period. As a standalone unit, the first edition is an antipodean inversion in the vein of Neville's previous sexual-political satires like *The Parliament of Ladies* (1647), the second edition of the text foregrounds more shameful consequences. As Beach notes, the text seems to suggest that "English savages [are] unable to properly colonise a potentially important imperial outpost and keep it from the hands of the Dutch."⁵⁵²

In these efforts to come to grips with *The Isle of Pines* and its intentions, a seemingly minor detail has been relegated to the background: its location. Barring a few exceptions, the isle's location does not seem to carry any importance for the historical or literary appraisal of the texts.⁵⁵³ Consequently, the clues that the text provides for the sources that might have inspired it have been ignored. Even Beach's study which looks at the text as a reflection on intra-European colonial competition in Africa fails to remark on its locations and merely terms the isle as an "imaginative" island.⁵⁵⁴ This is not surprising as the faraway and exotic locale of the text offers itself up to stage a domestic intrigue. Neville's text is also valued as a precursor for two more popular and significant works, Hans Jacob Christoph von Grimmelshausen's *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus* and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.⁵⁵⁵ While *The Pines* is valued as a literary forbear, its own historical sources have never been fully investigated. Yet, for Neville's contemporaries, the specific locations and trade routes mentioned in the text were of significant interest and were in no small way responsible for the popularity of his tale. The

⁵⁵² Beach, "A Profound Pessimism about Empire," 23.

⁵⁵³ Among the few studies on the question of the location of *The Isle of Pines*, the most detailed exploration is to be found in Oliver R. Baker, "From There to Finistère: Finding Henry Neville's ISLE OF PINES," *The Explicator* 69, no. 3 (2011), 129--32.

⁵⁵⁴ Beach, "A Profound Pessimism about Empire," 23.

⁵⁵⁵ See J. H. Scholte, "Robinsonades," *Neophilologus* 35 (1951), 129--38; Nat W. Hardy, "The Naughty Pines: Henry Neville's *The Isle of Pines* as Literary Hoax" (master thesis, McMaster University, 1993).

place-names and locations that feature in *The Isle of Pines* can provide clues to the sources Neville might have employed while composing his utopian satire.

Locating the Isle of Pines: A cartographical transmission of error

In a 1674 world map (See fig 5.3) composed by the French Cartographer Pierre Du Val, we find an island at 28 degrees south inscribed as *Romeiros / Castellanoas al. I. de.Pines* (Spanish Romeros, also known as the Isle of Pines).⁵⁵⁶ This map features in W. A. R. Richardson's study of cartographical inscriptions dealing with seventeenth-century shipwrecks in the Indian ocean.⁵⁵⁷ While Richardson ascribes the borrowing to Neville's fiction, he believes that within Neville's text "no clear indication was given of the island's position, though it seemed to be somewhere east of Madagascar as this was approximately where the false los romeros was located, Pierre du Val presumed that they were one and the same island, even though no such assumption could legitimately be drawn."⁵⁵⁸ Railing against Du Val's lack of rigour, Richardson criticises him for "(j)umping to conclusions on the basis of insufficient or defective information."⁵⁵⁹ However, this disparagement presumes that *The Isle of Pines* did not make its location clear probably because the first edition published in June 27th, 1668, consulted by Richardson, did not carry any latitudinal positions. Successive English editions provided the island's location as "lyeth about seventy-six degrees of Longitude, and twenty of Latitude."⁵⁶⁰ The French Cramoisy edition, published prior to the coordinate-bearing English editions, furnishes a different latitude by claiming

⁵⁵⁶ See W. A. R. Richardson, "An Indian Ocean Pilgrimage in search of an island," *The Great Circle: Journal of the Australian Association for Maritime History* 11, no. 2 (1989): 32--51.

⁵⁵⁷ W. A. R. Richardson, "Cartographical clues to three sixteenth-century shipwrecks in the Indian Ocean," *The Great circle: journal of the Australian Association for Maritime History* 14, no. 1 (1992): 15.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁶⁰ Neville, "The Isle of Pines: Texts," 43.

“Cette Isle est situee a xxviij (sic) ou xxix. degrez de latitude Antartique.”⁵⁶¹ This is the very same latitude used by Du Val to mark the island populated by Pines. Du Val can be forgiven for his cartographical error as he was only employing the latitude given in the Cramoisy edition of *The Isle of Pines*; and thereby charting a previously uncharted island.

There was an additional reason for Du Val to chart the uncharted. Featured in nearly every Indian Ocean map of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the island referred to as *Romeiros* matched both the latitude and vague orientation provided for the island refuge of the Pines in the Cramoisy edition of *The Isle of Pines*, i.e. away from Madagascar and “in the direction of the Antarctic Circle.”⁵⁶² This coincidence was enough for Du Val to have concurred that the island of the Pines was in fact the same as the well-established *Romeiros*. In equating the island of the Pines with *Romeiros*, Du Val was at least right in that he confused one fictional island for another. Richardson has expertly tracked the origin of the cartographical fiction of the *Romeiros*. In 1525, a vessel belonging to Magellan’s

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., 58.

⁵⁶² Ibid., 59.



Fig. 5.3, A world map by Pierre Du Val. 1674, Printed map. The British Library (C.39.e.4(6)). Reproduced in Richardson, "Cartographical clues," 15. In this map, the marking of *Romeiros / Castellanoas al. I. de.Pines* can be found to the rightwards off Madagascar, below the inscription 'Tropique de Capricorne'.

fleet, the *Victoria*, was the first Spanish ship to have sailed across the Indian Ocean. The pilot, Francisco Albo, would record on his log the discovery of an uninhabited island at "38° de la parte del sur."⁵⁶³ The discovery was not deemed significant by the voyagers aboard the *Victoria* who passed it without landing, nor

⁵⁶³ Charles Vélain, "Les Iles Saint-Paul et Amsterdam," *Annales de Géographie* (Paris), 2 (1893), 329--54, quoted in Richardson, "An Indian Ocean Pilgrimage," 33.

was it mentioned in their report to the King of Spain's commission evaluating new discoveries. An island would soon surface at the location designated by Albo in maps drawn by Spanish cartographers with one of several variations of the name *los romeros*. But the island would not maintain this singular location for long.

In the cosmopolitan and plurilingual practice of early modern cartography, enigmas and corruptions could, as Richardson points out, emerge as a result of “faulty transcription, transliteration or translation, not to mention popular etymology, or false analogy, on the basis of perceived sound or spelling similarities.”⁵⁶⁴ In 1537, a little more than a decade after the *Victoria's* Indian ocean voyage, a map drawn by the Portuguese cartographer Gaspar Viegas would have an island located in 28° S abbreviated as ‘*dos Romros*’.⁵⁶⁵ This error of a *Romeiros* residing at 28°S featured in numerous maps and coexisted with other contemporary maps that mentioned the same island at 38°S. *Romeiros* usually occupied one of the two locations depending on whether the cartographer copied the map from a Portuguese or Spanish source; the former source usually indicated 28 while the latter correctly showed 38. Within this fissure of ten degrees a new island came into being. The same error is also to be found in Abraham Ortelius' 1570 world map illustrating Mercator's Southern Continent, in which the island of *Los Romeros* is placed at 28 degrees south.⁵⁶⁶ Du Val's inscription is an interesting instance of a cartographical error creeping in during the transmission of information about a colonial exploration; an error later marked and believed to be the factual equivalent of *The Isle of Pines'* location. Here we have an instance of a literary forgery that is complemented by a rapidly

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., 32.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., 33.

⁵⁶⁶ Richardson reproduces the map from: A.E. Nordenskiöld, *Facsimile-Atlas*, Plate XLVI, quoted in W.A.R. Richardson, “Cartographical Clues,” 12.

growing yet mercurial knowledge enterprise geared to the reconnaissance of potential colonies in the New World. Concrete landmasses and fluid abstractions, the worlds of fact and of fiction find interactive play in these exercises. Neville's pamphlets, and their notorious fluidity, belong not just to the coffee-house games of the Restoration but also to the practical fictions of colonial exploration and cartography. Umberto Eco in his *Serendipity: Language and Lunacy*, aims to demonstrate that "the false (not necessarily in the form of lies but surely in the form of error) has motivated many events of history."⁵⁶⁷ This "force of falsity", to borrow Eco's phrase, in the form of cartographic misinformation, assumptions, legends and forgeries were relied upon to undertake voyages that helped in the accidental discovery of unknown geographical regions. Voyages turned out to be a very effective epistemological testing ground, accidental discoveries producing surprising results for its traffickers.

This instance, in which an imaginary island is realised in cartographical practice, offers an opportunity to reflect on the indices that allowed Neville's forgery to gain currency if not credence. A German critic who undertook a thirty-two-page refutation of *The Isle of Pines* mentions in his skeptically titled *Das verdächtige Pineser-Eyland* that the merchant community in Hamburg were keen to acquire information regarding the island and evaluate its economic feasibility.⁵⁶⁸ Such an interest would certainly have involved investigating the few geographical coordinates and place-names mentioned in the text. This locational scrutiny, which could only last as long as there was some doubt regarding the text's

⁵⁶⁷ Umberto Eco, *Serendipities: Language and Lunacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 2.

⁵⁶⁸ The title translates as "the suspicious Isle of Pines." M.M.G.N.S., *Das verdächtige Pineser-Eyland* (Hamburg: 1668), f. A3 v., quoted in Gaby Mahlberg, "The Critical Reception of The Isle of Pines," *Utopian Studies* 17, no. 1 (2006): 134.

fraudulent status, is likely to have resembled the attention that the nineteenth-century bibliophile and politician Thomas Grenville gave to his copy of *The Isle of Pines* by highlighting place names such as "Calecute," "St. Hellens," and the "Isle del Principe" in order to carry out further investigation.⁵⁶⁹ Since India was the intended destination of George Pines' voyage and Madagascar a midway port, the geographical locations mentioned in the text allowed for it to be measured against extant textual and oral reports, especially those featuring maritime routes to India and the East Indies via Madagascar.

Oliver Baker undertakes a search for Neville's island in a fashion probably similar to the latter's contemporaries when he speculates that "(s)ince the full title includes a reference to Terra Australis Incognita, Keek's first letter completely fuddles the island's location, suggesting that it lies two or three hundred leagues northwest of Cape Finis Terre."⁵⁷⁰ If Van Sloetten's coordinates -- 20°S and 76°E -- are correct, Baker claims, "the isle of Pines lies in the southern hemisphere in what is now known to be a particularly empty part of the Indian Ocean, but its existence remote from conventional shipping lanes would have been entirely plausible to a seventeenth-century audience."⁵⁷¹ "Locating" Neville's island in the sense of ascertaining "an exact position" might be of limited use and even futile given the shifting versions of the texts in circulation.⁵⁷² If, however, we were to understand location from another of the *Oxford English Dictionary's* definitions as an act of "situating" or "being placed," then we could examine the constellation

⁵⁶⁹ Henry Neville, *A New and Further discovery of the Isle of Pines in a letter from C. van Sloetten*. The British Library (G.2732) quoted in Mahlberg, "The Critical Reception," 141--42 (see f.n.6).

⁵⁷⁰ Baker, "From There to Finistère," 131.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

⁵⁷² *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s. v. "location, n.," accessed September 24, 2016, <http://www.oed.com.chain.kent.ac.uk/view/Entry/109574?redirectedFrom=location>.

of place names and geographical coordinates of Neville's fiction as indicators of the probable influences that inform *The Isle of Pines*.⁵⁷³

Voyages, news and fictions: Seeking the *Isle of Pines* in early modern travel literature

The Isle of Pines is also a tale of two voyages in which passage, destination and purpose overlap. Though George Pines sets out from England in the year 1569, and Van Sloetten almost a century later from Amsterdam, their paths are similar. Both their ships sail around the Cape of Good Hope, pass the islands of St. Helen and Madagascar in order to reach the intended destination of India and the East Indies, but are led beyond the ends of the known world to Terra Australis, Incognita. While the journey of Pines' ill-fated ship was cut short, the Dutch are able to reach the final ports of trade, realising their final destinations of "Calecute," "the chief Mart Town and Staple of all the Indian Traffique" and "Cambaia" are a part of the East Indies.⁵⁷⁴ A few decades earlier, Hamond and Boothby had posited that Madagascar was a mid-place between England and Asia, and a strategic resource for the English to gain ascendancy in Asiatic trade. In putting forward his case for Madagascar, Hamond aspires to follow in the footsteps of "the Portugals" who "first passed the Cape of good Hope; to discover the Kingdomes of Cambaia and Calicut."⁵⁷⁵ Boothby recruited St. Helena for a purpose similar to that of Madagascar, and promoted both islands as ideal settlements for the English.⁵⁷⁶ Boothby, Hamond, and Neville (the latter albeit with a satirical awareness) were all tapping into the same current of maritime

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁴ Neville, "The Isle of Pines: Texts," 46.

⁵⁷⁵ Hamond, *Madagascar, the richest island*, 13.

⁵⁷⁶ Boothby, *A True Declaration*, 24; Games, *The Web of Empire*, 190--208.

aspiration in which it was the Indian Ocean world, not the Atlantic, that beckoned.

For European colonists, Terra Australis Incognita was unknown and unowned. It was a Terra Nullius in two senses, because of its unclaimed sovereignty (when argued through European legal contrivances) and also for its potential as an *ou topos*, a no-place, an uncharted fictional stage. As David Fausett observes, the fictional southern continent gradually began to be recognised as Australia once the Dutch found themselves marooned or shipwrecked on the Western Coast after having begun in 1616 to use a southern route from the Cape of Good Hope.

Fausett argues that the subsequent evolution of the idea of the southern continent into the actual terrain of Australia created the space for narratives that claimed to be true: “a series of para-utopian novels from *The Isle of Pines* (1668) to *Krinke Kesmes* (1708), via those of Varaisse and Foigny, led to the breakdown of that genre and the rise of the Robinsonade.”⁵⁷⁷ Further, he states, Dutch encounters with Australia “formed the basis for the many imaginary voyages, utopias and Robinsonades of the eighteenth century; and in this way they played a crucial role in the rise of the realist novel.”⁵⁷⁸ Fausett also claims that “the rhetorical aims, narrative structure and even theme” of *The Isle of Pines* derive from the famed Dutch East India Company (VOC) shipwrecks of the *Batavia* in 1629 and *Vergulde Draeck* in 1656.⁵⁷⁹

The extent to which *The Isle of Pines* can be linked to reports of these Dutch shipwrecks is debatable. One of the main pieces of external evidence offered by

⁵⁷⁷ Fausett, *The Strange Surprising Sources*, 200.

⁵⁷⁸ David Fausett, “Historical and Literary Parallels in the Early Mapping of Australia,” *Terrae Incognitae* 26, no. 1 (1994): 28.

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 27. These shipwrecks are recognised as being the first European settlement in Australia.

Fausett to establish a link between Neville's text and the Dutch shipwrecks is pictographic. He points to the frontispiece of the second Dutch edition published by Jacob Stichter, which features a cartographic detail of the alleged *Eylandt van Pines* (see Fig 5.4). In the illustration "there appears to be no island at all, but a continent with a river running inland", since the image resembles a detail from a continental map featuring a part of the southern coast.⁵⁸⁰ The drawing features rows of hills stretching beyond the cove. Interspersed among these rows are two lines of houses depicting small human settlements. Fausett argues that the map resembles the Australian coastline near the wreck of the *Vergulde Draeck*. He describes the map consisting of "its reef-lined, north-south oriented coast and a gulf" that is "suggestive of Shark Bay, it has a river running inland in an easterly direction - like the Swan, or the Moore River to the north of it, near which the *Vergulde Draeck* was wrecked."⁵⁸¹ While there is a case to be made for this cartographic similitude, it must be remembered that such a map features only in one of the Dutch editions and is not to be found in the English versions. The wrecks of the *Batavia* and the *Vergulde Draeck* were inserted into Stichter's version of *The Isle of Pines* in order to gain credence with a Dutch readership, just as those behind the French Cramoisy edition inserted the latitude of the *Romeiros* so that knowledgeable purveyors like Du Val could look for relevant analogues and err in the form of an informed guess.

Other than the cartographic detail on the title-page, the textual contents of Stichter's edition of *The Isle of Pines* was the same as the first Dutch

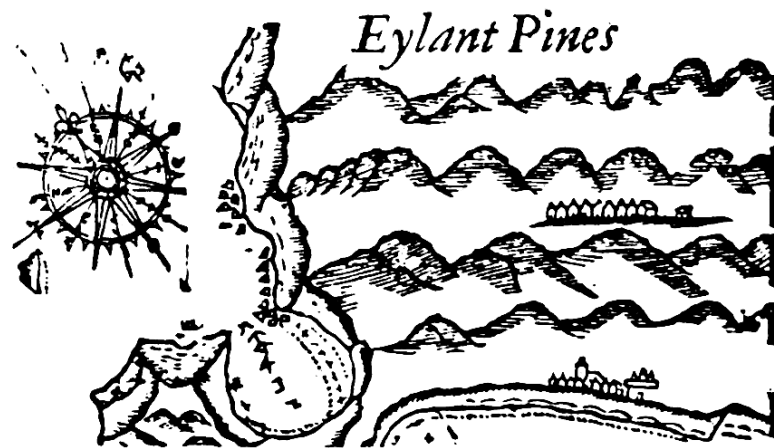
⁵⁸⁰ Fausett, *The Strange Surprising Sources*, ix.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 163.

Ontdeckinge van 't
E Y L A N D T
 V A N
P I N E S,

Synde een waerachtige beschryvinge van 't hierde Eylant
 in 't Zuyder onbekende Landt / so van desselvs Eychteen/
 Eieren / gel-gentheyt / als mede de Doozt-relinge
 der Engelse Natie / etc. op 't selve Eylant

Dyt het Engels Vertaelt



't Amsterdam / gedrukt by Jacob Stichter / op de Hare-
 lemmerstracet in 't Dergult W B C. 1668.

Fig. 5.4, *The Dutch frontispiece of the Stichter edition of the Isle of Pines*. 1668, Illustrated frontispiece in printed pamphlet. The John Carter Brown Library (D668. N5230). From: Henry Neville, *Ontdeckinge van't Eylant van Pines* (Amsterdam: Jacob Stichter, 1668) reproduced in Fausett, *The Strange Surprising Sources*, 174.

version of Neville's text issued by Jacob Vinckel. The pamphlet was eight pages long with the content indicating that the Dutch publishers were only familiar with the first English edition consisting solely of George Pine's account.⁵⁸² Fausett goes beyond this cartographic parallel to argue that the erotic theme of Neville's work might have been inspired by the incidents of sexual slavery that followed the

⁵⁸² See Ford, *An Essay in Bibliography*, 13--16.

Batavia's shipwreck.⁵⁸³ Following a mutinous voyage in which the commander of the ship, the established VOC merchant Francisco Pelsaert, had to manage the unruly skipper Adrian Jacobsz, the *Batavia* steered off course and was marooned near the coral reefs off the western coast of Australia. While the commander and the skipper undertook a relief mission to the port of Batavia, Jeronimus Cornelisz, a merchant siding with Jacobz, and his supporters went on a brutal killing spree to control the remaining crew. Seven women were taken as sex slaves, including Lucretia van der Miles, who was the daughter of the high-ranking merchant Jan Meynertsz, and over whom Cronelisz sought exclusive rights.⁵⁸⁴ This violent assault on the merchant's daughter is somewhat reminiscent of the exclusive attention George Pine assigned to his favoured wife, his master's daughter. Neville exploited the wish-fulfillment inherent in this story, in which the secretary as apprentice transcends his position through the sexual conquest of his master's daughter.⁵⁸⁵

In allowing this parallel to be drawn between Cornelius' enslavement of the *Batavia*'s female crew members and George Pine's "lusts" and "liberty" over his four wives, Fausett argues that the popularity of *The Isle of Pines* was a result of the desire for news about the shipwrecks.⁵⁸⁶ The rumour and mystery that followed the Dutch shipwrecks were, Fausett argues, "(i)ncubated" by a policy of colonial secrecy and the VOC's censorship of information related to these shipwrecks in particular.⁵⁸⁷ He claims that when *The Isle of Pines* was introduced

⁵⁸³ Fausett, *The Strange Surprising Sources*, 76.

⁵⁸⁴ Pelsaert would recount this in a popular news pamphlet published in 1649. See Francisco Pelsaert, *Ongeluckige Voyagie van't Schip Batavia* (Utrecht: Printer Lucas De Vries, 1649).

⁵⁸⁵ For instances of how marital alliances between apprentices and the daughters of their masters (or vice versa) were employed to retain mercantile interests in England, see Richard Grassby, *Kinship and Capitalism: Marriage, Family, and Business in the English-Speaking World, 1580-1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 48--52.

⁵⁸⁶ Neville, "The Isle of Pines: Texts," 36.

⁵⁸⁷ Fausett, *Historical and Literary Parallels*, 28.

into this volatile environment of maritime news, it invited intense speculation and scrutiny. However, the extent to which the news relating to the voyage was repressed is questionable since several editions of news pamphlets based on the Francisco Pelsaert's journal of the ill-fated voyage were published from 1648 onwards.⁵⁸⁸ Fausett's correlation considers *The Isle of Pines* as an echo of the *Batavia*'s ill-fated voyage in terms of its extreme subjection of women who in both instances are the first casualties of an oceanic space in which terrestrial moral codes no longer apply. But the echoes end there. What was common to the shipwreck news narratives of the *Batavia* and the *Vergulde Draeck* otherwise -- "many survivors, rescue missions, maroonings, a cargo of bullion," and "a voyage to Java in an open boat against incredible odds," and "scandalous conduct" -- bear little resemblance to the happenings of *The Isle of Pines*.⁵⁸⁹

One salient difference between *The Isle of Pines* and the narrative elements of *Batavia*'s shipwreck is to be seen in the tone of the illustrations which accompany the pamphlets describing these respective narratives. Pelsaert's *Ongeluckige Voyagie van't Schip Batavia* (1649) carries several dark-toned illustrations that show a ship caught amidst stormy waters, a barren coin shaped island populated with sailors swording each other to death, and a sombre queue of sailors waiting to be hanged in a port's makeshift gallows.⁵⁹⁰ Unlike Pelsaert's titular grievance, *The Isle of Pines* was not an unlucky voyage. On the contrary, the illustrated frontispiece of the July 27, 1668 English Edition, presents a more benign state of affairs: it is a set of four panels depicting a fortunate escape from the shipwreck, with the contented patriarch of the island counting his progeny, and culminating

⁵⁸⁸ See Pelsaert, *Ongeluckige Voyagie*.

⁵⁸⁹ Fausett, *Historical and Literary Parallels*, 28 (see f.n. 1).

⁵⁹⁰ See Pelsaert, *Ongeluckige Voyagie*, 13, 16, 41.

in a friendly farewell to the Dutch sailors (see fig.5.2).⁵⁹¹ Where the *Batavia* recounts an island disaster, *The Isle of Pines* was for the most part a masculine maritime fantasy.⁵⁹² Most of the narrative elements crucial to its popular appeal -- the antipodean twist of European voyagers encountering a naked white people in a remote island, this encounter between intercolonial rivals, the miscegenation resulting from Pines' intercourse with Phillipa the slave, and the abundant promise of the island along with the prodigiousness breeding of its inhabitants -- are absent in the events surrounding the Dutch shipwrecks.

If the indeterminate waters of Terra Australis Incognita were the chosen destination of Neville's fiction, Madagascar was its gateway, a liminal space between the known and the unknown, a conduit between that which was mapped and owned and that which was open for discovery and possession. It is in Madagascar's waters that both George Pine and Van Sloetten encounter the violent storms that push them towards the isle of Pines. Shifting the focus to the island lore of Madagascar could provide us access to more substantive echoes of Neville's work. Madagascar is also an appropriate location for exploring the *The Isle of Pines'* themes of shipwreck, of European castaways and their progeny. Madagascar's coast, as Hamond or Boothby loathed to admit, were treacherous for ships seeking anchorage. European sailors were so well acquainted with these circumstances that they knew where to look for signs of possible disturbances. The merchant Herbert Thomas recounts an incident in his travels when his captain, "spake lowdly and bid us expect a storme, and this memorable, that about this remote Land, you shall see a small blacke Bird long and sharp-winged, constantly flying vpon the surface of the Ocean; vpon view of this Bird (which

⁵⁹¹Neville, "The Isle of Pines: Texts," 25.

⁵⁹² See Wiseman, "Adam, the Father of all Flesh".

Sea-men improperly call Deuils Bird) an infallible tempest and storme in lesse then two dayes, assailes the ships. By which forewarning they haue the benefit of prevention.”⁵⁹³ Since the arrival of the Portuguese in the early sixteenth century, the ocean floor surrounding Madagascar was a nautical graveyard for hundreds of sunken European vessels belonging to either Portuguese, Dutch, English or French fleets.⁵⁹⁴ Apart from navigation errors or the lack of accurate charts which led them to sail onto the island’s numerous submerged reefs, cyclonic storms (as Neville indicates via Pine and Van Sloetten) contributed to many of these shipwrecks.

Situating *The Isle of Pines* in Madagascar: Colonial crossings to the New World, shipwrecks, and utopian island lores

Anthony Pagden has remarked on sea-crossing as the first step in the detachment between the colonist and their social context.⁵⁹⁵ The social and cultural rupture of a castaway community is more final. George Pine, while speaking of his polygamous pursuits, refers to the “taking away” of “shame (there being none but us) we did it more openly, as our Lusts gave us liberty.”⁵⁹⁶ More’s *Utopia* is not founded on shipwreck, but the discovery of the fabled isles of Neville and Bacon are preceded either by explorers losing their way or by their vessels becoming submerged. Shipwreck does not feature in More’s work as it was an English account of the Portuguese and Spanish exploration of the New World. England in the early sixteenth century was not yet fully in the fray to colonise the New World. But in the intensely competitive colonial race of the seventeenth century,

⁵⁹³ Thomas Herbert, *A relation of some yeares trauaile begunne anno 1626* (London: Printed by William Stansby, 1634), 18.

⁵⁹⁴ For a useful map which pinpoints the location of the major early modern era shipwrecks around Madagascar, see Pierre Van Den Boogaerde, *Shipwrecks of Madagascar* (New York: Strategic Book Publishing, 2008), 24.

⁵⁹⁵ Anthony Pagden, *European encounters with the New World: from Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 3.

⁵⁹⁶ Neville, “The Isle of Pines: Texts,” 36.

England, like its Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese rivals, remained on the lookout for undiscovered islands. It is this wish for serendipity, manifested in the form of a fortuitous shipwreck, that inaugurates and shapes Bacon's and Neville's narratives.

The first English narratives of shipwreck in the New World, such as William Strachey's *A true reportory of the wreck* - a paradisiacal account of being castaway in Bermuda - generated much interest. The narrative potential inherent in stories of shipwreck would contribute to the development of the Robinsonade, in which castaways are survivors who -- shorn of the accoutrements of empire -- have now to subsist by taking on the role of the prototypical colonist.⁵⁹⁷ Larson estimates that among Portuguese fleets alone "more than thirty vessels lost between 1500 and 1579 were shipwrecked on Madagascar, many of them along the seaboard of Anosy."⁵⁹⁸ As shipwrecks accumulated in the region, so did the communities of castaways that found themselves stranded on the island. Many French, Portuguese and Dutch sailors stranded along southern Madagascar made their way towards Anosy, which, as Larson notes, was "the premier rendezvous for Europeans washed up on the Big Island's shores."⁵⁹⁹ Some of them established themselves at a renovated fort in Trañovato, an island in the Fanjahira river, and married into a local king's dynasty following which their descendants became a

⁵⁹⁷ In a lecture delivered in Italy in the year 1912, James Joyce places Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* as "the true symbol of the British conquest," a "true prototype of the British colonist, as Friday (the trusty savage who arrives on an unlucky day) is the symbol of the subject races." As Joyce observes "the whole Anglo-Saxon spirit is in Crusoe" both in terms of skills and temperament. Castaway, he becomes at once "an architect, a carpenter, a knife grinder, an astronomer, a baker, a shipwright, a potter, a saddler, a farmer, a tailor, an umbrella-maker, and a clergyman" possessed with "manly independence," "unconscious cruelty," a "slow yet efficient intelligence," and a "well-balanced religiousness". Joyce's lecture was published posthumously in Kevin Barrey, ed., *James Joyce: Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 163--82.

⁵⁹⁸ Larson, "Colonies Lost," 350. A few of these shipwrecks along the coast of southern Madagascar and a map are listed in Pearson, "Close Encounters," 405.

⁵⁹⁹ Larson, "Colonies Lost," 350.

part of the region's princely class. The fate of many other survivors remained unknown and clouded by conflicting hearsay accounts.⁶⁰⁰

Portuguese Precursors to the Pines: Friar Athanasio's witness, João de Barros' *Décadas da Ásia* and Manuel Godinho de Erédia's dissimulations

In a related vein, news of a community descending from a party of stranded Portuguese sailors reached Philip III, who ordered various search expeditions from Goa to seek out these sailors. In a letter dated 27th February 1613, the Portuguese king writes to his viceroy of India, Jeronymo de Azevedo, with reference to a previous order made in a letter written in the January of 1611. In the letter, he commands the viceroy to send a search party for the white descendants of the shipwrecked Portuguese sailors who are reported to be living in Madagascar.⁶⁰¹ Anticipating Neville's pamphlet, the tale of an island-dwelling fair-skinned tribe descended from European castaways of the previous century seems to have sparked interest, for reasons related to commerce or the incident's fable like quality.

Among these various reports and the resulting maritime folklore surrounding Madagascar's shipwrecks or the fate of the descendants of Portuguese sailors living in there, one story in particular bears more than a passing resemblance to Neville's fiction. Sometime between 1606 and 1615, the Augustinian Friar

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., 351. While the castaways were stranded in Madagascar in the first half of the sixteenth century, these hearsay accounts occur in 1613. They range from speculations of the sailors leaving the island and making way to Mozambique, or being killed in battle by rival tribes. One of the more well-known version has these castaways being ambushed by a local ruler or Raondriana who commands his men to massacre them after both sides congregated in the pretext of a gifting ceremony. Larson attributes this account to misinformation spread by Portuguese priests frustrated by their inability to convert the local populace.

⁶⁰¹ "Documento 325, February 27, 1613," *Documentos Remettidos da India ou Livros Das Monções, Tomo II* (Lisbon: Typographia Academia Real das Sciencias, 1884): 336, An electronic version is available at <http://purl.pt/26875/3/>.

Athanasio wrote to the Archbishop of the Goan diocese, Aleixo de Meneses, about an incident that was recounted to him while he was imprisoned by the Dutch in Bantam. Athanasio reports meeting with a group of sailors belonging to a Dutch ship -- “the richest and fullest ever to go from India to Holland” -- which had run aground in Madagascar with the crew making their way back to Bantam.⁶⁰²

During the wreck, the crew took support from a neighbouring rock formation and were able to reach the bay of St. Luce in the southeast of the big island. While in the midst of building a boat they, like their compatriots in Neville’s *The Isle of Pines*, were greeted by a strange sight, with “many shows of love and gifts of joy” by the native inhabitants who were “white and blonde, and good looking”.⁶⁰³ The islanders, some of whom wore “coarse and badly made crosses from their neck,” had the “Christian names of our saints [male and female]” and called “themselves Portuguese, and Portugal to the land where they live.”⁶⁰⁴ The Dutch, much like Van Sloetten’s crew, found strange “so many of the novelties that they noticed on the land, and noticing the question that they first had been asked, if they were

⁶⁰² Friar Athanasio’s letter is reproduced in the Bulletin of the Geographical society of Lisbon. See Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa, *Boletim Da Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa: Volume 7a* ([Lisboa]: A Sociedade, 1887): 354--5. I would like to thank Tiago Sousa Garcia for an English translation of the friars letter and the excerpt from João de Barros’ fourth volume of the decades which comments on the friar’s letter. The translation of the whole letter and the excerpt is provided in the appendices. I have approximated the year of Athanasio’s letter from two pieces of evidence. Van Den Boogaerde locates the Dutch vessel mentioned by Athanasio as the *Westfriesland* which ran aground in 1606 at the bay of St. Luce in the Anosy region of Southeastern Madagascar. See Van Den Boogaerde, *Shipwrecks of Madagascar*, 77. The *Westfriesland* was on its first return voyage to the Dutch Republic from Bantam. A log of the ship’s failed journey can be accessed from the vocsite website, a comprehensive database of ships used by the Dutch East India Company (<http://www.vocsite.nl/schepen/detail.html?id=11947>) and at the online database Resources Huygens ING (<http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/das/detailVoyage/95892>). I source the latter interval from the year of publication of the fourth volume of João de Barros’ celebrated compendia of travel literature *Décadas da Ásia* which mentions Athanasio’s letter. From these two dates we can infer that the letter was written sometime after the wreck of the *Westfriesland* and before the posthumous publication of Barros’ fourth volume. See João de Barros, “Capítulo II.,” in *Da Asia De João De Barros: Dos Feitos, Que Os Portuguezes Fizeram No Descubrimento, E Conquista Dos Mares, E Terras Do Oriente. Decada Quarta. Parte Primeira* (Lisbon: Regia Officina Typografica, 1777), 259--64.

⁶⁰³ See *Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa*, 354.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

Portuguese and had priests with them, asked the natives of their beginning and the foundation of the place.”⁶⁰⁵

Even the founding tale narrated by the Portuguese islanders is resonant with Neville’s origin story, which begins with George Pine’s shipwreck and survival, as read aloud by William, his grandson and the latter-day prince of the island. In Athanasio’s case, the Dutch sailors are told that the present-day king of the Portuguese tribe was “the grandson of a Portuguese, that there had been shipwrecked with a lot of people, and wanting to return to Portugal had not find a way to do it, and with the people who survived and had weapons, made himself a great Lord, and all the natives were sons, grandsons and descendants of the Portuguese.”⁶⁰⁶ In *The Isle of Pines*, Van Sloetten and his company are told about the “thing called a Ship” in which George Pines arrived; in the friar’s letter, the natives take “the Dutchmen by the hand, showed them the grave of their first king, that had been the captain of our lost ship, with a gracious cross on top of it.”⁶⁰⁷ Like all reports of the New World, both these castaway communities, the Pines and the Portuguese, are treated as natives defined via the scrutiny of European explorers. But in both these instances, one of the defining anxieties for the Dutch colonists is the extent to which these natives can be considered one of their own, a European people. This concern plays out in both these narratives through the pivot of religion.

Anticipating that his report might be dismissed as unreliable given that it originated from the Dutch, Athanasio’s letter to the archbishop buttresses his testimony by drawing attention to the faith and nationality of his informants. He adds that he was told about the encounter in the island by “our Catholic lads that

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid., 354--55.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid., 355; Neville, “The Isle of Pines: Texts,” 31.

found themselves in the ship as seamen therefore I know it for truth what they told me, and so can your Holiness.”⁶⁰⁸ Since the Portuguese natives of Madagascar first ask the shipwrecked Dutch whether “they had with them one or more priests,” the friar’s letter advises the archbishop to “send them one or more priests, so that they can return to their first rites and ways.”⁶⁰⁹ The friar emphasises the natives’ potential for religious restitution; the Dutch, he reports, “found nothing in them of a Christian nature as the first ones died, and there were no priests left among them, they grew forgetful of everything concerning our law, and now only in name, and in the crosses, are they Christians.”⁶¹⁰ For these natives, the cross had become a totem removed from the faith, a “coarse and badly made” ornament with which they lined their streets and decorated their necks.⁶¹¹ In emphasising the religion of the inhabitants, the friar rightly surmises that any form of Portuguese intervention would be based on the extent to which the inhabitants could be identified as people of the faith, and consequently, as Portuguese.

In his summary of the friar’s letter, the archbishop’s secretary advises his master to disregard the significance of the episode as “the natives are so far away from the issues of our Holy Faith that they don't even know names, other than the Holy Cross, so everything else is nothing but telling of tales.”⁶¹² There seems to have been a rumour that the descendant of the Portuguese castaways had come to name their territory Portugal. The name in conjunction with the erection of a stone cross and the religious affiliation of these natives must have briefly stoked colonial interests as this inadvertent island outpost could be as a legitimate part

⁶⁰⁸ *Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa*, 354.

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 355.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁶¹² *Ibid.*

of the Portuguese empire. However, the archbishop's secretary proceeds to discount any such design: "As for the name of the land being called Portugal," he writes, "there is no other record for the name to be inferred other than the one engraved in the *padrão*."⁶¹³ He concludes that an expedition to the island would be a futile investment by stating that "as for our Portuguese making themselves great Lords, so it happened, but time did away with them, as I explained before; regarding names, there is nothing else to it other than mentioned above."⁶¹⁴

While the priest is the divine conduit between a barbarian and European identity in the friar's report, Neville's text assigns the same role to the Bible. In order to maintain the civility of his community, George Pines orders that the Bible "be read once a month at a general meeting."⁶¹⁵ One of the first casualties of the demographic explosion among the Pines is this monthly sermon, in which "many of them wandring far up into the Country, they quite neglected the coming to it, with all other means of Christian instruction, whereby the sence of sin being quite lost in them, they fell to whoredoms, incests, and adulteries."⁶¹⁶ Predictably, Neville casts the biggest offender as "John Phill, the second son of the Negro-woman that came with my Grandfather into this Island. He being proved guilty of divers ravishings & tyrannies committed by him, was adjudged guilty of death, and accordingly was thrown down from a high Rock into the Sea, where he perished in the waters."⁶¹⁷ Here, falling into sin is tied as much to the neglect of the Bible as it is to the colour of John Phill's skin. The Phils signify colonial difference, an aperture for violence and conquest since the depravities are

⁶¹³ Ibid.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

⁶¹⁵ Neville, "The Isle of Pines: Texts," 37.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid., 39.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid., 39--40.

ascribed to racial mixing.⁶¹⁸ A later insurrection, in which the Dutch intervene, is also triggered by an act of sexual violence from a prince of the Phils. In the wake of the disruptions caused by the Phils, George Pines sets out six commandments to prevent future discord. As the Phils represent “the depraved nature of mankind,” the Bible is their converse, a repository of “good and wholesome Laws for the preservation of Humane Society.”⁶¹⁹

The obligatory religious meetings for the denizens of the Pines recall the harsh punishments meted out to the early settlers of the Virginia colony if they failed to attend church on the designated days. The Governor of Virginia, Sir Samuel Argall, in 1618 issued a proclamation that ordered compulsory church attendance during Sundays and other holidays. The settlers would otherwise be ordered to “lye neck & heels on the Corps du Guard the night following & be a slave the week following 2d offence a month 3d a year & a day.”⁶²⁰ Churchly congregation was a means to discipline and control the English settlers so that the aims of colonial government were achieved, especially after the bloodshed and disorder in the wake of the first Anglo-Powhatan War. As William Pines explains, social order emerges from a dialectic, as a “(s)eed being cast into stinking Dung produceth good and wholesome Corn for the sustentation of mans life, so bad manners poduceth good and wholesome Laws for the preservation of Humane Society.”⁶²¹ Whether in Virginia or in relation to *The Isle of Pines*, “(t)he discovery of the English book establishes both a measure of mimesis and a mode of civil authority

⁶¹⁸ Amy Boesky reads Neville’s text in the context of the various anti-miscegenation laws brought out in the middle of the seventeenth century in English colonies. See Amy Boesky, “Nation, Miscegenation: Membering Utopia in Henry Neville’s *The Isle of Pines*,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 37, no. 2 (1995): 165--84.

⁶¹⁹ Neville, “The Isle of Pines: Texts,” 39--40.

⁶²⁰ 10 May 1618, XLIV. Governor Argall: Proclamations or Edicts, in *The Records of the Virginia Company of London, Volume 3*, ed. Susan Myra Kingsbury (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1933), 93.

⁶²¹ Neville, “The Isle of Pines: Texts,” 40.

and order.”⁶²² As Homi Bhabha observes, “what is ‘English’ in these discourses of colonial power cannot be represented as a plenitude or a ‘full’ presence; it is determined by its belatedness.”⁶²³ Bhabha elaborates that “(a)s a signifier of authority, the English book acquires its meaning after the traumatic scenario of colonial difference, cultural or racial, returns the eye of power to some prior, archaic image or identity.”⁶²⁴

There are several parallels between the friar's letter and the founding tale of George Pines. They are both reports of Dutch explorers who encounter a tribe comprising the white skinned descendants of a European voyager after being waylaid by a storm near the coast of Madagascar. They both invoke christianity in the form of a single token (the priest or the book) in order to mediate between the tribe's estrangement and its European identity. These elements lent stories like the friar's report of Portuguese survivors in Madagascar with a fable-like, Robinsonian quality which interested the Portuguese monarch enough to order the Goan administration to send out expeditions in search of them, although the Goan archbishop's secretary does not hide his irritation at having to stake out resources in the pursuit of “nothing but the telling of tales.”⁶²⁵ This utopian attraction, the origin tale of a European people displaced in the New World only to generate and survive over generations, lent the incident enough mystique to be included in the fourth and final instalment of the sixteenth-century Portuguese historian João de Barros' *Décadas da Ásia* published posthumously in 1615. The fourth volume of Barros' history of the Portuguese exploration and conquest of its Asian colonies differs from the preceding three volumes in that it was edited by

⁶²² Homi K. Bhabha, “Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817,” *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (1985): 149.

⁶²³ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*, 149--50.

⁶²⁵ *Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa*, 354--55

João Baptista Lavanha, who completed the work based on notes left behind by Barros nearly four decades after his death in 1570. Lavanha appears to have interlaced the friar's letter with Barros' notes about an instance in 1527 regarding "the loss of two ships of Manuel de la Cerda, and Aleixo de Abreu."⁶²⁶

Barros mentions an expedition sent out in 1530 by Nuno da Cunha, the governor of the Estado da Índia, to search for the two lost vessels. He refers to a letter sent by Cunha to the Portuguese monarch João III, in which the governor informs the latter of the unsuccessful mission where they were only able to find a band of four castaways --three Portuguese and one French sailor; the rest were said to have dispersed deep into the interior of the island. Here we find what most probably is Lavanha's own intervention, wherein he speculates that "(o)f the people of those same ships of Manuel de la Cerda, and Aleixo de Abreu must descend the Portuguese, that some Dutchmen found in that island of St. Lawrence" and goes on to retell the story told "to Fr. Athanasio of Jesus, a Portuguese Augustinian friar, who was a prisoner amongst them."⁶²⁷ It is difficult to ascertain whether there is an exact correlation between those shipwrecks of an earlier century and the more recent incident sourced from the friar's letter . Yet Lavanha's connection of these two incidents allows us to observe parallels between the chronological frames of Barros' excerpt and Neville's *The Isle of Pines*. In the latter, Pines' master commissions a voyage "in the days of Queen Elizabeth," while the Dutch sailors encounter the descendants of the Pines in the late seventeenth century.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁶ Barros, "Capitulo II.," 259.

⁶²⁷ Ibid., 263. Barros could not have included the friar's letter as a part of his notes as the former was composed at least four decades after his death.

⁶²⁸ Neville, "The Isle of Pines: Texts," 25.

Barros' (or Lavanha's) excerpt also captures two other themes central to *The Isle of Pines'* narrative: the fertility of the island's denizens, and their fall into savagery due to miscegenation between the European and the native. The friar's tale is summarised thus: "the Captain having conquered part of the island, making himself Lord of it, and the rest of them married the native women, of which they had a large offspring, of which they descended; and as they're parents before them, and grandparents," before adding that the descendants committed "intolerable mistakes of Faith caused by lack of teaching, on which they more resembled those barbarians with whom they were raised than with the Portuguese that they descended from."⁶²⁹ Despite the striking parallels between the friar's letter and Neville's tale, the document would surely have been out of reach to the republican English writer since it was a part of the Estado da Índia records. However, it is plausible that it gained circulation in England via its inclusion in the historical digests of Barros, who as Vincent Barletta attests, was a figure "widely known and translated throughout throughout the Iberian peninsula and the rest of Europe," his works in no small way responsible for "the central place that Portuguese historical discourse had occupied occupied by the seventeenth century in Western European notions of the people and cultures of Asia."⁶³⁰ The *Decades* of Barros features as a highly trusted reference work in numerous cosmographies and travel histories written or translated into English during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Richard Hakluyt, in his *Divers voyages touching the discoverie of America* (1582), refers to the Portuguese historian while decrying the feebleness of England's colonial enterprise and praising the drive of the Iberian empires. Hakluyt laments that "since the first discoverie of America (which is nowe full fourescore and tenne yeeres) after so

⁶²⁹ Barros, "Capitulo II.," 263.

⁶³⁰ Vincent Barletta, *Death in Babylon: Alexander the Great and Iberian Empire in the Muslim Orient* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 141.

great conquests and plantings of the Spaniardes and Portingales there, that wee of Englande could neuer haue the grace to set fast footing in such fertill and temperate places, as are left as yet vnpossessed of them.”⁶³¹ As a contrast, he mentions of “Barros their chiefe Cosmographer being moued with the like desire” going onto retell what he heard from a “excellent learned man of Portingale” that Barros “was the cause that Bresilia was first inhabited by the Portingales.”⁶³² Richard Browne, an English ambassador to the court of France, regarded “our Johannes de Barros” as “the chief Historiographer of his time” and reckoned that he may “rather be stiled the Lusitanian Livie.”⁶³³ Barros was most probably the premier vehicle for the story of the Dutch shipwreck that encountered an island with Portuguese inhabitants in 1606.

The proposition that the Portuguese inhabitants of Madagascar would transform over a few decades into English descendants of the Pines on an island in Terra Australis is not altogether implausible if we consider that deception or dissimulation was sometimes the ruse of the aspiring go-between in the early modern world of colonial exploration. It would be instructive here to turn to the case of seventeenth-century Luso-Malay cosmographer, cartographer and botanist Manuel Godinho de Erédia. In a study charting the dissimulative career of Erédia, Jorge Flores reckons that this “(trans)cultural impostor, or intellectual

⁶³¹ Richard Hakluyt, *Divers voyages touching the discoverie of America, and the ilands adiacent unto the same, made first of all by our Englishmen, and afterward by our Frenchmen and Britons : with two nappes annexed heereunto for the plainer understanding of the whole matter* (London: Imprinted for Thomas Woodcocke, 1582), 1.

⁶³² *Ibid.*, 2. Hakluyt was emulating Barros by projecting himself unto a similar role in England’s imperial pantheon. In the pages immediately following the frontispiece, Hakluyt includes two chronological lists, one with “(t)he names of certaine late writers of Geographie” and the other with the “names of certaine late travaylers” who “have written their own trayvales and voyages.” While the first list features well regarded European writers mostly from the sixteenth century onwards, the second list in which “John Barros - a portingale” is included, lists important writers according to their nationality from the twelfth century onwards. These lists demonstrate that Hakluyt was highly aware of the role that travel histories and colonial cosmographies played in European imperial self-identity and the resulting glory that was to accrue to its writers.

⁶³³ Richard Browne, *The cure of old age and preservation of youth by Roger Bacon* (London: Printed for Tho. Flesher, 1683), 47; 105.

deceiver” developed a “mythomania” due to his intellectual isolation.⁶³⁴ Erédia had “a strong interest in issues and forms of knowledge that were central to the intellectual concerns of the Republic of Letters”; his enthrallment with a global intellectual legacy became a burden due to a lack of interlocutors and the tepid response from his patrons.⁶³⁵ Given that Iberian exploration and conquest was centred around the quest for precious metals, Erédia would fashion himself as a “Discoverer of the Island of Gold” in order to persuade the Goan viceroy Dom Francisco da Gama to outfit him for a reconnaissance expedition in the Malay Archipelago. ⁶³⁶ As a part of this larger quest, Erédia, the self-proclaimed *Cosmógrafo do Estado da Índia*, composes in 1616 the *Tratado Ophirico*, focused on the quest for the biblical jewel-laden port of Ophir from where king Solomon obtained some of his riches. Like several Iberian explorers before him, he sought to locate the island of Ophir in the waters of Terra Australis. As Kevin Sheehan has noted, Erédia’s contemporary and compatriot, the pilot-cosmographer Pedro Fernández de Quirós received authorisation from the Spanish monarch in 1603 for the exploration of the Austral lands. The permit was based on Quiros’ observations from his previous voyage to the Solomon Islands (named after the legend of Ophir) which he had undertaken to confirm the rumour that it was indeed “the place from whence the fleet of the biblical King Solomon had journeyed— islands laden with gold and pearls.”⁶³⁷

⁶³⁴ Flores lists a series of Erédia’s impostures in which he “invented his own genealogy, he probably also forged official documents, claimed to have discovered unknown lands, drew imaginary maps and took titles and honours that had never been granted to him.” See Jorge Flores, “Between Madrid and Ophir: Erédia, a Deceitful Discoverer?,” in *Dissimulation and Deceit in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Miriam Eliav-Feldon and Tamar Herzog (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 184.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, 203.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, 190. The concluding chapter of his first geographical description *Informação da Aurea Chersoneso, ou Península, e das ilhas auríferas, carbúnculas e aromáticas*, which was written ca. 1598–1600, is reserved by Erédia for his speculations on the possible discovery of an “Island of gold.”

⁶³⁷ Sheehan, Kevin. “Voyaging in the Spanish Baroque: Science and Patronage in the Pacific Voyage of Pedro Fernández de Quirós, 1605–1606,” in *Science in the Spanish and Portuguese Empires, 1500–1800*, by Bleichmar, Daniela, Paula De Vos, Kristin Huffine, and Kevin Sheehan,

Sheehan elaborates that “that the links between Quirós’s vivid descriptions of La Australia and that of contemporary and later authors and cartographers are explicit” and “(as) news of the ‘discoveries’ in the South Pacific became disseminated,” “cartographers such as Manoel Godinho de Erédia reproduced the contours of La Australia in accord with their own plans for settlement of the region.”⁶³⁸ It is in the context of Quirós that Erédia composed his description of the region in *Tratado Ophirico* and the *Declaracam de Malaca e India Meridional com o Cathay* (1613), with the latter’s manuscripts only being published much later in the nineteenth century. Intriguingly, friar Athanasio’s account of the 1606 incident, in which castaway Dutch explorers encounter Portuguese descendants in Madagascar, are mentioned in both of Erédia’s works. In the *Declaracam de Malaca*, he writes:

The Dutch ship, in a storm in latitude 41°S, discovered that southern mainland, where it found many Portuguese, the children and grandchildren of others who were shipwrecked on the coast, and they have the same arms and artillery in their possession, but are naked and poorly clad, and live by tilling the soil and by working, in the year 1606.⁶³⁹

However, characteristically of a time in which rumour, error and rigorous empirical observation clamoured to contest for claims over reality, the location of the Portuguese descendants and the shipwreck are altered. The atavistic offspring

eds., (Stanford University Press, 2008), Stanford Scholarship Online, 2013, 238, doi:10.11126/stanford/9780804753586.003.0013.

⁶³⁸ Ibid., 244. Sheehan points the borrowing to the following map: Manuel Godinho de Herédia, “Planisfério,” in *Atlas Miscelânea*, c. 1615–c. 1622, reproduced in Alfredo Pinheiro Marques, *A cartografia portuguesa do Japão (séculos XVI– XVII): Catálogo das cartas portuguesas [The Portuguese Cartography of Japan (XVI–XVII Centuries): A Catalogue of Portuguese Charts]*, trans. Martin A. Kayman (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional/Casa da Moeda, 1996), plate 65.

⁶³⁹ I use Richardson’s translations of the relevant passages of Erédia’s works that feature in Richardson, “Cartographical Clues,” 8–9. Richardson’s translated excerpts improve on an earlier English translation by J. V. Mills that can be found in his “Erédia’s description of Malaca, Meridional India and Cathay, translated from the Portuguese, with notes by J.V. Mills,” *Royal Asiatic Society - Malayan Branch Journal* 8, plate 1, (1930): 61--288. Apart from the *Declaracam de Malaca*, Mill’s translation also contains a selection from the *Tratado Ophirico* (1616). The passage above can be found in Mills, “Erédia’s description,” 67.

of the shipwrecked Portuguese are no longer found in Madagascar, but in the mainland of Terra Australis that Erédia so wanted to discover. The passages in which the shipwreck is mentioned are incoherent; there are many discrepancies to be found between the summary featured in the *Declaracam de Malaca* and the same incident as mentioned in the *Tratado Ophirico*. Yet a hint of the original location appears when Erédia describes the coordinates of the castaway community in the latter work as the southern land “called Region of Parrots or Regio Pithacoru which lies in latitude 48°S, on the meridian of the Island of S.L.co [São Lourenço, i.e. Madagascar].”⁶⁴⁰ In Erédia’s work, the original location of Madagascar is retained for the coordinates of its meridian. The location of the castaway community was moved along this meridian until it settled in the Region of Parrots, which as Richardson demonstrates, was “a fictitious part of Gerard Mercator’s southern continent.”⁶⁴¹ A clear parallel can be found in *The Isle of Pines*, where the violent storm that pushes the Dutch explorers from Madagascar towards Terra Australis is a fictive move to locate the castaway community from the well-known and intractable mid-place that was the big island, to a possible new colonial frontier of the Southern lands that the Dutch, Spanish and the Portuguese aimed to possess.

Were Neville’s work to be read in the light of these sources, the context of intercolonial competition between European powers in India and the East Indies can account for some of the interest surrounding this Restoration-era literary hoax. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, as the ports of the Indian Ocean began to be saturated with Dutch influence in East Asia and Portuguese control in South west India, and Japan and China looked increasingly

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid. Richardson borrows this passage from Mills, “Erédia’s description,” 263--4.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid., 1. For more details on the *Regio Pithacoru*, see Richardson, “Cartographical Clues,” 3.

unbreachable, seeking further east would be inviting if there was some intelligence indicating colonial feasibility. If Quiros set out from the coasts of Peru on his westward journey across the Pacific to dub the the southern continent as a New Jerusalem, Erédia hoped to sail to the region from the opposite direction, eastward and away from those parts of the Indian Ocean with which Europe was familiar. The violent storms that drove the voyage of George Pine and Van Sloetten from Madagascar, are then more than a literary device. Madagascar indicated both mean and deviation: the mean between Europe and the East that was known, and a point of deviation towards the East that was not known, where the promise of new settlements and commodities were beginning to fuel exploration. To a significant extent, the Dutch shipwreck of 1606 as reported in the work of Barros, Erédia and Athanasio's letter capture the kernel of Neville's narrative about George Pine and his ever-increasing descendants.

Neville's discourse as a parable of English colonial folly

However, an important aspect of Neville's work not captured in either of the above sources is the colonial interest shown by the European sailors who explore the island of the Pines. This aspect of the narrative also relates directly to Neville's readers, some of whom must have fleetingly entertained the idea of the island as a possible colonial or mercantile avenue. As mentioned earlier, the first edition consisted only of George Pine's relation, while the following two editions are narrated through the perspective of the Dutch sailors encountering the tribes of the Pines. In the third edition which combined the earlier two editions of *The Isle of Pines*, the Dutch sailors hear the origin tale of the English natives and go on to explore the island, "taking with us two or three Fowling-pieces, leaving half our Company to guard the Ship, the rest of us resolved to go up higher into the

Country for a further discovery.”⁶⁴² This armed company inspecting the island is reminiscent of a colonial mission. More particularly, there are reasons to believe that Neville was familiar with Walter Hamond’s *A Paradox* and the disastrous English attempt to plant a colony in Madagascar. The synopsis contained in the title page of the third edition of *The Isle of Pines* matches the topics covered by a generic colonial promotional narrative. It seeks to lay out “the Scituation of the Country, the temperature of the Climate, the manners and conditions of the people that inhabit it” just as the title page of Hamond’s *A Paradox* carries a “true Description of that Island: The Nature of the Climate, and condition of the Inhabitants.”⁶⁴³

En route from Amsterdam to Asia, Van Sloetten reports on a routine trading stop where “we had a sight of Madagascar, or the Island of St. Laurence” where “we steered our course, and trafficked with the inhabitants for Knives, Beads, Glasses and the like, having in exchange thereof Cloves and Silver.”⁶⁴⁴ However, his crew runs into trouble upon his return journey from Asia to Europe when:

we came again to Madagascar, where we put in for a fresh recruit of Victuals and Water. During our abode here, there hapned a very great Earthquake, which tumbled down many Houses; The people of themselves are very Unhospitable and Treacherous, hardly to be drawn to Traffique with any people; and now, this calamitie happening upon them, so enraged them against the Christians, imputing all such calamities to the cause of them, that they fell upon some Portugals and wounded them, and we seeing their mischievous Actions, with all the speed we could put forth to Sea again, and sailed to the Island of St. Hellens.⁶⁴⁵

Between these two references to Madagascar, Neville demonstrates his familiarity with several views held about the big island as reported in the travel literature of

⁶⁴² Neville, “The Isle of Pines: Texts,” 41.

⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*, 23; Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. A2v.

⁶⁴⁴ Neville, “The Isle of Pines: Texts,” 29.

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 47.

his time. For instance, the hostility to trade and the availability of clove and silver in exchange for beads are mentioned in Roberts Lewes' popular *The merchants mappe of commerce* (1638). Lewes' work was one of the earliest treatises to systematically document global traffic, where he states that in "Madagascar, otherwise called the Iland St. Lawrence", "the Inhabitants willingly permit no man to land upon their Countrey for traffique sake; it yeeldeth cloves, ginger, and some silver, to the Inhabitants owne use; but not for exportation, and their monies in use are the glasse beades of Cambaia, which in Merchandize and barter currantly passe amongst them."⁶⁴⁶ The hostility of the island natives towards the Portuguese (and therefore their readiness to be friends with the English) is an argument leveraged by promoters like Hamond and Boothby, who wanted to downplay any suggestions that their colonial rivals might have had some purchase on the island. In his *A briefe discovery or description of the most famous island of Madagascar*, Boothby speaks of an encounter with the leader of a tribe living near St. Augustine bay when "(i)n this Kings discourse we found how cruell the Portugals had beene to them, comming a shore and carrying men, women and children perforce away: they cannot indure the Portugals, telling me how they did betray them with pictures."⁶⁴⁷

So far we have mostly traced the historical sources, in the form of the castaway narratives that emerged from European sailors in Madagascar, that are likely to have influenced *The Isle of Pines* given the shared narrative features between the two sets of texts. Among these points of comparison are the antipodean trope of a native community of European descendants and the common network of place names that populate these texts. However, even more pointed similarities emerge

⁶⁴⁶ Lewes Roberts, *The Merchants Mappe of Commerce; wherein the Universal Manner and Matter of Trade, is compendiously handled* (London: Printed for Ralph Mabb, 1638), 111.

⁶⁴⁷ Boothby, *A Briefe Discovery*, 8.

when we place Neville's pamphlets alongside the promotional efforts of Hamond and Boothby. The overlaps in minute details and phrases certainly suggest that Neville would have perused the texts by the English promoters. Van Sloetten sailed from Madagascar to "the Island of St. Hellens" where the crew "stayed all the Christmas Holy-dayes, which was vere much celebrated by the Governour there under the King of Spain"; Boothby too mentions a christmas where he sailed to Saint Helena where he spent "a moneths time refreshing our selves in the uninhabited Island, with Hogges, Goats, and Fish," leaving "here, after a merry Christmas kept, with such homely fare as the place would afford."⁶⁴⁸ Where Hamond mentions bread-fruit "a kinde of Palmito, called by the Portugals, Corodima[...], which is said to be admirable vertuous, and not unproperly, the Inhabitants feeding on it instead of Bread," Neville's Van Sloetten relishes the nuts in the woods that were "as big as a large Apple, whose kernel being pleasant and dry, we made use of instead of bread."⁶⁴⁹

Utopia was essentially a social game, teasing, entertaining and preaching to its readers. Like Thomas More's *Utopia*, Neville cannot resist inserting references that betray his fictive proclivities. After spending the christmas holidays in the island of St. Helena, Van Sloetten happens upon "our old acquaintance Mr. Petrus Ramazina," a reference to Petrus Romanus, prophesied in a late sixteenth-century eschatological hoax to be the final Pope before the apocalyptic destruction of Rome. ⁶⁵⁰ In subtly including the chief character from a false

⁶⁴⁸ Neville, "The Isle of Pines: Texts," 47; Richard Boothby, *A true declaration of the intollerable wrongs done to Richard Boothby* ([London: s.n.], 1644), 24. The island of St. Helena was one of England's oldest colonies after the settlements in North America and the Caribbean. During the period in which Neville's pamphlets were composed, the English East India company had already colonised and fortified the island after having received in 1660 a royal charter that provided them with rights over the island.

⁶⁴⁹ Neville, "The Isle of Pines: Texts," 30; Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. B1v--r.

⁶⁵⁰ The hoax was perpetrated by the Benedictine monk Arnold Wion who, in his monastic history *Lignum Vitae*, attributed the prophecy to the twelfth century monk Malachi. For a discussion of

prophecy into his travel-tale, Neville indicated he was following in the footsteps of a well-established tradition of textual forgery. However, in forging a travel report, Neville could hardly have done better than to look to the fictive qualities of Hamond's own travel tale in *A Paradox*. A central part of Hamond's fictive repertoire involved the very protestation against fiction, in which he anticipates and denies that "I might be thought to use a Travellers authority."⁶⁵¹ Van Sloetten, addressing Abraham Keek, towards the end of the epistolary report of his travels, anticipates the suspicion of his readers by fully stating the proverb employed earlier in Hamond's text. Neville's Dutch captain requests his correspondent, "to give Credence" to "Others I know, such Nullifidians as will believe nothing but what they see, applying that Proverb unto us. That Travelors may lye by authority."⁶⁵²

The resonance between *The Isle of Pines* and Hamond's *A Paradox* is felt even more clearly in the postscript of Van Sloetten's report. Here, the Dutch captain pithily summarises some of the main arguments put forward three decades earlier by Hamond's *A Paradox*:

(A)nd yet are the people very intelligible, retaining a great part of the Ingenuity and Gallantry of the English Nation, though they have not that happy means to express themselves; in this respect we may account them fortunate, in that possessing little, they enjoy all things, as being contented with what they have, wanting those allurements to mischief, which our European Countries are enriched with.⁶⁵³

Van Sloetten is here summarising Hamond's position on Madagascar's inhabitants being a "happy people" because they "have no need of any forraign commodity, Nature having sufficiently supplied their necessities, wherewith they

the prophecy as a hoax see Geert Lernout, *Help My Unbelief: James Joyce and Religion* (London: Continuum, 2010), 158--59.

⁶⁵¹ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. B1r.

⁶⁵² Neville, "The Isle of Pines: Texts," 31.

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*, 49.

remain contented.”⁶⁵⁴ Where he puts forward the Pines’ inability to display a European ingenuity as a virtue, Neville’s Van Sloetten is incorporating Hamond’s take on the advantages of ignorance and its role in happiness. This particular move in Hamond’s text uses navigation as the exemplar of human artifice and knowledge where he argues:

And may not their ignorance in the Art of Navigation, be deservedly accounted an happinesse. Certainly by this means they are not contaminated with the vices and evill customes of strangers: when we have derived to our selves, with our commerce with forraign Nations, with their wares and commodities.⁶⁵⁵

These overarching parallels between *The Isle of Pines* and Hamond and Boothby’s promotional works lead us to various other connections between these two sets of events. Towards the end of his postscript, Van Sloetten delivers the following evaluation of the colonial reconnaissance of the island:

(A)ll that I shall ever say of it is, that it is a place enriched with Natures abundance, deficient in nothing conducible to the sustentation of mans life, which were it Manured by Agri-culture and Gardening, as other of our European Countries are, no question but it would equal, if not exceed many which now pass for praise worthy.⁶⁵⁶

Here, the Dutch captain’s appreciation for the happiness of the noble savage is revealed to be patronising, a concession made towards an inferior people inhabiting an island with natural gifts that require European ingenuity to fulfill its maximum potential. This statement is rooted in a context of colonial acquisition, whereas Van Sloetten’s earlier assessment of islanded contentment involved the travelers’ evocation of tropical bliss. A similar move is made earlier on when the isle’s first colonist, George Pines lists the beneficial aspects of the land he chanced

⁶⁵⁴ Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. F3v.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. F2r.

⁶⁵⁶ Neville, “The Isle of Pines: Texts,” 49.

upon, concluding that “this place (had it the culture, that skilful people might bestow on it) would prove a Paradise.”⁶⁵⁷ Boothby prefigured these observations in his assessments of Madagascar as a fertile island awaiting European intervention, “being indeed the paradise of the World, especially being once inhabited with Christians or civill people, skilfull in Agriculture and manufactures, and all sorts of Mecannick labourers and handicrafts.”⁶⁵⁸

In the face of these parallels between the promotional pamphlets commissioned by the Courten association and Neville’s tale of discovery, we know that Neville did not just concoct his pamphlets based on a generic understanding of travel reports. Rather, he saw a fictive potential in particular anecdotes as reported from particular colonial projects. If Neville was familiar with Courtens’ ambitious scheme for Madagascar, it is only fitting that he located the Pines’ in an island belonging to Terra Australis Incognita. Before his failed Madagascar venture, William Courten had petitioned King James for a patent authorising “all the lands in the south parts of the world called Terra Australis Incognita, extending eastwards and westwards from the Straits of Le Maire, together with all the adjacent islands as are yet undiscovered, or, being discovered, are not yet traded unto by any of Your Majesty’s subjects.”⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid., 35.

⁶⁵⁸ Boothby, *A Briefe Discovery*, 15. Just as Van Sloetten commends the island for its superlative fertility vis a vis other European countries, Boothby regards Madagascar as a land that “farre transcends and exceeds all other Countries in Asia, Affrica and America, planted by English, French, Dutch, Portugall and Spaniards: and is likely to prove of farre greater value and esteeme to that Christian Prince and Nation that shall plant and settle a sure habitation therein”. See Ibid., 5--6.

⁶⁵⁹ State Papers, Dom., Car. I, vol. xiv, no.33, quoted in Ernest Scott, ed., *Australia, Volume 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), 37.

Van Sloetten's commentary about the Pines' is, to borrow the title of Beach's study, one of "English degeneracy and Dutch supremacy."⁶⁶⁰ As Neville points out "the mere discharging off three or four Guns" by the captain's crew suffices to make his English rivals flee, "for what could nakedness do to encounter with Arms."⁶⁶¹ William Courten, then, provided Neville with a striking example for this representation of asymmetrical power between the two European powers. The ventures of Sir William and his son William esq. had, on separate occasions, been destroyed by the Dutch. As the eighteenth-century compendium *Biographia Britannica* notes, William esq. had obtained loans from his father-in-law and "equipped two ships, at great expense, the Bona Esperanza, and the Henry Bonadventure, which he sent to the East Indies."⁶⁶² During this "hazardous" and "desperate adventure" his ships were "waylaid, seized, and plundered by the Dutch, who in this iniquitous way ruined the son, after having attempted in like manner, to ruin his father about twenty years before, by the butchery of his agents, and the seizure of his property at Amboyna."⁶⁶³

Before the Dutch captured and established themselves in Batavia in 1619, the Ambon island was the headquarters of the Dutch East India Company. In the same year, after negotiations between King James I and the States General of the Netherlands, a Treaty of Defence was signed between the Dutch and the English East India Company to divide contractually the spice trade in the East Indies. A council was instituted so that both companies maintain the trading posts they had occupied at the time. Despite the agreement, conflicts broke out and distrust was

⁶⁶⁰ Beach, "A Profound Pessimism about Empire," 21.

⁶⁶¹ Neville, "The Isle of Pines: Texts," 45.

⁶⁶² *Biographia Britannica: or, The lives of the most eminent persons who have flourished in Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. Andrew Kippis, 1778--1793. Facsimile of the second edition, vol.4, (Hildesheim: Olms Verlag, 1974), 329.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*

rife, culminating in the 1623 incident that came to be known in England as the Amboyna Massacre. Ten Englishmen, including the local head factor Gabriel Towerson, were beheaded by the Dutch.⁶⁶⁴ In the following decades, the incident would play a central role in the massive pamphleteering campaigns that preceded the three Anglo-Dutch wars.⁶⁶⁵ Ever since its occurrence, as Marjorie Rubright remarks, “the Amboyna massacre was structured as a discursive debate among nations and their corporate bodies”; the incident was preached about in sermons, “serialized in pamphlets, recounted in ballads, censured in plays and depicted in the visual arts.”⁶⁶⁶ Courten would be a major casualty of the Dutch actions at Amboyna, incurring “severe losses from the seizure of his forts, factories, and property.”⁶⁶⁷ In 1665, closer to Neville’s own composition of *The Isle of Pines*, the merchant John Darrell, a sympathiser of the Courtens, brought out a pamphlet *A true and compendious narration or, second part of Amboyna*, which presented the massacre as a warning about the dangers the Dutch posed for English trade interests. Darrell warned that Dutch companies hoped to “command from North to South, and so to cross all the subjects of emperors, kings, princes, and potentates of the whole universe, save only the Narrow Seas of England which is the chief stumbling block.”⁶⁶⁸ If English actors under Charles II deployed

⁶⁶⁴ For the specific intrigues that led to the death of the English factors, see David K. Bassett, “The ‘Amboyna Massacre’ of 1623”, *JSEAH* 1, no. 2 (1960): 1--19. Also see Nicholas Tarling, “Ambon (Amboina/ Amboyna) Massacre, 1623” in *Southeast Asia, An Historical Encyclopedia: From Angkor Wat to East Timor*, ed. Ooi Keat Gin (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 2004), 142--3.

⁶⁶⁵ Soon after the incident, in 1624, a three-part pamphlet carrying the English relation of the event titled *A True Relation of the Unjust, Cruell, and Barbarous Proceedings Against the English at Amboyna*, the Dutch response and the English East India Company’s rebuttal was brought out. This pamphlet contained illustrations depicting graphically the torture of the English at the hands of the Dutch. In 1654, in the run-up to the first Anglo-Dutch war, Oliver Cromwell reissued this pamphlet with the title *A Memento for Holland*. As late as 1673, three months into the third war, Dryden would raise the incident to a polemical stage production in his play *Amboyna; or, The Cruelties of the Dutch to the English Merchants*.

⁶⁶⁶ Marjorie Rubright, *Doppelganger Dilemmas: Anglo-Dutch Relations in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 209.

⁶⁶⁷ William and Robert Chambers, *Chambers’ Edinburgh Journal* 15, Nos. 366--91 (Edinburgh: Published by William and Robert Chambers, 1851), 310.

⁶⁶⁸ John Darrell, *A True and Compendius Narration: Or (Second Part of Amboyna)* (London, 1665), 9--10, quoted in Steven C. A. Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism: Ideologies and the*

pamphlets as discursive weapons during the second Anglo-Dutch war of 1667, *The Isle of Pines* can be seen as a Republican prankster's manner of delivering a denouement to the whole affair. Neville's response gloats at the impotence of the Restoration monarch in the face of a quick and decisive defeat by the Dutch. Courtens' losses in Madagascar and the East Indies, and his fanciful patent to settle in Terra Australis, fed into Neville's broader satirical ambit.

Surprisingly, Neville's clever positioning of *The Isle of Pines* as a mockery of English imperial ambition and a political satire lampooning the perceived debaucheries of Charles II's reign went largely unremarked by its contemporary and later readership. Kate Loveman rightly observes a disjunction between modern and seventeenth-century commentary on *The Isle of Pines*, and notes that "modern critics have focused upon the story's political and religious implications, while early comment on these aspects has not survived."⁶⁶⁹ Most contemporary and even later references to *The Isle of Pines* focused on the fantastic aspects of plot and location rather than on its possible political overtones. They usually appear in jest or sarcasm such as the following reference in Dryden's *The Kind Keeper* (1680), in which the protagonist's uncommon virility is alluded to: "Why this ceremony betwixt you? 'Tis a likely proper Fellow, and / looks as he cou'd People a new Isle of Pines."⁶⁷⁰ Mahlberg observes that the political criticism of Stuart England contained in *The Isle of Pines* was lost in translation during its many transformations in various overseas editions.⁶⁷¹ But

Making of English Foreign Policy, 1650-1668, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 263.

⁶⁶⁹ Loveman, *Reading Fictions*, 72--3.

⁶⁷⁰ John Dryden, *The Works of John Dryden, Volume XIV: Plays; The Kind Keeper, The Spanish Fryar, The Duke of Guise, and The Vindication*, eds. Vinton A Dearing and Alan Roper (Oakland: University of California Press, 1993), 40.

⁶⁷¹ Mahlberg, "Authors Losing Control," 2.

this omission holds true for the English editions as well, and there is little evidence that gives us reason to believe otherwise.

Mahlberg attributes the wide range of overseas transformations in Neville's pamphlets to "the writer's loss of authority" in a cosmopolitan context in which "the pamphlet was up for grabs" in the absence of international copyright laws.⁶⁷² The overseas transformations of the work was carried out by translators, editors, publishers, and booksellers, who, Mahlberg notes, "more or less consciously interfered with the text and made deliberate changes to the pamphlet according to their needs and purposes."⁶⁷³ Yet despite these local variations, the domestic and international appeal of the text share some general points of interest. As mentioned earlier, the nineteenth-century English bibliophile Grenville's interest in the locations mentioned in *The Isle of Pines* echoed the colonial interest shown by the Hamburg merchant community mentioned in the refutation of a sixteenth-century German dissertation that refuted Neville's work. The truth or falsity of the tale, the location and fertility of the island and its potential as a possible colony, the sexual exploits of the protagonist, the Adamic generation of a large community of two thousand people, and the paradox of Europeans gone native were the main points of interest shared across both the domestic and the continental readership. In tracing the locational concerns and borrowings that are likely to have influenced *The Isle of Pines*, the picture is not so much that of an author's intentions being waylaid but rather an author tapping into a current of travel and exploratory literature, only for his work to be recirculated later as news from abroad. We see not so much a scenario of an "author losing control" but one in which pamphleteers, translators and readers are connected to each other as

⁶⁷² Ibid., 1.

⁶⁷³ Ibid., 3.

participants in an international network of overseas news reports. Neville coupled reports of Dutch castaways encountering a tribe of naked Portuguese descendants in Madagascar with Hamond and Boothby's grand projections of the big island in order to compose his utopian satire, which doubled up as a literary hoax. It is likely that the translators and publishers of the overseas editions inserted other locations along the same Indian Ocean trade route referenced in Neville in order to gather interest from their local readership, while some information savvy readers sought to corroborate the purported findings within *The Isle of Pines* by tapping into a corpus of colonial and mercantile reports relevant to the regions mentioned in these texts.

Myths of Demography, Birthing colonies: Overpopulation in Neville, Joseph Banks, Malthus and Darwin

If Dryden channeled the central role of virility in Neville's narrative, it is because the latter himself was likely to have utilised Madagascar's reputation in travel circles as a fertile location. Boothby supported his assertion of Madagascar as a "paradise" by pointing to its location in the tropics, which the geographies of the time associated with fecundity. According to Boothby, the locale and extent of the big island "comprehends many famous Countries that lie either under the Line, or under or neer both Tropicks, and so by consequence must in likelihood (or rather assured probability) participate of the fertillity, pleasure and wealth of them all; if not antecede transcend and superabound them all."⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁷⁴ Boothby, *A briefe discovery*, 15. Boothby conveniently ignored or was unaware of some facts about the tropics that Alison Games points out, that "Madagascar is generally dry" with "summers [...] the dampest season when tropical storms bring rainfall, but the winter months are arid, so dry that baobabs are tapped for their water." Similarly, Games also points out that "(s)ome regions of

In a related vein, an English translation of the contemporary scientific periodical, the *Journal des Scavans*, noted that “in Madagascar (which is very thin of Inhabitants, by reason of the inhumanity with which they put little Children to death) the Sheep bring Lambs four times a year.”⁶⁷⁵ Similarly, George Pine is only too pleased to describe both the abundance of the island he finds himself in, and the abundance it bestows on anyone who enters it. Relating the fate of the animals on the island, Pine says that he “found on Land a sort of fowl about the bigness of a Swan, very heavie and fat, that by reason of their weight could not fly, of these we found little difficulty to kill, so that was our present food; we carried out of *England* certain Hens and Cocks to eat by the way, some of these when the ship was broken, by some means got to land, & bred exceedingly, so that in the future they were a great help unto us.”⁶⁷⁶ The fecundity of Neville’s island was also a topic of intellectual debate in at least one instance.

The French scientist Henri Justel writes to Henry Oldenburg, secretary of the Royal Society in London, asking for more information about “that English Colony,” the isle of Pines.⁶⁷⁷ Here, geographical details and notions were incorporated into the fictional events narrated in *The Isle of Pines*, those very borrowings were also plowed back into discussions of geography and natural science in the context of scrutinising Neville’s text. Justel remarks that there are

the tropics were hosts to disease-bearing mosquitoes” with many of the English colonists dying of malaria soon after they set up camp in Madagascar. See Games, *The Web of Empire*, 201–02.

⁶⁷⁵ *Weekly Memorials for the Ingenious* (London: Printed for Henry Faithorne and John Kersey, 1683), 6.

⁶⁷⁶ Neville, “The Isle of Pines: Texts,” 34. Newton and Gadow (1896) believe Neville’s relation of the flightless bird is either a mention of the dodo which he might have borrowed from Herbert’s mention of the bird in (?) or a reference to the *Rodrigues Solitaire*, a swan-sized flightless bird that was endemic to the island of Rodrigues, lying to the east of Madagascar. See also Jolyon C. Parish, *The Dodo and the Solitaire: A Natural History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 124.

⁶⁷⁷ Justel to Oldenburg, late July 1668, in *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg*, ed. A. Rupert Hall and Marie Boas Hall, 13 vols. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965–1986), vol. iv, letter 929.

“those who think that this story is not true; first because the English were never in the East Indies at the time of Queen Elizabeth; because the Dutch ship which landed at this island is not named; and further that no one believes that a man even with four women could have produced 1789 people in fifty years.”⁶⁷⁸ But Justel himself does not see the demographic explosion as a problem. He believed it possible that private individuals could have taken a “long voyage without its being recorded by Purchas”, and that “the Dutch ship” would “perhaps be named in the account that will be given, and it may thus become known.”⁶⁷⁹ Regarding Pines' descendants, “no one doubts that this number of people could have conceived from that one man.”⁶⁸⁰ Justel is later disabused and writes to Oldenburg in August expressing disappointment that the account of *The Isle of Pines* was “only a romance” and that “the Dutch were capable of deceiving the world in this way, and of selling us falsehoods.”⁶⁸¹ It is perhaps Justel’s familiarity with English demographic measures at the time that accounts for his ready belief in the absurd “fact” of the island population’s incredible fecundity. Justel himself was interested in the emerging study of statistics and would receive from Caspar Neumann, a theologian living in Breslau, demographic data from the latter’s city for the years 1687–1691.⁶⁸² It is possible that Neville, like Justel, was aware of theories regarding population growth rates. Neville was a close associate of William Petty as both of them belonged to the Rota Club, a group lobbying the court of Charles I for constitutional reform. It is likely that he was familiar with Petty’s mathematical theories about the exponential increase of population. In his essay *Of the Growth of the City of London*, Petty estimates the population of the

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., letter 945.

⁶⁸² See Nicolas Bacaër, *A Short History of Mathematical Population Dynamics* (London: Springer, 2011), 6.

city of London to grow eightfold to almost eleven million people within a span of hundred and fifty years.⁶⁸³ Neville must have been familiar with these discussions and might well have used such projections as the basis for George Pine's numbering his tribe at almost two thousand "(c)hildren, Grand-children, and great Grand-children."⁶⁸⁴

David McInnis provides an anecdote about the intriguing physical context of a copy of *The Isle of Pines* held in the British Library. McInnis notes that Neville's pamphlet "was part of a *sammelband*" that "belonged to Sir Joseph Banks, the botanist on the *Endaeavour* during Captain Cook's expedition of 1768-71."⁶⁸⁵ McInnis raises (but does not answer) a pertinent query: "Why would Banks, a reputable naturalist who would later become President of the Royal Society, think it appropriate to consult a satirical fable [...] about repopulating a desert island?"⁶⁸⁶ Here is an interesting connection that could be a response to the above question. Neville's narrative dealt with populating an uninhabited island in Terra Australis and therefore emerged as a fable directly addressing anxieties surrounding the process of colonial settlement, anxieties which Banks was grappling with as Cook's expedition shifted their efforts from discovery to possession. Banks, like John Wilkins who credulously employed the fictional giant *Rukh* to demonstrate a physical fact, sought *The Isle of Pines* as an exemplary case for the generation of a colonial population. By illustrating the path to be charted from original settler to a society that needed to be contained by

⁶⁸³ William Petty, *The Economic Writings of Sir William Petty, together with The Observations upon Bills of Mortality, more probably by Captain John Graunt*, ed. Charles Henry Hull (Cambridge University Press, 1899).

⁶⁸⁴ Neville, "The Isle of Pines: Texts," 37.

⁶⁸⁵ David McInnis, "Marlowe and Electronic Resources," in *Christopher Marlowe at 450*, eds. Sara Munson Deats and Robert Logan (New York: Routledge, 2016), 310--11.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

law and religion, Neville's pamphlet provided not so much technique as it did allegory.

The allegory of George Pine and the several tribes fathered by him offered a space through which a political arithmetic could be imagined before it took its eventual shape in the form of policy and decisions. Neville's pamphlet might have been on Banks' mind in 1786 when, as Diedre Coleman remarks, "(t)he convict settlement at Botany Bay, top-heavy with males, exercised the ingenuity of a number of senior personnel" as population was a significant concern "to securing the viability of new colonies" and that "the proportion of males to females must always prove a major consideration".⁶⁸⁷ In his *A Proposal for Establishing a Settlement in New South Wales*, Banks' close friend and colleague James Maria Matra suggests utilising the ships used to convey the convict-settlers to either procure "live stock from the Cape, or from the Molucca Islands" or "be employed in conveying to the new settlement a further number of women from the Friendly Islands, New Caledonia" from "whence any number may be procured without difficulty" as "it is well-known that it would be impossible to preserve the settlement from gross irregularities and disorders."⁶⁸⁸ Matra's social imaginary as a colonist engendered his view of Pacific-island women as commodities necessary for containing masculine disorder, dispensable, and interchangeable with livestock. Moving away from Matra's economy of base desires and social disorder, a letter addressed to Banks held presently in the State library of New South Wales suggested the introduction of a colonised female population to breed a new

⁶⁸⁷ Deirdre Coleman, *Romantic Colonization and British Anti-Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 24.

⁶⁸⁸ "Sir George Young's Plan," in *Historical records of New South Wales: Vol.1, Part 2* (Sidney: Charles Potter, 1892), 18. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-343658027/view?partId=nla.obj-343668159#page/n53/mode/1up>.

Cf. Bladen, F. M, Britton, Alexander and Cook, James. *Historical records of New South Wales* Sydney: Government Printer, 1892. Web. 15 December 2016 <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-343230396>>

generation of occupants. The potential virtues that could result from this specific racial mingling are depicted with utopian overtones:

It is now determined to send a great Body of Persons who have forfeited their Liberty here to the Southern Hemisphere and to plant them on the Banks of Botany Bay on a Soil and in a Latitude fitted for the Culture of every Thing that can satisfy the wants and Indulge the Appetites of Men: The advantage to be derived from transplanting so many Persons, must arise from a future Increase of their Numbers; But as most of these are Males, they must perish without increase, unless a suitable provision of Females shall be settled among Them. It is not a long Run from new South W'ales to Otaheite; If all the men unprovided with wives were embarked in one or two Vessels and sent to Otahaite They might, without imitating the Violence of a Roman Rape, bring from the superior race of Inhabitants in that Island a set of the most beautifully formed Women that the Sun beholds, and thereby Botany Bay might be peopled with Beings that would be an Ornament to Human Nature: From the sober gravity of the Males and the airy Lightness of the Females, from the thoughtful Dispositions of the men and the gay unthinking chearfulness of the women, a generation of social Benevolent Beings might arise, and in time become a flourishing nation.⁶⁸⁹

The main features of the letter's contents -- a fertile southern soil and latitude, the appetites of men, enslaved women as instruments of sexual desire, and a future increase of numbers -- share evident narrative parallels with Neville's pamphlet. The notion of the colony is usually associated with the Roman conception of *colonia*, which commonly carried the sense of either a farm, a landed estate or a settlement. As Vanessa Smith observes, in this instance of Botany Bay's "disturbing proto-eugenicist speculation", the colony is conceived of as "a selective breeding farm".⁶⁹⁰ In the context of such deliberations, *The Isle of Pines*

⁶⁸⁹ Copy of letter received by Banks, 13 December 1786, signed with unidentified author's initials, 'R.H.,' *Papers of Joseph Banks*, Series 23.01, Cy 3008/6-9, Mitchell Library, Sydney, quoted in Coleman, *Romantic Colonization*, 25. Coleman surmises that the writer may have been Robert Hobart, Lord Hobart, 4th Earl of Buckinghamshire. Vanessa Smith argues that the author of the letter "substitutes a series of more benign binaries - beauty and intellect, gravity and lightness, thoughtfulness and gaiety" - to mitigate what might be perceived as "a potentially volatile union between dark and light, native and criminal." See Vanessa Smith, "Pitcairn's 'guilty stock': the island as breeding ground," in *Islands in History and Representation*, eds. Rod Edmond and Vanessa Smith (London: Routledge, 2003), 125--26.

⁶⁹⁰ Smith, Pitcairn's 'guilty stock,' 125--26. Coleman notes that this "project of engrafting reproductive sexuality onto territory was a pressing practical issue for Governor Philip". As Coleman goes on to relate, "(w)ith the topic of breeding uppermost in mind", the then Governor of New South Wales, Arthur Philip, sought guidance as to whether the supply ships were to be used for "obtaining livestock from the Cape, or for conveying women from the islands" before finally opting for British women instead. See Coleman, *Romantic Colonization*, 25.

probably served as an apposite emblem for the reproductive potential sought in Botany Bay.

If Neville's pamphlet bore significance to a colonial scenario more than a century after it was first published, it was partly because the text borrowed its themes and devices from certain predicaments and contrivances posed by the colonial world that preceded it. Among these influences were anecdotes about Portuguese castaways who, over a few generations, had established themselves as a native community in Madagascar. Then there was Hamond's pitch in which the big island was "(a)n Earth, like that of Eden, pleasant without artifice, and plentiful without labour", and "which though untill'd and unmanur'd, yeelds all necessaries for life, even to superfluity".⁶⁹¹ Echoing Hamond's presentation of the island, Boothby compared Madagascar "to the land of Canaan that floweth with milke and hony" and "without all question, this Country farre transcends and exceeds all other Countries in Asia, Affrica and America, planted by English, French, Dutch, Portugall and Spaniards: and is likely to prove of farre greater value and esteeme to that Christian Prince and Nation that shall plant and settle a sure habitation therein".⁶⁹² Following their lead, effortless procurement and pleasure is also the chief attraction of the island for George Pine who marvels at the nuts that could be used as bread, "very good meat" and eggs of large fowls and ducks, a tame and fast-reproducing goat-sized beast that could be easily killed, a "great store" of fish, and climate that was "ever warm, and never colder than in *England* in September".⁶⁹³ He also attributes his apparent licentiousness to the "Idleness

⁶⁹¹ Hamond, *Richest and most Fruitful Island*, sig. A3r; Hamond, *A Paradox*, sig. Bv.

⁶⁹² Boothby, *A Briefe Discovery*, 5--6.

⁶⁹³ Neville, "The Isle of Pines: Texts," 34--35.

and Fulness” that came with such plenty, and generated “a desire of enjoying the women”.⁶⁹⁴

Neville’s endlessly provisioned landscape is reminiscent of the imagined land of Cockaigne, a series of medieval monastic and peasant fantasies that became a commonplace in thousands of Europe-wide renditions. Herman Pleij identifies Cockaigne tales to normally feature a place where “(w)ork was forbidden”, “food and drink appeared spontaneously in the form of grilled fish, roast geese, and rivers of wine”, the “weather was stable and mild-it was always spring” and there was “free sex with ever-willing partners”.⁶⁹⁵ Neville’s isle was a land of Cockaigne repurposed for the age of exploration. Unlike his successor Robinson Crusoe, George Pines possesses the island not so much by utilising the instruments of European civilisation, but by consuming its commodities and sensual delights.

However, Neville did not unquestioningly adopt Hamond and Boothby’s near-frivolous depiction of an island paradise blessed with unfettered abundance. If Hamond’s Madagascar was Eden before the Fall, the Dutch explorers in Neville encountered an island community dealing with its post-lapsarian descent. In an important sense, *The Isle of Pines* pursues these visions of abundance to their logical moral conclusion. George Pine has to contend with his subjects having fallen into sin in a land in which “brother and sister lay openly together; those who would not yield to their lewd embraces, were by force ravished, yea many

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid., 35--36.

⁶⁹⁵ Herman Pleij, *Dreaming of Cockaigne: Medieval Fantasies of the Perfect Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 3. According to Pleij, Cockaigne was a popular game among the masses, “a means of alleviating the everyday worries of peasants and the lower middle classes” and occupied a central place “within the survival strategies of both peasants and townsfolk” offering “a light-hearted counterbalance to the weighty obsessions of medieval existence” experienced by “all levels of society, by the laity and the clergy, men and women alike”. See Pleij, *Dreaming of Cockaigne*, 5.

times endangered of their lives”.⁶⁹⁶ Pine has to resort to punishment, condemning the principal offenders to execution and setting forth six commandments which had to be protected by representatives from each tribe so that future discord could be prevented. Under his grandson William’s reign, a conflict between two tribes throws the island into a civil war; the island, it is noted, comes to “a great hurly burly, they being too great Potent Factions, the bandying of which against each other, threatened a general ruin to the whole State”.⁶⁹⁷ Given these turns in the tale, it is possible to see Neville’s text as applying the benefit of hindsight to the failed Courten campaign and their overblown promotional literature. In laying out the blinkered nature of the colonial desire for abundance, Neville’s text can be seen as satirising Hamond’s and Boothby’s naive visions, in which natural abundance is sufficient to sustain any form of social arrangement.

Neville’s less than ideal conclusion to a well-provisioned social imaginary might have been another reason why *The Isle of Pines* garnered the attention of Joseph Banks, who thought it fit to include the text in a compilation that included more serious scientific and exploration literature. Justifying the many transgressions among his subjects, William Pine makes the following observation: “in multitudes disorders will grow, the stronger seeking to oppress the weaker; no tye of Religion being strong enough to chain up the depraved nature of mankinde”.⁶⁹⁸ This statement admits concerns with the effects of population growth, a theme whose importance would be foregrounded over a century later in the works of Robert Malthus and Charles Darwin. Prior to Malthus, Banks was concerned with the mechanics of population given his role in looking for ways to populate settlements

⁶⁹⁶ Neville, “The Isle of Pines: Texts,” 39.

⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

in their new colony. Regarding the sparse population of aboriginal people living on the eastern coast of New Holland, Banks wondered:

Whatever may be the reason of this want of People is difficult to guess, unless perhaps the Barrenness of the Soil and scarcity of fresh water; but why mankind should not increase here as fast as in other places unless their small tribes have frequent wars in which many are destroyed.⁶⁹⁹

In his *An Account of the Voyages undertaken*, James Cook's editor, John Hawkesworth would paraphrase Banks' full observation as a neat question: "By what means the inhabitants of this country are reduced to such a number as it can subsist, is not perhaps very easy to guess."⁷⁰⁰ Reading Hawkesworth, and mistakenly attributing Banks' query to Cook, Robert Malthus would later reflect that his entire project in *An Essay on the Principle of Population* came about in order "to answer the question, generally, which had been applied, particularly, to New Holland by Captain Cook."⁷⁰¹ Malthus was able to demonstrate that an otherwise ever-increasing population was constrained by limited resources, this being a "great restrictive law" that "man cannot by any efforts of reason escape from it."⁷⁰² Later donning his cleric's hat, and not unlike Neville in *The Isle of Pines*, Malthus too pronounced that "vice and misery" were the few remedies that remained for a mankind driven to excess but having to bow to "Necessity, that impervious all-pervading law of nature" which "restrains them within the prescribed bounds"⁷⁰³ Malthus' work carries a dark tenor, of nature cutting man

⁶⁹⁹ Joseph Banks, *The Endeavour Journal Of Joseph Banks 1768–1771*, ed. John Cawte Beaglehole, vol.2 (Sydney: Angus and Robertson Ltd, 1962), 123. Also quoted in Alison Bashford and Joyce E. Chaplin, *The New Worlds of Thomas Robert Malthus: Rereading the Principle of Population* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 98.

⁷⁰⁰ Robert Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population; or, a View of its Past and Present Effects on Human Happiness: vol. 1*, 5th ed. (London: John Murray, 1817), 38--39.

⁷⁰¹ Robert Malthus, *Summary View of the Principle of Population* (London: John Murray, 1830), n.p. Also quoted in Bashford and Chaplin, *The New Worlds of Thomas Robert Malthus*, 98.

⁷⁰² Malthus, *An Essay*, 4.

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*, 34, 4.

down to size, or of man culling his own through various means including misery and vice.

Where Malthus fixes on the term ‘necessity’, Darwin, in his essay *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, uses the term “Struggle for Existence” to label the animating force at the heart of his proposal for a new universal history. “A struggle for existence amongst all organic beings throughout the world”, observes Darwin, “inevitably follows from their high geometrical powers of increase.”⁷⁰⁴ Darwin asserts that the ‘struggle for existence’ was “the doctrine of Malthus, applied to the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms”, that all creatures tend to “increase at a geometrical ratio” and “would most rapidly stock every station in which they could any how exist, and that the geometrical tendency to increase must be checked by destruction at some period of life.”⁷⁰⁵ For Darwin, natural checks were necessary for the population rate to reduce after a point, else “even slow-breeding man has doubled in twenty-five years, and at this rate, in a few thousand years, there would literally not be standing for his progeny.”⁷⁰⁶ Were we to set Darwin’s exploration of nature’s checks alongside *The Isle of Pines*’ own scepticism of unchecked growth, we can perhaps see Neville’s satire as providing a sideways rumination on colonial tropes of excess. In Neville’s tale, the excess of an unknown island is not disproven. Rather, like the “dream of Madagascar,” it is followed through to its ruinous conclusion.

⁷⁰⁴ Charles Darwin, “On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection (1859)”, in *Evolutionary Writings*, ed. James Secord (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 109.

⁷⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 110, 135.

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 134.

Conclusion

In a thesis that engages with no-places and paradoxes, those Möbius strips of discourse, it is only fitting to conclude by returning to the beginning. In the epigraph that opens this thesis, we find Gonzalo from *The Tempest* enchanted by the island. He seeks to enchant too, to bring his fellow stragglers to his mood. But the cunning do not like to be moved. In Sebastian and Antonio's mockery of the counsellor's enchantment - that Gonzalo "will carry this island home in his pocket" and "sowing the kernels of it in the sea, bring forth more islands" - can be discerned three features of early modern utopian and promotional discourse that have directed the exploration of the preceding chapters. Their sarcastic asides to the counsellor evoke three moves: islanding, pocketing and proliferation. Early modern utopias, such as those conceived by More and Bacon, take care to protect their boundaries and their beginnings. More's king Utopus is drastic in this regard, carving into an island the mass of land that was to be his realm. The beginnings of Bacon's *New Atlantis* do not belong to the acts of mortal beings, they are revealed in a divine spectacle of sound and light. In Hamond's characterisation, the timelessness of Madagascar's inhabitants is more modest. It is a consequence of an equilibrium reached between nature and man, between desire and provision. In this pact to transcend space and time, an islanding away from the contamination of circumstances, these texts were engaged in erecting unsustainable platforms. Here islanding makes way for pocketing, a vast textual repertoire of concealments.

The utopian garment hides many pockets. More's *Utopia* can never fully confirm his sober erudition when the nonsensical names of the characters and places that feature in *Utopia* indicate a satirical game. The denizens of Bacon's *New Atlantis* employ an espionage network to gather the intelligence that makes them invincible. More, Bacon and Neville employ different means to hide the location of their fabled isles. Hamond celebrates the surmountability of Madagascar's natives not by emphasising their weakness, but by praising the virtues of their atavistic weaponry. Neville disguises his hoax by inserting geographical references familiar to the travelers of the period. Such grandstanding and subterfuges are parts of larger chains of fantasies and contingencies, a proliferation of idealisations emerging from a vast field of political aspirations, each of these textual kernels in turn giving rise to other projects and other fictions. More's elegant polis is a textual monument to his classical forbears, a tribute to the Greek and Roman traditions of rhetoric employed in statecraft. More's utopian mastery also inspires, or at least serves as an emblem, to Vasco Da Quiroga's project of organising the native communities of colonial Michoacán into pueblo-hospitals. Biblical allegories permeate Bacon's *New Atlantis*, the island going on to serve as an emblem for an incipient Royal Society. Neville's isle features a bricolage of anecdotes taken from the travel writing of his time, the ordinary aspects of his tale going on to influence the shape of many a robinsonade. Hamond utilises the French surgeon Ambroise Paré's vituperations against firearms to forward his own thesis regarding the utopian community that was to be found in Madagascar.

Utopian texts arose from this proliferation of projects and narratives, and their edicts were re-fashioned as they circulated. This kind of textual and cultural

proliferation runs counter to the utopian temptation of islanding and its fear of contamination. Yet in many ways, it was the material circumstances that shaped each act of islanding. The writers of utopian texts were masters of their worlds and furnished them with a range of paradisiacal objects such as fruits that heal, people who are never bored, and chickens that never tire of breeding. But they too were subjects of their own masters, directing their imaginings to a current or prospective patron, or to a company of peers. More's Utopia was addressed to a Humanist republic of letters. New Atlantis was part of a larger body of work through which Bacon sought increased patronage from James I. Walter Hamond made changes to his idealised depictions of Madagascar according to the injunctions of the Courten Association. Neville's satire participated in a cosmopolitan Republicanism that also had Dutch connections.

Utopian speculations and reports were shaped by the roles that the writers were expected to fulfill for their commissioners. Islanding was not solely an act of literary mastery, it reflected political and intellectual anxieties. This thesis has focused on such a juncture, in which utopian writers sought to 'island' and 'pocket' their geographies in order to conceal, defer or defeat prevailing anxieties. Engaged in this manner, utopian literature can provide an object lesson about the aspirations that belong to a particular age. By casting a utopian lens over the world of colonial promotion, these fabled islands can throw light on texts not usually considered imaginary. This is especially so in the case of the English attempt to plant a colony in Madagascar. Given that the attempt ended in failure, it is an episode characterized by absence, of what was not to be. Yet it bears ample textual traces of exalted aspirations. The fictive possession of Madagascar was,

then, as much a part of English colonial design as the mercantile stock exchange or the establishment of a slave plantation.

Cloaked in the garb of the scrupulous traveller, Madagascar's promoters told English colonial investors what they would have liked to hear (if not believe) about the island. In taking on what was essentially a project of determining and rendering wishes, the Madagascar pamphlets were charting a geography of colonial desire. The seventeenth century 'dream' of Madagascar - when seen as a fictive possession - does not entirely preclude the actualisms of history. Rather, it foregrounds the fantasies that animate historical events, the ways in which lies and fictions could move early modern colonial ventures. Colonial promoters incorporated various modes of idealisation to furnish their unabashed optimism. J. C. Davis distinguishes between the more sophisticated early modern utopian social models, such as those in Thomas More's *Utopia* and Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*, and the unaccounted visions of excess or plenitude that feature in cockayne, arcadian and millenarian narratives. Davis rightly emphasises that the former are occupied with setting out social problems and their technocratic solutions while the latter genres find different ways of ignoring or sublimating concerns regarding the relation between means and social ends. But as the Madagascar pamphlets and the *Isle of Pines* show, gestures of colonial promotion drew across the spectrum of utopian genres. The differing modes of idealisation in early modern utopias are, then, not mutually exclusive; together they reinforce the tacit and explicit designs of colonial promotion in the seventeenth century.

After John Smart's disastrous expedition to the island, Madagascar's promoters were an easy target for blame. But for all their exaggerations and excessive praise, promoters like Hamond and Boothby were not deviantly dishonest. They merely attempted to accommodate the contrary demands of colonial promotion; an assignment that involved setting forth images of paradisiacal abundance based on the scraps of truths and half-truths known about a region selected for settlement. Such utopian projections accompanied most colonial expeditions.

Like the official histories that celebrated the exploits and virtues of imperial dynasties, or the festival books that commemorated an important royal occasion, colonial promotional literature was a platform for justifications and displays of political entitlement. But the latter differed from previous panegyric traditions in that promotional texts were repurposed to suit an emerging form of power that was no longer the sole provenance of kings and kingdoms. This was a new kind of empire overseen by mercantile associations and joint stock companies scrambling for the distant ports of New World colonies. In addition to being advertisements that marketed the colonial venture, promotional literature also set out the values and commitments under which the possession of a settlement was justified. Promotional literature readily employed pre-existing utopian modes as they helped articulate and establish a discursive normativity. It provided a range of 'if-then' and 'ought' arguments that in part formed the logic of colonial empire. The use of early modern utopian discourse helped English colonial promotional literature to function simultaneously as a discursive commitment, a propaganda tool, and a necessary vision. Like the differing locations of Neville's ultimately fictional isle, the shifting idealizations of Hamond's pamphlets open a window onto the language games of colonial possession.

Appendix I

Letter from Fr. Athanasio, Augustinian Friar to the Archbishop

Primate D. Fr. Aleixo de Menezes (c. 1615)⁷⁰⁷

Being captive in Sunda, there arrived a brigantine from the island called Mauritius by the Dutch, and we the Island of Diogo Rodrigues in the charter, and gave us the news that a Dutch ship, the largest that ever went from Holland to India so far, the one that went to Goa, when Ayres the Saldanha was general there, weighing 800 tons and 50 pieces of artillery, the richest and fullest ever to go from India to Holland, by negligence of the night officers, went ashore in the island of Madagascar, named by us S. Lourenço, and almost lost everything, and almost all was sunk down but for some rocks that were saved; the men from this ship run to this island that I call S. Lourenço, in order to there build shelter and build some vessel, they arrived in a place on that same island called Santa Luzia in the charter, and there immediately came to welcome them the natives of the land with many shows of love and gifts of joy, asking the Dutchmen, seeing them white and blond, if they were Portuguese, and if they had with them one or more priests; This, the Dutch themselves told me, and so did some of our [implies Catholic] Christian lads that found themselves in the ship as seamen; therefore I know it for truth what they told me, and so can Your Holiness. The people from the land was white and blonde, and of good looking, and some of them with some coarse and badly made crosses from their neck, all having Christian names of our saints, call themselves Portuguese, and Portugal to the land where they live, and have along their streets and on their huts coarse and badly made crosses; the Dutch, finding strange so many of the novelties that they noticed on the land, and

⁷⁰⁷ Translated from Portuguese to English by Tiago Sousa Garcia. For a Portuguese transliteration of this letter, see *Boletim Da Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa*, 354--5.

noticing the question that they first had been asked, if they were Portuguese and had priests with them, asked the natives of their beginning and the foundation of the place, the natives told them that the king in power at the time was the grandson of a Portuguese, that there had been shipwrecked with a lot of people, and wanting to return to Portugal had not find a way to do it, and with the people who survived and had weapons, made himself a great Lord, and all the natives were sons, grandsons and descendants of the Portuguese, and the natives taking the Dutchmen by the hand, showed them the grave of their first king, that had been the captain of our lost ship, with a gracious cross on top of it, with a tombstone engraved with old and worn out letters, that could not be read. The Dutch asked the natives about their ways and rites but found nothing in them of a Christian nature; as the first ones died, and there were no priests left among them, they grew forgetful of everything concerning our law, and now only in name, and in the crosses, are they Christians. In Mozambique, as it was heard here, the Kaffirs have connections with this land, Your Lordship see if you can send them one or more priests, so that they can return to their first rites and ways.

[The section below consists of comments written by the Archbishop's secretary summarising and evaluating the content of the friar's letter]

Answering to the previous chapter of Fr. Athanasio, I say that the people who were found in the island of Santa Cruz where the king Bruto Xambanga resides in a height of 25 escassos, mentioned by the above letter, is the bay of Santa Luzia; it says that they welcomed the Dutchmen with many shows of love, and the natives asked them if they were Portuguese and had priests with them. There is not one [priest] among them, for the natives are so far away from the issues of our Holy

Faith that they don't even know names, other than the Holy Cross, so everything else is nothing but telling of tales; however, as he [Athanasio] says, they normally carry the Holy Cross on their necks as a way of Christ's dress, some of them very well made and some coarse, all forged from a metal similar to pewter, very adorned with fine beads hanging from the crosses: as for the people, they are good looking, with their hair as described by him.

As for the name of the land being called Portugal, there is no other record for the name to be inferred other than the one engraved in the padrão [standard]; about other questions, they must be discussed; as for our Portuguese making themselves great Lords, so it happened, but time did away with them, as I explained before; regarding names, there is nothing else to it other than mentioned above.

Appendix II

An excerpt from *Da Asia De João De Barros (1615)* attempting to identify the Portuguese shipwreck mentioned in Fr. Athanasio's letter⁷⁰⁸

Of the loss of two ships [carracks, port. Nau is used throughout the text to mean ship, as a carrack was a specific kind of Portuguese vessel] of Manuel de la Cerda, and Aleixo de Abreu; and of what happened to those who survived. The two ships from which these Portuguese was saved, that was taken to Nuno da Cunha, were part of a fleet of five that sailed from Portugal in the year 1527, of which Manuel de la Cerda was the Capitão mor Manuel de la Cerda, and of the other four ships where the captains Aleixo de Abreu, Christovão de Mendonça, Balthazar da Silva, and Gaspar de Paiva. These last three arrived safely to India in September (as it was written above), and the two of Manuel de la Cerda and Aleixo de Abreu were lost in the east coast of the island of St. Lawrence, in the low tide of St. James bay [baía de São Tiago or Santiago], (where Nuno da Cunha was), where everyone from these two ships came to land; and some trenches were dug, in it they stayed, with the arms that were savaged from the shipwreck, and other stuff, that exchanging for provisions, (of which that area of the island is not very rich in) with the natives, they miserably survived, waiting for some ship to sail by that, seeing the signs made by them, would take them in. They stayed in that bay for one year, at the end of which Antonio de Saldanha sailed by in his ship, part of the fleet of the company of the Governor Nuno da Cunha, which seen by those lost people, as it was night time, made great fires in the shape of crosses, in order to

⁷⁰⁸ Translated from Portuguese to English by Tiago Sousa Garcia. For the original excerpt in Portuguese, see Barros, "Capitulo II.," 259--64.

show to the ships that lost Portuguese people were there. Having seen the fires, Antonio de Saldanha ordered the sails to be put down, stood by, and as dawn returned to the coast, to which they dare not set foot, for they knew nothing of it, waiting for someone to come from land in an *almadia* [african boat?] to tell them which people they were; and so, distancing themselves from land during the night and returning to it during the day, António de Saldanha stayed for eight days, and at the end of it, hit by a strong storm, disappeared and continued his voyage. The lost Portuguese, seeing themselves without the solution they hoped from the ship, decided to cross to the other side of the island, where they could find some boat in the land to take them to Sofala or to Mozambique, and split into two squads, advanced through the backlands [sertão], where they disappeared, staying there sick that man found by Nuno da Cunha, from whom the relation of the lost of those ships was gathered.

By Nuno da Cunha's letters was known to El-Rei D. John the news of the loss of these two ships, and he sent for them in the year 1530 with two ships, of which two brothers, Duarte da Fonseca, and Diogo da Fonseca, were the captains. Both arrived to St. Lawrence's island, Duarte da Fonseca entered a great bay, where he drowned with ten men in the small boat of his ship; and Diogo da Fonseca, surveying the coast, arrived at a port, where he saw large smokes; and sending a boat to land to discover the reasons for the smoke, found four Portuguese who were making them, three from Manuel de la Cerda's ship, one from Aleixo de Abreu's, and a Frenchman from a French ship, that ended up there, of three, that in the years before went to India. These men having been taken aboard of the ship, told them that there were many alive from their group, but they were so much spread in the middle of the island, that it would be impossible to find them; as such, Diogo da Fonseca took them to Mozambique, using his brother's ship;

leaving there one of them for being too rowdy, left for India in April 1531. And in stopping in Socotra he was lost in a storm, which was known later through some work, and some chests that were washed ashore of that island; and through the papers found in them it was understood that it belonged to that ship of Diogo da Fonseca, and the result of his voyage.

Of the people of those same ships of Manuel de la Cerda, and Aleixo de Abreu must descend the Portuguese, that some Dutchmen found in that island of St. Lawrence, where they were lost at the cape of St. Lucy, coming from Java in a ship full of drugs; those same Dutchmen, having been cutting wood to build a boat to take them back to Bantam, where seen by the peoples of the land, to whom the Dutchmen seemed Portuguese, came to them in great agitation, and hugging them and speaking Portuguese, told them that they were themselves the grandsons of Portuguese, and with great insistence asked them if they had any priests with them. Having found out that they were not Portuguese but Dutchmen, of which they had never heard of, told them how in the past a ship as large as the Dutch had there been lost, having the people saved themselves, and the Captain having conquered part of the island, making himself Lord of it, and the rest of them married the native women, of which they had a large offspring, of which they descended; and as their parents before them, and grandparents, they wished to have priests to indoctrinate them , so they had the same desire. Having built the boat, these same Dutchmen returned to Bantam, where they told this story to their companions, and to Fr. Athanasio of Jesus, a Portuguese Augustinian friar, who was a prisoner amongst them, adding how they had noticed in those people intolerable mistakes of Faith caused by lack of teaching, on which they more resembled those barbarians with whom they were raised than

with the Portuguese that they descended from. Fr. Athanasio told of all of these things to D. Friar Aleixo de Meneses, Archbishop of Goa at the time, and who was the Governor of India, and is now Archbishop of Braga, viceroy of Portugal, who with vigilance, and care that he usually puts in similar cases, and great zeal in the conversion of souls, of the old St. Thomas Christians to the Catholic faith, and obedience to the Holy Roman Church, of which for more than one thousand years they were separated, in which this most illustrious Archbishop, in continuous danger, and with tireless work mimic the prelates of the primitive Church asked the fathers of the Society of Jesus, who went with D. Estevão de Taíde to conquer Monomotapa, of Mozambique, or of some neighbouring port, to work to achieve clearer news of this people in order to help them as their necessity demands.

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