



A Machereyan Reading of Francis Godwin's *the Man in the Moone*

Ali Salami

Assistant Professor, University of Tehran

Salami.a@ut.ac.ir

Midia Mohammadi

Graduate Student, University of Tehran

midiamohammadi@ut.ac.ir

Abstract

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Se through plenty of transitions, and e that was enhancing changes by ad imposed since the Middle Aventions and advancements. *The* utopian science fiction novels, an tury Spaniard on the moon on By the time Godwin's book wa ad brought authorities into turllity of extra-terrestrial life had e these novel ideas in a subtle narra t's own time by providing a utopian with an eye on the historical context advancements of its time, it will be examin ng, primarily based on Pierre Macherey's "the ideological project" of a literary work s" and the "unsaid" in the text which highlights "the ideol eaid" in



Introduction

The Man in the Moone or A Discourse of a Voyage Thither by Domingo Gonsales was published in 1638 pseudonymously and posthumously in the same year *The Discovery of a World in the Moone* by John Wilkins was published. The book was written by the English divine and Church of England bishop Francis Godwin (1562–1633) and is considered the first English science fiction utopian novel. The work itself claims to be a non-fiction travelogue written by Domingo Gonsales in Spanish and later published by Jesuit missionaries he visited in China after returning to the earth. Gonsales, the protagonist of the work who is a Spaniard forced to escape the country after killing a man in a duel, narrates the story. He then goes on a voyage to East Indies, the island of St Helena, and then flies to the moon, depicted as a utopian paradise inhabited by Lunars. Francis Godwin's imagination explored beyond new scientific advancements of his own time and limned a new utopia through which many of the seventeenth-century institutions could be criticised. In order to scrutinise the book concerning many concepts it has concealed in its silence, the article is going to rely on Pierre Macherey's notion of "silence" or "narrative rupture" and the Marxist view which accentuates the interrelation between literature and its context.

Francis Godwin (1562-1633), born in Hannington in Northamptonshire, was the second son of Thomas Godwin, Bishop of Bath and Wells. He attended Christ Church, a constituent college of the University of Oxford and there he received his degrees in Bachelor of Arts in 1581 and Master of Arts in 1584. Being a perseverant scholar, Godwin then attained the higher degrees of Bachelor in 1594 and then Doctor of Divinity in 1596. His father, Thomas, had been variously an academic and a schoolmaster. After the Catholic Queen Mary's accession, he was obliged to leave the school and retrained in Medicine at Oxford University to support his family. He was nonetheless harassed for his Protestantism by the authorities. Later upon Queen Elizabeth I's accession in 1559, he returned to divinity and rapidly became a popular preacher. The Queen was so pleased with him that he was appointed Dean of Christ Church in Oxford in June 1565 and when she visited Oxford in 1565, Godwin was one of the four divines appointed to hold theological disputations before her. The winter after her visit, Queen Elizabeth promoted Godwin to Dean of Canterbury, a post he held for 17 years (1567-1584). In 1576 he became one of the ecclesiastical commissioners.

Early in the 1590s, Francis Godwin started compiling biographies of all the English bishops from the beginning of Christianity in Britain to his day. He published his *Catalogue of the Bishops of England since the first planting of the Christian Religion in this Island* finally in 1601 and excused his passion for "the study of histories and antiquities" as "somewhat greater, then was needfull for a man that had dedicated himselfe and his labours unto the service of Gods church in the Ministry." (Godwin, *A Catalogue of the Bishops of England* (London: George Bishop, 1601). He also published *Rerum Anglicarum Henrico VIII., Edwardo VI. et Maria regnantibus Annales* which was later translated and published by his son Morgan under the title *Annales of England* (1630). His other famous work is *Nuncius inanimatus* which was originally published in 1629 and the reprinted in 1657

Godwin's reputation in English Literature is to his last period and not to his youthful student days, and he is best known for *The Man in the Moone*, his science fiction novel written in 1620s. "Godwin was a good Man, grave Divine, skilful Mathematician, pure Latinist, and incomparable Historian." (Fuller, 284) His book inspired many celebrated literary texts in later centuries such as *Gulliver's Travels* written by Godwin's great-great-nephew, Johnathan Swift; *The Emperor of the Moon* (1678) written by Aphra Behn and three satirical science fiction novels written by Cyrano de Bergerac in 1650s later credited by Arthur C. Clark as the first description of rocket-power space flight. Godwin's science fiction owes a lot to scientific texts such as William Gilbert's *De Magnete* (1600), and Francis Bacon's *Sylva Sylvarum* (1627) and also the prior existing imaginary notions such as the idea of flying by birds which was as old as the myth of Alexander the Great's bird-powered



flight or The Flying Throne of Kay Kāvus written in *Shahname* in the tenth century. Moreover, Godwin's information of China gives his work one of its setting and gives him the idea of a language whose meaning relies on vowels and tones. Robert Burton (1577-1640), who earned a reputation in English Literature because of his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, was another influence on Godwin's writing and his *Digression of Ayre* gave him the details for his astronomical speculations, the height of El Pico, bird migration, Tenerife, locust swarms, devils in the air, et cetera.

It is not clear when Francis Godwin wrote *The Man in the Moone*; however, based on the details mentioned by Gonsales, it is estimated to have been written in 1620s. "Domingo Gonsales mentions in passing real events such as the battle of the Isle of Pines (1596) and concludes in China in late 1601 in the company of identifiable members of the Jesuit Mission." (Poole) William Poole confidently dates *The Man in the Moone* to "the last decade of Godwin's life, and most probably to after 1628." Godwin must have read many travelogues, scientific texts, literary texts on imaginary lands and utopias, folklore texts and other writings, but what influenced him the most to invent his masterpiece must have been Robert Burton's texts in which he could find ingredients for his well-prepared product.

In his most celebrated book, *A Theory of Literary Production* (1966), Pierre Macherey draws attention to the "unsaid" things of a literary work. He states that the speech of a literary text is shaped by its "gaps" and this is associated with political, historical context of the work and its ideology:

The speech of the book comes from a certain silence, a matter which it endows with form, a ground on which it traces a figure. Thus, the book is not self-sufficient; it is necessarily accompanied by a certain absence, without which it would not exist. Acknowledge of the book must include a consideration of this absence. (Macherey, 95)

Macherey goes beyond drawing a line between the visible and the invisible in the text by creating a distinction between the conscious and unconscious of the work in which the latter is what the work is trying to depict in its unsaid. He believes that the unsaid is not always the result of the author's entailed decision but could be left out or "missing" unconsciously. He states that "the work encloses a meaning which must be released; the letter of the work is the mask, eloquent and deceptive, which this meaning bears; a knowledge of the work is an ascent to this unique central meaning." (Macherey, p.86). Based on this distinctions, a Machereyan reading would be answering two questions about the text: if "the work originates in a secret to be explained" and if "the work is realised in the revelation of its secret" (Macherey, p.107) Thus, taking into account that the writer's presentation of the theme is a "mask", applying Macherey's notions on a science fiction work that was produced in the time of "censorship's great moment"¹ is illuminating.

1. The Sound of Silence: Pierre Macherey's Theories

Looking for the "unsaid" in the text is a firm ground all that Macherey's reading strategy is constructed upon. Macherey reverses the traditional notion that lines form the gaps between them by claiming that "the speech of the book comes from a certain silence" and "Silences shape all speech". (Macherey, 1966) Clearly, it is necessary to investigate the "unsaid" of a literary text in order to decipher the work. In addition to distinguishing between "visible" and "invisible" of the text, Macherey draws a line between the "conscious" and "unconscious" of the work with the text being the first one and its gaps the latter. As stated in the Introduction, a Machereyan reading would be answering two questions about the text: if "the work originates in a secret to be explained" and if

¹ Joseph Loewenstein, "Legal Proofs and Corrected Readings: Press-Agency and the New Bibliography" in *The Production of English Renaissance Culture*, ed. David Lee Miller et al. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994)



“the work is realised in the revelation of its secret” (same) He states that the writer’s presentation of the theme is a “mask” which disguises it consciously or unconsciously. He also insists that this process must not be mistaken for “interpretation” and states that “This is precisely the opposite of an interpretation or a commentary: an interpretation seeks pretexts, but the explanation proposed here finds its object wholly prepared and is content to give a true idea of it.”(same) In applying his approach on Jules Verne he writes:

We know that a writer never reflects mechanically or rigorously the ideology which he represents, even if his sole intention is to represent it: perhaps because no ideology is sufficiently consistent to survive the test of figuration. And otherwise, his work would not be read. The writer always reveals or writes from a certain position (which is not simply a subjective viewpoint) in relation to this ideological climate: he constructs a specific image of ideology which is not exactly identical with ideology as it is given, whether it betrays it, whether it puts it in question, or whether it modifies it. This is what must finally be taken into account in order to know what the work is made of. And the author does not always need to say what he is making. Pierre Macherey

As explained by Terry Eagleton in *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory* (1976), “Macherey claims that literary works are internally dissonant, and that this dissonance arises from their peculiar relation to ideology.” He believes that based on Macherey’s ideas, the “unsaid” of the work is where the ideology is hidden and the responsibility of the critic is to read these gaps/absences and elaborate on the unconsciousness of the text. In addition, it is also the task of the literary critic to express “how the text is hollowed by its relation to ideology, how in putting that ideology to work, it is driven up against those gaps and limits which are the product of ideology’s relation to history.”(Eagleton, 1976) Furthermore, Terry Eagleton suggests that Macherey’s theory of unsaid/absence could be a crossbar between Marxist criticism and Freud’s theory in *The Interpretation of Dreams* which states that it is necessary to probe the content of dreams to reveal its content. However, it is not easy to do so because “the analyst’s task is not only to lay bare the meaning of a distorted text, but to expose the meaning of the text-distortion itself.” (same) In this regard, the psychoanalyst, like a Machereyan literary critic, must reassemble the actual literary/dream production process. Therefore, the general theme of the text exists in its distortion. The first layer that is the text must be lifted up to reach the depth of what makes the text a whole.

In the first pages of *A Theory of Literary Production*, Macherey elaborates on literary criticism and draws distinction between criticism as the appreciation that is regarded as the education of text and criticism as the knowledge he considers to be the science of literary production. He later states that while the first one is normative, the second one is speculative and formulates the laws. Pierre Macherey in “Jules Verne: The Faulty Narrative” provides an example of his theory of reading a science fiction text closely. In the beginning, he explains his approach and later applies it to Jules Verne’s work. He states that

As against the excesses of interpretation it is usual to posit the systematic description, which does not alter the work, because it proposes only to disengage a structure, a specific coherence, to establish a principle of closure which constitutes the work, that sufficiency evident in the internal relations of its various parts. This structuring, which is a relatively simple operation (especially in the case of an author like Verne, who wanted to make his work as transparent as possible by emphasising the obviousness of its articulations), which involves an analysis (the isolation of particular themes, the definition of mythical symbols) and a reassembly (the establishment of a hierarchy among its elements), is the exact opposite of a historical analysis: the logic of the work is the logic of its composition, a logic which is



immediate and immanent, even if the study of composition goes beyond a mere problematic of forms.

He also declares that there are two opposing methods to approach works: one is interpretation, which is moving towards the work, seizing upon it from a distance, while the other is a description that moves away from the work in order to estrange it from itself. Interpretation nominates the work as a situation, whereas the description makes of it a simple disposition. He believes that it could be possible to escape this contradiction by placing ourselves in the gap between these two and not letting them exclude or obscure each other. To study a literary work as an ideological project, we need to focus upon its dominant theme and its real beginning. In Verne's case, that theme would be the conquest nature, and the work begins as a response to the initial questions in his mind: "Is it this conquest of nature which defines the content of the history of the contemporary world? How can this be expressed?" (Macherey, 1966) Macherey points out that it is in these kinds of works that the future is hidden in the present and in voyages that the separation between the known and unknown is highlighted. He later states that we must "examine not only the conditions of the possibility of the project but also the validity of the means employed in its realisation." and answer questions "What Verne actually find that he had done? What is the relation between the initial project and the work for which it was simply a pretext or condition?" (same)

5 It seems not only possible but necessary to begin from the literary work(the text) itself, rather than at a distance or simply by moving through it. It is even inevitable that we must begin where the work itself begins: at the point of departure which it has chosen, its project, or even its intentions. Macherey chooses several of Verne's works to elaborate on his ideas. The first step he proposes is to find "the point of departure" in the work rather than studying the text from a distance or simply by moving through it. Therefore, it is necessary to find "a general and explicit theme against which the work is continuously defined" which as stated before, is "the conquest of nature by industry" in works of Verne. Macherey regards the general theme to be an indication of a certain social or ideological movement that is of great significance for the emergence of the work and by taking a close look at Verne's work we could see how he saw "man's domination of nature" as the subject of his works and disguised it in many forms. Science with is the "supreme work of man" helps him dominate and transform nature entirely. Macherey then finds conquest, movement and transformation to be expressed in three major themes in Verne's works: the voyage, scientific invention, and colonisation. He regards them to be actually equivalent since the scientist is in fact a traveller and a coloniser. He finds that point of departure in Verne's works in the voyage which is the fiction's nexus.

The transition from the ideological project to the written literary work can only be accomplished within a practice that begins from determinate conditions. At this moment of the analysis, it would be tempting to say that Verne has everything necessary for the writing of his books; but in fact he has nothing at all and must seek out other means: those true themes of his work—in their individuality, in the specificity of the writing of a page—which, unlike the ideological subject, cannot be immediately representative of a generality. For us these themes define another level of description, corresponding to the time of production, which can be called figuration. Naturally, it remains to be seen whether this second level sustains and continues the first level, whether it puts it into question; and then whether it is self-sufficient at this new level. Terry Eagleton believes that "Macherey's conception of the text-ideology relation is a fertile, suggestive one; but it is also, it must be said, partial." (92) The theory lets the work to preserve its autonomous existence while being criticised according to its historical context. Regarding Jules Verne's works, Macherey does not consider them a representation of science but an "interrogation of the image of science" and his works must be understood in relation to progress and industry of its own time, which are not directly expressed through his novels. Macherey continues to say that Verne's did not intend to illustrate an idea but to understand "the combination of the thematic figures and the fable."



The interest of Verne's work resides in the discovery of an object which indicates this very combination: the island, the juncture of the thematic figure with the events, of a certain plot-form which derives from the collision of two possible narratives which also symbolise two forms of fiction. This makes the island irreducibly different from all the other thematic figures. (Macherey, 1966)

Macherey insists that even if after studying the context of a work we come across contradictions in real life corresponding to those of the work, it still is an authentic production rather than a reproduction and points out an example of this parallelism in Verne's life and his work. He states that ideology is itself made from the totality of productions and a single literary work cannot reproduce a totality of an ideology. "Ideology is not, prior to the work, like a system which can be reproduced: it is resumed, elaborated by the work; it has no independent value." (Macherey, 1966)

2. Politics in the Seventeenth-Century England

6 Upon the death of the last monarch of the Tudor dynasty, Queen Elizabeth I on March 24th in 1603, the thirty-six-year-old James Stuart, who had become King James VI of Scotland since 1567, succeeded her as James I and started a new era in English history famously known as Jacobean Era. His accession to the thrones of England and Ireland is known as The Union of the Crowns. Although James had the dream of unifying all his land into "The Empire of Britain" and called himself "Rex Pacificus" (King of Peace), several turbulences happened to England during his reign whose only contribution was more schism. For instance, Gunpowder Plot of 1605 took place and failed, leading to Oath of Allegiance in 1606 and the execution of traitors. The first British colonies on America were founded in 1607, but nothing could conceal England's dark side being heavily in debt, which was a chronic condition since Elizabethan Era, but showed severe symptoms in his time. Jacobean era started with a plague outbreak and ironically ended in one, which deteriorated the economic problems. On the account of being a pacifist, James managed to amend England's relationship with other countries while deteriorating his relationship with his own people. He believed in sitting on a throne that had been given to him by God rather than people and disliked the idea of having House of Lords and House of Commons; therefore, he expected unconditional obedience from his subjects. Finally, after managing to live his peaceful life, he bequeathed his throne, mentality, and all the conflicts he had given rise to during his lifetime to his successor, Charles I in 1625, leading to his execution in 1649.

In 1543, as stated in Treaty of Greenwich, Mary Stuart was supposed to marry Edward VI of England, which did not go as planned, and later there was the idea of joining Queen Elizabeth and James Hamilton in marriage which also did not happen. Scotland and France were allies since Auld Alliance in 1295, which was established to resist English invasions. This alliance was weakened in the Treaty of Edinburgh in 1560, which added England to the pact. However, this union did not create "joy and peace of new Anglo-Scottish friendship" as James expected. Great academics such as Sir Thomas Craig of Riccarton in *Jus feudale* (1603), and John Russell, believed that the union under one king was viable; however, they were aware that the "one law" for the whole union could not come into practice since the English and Scots laws were not established on the same grounds. English merchants, lawyers and academics were definitely unhappy about the Scots and James' attempt to join these two nations was the dominant subject of the parliamentary sessions of 1604 and 1607, and his failure showed an early symptom of Gunpowder Plot in 1605.

The early seventeenth century was not a time of healthy economics for England, and as it has been documented in several sources, the Elizabethan court was delivered to James while it was heavily indebted and the king himself had debts that added to it caused numerous problems for the kingdom. England experienced a "particularly serious partial bankruptcy in 1598." (The debts of James VI of Scotland) While some sources mention that James could heroically pay the debts, more reliable



sources state an economic depression in England in 1620s, primarily caused by currency manipulations in the Thirty Years' War. They raised the in a time of unemployment, unpaid rents, and general economic hardship." (Russell, 1990) The economic depression of 1620s was accompanied by economic texts whose most notable contributors are Edward Misselden, Gerard de Malynes and Thomas Mun who wrote to analyse the economic situation in divergent points of view. While most of them explain this depression "in terms of an outflow of bullion and an abnormally low exchange rate of the English pound", Thomas Mun, a director of the East India Company, "believed that the export of bullion and the low rate of exchange were simply the results of an adverse balance of trade, a case which he argued cogently in his memoranda to the Commission for Trade." (Readings in Economic and Social History, 58) In the year 1600 that William Gilbert published his famous treatise on geomagnetism in England, Giordano Bruno was burn at stake in Rome; therefore, a little censorship in England did not look as horrible as it seems today. However, "If censorship exists at all times and in all places, the seventeenth century was censorship's great moment, at least in England." (Randy Robertson, Censorship and conflict in seventeenth-century England) Censorship in seventeenth-century England took a new form from 1622 when stationers were expected to have a licenser who had to approve each work before publication and enter all the register copies.

"Writers of Tudor and Stuart age had no way of knowing when the vagaries of fortune might shift against them. Penalties for violating censorship rules could be swift, severe, and occasionally fatal. No matter how irregular the application of the law, censorship would have been in the minds of authors and doubtlessly influenced the manner in which they shaped their writing. It certainly prompted many of them to publish their works anonymously or under a pseudonym." (Dictionary of Literary and Dramatic Censorship in Tudor and Stuart England)

3. Science in the Seventeenth Century

In the beginning, man and nature were with man and in a sense, nature was man. The confusion caused by different phenomena was scary not only because of the self-preservation instinct but because man needed to understand himself; therefore, man started explaining the world around him in every way he could and finally sheltered in science. While science spent many years in murk during the early ages, it finally was ignited by revolutionary ideas and continued its development through empiricism. Although it is interesting to see the route science has taken to reach the twenty-first century, our focus is mainly on the main scientific advancements in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

One of the most revolutionary theories was the one stated by Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) and later proved by Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) when he observed and showed stars through a telescope. Before Copernicus, the earth was taken as the centre of the universe in the geocentric Ptolemais Model that was followed for over a millennium. Geocentrism and theology were inseparable until the publication of *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium (On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres)* in 1543 by Copernicus. He was not the first scientist discrediting geocentrism in favour of heliocentrism, and the idea was originally proposed by Aristarchus of Samos (circa 300-200 BC); however, he was the most courageous one who published his works on the subject in the sixteenth century. Replacing the centre of the universe with sun rather than Earth was not just an alteration in the science but also a belief system. Until then, the church had told people that they were the centre of the world and that there was heaven in the sky and now human, and consequently the church was being decentralised. As stated by Thomas S. Kuhn in *The Copernican Revolution*, "before the tenth century and again after the sixteenth, the church's influence was, on balance, antiscientific. The Copernican theory evolved within a learned tradition sponsored and supported by the Church; Copernicus himself was the nephew of a bishop and a canon of the cathedral at Freudenberg, yet in 1616 the church banned all books advocating the reality of the Earth's motion. No single



generalisation will describe the church's overwhelming influence upon science, for the influence changed with the changing situation of the church. Many scientists later followed Copernicus' idea among which Tycho Brahe, Johannes Kepler, Galileo Galilei and Isaac Newton are the most important figures, and Kepler is mostly related to Godwin's *the Man in the Moone*.

Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) was Tycho Brahe's colleague and a lifelong Copernican. His first important book, *Mysterium Cosmographicum* was published in 1596, and largely defended the Copernican system. Kepler wrote a narrative in 1608, posthumously published by his son in 1633, called *The Dream, or Posthumous Work on Lunar Astronomy*, which interestingly describes a journey to the moon the habitat of its inhabitants. Kepler's *The Dream* is very close in form and content to *The Man in the Moone* while it is unlikely that the authors could have read each other's works since they were published posthumously in both cases; however, the works have many similarities that could have been the result of the same track of thought. Both narrators find visible proof that "the light and dark spots on the moon are sea and land." Moreover, Domingo Gonsales encounters demons on his journey like the Kepler's lunar voyager who travels the demons' route to the moon. In each story, the journey's start requires great effort to overcome the Earth's magnetic pull. Nevertheless, once beyond that, travel is unhindered. In both, the speed of travel is compared to a bullet fired from a cannon. Both Godwin's Lunars and Kepler's Levanians are notable for their tall stature. (Hutton)

Another scientific novelty that has left its mark on *The Man in the Moone*, is *On the Magnet and Magnetic Bodies*, and on *That Great Magnet the Earth*, a scientific work published in 1600 by the English physician and scientist William Gilbert and his partner Aaron Dowling. "The invisible physical force which repels and attracts had no name until William Gilbert, the 'father of magnetism', called it 'electric' in his treatise *De Magnete* (1600). 'Earth', he wrote, 'is nothing but a large magnet.'" (Europe A History by Norman Davies) Gilbert's cosmology that the stars were fixed and that the force of magnetism holds the planets in orbit around the sun, proved his Copernican views later when *A New Philosophy of Our Sublunar World* was published posthumously in 1651. Another consequence of Copernican Revolution was the revival of cosmic pluralism. Whereas the idea belonged to many philosophers of the past, the newfound facts which proved Earth to be only one of the other planets, strengthened the idea of extra-terrestrial life. The idea came from Ancient Greece and Muslim philosophers and besides its scientific value, it was removing human society as the center of the world which was not favored by church. After the Copernican revolution, the idea was revived and man started imagining life on other planets.

4. How Man Escaped Seventeenth Century Earth: A Close Reading of *The Man in the Moone* based on Macherey's Ideas

According to all the context provided in previous pages, Francis Godwin's text was produced in a time of transition and turmoil in England. It was written in a time of religious conflict, the emergence of new scientific advancements and the peak of censorship. The work exposes the reader to the reality hidden under the veil of science-fiction. Godwin criticises the institutions of his time and creates a utopia masterfully using various narrative techniques: the narrator being a Spaniard, the Arcadian utopia, utopia on the moon, satirical devices, and different perspectives given to the reader.

The first interesting fact that comes to the reader's mind is choosing a Spaniard, and this is not the first utopian English work choosing a Spanish narrator as the same was done in *New Atlantis*. While this could be because Spain's fame in voyages, expeditions, and colonisation at that time, it could also be regarded as a way to disguise the idea of criticising the seventeenth-century England institutions. Since the notion of censorship is stated in Gonsales' narration when he talks about his own experience, it would be very probable that Godwin cleverly chose a Spanish narrative to escape censorship and possible criticism:



But I must be advised, how I be over-liberall, in publishing these wonderfull mysteries, till the Sages of our State have considered how farre the use of these things may stand with the Policy and good government of our Countrey. (Godwin, 1638)

To conceal meaning deeper in this disguise, Gonsales continues with saying that he is even a Catholic and has to “prove prejudicial to the affaires of the Catholique faith and Religion” (Godwin, 1638) Godwin hereby creates a protagonist that is neither English nor Protestant to give his hero the freedom in action and speech and avoids imposing any principle on his character. Eventually, he creates a narrator far distant from the writer whose ideas could not be read exactly as the ones Godwin had.

Having a journey to the moon was definitely not an original idea. While Godwin’s narrative was the first attempt to send man to the moon using his own invention, several texts precede *The Man in the Moone*, which also contain a journey to the moon. *On The Face which Appears on the Orb of the Moon by Plutarch* (circa 120 AD), *The True Story by Lucian* (circa 200 AD), *Paradise in Divine Comedy* by Dante (1472) and *Orlando Furioso* (1516) by Ludovico Ariosto are some other works that explored the same journey; however, it is not known if Godwin had read Lucian’s work since it had lost its position during the Middle Ages. The notion of Gonsales’ spiritual transformation touches upon Dante’s moon travel. In *Divine Comedy*’s “Paradise”, the first sphere of the nine ones in heaven is the moon and reaching there symbolises the quest for knowledge, while in *Orlando Furioso* the journey to the moon is not regarded of high spiritual value and tells the story of Orlando, the protagonist who travels to the moon to retrieve his lost wits.

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While the journey to the moon and the idea of transformation after a lunar travel were not Godwin’s, and the journey could also be found in Kepler’s *The Dream*, he was the first writer who used new science and astronomy and merged them with an invention to build a narrative. Being distant from Godwin himself, we cannot know for sure if Gonsales’ conservatism is a sincere one or an expression of the fear imposed on scientists by the church; he states: “not going so farre as Copernicus, that maketh the Sunne the Center of the Earth, and unmoveable.” (Godwin, 1638) Godwin has taken a path of veiling his thoughts and Gonsales’ choice of words needs to be deciphered in that regard. Domingo Gonsales starts the story as a Catholic rogue who goes through a transformation after his journeys. Although the story reveals religious themes, Godwin emphasises new astronomy and technological advancements, indicating that he believes this alteration could not occur in traditional ways. Gonsales starts the story as a materialist who starts his voyages either to escape murder charges or to gain wealth, he also wonders about making St. Helen a colony of his country. As he connects with nature in his time of solitude on St. Helen, his imagination and creativity give him the ability to step a foot on the lands that no other man has ever explored.

Godwin encodes his themes in creating a character that cannot be criticised by Anglican Church and uses a setting of Elizabethan era to escape the censorship of the Jacobean era. *The Man in the Moone* is set during Queen Elizabeth’s reign, and Gonsales travels to the moon in 1599 and returns in 1601. Francis Godwin was a student at Oxford University in 1580s and wrote his narrative after the Copernicus ban in 1616. His father had retrained in medicine during Queen Mary’s reign, and Francis Godwin had experienced the Catholic-Protestant conflicts himself. By creating Gonsales and his narrative, Godwin was criticising both Catholic and Protestant’s dogmatism. Gonsales is a Catholic rascal who can be criticised for many of his characteristics; nevertheless, he transforms to be a better person, but no church or preacher can take the credit for his salvation, and he ascends through solitude, science and imagination. While it shows how even a Catholic man can become a better person, not by changing his religion but by connecting with his mind and nature. Godwin intended to reconcile religion and science and although he indicates that Lunars are Lutheran Protestants, he does not imply Gonsales becoming one and it could not be interpreted as Godwin’s inclination towards Protestantism. Nevertheless, he simulates the hierarchal religious system of Anglican Church with the king as



supreme leader as James always desired and bishops such as himself in position of authority by designing the same system in the ultimate utopia of Lunar society. However, he proposes some changes and expresses his aversion to punishment by stating that there is no punishment in that society since there are no crimes or lawyers. Godwin does not give us the reason of this peace and order directly but keeps it in his “gap” and “silence”. Although the Lunar society and government is very similar to England’s system, economically it could be regarded as a communist utopia as the one created by Sir Thomas More which implies the same system. The government controls the material resources of the country and distributes them among the citizens to make sure that they have all the essentials to sustain their lives. Gonsales states the cause of this peace and harmony in this way:

But the chief cause, is that through an excellent disposition of that nature of people there, all, young and old doe hate all manner of vice, and doe live in such love, peace, and amitie, as it seemeth to bee another Paradise. True it is, that some are better disposed then other: but that they discern immediately at the time of their birth. (Godwin,1638)

This indicates that the moral excellence found there is the result of “their disposition” rather than their religious faith. The word “disposition” could be taken in two meanings: their true nature and the individual’s position in society. Since Godwin does not imply deterministic ideas and allows Gonsales to become a better person, although he starts his journey as a worldly man, the latter meaning is mostly probable. Godwin harshly rejects the idea of Calvinist predestination by keeping options open for Gonsales and letting him choose to change for the better by his own free will. Godwin is the most brilliant for choosing a character who is the youngest in a noble family, one that does not carry any heavy responsibilities and mostly rely on free will rather than deterministic paths chosen by his parents; while they wanted him to go to church, he chooses to go to war with Duke D’Alva. His life choices such as going to war, leaving university to live in Antwerp, having a duel and killing a man, staying in St. Helena after recovery, leaving the land of “illusions of devils spirits” after some hesitation, staying with Lunars, and coming back to Earth, are all his own decisions.

Godwin depicts two utopias in his narration, St. Helena is the Arcadian one and the ultimate one is the Lunar society. While St. Helena becomes a haven for Gonsales only because he falls sick on the voyage, reaching the second one does not happen passively. He has to spend some time in solitude in nature, study every element there and even “tame a fox” to finally become a natural philosopher who can invent an engine and tie birds to it. Reaching the ultimate utopia of moon, on the other hand, is totally active and depends on Gonsales’ decision. After escaping the ship he does not reach the moon as his first destination but arrives to the land of “illusions” where everything seems to be fine and it is only for him to choose between staying, flying higher or returning back to Earth. This implies that reaching the ideal state is neither the result of religious faith nor a passive act; it is not the result of Gonsales’ noble parentage, wealth or Catholic faith but his contemplation in solitude and labour.

Although the moon is the ultimate utopia, Gonsales decides to depart and come back to Earth. While he states that the only reason to do so is to see his wife and children again and he is afraid that he might lose his Gansas since three of them are already dead, a close reading of his departure part suggests that it is boredom and stillness of that world which pushes him back. The moon is depicted as the Garden of Eden and it is a place of “perpetual spring” with no rain, wind or change of air and contains “all pleasures, all content”. This implies that the utopia delineated by Godwin, can neither exist nor satisfy man. In a state where The Fall is not possible, man will not fail but he will not grow either.

Before Gonsales’ departure, the Lunars king requested him to deliver a present to Queen Elizabeth and calls her “calling her the most glorious of all women living”.(Godwin 1638) The



mention of Queen Elizabeth's name by the fairest king shows Godwin's fondness of the Queen and delivers a subtle criticism of James as the current king of England. The whole change of setting and placing of Gonsales' trip during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, could be concluded in the last lines of the great King Irdoonzur's admiration of her and Godwin could not have chosen a more delicate way to express his opinion of the new era without bearing consequences.

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