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REASON IS KING AND SCIENCE IS HIS CROWN:
A STUDY OF FRENCH SCIENCE-FICTION
FOR THE DISSEMINATION OF PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT

by

Lauren A. Gandy

A thesis submitted in partial requirement for the completion of the requirements
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Abstract

The thesis seeks to explore the didactic application of French science-fiction during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for the portrayal and dissemination of their respective philosophical theories. Studying science-fiction novels during these centuries will allow a comparison of seventeenth and eighteenth-century dissemination methods, to determine if the foundational seventeenth-century methods were retained or modified to more accurately represent the change in philosophical attitudes. Exploration of this topic will contribute to a greater understanding of French Enlightenment theory, analysis of relatively unstudied novels in the science-fiction genre, and a novel approach to "proto" science-fiction literature by connecting the previously separate genres of science-fiction and philosophy during the Enlightenment. The trends within the seventeenth century show dominant authoritative representations through analogical examples, authoritative ideological figures, and an emphasis on logically sustained arguments. The eighteenth-century trends focus on logical passionate attitudes, burlesque scenarios, and authoritative actions to exemplify the Enlightenment ideologies. Therefore, these five analyzed *œuvres* show conservation of didactic and authoritative dissemination methods during this philosophically evolutionary time period.

Dedications

       This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Reagan and Vincent Gandy, and my little brother Gregory, who have supported me every step of the way. To my dear friends Luciana Walker, Mariela Saad, and Chalynette Martinez; without your continual support and encouragement I would not be where I am today. I am truly blessed to know you.

Acknowledgements

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Part 1: Introduction

It has long been acknowledged that literature is reflective not only of the author, but of society, religion, and even philosophy. In a time when mediazation was limited to the oral and printed word, entertainment found in books and letters, and intellectual stimulation in *salons*, literature was as much an artistic expression as it was a record of history. The literature published from 1660 – 1780 is indicative of France's response to the seventeenth and eighteenth-century radical philosophies of Rene Descartes, Blaise Pascal, Voltaire also known as François-Marie Arouet, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and many others. This period of time saw two distinct types of philosophy: seventeenth-century *penseurs libres* or *libertins* and eighteenth-century *philosophes.* The doctrine of the seventeenth century provided a clear foundation for the eighteenth-century radical philosophers, and therefore it is probable that the methods of disseminating the philosophical ideologies were similar.

Science-fiction in particular, written to amaze readers with stories of flying men and astonishing astral discoveries, has a tendency to reflect advances in the scientific and intellectual communities. However, there is much debate as to what constitutes science fiction (SF) and when it actually began. The genre today encompasses many topics such as stories set in the future, apocalypses, astral phenomena and space travel, hollow earths, parallel universes, innovative inventions, time travel, utopia/dystopia, and almost anything to do with robots and artificial intelligence ruling the human population. The official term "science fiction" applies when discussing the novels of Jules Verne, such as *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* and *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, to the present day. "Proto-science fiction" is reserved for any novels set before Jules Verne, but it appears this term does not apply to works before the Scientific Revolution; ancient precursors such as Ramayana and The Epic of Gilgamesh – which is argued by Pierre Versins to be the true first

work of science fiction (Vas-Deyres "Pierre Versins et L'Encyclopédie de l'utopie") – are excluded from this category. This classification is important when investigating the following novels: *Les Histoires Comiques: L'Autre Monde ou Les Etats et Les Empires de la Lune* by Hercule Savien Cyrano de Bergerac (1657), *La terre australe connue* by Gabriel de Foigny (1676), *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* by Bernard le Bovier de Fontelle (1686), *L'an 2440: Rêve s'il en fut jamais* by Louis-Sébastien Mercier (1771), and *La découverte australe par un homme volant* by Nicolas-Edmé Rétif de la Bretonne (1781).

The shift from "precursors of science fiction" to "proto-science fiction" begins in the 1500's with works such Thomas Moore's *Utopia* – which defined the entire utopian genre – and the "mad scientist" story, the Faust legend. While the history of proto-science fiction beginning in the seventeenth has been discussed by authors such as Jean-Marc Lofficier, Randy Lofficier, George Slusser and Arthur B. Evans, the literary criticism of French proto-science fiction as a whole is severely lacking from France (Bozetto 2). American SF critics Evans and Slusser have pioneered the field and published works detailing the origins and influences of proto-science fiction, beginning when the name "science-fiction" was seen together in France in the seventeenth century with René Descartes (Slusser 200).

Mercier's novels have been a great topic of discussion in regards to his famed *œuvre L'an 2440; Rêve s'il en fut jamais*. In the 1980's, there was a resurgence of scholarly study on Cyrano de Bergerac's *Les Histoires Comiques*. These novels have already been classified as SF due to their plotlines and classic SF elements of astral exploration, inventions, changed futures, and scientific advancements. This historical and philosophical basis provides the critical tools for analyzing the SF *œuvres* of Hercule Savien Cyrano de Bergerac, Gabriel de Foigny, Bernard le Bovier, Louis-Sébastien Mercier, and Nicolas-Edmé Rétif de la Bretonne.

However, what is SF? As mentioned before, the genre itself is incredibly diverse and divisive. The definition of science fiction according to the online Merriam-Webster Dictionary is "fiction dealing principally with the impact of actual or imagined science on society or individuals or having a scientific factor as an essential orienting component" and is a subset of speculative fiction. The online dictionnaire Larousse defines SF in 2016 as "genre littéraire et cinématographique qui invente des mondes, des sociétés et des êtres situés dans des espace-temps fictifs (souvent futurs), impliquant des sciences, des technologies et des situations radicalement différentes," (a literary or cinematographic genre that invents worlds, societies, and beings situated in fictive time-space (often future) implicating science, technology and situations radically different).

Certain *œuvres* examined herein have been classified already as SF by current scholars. Sylvie Romanowski, along with Calle-Gruber, Philmus, and Suivin, in her paper "Cyrano de Bergerac's Epistemological Bodies: 'Pregnant with a Thousand Definitions'" classifies *Les Etats et Les Empires de la Lune et du Soleil* as it fits with Ursula Le Guin's definition: "*L'Autre Monde* explores other spaces, and are themselves situated elsewhere, in another intellectual and critical space" (1). Le Guin's classification of SF is defined by "its use of new metaphors, drawn from certain great dominants of our contemporary life—science, all the sciences, and technology" (Romanowski 1). She identifies a critical difference between SF of pre- and post-19th century, as many historians argue SF did not begin in its modern form until after the industrial revolution.

To explain; three schools of thought exist as to when SF began. Adam Roberts discusses them in his article "A brief note on Moretti and Science Fiction," an addition to his novel *The History of Science Fiction*. One school believes SF "began with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* in 1818; it began with H G Wells *Time Machine* in 1895; it began with Hugo Gernsback's magazine *Amazing Stories* in 1926, and Gernsback's prosodically-hobbledehoy coinage 'scientifiction'"

3

(http://www.thevalve.org). This would eliminate every novel before the Industrial Revolution. Therefore the term "proto"-SF was given to those works. He also notes an intriguingly generational or cultural trend, where SF novels published within certain decades focus on similar scientific themes. The table below shows his interpretation of the generational themes. It is noticeable that four of 5 novels investigated in this thesis are listed.

4. *Table 1.* Themes of French SF generations from 1600 – 1800 (Roberts "A brief note on Moretti and SF")

Time period	Theme	Novels
1600s-1650s	Lunar adventure	Kepler's *Somnium* (1600-1636) John Wilkins' *The Discovery of a World in the Moone* (1638) **Cyrano de Bergerac's *Les histoires comiques ; Voyages dans la Lune* (1657)**
1650s-1690s	Philosophical speculation and the 'plutslity of worlds'	Athanasius Kircher's *Iter exstaticum coelester* (1656) **Bernard de Fontenelle's *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* (1686)** Gabriel Daniel's *Voyage du Monde de Descartes* (1690)
1700s-1750s	Aliens as fantastical humanoids	Thomas Gray's *Luna habitabilis* (1737) Ludvig Holberg's *Nikolai Klimi iter subterraneum* (1741) Voltaire's *Micromégas* (1750)
1750s-1790s	Fantastic voyage as satiric-comic buffoonery	Tobias Smollett's *The History and adventures of an Atom* (1769) William Thomson's *The Man in the Moon* (1783) Anonymous' *A Journey Lately Performed Through the Air in an Aerostatic Globe* (1784)
1760s-1800s	Utopian and future fictions	**Louis Sebastien Mercier's *L'an 2440* (1771)** **Nicolas-Edmé Rétif de la Bretonne's *La découverte australe par un homme volant* (1781)**

		John Wessel's *Anno 7603* (1781)

The missing novel, Gabriel de Foigny's *La Terre Australe Connue* (1676), does not fall into the category for his "cycle", philosophical speculation and 'plurality of worlds'. However, it does fall into a sub-trend with *utopie romanesque*, fictional utopian novels, such as Denis Veirassse' *Histoire des Sevarambes* (1677) and Simon Tyssot de Patot's *Voyage et Aventures de Jacques Massé* (1710) and *La Vie, Les Aventures et Le Voyage de Groenland du Révérend Père Cordelier Pierre de Mésange* (1720).

Yet, the debate as to when "science-fiction" first began has led works of proto-science fiction to be treated as minor works (Slusser "Origins of SF" 200). Until 1972, when Pierre Versins rediscovered him, Nicolas-Edmé Rétif de la Bretonne, he was virtually excluded from the SF genre. These novels use a great quantity of scientific elements and can be classified as proto-science fiction. The classification of these novels as proto-SF has implications as to their purpose. The intellectual community is drawn to express their growing thoughts and ideologies; however the control of publication was in the hands of the royal house.

The connection between proto-SF and philosophy has many origins, some of which are more practical in nature. To hide their anti-monarchal and anti-religious statements, the *libertins* transformed their *œvres* into the ridiculous, hysterically comical tales characteristic of the burlesque period. This allowed them to avoid the censorship. When Louis XIV took the throne, he limited the publishing process even further to eliminate "scandalous" texts from circulation – such as pornography, anti-religious prose, and anti-monarchy prose (Goodman 20; Library of Congress http://www.loc.gov/exhibits). It can be concluded that the purpose of these science-fiction *œuvres* was to hide didactic treatises of the author's thoughts and convey the "advances" of the Enlightenment intellectual community while escaping censorship. Instead of merely entertaining or

mocking the monarchy or church, the SF authors integrated scientific and philosophical teachings within their works to illustrate the intellectual and non-spiritual evolution of mankind.

Within this small selection of SF *romans*, the themes of utopia, interplanetary travel, anthropological study, dreamlike voyages, time travel, and scientific inventions are used. Bergerac invents crude machines and theories that predate their actual discovery to travel between planets ; uses an imaginary voyage to Australia to critically explore the hermaphroditic culture there; Fontenelle depicts exploration of the stars; Rétif enacts his utopian dream through a hierarchy built upon flying machines Mercier travels to his utopian future in a prophetic dream. Each uses the scientific discoveries within to advance their plot and societal criticism.

The novels analyzed in this thesis are defined by the human *esprit*; how they approach the Enlightenment theories, how they are represented, and what is the intended message behind these philosophical musings. Their reasoning, interpretations, and presentation are examined for clues as to their attitudes and writing purpose. Based on this knowledge of proto-SF and the prominence of certain writers in the SF genre and in the Enlightenment, it is also probable that these writers well documented to be involved in the Enlightenment era – such as Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle and Nicolas-Edmé Rétif de la Bretonne – used their SF novels as a way to share their ideologies and to avoid government censorship.

By studying French SF novels by writers believed to be directly and indirectly involved in the Enlightenment movement will allow determination of the modes of philosophical dissemination during its most influential periods. The literature of select "Enlightened" novelists has been extensively studied; however, the SF genre as a whole during that time period has not. Therefore, the distinction between this thesis and others is that it looks at the genre of SF for the influence of

philosophical ideology and its representation therein versus looking at an author's work for his

particular ideology.

Part 2: Background

Though the Enlightenment spans different centuries for different countries, this paper will focus on the French philosophers that contributed to the French Enlightenment period.

Section 2.1: The *Libertins* and the Seventeenth Century

The seventeenth century was a time of absolute kings, scientific revolution, violent religious arguments, and civil wars. To understand the *libertins*, a historical context of its ruling monarchy, religion, and philosophic thought is needed.

The seventeenth century began with the assassination of King Henry IV in 1610, and Louis XIII became King while his regent Marie de Medici ran the kingdom until his sixteenth birthday. Marie de Medici maintained the government of France, and managed to settle the small rebellion led by the nobleman Henri, Prince of Condé in 1614. She agreed to an assembly of the Estates General to address the grievances which led Condé to raise his army, but this was delayed until the official coronation of Louis XIII. However, her reliance on the Italian foreigner Concino Concini angered Condé and he raised another army, this time with the help of the Huguenots, the French Protestants.

This led to more political intrigues between de Medici, Concini, and Condé, ending with the eventual imprisonment of Condé, the assassination of Concini, and the exile of de Medici by her son Louis XIII. The aid of the Huguenots to Condé's plots led Louis to believe they would never be loyal subjects, and with the help of Richelieu, whom he named Cardinal in 1624, began to wage civil war, named the Huguenot Rebellions, against them (Roberts 175). The ultimate result of these rebellions was the loss of political and military power with the retention of the religious rights

granted to them from the Edict of Nantes in 1598. However, they lost that right in 1685, when Louis XIV actively hounded the Huguenots and revoked the edict.

Besides the violent persecution of the Huguenots, many other Christian denominations such as the Calvinists and Jansenists were hunted for their non-conformity to the supreme Catholic religion (Adam 115 ; Roger 181). Both of these denominations were criticized by the Jesuits, even though Jansenists were a direct subdivision of Catholicism that stressed the teachings of Augustinus, because they refused the concept of "free will." The papacy forbade the reading and teachings of Augustinus in 1642, and afterwards the persecution of the Jansenists began. Calvinism or the Reformed Christianity was a sect of Protestantism, the "enemy" religion to the Catholic Church and the papacy, which followed the teachings and practices of many Reformation-era Protestants, including John Calvin.

It is clear that the violent responses from the Catholic royalty and the intolerant attitudes towards Jansenism, Calvinism, and Huguenots influenced the *libertins* and explain their distinctively strong anti-religious sentiments. However, anti-dogmatic did not mean anti-God. When considering René Descartes and François de la Mothe le Vayer, both used their skeptic ideology to prove the existence of God (Descartes with methodological doubt and la Mothe le Vayer with Pyrrhonistic doubt), and therefore confirm their own religious beliefs (Hatfield, "René Descartes). François de la Mothe le Vayer is widely known for his Christian skepticism. The author and his *Dialogues fait à l'imitation des anciens* (1716) were "rediscovered" in the 1980's by Réne Pintard. La Mothe le Vayer represents the philosophical side of the monarchy and political elite as he was accepted into the Académie française, had the patronage of Cardinal Richelieu, and was retained by Anne d'Autriche to tutor her son Louis XIV.

Although the name *libertins* came into popularity during this century, it was originally coined by the Calvinists in the 15ᵗʰ century. *Libertin*, in their context of *penseur libre* of Calvinism, referred mainly to the freedom of religious thought from the mainstream Catholicism. However, intellectual *libertins* seem to imply another freedom, a freedom of the mind from the conformist ideologies that originated from the Church. This relate closely to another term that emerged in the 20ᵗʰ century to describe its seventeenth century philosophers; *libertins érudits*. Proposed by Réné Pintard, the term describes philosophers who supported "le mouvement de pensée et la sociabilité intellectuelle qui s'émancipent des dogmes" (the mouvement of thought and intellectual sociability which emancipated itself from the dogmas, Universals.fr "Libertins érudits"). Yet this must be considered in a specific context, as Tullio Gregory explains that the libertine learning served "to mask and disseminate opinions that would otherwise have been difficult to propose (especially in skeptical, anti-metaphysical, and anti-theological debates)" ("Libertinisme Erudit in the Seventeenth-Century France and Italy: the Critique of Ethics and Religion 325).

Another term that emerged past the seventeenth century to describe its philosophers was *beaux esprits* for Fontenelle. This referred to quick witted, educated men and women whose qualities included eloquent speech and intellectual curiosity – although this applied more to the concept of the *honnête homme* which defined the ideal civility of the nobleman. The similar yet specific nature of these terms emphasizes the difficulty in defining the seventeenth century philosophers, as modern critiques debate the classification of the authors, but the authors themselves often put their own classifications forward.

Pierre Bayle, a prominent philosopher of the late seventeenth century, was raised a Huguenot. Although he converted briefly to Catholicism, his reconversion to Calvinism led to his hasty escape to Sweden in 1670, but he returned to France in 1674 under the name "Bâle" and

began to publish vicious attacks to the Catholic Church in the 1680s. His most influential *œuvre*, one that influenced the philosophies of Voltaire, was *Le Dictionnaire critique et historique*. Published in 1697, it was originally an attempt to correct the mistakes in the dictionary of Louis Moréri, but evolved into the defining *œuvre* of the seventeenth century philosophy. It contained numerous attacks to organized religion, not only against Catholicism, but against his Protestant colleagues as well. He avoided direct scandal with the royal printers by "disguising his own opinion and putting the skeptical ideas into the mouths of famous scholars," (Blom 39) – much as the alchemists disguised their true authorship by taking on the names of ancient Greek philosophers, allowing Bayle a sense of anonymity so he could play the part of the "innocent bystander" (Blom 40). Bayle in particular did not feel men could obtain true knowledge, and that seeking knowledge led to an even smaller understanding. His other significant contributions to philosophy included his toleration theory, "the problem of evil" and unclassifiable skepticism (Lennon et. al. "Pierre Bayle").

It is in Bayle's example that we see how controversial authors were allowed to be published. The printing presses were controlled by the royal administration. Therefore any and all manuscripts circulated throughout France's most influential countrymen were subjected to the Church's and noble's censoring process. Of interest is also the audience for

The overarching themes of the seventeenth century were *plaire et instuire* and reason over passion. The first meant to have fun while learning; never to be instructed monotonously with an unwilling pupil. Instruction should always be entertaining and wanted. The later was described by René Descartes in his last published work *Les passions de l'âme* in 1649. He theorized as the "passions" – emotions in later time – from his position as a physicist and a Cartesian dualist. He treated the body as a machine, independent of the soul and therefore the passions (although he defined passions as something to extraneous to be endured rather than the internal sentimental

emotions of today), inferring that critical, scientific study into their nature would allow man to control the passions and not be controlled by them. Those who were dictated by their passions – such as those in love or driven by hatred – are ruled by their emotional urges rather than rational thought, and therefore cannot function.

The ability for Descartes to define the passions of the soul came to be not only due to the urgings of Queen Elisabeth but also due to his earlier work on doubt, known today as Cartesian skepticism, different from La Mothe le Vayer's skepticism. It is a methodological process by which Descartes doubted all beliefs, so that he could prove those which had not doubts were absolute truths. The greatest example is the idea of *Cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am). Descartes proved that by doubting his existence, there was no doubt he existed, and therefore existence was a certain truth.

Overall, the French seventeenth-century intellectual *libertins* were a group dedicated to tolerance, anti-dogmatism, and well-supported argumentative reasoning. In particular, their philosophy countered foundational beliefs put forth by the Church, such as the separation of the nonmaterial soul and material body, the support of scripture to use violence to convert, and the conflict between theological dogma and self-evident edicts of reason. As such, logical, systematic approaches to conveying their theories, whether through teacher-student classical scenes or evidence based persuasive discourse, are expected. Select philosophies of the aforementioned seventeenth century philosophers are listed in Table 3 of the appendix.

Section 2.2: The *Philosophes* and the Eighteenth Century

Though it began with the year 1700, truly the eighteenth century began with the quiet death of King Louis IV on September 1, 1715. The end of Sun King's reign caused the country to hold its breath as to what came next. The French populace waited as Phillippe d'Orléans became regent of France in place of the five-year old Louis XV, ruling alongside Cardinal Fleury. Marked by conspiracy, Phillippe d'Orléan's short regency revealed a growing problem with political court intrigue. Nobles and the clergy battled against the royal administration on everything from taxes to centralized government (Roche 119), most notably the *vingtième* , a tax that took 5% of your net earnings, including land holdings, property, commerce, industry, and income. The clergy and nobility were greatly against the tax, and eventually convinced Louis XV to abandon his support of it.

France's continued engagement in territorial and succession war did not end fruitfully. This included the War of Spanish Succession, Austrian War of Succession, Seven Year's War, and an ongoing struggle with Britain's navy from 1745 - 1746. The great victories of old became steep losses, and the discontentment from the nobles who encountered the losses grew daily. Unlike his grandfather, Louis XV was unable to handle these disgruntled financiers with his inherited "absolute" power. The relinquishment of French territory during this time has been widely acknowledged to have undermined the absolute monarchy and bankrupt the already shrinking treasury. To compensate for increasing debt, the *vingtième* tax was enacted in 1749, 1756 and 1763.

Experimentation with economic policy and banking also rapidly increased inflation in the country in 1719 before Cardinal Fleury introduced a strict gold to silver conversion rate and created a period of economic stability in 1726 (Gascoigne, http://www.historyworld.net/). Of great importance was also the agricultural industry. Though the sector had not evolved since Renaissance times, with labor-intensive methods still prominent, and new technologies like fertilizer and

agronomy slow to spread nationwide, the sheer size of France allowed farmers to supply for the country. Inflation of grain prices was integral in destabilizing the peasant class. Several key factors contributed to this problem.

Poor harvests were rife during the later 1700s due to the reliance of France's agriculture on the weather and slow spread of technology. France experienced severe droughts in 1769, 1770, 1775, and 1776, long winters and wet springs in 1783, a volcanic eruption spreading ash in 1784, droughts again in 1786…all these continued the low yield from grain crops. These food shortages led to increased prices in the cities, especially impacting city dwellers. Furthermore, medieval laws called the manorial system allowed noble land-owners to take a portion of the harvest from the farmers (Sée 21; Roche 119). A large portion of the agricultural peasant workforce owned their land, but acreage varied drastically, some with large fields and others with garden-sized parcels (Sée 18, 21; Roche 116-117). Some peasants compensated with small acreage with the process of *métayage* or cooperative farming (Sée 18). Peasants would combine their land to share the acres and increase crop sizes. However, a portion of their crops belonged to the proprietor, and compounded with storing for the royal granary, noble tithes, and taking a portion out for self-sustenance, the amount of food going to market was drastically reduced. Though Jacques Necker's emergency policies helped in 1788 to relieve some of the burden, by banning food exports and making all grains go to market, 1789 began with France critically short of food. The poor were starving, the taxes high, and industrial peasants lined the streets to receive the single loaf they were able to afford, as bread prices increased exorbitantly.

During the latter half of this agricultural turmoil, Louis XVI reigned. He took power after his father's death in 1774, and immediately began to try and appease the people by reforming to Enlightenment ideals. However, the still powerful nobility rejected these reforms with hostility. His

economic policies lead to increased bread prices, and eventually, his reign accumulated in his death by guillotine in 1793 after the French Revolution, along with his wife Marie Antoinette.

The mismanagement of the industry most important to the common folk, coupled with public friction between nobility and royal administration, and weak leaders in Louis XV and XVI compared to the Sun King, marred the *philosophes'* world. It is unsurprising to note that the most prominent philosophies focused on political structure. From their frequent perch in Parisian and high society life, *philosophes* launched themselves into the political and social fray with aggressive and biting critique, unlike the *libertins*, whose motivations stemmed from isolated intellectual development (Goodman 25-26).

Their involvement in Parisian and high society life is well-documented, and their sociability can be explained by Dena Goodman in her book, *The Republic of Letters*. Denis Diderot and d'Alembert believed the exchange of ideas (almost commercial, as d'Alembert describes it) was central to individual utility and human society (26): "For Diderot and his fellow editor d'Alembert [of *l'Encyclopédie*], the communication of ideas was the basis of human society, and human association was the basis of knowledge. Sociability was fundamental to both the political and the epistemological in human affairs" (26). As such, many of the eighteenth century philosophers regularly interacted, debated, and were inspired by each other. The most famous example is that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Voltaire, whose friendship ended with a single book: *Du contrat social.*

Voltaire was so infuriated by the liberal and democratic views put forth by Rousseau, that he reportedly wrote back "Never was such a cleverness used in the design of making us all stupid*"* (Russell 554). Thereafter, the two were bitter rivals and would frequently publish texts contradicting each other's philosophy. Denis Diderot was also friends with Rousseau, along with Baron Holbach,

Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, although their friendship ended much sooner than the great Voltaire/Rousseau chasm.

Also integral to understanding the eighteenth century was the topics of censorship and dissemination. More than ever before, France and its inhabitants, especially the intellectual elite, were connected with the world. Published letters of intellectual discourse between English and French philosophers were stylistically unique to this period, as evidenced by Voltaire, Montesquieu, Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton and David Hume.

Censorship was an obstacle more easily managed if you were a favorite of Louis XIV in the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, the censoring and publishing process – one and the same – was extensively managed by the Church and nobility, along with the royal court – there was expansion of the censoring body within the Versailles library administrative office (Mandrou 195). *Philosophes* who were able to voice their opinions "indirectly, suavely, and by someone with good connections" (Roche 120), then the author could avoid imprisonment, and perhaps gain a patron. However, if one was uncompromising, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the reward was often isolation or flight. The intricacies of freedom of speech and the press were "deeply felt and deeply personal demands which, in turbulent political life of eighteenth-century France, acquired general significance" (Roche 120). Montesquieu (*Lettres persanes*, 1721) and Volaitre (*Lettres anglaises*, 1734) both utilized this indirect strategy with much success.

However, even with a more involved censoring body, a defining characteristic of the eighteenth century was irony; whether in theatre, novels, pamphlets, epigrams, or poems, *le burlesque* ruled, the satire and the héro-comique its faithful companion (Hazard 13). During the latter half of the century, as the royal court lost control, the vast underground literature expanded rapidly to

critique every aspect of France critical thought (Blom 18). This could explain why the writing style of the eighteenth century became shorter, more poignant, with less "fluff" or "irrelevant" details included – possibly used to further hide their ideological meaning while supporting it (Suleiman 203).

The prominent thinkers of this period were called *les philosophes*. The ideological stance the *philosophes* took is much harder to define than their name. As Peter Gay said, "In their temperaments, as in their prescriptions, the *philosophes* differed widely. To speak of them as one movement is to speak of them as a disciplined troop…What united them was the common experience of shedding their inherited Christian beliefs with the aid of classical philosophers and for the sake of a modern philosophy" (Gay 16-17). Gay goes on to describe their rejection of all supernatural religions, the embracement of science as the way to truth and happiness, their belief in the critical method, the uselessness of metaphysics, and their destructive, aggressive criticism (Gay 17-18). It is agreed by many critics, however, that these critical discussions were doggedly marked by hope (Hazard 22; Mandrou 196). This hope was based in many things: social change, political change, philosophical change. It was a hope forced upon them, hoping for the sake of a better world to live in (Gay 72).

Arguably, the most influential French philosophers during this period were Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (though Genevan, he wrote the majority of his philosophies and impactful literature in France while participating in French debate), and Denis Diderot.

Diderot launched his career in 1751 with the help of d'Alembert and the groundbreaking *l'Encyclopaedie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*. Much in the style of Bayle, Diderot and d'Alembert used their dictionary entries as vehicles to disseminate their views of many topics including religion and philosophy. His theories on the discrediting of religion bear vestiges of

Descartes and Bayle. Diderot was a great proponent, much like Voltaire, of empirical science. He dedicated an entire work, *Discours de la suffisance de la religion*, in dissecting the "essential truths" that could only be obtained through empiricism and not through religion. These truths were obtained through visual and sensual imagery, much like what la Mothe le Vayer emphasized with his Pyrrhonistic doubt.

Voltaire rose to fame and his literary genius dominated many fields, most notably theater and philosophy. One of his most prominent philosophies focused on government systems, truly believing that a benevolent absolutism was the most effective. Many facets of philosophy shifted within the century, and one of the greatest supporters of the Enlightenment became its greatest enemy – Jean-Jacques Rousseau, as discussed earlier. The famed *œuvre*, *Du contrat social*, which caused the great rift between former friends, explained Rousseau's view on a civic humanistic form of government. This involved truly transferring all power to the masses, single units giving up their individual rights. The public would then work in harmony, as nature designed, to promote the "common goodwill." Other prominent works further discussed his emphasis on the natural order, where true human nature is reflected. His *Discours de l'inégalité* justified Rousseau's belief in the unnaturalness of inequality between men, as inequality was unnatural in nature. Though Rousseau dominated the philosophical theory much as Voltaire did, his paranoia caused him to turn away his friends and critique the intellectual movement that gave him his fame. The eighteenth century was not only marked by significant change, but the push against religion was concrete for intellectuals and transformed the rather stoic countermeasures to ones steeped in emotion.

In sum, many factors influenced the *philosophes'* movement including the deplorable economic sector, bitter rivalries, passionate discourse, disputes in government systems, empirical reasoning, the seventeenth century *libertins*, and a forced optimism for better days to come. Select

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eighteenth century philosophies of the aforementioned philosophers are listed in Table 3 of the

appendix.

Part 3: The Seventeenth Century

Section 3.1: *Les Histoires Comiques: L'Autre Monde ou Les Etats et Les Empires de la Lune*
By Hercule Savien Cyrano de Bergerac (1657)

Les Histoires Comiques are a two-part series of novels that feature a protagonist (presumably Cyrano de Bergerac himself, as the protagonist's name Dyrcona is a clear anagram of the author) traveling to different planets and recounting his adventures with the multitude of cultures and societies in the universe. The first, *L'Autre Monde* ou *Les Etats et Les Empires de la Lune* was published in 1657, and the second novel, *L'Autre Monde* ou *Les Etats et Les Empires du Soleil*, published in 1662. The premise and novels were highly influential to *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift. This section will critically analyze only the first novel *la Lune*, as *le Soleil* was not completed before Bergerac died in 1655 while the original for *la Lune* was finished in 1650.

The novel features two prominent philosophical ideas that illustrate the authoritative intellectual stance of the author. Beginning with Hélie and Dyrcona, there is a motif of reducing the marvelous, mystical phenomenon to rational explanations, a core *libertin* value (Gay *Science of Freedom* 52). In the clearest example of this motif, Dyrcona speaks with another about various topics, including atomic theory.

> Hélas! entre rien et un atome seulement, il y a des proportions tellement infinies, que la cervelle la plus aiguë n'y sauroit pénétrer; il faudra pour échapper à ce labyrinthe inexplicable, que vous admettiez une matière éternelle avec Dieu, et alors il ne sera plus besoin d'admettre un Dieu, puisque le Monde auroit pu être sans lui. Mais me direz-vous, quand je vous accorderois la matière éternelle, comment ce chaos s'est-il arrangé de soi-même? Ha! je vous le vais expliquer. Il faut, ô mon petit animal ! après avoir séparé mentalement chaque petit corps visible en une infinité de petits corps invisibles, s'imaginer que l'Univers infini n'est composé d'autre chose que de ces atomes infinis, très-solides, très-incorruptibles et très-simples, dont les uns sont cubiques, les autres parallélogrammes, d'autres angulaires, d'autres ronds, d'autres pointus, d'autres pyramidaux, d'autres hexagones, d'autres ovales, qui tous agissent diversement chacun selon sa figure.

[Ha! Between nothing and a single atom, there are truly infinite proportions, that a brain the most keen would not be able to penetrate; it must to escape this inexplicable labyrinth, that you must admit the eternal material with God, and so it no longer needs to accept a God, since the World would be able to be without Him. But, you will ask me, when you agree with me about the eternal matter, how is this chaos arranged by itself? Ha! I will explain it to you. It must, my little animal! After having separated mentally each little visible body into an infinity of little invisible bodies, imagine that the infinite Universe is composed only of things other than these infinite atoms, very solid, very incorruptible and very simple, which some are cubic, others parallelograms, others angular, round, points, others pyramidal, others hexagons, ovals, that all act diversely, each according to its figure, Bergerac 91-92.][1]

The idea of atoms as the smallest unit of life originally appeared in ancient teachings of Democritus that Descartes adopted and brought into his own philosophical treaties. The idea of blood circulation as one directed by the body, and not by God of Nature as proposed by Catholic priests, demonstrates an importance of medical knowledge as a philosophical concept. Both examples presented are ways to disseminate knowledge, not speculative musings, as they contain an absolute certainty that weighs down their words. In contrast, the blessed individual Hélie attributes normal or seemingly extraordinary phenomenon to religious reasons, such as an Angel creating light that illuminates the world or a transportation mechanism based on smoke that is only attracted to God (Bergerac 32).

The second philosophical characteristic ties back to the idea of the *libertin érudit*; a rejection of all dogma, even scientific dogma. As dogmatic beliefs are those free from intellectual challenge from its followers, philosophy and religion can be equally dogmatic. However, Bergerac's characters support their claims much in a way a student writes a cohesive essay. Each thesis statement precedes a variety of observational data or philosophical logic that proves the claim. The characters that accept things without inquiring as to their validity, such as the Queen and King who assume upon

seeing Dyrcona that he is the *femelle* to their Spanish slave and trap them together in a cage to force reproduction, are shown to be entirely absent from philosophical discourse.

Information about cultures or philosophy is disseminated through two formats: a discourse or a monologue (defined for this novel as one person speaking for more than 3 pages without interruption). Unlike analogies which can be convoluted and obscure intended sub-meanings, Bergerac prefers to convey his ideas through direct language with sub-textual meaning. The comparison is that rather than a twisting road that ends at a destination like an analogy, his meaning is water underneath a bridge of words and discourse.

Furthermore, monologues originate for the most part from four characters: Dyrcona (the protagonist), Hélie, *le Démon de Socrate* and *le fils de l'hôte*. Their naming in particular is indicative of their ideological standpoint and has been extensively studied. The character disseminating the information shifts as the intrigue advances, and therefore the connotation of the philosophical information shifts. The overlying voice is clearly Bergerac, who speaks through his characters as a ventriloquist manipulates a dummy. The four aforementioned characters have large intellectual presence within the novel.

Dyrcona, being the protagonist, comes from France with modern views of astronomy and philosophy, reflecting enlightened values. His initial stance as the reigning intellectual authority is unsurprising. It can be attributed to simply the most relatable position for the reader, most likely a member of the Sun King's court, or a way to integrate a mutable character into the story, who must have certain "solid" values to evolve. Hélie is a Jewish adolescent who, before landing in Eden, craved more knowledge and heeded the song of an angel, building a chariot of fire to deliver him to the *le Paradis d'Adam, l'Arbe de Science* (Adam's Paradise the Tree of Science). He is a character blessed

by an angel's song and reaching *le Paradis terreste* (earthly Paradise). In essence, he represents the "godly" or religious influence that is strong within French society, and its relationship with scientific explanations, as evidenced from the examples shown before. The fact that he is trapped in Paradise could be analogous to the intellectual "trap" of religious reasoning, as Bergerac himself would gleefully substantiate.

The Demon of Socrates is rather self-indulgent and haughty. His words and actions are aggressive, subversive, mocking, yet flattering and adulatory towards the amazing men he has met in his past. Upon meeting Dyrcona, he delves into his own superfluous autobiography that emphasizes his connections to and judgment of the Earth's most prominent historical figures in the eyes of Bergerac. Fictitious or factual, it does not matter to le Démon, who lists Doctor Faust alongside La Mothe le Vayer and Gassendi (Bergerac is overt with his praise and support of Gassendi and his work). This allusive quality manifests later as well, when le Démon reveals his fluid position in society, from dutiful citizen to a lawyer who defends the intellectual "traitor." While his original interactions with the main character were largely problematic, he later becomes an ally that prevents Dyrcona's execution for his sacrilegious statements and saves him from his continued enslavement to the King and Queen. His words and actions provide the most biting commentary of the characters, until we come to *le fils d'hôte*. This character dominates the entire end of the novel, engaging Dyrcona in discourse traversing a multitude of subjects before being whisked up a chimney by an Ethiopian because of his anti-Christian remarks.

Bergerac draws attention to these characters and their relative positions in ideology by giving them the longest monologues. These characters clearly represent stark ideological differences: the knowledgeable, the ignorant, and the mediator. No internal conflicts are shown during their

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speeches, as the characters are giving information rather than receiving or debating. The overall tone is didactic and superior, highlighting the progression of information through the novel.

For example, the protagonist Dyrcona asserts his authority when visiting New France and Paradise. He speaks with the Vice-Roi about the movement of the Earth and stars, yet when Dyrcona is finished speaking, he cuts off any chance of rebuttal by closing his eyes. "Mes yeux qui se fermoient en achevant ce discours, obligèrent le Vice-Roi de sortir" (my eyes, whiched closed themselves after this discourse forced the Vice-Roi to leave, Bergerac 16). The meaning of obliging in this sentence removes any choice in the Vice-Roi's appropriate responses. Therefore Dyrcona's actions show him to be the dominant presence intellectually, though the Vice-Roi's position clearly positions him above Dyrcona's social rank. This is also the case with Hélie, who presents the positive veneration of *Dieu*, and should be the dominant speaker (considering a catholic influenced France). Even as he is the dominant speaker, Dyrcona asserts his authority through interruptions, aggravating Hélie with a single phrase into defending his beliefs, and later makes him so cross he glares and reprimands Dyrcona for his insolence. Those that defend beliefs, rather than presenting them calmly, cannot be the authority of the scene, as they are forced into a position that may or may not be favorable to the character:

> Hélie pendant tout ce discours me regardoit avec des yeux capables de me tuer, si j'eusse été en état de mourir d'autre chose que de faim : 'Abominable, dit-il, en se reculant, tu as l'impudence de railler sur les choses saintes, au moins ne seroit-ce pas impunément si le Tout-Sage ne vouloit te laisser aux nations en exemple fameux de sa miséricorde; va, Impie, hors d'ici, va publier dans ce petit Monde et dans l'Autre, car tu es prédestiné à y retourner ; la haine irréconciliable que Dieu porte aux Athées.

> [Hélie all through my discourse regarded me with eyes capable of killing me, if I was in a state to die of anything other than hunger. "Abominable, he said, by withdrawing yourself, you have the impudence to rail against the saintly things, at least do not be so reckless if the All Sage wants to allow you to the nations as a renowned example of His mercy; go, Imp, outside of here, go advertise in this little World and in the Other, as you are predestined to return here, the irreconcilable hate that God takes to Atheists, Bergerac 34.]

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This shows the position not only of Hélie but also of Dyrcona, and of Bergerac. Hélie is an angry, bitter man, but even abandoned in the Garden of Eden still defends his God. In contrast Dyrcona stands in with the other Greek "atheists" like Socrates, and bears the "haine irréconcillable" that God carries for "atheist" or non-Church conforming philosophers.

Dyrcona's apple-eating expulsion from *le Jardin* lands him directly in contact with the non-religious philosophers of the novel, and consequently we do not return to a positive view of *Dieu*. The Tout-Sage, All Wise, demands poetic offerings without knowing how to read (Bergerac 50) and enforces an "absurd" gerontological society that is mocked by the two professors (Bergerac 75-76, 78). The intellectual authority lies with those who denigrate God and dispute his godly decrees. The *Démon* is not only the one responsible for capturing the protagonist and selling him off, to be treated as *une femelle* whose existence is only to please the Queen, but in turn exonerates him from his execution. Dyrcona is only saved from society and indoctrination by his demon that simultaneously prevents him from interacting properly with society (he is reduced to a sideshow display).

Another point along the transfer of intellectual authority from character to character is the simultaneous degradation and eventual re-establishment of intellectual authority of the principle character. This is shown not only in who speaks dominantly on ideology, but also the freedom Dyrcona possesses. Dyrcona's character goes from a wayward traveler flying to and from disseminating his intellectual wisdom, to captive prisoner and finally, *la femelle* for the beastly King and Queen of the Moon due to his resemblance to a monkey, and almost executed for his beliefs by the religious authorities underneath her.

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His intellectual authority is threatened when he loses his physical freedom and societal importance, until it is at once gone and he becomes subject to the intellectual views of his societal superiors, *le Démon* and *les deux profs*, who save him. This would initially be viewed as a subversion of the enlightened ideas professed by the main character at the beginning of the novel; the character who states clearly his support of enlightened values is degraded from human to slave to insolent dog. It is a simple cause and effect relationship that appears to reflect Catholic religion consequences; do this, and you will go to hell, or profess your love of the Lord, say ten Hail Mary's, and you will be renewed. Conform, be rewarded; resist, be punished. As a strong proponent of the Church, Cyrano abnormal usage of religious cause/effect to subvert enlightened values indicates a deeper meaning.

Looking closer indicates a more political reason for transfer of intellectual authority from the protagonist to the other characters. As Dyrcona's intellectual authority declines, that of the "alien" characters such as *le singe espagnol* and *le Démon* increases. This is shown by an increase in dialogue for these characters, superior positions or those of greater authority in society, and story advancement. *Le singe espagnol* is the "senior" *femelle* of the King and Queen, and therefore teaches Dyrcano how to act. *Le Démon* becomes the lawyer who defends Dyrcona against the accusations of the *Prêtes*, who want to see the protagonist punished due to his blasphemous mislabeling of the Moon as the Moon and Earth as the Earth, implying the world he was standing on (the Moon) was nothing more than a satellite and not the center of all human advancements (the Earth). This change from intellectual authority of the protagonist to becoming fully removed from discussion, remaining only an observer, demonstrates the author's need to escape censorship by the French government and the Church. By making shifting the "enlightened" character from the protagonist to the subversive

"Other," the author creates a superficial change in representative. It does not affect the authoritative position of the characters nor the mode of dissemination through the novel.

In sum, Cyrano highlights key ideological points by focusing most of the information disseminated to a small cast of characters, and polarizes the ideology of these characters to create a progressive stance in ideology and avoid government censorship. It is well known that Cyrano de Bergerac's novels were so incendiary to the Court and Church that his editor, Charles de Sercy, extensively censored the novels long before they reached the official government office.

Section 3.2: *La terre australe connue*

By Gabriel de Foigny (1676)

This *œuvre* is a part of a series of utopian novels published at the end of the seventeenth century. In discussing utopian fiction, Foigny's work is often analyzed with the likes of Denis Veiras, Honoré d'Urfé, and Tyssot de Patot, although it has been a source of contradiction for many scholars beginning in the 1920s. This work in particular provokes numerous discussion points as to the contradictory representations of faith and scientific principles, all under the name of philosophy.

In the seventeenth century, *la connaissance*, *les lumières*, *la verité,* were all terms for knowledge. It was where the *Lumières* derived their name; a term for that which brings those out of darkness - light, both physical and intellectual. No work is better for exploring the dual nature of its secular and religious connotation than *La Terre Australe Connue ; C'est-à-dire une description de ce pays inconnu jusqu'ici et de ses mœurs & de ses cotûmes par Mr. Sadeur, Avec les aventures qui le conduisirent en ce Continent, & les particularitez du sejour qu'il y fit durant trente-cinq ans & plus, & son retour* (The Known Australian Land; Meaning a description of an unknown land just to its customs and traiditions by Monsieur Sadeur, with the adventures which drive him to this Continent and particularize themselves with a sejour that endured thirty-five years and more, and his return).

Foigny's goals for his novel are subtle; there is no introductory statement about his grand scheme for this *œuvre*. Instead, he represents dogmatism and Enlightenment theories equally with a tone of "*ambivalence essentielle*." He subverts and supports both philosophies throughout the novel, yet it is the nature of his protagonist which conclusively shows the intrinsic Enlightenment influences of the *intrigue*.

The protagonist Sadeur identifies immediately in the book as a Christian man - "Comme il m'est impossible de faire reflexion sur toutes les avantures de ma vie, sans admirer **la divine**

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Conduite[1] sur ses creatures" (as it is impossible to make reflections on all of the adventures of my life, without admiring the **divine Conduit** about his creatures, Foigny 1). This is not the case, however, in the most critical chapter of the story, where Sadeur discusses the cultural philosophy of the hermaphroditic Australians with "le vieillard" or the old man.

> Je sais bien, dit-il, qu'étant arrivé dans un pays où tu vois plusieurs choses contraires à celles qu'on pratique au tien, tu as quelque raison d'être surpris & étonné. Mais comme c'est une coûtume inviolable parmi nous de ne souffrir aucun demi-homme, & que nous les reconnoissons par le sexe & par les actions ; bien que tes deux sexes te sauvent, tes façons de faire te condamnent : & il faut que tu les corriges pour prolonger ta vie.

> [I know well, he said, that having arrived in a country where you see many things contrary to those which you practice yourself, you have some reason to be surprised and astonished. But as it is an impregnable custom amongst us to suffer no half man, and that we know them by their sex and by their actions ; even though your two sexes save you, your ways condemn you: and you need to correct them to prolong your life (Foigny 90).]

For his reply, Sadeur lists patiently the customs of his country and those of others such as Africa, Asia, and Europe. Yet it is again the vieillard's response which shows the Enlightenment influences.

> Tu en avances trop en trop peu : prends garde à ne te point couper, & à ne te point enlacer en des contradictions. **Tu n'accorderas jamais l'usage du raisonnement avec l'exclusion des deux sexes** : & ce que tu âjoutes, que plusieurs raisonnent entre vous, & qu'on y fait des leçons du raisonnement en plusieurs lieux, **prouve que le raisonnement est banni de chez vous**. Le premier fruit du raisonnement est **de se connaitre** ; & cette connoissance emporte par nécessité deux choses : l'une, que pour faire un homme, il faut qu'il soit entier : l'autre qu'il raisonne, ou du moins qu'il puisse raisonner librement & quand luy plait. Vous manquez au premier, puis que vos hommes sont tous imparfaits : vous manquez au second, puis que vous n'avez que peu de personnes qui puissent raisonner. Pourrois-tu contester ces réponses.

> [You advance too much and too little: beware to not hit yourself and to not entangle yourself in contradictions. **You will never grant the usage of reasoning with the exclusion of both sexes:** and that which you add, served of you reason, and that they make there the lessons of reason in many places, **prove that reasoning is banished at your home**. The first fruit of reason is to **know thy self**; and this knowledge takes by necessity

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[1] All emphasis by me

two things: one, that to be a man, it must be that he is whole: the other that he reasons, or least that he is able to reason freely and when it pleases him. You forget the first, since your men are all imperfect: you forget the second, since you only have a few people who are able to reason. Are you able to contest these responses? (Foigny 90)]

This direct challenge of intellect, especially when discussing the ability to reason – a true Cartesian principle – is intriguing in the context of the idea of a "whole man." If one believes what the *vieillard* (the hermaphroditic Australian, the Other, the non-French, non-Christian) tells Sadeur (the Christian, French, "fully formed" man), then the ability to reason is limited to men by society. This limitation causes a "banishment" of true reasoning as men do not "know" each other; *se connaître* in this context is not only to know each other, but also to be acquainted with in terms of a relationship, a sexual undertone that emphasizes the "female" or feminine aspect lacking in men. Because if they knew each other, men would be whole; they would be able to marry mind and body together – an acknowledgement of the Cartesian dualism theory of a separate body and mind. This is subsequently refuted by the *vieillard* since as he states man's limitation of reasoning men, he also states the imperfection of Sadeur's men, the Christian Frenchmen ("you forget the first, since all **your** men are imperfect"). To sum, not only do all men fail at understanding knowledge and each other by **only** rationalizing with other men, but they do so utterly poorly because they are imperfect. This imperfection is born of their lack of having both sexes, which the hermaphrodites possess.

Sadeur follows this by debating the word "perfect." He does not address the preceding argument of whole versus half men, a clear allusion to the hermaphrodite versus man and Australian versus French cultures, nor the complete castration or his "rational" gender. Instead, he argues that men cannot aspire to be perfect because "c'étoit un principe du raisonnement d'appeler une chose parfaite, qui avoit tout ce qui étoit requis à son établissement" (it was a principle of reason to call a thing perfect, which had all that which was required at its conception Foigny 90-91):

Par exemple : 'on ne peut dire qu'un homme manque de perfection, parce qu'il n'est pas soleil : autrement on feroit une confusion dans la nature, & il n'y auroit rien de parfait. Il faut donc connétre ce qui est requis pour établir la perfection d'un homme : & en étant tombé d'accord, on jugera sans doute de ceux qui sont defectueux, & de ceux qui sont parfaits.

[For example, you are not able to say that a man lacks of perfection, because he is not the sun: otherwise there would be confusion in nature and nothing would be perfect. We therefore must know what is required to establish the perfection of a man: by agreeing with each other, they will judge [in the sense of recognize] without doubt those defective and those perfect (Foigny 91).]

This argument simultaneously refutes and supports Enlightenment theories. It directly contradicts the prominent skeptic philosophy of La Mothe le Vayer, while utilizing the Cartesian methodological doubt of Descartes. La Mothe le Vayer decreed that true knowledge could never be obtained completely, as human senses are feeble and able to be deceived, therefore accepting anything obtained from the senses as pure fact is indeed credulous. The knowledge of a "perfect man" and how to become one could not ever be obtained because that process involves the human senses. However, this conclusion of perfection by Sadeur is supported by the methodological doubt proposed by Descartes, as it accepts only the information known to be true, breaking it down into smaller and smaller units, solving those problems first, and making a complete list of future problems. (Hatfield "René Descartes").

This style of reasoning is further used by the proceeding arguments of the *vieillard*. However, within the same chapter, Foigny retracts his secular argumentation in favor of religious influences.

J'écoutois cet homme plustôt comme un oracle que comme un philosophe : toutes les propositions qu'il formoit, me fournissoient des raisonnements que j'estimois invicibles. 'Vray Dieu', disois-je, 'que les lumieres de cet homme approchent des sentiments de nôtre foy, & qu'il est aisé de marier celles là avec ceux-ci.

[I listened to this man rather more like an oracle than a philosopher: all the propositions that

he formed, gave me reasonings that I esteemed invincible. 'True God,' I said, 'that the lights of this man are close to the sentiments of our faith, and that he is easy to marry those with these (Foigny 105).]

This reinforces the removal of the personal interpretation of the seeker and replaces it with the already interpreted "oracle's" words, contradicting the *libertin*'s influences. The religious leader of the hermaphrodites states that his soul does not permit him to conceive an eternity or understand a total production without the conduit, the Grand Sovereign and Architect (Foigny 115) – a clear parallel to the Catholic way of divine interpretation through a priest or bishop. Both the Australians and Sadeur also present blind acceptance of the "Incomprehensible" God which governs them, to the point that Australians feel no need to speak aloud about their religion and the rational, enlightened thought that proves their faith and customs.

This contradictory nature, fluctuating between religious indoctrination and *libertins* anti-dogmatic philosophy, of the novel has created a divide for critics as to the intentions of Foigny. One stance is illustrated by Peter Kuon in his article "Utopia between Myth and *Lumières*," :

> Dans la structuration géométrique et rationelle de l'espace, de la société, voire de la langue utopienne, on aperçoit le reflet du cartésianisme triomphant. Mais les deux textes ne témoignent pas seulement de l'idéologie dominante : ils articulent également des tendances sous-jacentes qui minent le pouvoir religieux et temporel et préparent le renversement des valeurs au siècle des Lumières. C'est ainsi que le déisme agressif et quelque peu spinoziste des Australiens…n'a plus rien à voir avec la religion naturelle des Utopiens…qui n'attendent que la révélation pour se convertir au christianisme."

> [In the geometric structuring and rationalizing of space, society, even the utopian language, we glimpse the reflection of a triumphant Cartesianism. But the two texts [*La terre australe connue* and *l'Histoire des Sévarambes* by Denis Veiras] do not testify only to the dominant ideology: they articulate equally the underlying tendencies which mine the religious and temporal power and prepare the reversal of the values during the Enlightenment. This is the reason why the aggressive deism and non-spinozist deism of the Australians…have not much in common with the natural religion of the Utopians…who wait only for the revelation to convert themselves to Christianity (Kuon 254).]

However, other scholars say that this dual representation of religious dogmatism and enlightened philosophy is due to Foigny's essential ambivalence (Ferguson 257). Equally representative of both sides of the Enlightenment versus dogmatic argument encompasses the "Bayle enigma" of philosophy. This poses a bizarre anachronistic dilemma. Pierre Bayle published his thoughts on argumentative support several years after Foigny. Yet the exact argumentation is present in the novel. Could this be indicative of other fully flushed out representations that influenced Bayle, and the *libertin* merely gained the most fame for employing the method? Regardless, Bayle's philosophical theories cannot be applied here, as his theories were published long after Foigny's novel.

Furthermore, this ambivalent equatorial reasoning uses a conflicted tone. Neither way of life gains the upper hand, even at the end of the novel, yet the conclusive stance is demonstrated by the protagonist Sadeur, who is revealed to be a hermaphrodite. This fact creates a subtle message of the intrinsic nature of the Enlightenment. The philosophers were concerned with the "self", autonomy of thought from dogmatism and from the body. Yet if the hermaphrodites represent Cartesian ideals, and Sadeur has always been a hermaphrodite, he is a Cartesian ideal. Even as his "mind" that rules the "body" is dogmatic in ideology, as represented several times throughout the novel in the fatalistic approach to his life, he reinforces the Cartesian dualist separation and Pyrrhonist doubt, as he could not believe he was a hermaphrodite and therefore rejected that which his senses observed in favor of reasoning. The overall Enlightenment approach to the protagonist emphasizes that the philosophy is intrinsic to his nature, and can be interpreted as intrinsic to the nature of the reader, as they identify with the Christian, French protagonist.

Finally, the subtle ambivalence used throughout this novel does not lend itself to an overtly authoritative character, and this is seen fairly often throughout the novel. The vieillard, though the

cultural and political leader, and clearly the intellectual representative for the hermaphrodites, does not simply dominate the conversation. At most, he speaks at length on a variety of subjects, of which he allows ample opportunity for the protagonist to rebuke. And rebuke he does at various times throughout the novel. Yet it is an exchange of ideas that changes the tone from one of intellectual dominance to an "ambivalent" or indifferent exchange, where the characters disseminate information with no strong emotional attachment. Once again, reason triumphs passion in seventeenth century French literature.

In essence, though enlightened philosophies are used to uphold dogmatic ideologies, the intrinsic hermaphroditic nature of the protagonist, and his ambivalent approach to demonstrating the pros and cons of each philosophy reveal Foigny's novel as a great example of Enlightenment dissemination. His use of vacillating and balanced representation, and having a likable intellectual authority espouse both philosophies, characterize a truly objective dissemination method and the correct approach to interpreting them.

Section 3.3: *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes*
By Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle (1686)

Fontenelle was an academic versed in law and literature. However, his fascination with science led to distinguishing himself via his historic books on philosophy and science. "By affirming the scientific knowledge, he created a characterization of the historical progress of the human spirit that most of the Enlightened philosophers adopted" (Mazauric 13).

The *œuvre* resembles a Socratic discussion more than a Jules Verne story, and fortunately, for our purposes, this novella of science-"fiction" contains many influences of the *siècle des Lumières* as well as the "grand siècle," and provides a strong foundation on how these theories can be integrated into a seventeenth century SF *intrigue*. Fontenelle introduces his *œuvre* with a preface, explaining his choice of philosophy – "la plus capable de piquer la curiosité" (the most capable of piquing the curiosity, Fontenelle 1) – his selection of a women to instruct, and how it does not violate the Church's ideological domain as the men on the Moon are not "Men of Adam." Thereafter is the typical *exposition,* which introduces our female "student" *Madame la Marquise*. The story is told over six nights, five consecutives *soirs* and one a year after the "original" *entretiens* are published, covering topics such as the habitants of the Moon, the differences between the Earth and Moon, the planets in general, the stars and their *tourbillons*, rotational mouvement, etc.

Though the *intrigue* is based on astral subjects, many earthly influences of the Lumières are found, mostly in analogies that make the far-fetched philosophical musings more accessible to understand. The cultural influences most prominently mentioned or depicted are Oriental and Greek imagery and positive analogies of money (Gay, *Science of Freedom* 25). The scientific influences are mainly mechanistic imagery and Newtonian physics based analogies (Gay, *Science of Freedom* 26). Fontenelle begins his novel with what resembles a categorical listing of influences and name-

dropping. During the first *soir* alone, Fontenelle mentions Egypt and the Nile, Indians, Iroquois, the Tartar, Persians, Turks, and Circassians, followed by the oriental Indies, Chinese, Greeks and Amérique – as discovered by Christopher Columbus, praised heartily in the novel. Astronomers such as Copernicus, Galileo, Tycho Brahe, Ptolemy, and Aristotle are littered about within the first chapter. This careless name-drops enriches his introductory premise with scenic far-off countries and vogue scientific theories, connecting a "fiction" to reality. As the story progresses, the narrative scenery becomes focused, less eclectic. The topics focus on abstract teachings, and due to the blasphemic nature of these teachings, it seems Fontenelle chooses to censor himself by removing any "earthly" connections. No specific names of real philosophers are mentioned, no real place, no real cultures.

Regardless of Fontenelle's self-censoring strategies, disconnecting the abstract from the real, the undeniable goal of this novella is to learn. Fontenelle states that he aimed to treat philosophy in a way which is not philosophic, and he tries to bring it to a point where it is not too dry for the people of the world but not too boring for the savants (Fontenelle, 1). So although the didactic intention is not disguised, what the intended "students" are going to learn is less forthwith. Although philosophy, such as the analyses of the planets and other astral bodies, features prominently, the analogies used to explain these theories are of particular interest for their imagery and connotation. The greatest proofs for Fontenelle's *œuvre* to be a didactic application is the entire format of the intrigue as a series of analogies, the use of a female pupil taught by a male instructor, and the usage of the French term for philosopher instead of astronomer in certain passages.

In her book *Authoritarian Fictions* (1983), Susan Suleiman investigates the novels that explore ideological discourse in that the discourse refers "explicitly to, and identifies itself with, a recognized body of doctrine or system of ideas." (1). This subdivision of ideological fiction is designed to

"persuade by induction or argument by analogy." (27). Aristotle divided these analogies into two categories: "real" which had a historical or mythological basis, or "fictional" which were created by the narrator.

Fontenelle conveys a majority of the complex scientific ideas through accessible analogies to *la Marquise* of both the "real" and "fictional" variety. For example, during the second *soir*, Fontenelle explains his "proof" for the habitation of the moon, when no concrete or visible evidence has been provided, through the use of a comparison between Saint-Denis and Paris.

> Supposons qu'il n'y ait jamais eu nul commerce entre Paris et Saint-Denis, et qu'un bourgeois de Paris qui ne sera jamais sorti de sa ville…voie Saint-Denis de loin; on lui demandera s'il croit que Saint-Denis soit habité comme Paris. Il répondra que non; car, dira-t-il, je vois bien les habitants de Paris, mais ceux de Saint-Denis je ne les vois point…Il y aura quelqu'un qui lui représentera qu'à la vérité…mais que l'éloignement en est cause; que tout ce qu'on peut voir de Saint-Denis ressemble fort à Paris…et qu'il pourrait bien encore ressembler à Paris d'y être habité…Notre Saint-Denis c'est la Lune, et chacun de nous est ce bourgeois de Paris, qui n'est jamais sorti de sa ville.

> [Suppose that there was never trade between Paris and St. Denis and that a Parisian inhabitant who never went outside of the city… sees St. Denis far away; they would ask him if he believes St. Denis is inhabited like Paris. He will reply that no, as, he will say, I see well the inhabitants of Paris but those of St. Denis, I do not see them…there will be someone who will represent to him the truth…that the distance is the cause; that all we are able to see of St. Denis resembles Paris…and that it could well still resemble Paris to be inhabited…our St. Denis is the Moon and each of us is the bourgeois of Paris who never goes outside the city (Fontenelle 90-92).]

More critical than the use of analogies, however, is the structure of the analogy. Suleiman describes two structures; one where the listener is called at the end of the story to interpret and internalize the hidden lesson contained in the analogy (30) and another where the listener, who has already interpreted the analogy before beginning to read it, "brings their actions into line with the underlying meaning of the story" (32). An example of the latter type is in Matthew (25:1-23), which presents a distinct shift between the preceding discussion and the proceeding story ("And the

kingdom of Heaven will be like this.") and ends with an injunction, a defining phrase that brings the readers out of the story and into the application phase of the interpreted message ("Keep awake then; for you never know the day or hour.").

Fontenelle uses both types; the excerpt above is an example of the second type – the *l'incipit* of the preceding paragraph states "…voici ce qui m'a fait pencher du côté des habitants de la Lune." (Here are that which makes me inclined to the side of the habitants of the moon, Fontenelle, 90). This sentence introduces the story and ends with the application of the analogy to the "imperative" or current situation of the reader, in this case, the discussion between himself and *la Marquise* as to the probability of an inhabited Moon.

The analogy structure can be further broken down into the narrative discourse or story, the interpretive discourse – the comments on the story in order to expose its meaning, and the pragmatic discourse which applies the interpreted generalization exposed in the narrative and interpretive discourse to the reader. In this situation, the injunction – "*Notre Saint-Denis c'est la Lune, et chacun de nous est ce bourgeois de Paris*" – can be interpreted as both the pragmatic and interpretive discourse, as the sentence not only expresses the derived meaning of the narrative but also applies it to the current discussion.

This structure of the narrative, interpretive, and pragmatic discourse allows the intelligent reader, already knowledgeable about that which Fontenelle "explains", to apply the deductive conclusion to the comparative situation of the Moon, without misinterpretation. As analogies are a form of indirect communication, there is a possibility of misinterpretation of the intended message. By stating the pragmatic discourse directly after the interpretive, it decreases the likelihood of any alternative "answers" to be presented by the reader (Suleiman, 35), which would undermine the

authoritative and didactic stance of the "teacher" or teller of the analogy. As the protagonist

(Fontenelle most likely, as he uses an unnamed protagonist for the novel) is the sole source for the

majority of scientific information presented, this reserves the right of narrator to Fontenelle. He

therefore controls the disseminated information in its entirety.

Another point of curiosity on the didactic nature of the piece is the selection of a female

"student," *la Marquise*. The seventeenth century saw the integration and transformation of literary

culture into the "ruelles", salons reserved for elite society intellectuals through the popularity of the

Hôtel de Rambouillet. The "ruelles" were usually run by men and women alike and a place to

express their own thoughts on their literary works and ideas, to create literary works, allowing

members to read their *travail en cours* for critiquing. If particularly impressive, the fortunate man

could obtain a sponsor from one of the prominent ladies and secure a captive audience and

permanent invitation to the informal academic setting. Yet the portrayal of a women becoming an

informal pupil to a learned man, discussing the stars and planets as they gazed upon them in the

starry sky, seems atypical of the century which saw the creation of L'Académie française and

l'Académie des sciences; two schools which Fontenelle was accepted into in 1691, to his great

reluctance, and whom allowed no women behind its prestigious walls.

Therefore, the use of a female pupil is quite interesting and the consideration of the preface

versus the portrayal of *la Marquise* in the story gives more information about Fontenelle's aim. He

states:

> J'ai mis dans ces entretiens une femme que l'on instruit, et qui n'a jamais ouï parler de ces
> choses-là. J'ai cru que cette fiction me servirait et à rendre l'ouvrage plus susceptible
> d'agrément, et à encourager les dames qui par l'exemple d'une femme qui, ne sortant jamais
> des bornes d'une personne qui n'a nulle teinture de science, ne laisse pas d'entendre ce qu'on
> lui dit, et de ranger dans sa tête sans confusion les tourbillons et les mondes. Pourquoi des

femmes céderaient-elles à cette marquise imaginaire, qui ne conçoit que ce qu'elle ne peut se dispenser de concevoir? A la vérité, elle s'applique un peu, mais qu'est-ce ici que s'appliquer?

[I placed in these interviews a woman who I instruct, and who has never heard of these things. I believe that this fiction would serve me to make the work more susceptible to agreement, and to encourage the intellectual women by the example of a woman who never goes outside of the limits of a person who has no smattering of science, but still understands what is said to her and can visualize in her head without confusion the orbits and the worlds. Why do the women yield themselves to a certain imaginary marquise who only conceives that which she is not able to avoid conceiving? In truth, she applies herself a little, but what does it mean to apply oneself? (Fontenelle preface)]

He goes on to describe that the same method of understanding philosophy is used to enjoy the beauty of *La Princesse de Clèves*, a psychological novel by Mme de Lafayette which was the first *roman d'analyses* (analysis novel), and that although the ideas are less familiar to the majority of women than those of that novel, they would need a second lecture at most, and that nothing would escape them. Though long-winded, the preface creates a portrait of a man whose prejudices against women did not extend to their capacity to understand philosophical/scientific theory. Yet perhaps this was more a reflection that, at the time, teaching women was considered a very vogue activity, as women, although they were not allowed into universities and received no formal training, were expected to comprehend the theories effortlessly, as they did all other subjects. The actions of *la Marquise* seem to support this, as often times the narrator will explain a theory and after a long-winded lecture or analogy, and she will instantly understand what he said. Several times she asks questions which either follow the logical path of the discussed idea or do not. If they do not arrive at the expected conclusion, this allows the narrator to begin the process of education again, and provides a continuing excuse for discourse.

Altogether, *la Marquise* never demonstrates any misunderstanding of the scientific ideas, reinforcing the "effortless" way in which women "obtain" their knowledge. At the end, the

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knowledge that he imparts to *la Marquise* fills her with life - "je vous avouerai qu'elle m'a laisée avec quelque soupçon que vous pourriez bien m'avoir gâté l'esprit" (I would concede that she let me with some suspicion that you would easily have spoiled my enthusiasm, Fontelle 39) – and that he in turn is glorious – "Je serais bien glorieux, lui répondis je, d'avoir eu tant de pouvoir sur vous, je ne crois pas qu'on pût rien entreprendre de plus difficile" (I would be well glorious, I responded to her, having had so much powder over you, I do not believe that anyone would be able to begin nothing more difficult, Fontenelle 39). The protagonist's knowledge is "glorified" through la Marquise.

The reference of astronomers as "*philosophes*" (philosophers) from prominent figures in the field to naming all those studying the planetary bodies in general, also creates an authoritative viewpoint. The term "*les astronomes*" (astronomers) was first used in 1549, replacing the term "*astronomiens*", and meaning a specialist of the field of *astronomie*. It is curious then that Fontenelle refers to his other colleagues as well as specialists in the philosophical musings of the cosmic plane as *philosophes* in the majority of the *œuvre* and then in the last chapter, when Fontenelle et *la Marquise* reunite to discuss the "nouvelles pensées qui confirment celles des entretiens précédents" (new thoughts which confirm those of the preceding interviews), the warring intellectual factions – those who believe and those who do not - appear as two new terms; *les raisoneurs* et *les astronomes*. Fontenelle uses the term *les raisoneurs* when illustrating the division between men about the topic:

> Contentons-nous d'être une petite troupe choisie qui les croyons, et ne divulguons pas nos mystères dans le peuple. Comment, s'écria-t-elle, appelez-vous peuple les deux hommes qui sortent d'ici ? Ils ont bien de l'esprit, répliquai-je, mais ils ne raisonnent jamais. Les raissonneurs, qui sont gens durs, les appelleront peuple sans difficulté. D'autre part ces gens-ci s'en vengent en tournant les raisonneurs en ridicules, et c'est, ce me semble, un ordre très bien établi que chaque espèce méprise ce qui lui manque.

> [Content ourselves to be a little chosen group which believes it, and do not divulge our mysteries to the people. How, she cried, can you call these "people" the two men who come out from here? They have good minds, I replied, but never reason. The thinkers, who are tough men, call themselves people without difficulty. Other parts of these men here avenge

themselves by turning the thinkers into ridiculous men, and it, it seems to me, is an order well established that each type despises what they lack themselves (Fontenelle 39).]

Fontenelle changes the lofty term *philosophes* to *raisonneurs* for a specific purpose; to establish a division between men based on intellectual inequality without introducing a division of philosophy. This prevents an interpretation of anti-religion – as emphasizing those who philosophize life "correctly" and those who do not, could be considered an attack on the Church. His introduction also emphasizes the *les raisonneurs* as a chosen group that he and *la Marquise* now contribute to, as her instruction is well complete. Finally, Fontenelle almost endears the thinkers to the readers through the use of discrimination based on intellectual superiority, the superior *raisonneurs* able to dutifully participate in society but unable to do so with the lowly inferiors.

God, however, is relegated to an amateurish designer, giving even more legitimacy to the authority of intellectual thought to the non-divine figures, as they do not associate with the incompetent, omnipotent *Dieu*. As *la Marquise* and the narrator discuss the order of the planets and their circular orbits - a poorly disguised proof theory for heliocentrisme - a previous king of Castille comes up in the subject:

> L'embarras de tous ces cercles était si grand que dans un temps où l'on ne connaissait encore rien de meilleur, un roi de Castille, grand mathematicien, mais apparemment peu dévot, disait que si Dieu l'eût appelé à son conseil, quand il fût le monde, il lui eût donné de bons avis. La pensée est trop libertine; mais assez de cela même est assez plaisant, que ce systeme fût alors une occasion de péché, parce qu'il était trop confus. Les bons avis que ce roi voulait donner regardaient sans doute la supression de tous ces cercles dont on avait embarrassé les mouvements célestes.
>
> [The confusion of all these circles was so great that in a time in which it was not known any better, a king of Castille, great mathematician but apparently little devout, said that if God had called him to counsel when he made the world, he would have given him a good opinion. The thought is too libertine; but enough of that same thing is pleasing enough, that the system was then an opportunity of sin, because it was too mixed up. The good advises

that this king wanted to give without a doubt the suppression of all these circles that had encumbered the celestial movements (Fontenelle 6).]

As Fontenelle introduces this division of men - those religiously affiliated and those not - earlier in the novel, as compared to the division of thinking, intelligent men versus not, he connects the non-religiously affiliated men with those who reason well. However, by separating these two conclusions, the syllogism becomes more subtle. This could be due to Fontenelle's goal of avoiding making powerful enemies within the influential Church.

In conclusion, Fontenelle uses a strong didactic approach with emphasis on the intellectual authority of astronomers and non-religious philosophers to teach the female student about the seventeenth century *libertin* and scientific ideologies. The usage of Enlightenment imagery such as Newtonian physics, Oriental and Greek inspired people and places, along with the ideologies of Gassendi and Descartes reinforces the true aim of his novel as a didactic application for dissemination of seventeenth century values.

Part 4: The Eighteenth Century

Section 4.1: *L'an 2440 rêve s'il en fut jamais*
By Louis-Sébastien Mercier (1771)

Mercier dreamed of a new world, one free of the weights and atrocities contained in reality. In his *chef d'œuvre*, he transports his protagonist 700 years into the future to explore the transformations that have already happened to his beloved city, Paris. This specific type of novel the *uchronie*, "emphasizes the temporal rather than the spatial perspective" (Ludlow 20) and was first practiced by Mercier in the eighteenth century. Like most of the novels in this thesis, the SF genre was once again used to investigate something else, and Ludlow claims it as a "means of investigating the future" (20).

Mercier was well-documented as an Enlightenment philosopher, author, and revolutionist, beginning his career counteracting Racine and Boileau in French poetry by writing historic epistles. He was a profound writer and employed a journalistic style that kept the reader riveted even when the subject matter was dull. As Geneviève Boucher discusses in her article "Le discours sur le roman dans le panorama urbain: tableau, style et histoire chez Louis Sébastien Mercier," Mercier placed greater importance on the novel later in life, as he believed it to be a vehicle for having a profound impact upon the reader. "Fictional style appears as a model of literary effectiveness as it is the more likely to create an intimate connection between the author and the reader" in which "the work can have a true effect" (Boucher 23).

His *œuvre*, *L'an 2440; reve s'il en fut jamais,* not only features a prominent character of the Black Spartacus but also a France "perfected according to Enlightenment ideals" (Marcellesi 1-3) where history becomes a source of "aesthetic emotion" (Boucher 23). This is clearly evident even in the *avant-propos* or foreword, where Mercier discusses the human progress toward perfection.

Pourquoi le genre humain ne seroit-il pas semblable à l'individu? Emporté, violent, étourdi dans son jeune âge; sage, doux, modéré dans sa vieillesse.(a) L'homme qui pense ainsi, s'impose à lui-même le devoir d'être juste. Mais savons-nous ce que c'est que perfection? Peut-elle être le partage d'un être foible & borné? Ce grand secret n'est-il pas caché sous celui de la vie?

[Why would the human genre not be similar to the individual? Bad-tempered, violent, scatterbrained in his young age; sage, gentle, moderate in his old age. (a) The man who thinks thus, imposes upon himself the task to be just. But do we know what is perfection? Can it be embodied by a feeble and narrow-minded being? Is this great secret not hidden under that one? (Mercier 2)]

He goes on to say to answer these questions by encouraging the French citizens to sleep and dream of Plato. Mercier sees their suffering under some unnamed hand, when they have grand projects and dreams to realize (Mercier 3). Sleep, he commands, and see our bliss, "notre félicité" (Mercier 3).

Mercier's protagonist does just that and awakens in the future, in 2440 to be exact, and explores a futuristic Paris free of the strife and hardships that plagued eighteenth-century France. Similar to *La terre australe connue* where Foigny focuses each chapter to a specific aspect of the hermaphroditic society, each chapter of *L'an 2440* relates to a specific aspect of the society that Mercier wants to convey. Mercier's uchronic title establishes its ideological, enlightened stance and authoritative dominance principally through two ways. One is a consistent juxtaposition of "good" and "bad" qualities representing a rigid dichotomy of non-Enlightenment and Enlightenment ideologies, culminating in an enlightened royal character. The second way is through the footnote interruptions which Mercier uses didactically to draw the reader from the narrative and apply his "lessons" to reality.

Each chapter presents an individual story on a different "corrected" aspect of the utopian Paris. This gives Mercier the freedom to construct a novel-long conceit and distinctly antithesize

Enlightenment and non-Enlightenment values as good and bad. This is accomplished on the macro and micro level simultaneously, as the micro-aggressions build up to the climactic ending of discovering the grand sovereign Louis XIV in the ruins of Versailles. An example of a microscopic micro-aggression is the oxymoronic representation of at the beginning of the dream. The English friend dictates to the protagonist all that is ill with France, from the horrible disproportion of fortunes (Mercier 9) to corrupting themselves and increasing the sum of their ills (Mercier 11). Be proud of your beautiful monuments that will fall in ruin (Mercier 9), he foretells.

> On pouvoit cependant raisonnablement penser qu'il devoit en arriver le contraire; mais trop de gens sont intéressés à s'opposer au bien général. Je vais chercher quelque village où, dans un air pur & des plaisirs tranquilles, je puisse déplorer le sort des tristes habitans de ces fastueuses prisons que l'on nomme villes.

> [One could however reasonably think that the opposite might happen ; but too many men are interested in opposing themselves to the general good. I will search some villages where, in pure air and tranquil pleasures, I will be able to lament the fate of the sorrowful inhabitants of the luxurious prisons that one calls cities (Mercier 9).]

This juxtaposition on a micro-level serves to degrade the appearance of cities, not only in opposing the countryside and rural communities that house the agricultural farmlands so desperate to feed the Parisian peasants, but also in their contents. The cities are "fastueuses prisons", luxurious prisons; the emphasis is not only on the restriction of temporal freedom – their adherence to a strictly scheduled industrial work-life – but also the servitude to their industrial masters and the royal administration. The vilification of cities, the seat of power for the clergy and bourgeoisie, undermines their position and therefore their authority.

To see the benevolent nature of the Enlightenment, we visit one of the many examples as the protagonist wanders through future Paris with the help of his guide. The protagonist is quickly enraptured by the actions of the futuristic sovereign, Henri IV 2.0. He is known to often walk

among his citizens (Mercier 27) and rewards great artists, needing neither the excessive flattery of admirers nor the assurance of his merit by a rich person (Mercier 28-29). Instead, he likes to praise the natural equality which exists among his citizens (Mercier 27) and invites the great artist into his palace to instruct him (Mercier 29). This acknowledgement of equality among men, of having the merits of a person determined not by the size of their following but by the quality of their work, exemplifies the utopian ideals that solve the unnaturalness of inequality put forth by Rousseau.

> Il met à profit les leçons lumineuses de celui qui a pris quelque grand objet pour but principal de ses méditations. Il lui fait présent d'un chapeau où son nom est brodé; & cette distinction vaut bien celle des rubans bleus, rouges & jaunes, qui chamaroient jadis des hommes absolument inconnus à la patrie.
>
> He [King Henri IV 2.0] placed to profit the luminous lessons of the man who has taken some great object for the principal goal of his meditations. He gave them a hat where his name was embroidered; and this distinction was well worth the one of those blue, red and yellow ribbons which long ago adorned men absolutely unknown to the motherland. (Mercier 29)

Henri IV was also known as King of Navarre and ruled France from 1553 to 1610, long before Mercier's time. His most famous decree was the Edict of Nantes that momentarily stopped the religious wars tearing France apart. As such, his idolization by Mercier as the ruler of this Enlightenment land is intriguing. Henri IV was originally born Catholic, raised Protestant, and persecuted with other Huguenots. Upon taking the throne and seeing the devastation of the religious wars, he abjured his Calvinist faith and brought temporary peace to the land. In a romanticized version, Henri IV turned his back on religion, cast aside his own prejudices, and ruled for the good of the passionately blinded religious zealots, encompassing the Enlightenment values of the seventeenth century more than the eighteenth. Unlike the passionate musings of Mercier himself, his idolized Enlightenment King still harkens back to the days of old.

It is difficult to say at first if Mercier is a supporter of Voltaire or Rousseau. Clearly, the Paris of 2440 demonstrates the common goodwill so idolized by Rousseau, and fixes the social inequality so reviled by the philosopher. However, there is the conundrum of the Henri IV 2.0. Is he the benevolent sovereign of Voltaire, or is he a representation of the public, an accumulation of the "common goodwill" and public sovereignty of Rousseau? As these political styles exist in polar opposites, one must have an all-controlling monarch and one must eliminate it, it isn't possible for Henri IV to be a combination of the two. This king is revered, "la voie publique reçoit sous ses pas comme une empreinte sacrée que chacun révere" (the public voice receives under his fingerprint like a sacred mark that everyone reveres, Mercier 27), blushing when he appears and stopping all discordant noise.

The citizens themselves become angry when the protagonist questions any of his decrees, such as the effectiveness of their judicial methods. "Si vous faisiez cette question sérieusement, me répondit mon guide d'un ton sévere, vous insulteriez au Monarque, à la Nation, à moi-même" (If you asked this question seriously, my guide answered me in a severe tone, you would insult the Monarch, the Nation, and myself, Mercier 83). Clearly, critiquing things is reserved only for all that is wrong with eighteenth century Parisian monarchs, and not the beloved King of Navarre! Yet this does not answer our question. Voltaire's monarch would be absolute, but so would Rousseau's character embodiment of the public will, as citizens give up their rights to the mass for promoting harmonious government.

Actions of the judicial nature, such as the execution of a man or trials, are executed as a group, with each position (judge, lawyer, citizen/jury) present and gathered to voice their opinion. The emphasis on the priceless value of a human life greatly influences the "deciders" to stay their hand (Mercier 85-89). These actions are not carried out by a single person, not by the order of a

benevolent ruler who makes the decision for the citizens. The people of 2440 Paris are actively

engaged in the decisions of their lawmakers and judges, implying not only an interest in inclusion

but also an education of the standards citizens to be able to participate. This involvement and

inclusion of the "common" voice in a normally "elite-only" environment makes me inclined to see

Rousseau's influence more than Voltaire's on the position of their revered ruler and societal justice.

To return to the aspect of juxtaposition, the literary device is used also to critique the nature

of the eighteenth century philosophical Enlightenment. As the protagonist visits the King's library,

he notices the library to be less voluminous (Mercier 195) and inquires to the librarian what

happened. He responds that they had voluntarily set fire to the books whose authors marched to the

beat opposite to the honest thinkers of the futuristic era (Mercier 195-196).

> En effet, que côntenoit cette multitude de volumes? Ils étoient pour la plupart des répétitions continuelle de la même chose. La philosophie s'est présentée à nos yeux sous l'image d'une statue toujours célèbre, toujours copiée, mais jamais embellie: elle nous paroît plus parfaite dans l'original, & semble dégénérer dans toutes les copies d'or & d'argent que l'on a faites depuis; plus belle, sans doute, lorsqu'elle a été taillée en bois par une main presque sauvage, que lorsqu'on l'a environnée d'ornemens étrangers. Dès que les hommes se livrant à leur paresseuse foiblesse s'abandonnent à l'opinion des autres…ils perdent l'invention & l'originalité. Que de projets vastes & de spéculations sublimes ont été éteints par le souffle de l'opinion!

> [Indeed, what was contained in these multitudes of volumes? They were for the most part continuous repetitions of the same thing. The philosophy was presented to our eyes under the image of a statue always celebrated, always copied, but never embellished: it appeared to us more perfect than its original form and seemed degenerated in all the copies of gold and silver that were since; more beautiful, without a doubt, when it was carved in wood by a hand almost savage, than when it was surrounded by foreign ornaments. As soon as giving in to their weak laziness, abandon themselves to the opinion of others…they lose creativity and originality. So many vast projects and sublime speculations were extinguished by this breath of opinion! (Mercier 196-197).]

What contents indeed! Mercier appears to be attacking the same philosophers whose

ideologies and passion lit the very spark that resulted in the great changing of these deplorable times

he detested so much - the French Revolution (Mercier , 3). However, this time was also rife with public rivalries between prominent philosophers, leading to discord and pettiness rather than as many "sublime speculations" as Mercier hoped. Furthermore, the texts, so lauded amongst the intellectual community, were mere copies of each other (toujours célebre, toujours copiée, jamais embellie). In his opinion, no original thought came from this group so intertwined with each other, and dependent upon the funding of the rich bourgeois. By removing the philosopher from the finery, the community, the socioeconomic status beholden upon the philosophers, by placing the philosophy into isolation so deep he carves his very ideas from nature, Mercier believes originality will come ("une main presque sauvage" in contrast to "l'environnement des ornements étrangers"). Rousseau's emphasis on the natural order reflecting the "right" in society is clearly something Mercier heeds to.

Unlike any novel analyzed in this thesis, *L'an deux mille quatre cent quarante* contains footnotes written by the author, with letters that interrupt the flow of the *intrigue*. These interjections have a two-fold effect. One is to give the impression that this is a work of "fiction"; the *œuvre* is at once an exploration of the protagonist (unnamed, and can be assumed to be Mercier) in an imaginary 2440 Paris and an educated critical commentary on 1768 Paris (Mercier 14). Didactic, academic essays contain footnotes; fictional novels do not. This raises the academic level of the information presented and the intellectual position of the author. The other is to create a "teaching moment" from Mercier. Looking at individual footnotes will explain this point further.

Consider this example that introduces the 15th chapter on Theologians & Jurisprudence; "Heureux mortels!", the author writes, "vous n'avez donc plus de théologiens (a)?" (Happy mortels! You have never hence had theologians? Mercier 76). The footnote reads thus:

Il ne faut point ici confondre les moralistes avec les théologiens: les moralistes sont les bienfaiteurs du genre humain; les théologiens en font l'opprobre & le fléau.

[You must not confuse the moralists with the theologians: the moralists are the benefactors of the human kind; the theologians scorn and curse it (Mercier 76).]

Not exactly the most objective description of theologians: key things to note are the usage of the "*il ne faut point*" (one must not), an incredibly didactic expression reminiscent of instructions given to a child by its mother, and the intent on an almost dictionary-like expression. He introduces both "entries" (moralists, theologians), alphabetically, juxtaposing viewpoints around the object of the *genre humain*, the human condition. Now let us consider another example, more historically inclined. "Par exemple", the guide explains to the protagonist, "il n'y a pas de grâce pour un ministre (a) qui abuse de la confiance du souverain, & qui se sert contre le peuple du pouvoir qui lui est confié" (For example, there is no mercy for a minister who abuses the confidence of the sovereign, and who uses his power against the people, Mercier 82). Once again, a didactic introduction is used to change the tone from one of presentation to teaching. This is important, that introductory phrase says, you need to pay attention.

(a) La bonne farce à représenter que le tableau de nos ministres! Celui-ci entre dans le ministère à l'aide de quelques vers galans; celui-là, après avoir fait allumer des lanternes passe aux vaisseaux, & croit que les vaisseaux se font comme des lanternes: un autre, lorsque son père tient encore l'aune, gouverne les finances; &c. il sembleroit qu'il y ait une gageure pour mettre à la tête des affaires des gens qui n'y entendent rien.

(a) The good farce to represent that as the picture of our ministers! Here comes in the ministry with the help of some gallant verse; this one, after having lit the lanterns passing as vessels, and believing that the vessels are like lanterns: another when his father still holds the rod, and governs the finances; it seemed that there was a challenge to place at the head of business men who heard nothing.

Here, once again, Mercier stops the narrative to interject his own opinion. Rather than explaining his ideas inside the intrigue, voiced by his character, he specifically places a close positioning of the ideal situation for France's ministers with the distressing reality. The usage of

"farce" as opposed to comedy or tragic comedy gives rise to a slap-stick, low-brow comedic representation. A farce's comedic nature is dependent upon exaggerated stereotypes and general buffoonery. Therefore, the laughable representation of ministers as those who defy the "powerful people," the elite and noble, bitterly amuses Mercier. In continuing the novel, Mercier speaks as to histories of places, transformations of space and time, but always returns to bitterly critiquing his own idealistic representation.

In conclusion, Mercier creates an enlightened, Rousseau-influenced futuristic Paris to didactically disseminate his beliefs in footnotes and from characters. The dichotomy of Enlightenment and non-Enlightenment values are presented on a micro and macro scale, reinforcing the rigid associations of good and bad to their respective ideologies.

Section 4.2: *La découverte australe par un homme volant*
By Nicholas-Edmé Rétif de la Bretonne (1781)

Rétif de la Bretonne is an outlier when compared to the others of this list of novels. His work is the least studied, and only in regards to the libertine influences of pornography and perversion. His name, after all, is used to describe someone with a shoe fetish (*retifism*). Among the countless novels he has written, the novel *La Découverte Australe par un Homme Volant ou Le dédale français*, published in 1781, has especially little analysis beyond the wonderfully drawn illustrations which accompany the novel. For the purposes and scope of this thesis, only the first volume of the four part novel will be discussed, as the material there is sufficient for my purposes. The novel is at first two companions who discover they are alike in all ways, except they were born on opposite sides of the Earth. The *Je-ne-sais-quoi* man then launches into a tale about Victorin, a love-struck inventor who kidnaps Christine, his amour, to live with her atop an inaccessible mountain, and the subsequent volumes feature their adventures.

To begin, the novel's tone is unlike any novel within this treatise. Unlike somber ambivalent Foigny, studious Fontenelle, ascerbic Bergerac, or sagely optimistic Mercier, Rétif feels alive with his novel. The tone bounces about, characters shifting from passionate to indifferent within the blink of an eye, literary style in short, direct sentences with frequently repeating subjects in the same sentence. The introduction of our storytelling characters exemplifies the novel's tone quite well;

> Nous approchions la Capitale; & comme notre conversation avait été fort-particulière, nous volumes…ne pas prendre une mauvaise opinion de nous à nos Compagnons de voyage; nous leur fimes des compliments, nous leur donames des éloges…Nous nous séparames avec autant d'indifference que si nous ne nous étions jamais vu.

> [We approached the Capital; and as our conversation had been strongly particular, we wanted…to not leave a bad impression of us to our traveling Companions; we gave them compliments, we gave them praise…we separated with just as much indifference as if we had never seem each other (Rétif 32-33).]

In a short time period of two paragraphs, much transpires; the traveling group comes upon the capital, reestablishes the ease of conversation between everyone and by the time the cab parks, the people disappear in opposite directions like strangers. This "je-ne-sais-quoi" attitude is reflected throughout the novel, from the protagonist of the internal story Victorin recovering swiftly from the death of his close colleague Jean Vizinier (Rétif 44) to Victorin calmly threatening the chamber-maid if she reveals that he kidnapped Christine, his love, rather than saving her from large birds (Rétif 105-106).

Rétif perhaps uses this tone for many reasons. The emphasis on a light mocking nature is burlesque in its purpose, the absurd reality captured with levity so common in the eighteenth century. It also serves as a stark difference from the novel's seventeenth-century predecessors, and its companion novels as the seriousness of the eighteenth-century food and political situation worsened. Did Rétif choose a stylistically soft tone, still mocking but with the optimism so needed in those times, to counteract the drudgery of everyday life? It certainly highlights the key points of his ideology, and his authoritarian position. Firstly, Rétif introduces us to a benevolent absolutism idolized by Voltaire, describing its uses in empirical observations emphasized by Diderot. And secondly, the storyteller seen at the beginning of Victorin's and Christine's tale quickly asserts his authority through classic authoritarian posturing, along with Victorin who establishes his authority over Christine through reverse psychology.

The authoritarian roles are clearly present in the *Je-ne-sais-quoi* man presented in the "reality" of the book and Victorin, the love-struck protagonist Victorin of *Je-ne-sais-quoi*'s story. *Je-ne-sais-quoi* interrupts *Compère Nicolas*, the protagonist, as he describes himself by launching into the *exposition* of

his tale (Rétif 30), ends the conversation abruptly (Rétif 35), and challenges the intellectual capacity

of Nicolas by testing him on his knowledge of great men (37).

> Lesquel de vos Grand-Hommes, consentirait à se laisser emporter aux Terres-australes?
> Cette question, lui répondis-je, n'est pas sans difficulté. Les plus grands-hommes sont M.
> De-Voltaire, M. Rousseau, M. De-Buffon[…]L'Australien m'embrasse de joie.
>
> [Which of your great Men, consent to let themselves be taken to the Australian land?
> This question, I responded to him, is not without difficulty. The greatest of Great Men are
> Monsieur Voltaire, Monsieur Rousseau, Monsieur Buffon…the Australian embraced me in
> joy (Rétif 37).]

To pass this test is then for Nicolas to be regaled with a mighty story of Victorin and

Christine by *Je-ne-sais-quoi*. Clearly, knowledge of the most famous eighteenth century French

philosophers, was something Rétif wanted to emphasize as important. The protagonist follows the

answer with critiques as to why each cannot be considered the very greatest – Voltaire too old,

Buffon is "more suitable" but gives no reason why, and Rousseau abandoned them - them being the

philosophers (Rétif 38). Preceding this test, the protagonist Nicolas confuses a monkey with a

philosopher who is only able to prove their occupation through a letter (Rétif 28), and emphasizes

his own philosopher's status, along with his penchant for writing bad books (Rétif 29). The ironic

representation of actual philosophers could translate to a critique on the celebrity status of Rousseau

and Voltaire, not translating directly to the quality of work being produced. Beyond just knowing the

Great Men of the eighteenth century, it is important to critique their work to be truly "philosophic."

However, the *Je-ne-sais-quoi* man further asserts his authority as he is the one who "approves"

Nicolas' answer. It is through him that we learn of Victorin and Christine, and Nicolas is simply

there to learn. Though not a classic teacher-student representation, there is a clear difference in

intellectual authority before the novel's main plot begins.

Victorin's authority as a Souverain of Mt. Inaccessible as well as the intellectual authority is established through Christine and his inventions. In regards to his inventions, Rétif establishes Victorin's independent ability to reason by designing wings and carriages at whim. He possesses *l'esprit* enough to design wings able to maneuver effortlessly, with a rudder and modern airplane-like machinations. He also builds a coach for le Petitmaître which causes such alarm with its lifelike movements that both the customer and others think it was made by the Devil himself. Almost all of Victorin's inventions in the first volume cause the general populace to believe he sold his soul to the Devil, or became *le Diable* (Rétif 85, 87). This vilification of scientific advancement is not novel in context of the Church's strong stance on scientific philosophies, but the outright demonization is interesting when considering who is censoring the material. Rétif does not mince words as his creations cause instant panic and blasphemic musings within the general imaginary populace. Noteworthy is the indifference the protagonist shows in regard to this potential blasphemy. There is no remorse, no attempts to correct their mindset. He simply moves about freely to enact his amorous, if not villainous, plans.

On a more insidious note, Victorin uses reverse psychology to assert his authority over Christine. Much in the way of Pyrrhus to Andromache, Victorin cleverly calms Christine by emphasizing her sovereignty over him, how he does everything in his power to aide and protect her (Rétif 114 – 116), after she distraughtly finds herself atop an isolated mountaintop. His silver-tongue consoles the terrified woman, spinning a tale of how large birds kidnapped her and his bravery in fighting them off. The manipulation is complete, when he convinces her to write a note to her father (that he will deliver, of course, as he only serves her) to tell him of Christine's predicament. The contents of the letter prove Victorin's success.

Il y est arrivé presqu'aussitôt que moi, le jour de mon enlèvement; il a combattu le gros

Oiseau avec tant de courage, qu'il est parvenu à la chasser du Mont-inaccessible, où il nous a tous portés, & où nous sommes allés à notre aise pour les besoins de la vie: et mon particulier, je suis respectée comme une Souveraine; Victorin est mon premier sujet, & je sais que c'est à lui que je dois toute mon autorité…Cet aimable jeune-homme a seul la faculté de sortir le Mont-inaccessible, & il n'en use que pour me servir.

He arrived there almost no sooner than me, the day of my abduction, he fought the large birds with so much courage, that he stretched the hunt to the inaccessible mountain, where he [the bird] had taken us and where we went to our pleasure for the needs of life: and my person, I am respected like a Sovereign; Victorin is my first subject and I know that it is to him that I owe all my authority…this amiable young man has only one faculty to go out of the inaccessible mountain, and he uses it only to serve me (Rétif 120-121).

Though Victorin pondered when concocting his abduction scheme of his position as Sovereign of the mountain colony – "Victorin ala passer encore un-jour sur sa montagne, qu'il aurait pu regarder comme son petit-empire" (Victorin passed yet another day on his mountain, that he had already been regarding as his own little empire, Rétif 70) – he quickly relinquishes title, pomp & circumstance to Mme Christine. Her new role as Queen is clearly a way for Victorin to keep her happy in his gilded mountain cage, and distract her from longing to see her father (Rétif 111-112).

For philosophical influences, Victorin's government style for his mountain colony is reminiscent of Voltaire's benevolent absolutism. He kidnaps subjects that he believes he "saves" from their current situation, and although all are wary of his intentions – understandable after being kidnapped by a flying man and taken to an isolated mountaintop – they begin to respect him because of his tender care, fulfilled promises, and ingenious inventions. "Tous les Habitants du Mont-inaccessible furent pénétrés de respect, en voyant leur Maître dans l'air" (all the inhabitants of Mt. Inaccessible were lavished with respect, in seeing their Master in the air, Rétif 128),. His creativity, his invention convinced the habitants that he was good, capable of ruling them. Though not all his inventions were truly his, but in part those of his former companion Jean Vizinier (Rétif 40-41), whose fatal drowning after a failed attempt of the wing prototype lead to the first abduction

of his widow and bastard daughter. If such a clever man could create such a contraption, transporting him and others to a remote mountain, then truly he had *l'esprit* to govern. This is much along the lines of what Voltaire argued, in that only a philosopher, free from the pressure of pleasing a noble peerage and concerned only with ruling the people, could rule properly and justly.

Furthermore, Victorin only saves people whom he believes would benefit from a removal from French society, forming a contract or agreement with each of them upon their arrival. For example, the Vizinier widow and her bastard daughter, along with the hopeless Cathos, are whisked atop the mountain due to problems Victorin perceives he can solve. Though he abducts them – clearly against their will – each lives harmoniously together, pleased with their husbands/wives and station in life. "…tous se trouvaient dans une position agréable : ils vivaient dans l'abondance & dans les plaisirs : peu d'ouvrage, des amusements sans-cesse répètès, un joli séjour, un air excellent, une bonne nourriture…" (all found themselves in an agreeable position: they lived in abundance and in pleasure: little writings, amusements always repeated: a jolly stay; excellent air; good food, Rétif 138),. Their contract formed at the moment of their capture is upheld by their wonderful, happy Sovereign and his lovely Queen.

Rétif delights in occasionally breaking the fourth wall (Rétif 79,86) to address the audience, but it is perhaps during the description of the *République* that he breaks the walls not to amuse the readers but to address the ills of French society (Rétif 140-141). Rétif utopian mountain colony addresses all the qualms of the social realm, such the vices that plague mankind and the inequality of man.

> O Législateurs! Fous, que voulez rendre les autres sages, que vous méritiez souvent tout notre mépris!...Aureste, la vertu, sur le Mont-inaccessible, est fort-naturelle; je le répète, toute Société assés bornée, pour que Individus y soient égaux, se connaissent tous, aient tous besoin les uns des autres, est nécessairement heureuse & vertueuse: voila la nœud; je ne sais si aucun Moralité l'a trouvé.

[O Legislateurs! Insane, that you want to render otherwise, that you often validate all our contempt! Furthermore, the virtue, on the Mt. Inaccessible, is very natural; I repeat it, all Society rather narrow-minded, for all Individuals are equal there, knows each other, all the need of one another, is necessarily happy and virtuous: voilà the knot, I do not know if any Morality has found it (Rétif 141).]

This clearly was important enough for Rétif to drop all pretenses, even losing some of the burlesque tone, to convey this message. He directly addresses legislators, which could be the Parlement of Paris, suspended from 1770 to 1774 by Lord Chancellor Maupeou, or the Estate-General, which had not met since 1614. The gathering of that legislation body was instrumental to starting the French Revolution, as the legislators representing the Third Estate, or everyone not of royal, religious or noble association, broke apart of the other two estates to address the concerns of the people, eventually declaring themselves the National Assembly. Considering the novel's publication time of 1781, it is unlikely the Estates-General is being addressed, and more likely the Parlement. Now, why would he address this body? Because their lethargic bureaucracy, so concerned with preserving the societal privileges from medieval times, could not pass enough relevant reforms for the general populace. This stagnation was not uncharacteristic, but incredibly frustrating to the starving and over-taxed Third Estate. Rétif's direct address of this issue and the responsible party closes the divide between the utopia he describes, and the things standing in the Frenchman's way of achieving it.

In sum, Victorin does not espouse ideological beliefs, but embodies them with his actions. His words are burlesque and ironic; his passions encouraging manipulation and honesty; but his actions serve to depict the "enlightened" political system using "enlightened" descriptions that hearken to Diderot's essential truths. What he does is truth because Victorin obtains them through visual imagery, along with the reader. The most vivid descriptions in the novel are of Victorin's inventions, his wings and his coach, the mountaintop colony he creates and lavishes with stylish

furnishings for his love. All of these things create a truth about him, an essential truth to understanding the way Victorin thinks and operates. He is methodical, always thinking, always scheming, critically analyzing and critiquing the methods he uses, and willing to change his surroundings to suit his needs.

In conclusion, Rétif employs a burlesque tone and imagery to bring attention to the enlightened ideologies of Voltaire and Diderot, and disseminates these philosophical representations through established dominant characters such as the *Je-ne-sais-quoi* man and Victorin. His unusual direct address to the dominant French legislative body also brings attention to the seriousness of France's reality in the 1800s, and how it impacted every social class. Using proto-SF also highlights the condemnation of the scientific method by the Church and its stark ideological representations (either an angel or a demon) and the power of science and intellectual authority over man.

Part 5: Conclusion

The SF *œuvres* of the seventeenth and eighteenth century give great insight into the opinions and passions of their authors in their respective centuries. The seventeenth century focused on learning and amusing themselves, all the while removing the "passion" from the equation to allow tolerance in thought. The eighteenth century, drawing from their intellectual forbearers, turned their perfected reasoning into passionate discourse that eventually sparked a philosophical and historical revolution. The historical and social context paints a clear picture as to how certain philosophies and philosophers came to dominant their respective eras, and the likelihood of their famous ideologies catching the attention of novelist. Furthermore, proto-SF, a genre including scientifically based explorations and social commentary, presented opportunities for disseminating the philosophical ideologies to avoid censorship in the seventeenth century and spread the political and philosophical revolution in the eighteenth. The consistent use of intellectually authoritative characters and didactic situations and representations of "enlightened" philosophies point to the conclusion that proto-SF genre was a didactic tool of its author's arsenal.

These *œuvres* of the seventeenth century themselves provide an interesting comparison when considering the method of dissemination and the philosophies that they emphasized. Originally hypothesized was that these authors utilized an intellectual authority in the protagonist to disseminate information using didactic methods, such as teaching structures and authoritative characters. Fontenelle uses an incredibly didactic environment to teach *la Marquise*, showing a non-traditional student receiving the information effortlessly. He represents his colleagues, *les astronomes*, as philosophical authorities above the religious *Dieu*, while controlling the flow of information to his student. Foigny emphasizes a "Bayle enigma" before the philosopher wrote his treatise with the

"*ambivalence essentielle*" that he uses to depict dogmatic and objective religious and Enlightenment ideology.

Cyrano de Bergerac holds nothing back in his acerbic criticism of the Catholic religion and inverse representation of "contradictory" philosophical ideas. His transitioning of intellectual authority from the protagonist to the "Other," foreign characters reinforce a separation of that authority from the current mainstream to the "incoming" philosophers such as Descartes and Bayle. He uses a limited number of characters, whose context create a progression of intellectual authority away from God, culminating in someone called the Antichrist, to convey this information and maintain an authoritative, classically dominant representation of intellectual authority to reinforce the "correctness" of his ideologies.

Foigny depicts an initially religious adventure that transforms into a secular and religious critique on French philosophical development, constantly shifting in stance for supporting or subverting religion and philosophy. He limits the sources of information to two centralized characters of the protagonist and the *vieillard*, and conveys information directly and indirectly with the intrinsic nature of his characters.

Fontenelle and Cyrano de Bergerac share a number of similarities in their dissemination of information, principally, that there is a limited number of characters with information to disseminate who demonstrate authoritative behaviors, and that discourse has only one source of intellectual authority at any one time. This source always disseminates Enlightenment ideologies. Both authors also utilize a classic teaching environment, where "students" seek out the "teacher" to learn more about a number of subjects. Bergerac's protagonist has a number of students as he advances the plot. Bergerac, however, subverts his protagonist as the intellectual authority as the Enlightenment

ideas stray too far to be passed over by censorship and passes the title of teacher to the "Other" foreign characters, such as *le Démon*, the learned professors, or Hélie. In contrast, Fontenelle states the limitations of his treatise in application, and avoids speaking of censored subjects as much as possible, but never transfers the intellectual authority.

The didactic tone so clearly utilized by Fontenelle and Bergerac is subdued in Foigny's plot. His characters are intellectual standards but not authoritative standards. This is more reflective of the objective tolerance espoused by *libertins* philosophy but does not follow the trend set forth by Fontenelle and Bergerac. As Foigny's novel was published between those of Bergerac and Fontenelle, it is difficult to discern what factors might have influenced this approach if considering the *œuvre* as part of the whole SF genre.

However, all three novels can be considered promoting anti-dogmatism, as all three emphasize a breaking from "traditional," mainstream thought and a consideration of the opposing side. Respect and consideration for religious organizations and beliefs vary between authors, but the conformist attitude is markedly absent or, if present, mocked. Challenges of intellect and intellectual beliefs are frequent throughout each *intrigues*, and provide advancement of the story as well as character development. Therefore, it would be my recommendation that these novels be studied not only in the light of not *libertins*, free thinking philosophy, but also especially within the world of the *libertinage érudit*, a focused sub-classification that stresses the academic application of free thinking.

The integration of these values into the *intrigues*, along with select philosophies of Descartes, Bayle and La Mothe le Vayer, show that the SF genre of the seventeenth-century was a critical tool in disseminating enlightened ideologies. More novels must be considered to clearly determine the trend of didactic application and authoritarian *libertins* characterization, however classifying certain

novels as SF within this time period is the greatest obstacle to expanding the study. Gabriel Daniel's *Voyage de la moon des Descartes* (1690) is an excellent candidate, along with Simon Tyssot de Patot's *Voyage et Aventures de Jacques Massé* (1710) and *La Vie, Les Aventures et Le Voyage de Groenland du Révérend Père Cordelier Pierre de Mésange* (1720).

To analyze the eighteenth century, several viewpoints are necessary. The historical context paints a picture of political and economic turmoil; the social context shows the evolving relationships and interconnectedness of the *philosophes*; the intellectual context emphasizes a critique of the former two issues. Nicolas Rétif de la Bretonne and Jean-Sebastien Mercier take two stances on the everyday drudgery and the rapidly evolving philosophical discourse that defined it.

Mercier shows himself to be a firm believer in Rousseau's ideology. His work emphasizes the natural isolation necessary for original philosophical thought, and creates vingenette chapters to disseminate his poignant critique on the ineffectiveness of the l'Ancien Régime (Hamel 9; Chisick 651) The intellectual authority, and authority in general, lies not with the protagonist but with the author, who interjects words of wisdom and footnotes that break the *intrigue* and thrust the reader to take their knowledge to eighteenth century France. This authoritative action reinforces the didactic nature of his "teachings" and philosophical dissemination.

Rétif de la Bretonne, in contrast, chooses the counter-political style to Rousseau, that of Voltaire's. His benevolent, absolute dictator of Victorin kidnaps those he believes he can help most, removing them from the real French society below and transporting them atop his mountain utopia. The intellectual authority lies again with Victorin, who displays reverse psychology in controlling the female embodiment of eighteenth century French values Christine, and therefore dominating the intellectual space of that time.

In comparing the two eighteenth century novels, it is apparent there is a great variation between literary styles and dominant philosophies. Firstly, *L'an 2440* does not contain an authoritarian protagonist. Most authoritative disseminations are achieved through Mercier's interjecting footnotes, with some appearing in the actual plotline. In contrast, Rétif centralizes all of the physical and intellectual freedom into his protagonist, Victorin. There is an absolute nature to the ideologies presented in the novels that is continuous. Rétif's protagonist is never questioned on stance or beliefs, and neither is the guide for 2440 Paris. Their beliefs simply are, and have reasons to exist as such. Sometimes these reasons are explained, other times they are not. This absolute confidence contains an authority and certainty that is clearly conveyed to the reader. However, the novel's organization (vignette chapters versus continuous plot), tone (optimistic and categorical versus whimsical and indifferent), and protagonist (passive versus authoritative) are too different in style to conclusively determine an overall trend in literature.

A table has been compiled as to the similarities of various seventeenth and eighteenth century novels and their similarities.

Table 1. Noticeable similarities between the seventeenth century and eighteenth century novels

Theme/aspect	Seventeenth century novel(s)	Eighteenth century novel(s)
Authoritative protagonist	L'autre monde Entretiens sur la pluaralité des mondes	La découverte australe
Passive protagonist	La terre australe connue	L'an 2440
Chapters separated into stand-alone sections	La terre australe connue	L'an 2440
Authoritative representation of ideology	L'autre monde La terre australe connue Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes	L'an 2440 La découverte australe
Direct mention by name of current French philosophers	L'autre monde	L'an 2440 La découverte australe

Direct mention by name of Greek philosophers	L'autre monde La terre australe connue Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes	L'an 2440 La découverte australe
Critiques religion/Christinaity	L'autre monde La terre australe connue	L'an 2440 La découverte australe
Burlesque influences	L'autre monde	La découverte australe
Didactic tone	L'autre monde Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes	L'an 2440 La découverte australe
Exploration and discovery of far-off lands	L'autre monde La terre australe connue	La découverte australe
Abstract exploration of known French locations	Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes	L'an 2440

*Note: The titles are abbreviated except for Fonetenelle's *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes*

Between the seventeenth and eighteenth century, there is a smaller deviation in literary style in seventeenth century than in the eighteenth, but overall trends exist in authoritative depictions of ideology and critiquing of mainstream ideas. One of the most intriguing aspects is the name-dropping of actual philosophers that introduces the novels. All of the authors employ this literary device to, in essence, break down the fourth wall and connect the philosophical sub-text, hidden within the SF intrigue, to reality.

In comparison to the the Bergerac and Fontenelle, though, who just relate names or speak with characters who knew these *grands personnages*, Rétif integrates his characters into the lives of these grand men (Rétif 38-39). The descriptions are therefore, no longer about history, but rewriting it. This distinct aspect separates Rétif's novel apart from the others in terms of connecting ideology of the novel to the real world, and the absolute certainty of the validity of Rétif's opinion. Rétif rewrites history in his novels not to demonstrate a potential outcome, but to strengthen the intellectual authority of his protagonist and storyteller. These are not simply men discussing a story; these are intellectual, philosophically versed men connected to the standards of French philosophical

thought. Mercier skips entirely over connecting ideology to another person and simply stats his own

opinions, integrating his own authority into the intellectual collective of eighteenth century

philosophers, much in the way Diderot and d'Alembert did with their *Encyclopédie*.

The most notable difference in ideological dissemination is that the seventeenth century

focused on intellectual discourse to frame the philosophies, while eighteenth century novelists

emphasized actions and descriptions rather than words for demonstrating their select Enlightenment

ideals. Fontenelle, Bergerac, and Foigny talk about the philosophies, whether in discourse,

monologue, overtly or subtly, integrating the theories behind smoke and mirrors to avoid

censorship. Their prose is verbose and at times repetitive. Mercier and Rétif, in comparison, are

unabashedly overt and direct. There is no subversion or diversion in their *intrigues* in regards to their

philosophical dissemination. Mercier presents an idealized future to contrast the multitude of ways

eighteenth century France fails, and Rétif removes his entire utopia from the world to isolate and

cultivate his own ideals.

It is interesting to note that a dictionary defined the philosophical direction in both

centuries; in the seventeenth century, *le Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* by Bayle, in the eighteenth

century, the massive *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonée des sciences, des arts et des métiers* by Diderot and

d'Alembert. The development of *l'Encyclopedie* was directly influenced by *le Dictionnaire* (Blom 44),

and along with the publication of *la Correspondance de Mersenne* – Mersenne was a theologian and

mathematician called the "center of the world during the first half of the 1600's," (Bernstein 59).

The latter text allowed a precise reconstruction of the best scientific theories with a focus on the

metaphysical influences of Gassendi and Mersenne in *l'Encyclopedie* (Mandrou 203), so reviled in the

eighteenth century but critical to later philosophical thought.

Overall, the textual analysis of these five proto-SF novels of the seventeenth and eighteenth century support the hypothesis. The authoritative and didactic philosophical dissemination methods are clearly conserved from the seventeenth to eighteenth century. Bergerac, Foigny, Fontenelle, Mercier, and Rétif integrate authoritative representations of their respective philosophical ideologies, introduce intellectually authoritative characters to discuss these philosophies, and place these characters in didactic situations. The seventeenth century exhibits a markedly verbose style most likely resulting from the attempt to hide inflammatory ideologies from censoring bodies, logical reasoning, and lengthy discourse to objective determine the pros and cons of each representation – with Bergerac as an acerbic exception. The eighteenth century displays a concise style born of avoiding altogether these censoring bodies, and a tone laced with hopefulness to solve the dispairing issues of their time. Conclusively determining this conservation of dissemination method will require expanding the list of novels analyzed. This thesis has shown that a greater understanding of proto-SF and its relationship to French philosophical thought is a novel field to explore. As philosophy and science continue to evolve, intertwine, and contend with each other, understanding its origins in French proto-SF can also contribute to understanding the modern rational thought of the French people.

APPENDIX

Appendix

Table 2. Select Seventeenth and Eighteenth century philosophies, originator, meaning, and associated text

Name	Originator	Meaning	Document
Toleration theory	Pierre Bayle	All religions – paganistic or Christian – should be tolerated due to their right and duty to act as supported by faith, whether correct or not.	*Commentaire philosophique*
Skepticism on understanding knowledge theory	Pierre Bayle	True knowledge can never be completely obtained.	*Le Dictionnaire critique et historique*
Proper argumentative reasoning	Pierre Bayle	To fully understand a dilemma, both sides of the argument must be explored and fully supported.	*Commentaire philosophique*
Cartesian reasoning	René Descartes	Logical reasoning based on four principles: a) Never accept anything as true, except things that cannot be doubted b) divide each problem into parts, c) deducing one conclusion from another and d) conducting a systematic synthesis.	*Discours de la méthode*
Reason vs. passion	René Descartes	Reason and the ability to reason is more powerful than passion, which creates folly.	*Les passions de l'âme*
Cartesian dualism	René Descartes	Material mind and nonmaterial spirit are influenced by each other; mind and body are separate.	*Discours de la méthode*
Opinion influence theory	François de la Mothe le Vayer	Someone possessing an *esprit fort* – "strong mind" - that sustains praise from supporters without giving into the temptation to internalize the opinion that he philosophizes and therefore his life is "unconstrained from external opinion."	*Dialogues à fait l'imitation de l'ancien*
Passionate ideology	Denis Diderot	"Only the passions, the greatest passions, can lift the soul to do great things" (Blom 22).	*Pensée philosophique, Vol 1. Philosophie*
"Essential truths"	Denis Diderot	Truths derived from empirical observation and logical deduction, not religious truths. Obtained through sensual or visual imagery.	*De la suffisance de la religion naturelle*

Unnaturalness of inequality	Jean-Jacques Rousseau	The inequality of man as defined by socio-economic qualities and bloodlines, known as moral inequalities, is unnatural, because it does not exist in nature.	*Discours de l'inégalité*
Classical republicanism or Civic humanism	Jean-Jacques Rousseau	There is no single ruler, the people govern themselves by giving up their rights to the people and they govern themselves according to the "common good."	*Du contrat social ou Principes du droit politique*
Benevolent absolutism or Enlightened monarchy	Voltaire	One absolute ruler with counsel of advisors without having to face debate or political opposition, held power through social contract. The absence of a noble peerage means ruler concentrates on general population only. Believed only philosophers could rule properly.	*Dictionnaire philosophique*

Table 4. List of *œuvres* and philosophical documents relevant to thesis from 1600 to 1800

Œuvre	Author	Date of publication
Dialogues faits à l'imitation des anciens	La Mothe le Vayer	1630
Discours de la méthode	Descartes	1637
Principia philosophiae	Descartes	1644
De Vita, moribus et doctrina Epicuri libri octo	Gassendi	1647
Les Histoires Comiques: Lune	Cyrano de Bergerac	1657
Les Histoires Comiques: Soleil	Cyrano de Bergerac	1662
La terre australe connue	Gabriel de Foigny	1676
Pensées diverses sur la comète de 1680	Pierre Bayle	1683
De motu corporum in gyrum	Isaac Newton	1684
Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes	Fontenelle	1686
Les commentaires philosophiques (4 volumes)	Pierre Bayle	1686-1688
Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica	Isaac Newton	1687
Dictionnaire Historique et Critique	Pierre Bayle	1709
Les pensées philosophiques	Denis Diderot	1746
Promenade du sceptique	Denis Diderot	1747
Discours sur les sciences et les arts	Jean Jacques Rousseau	1750
Encyclopédie	Denis Diderot, d'Alembert	1751-1772
Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations	Voltaire	1756
Du contract social ou Principes du droit politique	Jean Jacques Rousseau	1762
Traité sur la tolerance	Voltaire	1763
L'an 2440 rêve s'il en fut jamais	Louis-Sébastien Mercier	1771
La découverte australe par un homme volante	Nicholas Rétif de la Bretonne	1781

Yellow denotes philosophical texts and blue denotes *œuvres*.

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