

American Hollow Earth Narratives From the 1820s to 1920

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Michelle Kathryn Yost

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Abstract

With the disappearance of *terra incognita* from nineteenth century maps, new lands of imagination emerged in literature, supplanting the blank spaces on the globe with blank spaces inside the globe, the *terra cava*. Beginning with Symmes's Theory of Concentric Spheres from 1818, dozens of American authors wrote fictions set in a hollow or semi-hollow earth. This setting provided a space for authors to experiment with contemporary issues of imperialism, science, faith, and socio-political reforms.

The purpose of this thesis is one of literary archaeology, examining the American hollow earth narrative, which peaked in publication numbers between 1880 and 1920, most of which was forgotten as exploration of the Poles disproved Symmes's theory of Polar openings into a hollow, habitable world. Though there have been some general studies of hollow earth and subterranean literature, there has never been a focused study of nineteenth century American hollow earth literature and its relationship to contemporary culture.

The first chapter explores the history of John Cleves Symmes, Jr and his theory in the early nineteenth century, and the influence it had on American politics, literature, and scientific thought. In the subsequent three chapters, the *terra cava* narratives published between 1880 and 1920 are explored in three categories: the imperial, the spiritual, and the utopian. All of these elements reflect distinct American concerns during the fin de siècle about the country's expansion, the closing of the frontier, variations in Christian theology, the development of Spiritualism, the women's rights movement, and socio-economic reforms meant to improve American life. The primary texts are supported by contemporary reviews and analyses where any exist.

As part of the conclusion, an extensive examination of the post-1920 *terra cava* narrative and the legacy of Symmes is provided, establishing the modern context for examining these historical literary works.

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Declaration

This work is original and has not been submitted previously in support of any degree, qualification or course.

Michelle K. Yost

Liverpool, August 2013

Introduction

LIGHT GIVES LIGHT, TO LIGHT DISCOVER -- "AD INFINITUM.

ST. LOUIS, (Missouri Territory,)
NORTH AMERICA, April 10, A. D. 1818.

TO ALL THE WORLD!

I declare the earth is hollow and habitable within; containing a number of solid concentrick spheres, one within the other, and that it is open at the poles 12 or 16 degrees; I pledge my life in support of this truth, and am ready to explore the hollow, if the world will support and aid me in the undertaking.

Jno. Cleves Symmes.

Of Ohio, Late Captain of Infantry.

N. B. -- I have ready for the press, a Treatise on the Principles of Matter, wherein I show proofs of the above positions, account for various phenomena, and disclose Doctor Darwin's Golden Secret.

My terms are the patronage of this and the new worlds.

I dedicate to my Wife and her ten Children.

I select Doctor S. L. Mitchill, Sir H. Davy, and Baron Alex. de Humboldt, as my protectors. I ask one hundred brave companions, well equipped, to start from Siberia in the fall season, with Reindeer and slays, on the ice of the frozen sea: I engage we find a warm and rich land, stocked with thrifty vegetables and animals if not men, on reaching one degree northward of latitude 82; we will return in the succeeding spring. J. C. S.

In 1818, this short article, simply titled 'Circular Number 1', was disseminated across the United States and world by John Cleves Symmes, Jr., a former Captain in the US cavalry, a self-styled natural philosopher, and definitely *not* insane. This last element we know by virtue of the certificate included with Circular Number 1 to ensure that it would not be dismissed at the ravings of a lunatic.¹ Though the idea of a hollow earth with concentric spheres had been in place since the late seventeenth century, and influenced earlier hollow earth narratives, the Symmes theory is unique for its influence on American science, politics and literature. Even those that did not believe in the Symmes theory or use it as a literary tool were influenced by the same storytelling techniques and inner earth constructs: the energised atmosphere, the lost race, the alteration of scale, prehistoric animals, and supernatural powers.

What is meant by *terra cava*? I use this term to encompass the variety of 'hollow earth' writings that includes semi-hollow earth novels (those that employ vast caverns and

¹ Peter Fitting, *Subterranean Worlds: A Critical Anthology*. (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), p. 95.

cave systems), interior concentric spheres, and the nineteenth century concept of a hollow earth open at the Poles. The Ptolemaic vision of stratified levels of existence is turned inward, moving from the heavens to inside the earth. What was once a realm of uncertainty and dread relayed in myth and religious teachings was turned, by science and imagination, into a new habitable world.

Caves, chasms, mines, and other openings to space beneath the surface of the earth haunt human mythology in nearly every culture, and none of these ‘underworlds’ represents a pleasant realm. The gods, ghosts and ghouls which inhabit them are the stuff of nightmares, and not until the end of the seventeenth century would anyone begin to believe differently.

Dante’s circles of hell do not ring so different from the theory of concentric spheres that Edmund Halley would propose a few centuries later. (Hell would later be relocated to other planes and other planets once it became more difficult to locate the centre of damnation inside the earth.) In 1665 Athanasius Kircher published *Mundus Subterraneus*, which envisioned the inside of the earth as a series of channels for water and fire, producing the first maps of the earth beneath the surface. In 1692 Edmund Halley proposed that the Earth was constructed of a series of concentric spheres beneath the surface. His reasoning for this stemmed from his work on Newton’s *Principia*, in which Newton had calculated the density of the moon to be significantly greater than the Earth’s:

Now if the Moon be more solid than the Earth, as 9 to 5, why may we not reasonably suppose the Moon, being a small Body, and a Secondary Planet, to be solid Earth, Water and Stone and this Globe to consist of the same Materials, only four Ninths thereof to be Cavity, within and between the Internal Spheres; which I would render not improbable.²

Newton based these calculations on tidal powers of the Moon and Sun, but missed the mark fairly significantly.³ Because of this miscalculation, Halley felt the need to account for the Earth’s larger size yet smaller density, and a series of hollow, concentric spheres fit the bill.

² Conway Zirkle, “The Theory of Concentric Spheres: Edmund Halley, Cotton Mather, John Cleves Symmes.” *Isis* (Vol. 37, No. 3/4, July 1947), p. 158.

³ Nick Kollerstrom, ‘The Hollow World of Edmund Halley’, *Journal for the History of Astronomy*, Vol. 23 (August 1992), p. 185.

Into all of this Halley includes explanations for gravity, magnetism and hydrodynamics. The entire world system must be made cohesive in order to succeed as a scientific theory.

Reverend Cotton Mather was a leading figure of protestant faith in America in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, and wrote one of the first scientific texts to appear in America, *The Christian Philosopher* (1721). In this he affirmed Halley's theory and expands upon it to explain other natural phenomena, including compass variations and the atmosphere inside the earth.⁴ For Mather, nothing in this theory of world structure violated the tenets of his faith.

[W]e may reckon the external parts of our globe as a shell, the internal as a nucleus, or an inner globe included within ours... Mr. Halley allows there may be inhabitants of the lower story, and many ways of producing light for them. The medium itself may be always luminous ; or the concave arch may shine with such a substance as does invest the surface of the sun ; or they may have peculiar luminaries, whereof we can have no idea. The diameter of the earth being about eight thousand English miles, how easy it is to allow five hundred miles for the thickness of the shell! and another five hundred miles for a medium capable of a vast atmosphere, for the globe contained within it!⁵

This follows what might be called the Divine Law of Economy, that no space in creation must be wasted (meaning, inhospitable to life). This idea of economic creation is found through nineteenth century *terra cava* writings, both fiction and nonfiction; there must be more than what is on the surface, or the rest of the planet is wasted matter.

Two of the earliest *terra cava* narratives were French: *Relation d'un voyage du Pôle Arctique au Pôle Antarctique par le centre du monde* (1721), anonymously published, and *Lamékis, ou Les voyages extraordinaires d'un Egyptien dans la terre intérieure; avec la découverte de l'Isle des Sylphides* (1735) by Charles de Fieux de Mouhy; neither has ever made it into English translation. Satire, before science, became a framework for *terra cava*, from Ludwig Holberg's *The Journey of Neils Klim to the World Underground* (1742) to *Icosameron* (1788) by Giacomo Casanova. Like *Gulliver's Travels* or *Candide*, the hollow earth satire was not about the space or place in which the stories were set, but a commentary upon contemporary social, political, and religious issues. Their nineteenth century

⁴ Zirkle, 'Theory of Concentric Spheres', p. 156.

⁵ Cotton Matthew, *The Christian Philosopher; A Collection of the Best Discoveries in Nature, with Religious Improvements* [1721] (Charlestown: Middlesex Bookstore, 1815), pp. 118-9.

descendants would not behave so differently – but earnest, rather than satirical, delivery would become the standard.

There are several British examples of pre-nineteenth century hollow earth literature, the most well-known being Robert Patlock's *The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins, a Cornish Man* (1751). Patlock was an attorney as well as a novelist, accused by the *Monthly Review* of being 'the illegitimate offspring of no very natural conjunction, like *Gulliver's Travels* and *Robinson Crusoe*, but much inferior'.⁶ Less is known about the anonymously published 1755 novel (though the close proximity of publication dates indicates a general public interest in the subject) *A Voyage to the World in the Centre of the Earth*, though part of it survives as an 1802 chapbook called *Bruce's Voyage to Naples, and Journey up Mount Vesuvius; giving an account of the strange disaster which happened on his arrival at the summer: the discovery of the central world:*

The space that I had fallen through was as deep as the crust of our world is thick, which is a little more than a hundred miles. When I got through that, I arrived in the regions peculiar to the central world, which, by its attractive quality, continued drawing me toward it, till such time as I arrived upon its surface.⁷

This description follows the idea of Halley's concentric spheres; the narrator does not land on the reverse of the earth's crust, but a second sphere inside the earth. But the science of this world structure is never discussed, being beside the point; these novels are not about scientific exploration, but exploration of human society, both external and internal.

Beginning in 1820 and continuing for a hundred years, dozens of *terra cava* narratives on the Symmes model were published, the vast majority in the United States between 1880 and 1920. This project is one of literary archaeology, uncovering a popular subgenre of writing in the United States that has been largely forgotten. Scientific hypotheses of the hollow earth reached the halls of Congress, filled the popular press with debate, created a marketable subgenre of literature, and even launched a scientific expedition. With the disappearance of *terra incognita* from maps at the end of the nineteenth

⁶ A.H. Bullen, 'Preface', *The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins, A Cornish Man* (Boston: T. Bedlington, 1842), p. 3.

⁷ Anon., *Bruce's Voyage to Naples, and Journey up Mouth Vesuvius* (London: S. Fisher, 1802), p. 9.

century, new spaces for literary exploration – imaginative spaces once occupied by darkest Africa, the Amazon, and uncharted islands – needed to be convincingly drafted, and Symmes’s theory of a hollow, habitable earth provided the blank slate on which authors could experiment with various theories of social, political and evolutionary consequence.

Different scholars have differing ideas about the meaning of the underground in literature. The historian Rosalind Williams proposes that ‘narratives about underground worlds have provided a prophetic view into our environmental future. Subterranean surroundings, whether real or imaginary, furnish a model of an artificial environment from which nature has been effectively banished.’⁸ Few individuals have attempted to analyse the hollow earth, and many of the works are either incredibly broad or non-academic: Walter Kafton-Minkel did one of the first surveys in 1989 with *Subterranean Worlds: 100,000 Years of Dragons, Dwarfs, the Dead, Lost Races & UFOs from Inside the Earth*; Everett F. Bleiler’s science fiction catalogue, *Science Fiction: The Early Years* (1990), provides a more extensive summary of the known *terra cava* fictions and includes a few words about his thoughts on the story; Peter Fitting published an anthology with excerpts from several works, *Subterranean Worlds: A Critical Anthology* (2004); and David Standish wrote the decidedly non-academic survey, *Hollow Earth: The Long and Curious History of Imagining Strange Lands, Fantastic Creatures, Advanced Civilizations, and Marvelous Machines Below the Earth’s Surface* in 2006, only briefly summarising a few of the many *terra cava* narratives from the fin de siècle. *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (2011) in its latest edition (available only online) also provides some information about hollow earth novels, but not extensive analysis, and some entries are incomplete or erroneous; such as ‘Orcutt, Emma Louise’, which identifies the inhabitants as all living underground in ‘Suspended Animation’; the underground portions of the world are petrified remains of the dead, and the surface population very much alive.⁹ The entry for ‘Moore, M. Louise’ identifies the land

⁸ Rosalind Williams, *Notes on the Underground: An Essay on Technology, Society, and the Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), p. 4.

⁹ John Clute, ‘Orcutt, Emma Louise’, *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* <http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/orcutt_emma_louise> Accessed 10/11/2014.

visited in *Al-Modad* as Al-Modad, which is actually the name of the protagonist.¹⁰ In 2012 an edited collection of essays about the hollow earth, *Between Science and Fiction: The Hollow Earth as Concept and Conceit*, was published in Berlin, but this focuses almost entirely on European *terra cava* narratives. No one has conducted a thorough examination of the dozens of hollow earth writings published in the United States in the nineteenth century and what they reveal about American culture, religion, and politics at that time. Consider the following, from a newspaper ninety years after Symmes's announcement, from a society formed to prove the earth is hollow:

‘It is time for action – not a time for mere talking. But the earth is hollow and our investigations will soon prove it. The poles so long sought are but phantoms. There are openings at the northern and southern extremities. In the interior of the earth are vast continents, oceans, mountains and rivers. Vegetables and animal life is evident in this new world, and it is possibly peopled by races yet unknown to the dwellers upon the earth's exterior.’¹¹

Though there are no scientific papers supporting Symmes's theory, this newspaper article is an example of popular science in the United States influencing public thought and cultural products. Support for Symmes's model of the earth isn't to be found in searches of scientific journals, but in newspapers, independently published tracts by non-scientists, and fictional narratives.

A significant portion of my argument is to highlight the hollow earth science, and political and social theories that went into crafting these narratives. *Symzonia*, *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*, *The Goddess of Atvatabar* and more, when they appear in an academic analysis, are often referred to in terms that remove the story from realist connotations and examine them in satiric terms. While many of them employ some form of social commentary or political view meant to reflect back on the reader, that does not automatically make them parodies. Parodies tend to emerge later in a genre's existence, after its tropes have been established. The pre-nineteenth century *terra cava* narratives were immersed in social satire, and this is where so many literary theorists misstep in their

¹⁰ John Clute, ‘Moore, M Louise’, *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* <http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/moore_m_louise> Accessed 10/11/2014.

¹¹ Anon., ‘Going to Look for a Big Hole at the Top of the World’, *Marion Daily Mirror*, Vol. XVI, No. 229 (25 April 1908), p. 9.

assessment of nineteenth century *terra cava*; just because the most well-known hollow earth books before this period were written in the vein of Swift and Voltaire does not mean that those which came later were intended to be interpreted in the same way; American authors tended to take a different narrative approach. Because the idea of a hollow or porous world being inhabited appears to be a ridiculous premise in the twenty-first century, it is easier to paint these novels with the wide brush of parody rather than to enter into the mind-set of contemporary writers and readers who viewed portions of the world as still unknown, and holding the possibility of rich surprises.

Many of these texts are almost completely unknown, residing in distant archives, too delicate even to scan; others have found a second life in the modern royalty-free press, where books no longer in copyright are photocopied into bound editions; some are missing altogether, and their titles only recorded in lists and archives.

This study is intended to be the most comprehensive ever assembled of hollow earth literature in the nineteenth century and early twentieth, including several rare texts that have never before been analysed. After examining the history of the idea and early *terra cava* works, the focus narrows specifically to narratives published between 1880 and 1920, which I view as the apogee of this genre, before polar exploration and scientific information closed the proverbial book on hollow earth theory. Broken up thematically, the texts are also examined chronologically to trace the influence of earlier works on those that come later. The timing of the emergence of the American *terra cava* novel falls into the timeline Roger Luckhurst explores in his study of science fiction's conditions of emergence in 1880.¹² The civilisations located in the centre of the earth are often crafted as technologically advanced, coincident with Luckhurst's idea that in 'the 1880s, urban life was *itself* a machine ensemble, with everyday communication, public spaces and popular culture increasing routed through machines.'¹³ The few *terra cava* civilisations that are populated by non-technological peoples are portrayed as benefitting from the technological contributions of

¹² Roger Luckhurst, *Science Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), p. 13.

¹³ Luckhurst, *Science Fiction*, p. 29.

the American male who arrives. The technological benefits are mediated by pastoral utopianism, addressing the American belief in the potential of technology with the problems of industrialisation and urbanisation. Without unexplored spaces left on the continental United States, the possibilities of a hollow, habitable world allowed writers of fiction and nonfiction to exercise their theories in an unknown space.

Chapter one examines the early nineteenth century history of *terra cava* in the United States. From John Cleves Symmes's Circular No. 1 forward, there is over one hundred years of literary exploration in the hollow earth leading up to the popularisation of the genre at the end of the nineteenth century. The 1820s saw an extensive discussion about Symmes's theory carried out in newspapers, pamphlets, lecture halls and the corridors of Congress. The first American narrative to combine Symmes's geography with fiction is Adam Seaborn's *Symzonia* (1820), which inspired dozens of narratives to follow.

Chapter two examines the literary conquest of *terra cava*. New land, new wealth, new trade opportunities, the hollow earth provided American writers with a new frontier in the wake of America's closing chapter of Manifest Destiny and opening salvos into global imperialism (i.e. Cuba, the Philippines, etc.). Where Symmes's theory and the U.S. Exploring Expedition had to contend with the national policy of the Monroe Doctrine, the later decades of the nineteenth century saw this doctrine set aside in favour of global expansion for the health and wealth of American markets. The various gold rushes of the century also inspired further movement in the quest for new veins of mineral resources.

In chapter three I will look at the rise of new scientific theories in the nineteenth century, tumultuous change in religious beliefs, and new ideas with the influx of evolution, electricity, and the scientific method. Multiple religious revivals meant a variety of Christian sects, including Mormonism and Christian Science. Spiritualism – while having no definitive dogma – was practiced as an amalgam of Eastern and Western religious beliefs and scientific practices. Subterranean settings allowed for the creation of lost races with more advanced mental and spiritual powers, as well as crafting environments that reinforced those powers.

In chapter four I will examine the conjunction of utopian movements and various advancements for social reform (including prohibition, vegetarianism, and universal suffrage) the hollow earth provided a verisimilic chronotope in which authors could probe their socio-political hypotheses. These utopias often embraced aspects of the colonial and spiritual, exploring (and exploiting) wealth and faith and science to build a perfect realm often modelled on American ideals. Jean Pfaelzer's study of nineteenth century American utopias notes that 'utopian fiction is a mimetic mode that reproduces familiar experiences, extrapolating them from current and past realities.'¹⁴ The hollow earth provides a setting for utopia that is geographically fictional, but closer in distance – under our feet – than in politics, democratic republics with socialist economics, utopic dreams aspired to by the Progressive political movement in America at the end of the century. There are certainly a few British examples of the semi-porous *terra cava* in this period, such as C.J. Hyne's *Beneath Your Very Boots* (1889), E.D. Fawcett's *Swallowed by an Earthquake* (1894) and *Land of Nison* (1906) by C. Regnus [aka Charles Sanger].

Integrated within the discussion of these fictional texts are several contemporary non-fiction works on hollow earth theory related to scientific theories on volcanoes, earthquakes, geology, and even human origins, which built strong ties to the various *terra cava* hypotheses. Evolution, the biblical flood, migration and separate creations all emerge in the narratives which much account for a 'lost' race in the *terra cava*. Science, and the disappearance of unknown lands on the surface, makes it insufficient to merely accept the existence of a heretofore unknown race of hominids without attempting to explain their presence.

A Note on Sources

It should be noted that despite efforts that included visits to the Library of Congress, the Eaton Collection at the University of California Riverside, and the Charvat Collection at the Ohio State University, some titles listed as hollow earth novels could not be uncovered, or

¹⁴ Jean Pfaelzer, *The Utopian Novel in America, 1886-1896: The Politics of Form* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984), p. 15.

were geographically or financially beyond reach. William F. Bleiler's *Science Fiction* and David Standish's *Hollow Earth* both provided extensive lists of hollow earth literature, but beyond acknowledging their historical existence, tracking down copies of some of the works proved impossible; even when listed in archive records they could not be found by staff. *The land of Nison* was missing from both the Riverside collection and Library of Congress. As such, some works can only be discussed in brief based upon secondary sources. To this end an appendix has been added, listing these missing sources, and discussing works missing from the main discussion because they do not actually fit into the *terra cava* genre, but have been erroneously listed as such in other sources.

Chapter One – Symmes, Poe, and the Early *Terra Cava*

In the beginning there was John Cleves Symmes, Jr. (1780-1829) and his ‘Circular Number 1’. And then there was Jeremiah Reynolds, James McBride, Alexander Mitchell, and Edgar Allan Poe. These were the names that came to dominate the discussion and dissemination of hollow earth theory in the 1820s and 1830s. Their research and writings would shape the work that was to come in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century. They were amateur natural philosophers all, pioneers of a new American theory, excited by the implications of a hollow earth: a new frontier to explore, with new wealth opportunities. They were determined to convert the world via pamphlets, newsprint, lectures, non-fiction and novels. Following all of these didactic paths, Symmes and his fellows started a conversation in America that would last for a century, giving rise to some of the first science fiction and utopian texts produced in the US. Here it is necessary to lay the foundations of the Symmes’s theory, and in subsequent chapters the lasting effects of these works will be explored.

I – John Cleves Symmes, Jr.

LIGHT GIVES LIGHT TO DISCOVER -- AD INFINITUM.
ST. LOUIS, (Missouri Territory,)
NORTH AMERICA, April 10, A. D. 1818.

TO ALL THE WORLD!

I declare the earth is hollow and habitable within; containing a number of solid concentric spheres, one within the other, and that it is open at the poles 12 or 16 degrees; I pledge my life in support of this truth, and am ready to explore the hollow, if the world will support and aid me in the undertaking.

Jno. Cleves Symmes.

Of Ohio, Late Captain of Infantry.

N. B. -- I have ready for the press, a Treatise on the Principles of Matter, wherein I show proofs of the above positions, account for various phenomena, and disclose Dr. Darwin's “Golden Secret.”

My terms are the patronage of *this* and the *new worlds*. I dedicate to my Wife and her ten Children. I select Doctor S. L. Mitchill, Sir H. Davy, and Baron Alexander Von Humboldt as my protectors.¹⁵

¹⁵ Dr. Samuel L. Mitchill was a well-know American scientist; Sir Humphrey Davy was a British chemist and geologist, and Baron Alexander Von Humboldt was a Prussian geographer and explorer.

I ask one hundred brave companions, well equipped, to start from Siberia in the fall season, with Reindeer and slays, on the ice of the frozen sea: I engage we find a warm and rich land, stocked with thrifty vegetables and animals if not men, on reaching one degree northward of latitude 82; we will return in the succeeding spring. J. C. S.¹⁶

There are several rhetorical pieces to digest in this. Firstly, Symmes does not say that he hypothesises, or believes, but he ‘declares’, eliminating the possibility for doubt. Secondly, he pledges no funds (he has none) but only his life to proving the correctness of his ‘truth’; he does not call it a theory, but truth. Even though he was no longer a soldier, Symmes still signed this ‘Late Captain of Infantry’ to establish his military credentials, and presumably, valour, as qualities for leading an expedition. If this ‘Treatise on the Principles of Matter’ that is supposed to provide his evidence ever did indeed exist, then no record of it has survived. Those famous men he called upon as his ‘protectors’ had certainly never met – or even heard of – the ex-US army officer working at the frontier trading post of St. Louis. Without actually providing evidence, Symmes asserts that ‘rich land’ well supplied with consumables will be discovered, tempting others to support him with the promise of reward.

In 1818, 500 copies of this small article, simply titled ‘Circular No. 1’, were disseminated across the United States (to scientists, academics, and politicians most notably) and to certain figures in Europe.¹⁷ Symmes even included a certification of his sanity to ensure that it would not be dismissed at the ravings of a lunatic.¹⁸ Drawing from many of the seventeenth and eighteenth century sources cited in the Introduction, Symmes set out to craft a uniquely American scientific theory.

I.i – The (Semi)-Scientific Life of Symmes

John Cleves Symmes, Jr. (named for his uncle, a prominent politician and lawyer, who arranged for the Miami land purchase in south-western Ohio in 1787, a region that still bears

¹⁶ David Standish, *Hollow Earth: The Long and Curious History of Imagining Strange Lands, Fantastical Creatures, Advanced Civilizations, and Marvelous Machines Below the Earth’s Surface* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2006), pp. 41-2. Standish took this from James McBride’s *Pioneer Biography: Sketches of the Lives of Some of the Early Settled of Butler County, Ohio* (1859-61).

¹⁷ Duane A Griffin, “Hollow and Habitable Within: Symmes’s Theory of Earth’s Internal Structure and Polar Geography”, *Physical Geography*, 2005, 25, 5, pp. 382-3

¹⁸ Griffin, “Hollow and Habitable Within”, p.383

traces of the Symmes family name) was born in Sussex County, New Jersey in 1780. In a note that Symmes left in the margins of a copy of McBride's work on the Symmes Theory of Concentric Spheres, he states that at age eleven he received a copy of James Cook's memoirs about his voyages, and that his father, 'though himself a lover of learning, reproved me for spending so much of my time from work, and said I was a book-worm.'¹⁹ Here we have what must have been one of the first sources of inspiration for Symmes's theory. In the same note he states that at 'about the same age I used to harangue my playmates in the street, and describe how the earth turned round; but then as now, however correct my positions, I got few advocates.' Of course it is possible that Symmes (writing this after 1826) could be letting his own present disappointments colour his views of his own past. As for his education (the substance of what his qualifications were to make such a pronouncement), there is a brief explanation in the biographical notes on him at the end of McBride's

Symmes's Theory of Concentric Spheres:

During the early part of his life, he received, what was then considered, a common English education, which in after life he improved by having access to tolerably well selected libraries; and being endowed, by nature, with an insatiable desire for knowledge of all kinds, he thus had, during the greater part of his life, ample opportunities to indulge it.²⁰

Symmes, like many other amateur natural philosophers of his day, was a self-educated man; Nathiel Philbrick attested that 'what...Symmes lacked in intellectual credentials, he more than made up for in audacity and pluck.'²¹ His theory was not developed by the observation of natural phenomena, though, but by reading the observations of others and extrapolating a hypothesis that would synthesise a variety of inexplicable occurrences in nature, such as the Aurora Borealis, fluctuations in compass readings,²² the migration of animals²³ and the perception of warm winds coming from the Poles noted by some sailors. It is difficult, from

¹⁹ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 42.

²⁰ James McBride, *Symmes's Theory of Concentric Spheres: Demonstrating that the Earth is Hollow, Habitable Within, and Widely Open About the Poles* (Cincinnati: Morgan, Lodge and Fisher, 1826), p. 158.

²¹ Nathaniel Philbrick, *Sea of Glory: America's Voyage of Discovery, The U.S. Exploring Expedition, 1838-1842* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 18.

²² McBride, *Symmes Theory of Concentric Spheres*, p. 33.

²³ McBride, *Symmes Theory of Concentric Spheres*, p. 68.

a modern perspective, to appreciate what Symmes was attempting to do: the theory was wrong, but the scientific philosophy Symmes used was not without merit. Inductive reasoning was burgeoning scientific practice championed by William Whewell in *Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences* (1840): ‘Induction consisted in gathering evidence, generalizing it, and then making an explanatory leap to postulate a general conclusion.’²⁴ This is the opposite method utilized by the likes of Sir Edmund Halley, who employed deductive reasoning and mathematics to introduce his theory of concentric spheres over a century before.

Joining the US Army in 1802, Symmes rose to the rank of Captain, and served along the Canadian frontier during the War of 1812. Leaving the military in 1816, he went to work at a trading post in St. Louis with his growing family, where he began to put his theories to paper for presentation to the rest of the world. The exploration of the earth’s Polar Regions was also well underway by the time Symmes took up his pen. Among the most successful were Captain James Cook’s Antarctic voyages of 1768-1771, and 1772-1775, which were widely publicized (and surely familiar to Symmes, as these are subsequently referenced in *Symzonia*). Cook’s voyage put an end to the speculation of a warm continent, *Terra Australis Incognita*, but apparently did not rest the case entirely for Symmes. While Symmes was likely familiar with and influenced by the works of Halley, Mather, Cook, etc., it is impossible to say if he was familiar with any of the more literary productions of a hollow earth nature.

In citing the three ‘protectors’ that he did, it is reasonable to assume that Symmes was familiar with their work, and had reason to believe that their research interests would coincide with his; unfortunately, two of the three did not see the world through Symmes’s eyes. Baron Alexander von Humboldt was a Prussian-born geographer, naturalist and explorer. Between 1799 and 1804 he travelled throughout Latin America, and Griffin believes that Symmes read this work and ‘sought to emulate his approach to geographical

²⁴ Charlotte Sleight, *Literature and Science* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 83.

inquiry and explanation' in his own hypothesising.²⁵ Humboldt took a unique view on science, which influence others in the nineteenth century, that there was interconnectedness between all aspects of nature and its forces, which likely influenced Symmes's approach to a unified system of explanations for natural phenomena via a hollow globe. Sir Humphrey Davy was a British chemist and inventor who influenced Symmes with his work on volcanoes and earthquakes; Davy's affiliation with a country so recently an enemy of the US did not stop Symmes from looking to him for scientific support. Both of these men dismissed Symmes outright; only Dr. Samuel Mitchill responded with support for Symmes's theory. Mitchill was a renaissance man, having trained in medicine in Edinburgh, but taken up work in nearly every field of science; he was 'America's celebrity science superstar'²⁶ according to Griffin. But it was probably as much Symmes's American citizenship as his theory that elicited Mitchill's support, as the latter was a fierce patriot who also wanted the U.S. to make its mark in global scientific achievement.

Symmes never left a large written body of work, letting friends and followers do it instead (i.e. Alexander Mitchell and James McBride). He did, however, follow up 'Circular No. 1' with 'Memoir No. II' on 17 June 1818:

With dividers describe a circle on a plate of matter of loose texture, and in the centre add a very small circle; then draw a right line through the centre. It is evident, as matter gravitates matter in proportion of quantity and distance, that either half of the inner circle, being almost equally surrounded by matter, must be very little gravitated centrewise: so being suspended extremely rare, only a rotator motion is needed to throw it compactly toward the outer circle. This admitted, it follows that, half-way from the outer to the inner side of this circle of matter so thrown out, a like rarity of gravity should prevail, and hence a disposition to separate into two concentric circles occurs. Thus far admitted, it follows that successive similar subdivisions should exist, gradually lessening in force or quality. By applying this principle to the earth, I found the necessity of hollow concentric spheres. A decision of schoolmen on these lines shall be followed by additional positions, further explaining my new principles of hollow planets and concentric spheres, declared in a circular letter of the 10th of April, 1819.

John Cleves Symmes,
Of Ohio, late Captain of Infantry²⁷

²⁵ Griffin, *Hollow and Habitable Within*, p. 388.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ This is the version which appeared in *The Times of London* on 9 September 1818.

Symmes is attempting to make the reasoning of his theory demonstrable on a small scale (in a way easily reproduced by anyone) as a metaphor for the larger world structure; it is a sort of experimental ‘proof’. This was a common – and necessary – practice for laymen and the amateur scientist to connect with new ideas. Historian William Stanton believes that there were many who supported Symmes because his ‘theory was commonsensical; it well accorded with popular presuppositions, religious as well as scientific’.²⁸ Significantly, though, for the most part these are not *scientific* men supporting Symmes, but other amateurs and enthusiasts like himself, and Stanton is not very flattering of the type of follower, nor the culture that allowed for the theory to flourish, as ‘common sense and Western boosterism, religious complacency and contempt for learning, even Symmes’ sweet nature, would have counted for little had the New Theory fallen elsewhere than on the seedbed richly manured with equalitarianism and...cultural patriotism.’

There are two cultural forces at work to promote the idea of a hollow earth among Americans, that of the need for a stand-out American scientist, and the belief that education does not make a man better than any other in mental powers: ‘The equalitarian contempt for learning, coupled with the persistent call for an American Newton who would establish the equality of Americans with other people, were already distinguishing the United States as pre-eminently the county of the queer fellow.’²⁹ This is why there are almost no novels published by authors outside of the U.S. which employ Symmes ‘s theory; it is unique to a certain American mentality that thrived in the nineteenth century. Symmes gave the United States an original scientific theory, one that was relatively simple to grasp and required little in the way of maths or laboratory experimentation to grasp. Like the proverbial pebble tossed into the pond, non-fiction and fictional explorations of Symmes started along the border of Ohio and Kentucky, and rippled out across the American continent.

²⁸ William Stanton, *The Great United States Exploring Expedition of 1838-1842* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1975), p. 9.

²⁹ Stanton, *The Great United States Exploring Expedition*, p. 11.

I.ii – Symmes on the Road

Realising the need for popular support to launch an expedition to test his theory, Symmes took the proverbial show on the road, giving public lectures all around the United States: ‘Audiences packed halls expecting high amusement from a madman. They went home wondering if Symmes might not be right after all.’³⁰ Apparently, though, even Symmes’s kindest supporters admitted that he was not a natural public speaker: ‘As a lecturer he was far from a success. The arrangement of his subject was illogical, confused, and dry, and his delivery was poor. [...] However, his earnestness and the interesting novelty of his subject secured him audiences wherever he spoke.’³¹ Even James McBride said

Captain Symmes’s want of a classical education, and philosophical attainments, perhaps, unfits him for the office of a lecturer. But, his arguments being presented in confused array, and clothes in homely phraseology, can furnish no objection to the soundness of his doctrines. The imperfection of his style, the intelligence of his manner, may be deplored; but, certainly, constitute no proof of the inadequacy of his reasoning, or the absurdity of his deductions.³²

McBride does his best to turn Symmes’s negative attributes into a compelling, down-to-earth positive. It is unlikely, however, that if Symmes had not won the support of more capable people like McBride and Reynolds his theory would have lived beyond his own lifetime. Mere scientific writing was not enough, though, and it is the hollow earth in novel form which served to spread the idea even further, especially between 1880 and 1915, long after Symmes was gone.

In 1822 Symmes sent his first petition to the U.S. Congress asking for funding to equip an expedition to the Poles in order to discover if his theory of its opening into a hollow world was correct. Though Symmes was lecturing in south-western Ohio at the time, it was a Senator from Kentucky, Richard M. Johnson, who carried the petition to Washington, without much success:

Mr. Johnson, of Kentucky, presented a petition from John Cleves Symmes, of Cincinnati, in Ohio, stating his belief of the existence of an inhabited concave to this

³⁰ Griffin, “Hollow and Habitable Within”, p. 390.

³¹ John Weld Peck, ‘Symmes Theory’, *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly* 18 (January 1909), quoted in Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 80.

³² James McBride, *Pioneer Biography: Sketches of the Lives of Some of the Early Settlers of Butler County, Ohio*, 2 vols. (Cincinnati: R. Clarke and Co., 1869-71), n.p.

globe; his desire to embark on a voyage of discovery to one or other of the polar regions; his belief in the value and honor to his country of the discoveries which he would make; that his pecuniary means are inadequate to the purpose without public aid; and suggesting to Congress the equipment of two vessels, each of 250 or 300 tons, for the expedition; and the granting such other aid as government may deem requisite to promote the object...³³

Tabled indefinitely – perhaps not least because the petition is very blunt about looking for life inside the earth – Johnson tried again, with the same result.³⁴ The next effort came in the form of a petition to the Ohio General Assembly in 1824, asking that they pass an official recognition of his theory, and then approach Congress with his proposal to outfit an expedition.³⁵ Even though Symmes was only asking for recognition and a recommendation, the vote was postponed indefinitely. Symmes's last effort was to ask to join a Russian expedition to the Arctic in 1825, but because he could not fund himself, even with official approval, Symmes could not go. It should be noted that Symmes's theory is only being brought up in regards to funding proposals; no one is debating its merits or proofs. Congress seems distinctly uninterested in discussing the science of a hollow world, possibly because they either did not care or were already of an opinion one way or another and would not be swayed by further discourse. America was a new country, rapidly expanding to the West, recently out of a second war with Britain, and its politicians were distinctly preoccupied with other issues. That left the issue of Symmes's theory to be sustained by the popular press and the general public.

Even other authors did not support Symmes. In the 1827 novel *Voyage to the Moon*, American politician George Tucker took on Symmes's theory. While taking a balloon to the moon, the protagonist begins to observe the world from above for the first time.

I returned to the telescope, and now took occasion to examine the figure of the earth near the Poles, with a view of discovering whether its form favoured Captain

³³ *Journal of the Senate of the United States of America; Being the First Session of the Seventeenth Congress* (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1821), Thursday, March 7, 1822. p. 171.

³⁴ *Journal of the Senate of the United States of America; Being the Second Session of the Seventeenth Congress* (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1822) Monday, January 27, 1823. p. 165.

³⁵ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 82.

Symmes's theory of an aperture existing there; and I am convinced that that ingenious gentleman is mistaken.³⁶

As a member of Congress, Tucker would have been present for the proposals made on Symmes's behalf. The moon is inhabited, but the inner earth is not, indicating a disconnect in American beliefs about the creation of the universe.

In an 1871 article for the *Ladies Repository* (not a place where one would expect to find information about a debunked scientific theory), B. St. J. Fry states the problems Symmes faced:

No man of his day had studied the subject more thoroughly, and his plans for penetrating the icy North were those that later explorers have adopted with advantage. But his theory has so many of the elements that are woven into childish Munchausen stories, that few men could consider it with any degree of seriousness. But the men who so readily discarded them were for a time deceived by Locke's famous "moon hoax." Which had as little common sense to recommend it, and which was less susceptible of proof. For many of Captain Symmes's surmises have been proven to be well founded, but they do not in any wise establish his theory.³⁷

Symmes's theory, as further exploration of the Poles was launched in the decades after his death, would come back into some semblance of favour, though, as will be shown, it degenerated into a theory for spiritualists and conspiracy theorists. The 'moon hoax' to which Fry refers came about in August of 1835, when the *New York Sun* newspaper published a series of six articles (falsely attributed to the astronomer Sir John Herschel) describing the inhabitants of the lunar surface. Interestingly, Poe did a similar thing two months before, in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, but was more obvious about the satire, and most did not take it to be a genuine report. Fry is right about the conundrum of a public willing to believe in an inhabited moon, but not a possibly hollow earth. Perhaps it was the assumed veracity of journalism, and in the later part of the nineteenth century, newspapers would publish many more articles in favour of Symmes's work than were ever seen in his own lifetime.

³⁶ Joseph Atterley [George Tucker], *Voyage to the Moon; with Some Account of the Manners and Customs, Science and Philosophy, of the People of Morosofie, and Other Lunarians* (New York: Elam Bliss, 1827), p. 77.

³⁷ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 84

Symmes went on a lecture tour with Jeremiah Reynolds (who will be discussed further in section III), who proposed the lecture tour in the first place, realising that Symmes need to do more, meet more people, in order to gain support. The benefit for Symmes in all of this was that Reynolds made up for his partner's inarticulate lecturing style. But Symmes was in failing health, and the pair split in Philadelphia when Reynolds insisted on delivering the lectures his way – 'downplaying the wackier parts of the theory'³⁸ – and stressing the importance of a South Polar expedition purely in the name of science, not Symmes's Holes in the Poles. Symmes continued his lecture tour into the northeast and Canada, meeting with no more success in securing a North Polar expedition than he had before Reynolds joined him.

Worn down by his decade of travelling around the nation to promote his theory and to beg the funds for a mission to the Arctic, Symmes returned to Ohio a gravely ill man and died on 29 May 1829, leaving behind a legacy that would be largely forgotten for decades until his sons decided to revive their father's theory later in the century. He left behind little else in the way of a legacy; speaking fees and donations helping to support his lecture tour had provided almost nothing for his family.³⁹ His son Americus would later go on to erect a monument with a globe, open about the Poles, over Symmes's grave.

II – *Symzonia; A Voyage of Discovery*

To briefly summarise the novel, *Symzonia* is a novel about an American sealing expedition, under the command of Captain Adam Seaborn, which ventures through an opening in the Antarctic and finds itself in an interior world. The country at which they arrive, Symzonia, is a utopia populated by relatively small, very pale individuals of extreme intelligence and technological capabilities. Over the course of getting to know the population and what makes their country so prosperous and peaceful, Seaborn comes to realise all of the deficiencies inherent in his own beloved home country.

³⁸ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 83.

³⁹ Griffin, 'Hollow and Habitable Within', p. 384.

The structure and style of the novel most closely resembles that of the travel narrative of the preceding century: written in the first person, given over to more exposition than dialogue, and concerned with relating maritime and geographic details, as well as cultural observations. *Symzonia* is a ‘voyage of discovery’, a common subtitle for contemporary travel writing.

Before delving into the novel itself, there is the question of whether Symmes was even the author of *Symzonia*, which has been debated before and is not my primary concern. James Bailey, in his forward to the 1965 reprint of the novel, made the case for Symmes, while Hans-Joachim Lang and Benjamin Lease famously put forward the case for Nathaniel Ames as author.⁴⁰ Though it cannot be completely dismissed, I am not going to argue in favour of or against Symmes as the author of *Symzonia*. Short of a long lost confession being unearthed, the identity of the author will never be confirmed. It is best to approach ‘Adam Seaborn’ as his own agent, affiliated in some way with Symmes, but possibly not the man himself. *Symzonia* became a template that many subsequent hollow earth narratives would follow later in the century.

In choosing the pseudonym ‘Captain Adam Seaborn’ to publish *Symzonia*, three very distinct impressions are being made on the reader: ‘Captain’ implies authority, and it is also the same rank which Symmes held in the army; ‘Adam’ is the proverbial first man, and fits well with the ideas R.W.B. Lewis proposed in his theory on *The American Adam* (1955), the myth of a new man with no history and an edenic land in which to thrive; and ‘Seaborn’ tells the reader that this Adam’s nativity may be traced to the sea, which is the only path to *Symzonia* and the interior world. There is an implication of the mythic in this, and the mythic will continue to have an influence on *terra cava* literature to the present.

There is a hypothesis by the Yale scholar Lewis in his study *The American Adam*, which can be read in the subtext of Seaborn’s narration, and in subsequent *terra cava* novels: that of the new man in a new Eden. Lewis was examining American literature from

⁴⁰ Hans-Joachim Lang and Benjamin Lease, ‘The Authorship of *Symzonia*: The Case for Nathaniel Ames’, *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (June 1975), pp. 241-252.

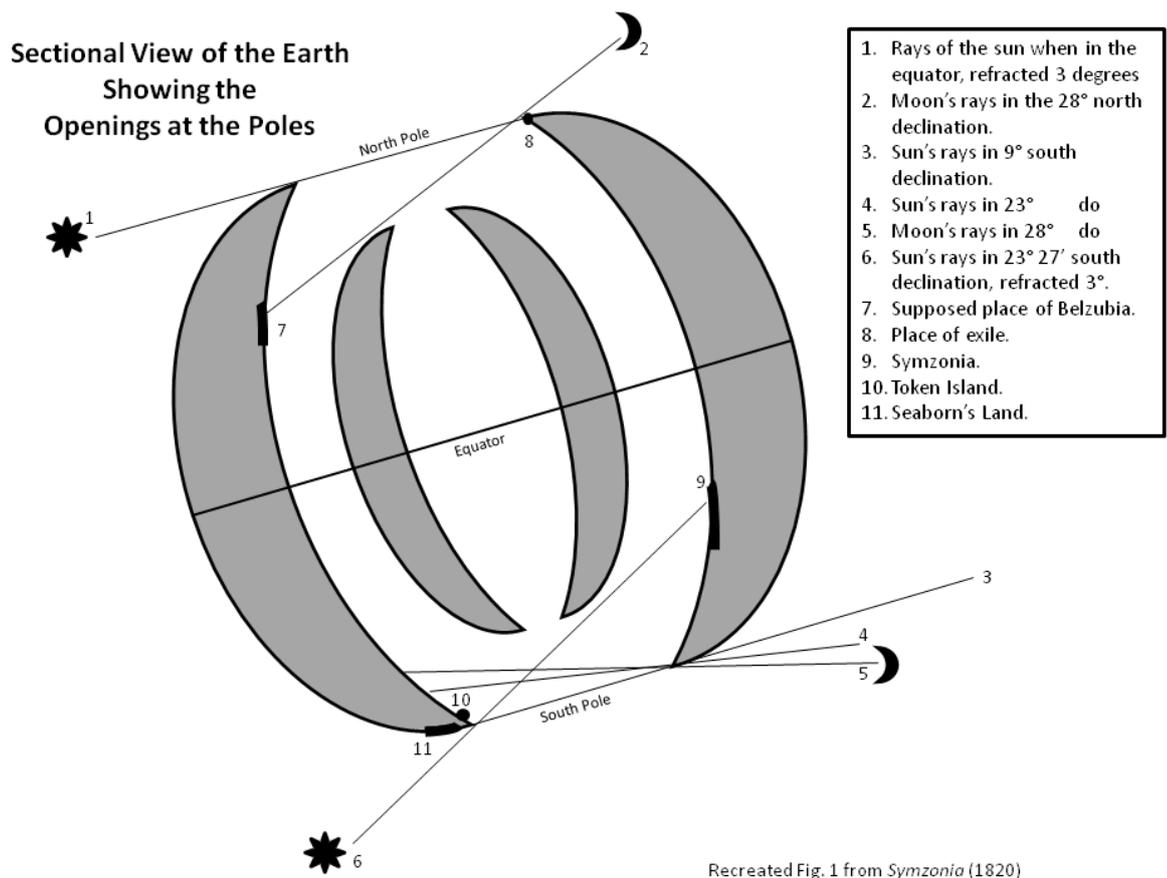
the mid-nineteenth century, but his views are still applicable to works that came both before, and after, his research period. American literature and mythology was crafted to present an ‘image contrived to embody the most fruitful contemporary ideas...that of the authentic American as a figure of heroic innocence and vast potentialities, poised at the start of a new history.’⁴¹ Almost all *terra cava* novels, starting with *Symzonia*, feature the first American man to enter the hollow earth and reveal its riches to readers.

This quest for a new Eden stems from a belief, even in Symmes’s time, that the U.S. was already losing its frontiers and would need a new country into which the growing population could spread. The official ‘closing’ of the American frontier would not come until after the 1890 census, but seven decades before, *Symzonia* was already lamenting, in Standish’s opinion, the ‘ever diminishing possibilities for great blue sky opportunity’ and championing the inner earth as ‘virgin land, ripe fruit waiting to be plucked, an unclaimed Eden, and no competition’.⁴² This ideal, though, is not often represented in literature, not even in *Symzonia*; ‘competition’ often exists in the form of native inhabitation, a native population that more often than not is more technologically advanced than the American explorers. These are *not* ‘unclaimed’ Edens, removing a sense of virginity unless it is in the context of American arrival, though there are certainly rich fruits ‘waiting to be plucked’. How these novels deal with the myth of the ‘American Adam’ will be addressed in later chapters, but there are certainly elements to analyse first in *Symzonia*.

There are two significant paratextual elements which set the scene for *Symzonia* before the novel actually begins. First is an image, Fig. 1, titled ‘Section View of the Earth Showing the Openings at the Poles’ with an accompanying key to explain to readers what they are seeing. (*Fig. 1*)

⁴¹ R.W.B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 1.

⁴² Standish, *Hollow Earth*, pp. 68-9.



This is the first image that would have acquainted the public with how Symmes viewed the world; it is a mixture of both mathematical theory, and purely imaginative geography. The second element introducing readers to the unusual narrative they are about engage with is an ‘Advertisement’ similar to the acknowledgements and addresses to the readers found in other travel writing, along with ‘some sort of justification for both travel and travel writing’.⁴³ In this instance, however, it is a fictional invocation of these literary traits:

The Author of this work, and of the discoveries which it relates, leaves it to his readers to decide whether he excels most as a navigator or a writer, and whether he amuses as much as he instructs... [I]n the achievements here recorded, he availed himself of all the lights and facilities afforded by the sublime theory of an internal world, published by CAPTAIN JOHN CLEVE SYMMES, and by the application of steam to the navigation of vessels, for which the world is indebted to FULTON... [H]e feels, after having discovered and explored a world before unknown, that he can well afford to bestow on others the praise to which they are entitled. He has one consolation, in which he is confident of the sympathy of those who wish him well; namely, that if the book is not bought and read, it will not be because it is *not* an American book. He gives notice that he had no intention to relinquish his right to

⁴³ William H. Sherman, ‘Stirrings and Searchings (1500-1720)’ in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 30.

the invention of oblique paddles for steam ships, though the circumstances narrated at the close of the volume hinder him from taking out a patent at present.⁴⁴

This is ‘exploiting the uncertain boundary between travel writing and the fiction which copied its form’,⁴⁵ a practice started in European novels before the U.S. was settled. The very first sentence is an act of authorial mitigation, admitting that the story could be one of fact, or of fiction. If the reader perceives the novel as a fiction, then hopefully they are entertained by this American novel (written at a time when, as Sleight has informed us, most books read in the U.S. were from Europe). The favours of patriotism are being invoked by the author. But the author also assures reader that he has not written to claim fortunes, or to claim credit for ‘discoveries’ that belong to Symmes and Robert Fulton, American inventor of the first steamboat (which Symmes may have seen on the Mississippi river while he was stationed out west). Fulton’s name, in 1820, was likely far more widely known than Symmes’s (not least because Symmes’s full name must be used, but not Fulton’s) and by pairing them together in this introductory statement, he is lending the same professional weight implicit in Fulton’s name and work to Symmes. There are several aspects in this paragraph that lend to readers a glimpse of the story to follow, especially that it will be one of profound discovery. Why this discovery has not been more widely publicised it hinted at in the last sentence; some ill-fortune has befallen the author.

II.i – Outside the World

Adam Seaborn, captain of the vessel he commissions to sail to the Antarctic, the *Explorer*, starts his narrative by outlining the reasons for his voyage, the supplies he lays in, and the course he follows, like so many other non-fiction travel narratives:

In the year 1817, I projected a voyage of discovery, in the hope of finding a passage to a new and untried world. I flattered myself that I should open the way to new fields for the enterprise of my fellow-citizens, supply new sources of wealth, fresh food for curiosity, and additional means of enjoyment; objects of vast importance, since the resources of the known world have been exhausted by research, its wealth monopolized, its wonders of curiosity explored, its every thing investigated and understood!

⁴⁴ Adam Seaborn [pseudo.], *Symzonia: A Voyage of Discovery* (1820, reprinted by Moonglow Books, 2009), p. 5. All further references cited in text for this edition.

⁴⁵ Peter Hulme and Tim Younds, eds., ‘Introduction’, *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 6.

The state of the civilized world, and the growing evidences of the perfectibility of the human mind, seemed to indicate the necessity of a more extended sphere of action. Discontent and uneasiness were every where apparent. The faculties of man had begun to dwindle for want of scope, and the happiness of society required new and more copious contributions (p. 12).

American explorers had only found their way to the Pacific coast with Lewis and Clark little more than a decade before, and yet Seaborn is already projecting discontent on the part of Americans for the lack of new spaces, resources, and exploration. However, it was the very fact that America had not yet been fully explored that helped Congress and President Andrew Jackson to cancel the first attempt at Pacific and South Sea (i.e. Antarctic) exploration in 1829. The concept of ‘Manifest Destiny’ – that the American flag would rule over the entirety of the continent, from the Atlantic to the Pacific – was still decades away from its full enunciation. And the Monroe Doctrine, which would press for American isolationism, would not be put into effect until 1823. But here we see Seaborn laying the foundation of an American desire to stretch the Stars and Stripes further into the world, lest the Union Jack get there first. At the time of publication, America had only been at peace with Great Britain for five years

The rhetorical effect of projecting genuine exploration to readers (and maintain the pretence of travel narrative) continues throughout the first chapter, which is replete with descriptions of the crew and supplies that Seaborn lays in for his trip, from ‘abundant stores for three years’ to ‘officers and crew from among the most skilful, temperate, and orderly mariners’, as well as the necessary scientific instruments that had become common to include on voyages; part of this scientific preparation is apparently ‘Symmes’s Memoirs, and printed Lectures’ (p. 15), though very few of these existed at the time of the novel’s publication. Symmes is referenced throughout the novel, often in the most glowing of terms, to remind the reader of the visionary whole led them (and Seaborn) to this new world within the world: ‘I concurred in the opinion published by Capt. Symmes, that seals, whales, and mackerel, come from the internal world through the openings at the poles’ (p. 20); and, ‘I had no apprehension of the air being unhealthy in the internal world, as suggested by Capt. Symmes, because the climate in which these visitors are found in the greatest number are the

healthiest of the external world, which indicates that they are accustomed to good air' (p. 23). Seaborn calls Symmes 'that profound philosopher' (p. 26) and speaks of 'his sublime theory' (p. 44) with reverence.

The navigational part of the narrative that occupies the first four chapters is no different from 'another of the many seagoing journals that had been published over the years.'⁴⁶ Setting out a trail of proverbial breadcrumbs for readers to trace on their own maps, the narrative follows from Cape Saint Roque in Brazil to the Falkland Islands. Here Seaborn pauses to describe the flora and fauna of the Jason Islands while the crew is sealing. Seaborn includes a great deal of scientific observation throughout, likely copied from the various travel narratives and natural science books he read. Seaborn does state that 'Whether I did or did not see a flying fish, catch a dolphin, or observe a black whirling cloud called a water-spout, is of very little importance to the world' (p. 16) acknowledging that very often this is the sort of information that readers of exploration narratives crave. He goes into details about Gentoo penguin colonies found to inhabit the Falkland Islands, their migratory, breeding and eating habits. These sorts of scientific observations that do not actually contribute the plot, but fulfil contemporary reader expectations of travel narratives containing facts and observations about the faraway lands.

Of the Falkland Islands themselves, he calls one of the harbours in which he parks the *Explorer* 'spacious, convenient, and secure...one of the indications that Providence formed this group of Islands for the abode of an enlightened and maritime people' (p. 18). What Seaborn is describing here is likely what is now known as Sanders Island, as the British had only settled the West Falkland Islands, and the author would have had better access to descriptions of these than the Spanish settlements in the East Falklands. It is described as being able to moor 'the whole navy of Britain' (p. 18) to impress upon readers both the size of the harbour, and the sinister threat that this is an ideal port which might be claimed by America's recent enemy. Both British and Spanish settlers had laid claim to the islands and were forced to withdraw at various points in time. Britain left behind a plaque

⁴⁶ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, pp. 70-1.

and a flag asserting their claim to the islands, a symbol that become important later in the novel. Britain would not re-establish rule of the Falklands until 1833, over a decade after *Symzonia* was published. The idyllic scene being set by Seaborn is likely Symmes's own push to see American settlement of the disputed islands: 'What a delightful situation these islands offer, for a virtuous, enlightened, and industrious community!' (p. 19) This also echoes the sermon given by John Cotton in 1630, encouraging the Puritans that they had a divine right to occupy the land in America, as they were god's chosen people, and would come to occupy all the lands of the world. This sentiment of American exceptionalism, and its own brand of 'democratic' imperialism, would grow throughout the century.

There is a strong anti-British sentiment running throughout the novel, and the British are often used as a counterpoint for American ambition. From here the narrative moves on to South Georgia Island and the Sandwich Islands (first explored by Cook in 1775) which is the limit of recorded southern space in 1820. Seaborn quotes Captain James Cook's record of having 'seen large bodies of ice in latitude 70° to 71° south', and Seaborn believes that this 'indicated the existence of land, because ice could not form in a deep salt sea uninterrupted by land' (p. 24). There was still no continent named Antarctica at this point, so in one respect, Symmes was right. Venturing further south than any previously recorded voyage, Seaborn finds resistance among his crew, which gives him an opportunity to relate to them (and thus, the reader) his various reasons for believing they will be successful sailing into these uncharted waters, which won't be very cold or icy, to his way of thinking:

- 1st. We know that the rays of the sun, uninfluenced by the atmosphere, would rest upon the pole for six successive months.
- 2nd. That the dense medium refracts, or bends the rays of the sun.
- 3rd. That the amount of that refraction depends upon the extent of the dense medium through which it passes.' (p. 25)

This is not presented as a dialogue, but as a list with didactic purpose for the benefit of the reader to understand the nuances of the theory. Now up to this point, Symmes/Seaborn is not entirely incorrect in his assertions, and like any scientist formulating a hypothesis, utilises this verifiable information to formulate the following conclusion:

4th. That at the poles, the rays of the sun coming to it in a very oblique direction, must necessarily pass through our atmosphere a great distance than on any other part of this globe, and consequently must there be refracted in a greater degree than elsewhere (pp. 25-6).

This last point is drawn out in length, giving precise angles, assumptions about refraction, and testimony from another explorer, Willem Barentsz, and his exploration of Novaya Zemlya at the end of the sixteenth century. The calculations given here finally explain part of the image given in figure one on the first page, clarifying how the solar and lunar rays of light reflect around the poles and into the earth. That the sun must shine on the poles for seven months straight would surely make them prone to over-heating rather than freezing, in Seaborn's considered opinion. Though we know now just how mistaken an assertion this is, in the early nineteenth century, a reader who would only see *terra incognita* on any map at the North and South Poles would in all likelihood be open to the possibility of tropical polar regions. The utilisation of observations from Barentsz's first voyage north in 1594 also helps to create the air of authenticity, the rhetoric of analogy which allows Seaborn to compare his own ideas and accomplishments with those of historical figures.

And if these 'facts and figures' are not enough to convince the crew, Seaborn challenges them with one more item, that of the brave American sailor outwitting the British: 'But, my lads, what Yankee sailor would hesitate to expose himself to be roasted or frozen alive to accomplish that which the British tars have endeavoured in vain to do?' This met with hearty cheers of assent by the crew who agree to sail onward (p. 26). Seaborn, though, admits that even though they are sailing toward Sandwich land, he does not believe it actually exists, 'for I have always been of the opinion, that the English placed this supposed land on their charts as an English discovery, stretching it along from the polar seas to latitude 57° south, that they might, whenever any land should be discovered in that unexplored quarter, have pretence for laying claim to it as a British discovery' (p. 26). Seaborn is not entirely wrong in this assessment of the politics of charts and maps, but the Sandwich Islands do indeed exist (however, it is what the Hawaiian Islands came to be called). Readers are constantly reminded of the ship's position because Seaborn is emulating

the tradition of the British to utilise travel narratives as an ‘instrument of empire for describing, categorizing and mapping the world which it aspired to possess’,⁴⁷ and Seaborn’s relation of his voyage must be as precise as possible. Without that precision, he runs the risk of losing claim to what he will discover; accuracy is as much a tool of science and mapping as it is the rules of empire. If America wanted to expand its influence beyond the continent, they would have to observe the same rules established in Europe.

At the point that the narrative leaves the known map, venturing into the imaginative. The transition is subtle, leaving readers to wonder when exactly it was they left the surface of the earth. On the ‘discovery’ of ‘Seaborn’s Land’ at around between 78° and 83° S (further than Cook’s recorded Antarctic penetration or his Sandwich Land) a ceremony of deeply national, imperialistic, and *legal* significance is performed:

Aware that there was a possibility that I might miscarry, and never get back to this place, I devoted a day to the performance of a necessary duty to my country, namely, taking possession of the country I had discovered, in the name and on behalf of the people of the United States of America. I first drew up a manifesto, setting forth that I, Adam Seaborn, mariner, a citizen of the United States of America, did, on the 5th day of November, Anno Domini one thousand eight hundred and seventeen, first see and discover this southern continent...which land having never before been seen by any civilized people, and having been occupied for the full term of eighteen days by citizens of the said United States, whether it should prove to be in possession of any other people or not, provided they were not Christians, was and of a right out to be the sole property of the said people of the United States, by right of discovery and occupation, according to the usages of Christian nations.

Without a globally recognised body to settle land disputes, employing ceremonial formalities that should be recognised by other European bodies (no one else’s opinion counting) is the best any explorer can do. A great deal of religious certitude is put upon this statement, in that Seaborn is claiming the land because there is no evidence of ‘civilised’ or ‘Christian’ people to be found, and that he is staking this claim in accordance to the tradition of ‘Christian’ (read European) governments. Seaborn, though naming the island for himself, does not claim it for himself, but for his country. Just like Columbus, he did not set out to form his own country, but to bring greater glory and gold to his home. This is an interesting

⁴⁷ Michael T. Bravo, ‘Precision and Curiosity in Scientific Travel: James Rennell and the Orientalist Geography of the New Imperial Age (1760-1830)’ in *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel*, eds. Jás Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), p. 166.

and generous offer, considering that the US government did not sponsor and was not aware of Seaborn's voyage, unlike the other empire-expanding voyages of exploration. He is acting without the foreknowledge and consent of his government; yet approval of his actions is assumed.

Having completed this important paper, which I composed with great care, knowing many wars had been waged for less cause than a right to so valuable a continent, I had it engraved on a plate of sheathed copper, with a spread eagle at the top, and at the bottom a bank, with 100 dollar bills tumbling out of the doors and windows, to denote the amazing quantity and solidity of the wealth of my country. [...] We marched up the shore with great pomp, the music playing and colours flying, to a convenient spot, where I buried the copper plate, and rolled upon it as large a stone as the whole ship's company could move, and ordered the blacksmith to engrave upon it, in large deep letters, "Seaborn's Land, A.D. 1817." (pp. 42-3)

This spiritually, nationally important ceremony is completed with a 'liberty pole', and Seaborn orders his cannons to fire, one for each state in the US.⁴⁸ When it is suggested that the number of shots be twenty-one, Seaborn says,

'I objected to that number, as being the royal salute of Great Britain' and flippantly instructs the crew 'to fire away till they were tired of it, and finish off with a few squibs for the half-made States. We completed the ceremony with a plenty of grog, and reiterated huzzas, as usual, and thus established the title of the United States to this newly discovered country, in the most incontestable manner, and strictly according to rule' (p. 43).

One is left to wonder where the author garnered this information about properly laying claim to foreign lands, but it is undoubtedly meant to leave the reader with a strong impression of legitimacy to the narrator's tale, and the lands he claims to have discovered. This procedure seems to echo, though, the one carried out by the British withdrawal from the Falkland Islands in 1776, when the commander of Port Egmont left a plaque on the garrison door proclaiming the British sovereignty of the Falklands and left the Union Jack flying.⁴⁹

As part of this act of laying claim to a new piece of land, exploration of it must be carried out because knowledge of a place is part of the act of laying claim to it, as if he who answers the most trivia questions is the most entitled to the property. Seaborn sends out his

⁴⁸ It is amusing to note that the Seaborn is asked how many shots that will be, a nod to the rapid expansion of the US in that the sailors are unsure of how many states were presently in the Union because they were so quickly being added.

⁴⁹ 'A Brief History of the Falkland Islands'. <http://www.falklands.info/history/history2.html>. Accessed 1/6/11.

crew to collect ‘‘geological, mineralogical, and ornithological specimens’ as well as ‘mammoth bones’, all ‘packed in boxes, as an invaluable acquisition to the scientific world’ (p. 40). Science and information are exchanged as commodities, given an equivalent material wealth. They are trying to obtain live specimens of the fauna ‘for the examination of the learned, and the benefit of Scudder’s Museum’, which was a museum in New York City that specialised in natural wonders and oddities. ‘The subjects in Natural History,’ John Morison Duncan said of it in his memoir, ‘are preserved with a degree of skill which is rarely found in similar exhibitions.’⁵⁰ Before the establishment of the Smithsonian Institute, Scudder’s (later P.T. Barnum’s) Museum was the best place in America to view scientific specimens from around the world. Seaborn’s reference to this museum, and the desire to contribute to its collections, impresses upon the reader the uniqueness of his expedition, and its value to the American public.

After the claiming of Seaborn’s Land, the appropriation of land via its surveying and naming continued, with ‘Take-in Harbour’ (pg. 37), ‘Mammoth River’ (pg. 41), ‘World’s End Cape’ (pg. 44), ‘Token Island’ (pg. 50), and ‘Albicore’s Islands’ (pg. 120). The act of naming is the act of claiming a place, and each place named is given with its latitudinal position, because the correct placing of it on a map is what makes the land real and cements the ownership. At this point in history, with so much of the Antarctic region unknown, there would not be many who could claim to know any more than Seaborn and refute the claims. Returning to the idea of the ‘explorer’s ego’, upon the discovery of habitable lands in the interior of the earth, Seaborn allows his imagination to run away with contemplations of his future in the history books.

My imagination became fired with enthusiasm, and my heart elevated with pride. I was about to secure to my name a conspicuous and imperishable place on the tablets of history, and a niche of the first order in the temple of Fame. I moved like one who trod on air; for whose achievements have equalled mine? The voyage of Columbus was but an excursion on a fish pond, and his discoveries, compared with mine, were but trifles; a summer sea and a strip of land, where common sense must have convinced any man of ordinary capacity that there must be land, unless Providence

⁵⁰ John Morison Duncan, *Travels Through Parts of the United States and Canada in 1818 and 1819, Volume 2* (Glasgow: University Press, 1823), p. 293.

were in that one instance more wasteful of its works than in all its other doings. His was the discovery of a continent, mine of a new World! (p. 55)

The mention of Christopher Columbus would bring all the historical connotations of the discovery of the Americas into the reader's mind, who views Columbus as the model for successful exploration (and immortality, in a historical sense). Seaborn also dismisses this discovery of the 'New World' as nothing when compared to his own 'New World'. More than just this, though, he makes mention of the possibilities that exploration has made available to men since the age of Columbus, that of upward social mobility, and contempt for 'men who feel themselves ennobled by their wealth, or by their technical knowledge; who think themselves superior to the useful classes of society; from whom I had often heard the scornful observation, "he is nothing but a shipmaster;" as if those men who lived and thrived but by the infirmities and vices of society were ennobled by their profession...' (p. 55). In spite of the patriotism seen throughout most of the book, this is a searing condemnation of his society and countrymen, and emphasis that the U.S. needs to abandon those social perspectives learned from the British and embrace new standards unique to the U.S. But this is not the end of the criticism of American and Western civilisation, as the Symzonians cast their own high cultural standards on Seaborn. They become a mirror through which Seaborn (perhaps the avatar for Symmes, who was to meet so many more disappointments) points out the many flaws in America's government, moral standards, economics, and social structures.

II.ii – Inside the World

The transition to the interior is subtle, with unusual phenomena indicating the change taking place. The compass becomes useless, 'changing its position every five minutes' (p. 45) and the sun no longer sets in regular patterns, and there is 'a large, luminous body northward, in the internal heavens, which reflected the sun as our moon does' that Seaborn identifies as 'the second concentric sphere, according to Capt. Symmes' (p. 47). This is point at which the so-called 'verge' of the world is crossed, and the interior is more visible than the exterior. Seaborn's language never changes, though, and he does not excite attention to this

fact, either for readers or his crew. This maintenance of normality limits the possible incredulity of readers, by making these revelations appear natural and expected.

The first place the *Explorer* visits is an uninhabited island that Seaborn calls Token Island – placed at 81° 20' S *internal* latitude – because he considers ‘its discovery as a token or premonition of some great things to come’ (p. 50). While there, Seaborn discovers the ruins of an unfamiliar vessel (though no sign of habitation, which he finds a great disappointment) which contains a ‘white elastic wire’ that Seaborn tells his crew is potentially ‘more valuable than silver’ and they must press on to see if they can find more of this metal (p. 50). It is several more weeks before the *Explorer* finally catches sight of another vessel, which they chase all the way back to land, Seaborn convinced that he is about to receive the revealed truth of ‘the infinite works of God’ (p. 54) and set his tortured ego at rest.

Initial arrival in the land called Symzonia – without concern for what the native inhabitants may have called themselves – ‘out of gratitude to Capt. Symmes for his sublime theory’ (p. 57) is described with lush verdure and Edenic language, what Standish calls ‘a scene that could have been lifted directly from Thomas Jefferson’s dreams’⁵¹ or an advertisement for new settlements out west.⁵² It is a land of mineral, agricultural and technological wealth, in addition to its utopian values and the aspirational message it sends to readers. Biblical imagery, such as the offering of ‘milk and honey’ (p. 75) to Seaborn wherever he goes, is reminiscent of the Promised Land. Seaborn makes great mention of the river banks as ‘one beautiful and highly cultivated garden’ and that there are not any ‘crowded cities, the haunts of vice and misery’:

Great numbers of small cattle and other domestic animals enriched the view, and a profusion of flowers, tastefully arranged in the vicinity of every house, filled the air with perfume, and charmer the eye with their variegated beauties. No fogs or vapours obscured the charming prospect, [...] the mild influence of the sun not being sufficient to produce rapid exhalations, not the nights cold enough to condense them into vapour. Nature’s fairest landscape requires no mantle to obscure its beauties, or to heighten their effect (p. 65).

⁵¹ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 77.

⁵² Which have been known, from time to time, to lie outlandishly about the quality of land the people would be settling.

A temperate climate offers more than just the image of edenic comfort: it is also an easier land to appropriate. Without needing to worry about too much sun or snow, dangerous weather patterns or foul air, a coloniser need not worry so much about his environmental safety; he can survive the land.

Like the people, the animals are kept small in size, also an interesting distinction when compared to later hollow earth narratives when nearly everything to be found in the interior of the earth is larger compared to their external terrestrial cousins. Their smaller size appears indicative of more delicate, evolved sensibility; they do not need the larger size of outer-dwelling men who fight amongst themselves. At a time when the industrial revolution was hitting its stride and coal smoke blanketed cities in the eastern U.S. and Europe, Seaborn's description of clean air would have indeed seemed like a utopia to readers. As most of North America is also prone to intense summers and freezing winters, this land of ever-temperate days and nights would also have been greatly appealing. Seaborn credits the lack of influence from the sun, but goes into little further detail about any meteorology of the place, which would have been interesting, as the reader might wonder if the interior of the earth was prone to much clouding weather at all, and never in the novel does it rain in Symzonia. It is as idealised as the Jason Islands were earlier in the narrative, with nary a negative trait to be found. Beyond the perfection of the land, though is the perfection of the people; what the author has done is invert the normative racial relations, of the arriving white man being at the top of the race ladder. Instead, Seaborn and his crew will find themselves distinctly disadvantaged in a land that perceives them as the proverbial 'noble savages'.

Upon entering Symzonia, Seaborn engages in a dance of diplomacy and attempting to appear as a civilised individual, revealing the author's own prejudice as to what counts for civilised, but would almost certainly have seemed reasonable to an American audience in

1820. It starts with Seaborn removing his hat and bowing low ‘to show the Internals⁵³ that I had some sense of politeness’ (p. 58). Gestures are encoded in a society like language, making Seaborn’s effort might seem naive. When this fails to elicit a response, Seaborn brings up a questionable tale from the Arctic travelogues of Sir John Ross – *A voyage of discovery, made under the orders of the Admiralty, in His Majesty's ships Isabella and Alexander, for the purpose of exploring Baffin's Bay, and inquiring into the probability of a north-west passage* (1819) – in which, Seaborn recounts, ‘Captain Ross was impeded in his progress northward by the northern “icy hoop,” he met with some men on the ice who told him they came from the north, [...] I remembered that these men so seen by Capt. Ross, saluted him by pulling their noses’ (pp. 58-9). (Seaborn also criticises Ross as ‘a very unfit person for an exploring expedition’ because Ross did not pursue those individuals to find their origin, and thus missed discovering the interior world.) This act of nose-pulling finally breaks the ice with the Internals, who send someone out to try to speak with him, but only when Seaborn decides to ‘show him that I had some sense of a Supreme Being’ and falls to his knees ‘with hands and eyes upraised to heaven, in the attitude of prayer’ (p. 60) is he truly welcomed by the natives. This act of Christian supplication is at once recognised (a fanciful act of negating the Symzonians’ otherness) and it is later noted that Internals ‘knew that I could not be unworthy of their regard’ because of this ‘testimony of reverence to the Supreme Being’ (p. 73). Recognition of Western religious practices as belonging to someone worthy of regard is the least of the ethnocentric and racially motivated tools utilised by Seaborn, as the Internals themselves are placed above Seaborn in a racial hierarchy of paleness, as he observes of the first Internal he meets on landing:

[T]he sootiest African does not differ from us in darkness of skin and grossness of features, than this man did from me in fairness of complexion and delicacy of form. [...]

I shoved up the sleeve of my coat, to show them, by the inside of my arm (which is always excluded from the sun,) that I was a white man. I am considered fair for an American, and my skin was always in my own country thought to be one of the finest and whitest. But when one of the internals placed his arm, always exposed to

⁵³ From time to time, despite immediately gracing the land with the name of ‘Symzonia’, the author will also refer to the inhabitants as ‘Internals’.

the weather, by the side of mine, the difference was truly mortifying. I was not a white man, compared with him (p. 61).

Among American readers, who would not see slavery abolished for another four decades, this observation – and subsequent shock at being out-paled – would have not seem out of place. The colour of one's skin at this time was the set of one's place in civilised society, and the discovery of a race inside the earth even fairer than a white American automatically marks this as a 'superior race'. Seaborn believes that it is his 'dark and hideous appearance' which sets the 'beautiful natives' on edge, a turnabout in the language of exploration, and most descriptions of travellers and natives would be given in the reverse. Seaborn even describes himself as 'a monkey' imitating the movements of the greeting party of Symzonians (p. 60). With this sort of inversion in character roles, it is easy to see why some have interpreted the novel as a satire; it is perfectly acceptable for a novel to be satirical some of the time, and yet still earnest in its message. In his study on race in early American literature, Jared Gardner noted that *Symzonia* 'offers recourse to a fantasy of a nation without racial differences as an advertisement for the real voyage this novel sought to inspire.'⁵⁴

The reasoning behind the Internals' initial reaction to Seaborn's appearance is given in the history of Symzonia, and intended to draw parallels with humanity's own origins. Those who are cast out of this proverbial (and possibly literal) Eden due to their degeneration into crime and vice for one reason or another, are sent to live along the icy verge where internal and external world meet:

There they continue to live in the vicious course, pursuing the gratification of their sensual appetites, and are punished with diseases of the body which enervate their faculties, inordinate passions which torture their minds, and fierce desires which are incapable of being satisfied. – The influence of their gross appetites and of the climate, cause them to lose their fairness of complexion and beauty of form and feature. They become dark colored, ill favoured, and mis-shapen men, not much superior to the brute creation (pp. 72-3).

⁵⁴ Jared Gardner, *Master Plots: Race and the Founding of an American Literature, 1787-1845* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 116.

The colour of an individual's skin becomes a mark of morality. By this description, Seaborn is thus implying that the Symzonians he meets are free of any 'sensual appetites' or 'diseases of the body', and that to be possessed of any of these traits, to not have a fair complexion and to not be beautiful therefore renders one a 'brute', or animal. Even the largeness of Seaborn's stature made him suspect because 'the descendent of the outcasts were enlarged in stature and size, owing to the grossness of their habits' (pg. 73). The exile of these social degenerates, and their change to 'dark-colored, ill favoured' men, seems reminiscent of the goals of the American Colonization Society. The ACS was formed in 1816 by white Americans to ship freed slaves back to Africa (resulting in the creation of Liberia) because they were viewed as a 'problem'.⁵⁵ For America to reach its true potential, they must – in Gardner's words – 'emulate the purity of the Symzonians'⁵⁶ and that means an all-white America.

Despite this reduction in size, and the implication that the appearance of delicacy is a sign of good breeding, the Symzonians are portrayed as being 'able to lift three times as much as any one of the degenerates' and 'to leap three times as high' (pg. 73). They are strong without *appearing* strong, like a common workman or fieldhand; the racial implications of presenting a sophisticated exterior to match the interior. This is a case of external appearances not being indicative of physical capabilities, and seems also counter-intuitive for the reader but for Seaborn's explanation. This explanation of the outcast race, sent to the far north of Symzonia, leaves Seaborn

a little humbled by this account of the origin of the northern internal people, and, cautiously avoided my observation that might discover, to my intelligent conductor, the suspicion which darted through my mind, that we the externals were indeed descendants of this exiled race; some of whom, penetrating the "icy hoop" near the continent of Asia or America, might have people the external world. The gross sensuality, intemperate passions, and beastly habits of the externals, all testified against us (p. 73).

This is not just racial evolution influenced by the environment, but racial evolution based upon moral behaviour. Though it might not be obvious to the modern reader, this is a

⁵⁵ The irony of this, though, is that President James Monroe, author of the Monroe doctrine and its anti-colonial sentiments, was tremendous supporter of African Americans colonising Liberia.

⁵⁶ Gardner, *Master Plots*, p. 118.

profound statement for Seaborn to make, decades before the publication of Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, because he is speculating upon secular origins, and a form of evolution, before the idea was planted in the popular consciousness. He does channel Lamarckian evolutionary theory, that '*the environment affects the shape and organisation of animals*' as it affects his movements, needs, and tasks.⁵⁷ The sins of the exiles drove them into an environment that shaped them into comparatively dark, crude beings, still awash with incivility. The story of the divine creation of Adam and Eve does not apply to this theory of Seaborn's, and the casting out of paradise can be read as a metaphor for those members of the Internal civilisation who were exiled to the Arctic. This disparaging mantle of 'gross sensuality' and 'intemperate passion' Seaborn takes on himself in addition to the rest of the external world, but his belief in the superiority of America and Western culture will still play a disastrous role near the end of the narrative.

Not just physically superior, the Symzonians are all intellectually superior, mastering English in a week and demonstrating eidetic memory (p. 64). However, though they are shown in many ways to be technologically advanced as well, they have not learned the art of optics, as Seaborn's spyglass attracts much attention, which is fortunate since it shows 'the internals that some useful knowledge might be obtained from the hideous strangers' (p. 62). They also lack accurate astronomical readings because they have such a limited view of the night sky (pg. 101). Interestingly, the practice of printing books has also escaped the Symzonians, and they are fascinated by the books that Seaborn brings (p. 81). But in every other regard, the Symzonians are in possession of technologies that have only been theorised by Symmes's contemporaries, including air ships levitated with 'an electric gas' (pg. 63), and fearsome 'engines of defence' (pg. 91). This application of technology to everyday life (and at one point, warfare) in Symzonia comes on the cusp of the industrial revolution and flood of new technologies in the real world. Seaborn is projecting what may be possible for his own countrymen to obtain, and how these advances in science may

⁵⁷ Jean Baptiste De Lamarck, 'From *Zoological Philosophy* (1809)' in ed. Laura Otis, *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 242.

improve current conditions in America and allow for the attainment of a Symzonia-like nation. At the same time, these technological advances are tempered with a respect for nature and living conditions; there are no dirty, crowded, choking cities in Symzonia, 'the haunts of vice and misery' (p. 64) and this is a feature of *terra cava* literature that will continue to feature throughout the next century.

Seaborn gives his greatest attention to describing Symzonia's government, echoing the young American form of government when he notes that 'in Symzonia all power emanated from the people' (pg. 66). This gives the impression that Symzonia, in all of its goodness and glory, is most closely related to the United States. Led by the Best Man (which, if translated into Greek, is *aristos*, making this, technically, an aristocracy, but one with far better connotations) and the Council of Worthies, the text reads more like a parable for the formation of the perfect meritocracy. The one hundred 'Worthies' fall under three categories: 'The GOOD, the WISE, and the USEFUL':

It is the duty of the worthies to notice the conduct of the people in their respective districts, to air the feeble and distressed, if any such be found, to encourage the wavering, and reward the meritorious. Whenever and one of them discovers a man of retired⁵⁸ but useful life, active but unobtrusive benevolence, extensive usefulness, with that modest shunning of the public exhibition of his doings which is necessary to possess the public in his favour, it becomes the duty of the Worthy to name him to the Grand Council, as a man of modest and exemplary merit (p. 66).

A form of government based upon meritocracy, meant as a possible acme – or even alternative – for American politics. This is a list of characteristics Seaborn would like to find in American politicians, and is meant as a primer for his fellow citizens to follow when at the election polls, as this is the idealised Congressional representative. It echoes the government structure Gulliver reported in Lilliput, where it is not men of genius, but those who practice 'Truth, Justice, Temperance',⁵⁹ which everyone is capable of achieving. For all of these positive qualities in Symzonia (and, by implication, lacking in the U.S.) there is also a list of offenses which keeps a man from the Worthies: 1) vanity, 2) deceitfulness, 3) tyranny, 4) hypocrisy, and 5) criminality/ irregularity/ bachelorhood (p. 68) – as apparently,

⁵⁸ In Symzonia, the retirement age is 100.

⁵⁹ Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2002), p. 49.

not pursuing marriage is considered irregular and a bad example for society. Because of these regulations, there is no political intrigue or back room dealing, and ‘the office of government are filled with the most intelligent, upright, and valuable men in the country, selected with the sole view of promoting the best interests of the nation’ (p. 69). Seaborn, attempting to hide the truth of the external world from his guide out of shame, will only admit to his guide that the political system in New York shares some similar characteristics. This is not resounding praise for the rest of the American political system if Seaborn is singling out only one state for mention. Despite the obvious pride he has in his country and the American form of government, when the Best Man asks for a description, Seaborn is careful ‘to say nothing about the qualifications for office, nor of the means resorted to obtain preferment’, to which the Best Man replies that he thinks ‘the scheme well calculated for a very virtuous and enlightened people, but liable to many abuses through the want of a probationary course of qualification for places of trust and power.’⁶⁰ Seaborn’s embarrassment and reticence about his own country is also similar to Gulliver, who finds himself constantly at odds in his travels with those who deride his home country: ‘my Colour came and went several times, with Indignation to hear our noble Country...the Seat of Virtue, Piety, Honour and Truth, the Pride and Envy of the World, so contemptuously treated.’⁶¹ Where Swift was deliberately enacting a satire, Seaborn is highlighting perceived deficiencies in American governance. Without knowing exactly who the author is, it is difficult to see where this political resentment originates in 1820, when the U.S. was still quite young.

In his meeting with the Best Man, further parallels are drawn between the American style of government and that of Symzonia. Seaborn had been worrying about having to observe courtly behaviours such as those observed in Europe and Asia, however: ‘The Best Man put me entirely at my ease in points of etiquette, by meeting me in the open air, in the garden, and without either the stiffness of affected pomp, or the austere visage of assumed

⁶⁰ Seaborn, *Symzonia*, p. 81.

⁶¹ Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*, p. 89.

sanctity. He received me with that frank, affectionate manner, which constitutes true politeness'.⁶² Upon the founding of the United States, the explicit removal of aristocratic titles and pomp had been paramount to the framers of the constitution⁶³, as they wanted more accessible leadership. Presidential inaugurations always take place outside, without the extreme formality of a coronation, and no avuncular is needed to instruct in courtly niceties. The 'assumed sanctity' to which Seaborn refers is that of the 'divine right' to rule that Americans had rejected.

The way of life among the Symzonians, that of peaceful, diligent pursuit of their life's callings while living in harmony with their neighbours and environment, is another aspect that Seaborn envies, and finds as an indictment of the external world. In examining the matter of industry between the internal and external world, Seaborn comes to realise that

the greater part of the labour of the externals was devoted to the production of things useless or pernicious; and that of the things produced or acquired, the distribution, through defects in our social organization, was so unequal, that some few destroyed, without any increase of happiness to themselves, the products of the toil of multitudes. Instead of devoting our time to useful purposes, and livery temperately on the wholesome gifts of Providence, like the blest internals, so as to preserve our health and strengthen our minds, thousands of us are employed producing inebriating liquors, by the destruction of wholesome articles of food, to poison bodies, enervate the minds, and corrupt the hearts, of our fellow beings (p. 71).

The language of this description is condemning the markets of the U.S. as producers 'useless' and 'pernicious' goods, while the products of the Internals are 'blest' or divine in nature. If the author was not a member of any prohibition organisation, this section of the text would certainly serve as his application for admittance, and Seaborn is forced to admit to the failings of his own country which he holds in such high regard. More than merely lamenting the waste of foodstuff in the production of alcohol, Seaborn is making the point that American and Western industry is given over to the manufacture of mostly useless baubles to satiate the appetite of acquisition, which the Best Man, upon hearing about the production of muslin, lace, cashmere shawls and gold jewels condemns as 'the creation of

⁶² Seaborn, *Symzonia*, p. 78.

⁶³ Article 8 of Section 9: No Title of Nobility shall be granted by the United States: And no Person holding any Office of Profit or Trust under them, shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State.

vanity, pernicious in their influence upon the foolish [...] and the production of them a preposterous perversion of the faculties bestowed upon us by a beneficent Creator for useful purpose' (p. 83). The work of the Internals is dedicated to being good and useful, while still maintaining their health and well-being and abundance of time for leisure (p. 70). As the industrial revolution was just hitting its stride, the author could not yet know the wretchedness of mass-production factories that would come later in the century, which would have appeared abhorrent given his sentiments about the present state of labour and manufacturing. In writing fiction and utopias, an author is hoping that his arguments and appeals for a better society will be heard, but the reality is that most will go unheeded. *Symzonia* serves a two-fold purpose: that of advancing Symmes's theory about polar openings leading to an internal world, and that of putting forth the possibility of a more advanced race found therein from which we could all learn a few things. From scientific observations, it moves to the anthropological, or more precisely, the utopian.

Several chapters are dedicated to various observations about the society of Symzonia, in keeping with the tone of Seaborn's consummate explorer, and the perfection of the Symzonian race and habitat, emulating More's *Utopia*. Women and men enjoy each other's chaste company in public, as 'The enjoyments of this refined people were intellectual and pure – not the debasing gratifications of animal passions and sensual appetites' (p. 100). Unusually for the time, Seaborn portrays women as (almost) social equals (they never appear to participate in government) as they are 'not regarded as inferior in intellectual capacity, or moral worth, [...] for the qualities of the female mind are developed and employed' (pp. 101-2). This is betraying the judgemental language which the author perceives to encompass the perception of women in the U.S. The simple lifestyle of the Symzonians allows for easily performed domestic tasks that do not wear women down, giving them time to focus on 'the instruction of their children, the improvement of their own minds, religion, and social intercourse' (p. 102). They wear simple clothing of exquisite white from the thread of a spider but cast in the like manner of metal, making it extremely 'convenient' (pg. 88). 'Convenience' is a word that comes up frequently when describing the

division of labour (pg. 88) and practice of commerce (pg. 89). The description of the economy sounds rather like early communism, in which the tokens for purchase are distributed annually by the government, and should any district fall short of supply, the government will redistribute the tokens and products ‘from the more fruitful districts... to equalize the value’ (p. 89). This is certainly a form of economics that would not be found in the United States in the early nineteenth century. The payment of taxes, which was one of the causes of the American Revolution (and a continued irritation for Americans, as demonstrated by the Whisky Rebellion) are levied and paid without complaint in Symzonia: ‘This tax is so light that nothing but a criminal want of industry or frugality can hinder any one from paying it’ and as he goes on to note, ‘the government exists for the sole purpose of preserving the freedom of the citizens, in the pursuit of happiness, and in the enjoyment of all those privileges and immunities which are compatible with the well-being of society’ (p. 89). This sounds rather like the claim of ‘life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness’ in the Declaration of Independence, a tone which would have resonated with Seaborn’s readers. In every way the internal world is made to reflect the best parts of American idealism, as it would encourage readers both in their patriotism and possible yearning for polar exploration, because if any civilisation did exist within the earth, and they were an advanced race, they would most surely resemble the (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) inhabitants of America. Patriotism and exploration were developing an intertwined relationship

One of the small but interesting facets of the narrative is that a history of Symzonia is presented in chapter 11, giving it a depth of character all of its own, and not a place of continued, unchanging existence (which is sometimes to be found in utopian literature). In the distant past, the Symzonians were in conflict with a people called the Belzubians (pg. 91), a name which seems to be a permutation of Beelzebub, a demon in Western religious mythology. This automatically draws the reader into a negative connotation of this internal country, which once went to war with the Symzonians because the latter refused to continue trading in cheap goods with them, which the Wise men considered a source of corruption (p. 92). This echoes the American antagonism toward the unfair trade values they experienced

while still a colony, forced to trade their products in favour of Great Britain. (Examples of this come from the Acts of Trade and Navigation, especially the Molasses Act of 1733 and the Sugar Act of 1764.) Happily, among the Symzonians was an inventor named Fultria,⁶⁴ who created the airships previously noted by Seaborn, and the ‘engines of defence’ (pg. 92), which, conveniently, the author is denied a description of by the Best Man, except that it ‘moved with astonishing velocity’ and ‘produced a flame of intense heat, [...] as to consume every thing for half a mile in every direction’ (p. 93). Though the Best Man and his council object to using the weapon on the ground of barbarity, Fultria defends his invention and its use in a rousing speech:

I would show my abhorrence of war by rendering it too horrible to be encountered.
I would abolish war by ensuring inevitable destruction to all who engage in it.
I would utterly destroy the invaders that none may hereafter dare to draw the sword for invasion.
Let all who take the sword perish by the sword, and war will be known no more (pp. 94-5).

This is another example of Biblical referencing by Seaborn, as the last line is drawn from the gospel of Matthew 26:52, without regard for the fact that in all likelihood, the Symzonians would never have read the New Testament. The readers would know it, though, and would recognize the parallels with their own religion and government. To make the case for the Symzonians as better than Americans, they must meet basic standards of civilisation, including Christianity and democracy. If the reader is less than convinced by the ‘rousingness’ of this speech, Seaborn defends himself by claiming it a poor translation on the part of a sailor such as himself, and that ‘our language is not sufficiently nervous enough to convey the sentiments of this enlightened man with the energy and conciseness of the original language’ (p. 94), an act of framing by distancing and disavowing total responsibility for the text if the reader is incredulous. Upon deliberation and decision to demonstrate the weapon, its effect is to send the Belzubians running ‘with as much precipitancy and haste as did the Midianites at the sight of the lamps and the noise of the

⁶⁴ The Latin translation for ‘Fultus’ is that of supporter or sustainer, probably not a coincidence on the author’s part.

broken pitches of the Gideon' (p. 95), yet another biblical metaphor⁶⁵ meant to create positive imagery in the reader's mind. The Symzonians come to resemble a Lost Tribe of Israel or a chosen people, a metaphor that will be echoed in many subsequent *terra cava* narratives.

Among the parables that Seaborn uses to educate the reader as to the purity of Symzonian thought, and the flaws of American governance, are stories gleaned from the records of the Assembly about men who had been *denied* entrance among the Worthies for proposing ideas and practices already common in the U.S. First is a man who, conducting a study in 'the laws of matter and motion' proposes 'that the Internals were inhabitants of the concave side of a hollow sphere; and reasoning from analogy, that the convex or outer side of that sphere must be inhabited' (p. 104) and for this proposal, the man was censured and called a 'maniac'. The implication of this is that the man was right, and should have not been so dismissed, and conversely, Seaborn should not be readily dismissed as a 'maniac' for his ideas. Another man, who proposes to remove the government regulation of commerce by the formation of a bank and issuance of bank notes, which is 'promptly condemned, as a device to cheat the people, by causing perpetual fluctuations in the nominal price of things' (p. 105). This is a direct reference to the contemporary economic woes of the U.S. as the Depression of 1815 (in response to the rapid inflation following the cessation of war with Britain) and Panic of 1819 had rippled through the population, causing job loss, foreclosures, and slumps in manufacturing and agriculture. The last tale from the records, which seems most counterintuitive to readers, is the rejection of publishing a code of laws. The reasoning given is that people are already aware of proper behaviour, and that nothing could be gained by confusing the matter with legalese: 'Language was imperfect; words had different meanings; those who violated the spirit of these laws would contrive to evade the letter; [...] more laws would be required; contest, disorder, and innumerable evils would be the consequence' (pp. 205-6). America's Constitution had been in place only thirty-two

⁶⁵ From the Old Testament Book of Judges, chapters 6-8, describing how Gideon, with the help of God, chased away the Midianites who had taken Israelite land.

years by the time Seaborn was writing, and this observation as to the difficulty of written law was surely reflecting the ever-changing nature of US law as the kinks in the system were hammered out.

The undoing of Seaborn's entire venture in Symzonia is brought about by his egoism and the assumption that the Symzonians would be impressed by all that the Western world has attained and written about. When he meets with the Best Man and is interrogated as to his origins and purpose for travelling to Symzonia, Seaborn stretches the truth some into to conceal his true motives, lest the Best Man find him uncivilised and vulgar:

My motive I stated to be, a desire to gain a more extended knowledge of the works of nature; adding, that I had undertaken this perilous voyage only to ascertain whether the body of this huge globe were an useless waste of sand and stones, contrary to the economy usually displayed in the works of Providence, or, according to the sublime conceptions of one of our Wise man, a series of concentric spheres, like a nest of boxes, inhabitable within and without, on every side, so as to accommodate the greatest possible number of intelligent beings.

I was already too well acquainted with the sentiments of this people, not to know that it would be extremely imprudent to suffer any expression to escape me which should discover that a desire of wealth; or of the means of sensual gratification, was among the motives which actuate the externals... (p. 79)

The reference to the theory of concentric spheres by a 'Wise man' is in all likelihood another reference to John Cleves Symmes, but in truth, the credit for the theory of concentric spheres (regardless of any polar openings for access) belongs to Sir Edmund Halley. The idea of a 'divine economy' in creation is not referencing the work of Saint Thomas Aquinas, but the idea that God would have made the best use of his creation by inhabiting every corner of the earth, including those within.

The divinity of Symzonia's creation is never entirely addressed, and does not reconcile itself to the Genesis story of Adam and Eve; should Symzonia be perceived as the original Eden? Seaborn seems reluctant to engage with ecumenical discourse, and instead relies on the mere mention of divinity as sufficient evidence for the civility and superiority of the Symzonians, and for the hollow earth to be part of the divine plan of creation. Among the Symzonians, he notes 'That the fatal sin of *cupidity*, which drove our first parents out of Paradise, is almost wholly unknown to the pure and uncontaminated Internals' (p. 87) making them sound like they were a separate, divine creation. The concept of Polygenism,

or Co-Adamism, was embraced by eighteenth century thinkers like Voltaire and Hume, so it is not surprising to see this concept in *Symzonia*. The Symzonians have not been cast out of their Eden, which may or may not be the same as Adam and Eve's.

When questioned upon the subject of religion, Seaborn mentions the American freedom of choice in religion practice (but only as it pertains to the worship of the Judeo-Christian God), which is pleasing enough to the Best Man as a sign of civility, but even as Seaborn takes care to mention the habits of only 'the most virtuous, enlightened and truly refined people' (p. 82) it is wholly insufficient because Externals are still prone to disease, the consumption of meat and alcohol, and social inequity, all failings in the eyes of the utopian leader (failings and condemnations that can be seen in many hollow earth utopian settings to follow). As Seaborn continues to try and impress with the advances of his society, first he fails upon the enumeration of manufacturing fine goods (pg. 83), and then the advances in the art of warfare, which the Best Man can hardly believe, as it is 'base and diabolical [...] to make a science out of worrying and destroying each other, like the most detestable reptiles' (p. 84). This is similar to the response Gulliver received from the King of Brobdingnag when he proposed to show him the use of gunpowder, compelling the king to ask Gulliver how he 'could entertain such inhuman Ideas'.⁶⁶ Instead, in leaving what he considers to be the great works of Western minds – Milton, Shakespeare, etc. – to be translated for and read by the Best Man, Seaborn hopes to reform his image (and that of his countrymen) but is only digging himself deeper when it comes to the opinion of the Symzonians of the Externals.

Seaborn finds himself called before the Best Man and the Council of Worthies to explain himself, or more precisely, to explain the behaviour of all of humanity. He admits that 'inhabitants of some islands far to the north, who, from their vicinity to the place of exile, might be the descendents of outcasts', or, 'were more probably the descendants of the Belzubians' (p. 98). Later in chapter 15, the Best Man calls Seaborn before him, to pass

⁶⁶ Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, p. 112.

judgement based upon the reading of Seaborn's books and the observations of his behaviour, rendering the following verdict:

That, from the evidence before him, it appeared that we were of a race who had either wholly fallen from virtue, or were at least very much under the influence of the worst passions of our nature; that a great proportion of the race were governed by an inveterate selfishness, that canker of the soul, which is wholly incompatible with ingenuous and affectionate good-will towards our fellow-beings; that we were given to the practice of injustice, violence, and oppression, even to such a degree as to maintain bodies of armed men, trained to destroy their fellow-creatures; that we were guilty of enslaving our fellow-men for the purpose of procuring the means of gratifying our sensual appetites' (p. 108).

And on and on, condemning almost every facet of American life (including slavery) in spite of Seaborn's best attempts to illicit awe and respect for his country. Though not quite calling Americans 'the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth',⁶⁷ it has a similar effect on both narrator (and reader). For this crime of deficiency of character, Seaborn and his crew are ordered to leave Symzonia, carrying nothing of value that might lure others like himself back to the country. Seaborn makes the mistake of mentioning to the Best Man that in spite of the dangers of sailing to the extreme southern latitude, 'this would be no objection to the externals; that in the pursuit of gain, they defied plague, pestilence, and famine' and cared not for the deaths of mariners in the quest for profit (p. 111) – an apt description of the preceding three hundred years of exploration. All that Seaborn is permitted to take with him upon his expulsion is a collection of Symzonian books, as 'good books could not do harm in any world' (p. 112) – a possible meta-reference to the novel itself, a 'good book' that cannot do any harm and may even help the reader. Being allowed his collection of knowledge makes Seaborn feel that the voyage is not a complete loss, and reassures the Best Man that 'there were many people amongst us who would eagerly emulate the purity and goodness of the Symzonians' (pg. 110), a statement that is likely directed at the reader.

The leave-taking is short, and Seaborn is warned to take care that none of his people approach Symzonia while they are still 'besotted in vice and iniquity' as the Best Man has ordered that the engines of defence be used to keep the corrupting Externals away (p. 114).

⁶⁷ Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, p. 111.

Still laden with a hundred thousand seal skins from which to draw a profit, and his Symzonian books, Seaborn decides to exact a promise from his crew to keep their discovery secret, so that they can benefit personally from a future expedition in search of Belzulia. (Having failed to gain fortune and fame from a divine country, they will seek the infernal instead.) He fears that 'we should in the first place expose ourselves to the charge of being impostors and outrageous falsifiers; in the second place, our countrymen, and even the Europeans, who would give us no credit for our bravery and enterprise, would avail themselves of all the information we might communicate' (p. 120). Seaborn does not seem to have taken a great deal away from his experiences with the Internals, as he is still intent on retaining all credit and potential profit for himself.

II.iii – Returning to the Real

Exiled from Symzonia for their barbaric and uncivilised ways, Seaborn returns once more to known lands and familiar narrative. His cargo of seal skins exchanged in China for other rich goods (such as silks, teas and chinaware, all things the Best Man would have objected to), Seaborn sails on to the US, only to lose all of his Symzonian artefacts in a storm, thus depriving him of any physical evidence for the reader, who is forced to rely upon Seaborn's memory and pathos for plausibility.

Upon returning to the U.S., Seaborn's tale takes on a tone of allegory, utilising presumed aliases for the individuals he does business with, including his friend Mr. Worthy and dishonest merchant Mr. Slippery. As Mr. Slippery mishandles all of Seaborn's cargo and plunges the man into bankruptcy and debtors prison for non-payment of import tariffs. All of the warnings and condemnations that the Symzonians had offered on American culture come to pass on Seaborn, in a form of divine retribution for his sin of avarice. There is a parable to be found in this loss of fortune on Seaborn's part. He was sent away from Symzonia because of the moral failings of the human race, and now he has fallen victim to the craven nature of an unscrupulous businessman and unforgiving government.

In the end, he is compelled to write his tale, despite his admonishing the crew to keep quiet, in hopes that the sale of the book will raise enough revenues to free him. His

example for this is the book of travels published by a ‘Captain Riley’; in all probability this is referencing Captain James Riley, who was shipwrecked off the coast of Africa in 1815 and published *Sufferings in Africa* in 1817⁶⁸, a book that had great national influence and was later mentioned as a favourite of Abraham Lincoln. Seaborn contends that this book contained ‘accounts not much more marvellous than those which I could relate of Symzonia’ (p. 136), implying that if readers were ready to believe the tale of James Riley, they should have an opening mind towards Adam Seaborn. He confesses as a matter of defence the problem of verifying his tale:

The authenticity and genuineness of these researches, since all the autographs and specimens collected to corroborate them were lost [...] must rest upon the authority of my extracts, translations, journal and memory. Should they even be questioned and disputed by the Scavans⁶⁹ of the external world, the generality of readers will probably trouble their heads very little on that score.

This seems almost a condescending statement to make to the reader, that few but the truly scientifically inclined will cast doubt upon the tale. Even if the general reader is not inclined to take in all of the science, they will at least be entertained. He concludes, though, that ‘I am ready to undertake a second voyage to Seaborn’s land, or a voyage to Belzubia and the place of exile, by the northern route, or another visit to Symzonia [...] as soon as I am furnished with the funds necessary for my escape from my present uncomfortable situation’ (p. 136); a subtle hint that if Adam Seaborn is a real individual, the purchase of his book, of investment in his future travels, will be a profitable venture.

II.iv – After *Symzonia*

The critical reaction to the publication of *Symzonia* was tepid: ‘It is, upon the whole, dull and uninteresting. A great deal might have been made out of the subject, for there is at least as much to satirize as in the age of Swift. The author is, however, very good natured, and if

⁶⁸ The original title, which Symmes probably knew it under, was *Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the American Brig Commerce*.

⁶⁹ This reference is probably in relation to the *Journal des sçavans*, a French science periodical published between 1665 and 1792. A ‘Scavan’ might be a reference to readers of this (or other) science journals.

there is nothing brilliant in his observations, there is nothing to offend.⁷⁰ The novel is treated with the same tongue-in-cheek attitude that Symmes himself was, referring to his ‘concentric’ theory as ‘the *excentric* theories’ that inspired the novel.⁷¹ Duane Griffin claims that ridicule of Symmes’s theory increased because *Symzonia* was a satirical novel,⁷² but most readers would probably interpret it as an earnest effort, not one of satire, even if there are several parallels with *Gulliver’s Travels*. The deficiencies of American society and politics are shown *contra* the perfection of Symzonia; Gulliver, unlike Seaborn, does not admit to these issues. Peter Fitting states ‘I read this novel – as have most of my colleagues in the fields of science fiction and utopia – as a satirical utopia which includes a defense of Symmes’s theory.’⁷³ Another contemporary reviewer of the novel actually barely references *Symzonia* at all, choosing instead to review Symmes’s theory and make reference to the ‘internal’ as *infernals*, and that moving to the inside of the earth would be financially sound, ‘for if ordinary *bottom* lands are notoriously fertile, what must those be, which are not only at the bottom, but on the other side.’⁷⁴ There is also strong anti-imperial sentiment when the anonymous reviewer claims that if ‘the Internals refuse to eat, drink and smoke, as we direct, there then will doubtless be found ways to compel them’,⁷⁵ emphasising (and disparaging) the rules of colonial trade that the U.S. had within the last two generations thrown off. Hester Blum finds *Symzonia* to be ‘parodic...but not of the outlandishness of Symmes’s theories themselves’ and is instead ‘a critique of US and British imperialism...a jape at the genre of writing produced by imperial ventures.’⁷⁶ From the contemporary reviews, Blum may be right about how the themes of exploration and imperialism are being treated, but unlike the others, does not believe that Symmes himself is an object of derision, especially if Symmes is the one doing the writing. There is justifiable reason to doubt some of the

⁷⁰ Anon., ‘Review of *Symzonia: A Voyage of Discovery*’ in *The Literary Gazette; or, Journal of Criticism, Science and the Arts*. 6 January 1821 (Vol. 1, No. 1), p.8.

⁷¹ Anon., ‘Review of *Symzonia*’, *The Literary Gazette*, p. 6.

⁷² Duane Griffin, ‘Hollow and Habitable Within’. P. 390.

⁷³ Peter Fitting. *Subterranean Worlds*. P. 106.

⁷⁴ Anon., ‘A voyage to the internal world’ in *The North American Review* (Vol. 13, Issue 32, 1821), pp. 135-6.

⁷⁵ Anon., ‘A voyage’, *The North American Review*, p. 140.

⁷⁶ Hester Blum, ‘John Cleves Symmes and the Planetary Reach of Polar Exploration’, *American Literature* (Vol. 84, No. 2, June 2012), p. 261.

insincerity towards nationalistic expansion, though, because the U.S. had only recently, with the Louisiana Purchase, doubled its size. Nor could Americans have been unaware of the ever-expanding British influence across the globe.

Setting aside the satire about American society and politics, at face value *Symzonia* does appear to urge readers to support American exploration and expansion (as well as American ideas and American literature). The novel itself seems to stand in contrast to what some historians viewed as Symmes's distinctly *anti-imperial* language in his known writings: 'For Symmes, the polar entrances to the interior belong to "the world" and to the mind rather than to the factional economic and political actors that—in his age and ours—continually conquer new territory in search of wealth.'⁷⁷ While Symmes did put his theories to the rest of the world, he was looking for economic and scientific support. The petitions that went before Congress certainly emphasised the need for America to get there first, as do many later novels. Only after failing with his own people did Symmes try to join a Russian expedition to the Arctic.

There are uncertainties when reading into the intentions of the author (Symmes or otherwise) in the publication of this story. No one calling himself Adam Seaborn ever wrote another piece, and Symmes never wrote any fictional narratives, and spent the bulk of his life after this point travelling the US and proselytising his theory, in which this tale might have been a tool. In his essays about his father's work, Elmore Symmes provides a copy of a hand-drawn map by Symmes, and 'the word "*Symmeseonia*" is the name he desired given to a continent when one was discovered';⁷⁸ a slightly different spelling, but the same sentiment, put on paper in 1822. The novel is the epitome of early science fiction, blending scientific fact and theory at a time when these things were in a constant state of fluctuation, for an audience that was ready to receive an exciting travel narrative not unlike those of actual

⁷⁷ M. Allewaert and Michael Ziser, 'Preface: Under Water', *American Literature* (Vol. 84, No. 2, June 2012) p. 236.

⁷⁸ Elmore Symmes, 'John Cleves Symmes, The Theorist', *Southern Bivouac: A Monthly Literary and Historical Magazine* (Vol. 2, 1887), p. 628.

accounts. Most significantly, though, *Symzonia* would help to lay the foundation for dozens of hollow earth stories to follow over the next hundred years.

II.v – The Symmesonian Letters

The *Cincinnati Literary Gazette* published a series of satirical ‘Symmesonian’ letters in 1824, written from the perspective of a traveller from that country, on the nature of American relations with the native inhabitants, British foreign policy, and the lack of action on Symmes’s theories. In the first letter, the unknown writer states that the ‘only circumstance that affords me any consolation is the indifference towards Capt. Symmes and his project that prevails among all classes; should this continue, I shall consider my country safe’.⁷⁹ As Symmes was travelling a great deal at the time giving his lectures, these letters were probably not a product of his hand, but one of his few followers in Southwest Ohio. I would even venture to hypothesise that someone very close to Symmes, someone who had seen the map from 1822 with ‘*Symmesonia*’ on it might have written the letters (like his stepson, Anthony Lockwood). Their publication, though, indicates that Symmes’s theory and the novel *Symzonia* were at least widely enough known by this point to be commented upon in jest without preamble. For the modern reader there are a plethora of academic opinions to take. It is interesting that this series of farcical letters does not use the proper spelling of *Symzonia*, but more directly references Symmes’s connection to the novel by changing the spelling to ‘Symmesonia’. The source of the publication, *Cincinnati*, also reinforces the connection which the city would have with the hollow earth theory for the next century, producing more works than any other location (works which will be discussed in subsequent chapters). Even Griffin remarks that the groundswell of support for Symmes ‘began among prominent Cincinnatians whose patriotism and regional boosterism was a great deal stronger than their understanding of natural history and philosophy’.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ ‘The “Symmesonian” Letters, No. 1’. *Cincinnati Literary Gazette*, 28 Feb. 1824, p. 66.

⁸⁰ Griffin, ‘Hollow and Habitable Within’, p. 390.

III – The Apostles of Symmes

‘Circular Number 1’ does not appear to have created the stir that Symmes hoped for, and he left the frontier of St. Louis to return to the family land in Ohio in order to spread his theory in the old fashioned form of public lecture. Along the way he picked up three men who would go on to publish more about the hollow earth than Symmes himself ever did: James McBride, Alexander Mitchell, and Jeremiah Reynolds. These individuals would also go one to further the cause of exploring the Polar regions, helping to launch what would become known as the U.S. Exploring Expedition (aka U.S. Ex. Ex. or the ‘Wilkes Expedition’). The scientific work published by these men would go on to influence a great many literary writers in the following decades.

III.i – McBride and Mitchell

Symmes inspired fellow Ohioan James McBride to write *Symmes’s Theory of Concentric Spheres: Demonstrating that the Earth is Hollow, Habitable Within, and Widely Open About the Poles* (1826), a 168-page treatise detailing every facet of the theory, the man, and the way forward to investigate the possibilities. At the time, though, it was anonymously published by ‘A Citizen of the United States’, likely meant to play on nationalistic sympathies. Another Ohioan, Alexander Mitchell, wrote a smaller, 24-page pamphlet in the same year: *A Treatise on Natural Philosophy, in Vindication of Symmes’s Theory of the Earth Being a Hollow Sphere*. Mitchell certainly knew McBride, as the copy of his pamphlet found in the Library of Congress has written on the front of it: ‘James McBride from the author’, so McBride must have come to know Mitchell’s work as well.

James McBride was the more vociferous of the two, defending Symmes – and his idea for an Arctic expedition – at every turn. He is doing more, though, than merely passing along the scientific thesis of the hollow earth. In the eighth chapter of his tract, McBride takes a very expansionistic approach to American science and exploration: ‘At all events a *voyage to the polar regions*, with an eye to the accomplishment of Symmes’s purpose, might

be productive of incalculable advantages to the cause of science in general.’⁸¹ McBride sees American knowledge (especially of a scientific variety) leading to American power, as it has for their European counterparts. He criticises what he calls the ‘let alone policy’ (the Monroe Doctrine), which went into effect in 1823, between the publication of *Symzonia* and McBride’s treatise. McBride outlines the many other expeditions and discoveries made by Great Britain, France and Russia, and delivers a conspiracy theory about the British:

Ross, and Parry have visited the arctic regions; and Parry now is out on his third voyage, as though there were some hidden mystery there, which the English government is anxious to develope. It is not likely that they would have fitted out, and dispatched four successive expeditions, merely to view Ice-bergs and Esquimaux Indians.⁸²

Once more, just as in *Symzonia*, the British and their expanding empire are perceived as a threat to American prosperity. Failure on the part of the U.S. government to act will result in lost lands, lost revenues, and lost prestige.

Alexander Mitchell’s small pamphlet was far more concerned with the science of the Symmes Theory than with politics and expeditions. In the preface to his pamphlet, Mitchell says he ‘undertook to shew [sic] the plausibility of the new system, as an argument, why our new philosopher should be patronized.’⁸³ Mitchell does not go into detail about who Symmes is, indicating an expectation of common understanding among any readers of his pamphlet, which suggests that Symmes and his idea were well known in the region by 1826. Symmes himself is referred to as a new Columbus for an even newer world potentially ten times the size of the Americas (p. 10).

Mitchell argues not just for a hollow earth, but one intelligently habited based on scriptural interpretation and the present habitation of all the known continents:

The Lord created the earth, he formed it not in vain, but made it to be inhabited... To reason from analogy, we must believe, that is there be a vast interior world, that, like all others, it abounds with rational and animal life. (p. 9)

⁸¹ McBrid, *Symmes’s Theory of Concentric Spheres*, p. 133.

⁸² McBride, *Symmes’s Theory*, p. 142.

⁸³ Alexander Mitchell, *A Treatise n Natural Philosophy, in Vindication of Symmes’s Theory of the Earth Being a Hollow Sphere* (Eaton, OH: Samuel Tizzard, 1826).All other references cited in text for this edition.

Divine economy, again; it is a waste of space to not create a hollow, habitable world. He derives from this the idea that the Moon is inhabited as well, based on ‘the light of reason and philosophy’ (p. 12), so that no matter how incredulous the reader is of an inhabited interior, the inhabitants of the interior and the Moon may feel just as incredulous. Mitchell’s rhetoric is divided between biblical analogy and observed phenomena, such as refraction causing the earth to appear still in the sky as it did in the bible (p. 10); this is the same sort of refraction – in Mitchell’s argument – and would be satisfied to see a US flag at the South polar axis. Mitchell is cautious, though, that ‘the Scriptures will be arrayed against’ Symmes and his followers because in the past the ‘Bible has been used as an engine against all important discoveries and improvements in science’ (p. 15). Mitchell is charging not just a general disbelief, but a concerted effort or conspiracy against Symmes, though no evidence of this beyond the denial of funding for Symmes’s mission can be found.

It is impossible to know how widely distributed McBride and Mitchell’s works were, but both being published in 1826 suggests a tipping point in the breadth of Symmes’s reputation and general acknowledgement of his theory, whether in favour or not.

III.ii – Jeremiah Reynolds

Though not an amateur scientist but a newspaperman by trade, Jeremiah Reynolds did as much, if not more, than Symmes to bring the theory to the public and encourage sponsorship of an expedition to one of the Poles. Reynolds’s emphasis on scientific Polar exploration for its own rewards, more than proving Symmes’s theory, was one of the reasons for their falling out. An Ohio University educated (though without the degree) newspaper editor, Reynolds was a more natural speaker, and more realistic about what kind of language and campaigning it would take to convince sponsors to send ships to the Poles.

Reynolds was editing the *Wilmington Spectator* in Wilmington, Ohio when he met Symmes at the age of 24, and gave up his newspaper career to join Symmes on his lecture tour; ‘An articulate and charismatic speaker, Jeremiah also had a flair for making influential

friends.’⁸⁴ But Reynolds was also developing grander ideas; he wanted to see a U.S. expedition to the south (as opposed to Symmes’s inclination to explore the closer north) not just in the name of the theory, but for knowledge itself. Reynolds was not as obsessed with the ‘Holes in the Poles’ – even willing to concede that they may not be there – which is what led to his falling out with Symmes. He was willing to concede that a U.S. ship could reach ‘the very axis of the earth’,⁸⁵ a concession that violated everything Symmes’s idea stood for. At the same time, it made what Reynolds was proposing all the more plausible. He had, according to Stanton, ‘effectively supplanted’ the notion of a hollow, habitable Earth, and instead put the emphasis on

a simple concept of the universe, simply expressed, and national pride at the prospect of launching an exploring expedition. In short, he made an urbane hypothesis of a backwoods doctrine of the cosmos and became for a time a popular evangelist of science.⁸⁶

Besides winning the support of other writers and politicians, Reynolds won over several of America’s new scientific societies, which also began to pester Congress for an expedition. In May of 1828 the House of Representatives finally passed a resolution, sent on the President John Quincy Adams, asking that a U.S. Navy ship be sent to explore the Pacific. This time, no mention of Symmes, or the hollow earth, is made, a significant change in tactics. Instead, the argument moves beyond the man and is put down to scientific, economic, and even imperialist reasons:

Mr. REED... I will now, said Mr. R. Since it has become necessary, explain my views upon the subject very briefly. Some time ago, petitions were presented to this House from the inhabitants of Nantucket, and also from New Bedford, in Massachusetts, praying that the Pacific Ocean and South Sea might explored, and that the islands, shores, reefs, and shoals, might be surveyed in an accurate and authentic manner. They further stated that their voyages have been extended, within a few years from Peru and Chili, to New Zealand and the Isles of Japan. The risk and losses have thereby been greatly increased. A number of ships have been lost, with their crews, no doubt upon the rocks and shoals, without one person’s escaping to tell the news. The insurance in those seas as I am informed, is nearly twice as much as in the Atlantic. [...] Those engaged in the fur trade, and all other commerce in the Pacific, which is now very considerable, and is rapidly increasing, are deeply interested in the resolution now under consideration. Commerce, the farming interest, and manufacturing interest, are all deeply interested in the safe navigation

⁸⁴ Philbrick, *Sea of Glory*, p.20.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Stanton, *The Great United States Exploring Expedition*, p. 14.

of those seas; in fact, our whole country is directly or indirectly interested. The proposed measure, therefore, is one well calculated to save lives and property, and to further and extend our prosperity...

[...]

Mr. CAMBRELENG... That the Pacific Ocean might be emphatically called the American sea; and he expressed a strong hope that the resolution would pass.

[...]

Mr. SAWYER now made some remarks in favour of the measure, which he thought was due as our contribution to the general stock of geographic and nautical science.⁸⁷

The reasons expressed by these Representatives begin to show the government interest in exploration, not just for the ‘contribution to the general stock’ of scientific information, but that this information has powerful economic status. The Pacific Ocean never came to be known as the ‘American Sea’, but the foundations of imperial ambition, even before the philosophy of Manifest Destiny (to be discussed later) came into the popular conscious, were already being laid. Reynolds was made a special agent to the Navy, who delivered a report on the various islands and shoals that the expedition should concern itself with investigating.⁸⁸ Reynolds got his start with Symmes, but would never vociferously back the hollow earth claim again, choosing instead to champion scientific exploration. If there happen to actually be ‘Holes in the Poles’, then all the better, but it would not be his principal argument.

When this first attempt at a government sponsored expedition fell through, Reynolds found passage on a privately funded enterprise, the South Sea Fur Company and Exploring Expedition, whose main purpose was sealing, but would take on scientific specialists as well. Unfortunately, the crew was not nearly as anxious to explore, especially as the sealing was not going well. Many deserted, and in the midst of a mutiny, Reynolds was set ashore in Chile, where he spend the next two years exploring on his own before finally making his way back to the U.S. His experiences, however, would inspire the writing of *Mocha Dick*, *the White Whale of the Pacific* (1839), which would be rewritten by Herman Melville into *Moby Dick* (1851). Reynolds’s lasting legacy seems to be not in his own work, but in those writers that he inspired.

⁸⁷ *Register of Debates*, 20th Congress, 1st Session, Debate 2731 (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1828).

⁸⁸ Philbrick, *Sea of Glory*, p. 21.

In 1836 Reynolds would publish a short history of Polar exploration that would become a significant source of information for Edgar Allan Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*. On the 3rd of April, Reynolds delivers his *Address, on the Subject of a Surveying and Exploring Expedition to the Pacific Ocean and the South Seas* to Congress, which in its published version goes on for nearly a hundred pages (and never mentions John Cleves Symmes, Jr.). Reynolds reinvigorated the debate for further American scientific exploration; Congress approved a bill providing \$150,000 for the U.S. Exploring Expedition, under the command of Lt. Charles Wilkes. When the U.S. Ex. Ex. was set to launch, however, it was without Reynolds, who had engaged in a bitter feud with the secretary of the Navy. Many of the other scientific specialists had been cut from the crew for budgetary reasons, and it was little wonder that Reynolds, who had no formal scientific training, was left behind. It did not stop him, though, from continuing to publish on Polar exploration.

III.iii – The U.S. Ex. Ex.

The U.S. Exploring Expedition was the direct result of petitioning by Symmes and his followers, though this is not a fact often remembered (probably not leastwise because such a scientific undertaking was inspired by such spectacularly wrong science). It was, to date, the most ambitious undertaking of the U.S. Navy, and took years to finally launch. Here again is seen the influence Symmes took not just from the observations James Cook made in his voyages, but the nature of exploration itself. Critic Roy Bridges explains; 'James Cook set the pattern of government demanding scientific investigation as part of a search for precise and accurate information whether or not this pointed to economic opportunities.'⁸⁹

Discovery, and information, became a currency unto itself, not leastwise because it may lead to future economic opportunities not immediately obvious or exploitable. But to map a place, to put your name on it, to put the flag of your country on it, is to claim a place.

When Richard Mentor Johnson (1780-1850) was a Senator for Kentucky, he brought Symmes's proposal to fund an expedition before Congress twice, and both times failed to

⁸⁹ Roy Bridges, 'Exploration and Travel Outside Europe (1720-1914)', *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 55.

sway the government. When the U.S. Ex. Ex. was cancelled after John Quincy Adams lost his re-election campaign for the presidency, it seemed the Polar voyage would never take place. In 1836, however, Johnson, running as the vice-presidential candidate on Martin van Buren's ticket, found himself the second most powerful man in Washington, and two years later, the U.S. Ex. Ex. set sail. There is little doubt that Johnson helped to keep Symmes's vision alive, and pushed to resurrect the mission.

Young Lieutenant Charles Wilkes – who was to become the officer in charge of the U.S. Ex. Ex. – first met Jeremiah Reynolds in 1828, after the Congressional resolution to send a Pacific exploring vessel. Wilkes stood out as virtually the only officer in the whole of the U.S. Navy to have any scientific interest or training (however amateur). In 1829, however, this initial voyage was scuttled by a Congress that felt it more prudent to 'see America first' before exploring further.⁹⁰ Former-President Adams also turned instead to the lower ranks of the House of Representatives, where he continued to campaign for America's scientific future.

IV – Edgar Allan Poe and Jules Verne

Jeremiah Reynolds found a lasting follower in the fellow newspaperman and gothic story writer Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) who would use the work of Symmes and Reynolds in two tales of terrifying polar exploration. It is even rumoured that as Poe lay dying, his last words were 'Reynolds... Reynolds... Reynolds',⁹¹ though no one knows for certain that they had met. While working for the *Southern Literary Messenger* Poe published many of Reynolds's works and wrote favourably of Reynold's 1836 Address to the House of Representatives on Antarctic exploration. Poe took Reynolds's position on the necessity of exploring the Poles, more than theorising on the feasibility of a hollow world.

The short story 'Ms. Found in a Bottle' was winner of the *Baltimore Saturday Visitor's* literary contest in 1833. Though there is no mention of Symmes, the ending sees

⁹⁰ Stanton, *The Great United States Exploring Expedition*, p. 25.

⁹¹ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 88.

the narrator swept down into a Symmes Hole. The idea of the whirlpool would be used again in his other short story 'A Descent into the Maelstrom' (though that tale is far less fatal for its protagonist). The structure of 'Ms. Found in a Bottle' also seems to be one later emulated by James De Mille in *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder* (1888). Two sailors caught in a storm are the only survivors from their vessel, carried south toward oblivion, and committing their tale to paper before casting it into the ocean as they disappear into a pure white landscape.

The only novel Poe ever wrote – and possibly never finished, depending on the reader's perspective – was *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838). Though it relied heavily on Reynolds's work on Polar exploration and his 1836 *Address* before Congress on the need for an American expedition, the novel is not, strictly speaking, a *terra cava* narrative when one considers the vagueness of its conclusion. Poe was attempting to capture the public imagination that was focused on the impending U.S. Exploring Expedition; he copied out almost half of Reynolds's 1834 work. Though *Pym* is often referred to in discussions of the hollow earth, there is very little in the novel to suggest that Poe was writing about Holes in the Poles. His significance is the influence he had on subsequent writers and thinkers. Poe does emulate other aspects of *Symzonia*, though, in the discussion of penguins, unfamiliar animal remains, and the discovery of uncharted land near the Antarctic Circle. Kafton-Minkel believes Poe remained intentionally vague as to the properties of the Antarctic in anticipation of 'great discoveries',⁹² in other words, not tipping his hand about the potential truth to the Polar mystery.

Pym was not an immediately successful book, which could be why Poe never revisited the form in his short career. In his history *The Rise of the American Novel* (1951) Alexander Cowie called the novel 'a plotless, nightmare-ridden book'.⁹³ Poe's gothic take on *Symzonia* was not suited to the masses, and he did little to actually promote the cause of

⁹² Walter Kafton-Minkel, *Subterranean Worlds: 100,000 Years of Dragons, Dwarfs, the Dead, Lost Races & UFOs from Inside the Earth* (Port Townsend, WA: Loompanics Unlimited, 1989), p. 253.

⁹³ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 101.

polar exploration and Symmes's theory. Standish notes that 'Poe loved hoaxes, and he does his damndest in *Pym* to carry it off.'⁹⁴

In 1897 Jules Verne tried to finish Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, penning a sequel called *The Sphinx of the Ice Fields*. But where Poe had cast his character into the current of a waiting maelstrom of a Symmes Hole in the Antarctic, Verne, ever true to his desire of conveying knowable science, merely has Pym's body found on a loadstone mountain. Standish accuses Verne's effort of being 'far from the spooky subterranean cosmos inhabited by Poe.'⁹⁵ As a *terra cava* novel and as a sequel to Poe, *The Sphinx* is a failure. Verne's most well-known work, the most well-known hollow earth novel, may have been inspired by Symmes and Poe, but is *not* a Symmesian novel.

The premise of *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* is well enough known, but there are two distinct versions of the novel: the first English translation in 1872, which William Butcher calls 'atrocious',⁹⁶ that changes the characters' names and nationalities, and then translations like Butcher's that try to restore Verne's original 1864 text with a faithful interpretation. (Not to mention the various liberties that Hollywood has taken with the story, not one of which is a faithful adaptation.) For the purposes of this study I must use the original English edition in order to understand the influence of the text on British and American writers of the hollow earth. Professor Liedenbrock becomes Professor Von Hardwigg, and Axel becomes an English nephew called Harry.

Ironically, though, *Journey* never references Symmes and does not make use of his geography, and it is in *The Adventures of Captain Hatteras* (1866) that a – dismissive – comment about Symmes finally appears:

"Finally, it has been asserted in our own time that there was an immense opening at the poles, from which came the Northern Lights, and through which one could reach the inside of the earth; since in the hollow sphere two planets, Pluto and Proserpine, were said to move, and the air was luminous in consequence of the strong pressure it felt."

"That has been maintained?" asked Altamont.

⁹⁴ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 102.

⁹⁵ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 113.

⁹⁶ William Butcher, 'Introduction', in Jules Verne, *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. vii.

"Yes, it has been written about seriously. Captain Symmes, a countryman of ours, proposed to Sir Humphry Davy, Humboldt, and Arago, to undertake the voyage! But they declined."

"And they did well."

"I think so. Whatever it may be, you see, my friends, that the imagination has busied itself about the Pole, and that sooner or later we must come to the reality."⁹⁷

From this exchange, we see that Verne was familiar with at least Symmes's 'Circular No. 1' and its invocation of Davy and Humboldt. (Verne is mistaken, however, in having a British character refer to Symmes as 'a countryman of ours'.) He is chastising those who have allowed 'imagination' to control their views of the Polar Regions, and suggesting that 'reality' – i.e. *reason* – must be asserted. Verne does not give his own reasons for doubting the theory, though, and does make any attempt to explain to readers why they should not follow Symmes into a Polar opening. But part of Verne's firm reliance on demonstrable science meant avoiding speculation; because he was not any more familiar with the geography of the Poles, he could not allow imagination to take him very far.

Conclusion

Though Symmes's Theory of Concentric Spheres would not be entirely forgotten in the middle of the century, America found itself far more preoccupied with Civil War and Reconstruction for anyone to publish on the hollow earth. Not until the 1870s would Symmes's name begin to reappear, attached to that of his sons, Americus and Elmore, giving rise to three decades of *terra cava* fictions inspired by his theory. With the success of several European novels that incorporated *terra cava* elements (*Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, *Laura: A Journey into the Crystal* by George Sands, *The Coming Race* by Edward Bulwer-Lytton) that were reprinted in the U.S., the literary market was open to reading American hollow earth narratives.

⁹⁷ Jules Verne, *The Voyages and Adventures of Captain Hatteras* (Project Gutenberg, <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/29413/29413-h/29413-h.htm>> accessed 21/3/2013), chpt. XXIV.

Chapter Two – Empire and the Resurgence of the American *Terra Cava*

Introduction

As *terra incognita* disappeared from late-nineteenth century maps and imperialism took hold in the American psyche, adventurers, theorists, and especially writers spread their imaginations into the interior of the Earth, sometimes employing it as a metaphorical stand-in, other times in scientific earnestness, but always a composite space revealing a piece of the nineteenth century polyphony: spiritualism, utopianism, colonialism, scientific discovery, political discourse, and so on. The theory of a hollow, habitable world open to explorers relies on a political and literary truism: **Exploration is never disinterested.**¹ At no point, in any of these novels, does a writer reveal anything less than the wealth of many nations lying around waiting to be claimed by he (it's always a he) who is willing to go out and grab it. These non-paradigmatic imaginings of the world are among the first steps to the identifiable realm of science fiction. Without the identifiable style of science fiction to guide the writer's narrative, it is travel literature and the romance (already a fading genre at this point in history) that most influenced the outlay of the story.

The scientific expedition of discovery may not seem an act of imperialism as it was not an armed conquest, but the act of naming was claiming in the Age of Exploration. By cataloguing and categorising the plants, animals, and peoples of a region previously unseen by European or American eyes, there is intellectual appropriation of the space. Before long, economic and political appropriation often followed. In the science and travel narratives of the nineteenth century, published for the pleasure and elucidation of the wider public that would never leave their own shores, was a marketable commodity. The imaginative travel and explorations narratives that took the place of the real thing in the second half of the century had to parallel these same themes of christening, characterising, charting, and in many cases illustrating the new lands. *Terra cava* theories and stories were a subset of the

¹ Credit for this statement must be given to my supervisor, Professor David Seed, who uttered this sentiment at nearly every meeting we had for three years.

terra nova speculations of the age, which included lost world, polar depression, and Martian topos.

The timing of the American written novels to follow here is significant. Following the 1890 US census, the government declared that there was no more American frontier, no boundaries or borders to explore, cross, and colonise. Frederick Jackson Turner described in his thesis on the American West the importance of new (rich) lands:

The exploitation of the beasts took hunter and trader to the west, the exploitation of the grasses took the rancher west, and the exploitation of the virgin soil of the river valleys and prairies attracted the farmer. Good soils have been the most continuous attraction to the farmer's frontier.²

Manifest Destiny had been achieved, and the United States Constitution ruled from coast to coast across the continent. But for a people who had spent the last century in quest for the frontier, this was not acceptable, and a new Manifest Destiny needed to be realised. In literature there was another continent, beneath American shoes, waiting to be found, and colonised. These novels are part of what John Rieder calls 'fantasies of appropriation', part of the growth of science fiction from colonialist narratives.³

What distinguishes several hollow earth novels from many of the other lost race narratives that occupy Rieder's study is that, like *Symzonia* before them, they find an *advanced* race, not a primitive one. This allows for a greater critique of the society producing the work; rather than being shining examples of wholesome civilisation, the explorer-narrators find themselves – and their philosophies – lacking in the light of a more progressive society. These internal countries are offered as examples of what America *could be* if only certain reforms were enacted. More of this will come in chapters 3 and 4, but the lost race theme in the imperialist novel is still relevant. In many of these works, though a more technologically or spiritually advanced race is discovered, but there is still *something* that the white westerner has to offer the interior world. What the conquered world of the interior offers in return is a replenishment of wealth and resources: 'The enormous mineral

² Frederick Jackson Turner, 'The Significance of the Frontier in American History', *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1921), p. 18.

³ John Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), p. 34.

wealth common to lost-race settings is ... based on the trope of inexhaustible natural abundance', according to Reiber, and 'also the peculiar colonial opportunity to get something for virtually nothing.'⁴ In the novels that employ a more primitive civilisation than that the narrator left behind, glory, God, gold and gunpowder are four fairly consistent tropes as they are in many of the contemporary imperial adventure novels. The single greatest 'advancement' the less technological or democratic civilisations possess is access to vast amounts of wealth; their single greatest deficiency is their lack of knowledge about gunpowder.

There are three significant types of Imperialist *terra cava* stories: first, the accidental imperialist, the narrator who did not mean to discover the hollow earth; secondly, the intentional imperialist, who sets out to find the hollow earth; and lastly, the juvenile imperialist, young boys whose curiosity and gumption leads them to fantastic locations underground. The first two require some explanation of distinction; this is a tale of two types of explorer. Christopher Columbus set sail to find a new trade route to the riches of Asia and happened to stumble upon a continent previously unknown to Europe. His accident of discovery led to new knowledge, trade and wealth for Europe. Hernan Cortez set out with an army for that new continent in search of wealth and conquered the Aztec empire: glory, god, gold and gunpowder. Many characters draw parallels between themselves and Columbus; none will admit to being a Cortez.

I – Before 1880: Edward Bulwer-Lytton's Fear of American Empire

Some of the most famous *terra cava* novels did not emerge from the country which spawned the idea, but from Europe, further emphasising the influence that European literature had on the new United States. Subsequent narratives about journeys to the interior of the world would not be compared to *Symzonia*, but to these imported novels. Verne's application of hard science, technology, the first-person narrative and the exploring spirit would all be seen in many subsequent hollow earth novels in one fashion or another. Edward Bulwer-Lytton

⁴ Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*, p. 50.

wrote a proto-science fiction story, and inverted the traditional imperialist tale by casting the white Westerner as the inferior being, powerless against the superior race of the Vril-ya. It serves as a metaphor for Bulwer-Lytton's own anxieties about Britain falling behind the coming race of Americans who were gaining in power and influence around the world.

Though Edward Bulwer-Lytton is most famous, perhaps, for giving the literary world 'It was a dark and stormy night' in the novel *Paul Clifford* (1830), *The Coming Race* (1871) is his famous novel, one that turns the tables on traditional imperialism and is also, strangely, set in the US. Bulwer-Lytton uses of imperialistic, utopian and spiritual themes are echoed in nearly all American *terra cava* novels to follow in the 1880s and 1890s, and the contemporary reviews of many of these novels will use *The Coming Race* as one of the standards against which they are measured. Despite *Symzonia* being of American manufacture and published half a century before *The Coming Race*, only the latter received critical attention at the end of the century. There is also no evidence that Bulwer-Lytton had any familiarity with *Symzonia* or Symmes's theory.

The narrator first introduces himself with some basic biographical information to establish his character and reliability as narrator, the traditional son of a well-to-do, respected family, honest and hardworking. It is interesting that Bulwer-Lytton, one of the few *terra cava* novelists outside of North America, would choose to write from an American perspective (though jokingly refers to the narrator's father's run for Congress being unsuccessful against his own tailor). In a way, it serves a send-up of America, criticising their economic and political ascendancy, as well as exposing the hubris of assuming racial dominance. How the narrator comes to this place is explained as nothing more than a quick accident, not a long journey, eliding over the long descriptions of travel often seen in other narratives of this type. Discovered by the Vril-ya, he is taken in as an odd 'pet' and named Tish.

The civilisation we meet is utopian, and explained in detail according to Bulwer-Lytton's own experiences as a Member of Parliament and Secretary of State for the Colonies. Like so many other utopian novels of the time, the Vril-ya society abstains from

alcohol and the consumption of meat. Poverty is unknown and the sciences abound.

Technology plays a large part of the utopian aspects of the Vril-ya society. Upon first entering the city Tish is introduced to automatons of semi-human form who respond to Vril-ya commands given by the touch of a staff, and lifts – which were a new technology in Bulwer-Lytton's time (p. 27). The wings of the Vril-ya are not biological, but actually mechanical (p.36).

From the first moment a member of the Vril-ya race is met, we know that they are rich, and that they are powerful. Tish describes that first sight of the beautiful creature 'roused that instinct of danger which the sight of a tiger or serpent arouses' (p. 25), even though it was also adorned in a tiara of jewels (p. 24), letting us know that this is no savage. Riches about everywhere; when Tish enters the home of his rescuer, even concussed he does not fail to take notice of the 'Oriental splendour; the walls were tessellated with spars, and metals, and uncut jewels' (p. 27).

The description of the appearance of the Vril-ya echoes imperialist language, how they possessed the 'gravity and quietude of Orientals' with 'dark eyes and red man's colour' (p. 28). But instead of their non-white appearance being a mark of inferiority, they inspire dread in Tish (despite their apparent kindness) because he senses that they 'could have killed me as easily as a man can kill a bird or butterfly' (p. 29). Our narrator experiences what it is like to be viewed as a lower form of life, when he is on the streets and examined with the curiosity of some 'rare wild animal' (p. 31). A mark of the Vril-ya superiority is their disgust at any 'vehement emotional demonstration' (p. 34), a parallel to the British ideal of the 'stiff upper lip'. Tish is also told that though he is obviously not part of the barbarian tribes existing under the earth, he obviously does not 'belong to any civilised people' either (p. 42).

American exceptionalism is heavily satirised by Bulwer-Lytton in Tish's explanation to the Vril-ya about his origins, 'to expiate on the present grandeur and prospective pre-eminence of that glorious American Republic' and its bright future in which 'the flag of freedom should float over an entire continent, and two hundred millions of

intelligent citizens, accustomed from infancy to the daily use of revolvers, should apply to a cowering universe the doctrine of the Patriot Monroe'⁵ (p. 44). The Vril-ya hosts are horrified by everything they hear from Tish about the US, and make him swear to never repeat this description to anyone. At the same time, Bulwer-Lytton is expressing his own – British – anxiety about Great Britain losing its superior place in the world to the Americans, who are truly the 'coming race'.

The Vril-ya are endowed with mystical powers via their use of Vril. The breath of a boy on Tesh's forehead ceases the pain from his concussion and puts him into a restorative sleep (p. 28). Tish refers to the Vril-ya as something like the 'Peri' of Middle Eastern myth, beautiful creatures descended from fallen who could be both benevolent and malevolent (p. 35). The first time he ever witnesses their flying dance, Tish is overcome with the belief that he has seen some form of witchcraft and panics (p. 36) much like other explorers who have perceived demonic action in the practices of newly encountered races. '*The Coming Race* – both the title and the book's ominous concluding phrase – reflects a long-standing interest of Bulwer-Lytton's, the occult, here given pseudo-scientific dressing, and his somewhat confused cogitations on the theory of evolution' (Brian Aldiss, 'Introduction' to *The Coming Race*, p. 5-6).

As outlandish as it may seem to the modern reader there were many in the nineteenth century who took the novel to be non-fiction, demonstrating the pervasiveness of the belief in interior life, technological advancement and spiritualist powers.⁶ Followers of Theosophy embraced the novel and the powerful magic substance of Vril, which became synonymous with life and virility. Marketers used it to christen and sell Bovril. Few seemed to realise that Bulwer-Lytton was *not* attempting to craft a course for social evolution, but a discouragement:

If all the utopian dreams for human society could be achieved... our society could not amalgamate with it; it would be deadly to us, not from its vices but its virtues.

⁵ A reference to the Monroe Doctrine.

⁶ Seed, 'Introduction', *The Coming Race*, pp. xlii-xliii.

Secondly, the realization of these ideas would produce a society which we would find extremely dull, and in which the current equality would prohibit all greatness.⁷

At this point, the imagined space of *terra cava*, in the real world and the literary, is becoming a contemporary paradigm that started with Symmes and *Symzonia*. But only after European authors published internationally successful novels (no non-fiction works on the hollow earth emerged from outside the US) did American authors seek success via the *terra cava* narrative setting.

II – The Accidental Imperialist

There are two types of explorer who end up in the centre of the earth: those who meant to be there, and those who did not. The significance of this distinction can be seen in the authors'/narrators' approach to the worlds they uncover: the intentional imperialist is confident (even over-confident) of his powers, while the unintentional imperialist is less certain about his position in this new world, and only by chance and good fortune is able to gain control of local government and resources. He is thrust into the position of being a saviour, like the exploration fantasy of the white man being made a deity by the native population. Here we shall start with the latter, the men who quite unintentionally found themselves in interior worlds that were put at their command. All of these authors, unless otherwise noted, are Americans.

II.i – *Under the Auroras*

First published in 1888 by William Jenkins Shaw as *Under the Auroras, A Marvelous Tale of the Interior World*, in the reprint four years later this early hollow earth novel was rechristened *Cresten, Queen of the Toltus* after its eponymous heroine, pictured in a sketch on the title page. There is a small, but significant quote given beneath the title on the first page: 'On science is the tale so firmly grounded,/Twixt real and fanciful the mind's confounded'. It's being hinted that the story to follow should be thought of as scientific in nature, even if presented in a fictional form. Science fiction, if you will, before science

⁷ James L. Campbell, *Edward Bulwer-Lytton* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), p. 56.

fiction. Like *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* and *Interior World* before it, the science is as paramount to the tale as the plot action.

Under the Auroras follows the narrative of an American inventor, Amos Jackson, who flies with a comrade into the interior of the world via a Polar Symmes Hole. Once there they discover not one but several lost civilisations, wedding themselves to the most powerful rulers of this interior world and going on an imperial campaign to bring the inhabitants of every realm under the rule of Cresten, Queen of the Toltus. Cresten and Jackson's purpose is to spread the benevolent rule of Cresten's utopian leadership.

The Preface is similar to those of others, distancing the author from responsibility for any reader incredulity – 'The whole responsibility for this story is thrown upon the shoulders of the narrator, who hath departed this life, and is, therefore, out of harm's way' – while also trying to build veracity; 'I have no doubt that, had this narration not been made to me, I should have gone to my grave without having learned how man and all other animals originated' (p. 3). As to who is playing the role of the amanuensis, we never learn; he (a 'he' given the illustration in the first chapter) is the interrogator and scribe, briefing readers on what to expect in the coming pages: 'where the white race comes from; when the Deluge occurred, and what caused it; why men lived to count their years by hundreds anterior to the Deluge; when and why the ice-belt was once farther south on the exterior globe; when and how the mountain ranges were up-lifted' (pp. 3-4) and so on, a tautology of human origins. What this unnamed secondary narrator wants to communicate in this introduction is his 'gratitude' (p. 4) for the knowledge shared with him by our primary narrator, Jackson.

Jackson arrives just as the secondary narrator is reading through an article, 'Captain Hall's Last Trip', about the Arctic explorer Charles Francis Hall, who died in 1871 on the Polaris Expedition in a failed attempt to reach the North Pole and discover the fate of the Franklin Expedition, setting the scene with breadcrumbs from the real world. Arriving in Patagonia, Southern Argentina, Amos Jackson's first words to his scrivener are 'Unfortunately, sir, I can speak only English, Norwegian and one or two other languages which no one save myself, on this exterior globe, understands' (p. 6). Interestingly, the

strangeness of this statement draws no comment from the secondary narrator, who goes on to insist that “I certainly am not of the opinion that you are now insane” (p. 7) when Jackson complains that others who have heard his story think him a lunatic. Jackson also exacts a promise from this editor to pass his tale onto the public, as he is a dying man and wishes that his discoveries not die with him. In the coming chapters there are many parallels, the amanuensis, the scribe and the interrogator of the narrative, the reader’s avatar within the plot. The secondary narrator never disappears entirely from the novel, as many others who introduce the story are apt to, providing a closing of the frame for us in the end by reporting Jackson’s death.

As the character of Jackson, he introduces himself as a native of Chicago, though he left 25 years before, a scientific investigator who partners with another scientist, John Harding. Sharing the opinion that the earth is hollow, and giving a rundown on assumed air currents to the readers (pp. 8-9), they construct a metal and rubber air balloon to take them to the opening in the Arctic Pole. The standard relation of a northern journey, moving from ice fields to warmer climes, the malfunctioning of the compass needle at the crossing of the verge, are the same as found in every other *terra cava* narrative, as this was how a compass was understood to behave in such a shifting magnetic field.

The environment of this underground world is idyllic, and the only element missing from Eden is the strong hand of an American man. The inclusion of an electrically charged atmosphere that leaves one ‘filled with a lightness of spirit and increased energy of both mind and body’ (p. 13) along with ‘an atmosphere so luminous that the whole firmament was the color of pale gold’ (p. 13). It isn’t enough for material gold to be present; this new world must be cast in the encompassing likeness of precious metal. He later reflects that they are ‘two insects in the bottom of a huge golden-bowl’ (p. 17), continuing the impression of a rich world awaiting exploitation. Jackson attributes this source of heat and light with an analogy to cyclones: ‘I will not theorize on the phenomenon, but simply refer you to the flame that you have seen arched over the vortex of a cyclone. Here it was not condensed into

destructive force, but grand in its proportion, mild and beneficent' (p. 13). This is apparently part of the effect of the electromagnetic and air currents Jackson and Harding studied.

Landing in the wilderness, Jackson makes a study of the plants under a microscope, observing 'the minute pores, through which they continually... exhaled oxygen' and concludes 'that the vegetation...took no rest' (p. 16). It is this 'find' to which he attributes the apparent exhilaration of the atmosphere. When confronted with danger, Jackson admits, in retrospect, that he was more daring-do because he was 'drunk' on the atmosphere (p. 19). He declares this inner world 'A fairy landscape' and a 'paradise' (p. 17) in which he would happily spend the rest of his life, all on his first few hours there.

Parallels with outer-world features and phenomena are noted in abundance: trees as enormous as California Sequoias (p. 17) and hairy elephants like those preserved in 'Siberian snows' (p. 18) which can only be a reference to woolly mammoths. After the battle to defeat the 'Se-ton-secks', everyone (including the defeated enemy) is fed from pumpkin-sized potatoes (p. 99). Such abundant resources would cure famine in the US and abroad, adding to the appeal of the interior world. Occasionally, Cresten stops to deliver a monologue on environmental development: "'You perceive,'" said the Queen, "that this valley illustrates another stage in the earth's advancement. The beasts could not live away from it, and we could not live long within its borders.'" (p. 111) The evolution of environments in their ability to produce and sustain life was a new development: "As the earth accumulated, the temperature lowered and the conditions changed" (p. 112) Cresten elaborates while surveying a valley.

The material richness of the inner world beyond its golden glow is soon made clear in Jackson's first encounter with the mass of inhabitants, with a band dressed in 'glossy fabric' and metal bangles (p. 28), while hundreds of beautiful female acolytes emerge clothed in gold and diamonds (p. 30). The dishes upon which the visitors' first meal is served are made of solid gold (p. 37). Sumptuous interiors to the quartz palace of Cresten, Queen of the Light, burnished with nuggets of gold and various gemstones (p. 32) gild the lilies of this civilisation. This is a land waiting for its treasures to be harvested by

adventurers from the outside. That the inhabitants of this opulent city are not Anglo-Saxon only makes the prospect of harvesting these riches more justified.

Racial insinuations are ever-present; the first view of the residents of the interior reveal ‘a face whose complexion, by contrast, would render the fairest American girl I ever saw quite unattractive in that regard. It was a face of such wonderful transparency and freshness, as surpassed all my former conceptions’ (p. 21) – and this is Jackson’s view of a man. However, the primitiveness of the man is betrayed by his golden-brown hirsute covering and loincloth. Jackson’s ethnocentric perceptions continue when he assumes his new companion, Tet-tse, to possess a nature-worshipping religion (p. 24) and refers to him as ‘a very intelligent animal’ (p. 25). At least in the taming of the woolly elephants, he decides that Tet-tse’s people are not ‘savages’ (p. 26). The relation of the natives as products of nature, completely provided for by their surroundings without the need for labour, is not dissimilar to contemporary perceptions of Pre-Columbian American Indians.

The spread of Cresten’s rule across the underworld is presented as nothing but a work of divine justice. When the Se-ton-seck are defeated, and Cresten nominates one of the captured warriors as the new ruler of his tribe, he cries: “Behold thou hast conquered, O most powerful, most beautiful and gentle, favoured of God! The vengeance that my father taught, hath died out of my breast! My soul is changed! I am thy subject! I will proclaim thee Queen among all our tribes!” The subjugator, the Queen, despairs for the bloodshed she must commit to accomplish the subjugation of the Se-ton-seck: “Why should they conspire against me? Why do they force upon me the spilling of more blood, which I abhor? Have I not made their people happy?” (p. 159) After conquering this race, one of the first places visited is a temple that exhibits ‘a most magnificent display of gold plating and carved marble.’ (p. 167) The sacrifices made to conquer this kingdom will at least be amply rewarded with riches, if the Queen had any interest. But she passes up even on collecting the golden armour and metal weapons of the defeated Se-ton-seck because she already has the precious metals ‘in abundance’ and they would only serve to remind her of bloodshed (p.

96). Not only is she benevolent, but any enterprising explorer would literally find gold laying on the ground, unimportant to the natives.

The evolutionary vocabulary of imperialist sentiments emerges several times, especially in the last quarter of the novel. In a portion of the interior that is perpetually night and cool, the Queen explains, ‘Yet, doubtless, in this gloom, the earth generated the white races, which, in their struggle against these adverse conditions, developed into the most hardy and strongest, the bravest and wisest of our species’ (p. 301); nothing subtle about the superiority of whites in that statement. There is still the belief of separate creations of the races, rather than the branching effect that Darwin hypothesised, and modern science confirms. Jackson states at one point: ‘This may have been the primal home of the white races, but I know of one white man who would not long survive under these conditions’ (p. 322) referring to himself.

Being thus so superior, not racially, but morally, Cresten and Jackson inspire the already restless population of the Zit-tites, to rebel against the king (p. 345). The present royal family is likened to the Borgias (p. 353), but the king is, of course, no match for Cresten (p. 357). Masculinity is not inherently superior to race; a woman from a ‘superior’ race is thus still more powerful, more intelligent, more worthy, than a man from an ‘inferior’ race. American laws against miscegenation in the wake of Emancipation would certainly influence this perception, but by selecting Jackson for a husband, Cresten is elevating the white American race to one of equality with her advanced species. Jackson, and by extension, the reader, can feel worthy of the great Cresten.

An exploration of linguistics, as it is in many of the lost race *terra cava* novels, is part of fleshing out the lost race. Jackson’s experience with a Norwegian farmhand as a child leads him to believe that the language he hears spoken in this land is one that ‘may have been spoken in Norway 1,000 or 2,000 years ago’ (p. 31). In a moment of literary misdirection, it is Cresten’s acquisition of English in only two days that forces Harding to declare ‘she’s a witch’ (p. 41) with evil intentions. This opinion changes fairly soon, though, and Harding weds himself to the Queen’s younger sister, Cetsen. Mastery of language is

always an aspect of the imperial conqueror, as communication lends power; Cresten's immediate apprehension of English distinguishes her superior mental abilities.

Politically, this is a monarchy, which seems counter-intuitive to a utopian existence, but is hardly represented as such under the auspices of the god-like Cresten, who rules in a philosophic manner: 'Knowledge is power...It controls all force, but its most potent agencies are love and charity. Inferior animals will always obey those whom they know to be their benefactors. The art of control consists in the means we use to keep their weak judgements informed of who are their friends.' As imperialistic and threatening as these sentiments may seem, Cresten elaborates that, 'What with us was Utopian, a metaphysician's dream of earthly Paradise, this wonderful creature had made a reality.' (p. 99). Jackson, the 'creature' in question, had brought Cresten into the physical world, completed her utopia, by being an adequate mate.

Cresten is the godhead of the government, in essence the ruler of a theocracy. Acting in this dual role, after the battle, she blesses the bodies of her fallen soldiers:

[All] the Toltus bent in adoration while she made over them the symbol of the arc, and commended the spirits of the departed to the care of the great God beyond the light, and to the joyful companionship of those who had gone before. It was the simplest form of worship that she had taught the Toltus. Both creed and ceremony were very simple. She was their God incarnate and their mediator; that was all of it.' (p. 105).

This sign of the 'arc' in relation to light seems reminiscent of the experiments and public exhibitions put on by Nicola Tesla at the end of the nineteenth century. Electricity takes on the symbolism of the cross, the arc a benediction.

The queen knew, for I had laughingly told her, that if she had not established a theocratic paradise, and made a happier people than I ever expected to see on earth, his democratic principles would have induced the Queen's consort to introduce the ballot and found a government on the elective franchise, if for no other reason than to escape being deified. (p. 119)

The argument being made is that a theocracy is preferable to an American-style democracy because it has produced perfect contentment for the Toltus. Jackson, though, does not aspire to be godhead, and would support a democracy inside the earth only in her absence because he knows that he could not be like Cresten; she is the exception to the tyrant.

Shaw finds much in the US political system to criticise in his valorisation of the Toltu socio-political organisation: 'I had never conceived of such a government as hers. It demanded little or no attention from her. There was no ever-changing code of laws to be revisited and amended, and no intricate judicial machinery for enforcement of law. The Toltus claimed nothing as their own; all was the Queen's and there was nothing to dispute over. Besides, I never saw a Toltu who did not have all he desired.' (p. 243). Shaw never quite reconciles this totalitarian form of government with the apparent wealth and plenty it provides, with the American precepts of freedom and individuality.

In terms of feminine authority, Cresten does not see herself, as a woman, any more deserving of power than a man. Jackson, on the other hand, sees her as his superior. Cresten is not just the absolute ruler of her land, but the conqueror of other hostile ones, leading her own armies of men. At one point, when the Lilliputian race Gen begin to fight amongst themselves, Jackson panics about how to stop them and cries 'Quick, my soul! Think for me!' This is followed by his narration 'The Queen had thought for me, as usual' (p. 210) as she stops them with a directed rainfall, one of her many powers. Jackson never demonstrates himself to be an intellectual or spiritual equal; Cresten, 'the great God Queen' (p. 216), is always one step ahead of him. Others – less wise – think they can fight against the rule of the Queen, who is 'but a woman' (p 226), and they are of course destined to fail, being so short-sighted as to judge her purely upon her sex. Harding and Jackson are merely 'mouthpieces' to convey orders during battle, Cresten requiring 'no aid or suggestion from [the men] in handling an army large or small' (pp 235-6). And yet each of the sub-kingdoms is ruled by a man. When her sister Cetsen gives birth to a boy, it is he who is named the heir-apparent. The role of women as rulers of the subterranean world is coming to an end. What, then, gives Amos Jackson the role of 'accidental imperialist'? It is his uniqueness, as a messenger of the outside world, that makes him of interest to Cresten; like the white-man-as-deity in other tales, Amos Jackson is a *rara avis* who must (being different from the native inhabitants and certainly not as hairy) be cast from a mettle worthy of holding power.

This white-dominated land in the south, however, is ‘lascivious and corrupt, they will neither respect the rights nor highly value the lives of strangers within their walls, if they perceive aught they may gain by their deaths’ (p. 322). Nonetheless, the Zit-tites (a play on Hittites, perhaps, to build familiarity with the reader) have built the largest city in or out of the world. Its over-crowding, leading to revolution, is likely meant as a parallel with the over-crowded cities in the US, millions living in squalid, packed conditions in tower blocks. There is also the excuse for arresting people who do not deliver up information to the police upon request, and when Jackson is questioned, he refuses to say that he is ‘a free-born American citizen’ because he will not ‘be thus imposed upon’ (p. 341).

On discovering the vault of giants in the conquered antediluvian city, Tu-teet, Amos Jackson wonders if these mummies are ‘the original Gog and Magog of Hebrew tradition’ (p. 176), though there is little consensus in the Old Testament as to whether Gog and Magog are individuals, or a tribe. This also stretches back to the mythical idea of giants walking the earth early in creation, and carries into the popular trope of giants (in the form of people, plants, and animals) occupying the inner world. In translating a text from the crypt, biblical history is crossed with the legends of the inner world, being fair-haired giants from the time of the Flood, while the dark-haired descendents (assumed to be Hebrew) settled the exterior (p. 197). The ‘giants’ from the northern reaches of the kingdom are the assumed descendents of ‘Noe’ (Noah, perhaps?), harkening back to Old Testament images of humanity (p. 218). Matching the Toltus history with Biblical history as Amos Jackson knows it gives him a certain power to the reader on the outside, verifying for them the legitimacy of Christianity and its stories as historical truth.

Upon discovery of the miniature Gen race and going to visit the Treck tribe, Cresten goes ‘as a god, and [they] as such received her’ (p 212). There is no questioning on Jackson’s part about this deception, using science and technology to impress upon another race the appearance of divinity. Yet when interrogated further on their beliefs, the Treck admit to ‘but one God, and all tribes worship Him’ (p. 213), implying a Christian universality. When the Treck question Cresten as possibly being God, she demurs: ‘I would

not that you should sin' (p. 213). Yet the Treck, according to Jackson, accept her as a deity, despite her efforts to educate them otherwise:

The prince became her plaything. She would take him gently between her thumb and finger, and place him in the centre of her palm; but it was in vain that she essayed to give him an idea of her hand. Its contour lay, as a whole, beyond his vision; it was to him an extensive plain. She was immensity, and she was, therefore, God. She added wonderfully to the knowledge of both the prince and the judge; so that when, a month later the tribe was returned to its place in the little world, they were, *par excellence*, its wise men.

'Thus we perceive,' said the Queen, 'how imagination cannot travel beyond the suggestion of the five senses. Even as these little creatures, so are we, in a lesser degree, prescribed.' (p. 214)

This is a lesson to the reader, about the limits of the human mind and its ability to perceive the wider universe beyond the five senses. Cresten, of course, possess a sixth, part of what allows her to communicate with Jackson mentally. The nineteenth century belief in spiritualism, and the exploration of the powers of the human mind, all play into this lesson being imparted, to convince us that there is more than we are capable of perceiving, and that the limits of our perception make us the same as the Treck, perhaps mistaking what we think we sense because of those limitations. Even Jackson states that 'it was not possible, had she [Cresten] not been able, by some occult process, to interpret their thought through some other medium than sound' (p. 215) that they should have come to know the Gen. Her faculty of foresight and knowledge have some 'occult power lying behind them' in Jackson's opinion (p. 215).

By chapter seventeen the Queen finally gets around to explaining the geography of the hollow earth to Jackson, and readers are finally given a map with characteristics similar to the one used in *Symzonia* (pp. 238-9). Symmes, though, is given no credit for his hollow world theory. With the aid of this map, Cresten describes how north/south and east/west are reckoned differently in the interior, and that the entrance of sunlight (or electricity, in the author's opinion) at either pole is circulated by the earth's rotation. Their exploration leads to geological analysis that the biblical deluge was 9,050 years before (p. 253), and observations of geysers and lava, explaining how these phenomena would work in a hollow world (p. 256). Without any sense of plate tectonics, chemical reactions and shifting liquid

tides become the proposed explanations, seen in *Under the Auroras* and other *terra cava* texts.

Strangely, for all of the scientific acumen that the Toltus seem to possess, in other ways they are incredibly archaic, such as boats that must be propelled by rows of oarsmen (p. 245) rather than engines and yet allowing for divers to be submerged in glass boxes pumped full of oxygen. They have ‘death-dealing tubes’ that can be ‘converted into an electric lamp’ (p. 249); they have power over electricity, but do not use it in engines for transportation. In order to explore the southern parts of the interior world, an air balloon like the one that brought Jackson and Harding to the interior is necessary to transport the Queen and Jackson. The Toltus have not before developed the technology to do this on their own.

On their voyage south, Cresten hands Jackson a powerful telescope to look upon the surface of the moon, which has become visible through the southern opening, saying, ‘See...how diverse and varied are the works of the Infinite. Wherever there is matter, there also is individual soul or spirit to be clothed by it. See you not it is inhabited?’ (p 293) Jackson observes people, buildings, forests, animals, etc. (p. 294), though it seems strange that astronomers up to this point in history would not have noticed a lush, inhabited moon. Additionally, on noting the provision of wings for these lunar inhabitants, the Queen states,

‘That they all have wings is the result of the electrified condition of the planet. It was formed under different conditions from the earth within which it moves, and nature adapts all forms to the conditions under which they are to exit. They are, no doubt, as we now are, only in a great degree, electrified by that quality of the spirit of light that merely repels them from the surface of their own planet and so renders them buoyant. Yonder moon does not attract us; the earth repels us. Yet is the moon the cause.’ (p. 294).

Jackson’s response? ‘Thus the Queen was able to account for all phenomena.’ I am not sure it is so clear in my mind. But here we have a nineteenth century amalgamation of both divine creation and evolution, without using either term directly.

Much of the novel moves episodically from adventure to adventure, pausing occasionally to reflect on science, history, mythology, politics and sociology. There is a map, similar to Seaborn’s, that demonstrates ‘The Interior of the Earth as Described by Cresten, Queen of the Toltus’ (pp 238-9). Maps are part of the orienting structure of

narratives set in unfamiliar lands, first in travel literature, then in the fantastic. In this case, Shaw has done more to integrate his theories and philosophies into a plot than some other authors. In chapter fifteen, little more than halfway through the book, our author/narrator, realises how bogged down his own narrative have become, and summarises for the reader his need to proceed at greater pace: ‘I find myself, sir, giving you a history of her [Cresten’s] reign so much in detail that I fear it will never be finished, since you perceive I have not completed more than one year of it yet. The necessity for haste is upon me’ (p. 215) – especially because Amos Jackson is a dying man. Our secondary narrator, the one in receipt of this narrative, breaks in to relate on Jackson’s deteriorating condition, and a strange pause, to which Jackson finally says “I have the assurance that I shall finish my narrative” (p. 216).

There is a love-triangle at play throughout much of the novel, with Norwald, Cresten’s fiancé, being brought back from the dead, attempting to usurp the throne, being banished from kingdom, and then once more fighting while in the Burning lands (pp 260-1). Chapter nineteen is the third chapter dedicated to narrating battle. The end of this is followed by another interlude from the secondary narrator: ‘It was late in the night when Amos Jackson completed this portion of his narrative; yet so anxious was he to tell it that he would, no doubt, have continued, had he not been seized with a violent fit of coughing, which terminated in a hemorrhage’ (p. 274). The start of chapter twenty is a secondary narration of Jackson’s declining health, though he recovers enough to continue the tale.

The end of the tale, and the overthrow of the Zit-tite government, moves rapidly in the end, and Jackson does not elaborate on the fifteen years that followed in the kingdom, where he and Cresten serve ‘as virtual sovereigns’ (p. 374). One day, Cresten merely announces that ‘the Infinite One hath called [her]’ and her work is finished, going to sleep and never waking again (p. 375). Taking her body to the outer world for burial, Jackson brings his story full circle: ‘One thought only possessed me: that was to find an inhabited land, tell my story, and die. I am weary. Reduce the light! I would sleep.’ (p. 375). The secondary narrator concludes with, ‘These were the last words of Amos Jackson. I darkened

the room as he requested, and when I turned to ask him if he needed anything, I saw...two lambent forms, which hovered a moment over his couch, and then died out. I stepped to his side, and lo! He was dead!’ (pp. 375-6).

Carrying the weight of a dying declaration, *Under the Auroras* attempts, like *Symzonia*, to present itself as a true history, educating readers to the nature of the world, one different from the geography they’ve been taught. The residents of this interior world, possessed of highly evolved minds and certain advanced technologies, like the Symzonians, and like so many more *terra cava* narratives. The imperial aspiration of Shaw, elevating the American man while presenting the possibility of commanding a new world of riches, is an idea repeated time and again.

II.ii – *The Third World*

Appended with the subtitle ‘A Tale of Love and Strange Adventure’, Henry Clay Fairman’s *The Third World* (1895) is an Arctic subterranean adventure story called ‘crude’ by John Clute in its execution, and yet unusual for its advocacy of female suffrage.⁸ *The Third World* is typical in its portrayal of a male protagonist who falls in love with the leader of an advanced civilisation, helping to overthrow a conniving dictator (see *Goddess of Atvatabar* and *Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder* for similar plot devices). Where it differs from others is its use of a British – rather than American – protagonist, the last survivor of the failed Franklin mission to the North Pole. Nor does it employ the Symmes Hole mode of entry or geology, but the equally popular Vernian cavern structure with a modified internal geography meant to explain aspects of the natural world.

In the ‘Author’s Introductory Note’, Fairman orients the reader to the history of the Franklin expedition (and Franklin will play a role in passing in several other *terra cava* novels):

The following story has its roots in a tragedy which stirred the sympathies of all civilized peoples.
[...]

⁸ John Clute, “Fairman, Henry Clay”, *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (2011) <http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/fairman_henry_clay>

In 1845 Sir John Franklin, the celebrated Arctic explorer, in command of two vessels- the Erebus and the Terror – was sent into the American Arctic region in quest of a strait which was supposed to connect Baffin’s bay with the Pacific ocean by way of Bering strait.⁹

Franklin and his ships were never seen again. Americans joined the British in searching for the lost expedition, to no avail. Fairman goes on to provide a history of those search and rescue missions, and the remnants of Franklin’s presence that were found (huts, skeletons, a diary, etc.), until page six, when the narrative transitions from the factual to the fictional:

Here, history retires and fiction takes up the pen.
“The Third World” is the supposed personal narrative of a sole survivor of the Franklin party. His story begins by relating how he, as a youth of nineteen, joined the expedition, and gives a detailed account of the voyage from the time of leaving England to the tragic ending, he, the Sole Survivor, being rescued from a snow-covered boat by the Eskimo, Loolik.

This manuscript is apparently discovered by a Norwegian sailor in 1859, along with a compass inscribed “The Terror” to attest to the narrator’s origins. Fairman has provided the traditional editor’s framing device (without actually naming himself as editor). He establishes facts to be intertwined with fiction, building verisimilitude for the story. At times, the flow of the manuscript is interrupted by [brackets] summarising certain details to elide over long descriptive segments, reminding the reader that this is supposed to be an edited story. The narrator himself also demonstrates a distinct awareness of his audience: ‘I am constantly tempted to enter into the details of things. I feel a desire all the time when holding my pen to describe minutely the scenery that surrounded me... But if I succumb to this temptation, my narrative, whilst it might be useful to the naturalist or geographer, would be prosy to general readers’ (p. 55). This removes the onus from Fairman to be overly didactic in his narrative, while keeping the plot moving with the ‘love and strange adventure’ promised.

The plot structure is simple: this unnamed English sailor wanders into the underground kingdom of Haiwana, where he is given the name ‘Wanhama’ by the natives, revered for his fair skin, and after battling doubters and villains, becoming the king’s right

⁹ Henry Clay Fairman, *The Third World: A Tale of Love and Strange Adventure* (Atlanta, GA: The Third World Publishing Co., 1895), p. 3.

hand in a vastly enriched kingdom. Race, history, religion and wealth – all imperialistic themes – come into play. Though Fairman is using a British narrator, many of the ideas ‘Wanhama’ espouses (including the use of American currency to denominate the value of treasure) strike the reader as distinctly originating in the U.S.

Opening with the statement, ‘I believe that my adventures are without a parallel in this history of mankind. Therefore, it seems a duty I owe to the world that I should write them down’ (p. 7) the narrator is asserting the prominence of his story above others, and that its writing is not for gain, but the revelation of truth for imperial gains. This is a tactic seen in many other hollow earth stories, like other travel narratives passing on new information to readers. First rescued by an Eskimo named Loolik (p. 8) several parallels are made between the narrator’s situation and *Robinson Crusoe*, equating Loolik with the character of Friday, and teaching him ‘more cleanly habits than are common to the people of his race’ (p. 13). Loolik becomes the faithful servant and ‘noble savage’ (p. 20) popular in literature. While exploring their northern environment, Wanhama and Loolik discover a valley which contains an ancient city buried under ice. On exploring it, they find vast wealth and perfectly preserved corpses; Fairman was undoubtedly influenced by both the contemporary excavations of Pompeii and the discovery of extinct creatures like woolly mammoths preserved in ice.

After Loolik falls ill and dies, the story shifts from the Arctic surface to the subterranean, following a cave into ‘the Plutonian regions’ (p. 23) since death would be assured if the narrator tried to make his way back south. After two chapters of broken narrative about his long walk to the interior – interspersed with asterisks *** marking breaks in the manuscript – Wanhama is rescued by a boat of internal inhabitants, described as having ‘black hair, black eyes, and brown skin’ who in attire resembled ‘the ancient Romans’ (p. 47). Repeatedly he mentions how they are all ‘brunettes’ and ‘straight and graceful in aspect’ (p. 49). One again, the *uniformity* of an interior race is displayed. No matter what the colour employed by the author, it is always uniform, unlike the multi-cultural United States. This is an extension of the early-nineteenth century fantasy ‘of an

America without race'¹⁰ that Gardner explored in his analysis of *Symzonia*. Though the skin-tone of these internals is darker, their uniformity of race marks them as superior to Wanhama and his own heterogeneous society: 'Isolated from all mankind, the inhabitants of my new world possess what no other race can boast – pure blood' (p. 91). These subterranean inhabitants are not 'short or deformed', but universally 'tall, erect and comely' (p. 69), meaning that they are also without the congenital and environmental physical impairments found among the working classes in the industrialised surface world.

This rescue leads into a lengthy soliloquy about the significance of the narrator's discovery (at least to himself and the contemporary reader):

By chance I found the key to the secret of the North Pole. I have unlocked the door and am about to solve the problem that has puzzled nations for centuries. But the secret will die with me; for the Arctic wilds are so little travelled it is not likely that my unparalleled experience will be repeated in thousands of years; most probably never again... I alone of all the billions of men who have lived on the sun-warmed hemisphere of the earth, will die in possession of the great secret.

[...]

I had known always that there was about the North Pole an unexplored region of almost continental proportions, and I believed myself now to the discovered of a NEW WORLD. (52)

The phrase 'New World' draws immediate contrast with Columbus and the 'discovery' of the Americas, and metaphor frequently used in *terra cava* novels. The interest in exploring the Polar regions is also drawn out into a hyperbole of a 'puzzle' that has intrigued 'nations for centuries', though it would difficult to trace any interest before the sixteenth century. The narrator soon finds himself subjected to the same interest that arriving Europeans in the West were also subjected to.

Foremost is the paleness of Wanhama (the name he is given means 'fair-haired' [p. 59]), who is marvelled over for his blue eyes, white skin and blond hair. He is a curiosity, and treated like one. Wona, his rescuer and host, harboured 'the natural ambition to be the first to introduce a blonde man into this country' (p. 56), like the first Native Americans carried back across the Atlantic to Europe. He is welcomed into the city in a triumphal march (p. 61) to be presented to the king. It is not just Wanhama's appearance, but what he

¹⁰ Gardner, *Master Plots*, p. 116

represents: a land and a race never before known to exist (p. 63). The Queen believes him to be 'a messenger from the supernatural world' (p. 66), a Saviour of some sort, which Wanhama does indeed become in the defeat of the rebellious Lord Bambana via the introduction of gunpowder to the Polarians. When presented to the public, the King makes a point of claiming that this mysterious man's 'lily-white skin would seem to indicate a higher order of beings than we are as it must be the product of finer and purer blood; but he claims no such superiority' (p. 71). Wanhama's 'finer and purer blood' casts him as the obvious hero and *deserving* inheritor of a large portion of the vast wealth of the kingdom. He is also the one who brings them information about the petrified city of wealth, as well as the path back to it.

There are many utopian aspects to the city of Hiawana, capital of Polaria (the narrator's designation for the country which becomes the popular designation, as if the kingdom never had a name before his arrival [p. 88]) making it a prize worthy of capture; horse-drawn chariots and vast green parks, 'a well-preserved city of ancient times' (p. 60-1). The presence of a monarchy is not inherently distasteful or damaging for the almost-perfect Polaria, because they are ruled by a benevolent and progressive King. It is the presence of the scheming, dangerous Lord Bambana which taints the utopian presence and provides the inlet for Wanhama to eventually ascend to the heights of power in Polaria. Besides royalty, there is also a favoured 'educated class' (p. 67), which implies that their opposite exists as well. Wanhama desires to use his newfound wealth and power to inaugurate schools and colleges all over the kingdom' (p. 234), fulfilling the distinctly American promise of universal education. Like many other utopian societies, and springing from the contemporary Prohibitionist movement, there is no alcohol to be found on Polarian tables (p. 70-1) and they lack even a concept for such a beverage. Wanhama believes this abstentious nature has contributed to their 'remarkable physical development' (p. 88). No imperialist would want to gain control over a country of drunkards and degenerates.

It is only the scarcity of precious metals that mars the nearly-utopian market, a scarcity that Wanhama finds himself in the position to alleviate. Without gold or silver to

circulate as currency, the economy functions via barter, an 'unhealthy state of affairs' that is 'a great burden upon the commerce and industries of the country' (p. 92). Fortunately, Wanhama knows where to find mountains of wealth waiting to be claimed by an industrious adventurer, one of his particular specialities; his role a saviour, not just of the body politic, but of the economy, is coming to fruition. Wanhama's crowning achievement – literally – is to crown the King of Polaria with the recovered crown of ancient Haiwana (p.265), an act usually reserved for representatives of Divine power.

Wanhama is fascinated by the books in Wona's house: 'What ancient history of the human race; what missing link it might supply; what confirmations of Holy Writ it might contain' (p. 64). There is a mixing of both Darwinian and Biblical language in this passage; he believes them to be of 'Adamic blood' though cannot identify their common heritage as there is no Bible among the Polarians. By chance Wanhama has a copy of the New Testament with him (one of two items to survive his ordeal since setting out with Franklin) and he translates it into the Polarian language, making himself into a prophet of the Good News. Fortunately, among the Polarians, there is already the practice of monogamous marriage (a mark of civilised behaviour), and these unions must be certified by a physician, a subtle reference to the practice of eugenics among them (p. 87). The second implement to survive Wanhama's journey to the Polar interior is his gun; with God and a gun he can bring the whole of the Polarian population under his sway. The gold he recovers from the ancient, iced-over city of Haiwana polishes the finished shine of Wanhama's deeds among the Polarians.

A new source of wealth is the last piece of the puzzle in putting an end to Lord Bambana's hold on the kingdom, as his are the only functioning precious metal mines. With the king's blessing, Wanhama leads an expedition back to ancient Haiwan in search of 'a public treasury' (p. 229). No compunction is felt in the grave robbing because 'the dead had no need for riches' and the act is only the restoration of the Polarians' 'lost inheritance' (p. 230). The order in which these excusing arguments are made is suggestive; even if it had not been a 'lost inheritance' that would not have mattered, because a deceased society does not

use its precious resources. These riches are also key to winning Noona away from Lord Bambana, worth ‘hundreds or perhaps thousands of millions of wealth’ (p. 234); the gold is so plentiful there is no need to bother with the silver (p. 237).

Wanhama’s ascension to the King’s right hand still marks him as superior to the internals in certain ways, characteristics which give him advantages. Foremost among these advantages are his physical appearance, being blond with pale skin, the white-man-as-deity trope of nineteenth century imperialist fiction. He is desired by the King to not just instruct the populace in ‘historical and geographical knowledge’ but also ‘the truths of the Christian religion’ (p. 163), as humble Wanhama is ‘the most celebrated man who has ever trod the soil of Polaria’ (p. 164). Authorial and reader wish-fulfilment seems an appropriate designation for this response to Wanhama. To his achievement of glory, God, and gold may be added a fourth, gunpowder, which Wanhama manufactures to blow up the defences of Lord Bambana (p. 289). He is rewarded – besides ten percent of everything brought back from the old city – with a medal from the King which reads ‘*Who strikes Wanhama, wounds the King*’ (p. 309), placing this blonde visitor on an almost equal footing with native royalty.

Though a significant portion of the narrative is given over to the journey, the meeting of the Polarians, describing their society, history, and geography, the rest of the story is given over to the traditional love triangle (Wanhama trying to win the hand of Lady Noona from Lord Bambana) and fighting (quelling Bambana’s rebellion). There is little to distinguish these passages as *terra cava* rather than another other worldly setting. This is the long promised ‘love and strange adventure’, reached after a hundred pages of just strange adventure.

It is difficult to define *The Third World* as a hollow earth novel, or even just a subterranean novel; Fairman does not remain consistent in his descriptions, or the geography. On the penultimate page, Wanhama asserts ‘There is but one gateway to the North Pole. It is through the cave that led me here. The mountains that wall this basin (or funnel) in, is unscalable. This I have ascertained to be unquestionably true.’ (p. 312) Is this a Polar Depression with a narrow tunnel leading to the other end of the world, were a similar

southern Polar Depression exists? In studying maps (though no illustrations are provided for readers), Wanhama concludes: ‘*The country inhabited by the Polarians is simply the vast crater of an extinct volcano*’ and at the centre of what would be considered ‘The Pole’ is a Bottomless Abyss (p. 81) some forty miles in diameter. The sun *is* visible during the summer months, and light is provided by the Aurora Borealis (which emerges from the Bottomless Abyss) during the winter months; twilight and sunrise occupy the autumnal and spring months respectively (p. 83-5).

Though the native inhabitants are not white, they are not depicted as savages, which is an unusual feature. However, unlike nearly every other *terra cava* novel which is populated with a race advanced both spiritually and technologically, *The Third World* presents a civilisation on the level of Rome; there is no knowledge of Jesus, and no scientific or technological knowledge. Inequality still permeates via a caste system. Wanhama’s arrival heralds a one-man colonisation of Polaria in words, deeds, knowledge, and political power, transforming their society into one that resembles the world he left behind.

II.iii – *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*

Though written by a Canadian, incomplete, and not published until long after the unfinished novel was tucked away and its author dead, *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder* deserves inclusion in this chapter for two reasons: 1) De Mille was educated in the US and may have come across the Symmes theory, and 2) the timing of its publication indicates a publisher’s engagement with a marketable idea. *Harper’s Weekly* (based in New York) was the first to publish the story, not a Canadian press; only later in the year would it become available in Britain and Canada. Standish considers this prestigious venue of American publication to be ‘an indicator of how mainstream the idea of the hollow earth had become.’¹¹ The fact that De Mille’s name was initially left off and the story published anonymously would indicate that De Mille’s name (already a popular author) was not intended to be the primary selling point of the story, but the subject.

¹¹ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 203

The framing narrative of *A Strange Manuscript* establishes a bipartite tale: The Primary narrator is Adam More, a British sailor swept into the Antarctic polar depression; the Secondary narrative is third-person, following a group of friends who find More's manuscript in the copper cylinder and read it aloud to each other. This allows readers a chance to reorient themselves – possibly asking the same questions as the boat party members – to the rapid shift in environment and values discovered in the Antarctic opening. John Rieder identifies it as 'largely parodic' of contemporary novels that centre on a plot to 'acquiring wealth in foreign lands that is the staple of adventure fiction.'¹² However, De Mille puts a great deal into the development of his lost race and their culture, using the secondary narration to further explore and explain the possibilities, which removes an overt sense of parody. In chapter XXVI the framing narrators question whether what they are reading is a satire 'directed against the restlessness of humanity... It mocks us by exhibiting a new race of men, animated by passions and impulses which are directly the opposite of ours, and yet no nearer happiness than we are (p. 245). This self-awareness on De Mille's part would seem to argue against a direct parody, at least of the primary narrative; there is certainly some satire (and sarcasm) to be found in the secondary narrative: De Mille's characters call his own writing 'rot and rubbish' and the writer 'tawdry' (p. 247). De Mille would have made a fine postmodernist.

This foursome of individual consists of Lord Featherstone, who furnishes the boat, and three members of British intelligentsia, who are meant to facilitate the didactic portions of the secondary narration: Oxenden, from Trinity College, Cambridge; Melick, a literary specialist; and Dr. Congreve, who happens to specialise in palaeontology and exploration history in addition to medicine. While idling off the shores of Canary Islands in 1850 they find the old copper cylinder containing a letter from Adam More, and a long manuscript written on papyrus. They take turns reading it out loud and discussing the merits of what has been read.

¹² Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*, p. 37

‘Adam’ is a popular name in *terra cava* literature (i.e. ‘Adam Seaborn’ of *Symzonia*) as ‘Adam’ represent the first man, and these explorers are the first to enter the hollow realms. ‘More’ is possibly derivative of the More who wrote *Utopia*, though the kingdom Adam More uncovers is darkly dystopian. Separated from his ship in 1843 while hunting seal with the second mate, More is left alone after his companion is eaten by Antarctic cannibals. Swept into an underground river – a trope that permeates the *terra cava* genre – More emerges days later in the land of the rather primitive Kosekin, whose tropical kingdom is likely the effect of a semi-hollow earth, or deep polar depression. Accident and a river have brought the hapless narrator to a rich land he will come to control by the end of the novel. One significant difference in *Strange Manuscript* from its other predecessors/followers is the presence of a primitive race; two explanations for this is De Mille’s Canadian heritage and exposure to British lost race literature, and the early date at which the novel was written, before advanced race narratives came into vogue.

Symmes’s theory is referred to at the beginning, connecting *Strange Manuscript* to the larger literary body of *terra cava* literature, even if it is difficult to determine the exact geography De Mille employs. Dr Congreve informs readers that measurements of the earth have revealed the Polar Regions to have a smaller diameter than the Equator, meaning there is a ‘depression of over thirteen miles’ at each end, and this is the potential setting of the Kosekin.¹³ They reside in caves when the Antarctic is in summer because they shun the light, making this a semi-porous earth, rather than one that strictly follows Symmesian geography. By filling in the blank spaces of Antarctica, De Mille is engaging in literary colonialism, claiming that empty space as his to fill. Adam More will go on to claim the kingdom of the Kosekin, not for any country or deity, but for himself. The process is terrifying, and the letter he includes with the manuscript makes it clear that More is deeply troubled by being severed from the world he knew (pp. 53-4) in this act of accidental

¹³ James De Mille, *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*, ed. Daniel Burgoyne (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Editions, 2011), p. 107. All further references cited in text for this edition.

imperialism. There is vein of both imperialism and resistance to imperialism that scholars have identified in recent decades.¹⁴

The Kosekin society is an exercise in values-inversion: they live to be poor and hungry, to suffer, to seek death, and to shun the light. Generosity advances the giver by making him poorer; political leaders are the most wretched of the Kosekin, all under the auspices of the Chief Pauper and the Chief Hag; to be eaten in a religious festival (the 'Mista Kosek') is the highest of honours; and women are the initiators of romance, but only so that the love may then go unfilled, thus adding to the suffering of both; this reads almost as a parody of Christianity. The alleviation to this backwards world for More comes in the form of Almah, a beautiful woman who lives richly and loves the light, having come from another realm, but her purpose is to be sacrificed and eaten by the Kosekin when she finally finds love.

The science of empire emerges in the breaking down of Kosekin language (Grimm's Law is heavily discussed by the secondary narrators) and origins, attempting to link them into the larger story of humanity according to Darwin. When More and the second mate first encounter people, the cannibals who end up eating the latter, they are described in terms of Darwin's own vision of the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego, with More casting them as something less than human: 'Even the wretched aborigines of Van Diemen's Land, were pleasing and congenial when compared with these, and the land looked worse than Tierra del Fuego' (pp. 71-2). Only later is it revealed that these are the great Paupers, the elite of Kosekin society, who have intentionally placed themselves in exile to starve. As for the Kosekin, both More, and his readers in the framing narrative, engage in much speculation about their origins: 'There was in all of them the same mild and gentle expression. In complexion and general outline of features they were not unlike Arabs...' (p. 94) And once he begins to learn the language, it is most similar to Arabic in More's mind (p. 115). Again, as in all other cases, the found race is uniform in appearance, making the visitor stand out as

¹⁴ See Carole Gerson's 'A Contrapuntal Reading of *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*' (1995) or Gerry Turcotte's "'Generous, Refined, and Most Self-Denying Fiends': Naming the Abomination in James De Mille's *Strange Manuscript*' (1999) for examples of this.

an anomaly. More speculates that ‘their love of darkness’ is perhaps derivative of ‘their habit of dwelling in caves’ (p. 162), though it is just as likely that the reverse is true; they dwell in caves because they love darkness. In a reversal of satiric *Erewhon* values, ‘the sick are objects of the highest regard’ (p. 163) as it gives others a chance to divest themselves of worldly goods, impressing them upon the ill that are too weak to refuse. The language De Mille uses is parodic: ‘Thus there are among the Kosekin the unfortunate many who are cursed with wealth, and the fortunate few who are blessed with poverty’ (p. 165) but these passages are less frequent than those of adventure and romance between More and Almah.

The other anomalous being among the Kosekin is Almah, described as being taller than any Kosekin (and stature is nearly always an indicator of good breeding) with a lighter complexion (though not necessarily described as being white), dark hair, and dark eyes: ‘She was unlike the others, and reminded me of those Oriental beauties whose portraits I had seen in annuals and illustrated books’ (pp. 111-2). Almah is fulfilling the role of the Eastern beauty trapped in a Harem to be rescued by the brave Westerner. She must also be separate from the Kosekin because they are portrayed as such a distasteful race, and therefore unsuitable to provide a partner for More. Though she has a great deal of power among the Kosekin, Almah is still a prisoner – ‘a sacred hostage’ (p. 133) – in need of Adam More’s masculine, white British help. She is part of the key to his ascent to power over the Kosekin (and many other women are in *terra cava* stories, like *The Goddess of Atvatabar* and *Under the Auroras*). As a woman alone, Almah has no power but that which she exercises through More. And in turn, only by conquering her heart can More conquer the Kosekin.

In their role as educators of the reader, the quartet on board the boat provide a great deal of history in terms of empire and exploration, discussing Ross’s expedition of 1839 (p. 102) and the U.S. Exploring Expedition; the doctors believe ‘that Wilkes’s antarctic continent will some day be penetrated by ships, which will sail for hundreds of miles farther south’ (p. 103). They are able to fill in the fossil record where More cannot, explaining that there ‘are fossil specimens of animals that still have living representatives. There is no reason why many of those supposed to be extinct may not be alive now’ (pp. 169-70). This

sentiment is one derivative of Symmes's own theory that long-extinct animals had actually migrated into the earth and still thrived there, which is why large, Cretaceous and Ice Age creatures often make an appearance in *terra cava* novels. In chapter XVII the doctor goes on to identify 'Ichthyosaurus', 'Cheirotherium', 'Hylæosaurus', 'Plesiosaurus' and 'Iguanodon' (pp. 174-5) in More's narrative, describing each fossil creature for readers. After this long discourse, the doctor is put on hold by Melick's demand, 'Talk English, doctor, and we shall be able to appreciate you' (p. 177), which is De Mille's own acknowledgement of how didactic his story can sound. The other contemporary subject that occupies the quartet (a subject that occasionally crops up in other lost race *terra cava* novels) is Grimm's law, the 1822 principle devised by the linguist Jacob Grimm, evaluating the evolution of language via systemic changes in sound. Applying this law to the Kosekin words More has provide, Oxenden believes the Kosekin to speak an evolved form of Hebrew, and possibly descendent of the lost Ten Tribes of Israel (pp. 180-1) and the Troglodytes – cave dwellers, rather than the modern meaning of unevolved – who once resided along the Red Sea (p. 183).

Only by learning the intricacies of this society and how its populace thinks can More turn their values back on them and use their philosophies to gain control of the Kosekin kingdom. More, with the help of his rifle (and thus the ability to deliver instant death from a distance) is revered as a 'supernatural power' to be worshipped, and he plays up his new role with the declaration, 'I am Atam-or, the Man of light! I come from the land of the light! I am the Father of Thunder, or Cloud and Darkness; the Judge of Death!' (p. 277) With this statement delivered at the point of a gun, More becomes the 'Chief Pauper', and Almah, his consort, 'Chief Hag'. Together they grant the 'honour' of exile to the hags and paupers so that they may starve to death, while More and Almah will take on the 'burden' of wealth by accepting one-quarter of all riches from each citizen:

We will sacrifice ourselves so far to the public good as to live in the light, and in open palaces. We will consent to undergo the pains of light and splendor, to endure all the evils of luxury, magnificence, and boundless wealth, for the good of the Kosekin nation. We will consent to forego the right of separation, and agree to live together, even though we love one another. Above all, we will refuse death and

consent to live. Can any rulers do more than this for the good of their people? (p. 279)

The Kosekin are overjoyed at this proclamation by their new rulers. Never has an accidental or intentional imperialist had an easier time of gaining wealth and status in a foreign kingdom. The one part missing from this take-over seen in many of the other novels is the presence of a Christian message; there is glory and gold for Adam More (with the use of gun powder), but not God, only the divinity which he makes for himself. He does not attempt to reform the Kosekin into a society similar to the one left behind, does not introduce them to the Bible, does not even try to amend their practices or stop their cannibalism; all of their beliefs he uses to enrich himself and Almah, to the great joy of the people.

Here is where the narrative end, though the closing lines of the novel from Lord Featherstone led us to believe there is more to the manuscript, which might have further explored the reaches of the Antarctic hollow. De Mille's brother claims that James was unable to 'make a satisfactory *denouement*' to this early piece of writing, and thus never published it.¹⁵

Contemporary reviewers accused De Mille of imitating similar works such as Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (1872) and Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race*, but only because they were not aware that De Mille wrote *A Strange Manuscript* sometime between 1866 and 1868.¹⁶ The inversion of social values makes it easy to see how some thought he was plagiarising *Erewhon*, though the satirical elements of both likely find their origins in *Gulliver's Travels*. After finishing his M.A. at Brown University (Rhode Island) in 1854, De Mille spent some time in Cincinnati, Ohio, which is where he might have gained some knowledge about Symmes. David Standish, in his examination of the novel, calls it a 'warmed-over hollow earth stew' concocted from 'various amounts of Symmes, Poe, and Verne',¹⁷ all of whom De Mille could have read before starting his manuscript.

¹⁵ Daniel Burgoyne, ed., 'Introduction', in James De Mille, *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Editions, 2011), p. 13

¹⁶ Burgoyne, 'Introduction', pp. 12-13.

¹⁷ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 202

III – The Intentional Imperialist

Besides those unwittingly making historic discoveries, there are those plots formed around the adventurer seeking fame and fortune at the centre of the world. These are the intentional imperialists, the men who come well-prepared to make themselves heads of government, leaders in trade, and owners of vast mineral wealth. They are Hernán Cortés toppling the Aztec empire, not Christopher Columbus on a trading expedition stumbling across an unknown continent. Political gain and financial wealth are expected outcomes for the protagonists.

III.i – *The Goddess of Atvatabar; Invading in Style*

William Bradshaw's 1892 entry *The Goddess of Atvatabar* has a lengthy subtitle: 'Being the history of the discovery of the interior world, and the conquest of Atvatabar'. As Standish states in his study, there is no subtle imperialism, 'it is blazing right in the title.'¹⁸

Exploration and Imperialism; Bradshaw knew what to sell to his readers. It is perhaps the most blatant of all the hollow earth novels in its intent to claim the interior world in the name of the US, and exploit its riches, while at the same time acknowledging that it is a work of fiction (via an introduction from Julian Hawthorne, son of American author Nathaniel Hawthorne). There are many others that made no such claim, attempting to maintain the façade of speculative realism, which is why tales like *The Coming Race* were taken so seriously. Hawthorne's introduction mentions *The Coming Race*, and Jules Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, but states that Bradshaw 'has swept aside each and all of these preliminary explorations, and has kindled the fires of an interior sun, revealing an interior world of striking magnificence' (p. 4). He orients the reader with a brief history of *terra cava* thought and a mention of 'Captain Symmes' (p. 4), as well as directing them towards the 'magical achievements of theosophy and occultism, as well as the ultimate achievements of orthodox science' (p. 6).

The protagonist is called Lexington White, a racially derivative name if there ever was one. He is the wealthy, private entrepreneur that sails through a north polar Symmes

¹⁸ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 204.

Hole, giving us little geographic information about how he came here, only a list of past arctic explorers and the furthest north they had attained. There is more of a developmental plot to *The Goddess of Atvatabar* than the previous pieces we've covered, including the love story of Lexington White and the Goddess, and his eventual war against the ruling powers which results in Lexington taking over the kingdom. A large part of the narrative is still given over to those imaginative descriptions of a society, its practices, beliefs, technology, climate, and so on.

Jean Pfaelzer calls this type of imperialist utopia 'conservative' because it is 'merely extensions of a growing practice in American polity, developing coalitions between government and industry.'¹⁹ Utopian conditions in these narratives are derived from projections of an improved American state, one that is always recognisably American even when set inside the earth. None of these are purely communist or socialist; all employ economic reforms that create opportunity, but not necessarily direct equality.

In the first chapter a crack appears in the ice barrier that surrounds the North Pole, widened with the help of White's 'terrorite gun' (p. 7) – a new explosive of his own invention that will come to be useful later in the novel. White challenges his crew, 'are you willing to enter this gap with the view of getting beyond the barrier for the sake of science and fortune and the glory of the United States?' (p. 9) It is the old inducement of imperialism: Glory, God (science), and gold. White set out for the North Pole with the intention of standing on top of the world, a 'monarch of an empire of ice' (p. 10), succeeding where Franklin and Jeanette had failed, and reminding readers of the very real failures to reach the Arctic in the recent past. Among the ship's specs, White mentions that he has provided his crew with 'a special triumphal outfit... This consisted of a Viking helmet of polished brass surmounted by the figure of a silver-plated polar bear' (p. 12). Image and pageantry, invoking the northern warriors of old and the ancient Roman practice of a triumphal march. As motivation for their achievement, a list of previous expeditions north

¹⁹ Jean Pfaelzer, *The Utopian Novel in America, 1886-1896: The Politics of Form* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984), p. 98.

and the highest latitude reached, stretching from 1607 (Hudson, reaching 80° 23' N) to 1883 (Lockwood, 83° 24' N)²⁰ with the hope of accomplishing 'a job that the biggest governments on earth are unable to do' (p. 14). It is interesting that in *terra cava* novels it is never a government agent or boat that reaches the interior of the world, but a private enterprise. This may be a result of the U.S. government's hesitancy to take more direct action in global exploration and expansion, and that sympathy for the one-man conqueror of a new world is more profound than that extended to a governmental body, which is not nearly so impressive. Nor has Lexington White set out specifically to conquer the inner world; he is expecting to find a Polar surface. Standish points out that 'as Poe had tried to cash in on a polar mania fifty years earlier, Bradshaw's polar framing for his hollow earth novel was quite timely.'²¹ It is one of the resident professors (White brought along an entire scientific team) who explains when the sun does not set that 'we are sailing down into a subterranean gulf' (p. 18). In all of this, though, Symmes will not earn a mention for his theory, but the size of his initially proposed opening has shrunk to only five hundred miles by the time Bradshaw is writing (p. 20).

Fear of the interior requires a rousing speech to overcome the crew's qualms. As Adam Seaborn once outlined the reasons for supposing the earth to be hollow, Lexington White outlines far baser reasons to continue sailing towards the interior:

Who knows what oceans, what continents, what nations, it may be of men like ourselves, may not exist in a subterranean world? Who knows what gold, what silver, what precious stones are there piled perhaps mountains high? Are we to tamely throw aside the possibilities of such glory on account of base fears, and, returning home, allow others to snatch from our grasp the golden prize? (p. 20)

This is not just about pride; it is about possession of assumed riches, and the threat of someone else getting there first and taking possession before you can. Symmes and his supporters made similar arguments, urging the US to reach the interior and claim it before a European power had the chance. This is, of course, based upon a Western cultural bias that

²⁰ William R. Bradshaw, *The Goddess of Atvatar: Being the History of the Discovery of the Interior World and the Conquest of Atvatar* [1892] (Memphis, TN: General Books, 2010 reprint), p. 14. All further references cited in text for this edition.

²¹ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 205

recognised right by discovery, and presumed another culture would hold to the same standards. Simply by being the first to sail to the interior, though they have yet to touch any land, there is assumption of discovery for the entirety of the inner world, and a hundred canon shots to celebrate (p. 22) – again reminiscent of Seaborn actions in *Symzonia*. There is no apparent downside to imperialism for White: ‘[W]hat possibilities of commerce! What keen and glorious revelations of art! What unfolding of the secrets of nature each world would find in the other! What inventions rival nations would discover in either world, and here for the outer world what possible mountains of gold, what quarries of jewels! What means of empire and joy and love!’ (p. 27)

Other theories about the structure and nature of the interior world are illuminated; that heavier elements tend to sink into the earth makes the professor believe that as the ‘heaviest elements fall to the centre of all spheres’ the explorers were certainly ‘discover mountains of gold’ (p. 22). Gravity is also called into question when the sailors suddenly experience an extreme loss of weight, allowing to leap hundreds of metres in a single bound. They are not completely weightless, which the professor explains to be an effect of ‘centrifugal gravity’ thickening the Earth’s crust near the equator (p. 23).

‘Lexington Island’ is discovered to be uncharted and thus named after the voyage’s sponsor (p. 15), and the interior world is dubbed ‘Plutusia’ (p. 27) after the god Pluto, but there is actually surprisingly little appropriation via designation in the novel. The main forces Lexington White brings to bear in his conquest of Atvatabar are American philosophies and armed forces, as well as the requited love of the local deity. Once again a woman is key to the protagonist gaining power over the native populace by winning her heart with Anglo-Saxon daring, ingenuity and Protestantism.

The existence of internal habitation is finally confirmed with the appearance of flying men wearing artificial wings (p. 28), rather reminiscent of the Vril-ya. Yellow of skin, black of hair, not overly tall, and dressed in gleaming armour, the professor concludes that ‘the strangers must belong to some wealthy and civilized country’ (p. 28) because savages – and the impoverished – would not be capable of such a feat. Capturing one of the flying

men, much of chapter XI is given over to linguistic acquisition of Atvatabarese, which conveniently ‘resemble the English language more nearly than any other tongue’ (p. 30), so a simple transposition of the alphabet leads to easy fluency for the outsiders. This is a powerful tool for White and the crew, who interrogate their prisoner for information about the kingdom of Atvatabar.

The Atvatabarans are a mix of advanced technology and archaic practice. Though the soldiers possess the power of flight via ‘a little dynamo supplied by magnicity’ (32), the soldiers are only armed with spears and swords. They are ruled by a monarch elected for life and a legislative assembly, combining democracy and monarchy (p. 32), yet the people are still divided into classes of nobles and commoners, despite the overwhelming presence of gold (p. 33). They possess the technological power of railroads, telephones, phonographs, electric lights, airships etc. (p. 33), all powered by the combination of two native metals, and yet have no gunpowder or projectile weapons; these latter are the tools that will allow White and company to conquer the country.

Also lacking in Atvatabar is God, which White will also ‘give’ to the populace. In the mean time they worship a pantheon of deities, including a ‘sacred locomotive’, Rakamadeva (which echoes the Hindu god of love, ‘Kamadeva’), who possess a temple made from a train, and priests who intone prayers to the technology: ‘Glorious annihilator of time and space, lord of distance, imperial courier. Hail, swift and sublime man-crated god, hail colossal and bright wheel!’ (p. 39). The intentional identification of deities being crafted by mortals lessens them in the eyes of readers used to the idea of a god who existed before Creation. It is the faith of Atvatabar that ultimately becomes the country’s undoing under guidance from White. They worship the human soul as it relates to invention, art, magic and love, united in the form of the Goddess of Atvatabar, Lyone (p. 43):

She was a girl of peerless development; her arms were long and softly moulded, her breasts firm and splendid. The color of her complexion and flesh was of soft mat gold, like that of golden fruit... Her profile was perfect, being both proud and tender in outline. Her hair was a heavy glossy mass, of a pale sapphire-blue color, that fell in a waving cloud around her shoulders. Her whole figure bore an infinitely gracious expression, the result of possessing a tender and sympathetic soul. (p. 50)

There are many unique features of Lyone as a character to consider; she is *not* described as white, and yet is considered a pure and evolved being, having the skin-tone of a precious metal instead; she also has ‘sapphire’ blue hair, a colour not seen in the outside world, and yet described in terms of a gemstone to further emphasise the very wealth of her being; Lyone, as the living goddess of Atvatabar, is another treasure for White to acquire in his conquest. The throne on which she sits, the Throne of the Gods, takes the whole of chapter XIX to describe in its full ostentation. Standish believes that this ‘hyperestheticism’ was a conscious effort on Bradshaw’s part, ‘to show a society as devoted to art and spirituality as more are to profit and power... and to integrate beauty into everyday life’.²² But does the beauty of the environment create a beautiful race, or does a beautiful race create a beautiful environment?

Uniformity of race persists as the standard for the *terra cava* civilisation, and once again, the outsiders are of a paler hue: ‘Our complexions were lighter than those of the Atvatabarese, who were universally of a golden-yellow tint, and it was surprising to see how fair the people appeared, considering they lived in a land where the sun never sets’ (p. 36). Where Seaborn found a people so pale he did not consider himself a white man in comparison, the lost races inside the earth that appear in the late-nineteenth century tend to be shades of gold, red, and brown. Though described as physically well-developed and beautiful, the Atvatabarese are not as strong as White and his sailors, either: ‘It could not be expected that men who handled objects and carried themselves in a land where gravity was reduced to a minimum could be so vigorous as men who belonged to a land of enormous gravity’ (p. 58). Despite their more barbaric origins, White and company are stronger and more energetic than their hosts, which makes White attractive to Lyone; he is the proverbial noble savage.

Without irony, and without any Swiftian backlash, White is able to talk about the United States and the outer world in a positive light:

²² Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 208

I spoke of America and its nations founded on the idea of self-sovereignty, and of Europe with its sovereigns and subjects. I spoke of Egypt and India as types of a colossal past, of the United States and Great Britain as types of a colossal present, and of Africa the continent of the colossal future. I informed the king that the genius of Asia, of the Eastern world, ran to poetry and art without science, while that of the Western world developed science and invention without poetry and art. (p. 42)

America and Britain are made shining examples of the present world, but are somewhat disparaged for moving into the realm of invention without artistic development. Most interesting the projection of Africa – rising in colonial prominence at the time of Bradshaw’s writing after its partitioning among the European powers – into the future as a world power. But that is a power only exercised under colonial rule, not by the Africans themselves. Atvatabar, in contrast to this view of the external world, is made all the more promising by its balance between science and the arts: ‘Our wise rulers have been ever mindful of the equal charms of science and sentiment in educating our people’ (p. 42)

There is one great flaw in this utopia, the thread that once pulled unravels the whole kingdom and gives White the opportunity to (benevolently) seize control: hopeless love. Lyone’s desire to consummate her love of White (and vice versa) puts her at odds with the religion that elevated her to the role of goddess. The basis of this religion is one tied to technology; ‘Twin-souls’, or two people who love each other but live in abstinence, provide a ‘spirit power’ stored in vast batteries (p. 75). And the ‘spirit power’ generated by the twin-soul gives Atvatabese sorcerers control over matter itself, to create jewels, palaces, islands and even life (p. 98). These ‘ideal’ marriages, unconsummated, rather resemble the Shakers, a Christian sect in the United States whose followers marry but remain celibate. Those twin-souls which sin against the rule of celibacy are cast out of the sacred city of Egyptosis, like Adam and Eve exiled from the Garden of Eden. One such sinner declares, ‘There are thousands of twin-souls ready to cast off this yoke. They only await a leader to break out in open revolt!’ (p. 87). Fortunately for the suffering deities of hopeless love, Lexington White is there to help them overthrow Eden in favour of the American ideal, paraphrasing the seventeenth century British poet John Dryden:

Oh, give me liberty!
For even were a paradise itself my prison,

Still I would long to leap the crystal walls! (p. 85)

For White, this state of affairs reveals that ‘even the most perfect human organizations contain elements of decay and death’ (p. 88), a reminiscence similar to Thomas Jefferson’s about the Tree of Liberty needing to be refreshed with the blood of patriots from time to time. Like Americans, the Atvatabarese must never yield to pleasure, must never give up difficulty in favour of rest, that ‘life is a warfare ever seeking but never gaining repose’ (p. 89), and White will give them war and difficulty in the name of bettering their society. Freeing Lyone from her religious vows which dictate death for any goddess who dares take a lover (p. 93) is an added benefit. A kiss from her is a ‘proclamation of war upon Atvatabar’ and the inevitable ‘destruction of a unique civilization’ (p. 94). There appears to be little regret in White’s character for such apocalyptic actions, and Bradshaw can only be celebrating the destructive acts of imperialism.

The rebellion starts with a war of words, in letters, newspaper articles and manifestos exchanged between the Goddess, the King, and other government and religious leaders, this clarifying for readers all the reasons behind the impending war. When violence finally does break out, despite the Atvatabarese having ‘guns’ according to White’s descriptions, their soldiers have apparently never carried revolvers, which White and the sailors use to fight off larger numbers of Atvatabarese (p. 113). The ‘terrorite’ weapons aboard the Polar King also give them an advantage over the simple gunpowder cannons of the Atvatabarese navy (p. 114). Nonetheless, White and the Polar King are losing the battle until two ships – one flying the Union Jack, the other the Stars and Stripes – arrive and turn their superior Anglo-Saxon weapons on the fleet of Atvatabar (p. 120).

With the arrival of Captain Adams (American) and Sir John (British) the tide of battle turns in favour of White and rebels, and provides Bradshaw with an opportunity to showcase his imagined headline for a newspaper, should such a discovery as an inhabited hollow earth truly come to pass:

AN ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY!
The North Pole Found to Be an Enormous Cavern, Leading to a Subterranean World!

The Earth Proves to Be a Hollow Shell One Thousand Miles in Thickness, Lit by an Interior Sun!
Oceans and Continents, Islands and Cities Spread Upon the Roof of the Interior Sphere!
Boatswain Dunbar and Seaman Henderson, of the 'Polar King', Having Deserted the Ship as She was Entering Plutusia, Have Arrived at Sitka, Alaska, in a Desperate Condition, and Have Been Interviewed by a 'Western Hemisphere' Commissioner. They Say Lexington White, Commander of the 'Polar King' is at Present Sailing Underneath Canada on an Interior Sea!
Tremendous Possibilities for Science and Commerce!
The Fabled Realms of Pluto no Longer a Myth!
Gold! Gold! Beyond the Dreams of Madness! (pp. 124-5)

So emerges the larger imperialist implications of the novel, just in the newspaper headline: land, commerce, and gold. The article itself goes on for the remainder of chapter XLIV with sentences such as 'The story of the discovery of Plutusia and the Polar Gulf... will form an epoch in the history of the world' and 'The renown of Columbus and Magellan is overshadowed by the glory of Lexington White, a citizen of the United States' (p. 125). This news meant that soon 'all civilized nations immediately fitted out vessels of discovery to follow up the Polar King and make discoveries for the benefit of their respective governments' (p. 123), and thus far only the 'civilized' governments of America and Britain have succeeded. Even the Royal Geographic Society has made the American White an honorary member, suggested a holiday in his name, and set 'hundreds of professional and amateur astronomers and geographers' to work to prove the hollowness of the earth via mathematics: 'There is no man more famous to-day than Lexington White, Admiral of Atvatabar!' (p. 124). Captain Adams and Sir John are glad to join in the fight to help White secure his rule of Atvatabar, and thus the kingdom's riches, both mineral and geographical. All the outsiders need is their canon and their revolvers, which can easily remove the current king from his throne (p. 133).

Going against the Constitution of the United States, White gives himself the royal title 'His majesty Lexington, King of Atvatabar' and one to Lyone as well, 'of equal authority and dignity' (p. 159), but also declares that titles cannot be inherited: 'a man who had no other claims to greatness than the plumes he had borrowed from his father, should be despised' (p. 160), thus striking a balance between the American disdain of royal titles, and

the desire to be able to make oneself a king by right of glorious battle. In the Charter of Coronation he even asserts that the ‘crown and throne of Atvatabar’ are under White’s power ‘by conquest and by will of the people’ (p. 163), making it appear that he was popularly elected supreme ruler for life. He also puts forth an election for a new legislature, allowing ‘the nation not only to keep all its ancient privileges’ while adding ‘new and more important measures of political liberty’ (p. 167), liberties likely deemed important by White’s American standards.

White also notes that because of his easy success, the latecomers Captain Adams and Sir John are encouraged to seek out other kingdoms in Plutusia to conquer: ‘they thought it a marvellous thing that one small vessel with but eighty men could conquer fifty millions of people’ (p. 157). The rest of the inner earth seems destined to fall under ‘benevolent’ Anglo-Saxon rule. King Lexington blesses their ventures and asks them to carry a message to America and England, telling those countries that ‘our ports are open for commerce, and foreign trade is welcome to seek out shores. We have gold enough to enrich all comers from the outer world’ (p. 158).

One of the concluding notes White includes, fulfilling the final mission of the imperialist, ‘glory, God, and gold’, is the introduction of Christianity to the Atvatabarese: ‘I hoped to see the Christian faith rule the souls of those who had so recently worshipped themselves’, and Lyone is the first to convert (p. 168). Bradshaw makes it a rich world worth coveting, going so far as to explain that Atvatabar has \$8 trillion in annual revenue (p. 167) that Lexington and his crew are now privy to – making Atvatabar a far more valuable conquest than Polaria in *The Third World*. (For comparison, the U.S. GDP in 1892 was only \$16.5 billion.²³) And Atvatabar is only one continent among a hollow world filled with them. The purpose of giving these amounts relates back to the opening of this chapter: exploration is never disinterested.

²³ ‘Government Revenue Details - 1892’. Accessed 06/01/14.
<http://www.usgovernmentrevenue.com/year_revenue_1892USmn_15ms1n>

Contemporary reviewers were, for the most part, kind towards Bradshaw's novel, if at times a little sarcastic: 'Since Jules Verne set the fashion of journeys to remarkable places we see now and then accounts of some wonderful discoveries' said *The Saint Paul Daily Globe*,

The religion as explained by the Goddess of Hopelesslove was far too ethereal [sic] and spiritual to commend itself to people in our sphere, and the introduction of pushing American men seems to have upset things in Atvatabar, as it usually does everywhere, for the goddess fell in love with the American commander, as is the custom of maidens everywhere, and as she had already found her twin soul and lost him by death, and was devoted to perpetual widowhood in a spiritual sense, the whole country had to be upset and its theology changed to suit her change of mind, for marry the beautiful American she would and did.²⁴

The Sun [N.Y.] also compares Bradshaw's novel to another European product, at attempts to hold *Atvatabar* up as an equal achievement: 'It looks as though Mr. Rider Haggard's "She" were the source of Inspiration for "The Goddess of Atvatabar" a novel by Mr. William R. Bradshaw... but the later story is no servile Imitation of Its distinguished model.'²⁵ Another reviewer holds up both Verne and Haggard for comparison: 'It possesses all the extravagant fancies to be met with in Jules Verne's "Journey to the Center of the Earth" and Rider Haggard's "She." The perfection of the various apparatuses of locomotion, the ingenious architecture throughout the kingdom, the novelty of resting on the air, owing to the absence of the attraction of gravitation, all appeal to one's interest.'²⁶ These reviewers demonstrate awareness about genre and similar narrative chronotopes. It is significant that *Atvatabar* never stands in relief against another American novel, revealing a sense of literary inadequacy that still appears to haunt the United States even at the end of the nineteenth century.

Modern readers have hardly been as kind in their words about *Atvatabar*. Standish notes that 'While it strives for a certain high-mindedness, *The Goddess of Atvatabar* is shot

²⁴ 'Review: *The Goddess of Atvatabar*', *The Saint Paul Daily Globe*, Thursday Morning, May 5, 1892, p. 3.

²⁵ 'Review: *The Goddess of Atvatabar*', *The Sun*, Saturday, June 4, 1892, p. 8.

²⁶ 'Review: *The Goddess of Atvatabar*', *The Morning Call*, San Francisco, Sunday, June 5, 1892, pp. 9-12.

through with elements of Gilbert and Sullivan-style comic opera.²⁷ The reason for this may be, according to Standish, was that Bradshaw ‘may have had a little help from his chemical friends’,²⁸ implying drug use influenced the novel’s wildly imaginative scenery, but Bradshaw produces no evidence for this, and nothing known about Bradshaw would suggest this. He was an active member of New York’s Anti-Vivisectionist League, married with several children, and frequent contributor to American magazines, making it seem unlikely that Bradshaw was employing hallucinogens to influence his writing.

In his work on colonialism and science fiction, Rieder identifies *Atvatabar* as a ‘poorly written novel’ in which the local culture is ‘a weak cover for authorial polemic, and... the cultural *novum* proves to be merely a projective fantasy with little internal integrity, so that the exotic other takes whatever shape it suits Bradshaw to give it for his momentary purposes.’²⁹ Rieder is identifying an authorial tool found in many similar works; the *Atvatabarans* are not meant to maintain a unique cultural integrity, but serve as a moulded mirror reflecting Bradshaw’s view of America and its place in the world, what Rieder calls ‘satirical topicality spoiling the integrity of an imaginary culture.’³⁰ This is an unfair assessment, weighing Bradshaw’s work against present ideas of science fiction – written with the intention of being science fiction – while *The Goddess of Atvatabar* was meant to meet the standards of late-nineteenth century American utopian and imperialist fiction. The novel was designed to fit into contemporary reader expectations, radically different from those of twenty-first century critics. Rieder would doubtlessly find the same ‘flaws’ in every other *terra cava* novel of the era. Analysis of these *terra cava* works requires an appreciation for their contemporary circumstances of creation. If Bradshaw intended satire, Julian Hawthorne would have noted such an interpretation in his introduction; instead, Hawthorne and Bradshaw are presenting an earnest attempt to engage

²⁷ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 209.

²⁸ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 211.

²⁹ Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*, p. 69.

³⁰ Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*, p. 68.

the American reader in dreams of profit and empire beyond the Polar barriers, something Reider seems to have ignored.

III.ii – *Through the Earth*; Clement Fezandie’s Mathematical Journey

Though not a traditional hollow earth novel, Clement Fezandie’s novel *Through the Earth* (1898) is best described as a Vernian fall through geology. Fezandie opts to use Australian protagonists, Dr. Giles and James Curtis, rather than American, which brings imperialist issues into focus later in the narrative, imperial issues that exist despite being set ninety-five years in the future. The goal of the protagonists is to drill a tunnel through the earth from Australia to New York. This premise presents several deviations from other *terra cava* novels, foremost being that the earth is not hollow, but must be drilled through. It warrants mention in a discussion of hollow earth novels because it goes into speculative details about the earth’s structure along with scientific details, the kind of hybridisation seen in all of these narratives. The narrative is presented in the third person without any framing, emphasising that it is a fiction and not making an attempt to convince readers that the adventure is real. But the heavy use of scientific observation and information creates the impression that James Curtis’s inventive mode of transport might be possible. At the start of chapter XXI a footnote is provided attesting to the mathematical veracity of Fezandie’s work:

It may be well to state that the curious physical effects during the fall of the car have been very carefully calculated, with the kind assistance of the Professor of Applied Mathematics in one of our leading colleges. Hence, however startling and improbable our hero’s experiences may seem, they may be taken as a fair representation of what might happen under the conditions given.³¹

Fezandie, writing a narrative nearly a century in the future, is probably not referring to himself, but his specialty was in maths. There is no identified narrator, but this paratextual reference could be either Fezandie addressing nineteenth century readers, or the ‘author’ addressing late-twentieth century readers.

³¹ Clement Fezandie, *Through the Earth* (New York: The Century Co., 1898), p. 137. All further references for this edition cited in text.

There is an extensive debate between Dr Giles, the inventor, and James Curtis, the doubting associate, about the earth's construction, their didactic conversations providing an acclimating education for readers:

‘[Y]ou seem to forget that the earth, at the center, is one mass of liquid fire. So that, even if you succeeded in boring down through the solid portion of the external crust, you would be brought to a complete standstill as soon as you reached the red-hot fluid portion in the center.’ (pp. 4-5)

This sort of exchange makes up the bulk of the dialogue throughout. Dr. Giles emphasises an earth structure similar to Athanasius Kircher, one in which ‘there are certain incandescent masses in the interior but not that the whole center of the earth is in a molten condition’ (p. 9). The earth's core is riddled with pockets of molten rock, but not wholly liquid. Getting around the problem of the existing heat pockets is to be accomplished by ‘refrigerating agents’ (p. 13) fed through the tube lining. Scientific developments in the nineteenth century in refrigeration techniques and the quest to reach absolute zero likely influenced Fezandie's design.

Despite the many doubts espoused by Curtis, the reader's avatar for questions and dubious feelings towards the narrative, Giles is able to raise the capital, an estimated one hundred million dollars. An amount that must have seemed absurd in 1898 is easily raised by Giles because ‘The advantages to be gained are so great, even from a financial point of view, that... the shares of the company will sell like hot cakes’ (p. 25). The system being developed is based upon contemporary ideas of pneumatic tubes and subway systems.

American inventor Alfred Ely Beach drew the earliest designs for New York's subway, the Beach Pneumatic Transit (only in operation from 1870 to 1873); the London Underground and Crystal Palace Pneumatic Railway both opened in the 1860s. As far back as the eighteenth century, Royal Society members Isaac Newton and Robert Hooke explored the hypothetical possibility of a ‘gravity train’ (as it is called in modern terms), in which objects are dropped from one point on the earth and emerge in a straight line on the other end.

William Swindon, often referred to as ‘our hero’, is not introduced until page 95; up to this point the narrative has been almost entirely devoted to scientific discussion about

gravity, physics, centrifugal forces, etc. Swindon is an impoverished young man risking his life for the sum of £100 for his sick ailing mother, which no one else would take, to be the first person to travel through Giles's transport tube.

The Australian government attempts to stop Giles from launching William through the earth to New York, filing an injunction to fill in the tube lest the Americans use it to send troops through and occupy Australia: 'Full well he [Dr. Giles] knew that among the Australian politicians here quite a large number of "Jingoes," and he knew also that there had been considerable discussion as to the dangers which menaces Australia from the construction of the tunnel' (p. 123). Though the US and Great Britain had no political tensions at this point in time,

During the one hundred pages in which William is falling through the earth he has no one to speak to but himself, and does so at great length as he processes everything he goes through for the reader: "I understand it now," said William, after considering the matter a little. "We learned at school that a force sufficient to give a weight of one pound an acceleration of one foot per second would, if the body were placed where it would have no weight, suffice to impart to it an acceleration of thirty-to feet per second..." (pp. 149-50). William is the plucky youth readers are meant to admire and aspire to emulate, both in courage and intellect.

Ultimately the tunnel self-destructs when it loses integrity due to leaking air and lava entering the tube, but not before James has succeeded in reaching New York, winning the hand of Curtis's daughter, Flora, and selling his story for \$100,000 to a newspaper. There is a one-page Epilogue in the form of a wedding announcement dated 5 June 1999, assuring readers that all has ended well for everyone involved; William and Flora will settle in New York and William has a successful literary career (p. 238). Even after \$100,000,000 was sunk into the Dr. Giles's tunnel-through-the-earth, everything has turned out well:

Dr. Giles regretted the failure of his enterprise deeply; but as for the stock-holders, it is pleasant to be able to say that they lost nothing, as the returns from the electrical power they had furnished to different cities during the five years in which the construction of the tube was in progress not only paid for all the capital sunk in the enterprise, but left a handsome margin of profit besides (p. 237).

Invention and imperialism requires capital, and no one wants to imagine such efforts to be a failure. The interior of the earth – hollow or otherwise – presents an opportunity for financial gain to Fezandie and others. The threat of one nation attaining the power of the internal world before others is everpresent in the mind of fin de siècle *terra cava* writers, the majority of them American.

Fezandie, unlike several other authors, was a professional writer after a career as a maths teacher who went to work for Hugo Gernsback after the founding of *Amazing Stories*. Other titles include ‘A Journey to the Year 2025’ and ‘The Secret of Artificial Reproduction’, though no story of Fezandie’s is as well-known as *Through the Earth*. Contemporary reviewers apparently received it well, comparing it to Verne and Wells and ‘a very heavy draft...upon the dazzling possibilities of science...mastering the difficulties of gravity, temperature, and air-pressure’.³² On the other hand, Standish calls *Through the Earth* ‘[a]rguably the most boring hollow earth novel ever’³³ for its extensive, scientific details William narrates during his journey.

III.iii – *The Secret of the Earth, or, Failing to Conquer the Interior*

Charles Willing Beale’s 1899 adventure *The Secret of the Earth* does not make as much scientific pretence as the others; there are no appendices, no members of the Hawthorne dynasty providing an introduction, just a traditional adventure narrative told with the frame of the found manuscript. A cask, discovered floating in the south Pacific by a Dutch ship, is turned over to the unnamed narrator of the Prologue, perhaps intended to be Beale, who states:

Assured that no claim will be made upon the document, and overwhelmed with the profundity of its contents, I offer it to the public, convinced that in the history of our planet, there is nothing half so astounding as the revelation it contains.

[...]

The following is an exact rendering of the decipherable parts of the Attlebridge papers, handed me by the captain of the Voorne.³⁴

³² ‘Books and Authors’, *The Outlook* (8 October 1898), p. 395.

³³ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 224.

³⁴ Charles Willing Beale, *The Secret of the Earth* (New York: F. Tennyson Neely, 1899), p. 4

This is similar language seen in other ‘edited’ frames, that of the profound discovery that must be broadcast to the world, that the amanuensis has been exact and unbiased, and is also not responsible for the content of the book (should it prove to untrue).

American twin brothers Torrence and Guthrie Attlebridge go to England to ‘carve a fortune out of the Babylon [they] had adopted as a home’ (p. 7), referring to the growing trans-Atlantic business between America and Britain. Torrence is an inventor, and Guthrie (the narrator) a writer; Torrence’s trade happens to be in building airships. Like Jackson and Harding before them in *Under the Auroras*, two young men will use flight to reach the interior of the earth. Though Guthrie provides some specifications for Torrence’s invention, he conveniently does not go into any detail about how the ship works when discussing it with his twin: ‘Her power is exhaustless, and is evolved without steam, electricity, or – but what’s the use of going into that? You couldn’t understand if I did. It would take a course of mathematics to get into the first principles’ (p. 70). The reader, like Guthrie, is destined to never know how Torrence Attlebridge devised a flying machine a decade before the Wright brothers. The Attlebridges’ travel is luxurious in style – as many narratives of the intentional adventurer are; it is easier for the reader to be inspired to travel to one of the Poles of the world if it is with ‘furs and eider-downs’, an ‘abundance of fire-arms and ammunition’, sumptuous apartments and a saloon (p. 88) rather than exposure to freezing weather, poor dress and inadequate food as real explorers endured.

The purpose is to gain wealth from the invention of a flying vessel, not the wealth found inside the earth. Before a destination has even been selected, Torrence remarks, ‘What’s the use of money if not to give pleasure?’ (p. 50), a rather caustic remark, as the end of the narrative will prove. A mysterious benefactor named Merrick provides the funds to build the airship and fly into the centre of the Earth via a Symmes Hole in the North Pole, for which Merrick provided the evidence.

Before they have attempted to conquer the interior of the earth, the brothers reflect on their conquest of the skies:

‘This,’ said Torrence, looking about him with pride, ‘is what I call the climax of living. Above your enemies; above your friends; and out of reach of all the petty annoyances of earth!’

I was a jubilant as he... for has not flight always been the prerogative of angels? and has not man aspired to it as the most perfect form of migration?...

‘I could never be content to live down there again!’ I said, flipping the ashes of my cigar overboard.

‘Nor I,’ said Torrence; ‘not after this experience. The sky is good enough for me!’”
(p. 94)

Despite this being a hollow earth story, air travel and height are significant to the narrative, and imply an elevation of the brothers above all others, with Icarian consequences. During their flight the brothers often ‘buzz’ (to use the military term for pilots flying close to the ground) people and villages, enjoying the shocked reactions they receive, lording over ground-dwellers their technological achievement.

Torrence is long in drawing out his reasons for wanting to go to the North Pole, not telling his brother until 161 pages into the narrative about the existence of the Symmes Hole. Guthrie – and the reader – are subjected to cryptic remarks throughout, such as Torrence ‘declaring that [their] discoveries would vastly exceed those of Columbus in their magnitude’ (p. 122); referencing Christopher Columbus, as so many other tales of exploration, frames the discovery of the interior of the earth into a magnitude easily understood by readers. After meticulously covering the geography of Northern Europe and those points known the map to readers, the narrative takes a turn to the fantastic as they pass over the ‘Palæocrystic Sea’, according to Torrence: ‘We have passed the limits of the known; beyond lies the mystery of the undiscovered world. A world which you will soon admit is greater, and of far more importance than our own!’ (p. 127) Not only is this geographic signposting, but literary signposting for the reader, that the story is about to change direction; it is also foreshadowing the appearance of a new world, one which Torrence has invested with more value than the known world, sight unseen. This is part of the psychology that drove so many settlers westward in the United States the belief that someplace new *had* to be better than someplace old and familiar. Torrence goes on for eight pages about the history of Polar exploration and the theory of a hollow earth, centred on the work of Symmes. In addition to recycling previous ‘proofs’ about the possibility of a hollow

earth, Beale goes a step further, inserting a claim that Venus is observed to be hollow and therefor the earth must be as well because all planets must ‘be brought into existence and formed by the same laws... The solar system was the result of law, of unalterable and immutable law, working for manifestation. It would not produce a solid globe in the one instance and a hollow sphere in the other’ (p. 168). Beale never calls this ruling law divine or natural, leaving the writer of the law up to the reader’s preference; he only insists that the law is applied consistently. Perhaps it would be fairer to call Torrence Attlebridge the intentional imperialist, and his brother Guthrie a purely accidental one, as he had no notion of there they were going, of what they would find: ‘I was dumbfounded at the awful significance of our discovery. If I had suddenly found myself a visitor upon the planet Mars... my bewilderment could have been no greater’ (p. 169).

A long inventory of the riches provided by this hollow world grows throughout the narrative. Following Merrick’s direction, within hours of arriving the brothers land on a beach strewn with pearl-pregnant mollusks, ‘a fortune greater than the combined wealth of the Rothschilds’ (p. 151). Then it is a ‘well timbered country... of ravishing beauty’ (pp. 157-8), timbering being one of America’s great resources for centuries. Two ships espied by the brothers are fitted with sails ‘transcending that of the finest silk’ with masts ‘gilded and set with jewels’ (p. 171). The perfection of the environment is highlighted by the discovery of human habitation without roofs, indicating no precipitation, no change in temperature, a veritable ‘paradise’ (pp. 159-60) for living conditions. Torrence, in giving his history of the hollow earth, argues that ‘The inner world is better in every way than the outer. The climate is more uniform and temperate. The electrical conditions of the atmosphere more conducive to longevity and health, and the struggle for existence far less than with us’ (p. 164). No other *terra cava* novel is so blatant in its articulation of the hollow earth to be a paradise unlike any found on the surface of the world. Despite the promises of America, farming was often difficult, weather in the Midwest fluctuating between scorching and freezing, and exposed to large natural disasters from flooding to tornados.

Only after one hundred and seventy pages do the explorers finally observe inhabitants of this realm: ‘No Eastern potentate, or denizen of Aladdin’s palace, was ever half so gorgeously attired, as the passengers aboard this extraordinary craft’ (p. 171). However, unlike the protagonists in other hollow earth stories, the brothers do not meet this lost race, instead choosing to remain at a safe distance and simply sail on; no trade agreements, no falling in love with a princess, no being gifted with a king’s ransom, they simply settle on ‘a snapshot with the kodak’ (p. 172). Advanced technology does not need to be found among the lost races inside the earth because the brothers have brought it with them. It is revealed that Torrence brought along a thousand gold sovereigns because he thought it might be needed: ‘Gold talks, you know, and we may be able to communicate with these people through its medium. Gold is current throughout our world, and I want to see if it were good here’ (p. 174), which it turns out not to be since gold is already so plentiful. The reason for this, according to Torrence, has to do with gravity and the formation of the earth:

When our globe was in the process of forming, two great forces moulded it – the centrifugal and the centripetal. These produce various vibratory conditions in different masses, resulting in gravity of affinity upon one hand, and repulsion upon the other. Bodies having the greatest specific gravity grouped themselves about the inner surface... (p. 176)

In other words, gold accumulated in great quantities on the inner crust. This is an idea (based upon mistaken hypotheses regarding physics and gravitational forces) that permeates many *terra cava* novels, because it makes access to mineral wealth seem easy and boundless, influencing the imperial ambitions of writer and reader alike.

Though the brothers never land to interact with the native populations (thus sparing Beale from having to develop a new culture and language) the observations are meant to imply easy prosperity and welcoming Eden. A city of ‘white and gold’, a populace dressed in ‘fantastic and magnificent apparel’ (p. 178), perfumes filling the air that effect ‘an inexplicable sense of rest and quiet’: ‘Was this place heaven? I do not know; but can only affirm that it was too utterly marvellous, too glorious for language.’ (p. 180) The populace throws gold coins at the brothers, as they are nothing more than ‘souvenirs’ (p. 182), and

Guthrie calls them ‘the most wonderful civilization ever inspected by a man of our earth’ (p. 183). The symbolism of the cheap gold, a utopian city and open hospitality are the dream of any enterprising imperialist. In a mountain range just beyond the city they find gold sitting on the rockface: ‘This was not quart mining; it was simply bending one’s back and picking up wealth faster than a bank teller could deal it out over a counter’ (p. 190).

The great value of the land (America was still primarily an agrarian society in the nineteenth century) is also meant to entice settlement: ‘The hillsides were covered with verdure, and throughout the great parks fruits abounded in such variety... All was spontaneous, beautiful, and perfect’ (pp. 184-5). With the closing of the frontier, there was no more free, easily cultivated land in the United States, making such lush fields nearly as appealing as gold. Torrence believes there is enough evidence to consider the inner world the source of the legend of the Garden of Eden (p. 186), echoing another trope of the *terra cava* novel, and theories like that of William F Warren, who did not support the idea of a hollow earth, but the origin of the Garden of Eden being in the North Pole.³⁵

Naming rights to various lands, a primal act of appropriation, stretches throughout the narrative; there is ‘Mount Guthrie’ (p. 154) and ‘Torenzia’ (p. 158), which is rather reminiscent of ‘Symzonia’. Guthrie remarks, ‘we felt like monarchs, or rather god-like creatures’ who ‘owned and ruled a world from above’ (p. 158), a world they named at will in their attempt to claim all of it. Rather than go hunting for even more wealth after they are already laden with it, Torrence insists they continue with their ‘inspection of our new dominion’ (p. 202), implying that they brothers already consider the whole of the (inhabited) inner world to be theirs. This hubris comes crashing down in the end, along with their airship.

In order to keep the airship aloft they are forced to throw most of their gold overboard (p. 217), but it is only a temporary relief. After sailing through the Antarctic opening and once again proceeding north, but while over the Pacific and sinking once more,

³⁵ William F. Warren, *Paradise Found: The Cradle of the Human Race at the North Pole* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1885), p. 84.

they cast over the rest of their gold and jewels (p. 253), and crash onto an uncharted island, where Guthrie finishes writing up their experiences and commend his manuscript to the vicitudes of the waves, to be found by the unnamed framing narrator.

This is the downside of the narrative: They never make it home with their wealth or the record of their discovery. This is piece of *failed* imperialism, rather like *Symzonia*, in which the protagonists are left without a claim to fame or a penny to their names, and the status quo is resumed. But the subtle upshot of this scenario is that should the earth genuinely be hollow and awaiting someone from the outside world to come claim the gold, it is still there, waiting, because the narrators failed to properly secure it. The brothers had demonstrated two significant breakthroughs: 1) the achievement of controlled human flight, and 2) verifying Symmes's theory of an open, habitable earth. Both of these factors represent imperial possibility for the adventurous, clever American. This message is one that is visited even more strongly on those *terra cava* narratives intended for younger readers.

IV – The Young Imperialist

Throughout the era of *terra cava* literature, there were stories aimed specifically at boys to inspire their inner resourcefulness and gumption, to go make their fortunes in explorations and appropriation. They may compare to the Victorian tradition of *The Boy's Own Paper*, encouraging various virtuous personality traits and actions. These narratives all eschew the first-person and the framing device, making them straight-forward fictions for the most part, not intent on convincing readers of the actual existence of a hollow world (with the exception of *Interior World*).

IV.i – A Trip to the Center of the Earth

One of the earliest fin de siècle *terra cava* stories was Howard de Vere's (pseudonym for William Howard Van Orden) series for *The New York Boys Weekly*, 'A Trip to the Center of the Earth', in the summer of 1878. It was later released as part of the 'Five Cent Wide Awake Library' in 1894 (New York: F. Tousey). De Vere was likely taking advantage of

both the success of Verne's work as well as the renewed scientific interest in the hollow earth.

The first part of the story introduced two young cousins, Lou and Ted, walking around in Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, a cave that is mentioned in later *terra cava* narratives (such as *Etidorhpa*). While there they discover a dying old man, who tells them the secret of the cave: it leads to an underground civilisation and a stream lined with gold and diamonds.³⁶ Without 'wives or children to be worried' about them, Lou and Ted are free to undertake the sort of exploration that an attached man could not. A stock black character called Jeff is also taken along, called 'simple minded', carrying the provisions and speaking in dialect, referring to Mammoth Cave as 'de debbil's kingdom', his presence a reassurance for the superior masculinity of Lou and Ted. Part of the narrative also occurs back on the surface involving Lou and Ted's family, sensationalist and completely removed from the events inside the Earth, existing only to extend the overall story.

This is not a Symmesian structure, so artificial light and climbing equipment rather than geography become the mode of travel. Mammoth Cave is the only point of reference on the surface for readers; but this also means that the point of entry to the rich interior world is open to Americans without the need to sail to either Pole, or Iceland, thus reaffirming the greatness of the United States. The adventurers are preserved by God, and sure to thank divinity often in order to maintain this state of grace.³⁷ Whatever the hardship they face, Lou's constantly affirmed motto is 'onward!', a message surely meant to encourage the boy readers of the *Boys Weekly*.

Besides their daring-do, Lou and Ted must also possess intelligent reasoning in order to be successful explorers. Observing a thunderstorm inside the earth, Lou quickly reasons that where 'water exists evaporation must take place', and that lightning occurs because to his mind 'the light which pervaded the place [is] the result of electricity' in the

³⁶ Howard De Vere, 'A Trip to the Center of the Earth', *The New York Boys Weekly* (Vol. 2, No. 65, 8 June 1878), p. 2.

³⁷ Howard De Vere, 'A Trip to the Center of the Earth', *The New York Boys Weekly* (Vol. 2, No. 66, 15 June 1878), p. 2.

very air,³⁸ an environmental condition seen in many *terra cava* creations. The inhabitants are one of the few examples of a primitive *terra cava* rather than advanced, brandishing clubs and speaking a modified version of English, having lost ‘a’ and ‘the’ from their vocabulary among other things. Interestingly, the native inhabitants sustain themselves on a nutritious clay, or ‘kale’ in their language, which is ‘as fine and soft as flour’, so no one is reduced to actually eating mud.³⁹ Bleiler says the story is interesting ‘only for the language modifications.’⁴⁰ No scientific exploration of the language, nor Grimm’s Law, ever comes through the text; adventures and morals are De Vere’s main concern.

Despite their apparent savagery, though, the inner world inhabitants benefit from being white and dressed exactly alike,⁴¹ fulfilling Gardner’s image of the unified race. This whiteness also means that they are not a tremendous threat to the white protagonists, and are available for romantic entanglements. Lou and Ted are eventually welcomed into their society, though De Vere does not spend many words in developing a rounded picture of their society, instead moving between perilous adventures for the young men. The passage of a year is simply narrated, but Lou and Ted’s patience pays off when they join a water expedition and discover diamonds.⁴² They barely escape with their lives, though, and De Vere makes a point of warning against avarice, ‘that riches, wealth, is not everything.’⁴³

While the narratives directed at a more mature audience allow for the accumulation of vast wealth through glory, God, and gunpowder, it seems that the *terra cava* tales intended for juvenile adventurers require a more heavy-handed dose of morality, reminders to thank god, avoidance of greed, and respect for authority. This last part is most obvious in Lou and Ted’s willingness to live under the elders of the interior world, rather than overthrowing them.

³⁸ Howard De Vere, ‘A Trip to the Center of the Earth’, *The New York Boys Weekly* (Vol. 2, No. 67, 22 June 1878), p. 5.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Bleiler, *Science Fiction*, p. 195.

⁴¹ De Vere, ‘A Trip to the Center of the Earth’ (Vol. 2, No. 67), p. 5.

⁴² Howard De Vere, ‘A Trip to the Center of the Earth’, *The New York Boys Weekly* (Vol. 2, No. 68, 29 June 1878), p. 6.

⁴³ Howard De Vere, ‘A Trip to the Center of the Earth’, *The New York Boys Weekly* (Vol. 2, No. 69, 6 July 1878), p. 6.

IV.ii – *Interior World*, the Free Eden

The hollow earth novel *Interior World* by Washington L. Tower in 1885 offers readers a full summary of what to expect with the rather substantial subtitle of ‘A romance illustrating a new hypothesis of terrestrial organization, with an appendix setting forth an original theory of gravitation.’ What makes this work unique among entries in the field are its non-fictional frame, a third-person narrative, and a hollow earth devoid of inhabitants. The characters that end up inside the world by happenstance are made the lords of a land that has no one to raise an objection, the fantasy of an America that was supposed to be mostly devoid of life when the Puritans arrived. Of all lands that a young man can tame, one without any population to offer resistance is the best of circumstances.

The preface of *Interior World* is little more than 100 words outlining the two objectives of the text: to present the author’s own theory of gravitation as it relates to the structure of the world, and ‘To present a narrative entertaining to boys, yet free from any thing tending to awaken vicious or ignoble passions’.⁴⁴ This is an interesting dichotomy of intentions, the presentation of a complex scientific theory in a tale meant to appeal to male juvenile tastes (without offending their moral sensibilities). Tower feels that this sort of literature in America is sadly lacking, and that it is his job to help fill this gap. That he is doing this while presenting an idea that he claims to have spent years researching is just a happy cohesion of theory and plot.

In the beginning, it takes nearly fifty pages to get to the interior of the earth. First there is the introduction of the two adventurers, Belivast and Widmore, who move from the gold rush in the American northwest to being attacked by Indians to having a boy, Lethe Wildwood,⁴⁵ dropped into their care without explanation. While taking shelter deep in a cave, the men espy large pieces of gold in a deep crevasse, and in their attempts to reach it,

⁴⁴ Washington L. Tower. *Interior World: A Romance Illustrating a New Hypothesis of Terrestrial Organization, with and Appendix Setting Forth an Original Theory of Gravitation*. (Oakland, OR: Milton H. Tower, 1885), p. 3. All other references cited in text for this edition.

⁴⁵ The men decide to be clever in naming their charge, ‘Lethe’ being one of the rivers of Hades that flow into the underworld and causes amnesia in those who drink its waters. ‘Wildwood’ is a surname to denote the situation in which he was found.

fall in. This is not the traditional Symmes Hole entrance into the earth's interior, but this is still a Symmesian cosmology. Within five pages of falling through the chasm in the cave and finding themselves once again on terra firma, Belivast declares that the only explanation is that 'The earth must be a hollow sphere, and we have passed through the crust or shell, and are now on the interior surface' (p. 67). This followed by an explanation of how they passed through the gravitational convergence of the interior and exterior, followed by an explanation of the mathematics of light angling into the interior in a Symmesian fashion. As with other works, the creatures of the interior world are not quite like those found above, and harken back to the ice age, with mammoths to be found wandering about, having 'migrated' from its former home in North America (pg. 104).

In the spirit of Manifest Destiny to bring the New World under the American flag, the protagonists are inspired by their present circumstances 'with the spirit of enterprise, and they determined to incur the hazards, difficulties, and hardships of a migratory life, being supported with the belief that they were destined to accomplish a great work – a work of no less importance than that of opening communication between two worlds' (pg. 74). This is a sentiment found often in other hollow earth works; that of the characters feeling duty bound to alert the rest of the world to the presence of a hollow and habitable land waiting for trade, settlement, etc. The bait for readers to yearn for this world's veracity is set in the rich open lands, exotic pelts to be obtained (pg. 85) and the gold that is just lying around waiting to be plucked from the ground (pg. 99).

Interior World is not a lost race novel, unlike many of its contemporaries. Where every other novel is concerned with the exploration not just of new lands, but of new races, languages and cultural practices, Tower's work is completely devoid of interaction with anyone beyond the three protagonists until the end of the novel. This holds a greater significance for the new world dreamer: a wealthy land open to conquest (by Americans, of course) without anyone to object. That is one of the ultimate objectives seen in the majority of hollow earth narratives: the settlement of another 'America'. It is a Utopia without any of the social characteristics, only that of unfettered potential for moulding.

As part of that American ideal, good living and religious morality are slipped into the text, when Belivast and Widmore suddenly feel that they have been neglecting their religion, and go on to reminisce about this for four pages (pp. 63-6). Their young charge, who apparently remembers nothing of his former life, is then instructed ‘to understand that Nature is the workmanship of a Divine Intelligence, and that we are indebted to that Supreme Intelligence for the wonderful mechanism of our organization’ (pg. 65). This language is certainly Tower reaching out to the boys he hopes are reading his book. As Lethe grows, he becomes the archetypal male hero, credited with being ‘devout and moral by nature, very conscientious, candid and truthful, his mind never having been poisoned by the examples of evil associates’ (pg. 109). This is another benefit of this unspoiled land: a place free of corrupting influences Tower perceives in contemporary America. The mythical view of the American pastoral as an Eden is being recreated in the hollow earth. In the tradition of formal colonial claiming, the three men recite the solemn oath ‘We... do by right of discovery, now formally take possession of the Interior World in the name, and for the eternal behoof of the United States of America’ (pg. 128). This kind of ceremony can be seen clear back to *Symzonia*.

After years of journeying northward, they reach the north polar opening. The rough conditions of the Arctic make their escape difficult, as demonstrated by the bones of a crew from a stranded whaling ship (surprisingly passing up on the opportunity to mention the Franklin expedition) found on the verge of the two worlds. Making use of the ship to effect their escape, this is when they find the first humans they’ve seen since entering the earth. This family uses the name Tichborne, playing on one of the great nineteenth century court cases, the lost Tichborne heir (in this fictional case, shipwrecked for years) and the imposter from Australia who went to England and convinced the aggrieved mother of Tichborne that he was indeed her son. Within two chapters, Tichborne’s daughters are married off to Lethe Wildwood and Rolin Widmore, finally bringing the ‘romance’ portion of the novel’s subtitle to fruition. These two new Adam and Eve couples decide to remain in their new land, while Belivast sails out, landing in Alaska. As happens in every other return-of-the-explorer

narrative, Belivast's tale is not believed, and so he keeps it quiet until enough years have passed, and publishes his life. In this case, though, since the story is presented in the third person, the last sentence reveals that Belivast will only allow this 'history' to be published as a 'romance' (pg. 172).

That is not the end of the tome, though. A 33-page appendix follows, as the author feels the need to clarify the science he has used because 'a decent respect for the opinions of the reader would seem to require that some proof in support of such novel philosophic declarations be presented' (pg. 174). Tower goes on to cover topics such as Force, Negative Gravitation and the Solar System. What is even more unusual than an appendix in a work of fiction is the five-page index, assisting readers in referencing everything from 'Discovering ferocious animals' to 'Quarters for the winter' in case there was an especially thrilling part of the novel they wanted to go back to. At least, that is what one is left to suppose, because it makes little other sense in having an index for this work. Like Verne's *Journey* it is a tale as much dedicated to scientific (using the term loosely) exposition as relating an adventure. And without any signs of humanoid habitation – and only the hint at inhabitants in *Journey* – the potential for conquest of an unsettled land exists.

IV.iii – *Five Thousand Miles Underground*

Like the previous novel, *Five Thousand Miles Underground* is also addressed to the readership of juvenile males, part of the 'Good Books for Boys' series by Cupples & Leon publishers, which marketed all of Roy Rockwood's juvenile adventures. Like *Interior World* it also features third-person narration rather than first, but does not contain any didactic index. The third novel in the 'Great Marvel' sequence, *Five Thousand Miles Underground* (1908) features two teenage orphans and their friend and guardian, Professor Amos Henderson. The previous two instalments, *Through the Air to the North Pole* (1906) and *Under the Ocean to the South Pole* (1907) already established that there is no Symmes hole in either location, but on the way to the South Pole, identified a bottomless hole in the South Pacific that they come back to explore in this novel. Published under the publishing house

pseudonym 'Roy Rockwood', it was actually the product of Howard Garis, one of the most prolific writers of adventure series in the early twentieth century.⁴⁶

Professor Amos Henderson represents the quintessential eccentric American inventor, capable of building any mechanism he imagines, fabricating new chemical elements, and ignoring the laws of physics. Certain passages read like Edisonades, full of technical schematics and machine-love; there is nothing American know-how and an adventuresome spirit cannot conquer. The orphan boys he has taken in, Mark and Jack, are the avatars for the average prepubescent boy reading the story, yearning to invent flying machines and go exploring where no one has before set foot. Mark and Jack find themselves in frequent danger throughout the novel, from killer whales to high-jacking pirates and mysterious creatures haunting the ship, imparting the lesson that glory and god do not come easily, requiring ingenuity and bravery: '[T]he desire to discover something new and strange had gripped all of them, and not one would have voted to turn back.'⁴⁷ Empire building for a nation means access to an available supply of willing young men who put adventure above personal safety.

The Professor acts as the narrative encyclopaedia for the boys (and readers), with frequent didactic interludes: 'I have never spoke of it before, but now that we are fairly started and may eventually have a chance to prove my theory, I will say that I think the centre of this earth on which we live is hollow. Inside of it, forming a core, so to speak, I believe there is another earth, similar to ours in some respects which revolves inside this larger sphere.'⁴⁸ This is more in line with Edmund Halley's theory of concentric spheres, as opposed to Symmes's theory. Gravity is still downward, and rather than living on the reverse side of the Earth's crust, there is another, smaller globe within. This geography means that it is not possible to simply sail into the earth on the ocean; they must instead fly. The theory of a hot internal earth is explained by Henderson as a layer of hot gases between the two shells,

⁴⁶ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 232.

⁴⁷ Roy Rockwood, *Five Thousand Miles underground, or, The Mystery of the Centre of the Earth* (New York: Cupples & Leon Company, 1908), p. 101.

⁴⁸ Rockwood, *Five Thousand Miles Underground*, p. 39.

so once they touch down on the interior globe, will not suffer any ill effects (p. 104). Light comes not from the external sun, nor an interior one, but instead multihued volcanic fires (p. 163) producing an effect not unlike the Aurora Borealis, one of the favourite subjects of *terra cava*. There is also a lighter, more invigorating atmosphere (p. 133) which allows plant and animal life to grow much larger (p. 135), two features seen in other works like *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* and *The Smoky God*. Rockwood is borrowing many common items from other hollow earth stories, but creating his own scientific explanations for such features.

Like the conquistadors of old, the Professor and boys discover a ‘half-civilized race’ not dissimilar from the Aztecs culturally (p. 185), but they are fifteen feet tall and without well-developed musculature (p. 192), making them easy to defeat. Unlike many of the other American *terra cava* imaginings, it is not an advanced race found inside the earth, but a more primitive one. This would have the effect of making young readers feel the superiority of their race and achievements. This voyage has not resulted in cultural or spiritual growth for the characters, only the acquisition of scientific knowledge, and a whole lot of gold.

It turns out that the ghostly spectre haunting the ship was the king of these demi-Aztecs who, after becoming trapped in the outside world, hitched a ride back on the Professor’s flying vessel. As a reward he offers them directions to ‘The Temple of Treasures’ where they can take from the piles of ‘unlimited gold and diamonds’ (p. 214). Glory and gold await, but for two small problems: 1) the treasure is guarded by giant bats, which prevent them from taking away more than they can carry, and 2), the hole in the ocean floor by which they entered the subterranean world has been closed by an earthquake. In order to escape via a life boat launched on a water spout, they must throw their gold over – much like the brothers in *The Secret of the Earth* – and can only carry a few diamonds (p. 236). The closing of the hole also means that no other adventurers can follow in their footsteps, preventing anyone from verifying the story. No kingdom was conquered, and they lost much of their wealth, so their imperialist venture was not entirely successful. But the money obtained from their diamonds still allows them to ‘live in comfort the rest of their

lives' (p. 241) and Jack and Mark, like good American boys, decide to use their wealth for educations, so that they can be like the professor, building new inventions to take them on new adventures in search of more gold and glory. The Professor retires, and the rest of the crew invest wisely enriching themselves further. The lesson from this, then, is that private ventures are only part of the key to success; the rest comes from capitalism and savvy business acumen.

The boys losing most of their wealth and emerging with only a small reward for their adventuring efforts is similar to the results of *Secret of the Earth* and *A Trip to the Center of the Earth*, indicating a double standard for younger imperialists. While grown men can conquer empires and amass vast sums, allowing boys to possess the same without age and experience would potentially lead to vice and corruption. It would undermine the strength of position offered by age and experience if young men were to surpass their elders in wealth and the power it provides.

Conclusion

The hollow earth as a realm awaiting American exploitation all but disappears from the pages of literature after this point. Real explorers in search of glory (as there was not much in the way of God or gold to be found) planted their flags at both the North and South Poles not long after Rockwood's novel. The American frontier was firmly closed, and new capital was gained instead from the likes of Hawaii and the Philippines. American manufacturers profited greatly from the First World War, and the opportunity for prosperity moved from imperialism and land ownership to industrialisation and invention.

The movement from explorers discovering advanced civilisations (representing American uncertainty about their place in the world) to discovering races inferior to American good old boys seem to bring to the forefront of the literary imagination the superiority of America. There is no more spiritual journey to be taken, only the monetary one. And with the physical identification of the Poles (housing neither lost races nor mountains of gold) exploration is no longer interested. Victoria Nelson noted in her study of South Polar literature that '[t]he colonialist's psychotopographic presumption is to seek the

Other and find only his own reflection',⁴⁹ and with maps now labelling the geography of the Poles and finding no access to the world below, there is little left upon which to reflect. It is a problem that also encompasses the next two chapters, on the Scientific-Spiritualist *terra cava* novel, and the Utopian, all employing the last uncharted corners of the world to provide a portal into another.

⁴⁹ Victoria Nelson, "Symmes Hole, Or the South Polar Romance" in *Raritan* (Vol. 17, Issue 2), p. 159.

Chapter Three – The Scientific Religion of *Terra Cava*

“For what is farthest away and most hidden is, paradoxically, always what is most important: the journey to the pole is a journey to the center of the soul. A mystic or occult notion of both Poles also figures strongly in alchemists’ speculations about the resonating inner and outer world.”¹

When Symmes first hypothesised the existence of a hollow, habitable world, the faith that impelled him was an amalgam of scientific speculation and reasoned divine creation. By the end of the nineteenth century, various religious interpretations of *terra cava* would create new architectures for belief in a hollow globe. From Christian Scientist to Mormon to Spiritualist, the imagined spaces underground provided a blank slate upon which authors could test their scientific religions. The theory that the earth is hollow, thus doubling the amount of space for both nature and divine creation, influenced scientific and religious thinkers, as well as fiction authors.

A significant feature of some nineteenth century science fiction was that, for all of the science (without attaching the qualifier of accuracy) contained within their pages, there was often reliance upon divine providence to underpin the narrative. Many social observers over the last century have been consumed with the perception of continuous acrimony between science and religion, first conceived of by the American scientist John W. Draper in his 1873 text *The History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*:

The antagonism we thus witness between Religion and Science is the continuation of a struggle that commenced when Christianity began to attain political power. A divine revelation must necessarily be intolerant of contradiction; it must repudiate all improvement in itself, and view with disdain that arising from the progressive intellectual development of man.²

Draper views religion as a natural antagonist to science, the source of human progress.

However, during the nineteenth century’s ever-increasing scientific knowledge there was a societal push to reconcile the new with the dogmatic. The study of science and religion in the nineteenth century is significant for the rapid growth in the polarization of the two domains. Before this time science was referred to as ‘natural philosophy’; the world’s

¹ Victoria Nelson, “Symmes Hole, Or the South Polar Romance”, in *Raritan* (Fall 1997, Vol. 17, Issue 2), p. 163.

² John W. Draper, *The History of the Conflict Between Science and Religion* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1875), p. vi.

natural philosophers saw a heavenly hand in all they observed. This transition from ‘natural philosophers’ to ‘scientists’ was first proposed by a member of the British Association, William Whewell, to that body in 1833, and as Britain’s natural philosophers went, so went America’s, but in a distinctly American fashion. Craig James Hazen explains that ‘In the spirit of democracy – especially the antielitism it entailed – it became more common for ordinary people to discuss, debate, create, synthesize, modify, demonize, or embrace religious, scientific, and philosophical ideas.’³ New religious and philosophic movements arose in conjunction with scientific developments, including Spiritualism (‘Science of the Soul’) and mind-cure, or Christian Science. These arose as part of the widespread use of the popular ‘inductive method’ developed by Francis Bacon. ‘Baconian philosophy’⁴ was popularly implemented because it provided a framework of reasoning via demonstration, the origins of the modern scientific method. In *terra cava* narratives from this time, detailed descriptions of scientific reasoning to explain how a hollow world functions are often worked into the text, in addition to the author’s philosophies.

This connection between hollow Earth literature and religion has not gone unobserved. In *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* the entry on the hollow Earth states that ‘A religious note is not uncommon. In the later stories of the paranoid Shaver mystery the inner world is a hell; however, edenic stories in which creation took place inside the Earth...are more common.’⁵ Incorporating Darwin’s theory of human evolution with the account of the Garden of Eden in Genesis, the North Pole and/or the interior of the Earth became one of the nineteenth century’s prime locations for narratives of human origin and the lost Garden. These works are not all purely Judeo-Christian in theological orientation but are wider in their philosophic scope and tempered with serious examination of contemporary scientific theory. More than dime-novel adventures for boys, these works engage in the reader’s education. Unlike traditional works of fiction, these narratives should be viewed as

³ Craig James Hazen, *The Village Enlightenment in America: Popular Religion and Science in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000), p. 3.

⁴ Hazen, *The Village Enlightenment in America*, p. 9.

⁵ John Clute and Peter Nicholls, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, (London: Orbit, 1999), p. 580.

didactic dialogues between science and religion, author and reader, told through allegorical narratives of exploration. Experimentation with the nature and definition of religion was a common intellectual exercise.

William F. Warren, President of Boston University, authored *Paradise Found: The Cradle of the Human Race at the North Pole* (1885), in which he proposed that the historical Eden could be found in a tropical polar depression in the North Pole. He was reconciling biblically-inspired origins with scientific observations of biology, geography, and history; for him there is no conflict between science and religion. However, to Warren this view was inconsistent with a Symmesian geography:

Speculations or fancies of this sort have ever clustered about this mysterious region of the Pole. As we shall hereafter see, they abound in remote antiquity. Even the singular fancy known to the public as “Symmes’ Hole” antedates Symmes, and may be found in much more attractive form in Klopstock’s *Messiah*.⁶

Even if Warren is advocating for a solid earth, his view of human origins emanating from the last unmapped part of the earth emerges strongly in these *terra cava* narratives, resonating because no one found Eden on the surface of the earth.

It is necessary to cover various definitions being employed in this chapter. ‘Spiritualism’ is intended in its nineteenth-century, capital ‘S’ sense of a belief system in which the living could communicate with the dead and other species (such as Martians). How authors –and even practitioners – define it for themselves varies in slight ways; Spiritualism never provided a canonical tract of orthodoxy. In their introduction to *Nineteenth-Century Spiritualism and the Occult* Kontou and Willburn provide a useful outline for approaching Spiritualism and its companion, the occult:

[S]piritualism and the occult provide flexible allegories for many concepts that are distinctly modern – such as the permeability between remote places, instantaneous communication from afar, and the recording and reproduction of the historical past. The occult presents helpful allegories...for many modern cultural technologies such as mechanically enhanced communication, speedy inspiration, and the relationship between individual and group identities, which are often fostered at a distance.⁷

⁶ William F. Warren, *Paradise Found: The Cradle of the Human Race at the North Pole* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Company, 1885), p. 84.

⁷ Tatiana Kontou and Sarah Willburn, ‘Introduction’, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Nineteenth-Century Spiritualism and the Occult* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), p. 1.

The interior and exterior of the world certainly provides distance, and with the advent of the telegraph and telephones, railways, automobiles, aeroplanes, and electricity, communication and daily function over distance were being enhanced in the real world and perfected on the page of the novel.

The interesting aspect in many of these novels is how their spiritual and religious philosophies cross the boundary into the scientific and technological. In her study *Science and Literature*, Sleigh notes that Strauss's *Life of Jesus* (1846), 'in its search for authenticity... bowed the knee to the notion of truth; the Christian overtones of serving truth could not be purged. Truth and its corollary, doubt, were moral imperatives of Christian origin'.⁸ This is a sentiment to be found in all of these hollow earth narratives, both the fictional and the non-fictional (one cannot exactly call the latter 'factual'), to spread the word not just of a radical geography, but that this is a divinely ordained geography, and those living inside this divine ordination possess a truth about divinity that the outside world lacks. 'Truth' in these texts is not just composed of deductive 'facts', but scriptural evidences as well; 'something can be true without necessarily being factual.'⁹ Many of the authors write with the intention of not just demonstrating the feasibility of a hollow world, but the feasibility of a humanity that can spiritually elevate itself beyond present capabilities, blending observed facts, assumed facts, and imaginative speculation meant to unify all the elements into a cohesive whole.

I – Christianity Inside the Earth

These narratives embrace what William Paley called 'natural theology', discerning divine intent in the creation of a hollow world, inhabited by people more devout than those on the surface. As no place in the known world existed in such an idealized state, the theoretical interior Earth provides verisimilitude for readers familiar with the theory. The parables in these novels demonstrate that a reliance on God and his principles would herald a utopian,

⁸ Charlotte Sleigh, *Science and Literature*, p. 134.

⁹ Sleigh, *Literature and Science*, p. 140.

technologically advanced world. The pursuit of science for some was for religious ends, but during this same era, science was also put to use to reveal not the divine, but the non-denominational ‘spiritual’, and *terra cava* was the ideal topography for exploring its theories. What Standish called ‘Better living through chemistry’¹⁰ in his description of the utopian novel *Mizora* (to be discussed in the next chapter), can be modified to describe these novels as ‘Better living through Christianity’; yet this better living can only be expressed in the interior of the world. Finding the earth hollow would also indicate there was a divine hand in the world’s creation, exploration validating religious speculation.

Li – *Al-modad*

One of the first *terra cava* works to truly make an effort at synthesising science and religion, *Al-modad: Life scenes beyond the polar circumflex; a religio-scientific solution of the problems of present and future life*, has a subtitle that would not necessarily attract today’s readers to a work of fiction. Structurally, nothing about the work (except for its implausibility) would even lead a reader to recognize it as fiction, and it is never mentioned as such. The author’s intent of effecting reconciliation between science and religion is explicit both in the title and from the book’s initial appearance. The front cover is composed of Biblical quotations, as well as one from Confucius, which seems out of place. Interestingly, though, the author is not identified; the text claims only that it was written by ‘an untrammelled free-thinker’, a rather egotistic *nom de plume*. Sleight credits this as a nineteenth century example of ‘the courage of the free-thinking individual posited as automatically virtuous and trustworthy.’¹¹ History has been left to assume that the publishers, M. Louise Moore and M. Beauchamp (of whom no information exists) were the true authors, and every library catalogue references Moore as the author.

This small tome, printed on bible-thin pages between only slightly thicker sheets of paper with miniscule text whose ink bleeds through to the other side, seems over-priced at

¹⁰ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 198.

¹¹ Sleight, *Literature and Science*, p. 142.

\$1.00 in 1892; calculating for inflation¹², this book would cost almost \$24 today. Even putting an advertisement on the back cover for a photography shop in Cincinnati (far removed from the publishing point of origin in Cameron Parish, Louisiana) does not appear to have helped in reducing the cost. It is unknown if any editions beyond this one exist (certainly no record exists) or how widely this dense novel sold.

Beyond the paratextual quotes on the cover, the inside cover, below the copyright notice, is a note from the publisher, addressed directly to the reader:

Any purchaser of this book who will submit in proof in writing, either from a scientific or scriptural stand-point, to show that any theory herein presented is false will receive the price paid, with the thanks of the publisher. This is not intended as a *challenge*, but from a sense of veneration for the *truth* and of honest, fair dealing, as also to stimulate a spirit of candid, unprejudiced investigation.¹³

This is a unique statement to make, an address not from the intended ‘author’, per se, but the publisher (which I interpret to be one and the same) in an attempt to cultivate the trust and empathy of the reader to build veracity for the narrative. Just as important is what goes unsaid: the publisher makes no offer to *correct* any wrong information in the narrative, only asks to be informed (and furnished with proofs) of error and will pay the dollar spent on the book. Establishing credibility is also made through appeal to the reader’s intellectual ego by suggesting they question what they are reading: ‘Hearsay could never have satisfied me, nor should it ever satisfy you. Accept no theory unsupported by reasonable, tangible, demonstrative proofs’ (p. 80).

In addition to this ‘Special’ notice inside the cover is the fourteen-page *Publisher’s Preface* that goes on to establish the frame of the narrative. By substituting ‘Publisher’ for ‘Author’, the assumed neutrality of the former title is transferred onto the latter, which most readers must presume to have a bias. From the start, the publisher disavows any hand in the narrative, claiming only to have published it as part of ‘a solemn pledge given to a dying comrade’ (pg. 1). This ‘apology’ continues, ‘not to shun the criticism and possibly ridicule

¹² ‘The Inflation Calculator’ < <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/> > Accessed 11/11/2012.

¹³ Anon. [M. Louise Moore and M. Beauchamp], *Al-modad; or, Life Scenes Beyond the Polar Circumflex. A Religio-Scientific Solution of the Problems of Present and Future Life* (Shell Bank, LA: M.L. Moore & M. Beauchamp, 1892), n.p., cover material. All further references cited in text for this edition.

from which even prophets and poets are not wholly [sic] exempt, but to disclaim any right to merit from any benefit that may be conferred upon human society in the promulgation of ideas' (pg. 1). It is a seamless transition from apology to prophecy, comparing the work to that of 'prophets' and 'poets' and dismissing doubts or condescension as par for the course of great minds. And this is only done because the Publisher feels unworthy of taking any credit for the 'benefits' derived from the reading of *Al-modad*, seeking only to enlighten humanity for its own benefit. This framing device is seen in several other *terra cava* narratives,¹⁴ distancing yet elevating the publisher/editor. This preface is more extensive than others, following the Publisher's nameless family, and their encounter with Almodad Moetaend, the author of the manuscript, in November of 1879, an old, itinerate wanderer seeking refuge in his last days of life. This gives Almodad's story the weight of the deathbed confession (also seen in *Under the Auroras* and *The Smoky God*). He begs the family not just to listen to and publish his story, but that the work 'be printed upon that quality of paper, and in such style of binding, as will justify a reasonably low price to that class of purchaser who can ill afford the luxury of more expensive literature' (p. 11). This explains the low quality of the paper and binding for the novel:

To this end may the light of divine inspiration guide unprejudiced research to the unveiling of the mystery of scripture allegory, until science and religion spans the chasm of sectional prejudice and reveals the hitherto undefined purpose of that mysterious force of intuition – *inspiration* directing adventurous research in the ice-bound regions of the "North Pole" of future scientific discovery ending in the true revelation of God's purpose in the grand ultimatum of the human race, and with sincere desire that you will reap the reward due to the faithful and philanthropic...
(p. 11)

That single sentence (not even written out here in its entirety) is an example of not just the complex style of writing, but the interweaving of Christianity and science that dominates the narrative expressed in the society of the interior world. The hollow world was divinely created, yet hidden from the exterior world until science could move explorers to the interior.

¹⁴ i.e. *Interior World*, *The Secret of the Earth*, *The Smoky God*, etc.

The religious aspects seem clear from the very title of the novel; Almodad¹⁵ is a descendant of Noah listed in the book of Genesis, the name taken to mean something along the lines of ‘measure of God’.¹⁶ What becomes more interesting is that rather than being a strict Judeo-Christian interpretation of the Bible, the narrative goes out of its way several times to point out that the Old Testament should not be read as literal, but allegorical: ‘The book called the bible is not a *litteral* [sic], but an *allegorical* history’ (pg. 146). Biblical exegesis is compounded with social diegesis to convey the authors’ message, one of a utopian progressivism achievable through science and religion. Almost the entirety of the thirteenth chapter is given over to scriptural analysis. Where other *terra cava* narratives give over their exposition to exploring new societies, *Al-modad* is given to exploring new, ostensibly Christian philosophies.

The novel does not immediately set its sights on the hollow earth, starting with a long narrative about Almodad’s time in Africa, where he was captured by cannibals and forced to consume human flesh to preserve his life amongst his captors. This opens up a chance to compare the eating of human flesh with the eating of *any* flesh (pg. 40) – adding another tale of vegetarianism to the hollow earth canon. It is difficult to say what exactly compelled so many authors to write vegetarian societies, though the various movements in the nineteenth century toward healthful living and diets may have had some influence. Almodad’s time in Africa, his ‘sin’ of eating human flesh, construct a need for redemption, one that can be achieved inside the earth.

Eventually escaping to Portugal, and then to England, Almodad finds himself friendless and penniless with a family to support, and takes on a dangerous expedition to the Arctic, which is finally gotten to a quarter of the way into the narrative. Only a few pages later – and thus skipping over the many geographic details of a voyage that other authors have been wont to include – Almodad and a companion (Baldtsky), through a misfortune that separates them from their ship (the same as in *Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper*

¹⁵ Alternately spelled ‘Almodad’ or ‘Elmodad’.

¹⁶ Taken from *Hitchcock’s Bible Names Dictionary* published in 1870.
<<http://christianthings.com/reading/biblena.html>> Accessed 8/11/2011.

Cylinder) are swept away into a Symmes Hole. Faced with this series of unfortunate events, Almodad builds a metaphor between actions and the human heart, which he calls a 'battery charged with the magnetism of sympathy and affection' (p. 64). Like the spirit batteries of *The Goddess of Atvatabar* (published in the same year) the functions of the human body and soul are being related to scientific principles of electricity and magnetism. This suffering is to be balanced by the joy Almodad finds inside the earth.

As with nearly all hollow Earth narratives, a native population is to be found living in a technologically advanced state of utopia. These Internals are described by Almodad as a uniformly handsome race, with 'beardless faces, firmly modelled feminine features, beautiful clear complexion and perfect similarity, in form, stature, dress and deportment' and are 'objects of wonder and admiration'; even touching them gives off a sensation of warmth and 'tingling' (p. 72). The unity of the people, being of 'one nationality, speaking the same dialect' (p. 91) emphasises the thesis made by Gardner about the uniformity of race being an American fantasy, coming from a land of such diversity.¹⁷ Gifted with superior 'endurance, agility' and more, Almodad and Baldsky find themselves similarly vitalised, feeling an 'elasticity and buoyancy' (p. 76) in their bodies, though no reason for this is given. Being one of the 'accidental' explorers of the internal world, and untrained in the ways of science, Almodad cannot provide answers for readers, but must wait for them to come from the Internals, among whom physical perfection is a mirror for their religious superiority. There is qualitative praise lavished multiple times upon these interior beings for their 'physical, intellectual and moral perfection' because it is impossible 'to comprehensively describe the people, their manners and customs' (p. 78). However, the bulk of the narrative is given over to just this task, rather than developing a comprehensive plot of action. There is not even a love story (Almodad already being married) to distract from the 'religio-scientific' didactics.

Utopian in aspect, the purpose of the tale is to have the author/narrator move through the society of the interior inhabitants in order to compare it to contemporary surface society and all its flaws, during which Almodad takes the opportunity to wax eloquent on

¹⁷ Gardner, *Master Plots*, p. 116

religious particulars and the need for improvement in the outer world. Each of the chapters often revolve around exploring a certain religious or scientific topic in conjunction with telling the ‘history’ of the land, reading these histories as parables about America’s own problems: inequalities of wealth, unemployment, homelessness, prohibition, legal corruption, etc. Much of chapter ten is dedicated to a debate between Almodad and the *Preceptor* (one of his guides among the interior beings) about man’s potential to expand his knowledge and know the Creator. This is also the moment when in two paragraphs Almodad realises (and accepts) that he is on the inside of the Earth, and never reflects upon this fact again (p. 116). The scientific reasoning behind this revelation is hardly expanded upon, revealing that the author is more concerned with religious and political philosophies rather than elaborating upon the physical science of a hollow globe. Some examples of contemporary issues the author chooses to take on:

- Equality of the sexes, including even being comfortable in a state of undress in mixed company (p. 77)
- Land ownership. In the internal world, land is viewed as part of the divine creation, and one cannot purchase a part of the creation from the Divine, nor does the Divine have any use for earthy wealth (p. 95)
- Money. The dollar is described as a ‘fictitious representative of values it delude the people with irregular prices’ (p. 96). There is no stock market for individual losses and gains.
- Despotic and predatory governance: ‘[C]owering slaves are taught to regard despotic sway as a “survival of the fittest.” A single wolf would survive a flock of sheep on an Island only until the last sheep had expired, but how long would he survive the herbage on which the sheep peacefully subsisted?’ (p. 124).
- The Laws of Nature and Laws of God must be one and the same if God is to be held as the creator of Nature (p. 198).

- The Laws of Man: ‘It is not enough that human law declares an act *right* which the superior laws of God in Nature declares wrong. Law is not only fallible, it is often sinister and grossly pernicious’ (p. 203).

There is little on this earth that the author does not take issue with in some regard or another, and puts against the mirror of a utopian society inside the earth, and the novel is meant to provide the necessary proofs for this.

Where physical and spiritual wealth are found, so too is the mineral (despite the apparent rejection of its significance). The state of the Internals’ habitation is frequently described in language similar to those tales of overt imperialism: ‘[B]oth the inner and outer face of the walls of which are panelled somewhat on the gothic order, margined with elegantly wrought mouldings of pure gold; the angles of which are set with precious stones. In the midst of the central hall...were curiously carved tables and settees apparently inlaid with mother-of-pearl and tastefully finished in filigree’ (p. 75). These are the rewards for being a godly-scientific society, to be surrounded by a physical wealth that no longer holds any material value, purely the aesthetic. In *Al-modad* and other *terra cava* novels that the more removed a civilisation is from everyday material needs, the more valuable materials there are to be found, conflating the spiritual and the material.

Throughout the narrative there are frequent addresses made toward the reader. Finally reaching dry land, Almodad makes an address to the audience: ‘To the reader’s imagination I submit the experiment of surmising what our feelings were when we stepped upon this verdant shore’ (pg. 68). This is explicitly drawing in the audience to put themselves into the situation, reminding them by direct address that they are reading a ‘true’ tale. Often the reader is challenged to reflect upon what they are being told, such as ‘Reader, are you prepared to accept this theory?’ (pg. 185). This breaking of the fourth wall is also accompanied by occasional notes from the ‘publisher’ on issues both political and ecumenical. There is a long note that delves into the blasphemy of giving money to God, with biblical references for the reader to verify the publisher’s argument (p 77). This reflective referencing suggests that the authors entertain reservations about the reader’s

reception of the narrative and philosophy as plausible, thus necessitating narrative distancing and evidentiary offerings meant to maintain verisimilitude.

In the describing of the Interiors' habitat, Almodad again stresses to the reader that 'it will impossible to convey a comprehensive idea' of the 'majestic mountains' that are in perpetual bloom, and the orchards and fields that are never out of season in their production of foodstuffs because of the stable environment (p. 78). This is a condition expressed time and again in *terra cava* novels, that the interior of the earth is a paradise not subjected to famine, flood or drought. But never is it suggested by Almodad that this is a *physical* place of rich perfection which readers should aspire to obtain; rather, it is the *spiritual* perfection which should be sought, and the corporeal will follow.

Mingling traditional Christianity with Spiritualism and the latter's belief in 'living' spirits, the *Preceptor* tells Almodad that he was reincarnated in this utopia after living a life on the surface of the world, remembered like a vivid dream (p. 122-3). Utilising Almodad's Bible, the *Preceptor* presents various scriptural passages – not quoted, only listed for the reader to go find for themselves, like a devotional – to prove that 'the Scriptures...illustrate, by appropriate metaphorical figures, the relation of matter and spirit, appealing to spiritual perceptions through material channels' (p.120). To these statements, with the unquoted biblical passages for proof, he confidently states to the reader that 'No competent physiologist can fail to perceive in these texts the direct relation of the spiritual to the physical constitution of matter distinguished only by a thorough comprehension of the declaration of Paul recorded in the XV ch. of 1st Corinthians' (p. 121). Focusing on versus 44-46 (as the *Preceptor* advises) the following is found:

It is sown a naturall body, it is raised a spirituall bodie. There is a naturall bodie, and there is a spirituall bodie.
And so it is written: The first man Adam was made a living soule, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.
Howbeit that was not first which is spirituall: but that which is naturall, and afterward that which is spirituall.

For the *Preceptor* this passage means that reincarnation is possible, but in the interior world, it is a pure spirit being given another earthly body that happens to be more spiritually

elevated. In his previous earthly life he was a more intellectually and spiritually elevated individual, so that when he died and his soul was released ‘the congenial affinity of a second mother attracted the spiritual habitments of the ego to her own organism’ (p. 123), and he was reborn in the internal world to continue living a life of spiritual elevation. ‘A number of persons whom you see here are the re-embodiment of pioneer reformers who unselfishly devoted their lives to the work of reformation’ he goes on to state; in other words, the internal world is a sort of second, earthly heaven, in which the souls of the great and the good are reincarnated into a ‘city of God’. When Almodad dies in the company of the ‘publisher’s’ family in the Preface, his body is described as a ‘worn out garment’ no longer inhabited by the essence of his person, his soul (p. 14). The implication, perhaps, is that Almodad, being spiritually enlightened by his time among the Internals, will be reborn in the Internal world; his soul drawn to a like-minded mother already there.

More than any other *terra cava* novel, this one spends words in philosophical contemplation rather than exploration. What Almodad reflects upon is perpetual contrast between the lives of the Internals, and the deficiencies of the external globe. At the same time, due to the fantastic nature of the events involved, he must continually stress narratorial reliability to emphasise that he is *not* attempting to influence or mislead the reader in any way, while also appealing to their own self-interest:

I therefore, state facts and theories, simply as given to me, allowing all readers the same latitude of opinions claimed for myself. It is for *you* to say whether theories presented are borne out by your own convictions – after a careful investigation of the facts. Certainly you would not dare do yourself the injustice of rejecting a kindly offer of something for your interest without proving or disproving the merits of the offering. Without the evidences which I experienced I had been as sceptical, perhaps, as any who may read this book.
Hearsay could never have satisfied *me*, nor should it ever satisfy you. Accept no theory unsupported by reasonable, tangible, demonstrative proofs. (p. 80)

There is a plethora of meaning in these two paragraphs from Almodad and how the novel is to be interpreted. The reader is being placed in a powerful position, being given the right to judge the veracity of Almodad’s narrative. They are being asked, like jurors at a trial, to carefully weigh the evidence placed before them, and that they should not accept any substandard proofs. The proofs being offered, however, come only from the perspective of

Almodad and his publisher/editor; they are the prosecutors of America's perceived social and religious failings, with no one to answer for the defence. Almodad also attempts to mollify detractors by framing the narrative as simply a 'kind offering' that would only do the reader harm to reject. Of course, the reader is free to reject the narrative if it does not meet their philosophical standards, and they are free to write the publishers (as per the notice on the inside cover) should they find the facts and proofs wanting; but there is still the subtle suggestion that Almodad is indeed 'satisfied' with the proofs provided him, and the reader should have no reason to gainsay them. What is more, the rejection of this could prove damning: 'If you have no desire for immortality, and care not what the future may be to you, this book can be of no interest to you. As thy faith is so will the consequences be' (p. 155). Failure to accept the 'religio-scientific' solutions offered by Almodad is to set oneself on the path to Hell. The nature of sin, of law, of politics, etc. is expounded upon with proofs from both the perfect lives of the Internals, and references to scriptural passages. Both Almodad and his publisher/editors have included copious notes to underpin these arguments, and perhaps only *The Smoky God* rivals *Al-modad* for overall percentage of words in the entire story given over to paratextual elements. There are footnotes from Almodad, interjections by the 'publisher', quotes and poetic epigraphs to every chapter, images, and an appendix, contributing to the exegetic nature of the narrative.

This appendix is where it becomes apparent that no more attempt is being made at providing a narrative structure to the author's intended message, and is instead dedicated to direct didacticism, discussing 'Property Rights' (p. 204), 'Conjugal Mateship' (p. 207), 'All Matter Composed of Living Entities' (p. 209), and 'Hygiene' (p. 210). Interestingly, in this last section Almodad falls out of his singular first-person form and into the plural, stating 'We will not further lengthen this volume with statistics' on the health benefits of vegetarianism (p. 211), but who else is writing this besides Almodad is left to the imagination. Lastly, the 'Rights of Consciousness' (p. 211) is delivered via a poem of rhyming couplets:

Of what avail, however sacred we prize it,

The right of conscience if we may not exercise it?
Of what avail is freedom, or what use the mind,
If to some ancient custom it must be confined?

Similar philosophic couplets on the faults of man adorned the opening of every chapter. And only after this poetic finale to the Appendix does the novel actually reach its Conclusion, revealing how Almodad returned to the surface world and found himself without family, friends or funds. But it is not told in his words; once more the unnamed ‘publisher’ takes over, summarizing these events in just five pages ‘for want of space’ (p. 212). Almodad suffers the same depressing fate of many prophets: disbelieved, impoverished, homeless and friendless. Only because of the publisher’s promise are we even made aware of this ‘wonderful narrative’ (pg. 216) that must be given the weight of the deathbed confessional.

Bleiler is the only critic to have offered any commentary on *Al-modad*, stating that it is ‘a thesis novel designed to help the common man and also to reconcile Scripture with science’.¹⁸ He also calls it a ‘rare curiosity, but highly eccentric’ (pg. 517), which is to say the least. No other criticism can be found about *Al-modad*, and nothing about the theorised authors, as the novel does not appear to have even been printed more than once. Bleiler is correct in his summation, though, that the intent of the novel was to reconcile emerging science with biblical dogma, and the hollow earth setting is one of convenience rather than expressing conviction of its existence. The use of Symmsian geography, without going into detail about its structure or its function in scientific terms, also reveals how widely disseminated the theory was amongst the expected readership. This common knowledge is what allows the author(s) to set their religious utopia in the centre of the earth without having to spend words explaining the location and instead focus on the ‘religio-scientific solution’ being proposed.

I.ii – *Forty Years with the Damned*

Forty Years with the Damned, or, Life Inside the Earth (1895) by Charles Aikin is a title that combines the traditional impression of the interior of the earth as the setting for hell for the deceased, yet they are given a second, semi-spiritual/semi-corporeal life, not necessarily in

¹⁸ Bleiler, *Science Fiction*, p. 517.

hell, but in a sort of purgatory. Christian theology and imagery are radically mixed with not just hollow earth theory, but the likes of Gratacap's *The Promise of Future Life on Mars* when the inhabitants are suddenly transported to the neighbouring planet. Gratacap's premise was that human souls would be transported to Mars after death, while Aikin proposes future life inside the earth.

On his title page Aikin includes two interesting paratextual elements: first he quotes Shakespeare, 'I will a round, unvarnished tale deliver', and then in smaller type writes 'Mysterious Yet Colloquial'¹⁹ as if attempting to reassure readers that even though this novel may seem atypical, it is still approachable. He takes it further with an introduction/advertisement:

A plain, unvarnished tale, written as we talk.

That my purpose may not be misunderstood, I write this preface.

This book is not intended as a burlesque on religion as many might be led to suppose from the title. Although it deals largely in scenes pertaining to hades, yet it is not irreverent; in short it has nothing to do with any form of belief, but is a wild flight of fancy in which the weird and supernatural form the greater part.

The scenes are laid mostly inside the earth, which the author claims, for his story's sake, to be hollow and to contain nearly as much inhabitable surface as the outside.

Where mythological characters are introduced they are given Greek names, that they may be better understood, as little is known of the people's mythology of which I write.

Stories off the outside of the earth are told by resuscitated beings whose finite existence was not only on this but on other planets. (p. iii)

There is a great deal gleaned here, firstly, that Aikin does not want to novel to be misunderstood as something blasphemous based purely upon his title – a title that was surely chosen *because* it would attract attention. Secondly, that he has taken pains to write a novel in a language he feels is more accessible to the everyday reader, yet also admits to using Greek to denominate mythical creatures and distance himself from accusations of blasphemy. Thirdly, Aikin acclimates readers to the expectation of a hollow earth narrative, not for any scientific reasons (like *Interior World*) but purely literary ones. And lastly, Aikin makes a Spiritualist claim about the relation of tales from resurrected individuals who purport to have lived on other worlds besides earth. Yet despite distancing himself from any

¹⁹ Charles Aikin, *Forty Years With the Damned, or, Life Inside the Earth* (Chicago: Regan Printing House, 1895), p. i. All further references cited in text.

particular belief, it is a combination of Spiritualism and Christian imagery that provides the plot structure. In the framing of the narrative, of a hunter – speaking in the first person – introducing a strange man he met one day, it becomes a Spiritualist metaphor, perhaps, of the hunter, our Medium, channelling the spirit of our primary narrator, Joe, the escaped slave who lived forty years amongst the damned inside the earth.

The hunter introduces his secondary narration as that of the dying confession in an effort to extend it some validity: ‘I have a story to tell you, so strange, so weird that for years I have held it a secret locked... I know full well that I am growing old and soon must be done with things earthly. That my story may not be lost I tell it you’ (p. 1). On the verge of sleep while out hunting one day, the secondary narrator encounters a man described in very contradictory terms: white-silver hair, perfect physique, a Grecian nose, bedecked in rich jewels, facial features indicative of ‘strong mental powers’, and yet skin very dark in hue, which confuses the hunter (p. 2-3), as if all of these features should only be found in a white man. This stranger admits to being a former slave in the valley below four decades previous, and after this short introduction, the narrative is turned over to him.

Joe and his new wife Surene (read ‘serene’ for the implications of her character) escape from their plantation and into a cave, whose river takes them deep inside the earth (similar to the extended voyages in *A Strange Manuscript* and *The Third World* – they even have a dog with them as in the latter). Surene is described as being ‘seven-eighths white’ and literate (p. 10), while Joe believes himself to be of African mould, but being probably endowed with more native intelligence than most of my people’ (p. 11); this is a story of contradictions – much like Joe’s initial appearance – playing on both the worst of nineteenth century racial stereotypes, and at the same time attempting to defy them in Joe and Surene’s characters. Joe calls himself ‘black as the terrors of night’ and wonders why God painted his face ‘black as a demon’s’ yet gave him the mind of a man who dreams of ‘worlds radiant with love and whitewinged purity’ (pp. 23-4). White and black, devil and angel, are constant contrasts throughout the novel. When they meet a group of black men serving whites – in an earthly paradise where all are supposedly equal – one explains that

It is a law of nature and the will of God that the black man serve the white; yet with us it is no servitude, neither is it required of us if one cares not to do it, there is no compulsion. But... the feeling is universal that each serve the other as best he can and as we all do something, we can best perform our part by serving the whites... As on the earth's surface we have a strong desire to perform some kind of service, not for gain, but purely for love. (p. 111)

In other words, one's race, in this life or the next, best determines one's approach to labour. Nature and God have their own sets of laws, and yet both are in agreement that the best purpose of non-whites is to serve whites. This attitude expressed by Aikin likely comes from the practice of freed slaves continuing to work for whites across the U.S. in the nineteenth century, both in agriculture and domestic services, because there were few other employment opportunities; undoubtedly this 'service' was not purely an act of 'love' and demanded some form of compensation. Joe and Surene will also occasionally 'serve' the whites inside the earth, but choose to associate 'by natural instinct with those of [their] race' because their 'natural affinity was for each other' (p. 120). Aikin is being careful to create a paradise appealing to readers of all races who mistrust each other. In Surey, the inhabitants are 'separate but equal'.

When, after an indeterminate number of weeks, they emerge into a large, verdant cavern illuminated by a waterfall of light, Joe submerges himself in this liquid light that gives the bather all knowledge, rather like Eve eating from the Tree of Knowledge. In this case, though, Surene refuses to enter the stream, preferring to remain ignorant of the future. Part of the knowledge given Joe is that he and Surene are already 'saved from the tortures of hell' because of the suffering they already endured as slaves (p. 89). Joe realises that he and Surene will never age, and could wander this land of purgatory for all eternity if desired, but can never have children because upon entering the valley, human life is 'suspended' as it is, 'a violation of Nature's laws' (p. 101), again implying a separation between Nature and God. It is also a step towards reversing original sin, eliminating the pain of childbirth. The valley in which their raft deposited them exists in the earth's crust, between the outer world, and the inner, which is a combination of both Hell and the city of the resurrected, Surey (p. 90). To reach Surey they must proceed down the River of Death and the Gulf of Turmoil.

Aikin employs a great deal of metaphorical imagery to describe the massive barge carrying damned souls to hell, piloted by Death and manned by Father Time, Sin in the form of a woman, and the Furies (pp. 93-4). Employing the demonic beast from Revelations 12:3, a ‘dragon with seven heads and ten horns’ (p. 97), Aikin’s damned souls are eaten by the dragon, the gateway to Hell. Though the dragon is considered an enemy of God in the Bible, his seven heads are symbolic of universal wisdom, and his ten horns of great power, and by sending these cursed souls to hell, the dragon is putting them on the path to salvation, which is not a function he serves in the Bible. It never becomes entirely clear if Joe and Surene are actually deceased at this point – no death scene has been elaborated – or if they have somehow entered into the afterlife while still inhabiting their corporeal forms, *ascending* as it were, rather than being resurrected, ascending like Dante from the inferno to purgatory. The redeemed inhabitants of Surey – who have airships in their power – fly Joe and Surene back to the city with them, bypassing the seven-headed dragon. In describing these part-ethereal, part-corporeal natives of the inner earth, Aikin’s description does not vary much from other *terra cava* races:

These were the first pure beings I had ever conversed with, and a sense of pleasure and elevation soon followed. I knew that to live with these perfect people of Surey would be eternal happiness. They were of all molds, as on earth, but dressed practically alike...

All of these people, independent of age, were equally beautiful, as the deformities, diseases, and uncomeliness they had brought from the earth’s surface had been destroyed by the purifying fires of hell. (p. 103-4)

Dressed in flowing robes, adorned in jewels and flowers, they are the image of Greco-Roman finery with the singular distinction of being the only mixed-race civilisation in any hollow earth novel. They eat ‘perfect food’ from dishes of ‘gold and precious stones’ with ‘silver knives and forks’ (p. 110), and reside in buildings build with the same opulence; living amongst a mineral wealth that has little value to them, or use, because of their technological advancement. *Forty Years with the Damned* does not dwell on any scientific reasoning for the existence of this hollow earth, does not employ a traditional Symmesian geography, and does not have the protagonist dwell on the subject of residing in the hollow

earth either. This is treated as the natural location for a demi-heaven and a hell; gravity, volcanoes, the auroras, earthquakes, etc. are of no scientific consequence.

Like their other fictional advanced races, the people of Surey – despite their divine origins and questionably physical existence – have ‘all knowledge of mechanism, mechanical construction, and application of power’ (pp. 106-7). To possess all knowledge would mean dissolving the perception of time and the distance between innovations. Aikin’s description of a heavenly suburb resplendent with electricity and modern conveniences seems like Amos Fiske’s *Beyond the Bourne* (1891), whose heavenly residence still have need of air travel and electric appliances, but it’s unknown if Aikin was familiar with Bourne’s work. Though they should have little use for these devices in their resurrected, immortal forms, Surey is a technotopia. This civilisation occupies three-quarters of the inner earth, the remaining fourth belonging to the Valley of Resurrection, Gulf of Turmoil, and Hell, which is a single island (p. 112). There are no large cities, though, only a series of villages, ensuring that the stresses and pollution of urban life do not disturb this paradise. As every living thing exists in a state of suspended development there is no decay, and so the propagation of plant life depends upon ‘divine will’ (p. 113); the laws of Nature have no place here. But it is the known laws of Nature, the perpetual presence of decomposition that forms the basis of Joe’s apocalyptic vision of earth’s future:

In time man on earth’s surface will be poisoned by his own presence. The population will become so great and decomposition so rapid that the poisonous gases that must of necessity rise from the decomposed matter will poison human beings and create so much insect life that it will be impossible for men to produce substance enough for their own maintenance. They will war against each other for the possession of wealth and become so greedy that they will murder one another for it. (p. 238)

The first part of Joe’s prophecy is physical, like the statistics that once predicted New York City would become buried by horse manure because of the increasing need for horse power in the city. Decaying matter does release methane and other noxious gases, and does provide the breeding ground for various insect life, but Joe’s unfillable prediction (having bathed in that lighted river of knowledge) implies a Deity not in control of his own creation. Rather than a flood of water, a flood of *life* will consume humanity. And so will their greed; the

warring over resources is not a new concept, but a war over basic resources to support a burgeoning population was a growing belief in the nineteenth century following the work of Thomas Malthus. Aikin, however, fails to reconcile a God who has doomed humanity to misery via Natural laws, with the continued effort on the part of his fellows to redeem and save humanity anyway. Either redemption is possible, and what Joe saw was the product of false knowledge, or the act to save humanity from itself is fruitless.

Everyone in Surey performs the labour of their choosing, though only for the joy of it, as there is no economy or commerce, like William Morris's *News from Nowhere*. Nor is there crime or government, everyone existing in a perfect anarchy but for the laws ordained by the Almighty. Except anarchy would not be a good description for their existence, as 'nothing can be done in Surey but what is perfect' (p. 121). All arts are similar because there can be nothing imperfect about a painting or sculpture, building or song. What the country possesses in racial diversity they compensate for in cultural unity. 'Room for improvement' would be a useless phrase, meaning that Surey must always have had perfect art and perfect technology, since the beginning of Creation. If God cannot make mistakes neither can his resurrected followers, implying that everything Joe and Surene say and do are, without exception, perfect.

Joe reveals how he has learned via his bath in the light of all knowledge that he is not African at all, but the son of an Arab trader, kidnapped by European slave traders (p. 225). Surene is not surprised by this revelation at all, and it ties together with previous comments about Joe's apparent intelligence and unwillingness to be a slave. For white readers this removes the onus of having to empathise, in any way, with a black narrator. The nineteenth century concept of racial hierarchy placed the Arab over the African in Count Joseph Arthur de Gobineau's highly influential work *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (translated into English in 1856 by Henry Hotz as *The Moral and Intellectual Diversity of Races*): 'The Arab civilization, then, is nothing but the Greco-Syrian civilization, rejuvenated and quickened, for a time, with a new and energetic, but short-lived,

genius.’²⁰ Joe’s dark appearance is apparently not nearly as damning as having actual African blood in his veins, which is an interesting stance of Aikin to take; why could Joe not simply have been a black man? Why was it necessary to alter his origins? Like Surene’s being more white than black, Aikin is elevating those of paler skin and heritage above those of purely African descent, maintaining the traditional racial hierarchy and avoiding scandalising readers. Joe and Surene can be more active members in God’s plan rather than passive servants to the inhabitants of Surey.

A battle with the island of the Inferno ensues when some fifteen thousand purified souls are not released on time (p. 226), indicating some sort of agreement between God and Satan for penal services. The archangel Michael and an ancient Toltec warrior develop a battle plan that utilises both heavenly hosts and resurrected members of the Surey community, attacking by land, air and sea. The Toltec is killed in the midst of this, then restored to life once again and allowed to ascent to the celestial Golden City, as heaven apparently exists on an even higher plane than Surey, and the soul must die a second time before final ascension is achieved. This gives Surey the appearance of being some sort of utopian Purgatory, a stopping point between not heaven and hell, but earth and heaven, and those who exemplify themselves in Purga-Surey win entrance to the next level of divine existence. It also means that the ‘souls’ inhabiting Purga-Surey reside in some form of hybridised existence of both corporeal and ethereal elements. ‘Final’ death means the endowment of wings with which to ascend into ‘the Celestial City’ (p. 236); Aikin has created a second level to the afterlife, and this appears to be the level at which ‘souls’ engage with the external world, thus explaining ‘guardian angels’ and communication with Spiritualists.

This is a task which Surene chooses to take up, joining God’s volunteers from Surey to go to the surface once more and combat Satan and his minions: ‘They were endowed with winged power to travel where they would and subsist without food or shelter, rendering

²⁰ Count A. De Gobineau, *The Moral and Intellectual Diversity of Races, with Particular Reference to their Respective Influence in the Civil and Political History of Mankind*, trans. H. Hotz (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1856), p. 437.

themselves invisible at will' (p. 239). In Surey they can only fly with the aid of technology, and must eat and sleep in houses, living a very corporeal existence. To return to the earth's surface means to take on an entirely ethereal being. This occasions a chance for Surene to follow (invisibly) a young Virginian woman opposed to the Civil War, giving Aikin a opportunity to discuss both sides of the war, taking up neither side as a favourite, but an unfortunate division between friends and neighbours. Joe also looks into the future to see the defeated South and freed slaves, but laments their 'inherent sloth and laziness' preventing them from improving their situation in life: 'If he made no progress in his freedom, the fault rested with himself alone, he being empowered with his God-ordained rights' (p. 243). This is a direct contradiction to the apparently God-ordained 'sloth and laziness'; like his refusal to valorise one side of the war or the other, in terms of post-war race relations, Aikin both praises and condemns the freed man.

While Surene is attached to the earth's surface, Joe takes off with a resurrected Martian for the planet Mars, and the narrative once again is removed from the confines of the inner world. Chapters XI through XV, covering over 150 pages, revolve around Joe's involvement in political conflict on Mars. Aikin is drawing on the many novels and 'psychic' readings of the planet that were popular in the later nineteenth century, amalgamations of Percival Lowell's scientific works and pure fantasy. Only when Joe returns some years later is an external perspective of the Poles given; despite being ethereal and winged, Joe must get back to Surey via the North Pole, through an opening in a 50,000-foot mountain, too small to be considered a proper Symmes Hole. Around this peak is a 'warm, tropical, and fertile' valley (405), echoing the many other *terra cava* and 'polar depression' theories at the end of the nineteenth century that saw the Poles as easily habitable environs. To Aikin, though, this separation of the favourable country in the North from the rest of the world is one of Divine intention (p. 406), thus explaining why all other earthly explorers of the Poles have failed up to this point in history, and would, if Aikin was correct, continue to fail.

Joe returns to Surey finally, assumes his 'material form' (p. 408) – implying there is indeed a hybridised existence in Purga-Surey – and engages in long reflection on the life of humans on Earth, Mars, and in the isolated Polar valley, finding 'little difference [in] their condition as to happiness' (p. 408). The wealthy man has too many cares, the poor man too many wants, and the government in constant fear of 'being deposed (p. 409); in the late nineteenth century *terra cava* novel, no politician is safe from criticism. The inherent didacticism in the narratives resulted in continual moral, social, economic and political discourse: 'I realised that all earthly hope, expectation and coming happiness is a delusion, and that the man that died first was the first to gain real happiness' (p. 410). Joe's depressing reflection upon earthly life is one that does not come from experience, though, because Joe did not have to pass through hell to gain his happiness.

Amongst the inhabitants of Surey, Joe and Surene stand apart as 'the first and only beings that had ever entered this sacred valley without first being purified by the fires of hell' (p. 119), a distinction not even the eternal children of Surey have known (p. 117). Is this because Joe and Surene did not die during their long underground river voyage? But because this internal world is *not* inhabited by a race distinct from the external world, some factor must be employed to raise the protagonist above everyone else, or else his story would not carry the same weight.

The ending is swift, the frame closing back in on the hunter, moving from Joe's first-person perspective to the hunter's without transition. Joe is describing his reunion with Surene at the end of the Civil War, and the new paragraph starts, 'I awoke', before quoting Lord Byron: 'Life is twofold; sleep hath its own world' (p. 422), implying that the hunter never actually met Joe by the cave mouth, and it was all a dream. This is an unusual move for a *terra cava* narrative to take, lessening the impact of the didactic experience and information gained in the story.

A review from *the San Francisco Call* praises the novel highly, stating that Aikin's novel 'entitles him to a place beside Rider Haggard in the list of modern fiction writers of the highly imaginative school' and comparing the plot to 'Bulwer's "Coming Race,"

and...the voyages on underground rivers so graphically depicted in Haggard's African stories.' The compliments are more backhanded, however, when the reviewer states that *Forty Years* 'is well told and the writer's skill is shown in the almost convincing consistency with which the improbable incidents are evolved from his imagination, which approaches the Icarian in some of its flight'.²¹ The reviewer does not, in any way, reflect upon the religious notions expressed in the novel, highlighting only the adventurous aspects of the narrative.

Like Dante's work, Aikin crafts an interior world that is designed to serve divine purposes. But unlike the classical model of hell inside the earth, or the nineteenth century model of Eden inside the earth, Aikin has melded the two so that the *terra cava* serves as both the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*. *Forty Years with the Damned* does not concern itself with as much science as other works, neither in examining the earth's geography nor in the nature of the human mind and soul; for Aikin the hollow earth is pure divinity.

I.iii – *The Sovereign Guide*

Only a year after *Forty Years With the Damned*, William Amos Miller's *The Sovereign Guide; a Tale of Eden* (1898) emerged as an even more religiously inclined experiment in hollow Earth literature, featuring heavenly technology and contemporary social lamentation. The author presents a unique autobiographical introduction that does not address his inspirations, evidence, or intent for writing about a hollow world housing the remnants of Eden. Born blind and almost completely deaf, poorly educated and subsisting as a broom salesman, Miller is appealing for indulgence on the part of his readers if they find his story grammatically in error: 'I... earnestly request my readers to note the facts and difficulties attendant upon my education and therefore pardon the errors' (p. 7). Not only is Miller attempting to lower reader expectation and defray incredulity, he is also engendering marketable sympathy for the sale of his book. Details of his religious education, and expressed Christian sympathies, also cannot hurt in his appeal to the type of reader who would likely pick up a book subtitled 'a Tale of Eden'. Unlike the titles and subtitles of

²¹ Anon., 'Life Inside the Earth', *The San Francisco Call*, 23 November 1895, p. 23.

several other *terra cava* stories, Miller gives no hint of the hollow earth framing he uses, nor does his introduction mention Symmes.

Miller managed to attain some minor celebrity for himself, not as a writer or any particular work, but by virtue of being a blind and deaf man working in the field of letters. There are at least two extant profiles of him, one in a Sunday Supplement of the *Los Angeles Herald* that lists Miller as a ‘devout Catholic’ and writer of poetry,²² which was not true. A correction piece written by Miller for *The Silent Worker* attempts to correct this false profile. He asserts that his first published novel ‘A Tale of Eden’ (rather than *The Sovereign Guide*) ‘has had an extensive sale’ and that the mistaken impression of poetic Catholicism comes from Miller using some epigraphs from another blind poet (and school fellow of his) Richard T. O’Malley: ‘I am not a poet, and rarely ever sham verses even for my own use... I have published no works on Catholicity, though, on a scale, I may have assisted such publications.’²³ Miller never sold enough copies of the novel to warrant a second edition, and does not appear to have published any other works.

The Sovereign Guide itself is a story of pilgrimage by an unnamed narrator through the interior of the earth, which is the source of the biblical Eden. The novel opens without a fictional preamble; no framing via lost manuscript, death bed confession or declaration of relating to the world a wonderful discovery. Driven by a sixth sense to venture to Rome to reconnect with an old servant, the unnamed narrator is confronted with a divine being (the ‘Sovereign Guide’ of the tale) who, like Dante’s Virgil, is assigned to lead him on a spiritual quest into the Earth underground: ‘there he was before me, a supernatural being, enveloped in the scintillating light of the Aurora-Borealis’ (p. 17) Like the author, the narrator is deprived of eyes and ears, but this is to that he can ‘see’ and ‘hear’ in the spiritual world; he has become the proverbial ‘blind seer’ who will enlighten the world. The didactic narrative is accompanied by epigraphs from various poets such as Gray, Longfellow, Rev. Faber, etc.,

²² J. Freeman Cook, ‘Remarkable Achievements of William Miller, Blind and Deaf’, *Los Angeles Herald Sunday Supplement* (20 September 1903), p. 2

²³ William Amos Miller, ‘Autobiographical Sketch of William Amos Miller; The Deaf-Blind Story Writer of Los Angeles’, *The Silent Worker* (vol. 16, no. 7), p. 107.

drawing on their enlightenment – and fame – to bolster Miller’s own position as storyteller. The other extracts of uncredited poetry, given Miller’s claim in *The Silent Worker* to having no poetic skills, may have come from his friend Richard T. O’Malley.

They get to the interior of the world not via the Poles, but an egg-shaped submersible that is capable of re-orienting itself dependent on Earth’s gravitational pull. Despite the Christian sentiments and divine chariots capable of near-instantaneous transportation, the author chooses to incorporate many modern scientific advances into heaven’s arsenal, including magnets, electric engines and telegraphs.²⁴ Faith and omnipotent power are no longer enough to follow the movements of the divine; science and technology must be on hand to answer to God and his minions. The submersible, following the only water route between the exterior and interior of Earth, is equipped with machines for processing air, storing food and providing fresh water (p. 29); all rather corporeal needs for a heavenly mandated vessel that accommodates only one human being. Why the need for the vessel at all? Previously to this, the celestial guide has simply been allowing the narrator to transcend doorways in space to move about. This is part of the mechanisation of the spiritual realms, a synthesis of corporeal and ethereal, such as the Spiritualists aspired to.

The choice of an ocean route is itself interesting, because other tales that have not made use of the Symmes Holes have found other land-based means of getting to Earth’s core via caves and chasms. However, the narrator does point out that ‘the sun’s rays came from the polar circle’ (p. 33), which indicates the continuing use of Symmesian geography, even if Symmes himself never garners a mention. The reason no one can come or go through the Poles is because ‘a current of wind...equal to and proportionate to the velocity of the earth’ (p. 95) prevents man and machines from moving through the openings. Like other *terra cava* narratives, it is a paradise inside the earth, but for once, this was expected before the traveller actually arrived: ‘The general aspect of everything was perpetual summer. And this blooming region, so picturesquely Eden, left its name with us on earth’ (p. 34). Yet Eden is

²⁴ William Amos Miller, *The Sovereign Guide; a Tale of Eden* (Los Angeles, CA: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1898), 28-9. All other references cited in text for this edition.

only an island in the interior world, and beyond its shuttered gates are exiled humans still living in far better conditions than their external cousins. In the history of this author's Eden, Adam and Eve were driven out to the cooler surface world via the arctic (p. 36).²⁵ The only break in this perpetual summer is the occasional forty days of rain (a figure derived from the Noah story), but neither flora nor fauna is ever drowned in this deluge (p. 68).

To accompany this meteorological paradise is (again) the mineralogical paradise, where women are adorned in 'precious stones' (p. 41) and there are weavers of gold and silver (p. 105). It is a technological paradise, with the inhabitants capable of controlling electromagnetic ships (p. 43) and stationing astronomical observatories outside the Poles with telescopes capable of viewing the details of other inhabited worlds (p. 66). Telegraphy is the primary form of communication and taught to school children since everyone has a telegraph and telephone in their own homes (p. 67). Their medical sciences are capable of curing a cold with a simple injection (p. 69) and even in death the body turns quickly to dust after embalming, sparing the deceased the indignity of putrefaction (p. 104).

Inhabitants of this Eden are 'of an alabaster whiteness to almost transparency' (p. 62); though colour means nothing to the author personally, it means a great deal to his audience, who would be accustomed to artistic renderings of a Caucasian Adam and Eve inhabiting the Garden. Like other hollow earth inhabitants they are without a taste for meat or alcohol, which results in a generally healthier state of being for them than other earthly dwellers (p. 68). Their language has no alphabet, but thirty-six sounds 'blending so harmoniously together that the Edenites are never at a loss to express their ideas' (p. 63) and it is easily mastered in days. This simplicity in mastery indicates an evolved, logical language, one without contradictions and exceptions to its rules, such as Esperanto desired to do in the nineteenth century. Eden, the source of humanity, employs a language that can be easily universalised if people on the surface world are willing to embrace Edenic culture.

²⁵ This is loosely in keeping with William F. Warren's theories on human origins in *Paradise Found*, but it is impossible to know if the author had direct contact with Warren's work.

Eden (outside the Garden) is composed of small kingdoms, each of which are hereditary monarchies, and each monarch equipped with ‘twelve counselors [sic] to advise him as to the best interests and welfare of his subjects’ (p. 63). Despite following a system of government that the United States rejected little more than a century before the author’s birth, there is no war in Eden, no poverty, few laws, little crime and universal Christianity (pp. 64-5). This monarchical view of utopia is a conservative reaction to the progressivism of the US, invoking the historical view of kings ruling by divine right, and certainly the rulers of Eden must be recipients of God’s mandate. Queen Victoria’s global reputation and Great Britain’s economic and imperial success during her reign certainly influenced American perceptions of monarchy.

The majority of the text is concerned not with the unfolding of an actual plot, but with religious expression through visual metaphors and the description of Eden and its utopian society, like a prophecy. Metaphorical language via the narrator’s ‘visions’ is scattered throughout, from seeing the world as a conflict between diamonds and suffocating thorns (p. 18), to categorising humans based on their reactions to a giant diamond cross (p. 49-50). As a visually impaired writer, many of his ‘visuals’ must be metaphorical for him, if not for the reader. There is much to infer in parallels between Miller’s life and the experiences of his narrator. When the Edenite ship is sinking, the narrator is told not to despair but embrace ‘Patience, perseverance and resignation to the Divine Will’ (p. 56). For a man rendered both blind and deaf by illness and constantly thwarted in his education, these sound like a personal mantra.

Despite the author’s disabilities and unorthodox education he is obviously familiar with late nineteenth century scientific advances, hollow Earth theory and the debate about human origins. This last is most fully realised in the vilification of the theory of evolution when the narrator points out that ‘under no circumstance are theories allowed to be promulgated except in tale and fable’ (p. 66) – an interesting hypocrisy considering that the hollowness of the Earth was also just a theory. This highly scientific and technical society is therefore not allowed to theorise anything unless it is framed as folklore. Despite his

professed rejection of theory and love only of truth and fact, Miller's biblical cosmology of an Eden located at the centre of the earth has no basis in the Bible, but nineteenth century theory. Eden is at least able to reconcile its spiritualism with modern technological practices, a realism that at times pulls the reader out of the fantastic and into the physical. Miller is also not unfamiliar with Polar exploration history, as the narrator finds the perfectly preserved body of John Franklin and some of his effects, including a note about his ship being crushed by ice on 'July 30, 1845' (p. 71); thus adding another tale of Franklin to the *terra cava* canon.

One is also left to wonder about the author's stance upon women – and the suffrage movement – as he deals with them in the Edenite world only sparingly:

Woman's labor is to woman only given in all that appertains to their sex. Women when married are ineligible to labor while their husbands are capable of performing it, but single women and widows are not exempted from the labor and are accordingly taxed (p 73).

So women are only permitted to work in certain fields, and if married, are not permitted to work at all. This is far removed from the progressive view of women given in many other hollow earth texts at this time. The narrator provides this information shortly after noting that in the museum of preserved bodies from the external world, not a single one of them is female (p. 72). Is this because women are not typically found exploring the Polar regions, or because the Edenites do not care to view specimens of women in their museums? Though the narrator never addresses this issue, it is likely a combination of both; no one wants to imagine a taxidermied housewife in a museum, and a housewife is not likely to have been exploring the Arctic.

The two tutors assigned to the narrator by the king are 'Lee Von La' and 'Me Du Zi', names of monosyllabic construction similar to Chinese, which the author may have encountered when he relocated to California with his family. These two record everything the narrator tells them about the external world, and publish it as 'Tales and Fables from the Outer World' (p. 77), and in terms of religion, are the source of knowledge for Eden's more perfect form of worship, which is, interestingly, more Catholic than anything else (p. 79).

This is an interesting position for Miller to take, as there was still a lot of anti-Catholic sentiment in the U.S. at the end of the nineteenth century, from the Nativist Movement to attacks on Parochial schools. Churches are not designated as such, but rather ‘temples’ (p. 81), which is a decidedly non-Christian term to use, but Miller may be attempting to distance his Eden from what he views as the corrupt practices of the external world’s churches.

In addition to these utopian contrasts with the external world are several opinionated speeches by the narrator about current events. One of these is a vitriolic diatribe against newspapers printing rubbish, while in Eden only facts are reported: ‘Those papers, unlike that of earth, are the great disseminators of fact and knowledge, and no theories nor sensational rubbish crowding out of its columns the more befitting realities of life’ (p. 72). Another, marking the more overtly Christian nature of the text, is the narrator’s frustration with those who do not ‘bitterly denounce the Christian ministers of all denomination for... their tardiness in spreading the gospel of light among their simple, uncultured, barbarous neighbours’ (p. 77). In other words, the juggernaut of Christian conversion around the world is not moving swiftly enough for Miller, and the world would be more like Eden if everyone were willing to accept the same Christian principles as those residents of the interior.

The second-to-last chapter of *The Sovereign Guide* is one that may unintentionally provoke a few smiles among modern readers, as it covers the origins of Hell, which happens to be located on another planet, whose geology is organised into tiers which dictate various punishments, like Dante’s *Inferno* (p. 133). Satan keeps contact with his minions via telegram when planning an assault on Heaven:

Tell Prince Beelzebub to send Riches, Poverty and Misery, with seventy time seventy thousand legions to reinforce Alcohol to sap and undermine the foundation of that impregnable fortress of Virtue, and to prosecute the siege until we come in person, when I warrant this proud house must fall (pp. 114-6).

This is an interesting expansion of the view of the cosmos beyond the immediate solar system, in which the discovery that God created multiple planets for habitation reveals that the old belief that Hell is located beneath the surface of the world is mistaken. Quite the opposite, the centre of the Earth is the cradle from which humanity sprang. Miller is

employing the view of a wider Christian cosmology like that put forth by Charles Goodwin in 1860's *On the Mosaic Cosmogony*, that Biblical creation extended beyond the immediate Earth. In the penultimate chapter the Guide expounds upon how Hell came into existence, and Miller invents his own cosmology, of a pre-Creation heavenly realm inhabited by a spiritual meta-being called 'Avedores' (p. 118), the source of human souls, and these Avedores inhabited multiple Edenic planets before Lucifer rebelled against God (p. 119).

In the last chapter, following on from the glimpse into Hell, is the revelation of heaven and the 'Blessed Vision of the Second Divine Person – the Brightest of Eternal Light' (p. 127) – or, Jesus. Though given a long introduction to the author, and a build up to the narrator's quest, the novel abruptly ends in only two short paragraphs, without any further commentary from the author or narrator to close the frame; he says only that he crossed through the portal of a 'hideous dome' and that he found himself home amongst family, physically unable to see or hear any longer in this world (p. 130), a possible side effect of his divine encounter. The narrator does not go into detail about his compulsion to publish his adventures, or how he was received upon his return, elements typical in other *terra cava* and travel/adventure fictions.

In his review of the novel Bleiler believes that in a strict sense *The Sovereign Guide* is a religious fantasy, but it is the use of the technological that allows the narrative to be considered early science fiction.²⁶ He also considers the narrative to be 'naïve' and ' clichéd in religiosity' but finds it interesting that Miller's handicap did not prevent his imaginative visualisation.²⁷ Miller uses the *terra cava* to examine the potential structure of an Eden that still exists in the corporeal world, living in conjunction with biblical principles, and utilising recognisable technologies. For Miller, Eden needs a distinct physical location (and there are no blank spaces left on the surface of the earth to place a modern Eden) and modern technological conveniences.

²⁶ Bleiler. *Science Fiction*, p. 501.

²⁷ Ibid.

II – Spiritualism Inside the Earth

Spiritualism, which reached the apex of its influence at the end of the nineteenth century, was the ultimate convergence of science and religion. Making use of the scientific method and evolving technologies meant to measure the physical world, practitioners applied these tools to ethereal realms in an effort to measure, catalogue and define the human spirit. Séances to contact the dead were a common social activity. Patients on the verge of death were placed upon scales to see if they lost any mass at the moment of their passing so that the weight of the soul could be empirically measured. Spiritualism can be seen in works like John Uri Lloyd's *Etidorhpa* (1895) and to some extent William Bradshaw's *The Goddess of Atvatabar* (1892), with its use of spiritual batteries and its amalgamation of technology and the soul.

In the United States, Spiritualism had its stirrings in 1848 in upstate New York, the same region that gave rise to other contemporary religious movements like Mormonism and the Seventh Day Adventists during the Second Great Awakening. The Fox sisters claimed to have made contact with the spirit world via rapping sounds, and their celebrity spread rapidly throughout America.

The Spiritualist idea of 'materializations' – the appearance of physical objects sent by the spirit world – links the normally separate concepts of mind and matter. Minds and spirits are cast upon other 'planes', a term frequently used in these novels to explain levels of human consciousness. Madame Blavatsky, founder of Theosophy, even went so far as to adopt Bulwer-Lytton's 'Vril' as part of her work,²⁸ a distinct case of art influencing life. Spiritualism and the hollow earth became intimately intertwined, and continue to influence each other to the present. (More evidence for present day Spiritualist interpretations of the hollow earth will be explored in the Conclusion.)

²⁸ L. Sprague de Camp and Willy Ley, *Lands Beyond* (New York, Barnes & Noble Books, 1952), p. 307.

II.i – *Etidorhpa*, Inside the Mind

When John Uri Lloyd wrote *Etidorhpa, or The End of the Earth* in 1895, it was originally circulated privately among a small number of subscribers, but was quickly picked up by the Robert Clarke Company and put before the wider reading public. The tome later went through eighteen editions and was translated into seven languages.²⁹ Some parents even began to name their daughters ‘Etidorhpa’ (Aphrodite spelt backwards, though Lloyd’s reasoning for this is never given). An admirable publication history for what David Standish calls ‘easily the weirdest hollow earth novel of all’,³⁰ written by an author who has been accused of using his own pharmacological stock to influence his writing.³¹ *Etidorhpa* is a mixture of narratives; adventurous for the many perils encountered as the narrator descends into the earth, Spiritualist for its Dante-esque theme while examining the nature of the human spirit, and didactic for its tracts on contemporary scientific theories. Though not dogmatically religious, *Etidorhpa* embraces Spiritualism, the pseudo-scientific religion that emerged in the later part of the nineteenth century as practitioners attempted to use the scientific method to delve into the soul and afterlife.

The framing of *Etidorhpa* is one of the most complex in the *terra cava* field, which can leave readers confused as to which narrator they are reading at any given moment. Its lengthy subtitle proclaimed it to be ‘The strange history of a mysterious being and the account of a remarkable journey as communicated in manuscript to Llewellyn Drury who promised to print the same, but finally evaded the responsibility which was assumed by John Uri Lloyd’; no less than three sources for the novel are named therein. Where many tales employ a secondary narrator/editor to add distance from the original, (rendering unto their character sceptical sanity and in turn an air of plausibility because they can disown the more dubious aspects of the relation) *Etidorhpa* utilises a tertiary narrator in the form of Lloyd himself, who offers paratextual essays and footnotes. This trinity of layers provide the text

²⁹ Neil Harris, *Cultural Excursions: Marketing Appetites and Cultural Tastes in Modern America*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). 151.

³⁰ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, 218.

³¹ Marcus Boon, *The Road of Excess: A History of Writers on Drugs* (Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 228.

with ample room to editorialise upon certain topics outside the flow of the central story in order to build upon the scientific logic that lures the reader into accepting the narrative's believability. It is also an interesting parallel to the tripartite title of the novel: 'Etidorhpa', the inverse of a goddess's name, 'The Ends of the Earth', a fantastic geographic reference, and 'The Strange History of a Mysterious Being', giving readers some expectation of the style of narrative to follow. In an era when long, descriptive titles for novels was passing out of style, Lloyd's use of such a protracted description distracts from its fictional nature to imply the reality of a journey undertaken and recorded for global revelation. Lloyd's use of this complex structure allows him to be distanced from his theories by removing them to another character's perspective, so that the hollow earth remains in a nebulous realm of neither fact nor fiction in the narrative.

Beginning from the centre of the story, the primary narrator who undertakes the journey into the Earth is unnamed, calling himself only 'I-Am-The-Man Who-Did-It'.³² Contemporary readers may have considered this a parallel with the anti-Mason writer William Morgan, who was said to be kidnaped and murdered by the Masons in September of 1826. I-Am-The-Man goes on to relate his experiences to the secondary narrator, Llewellyn Drury, who is compelled to record and publish the narrative on pain of death. Frequently throughout the text, Drury interrupts I-Am-The-Man in order to question him on some scientific aspect of the tale, and debate ensues. Lloyd, the tertiary narrator, claims to have received the manuscript from Drury and taken it upon himself to publish it, with a few editorial footnotes and illustrations to add veracity. In later editions he included more material, such as a letter from I-Am-The-Man and information about one Professor Daniel Vaughn whose works greatly influenced Lloyd, so that readers would know Vaughn was indeed a real individual. One is left to question whether Lloyd is then indeed a part of the story, or whether his additions can be considered paratextual.

³² John Uri Lloyd. *Etidorhpa: The Strange History of a Mysterious Being*, 8th ed., (Cincinnati: The Robert Clark Company, 1897), 42. All other references cited in text for this edition.

After a lonely Drury makes a bet – which he loses – that he is alone, I-Am-The-Man appears, countering the bet, and threatens Drury’s life (p. 19) to compel him to become his amanuensis. More than that, in the final printing Drury is to add his own experiences and interludes with his narrator (p. 41), thus preparing readers for Lloyd’s literary style. Deeply disturbed, Drury visits a friend, Professor Chickering, in order to understand this experience, but Chickering passes it off as a hallucination caused by indigestion, and reads him a long passage from *Chambers’ Miscellany, vol. IV* (as explained in one of Lloyd’s footnotes, p. 28). Suggesting more outdoor exercise, Drury is sent away dissatisfied, but this chapter, being dedicated to reciting *Chambers*, also serves as proof that Drury sought to find a cause for fault in his meeting with I-Am-The-Man, to prove that the experience was not real. But failing to find proof, then the experience must be real. To bolster this impression of reality, among the many images in the novel there is even a facsimile page of the manuscript (p. 25), as if presenting itemised evidence in a court of law. If we think of the beginning and ending portions of the novel from Lloyd as a house frame, then the interludes between Drury and The-Man are load-bearing walls; Drury constantly reintroduces himself and his predicament: ‘Remember that I relate a story within a story’ (p. 134).

The society which I-Am-The-Man joined is referred to as the “Chemical Improvers of Natural Philosophy” – far more loquacious a title than the Masons – who pursue the alchemical sciences of Gerber, Arnoldus de la Villanova, Roger Bacon, and others (p. 44), as the alchemists of old regained a certain posthumous popularity in the nineteenth century with the rise of Spiritualism.³³ The-Man infiltrates them, determined to betray their secrets, but is found out and kidnapped on 12 August 1826 (p. 57); it is significant that Lloyd is so specific in his date when so often *terra cava* novels exist in generalised and implied times, this date linking I-Am-The-Man with William Morgan’s disappearance. I-Am-The-Man’s punishment is not to be cast out of the society, but to be ascended to the apex of the order, evolved to a state neither living nor dead, and once he has endured these trials, will present his information to the world (p. 58), explaining his attachment to Drury and the publication

³³ Madam Blavatsky covers the alchemists extensively in *The Secret Doctrine*.

of this tale. The kidnapped traitor is aged and rendered unrecognisable to friends and family, severing his connections to the present world so that he may be a more perfect pilgrim and prophet, unencumbered by material concerns (p. 71). The society member taking I-Am-The-Man to Kentucky reveals that he is telepathic, answering The-Man's unvocalised 'mind questions', explaining that humanity's understanding of the sciences is yet in its infancy, and that the development of mental science will reveal 'that the medium known as air is unnecessary as a means of conveying mind concepts from one person to another' (p. 74). In the late nineteenth century the idea of telepathy was new and intriguing, propelled by the Society for Psychical Research and supported by the likes of Edward Bulwer-Lytton.³⁴

Before I-Am-The-Man is led underground through a cave in Kentucky (identified on an illustrated map provided by Lloyd) his companion explains to him that 'Spiritualistic investigations, unfortunately, are considered by scientific men too often as reaching backward only. [...] Man must yet search by the agency of senses and spirit...and he who refuses to bow to the Creator and honor his handiwork discredits himself' (p. 102).

Spiritualism is not rejecting the idea of a Creator, perhaps one similar to the Christian God, but they are moving independently of any church canon in favour of scientific investigation of the Creator, as well as advancing the idea of human evolutionary perfectibility. Humanity's evolutionary prospects are brought to bear in the narrative, and Spiritualist investigators believed this to include telepathy, astral projection, ascension to other planes of existence, and a semi-physical afterlife, all gifts from the developing power of the human mind. And *Etidorhpa*'s pages are filled with literary tributes to these hopeful ideals.

What follows is an extended scientific and spiritual inquiry as I-Am-The-Man moves deeper into the Earth in his narrative, while debating his journey with Drury in the secondary narrative and forcing Drury to test the scientific validity of I-Am-The-Man's observations. A cohesive narrative never takes shape in the form of actions, antagonist or denouement, emphasising its role as prophecy. Instead, these experiments and research topics are fully detailed in Drury's narrative, part of the Baconian philosophy of

³⁴ Roger Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 62.

demonstrative theory. Though again not explicitly Christian in its intent, *Etidorpha* uses ideas from Spiritualism to navigate new scientific theories for the reader's benefit. Large tracts are given over to discussions about the nature of volcanoes, light, motion, energy, and gravitation. Detailed experiments, easily replicated at home by the reader, are demonstrated by Drury and I-Am-The-Man, such as beakers and tubes that illustrate the movement of water through the Earth (chapter 27). The very real professor Daniel Vaughn is written into the text to explain his theory on gravitation (which conforms to what I-Am-The-Man claims about the interior of the world) to Drury, and Lloyd includes both footnotes to this, and a paratextual essay on Professor Vaughn's life, certifying to the reader his existence. These experiments stand alongside rhetorical debates about proving/disproving the essence of the human soul and consciousness and warning against materialism overtaking the hope of heaven. I-Am-The-Man states, 'One man of science steals the body, another man of science takes away the soul, the third annihilates heaven' (p. 193), reminding readers that for all the study of the physical world being presented, this should not be at the expense of the human spirit.

Another factor setting *Etidorpha* apart from other *terra cava* narratives is the lack of any specific civilisation or habitation by Palaeolithic creatures. Because this is a novel stressing the importance of the mind and spirit, other physical characteristics of the interior world are not considered important unless they are explaining the greater function of the earth (i.e. volcanos or gravity). Some scholars have attempted to classify *Etidorpha* as utopian,³⁵ but it is difficult to see how a literary setting without people or a society beyond a blind, reptilian guide and the hallucination of a goddess called Etidorpha can by any definition represent a utopia. Lloyd's literary venture beneath the earth's surface is a gedankenexperiment of mind and science exercised in unfamiliar landscape (because such a journey undertaken in Cincinnati, or even the jungles of the Amazon would have stretched credulity too far).

³⁵ Kenneth M. Roemer's *The Obsolete Necessity: America in Utopian Writings, 1888-1900* (1976) is an example of this sentiment.

For all the strangeness of *Etidorhpa*, it is perhaps the reaction to the novel which is more interesting. Unlike so many other *terra cava* novels, *Etidorhpa* reached a certain level of popularity before fading into history, and Lloyd's name and life have not been lost to obscurity. Lloyd was associated with the Eclectic Medicine movement, an American medical practice in the nineteenth century that incorporated a lot of botanical remedies, many of them learned from the Native Americans. Lloyd's specialty was pharmacology, and his library of works can still be found in Cincinnati at the Lloyd Library and Museum. In Michael Flannery's biography, *John Uri Lloyd: The Great American Eclectic*, he notes that the novel originally distributed to only select subscribers 'has garnered a devoted following of readers for more than one hundred years.'³⁶ Because the novel was – and perhaps still is – unclassifiable, reactions from readers and critics varied widely, from 'one of the most striking revelations from the occult world that has been announced in modern times'³⁷ to 'a formless piece of fantastic fiction'.³⁸ Those willing to 'believe' in Lloyd's tale were convinced by the paratextual evidence such as the facsimile page from The-Man's manuscript, the map of Kentucky locating the entrance to the underworld, etc. Flannery accuses the novel of being weak as a novel, 'a thinly disguised treatise on the philosophy of science' with 'stilted' writing and 'cumbersome' organisation that presents only 'an amateurish appreciation' of the scientific subjects found in the book.³⁹ Lloyd would go on to write other novels, but of a more contemporary, realistic setting, never again approaching the strangeness and complexity of *Etidorhpa*. But certainly, as one of the most well-known *terra cava* narratives of the time, it would go on to influence others.

II.ii – *Under Pike's Peak, the Human Mind Expanded*

Written by Charles L. McKesson in 1898, and published by F. Tennyson Neely in New York (the company that also published *The Secret of the Earth* the following year), *Under Pike's Peak; or, Mahalma, Child of the Fire Father* offers several unique aspects to the *terra cava*

³⁶ Michael A. Flannery, *John Uri Lloyd: The Great American Eclectic* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998), p. 114.

³⁷ Charles Frederic Goss, *Cincinnati – the Queen City 1788-1912* (Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1912), 3:740.

³⁸ Anon., "Stringtown on the Pike", *Dial*, 29 (16 December 1900), 499.

³⁹ Flannery, *John Uri Lloyd*, p. 124.

genre, not least of which is its use of photographs unrelated to the text instead of illustrations for visualisation of the book's environment.

McKesson provides both a humorous dedication and a very intriguing introduction. Firstly, the book is dedicated to his friend, Laura B., who apparently said to McKesson after reading the manuscript: 'How did you dare write it? You don't know a thing about woman – I hope your wife pulled every hair out of your head' inspiring McKesson's dedication 'In the hope that she will be less severe in her criticisms in the future' (p. 1). As for the introduction, McKesson is providing an advertisement, setting the scene and events for the reader:

PIKE'S PEAK, stately and solemn, stands guard over the eastern gateway to the Rocky Mountains. What this sentinel has seen during the centuries of lonely vigil is locked in his silent, rock-ribbed bosom. In the year 1896 a daring tourist entered that bosom and possessed himself of some of the greatest secrets of the age.

What he learned of the Cliff Dwellers who once inhabited the region lying at the base of Pike's Peak; what he learned of the formation of the Cripple Creek gold fields... what he learned of the strange and mysterious character, Mahalma, Child of the Fire Father and of her peculiar sacrifice which has no parallel in literature, and what he learned of the philosophy of telepathy and kindred subjects, he tells in the story which follows.

If he tells truth, then truth is stranger than fiction; if what he tells is fiction, then fiction is stranger than truth. (p. 3)

McKesson is blending the factual existence of Pike's Peak and its location, with the fictional aspects of the narrative, and immediately laying the groundwork for readerly doubt about the novel's veracity, while distancing himself from the story's content; McKesson is now just the publisher/editor of someone else's – a tourist's – biography. It is also the mention of 'telepathy and kindred subjects' that immediately draws the narrative into the realm of Spiritualism before the story has actually commenced, and is reminiscent of the use of telepathy and mind-science in *Etidorhpa*.

There is no actual in-narrative framing, with chapter one opening from 'the tourist's' perspective – Thomas Larnard – of arriving in Colorado Springs, which happens to be McKesson's home; but despite his disavow of origin for the story with himself in the introduction, there is no mention of a found manuscript or deathbed confession related to McKesson. It's revealed that a Colorado Springs resident named Oliver Estiller disappeared

on Pike's Peak two years before while exploring it, and is presumed dead (p. 7). Following in Estiller's footsteps, the narrator also goes exploring on the mountain and falls to unknown depths inside the earth (p. 11). Like *The Coming Race* there is no journey, just a sudden transition via accident from outside the earth to in, and a quick encounter with strange beings:

There were a half-dozen creatures within the space illuminated by the match. The creatures... were about the size of a boy ten years of age. Their bodies... were covered with what appeared to be scales of various tints and colors. Their heads were unnaturally large, narrow and high in front... Their faces were as smooth as a child's and the skin was clear and white. Their hair was light brown or auburn. Their hands and feet were white and shapely. (p. 14)

Once more we read a uniformity of race, cast as pale and childlike to imply harmlessness (unlike the Vril-ya). This paleness, coupled with their apparent blindness (p. 19) is reminiscent of the guide in *Etidorhpa*, described as cavefish. The women are dressed in flowery bonnets, and the narrator thinks it like 'living in a flower garden', comparing them to 'fairies' (p. 20), and the children to 'dolls in a toy store' (p. 21), which serves to further remove them from a place of threat to one of Edenic peace. Larnard's first glimpse of the vast flower creations constructed by the natives makes him think of his 'descent' as an 'ascent' that landed him in 'a bouquet of flowers from heaven lodged in a radiant cluster of stars' (p. 32). The Christian imagery employed by Larnard at the start of his tale represents the best metaphors he can construct for lack of knowledge about his surroundings.

The power of these small creatures is hinted at when Larnard notices no sound from the people, and yet perfect awareness of each other, and non-vocalised responses to his enquiries, bringing him water (p. 18) and food (p. 28) when the need comes to mind. Their technology first becomes apparent in the use of a mechanised chariot that speeds across the cavern for miles. Electricity, ever the answer to all problems in the late nineteenth century, is used to grow the fruits consumed by the Azonians, and McKesson makes reference to contemporary efforts to better agricultural production via the application of electricity, 'the best of nature's friends' (pp. 144-5). Their metal clothing is produced via an annealing technique that renders the metal 'as soft and pliable as... silk' (p. 146). Mahalma's power of

astral projection allows her to mark the advances made above ground and bring the most valuable accomplishments of genius to the Azonians, so that they may continue their efforts to convert their realm into a 'fairyland' (p. 147). Mahalma emphasises that science and technology are the secret to Azonian success: 'We do nothing by waving a magic wand, or by supernatural means. All that we have accomplished is the result of hard work, and making a proper application of the laws of nature' (p. 145). Spiritualism is not 'supernatural', but viewed as an advancement of the human mind, and concordant with the natural laws the formed Spiritualist belief. Taking him to Mahalma, who greets him in English and welcomes him to the home of the 'Azonians' (p. 34) before providing Larnard – and the reader – with an extensive introduction to Azonian history:

Many years ago our people dwelt in the land now possessed by your people. They had been given the land by the Author of their life. They did not come to this land from across the great ocean as you have been falsely taught to believe. Life and intelligence sprang into existence in what you wrongly term the "New World" in the same manner and by the same power that it did in the so-called "Old World." Our people climbed the ladder of evolution and stepped into the light of civilization before those of the eastern world. Our people built cities, cultivated the land, developed the arts, and erected the home dedicated to live. They were peaceful, and trusted to their kindness and benevolence for protection, and not the force of arms. [...]

The day came when the brute-man discovered them, and fell upon them with great slaughter. Our people did not resist force with force but fled... Those of our people who escaped sought refuge in the caves and rugged cliffs where the foe had not the skill to follow them.

In these barren and almost inaccessible retreats, our people by their genius again reared a remarkable civilization... In time the foe acquired the skill to reach them, and again brought them death and destruction. Once more our people sought to escape to a place of safety. This time they fled into the bowels of the earth, access to which they had discovered in the caverns of the cliffs.

...They chose to remain in the caverns and live. In time they adapted themselves to their new environment and brought their genius into play to serve them. (pp. 36-8)

Though this passage is long, it is necessary to review the significance of contemporary knowledge on McKesson's part coming through the narrative. One is that there were essentially separate 'Creations' in the eastern and western hemispheres, with the western half following an accelerated evolution, so 'the Author' of this creation is not one of Biblical extraction. It also implies that the Anasazi cliff dwellings of the American southwest were constructed by the Azonians, who abandoned them in favour of a subterranean existence,

where evolution once again took hold and transformed them into the pale, blind cavefish-like beings they are now. It also means that McKesson is not using Symmesian geography, but Vernian, the population existing within a system of large, vaulted caverns. It is also difficult to discern if the 'brute-man' are inferred to be Native Americans – historically referred to as savages, living a less-evolved, uncivilized existence – because of the later defence Mahalma gives of them. But in the Azonina takes they are referred to as Chisaw, which is reminiscent of Native American tribe names like the Choctaw.

Larnard attempts to convince Mahalma that 'humane and civilized people occupy the entire land' (p. 41) and that the Azonians have nothing to fear from discovery by (white) Americans, but Mahalma makes reference to the Civil War as proof that this is not true, in addition to the robbing of the 'red men' (p. 41) whose land was taken, and the destruction of the 'noble civilization' of the Inca (p. 42). In the robbing of the Native Americans of their home, Mahalma compares it to 'grown men' tricking 'a child': 'he was artless and honest; you were cunning and avaricious' (p. 43). It is not a flattering picture to cast of either race, but following many high-profile massacres of Native Americans in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the accepted view of Native Americans was one of sympathy for an abused child. The view of Native Americans as childlike and without cunning was a centuries-old perception at this point: 'God has created all these numberless people to be quite the simplest, without malice or duplicity...'⁴⁰ wrote the Spanish Dominican Bartolomé de las Casas in the sixteenth century.

Larnard and Estiller are not permitted to leave the subterranean world of the Azonians for fear they might reveal the existence of a realm rich in gold and other precious minerals, which Mahalma reveals to be 'inexhaustable' (p. 44). McKesson is both criticising the gold fever that drove Americans into the Yukon and Pacific northwest, as well as Cripple Creek near Pike's Peak, while at the same time tempting it with a story of infinite gold under the peaks of Colorado. This gold the Azonians craft with the help of various machines, paint

⁴⁰ Bartolomé de las Casas, 'Very Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies,' *Retrieving the American Past: A Custom U.S. History Reader*, ed. Instructor Riley (Needham Heights, MA: Simon & Schuster Custom Publishing, 1997), p. 20.

with ground up gems, and then use to adorn their underground realm. No building, no clothing, no trinket or transport is spared a description of its mineral-rich construction. Larnard even stumbles across the gold fields used by the Azonians which are also accessible via Cripple Creek on the surface (p. 205), a popular mining site in McKesson's time.

Mahalma – like many other female rulers of *terra cava* narratives before her – becomes the key to the protagonist's success. She is no object of desire for Estiller because he has a fiancé still waiting in Colorado Springs; for Larnard she is the superior creature to be turned to love for the base-born white American of honesty and bravery. From the outset Larnard is curious about her marital status, but does not inquire because Mahalma is 'a person of good breeding' and 'a lady in the best sense of that word' (p. 47), crafted by a deity, the Fire Father. Not until chapter VIII does Mahalma make a physical appearance, presiding over a ceremony; seen from a distance she is described in terms of 'dignity' and 'majesty' (p. 80), 'beautifully white and perfect in shape and form' (p. 81), and 'symmetrical in outline as if carved in marble for a model of a perfect face' (p. 82). Larnard wonders if she is a 'messenger' from heaven, noting that she is not blind like the others, and is taller (p. 83), in addition to the fact that she also possesses the power of speech. Up close Larnard believes that she can 'read [his] thoughts as an open book' – once more hinting at telepathy – which he must guard as much as his words; her face is 'small, round, delicate, sensitive... perfectly chiseled' and spiritually beautiful for the 'sweet, wise, and noble soul it emanated' (p. 89). Mahalma is crafted a separate being from the other Azonians, emphasising her physical and spiritual superiority. This same technique is seen in *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder* and *Under the Auroras*, inserting a female spiritual leader that is physically distinct from everyone else in the population, making her more attractive to reader and male protagonist.

Mahalma's powers are further emphasised in the revival of Estiller after he attempts to commit suicide by jumping into the molten lake at the centre of Azonian worship and home of the 'Fire Father' (p. 92). A psychic Azonian doctor who neither says nor administers anything heals Estiller with only a long 'look' (p. 95) – 'look' being a strange

term to use for a blind man. The presence of artificial light – emanating from artificial flowers (p. 96) – is strange, then, because the locals would have no use for it, but McKesson cannot leave his characters completely in the dark, unable to see the vast riches underground, or the beauty of Mahalma. As she explains to Larnard, ‘Light is beautiful, and it makes other things beautiful. We do not use it to see by but we use it to decorate with’ (p. 119).

Sent by the Fire Father to help the Azonians, Mahalma reveals that she only needs to locate the individual she wants to hear, and closing her eyes, is capable of understanding them – verbally and nonverbally – in any language (pp. 109-110). This leads to a discussion between her and Larnard about the nature of communication and understanding, which reveals nineteenth century theories about the ‘philosophy of communication’: ‘the sound waves throw the molecules of the brain into motion, and... this motion of these molecules creates something with power to understand the meaning of the sound’ (p. 111). But what of consciousness? Is it only an effect of these moving molecules? McKesson’s theory, expressed via Mahalma, is that thinking alone can produce ‘sound waves’ from the moving molecules of the brain, and thus it is not necessary to vocalise thoughts in order to be understood (p. 113). It is only a lack of education among the people of the surface world that prevents them from understanding the principles of ‘the sound of thought’ (p. 114). Here McKesson has finally reached the point hinted at in his introduction to the novel, that of ‘telepathy’. The movement of the plot is not dependent upon this revelation; like several other *terra cava* novels intent on exploring a particular issue or theory, the storyline appears to have been developed around exploring and expressing this one subject, which fills the whole of chapter XI. More than just being able to read the thoughts of those around her, Mahalma can ‘see’ into other rooms, even other states, as she demonstrates by describing Larnard’s home in Massachusetts (pp. 118-9). This is similar to the ‘astral projection’ practiced by some mediums in the nineteenth century, who could cast their minds as far away as other planets.

'God' is rarely referred to but in euphemisms, like 'the Author' (p. 36), 'the Master Artist of the Universe' (p. 66), 'Infinite Father' (p. 83), 'Infinite Goodness' (p. 172), etc. Larnard does appeal to God in a prayer, to help him decide if he should remain among the Azonians in exchange for Estiller's freedom (p. 137). This is part of the shift from strict biblical religious following in America to a non-ecumenist, materialist belief, referring to God in other forms, removing the idea of a divine being from strictly religious terms. That a person can evolve to approach divinity is another accepted philosophy, as Larnard comes to think of Mahalma as existing on another plane, as 'supernatural or the highest product of centuries of love and unselfishness' (p. 183): Mahalma is now thought of in terms of an evolutionary product, something that regular humans (and McKesson's readers) may aspire to.

After a desperate and ill Estiller kidnaps Mahalma, Larnard decides the only way to rescue her is to train his mind in the ways of telepathy. Every day, sitting in a dark room, he relaxes his mind and tries to 'see' an object on which he has fixed his mind (p. 195), as well as 'listening' to mental words (p. 196). Months of mental exercise finally pay dividends, and Larnard knows where to find her, even losing his 'natural vision' (p. 220) and seeing with his eyes closed like the Azonians. In mental communication with Mahalma, she tells Larnard that he is 'standing on the borderland of soul life', at the cusp of spiritual life (p. 223). Larnard reveals a 'dual' Mahalma, inner and outer, joy and suffering (p. 224), which brings to mind the duality of Christ, the physical and the divine, like the Spiritualist unification of the material and the mental. Is Mahalma, then, intended to be a saviour figure? But Larnard also moves onto a place of both physical and spiritual existence, with the implication that any mortal can achieve this, thus removing the uniqueness of spiritual divinity.

During this spiritual quest to rescue the physical body of Mahalma, their souls are 'wed in the temple of the soul by the High Priest, Love' (p. 229). There is no physical expression of this union, only mental. In fulfilling his higher purpose, Larnard confronts the third human trapped in the world beneath Pike's Peak, a Chinese immigrant named Ching Wee (whose speech and actions McKesson embodies in all nineteenth century stereotypes),

and attempts to give him ‘facts!’ (p. 231). This is how spiritualism is meant to be interpreted, not as ‘belief’, but as ‘facts’, that very scientific word of tried and tested experimental proofs; telepathy, astral projects, etc. are ‘facts’ of existence. But this level of spiritual attainment comes at the price of suppressing all negative feelings, and when Larnard ‘sees’ that Mahalma has become Estiller’s lover, he loses the power of ‘mental vision’ forever (p. 242). He compounds his sin of primitive jealousy by killing Ching Wee when he gains the power of mental vision but refuses to take Larnard to Mahalma (p. 251).

Reflections upon this lead Larnard to muse upon the spiritual construction of the universe, reminiscent of other spiritualist philosophies of the day, namely that everything is controlled by an ‘Infinite Good’, which is an energy permeating all matter:

[T]here is in the universe an infinite and eternal energy working for the betterment, advancement, and uplifting of all things... this energy might properly be called the Infinite Good, and... this infinite energy is the cause of all action, conscious and unconscious. In other words, that there is not a movement of an atom of matter in the universe which is not guided and controlled by this infinite energy of goodness... (p. 254)

This philosophy forces Larnard to accept that his descent into the realm of the Azonians was for good, that killing Ching Wee was for good, all to teach him to evolve as a human being (p. 255). This also leads to a rejection of Christian orthodoxy: ‘I thought of forgiveness as taught by the orthodox church, and I could not accept it. I might pray to God to forgive me, and He might forgive me, but that would not take away the sorrow which I felt for senselessly striking Ching Lee, and I could not believe that I should cease to be punished for this wrong until I had learned the lesson which it was meant to teach’ (p. 257). In other words, forgiveness and spiritual ascension must come from within, not without; external forgiveness is not possible. This does not, however, completely remove ‘god’ from the equation, as Larnard continues to refer to Infinite Goodness as ‘Him’. Spiritualism did not necessarily set aside the belief in one overarching source of universal power, but separated it from biblical and ecumenical interpretation. The ‘Trinity’ in *Under Pike’s Peak* is replaced by the triangle, representing ‘Divinity, Energy, and Matter, which united constitute all there is in the universe’ (p. 277).

Upon finally locating Mahalma, she reveals to Larnard that he did not kill Ching Wee, and that the unfortunate man fell and struck his head after the encounter with Larnard, removing from him the crime which led to his final spiritual revelation about the nature of the universe (p. 263). Mahalma compares Larnard's mental journey to climbing the 'ladder of development', that his present incarnation is more advanced than all previous (p. 265). Evolution is not just of the body, but of the mind and soul. The creation of each soul and body is explained in the same way as the nebula theory of the earth's creation:

At some time in the history of the past, a part of the infinite intelligence was individuated or separated and placed in a crude mass of force and matter. This spark of intelligence gathered around itself all that it could use from that mass of force and matter, and when it had done this its progress was stopped until it could have other material upon which to work. (p. 266)

A spirit, then, is a separate entity that moves from physical body to physical body, always in search of improvement.

Upon finally recovering Mahalma and a very ill Estiller, they return to the city of the Azonians, where Estiller regains his health, though in his sickness, he taken from Mahalma 'the brightest jewel of womanhood' (p. 273), a metaphor that leaves little doubt to its implications. Mahalma agreed to play the role of Estiller's lost fiancé in order to preserve the lives of everyone else he threatened to kill. Estiller is to be forgiven his sins as well because of striking his head in his fall into Azonia, and claims memory of nothing until waking up on page 280. Because of his amnesia, Mahalma agrees to return Estiller to the surface, confident that he will not (or cannot) betray the existence of the rich Azonian civilisation. But Mahalma is haunted by the thought that she was wrong to so indulge Estiller (p. 293), chastity being more sacred than life itself. Without warning or explanation – except perhaps that sex is the undoing of an entire civilisation, and they are being cast out of the Garden – the vast underground realm begins to collapse, and only Estiller, Larnard, and Mahalma escape to the surface, where Mahalma promptly dies, begging Larnard to write the story of her people (p. 298).

II.iii – *The Divine Seal*

Not be found in any other record of hollow earth literature, *The Divine Seal* is unique in two ways: one, it was written by a woman, and two, it does not take place in the present, but in the future, in the twenty-second century. Published in Boston in 1909 by Emma Louise Orcutt, she dedicated the novel to her fellow board members of the ‘Mercy Warren Chapter, D.A.R.’ [Daughters of the American Revolution], an adventurous romance written by a woman for women, though told from the perspective of a man, Uzzane Slav, an American accompanying an *international* expedition to the Arctic. (The many failures to reach the Poles at this point in the first decade of the twentieth century must have given some to believe it would be centuries before this was ever accomplished, and would require extensive advances in technology.) This global team is sent to find the lost tomb of ‘Zallallah’, located somewhere in the open Polar Sea,⁴¹ using information garnered from the rediscovered city of Atlantis.⁴² This ‘Zallallah’ is said to hold the secrets to ‘ages past and ages to come’ (p. 14), the oldest being on earth. Uzzane’s narrative is a future history, with frequent address to the reader, ‘Imagine, if you can’ (p. 55), ‘Had you been there’ (p. 55), ‘you will have to go look... in the museum...’ (p. 88). The relics and treasures of this voyage are often listed in the museums and institutes in which they end up after the events of the story.

Much of the narrative, however, is given over to romance. Encountering a beautiful young maiden, Talma, trapped out on the ice the expedition follows her over a glacial mountain (the futuristic ships are capable of passing over the ice flows as easily as they do water) and into a polar depression of far more temperate conditions. Uzzane immediately falls in love with Talma, who is of course a ‘peerless’ beauty with black eyes, wavy hair, olive complexion, and a form ‘fashioned after a model combining the charms of a Venus and a Hebe (pp. 22-3). Unfortunately, she is promised as bride/sacrifice to the serpent-man Ozomoth as part of ancient custom. Only by finding the Zallallah, which they have been sent

⁴¹ Emma Louise Orcutt, *The Divine Seal* (Boston: C.M. Clark, 1909), p. 3. All other references cited in text pertain to this edition.

⁴² Atlantis was a significant topic of conversation in the nineteenth century, among Spiritualists, historians, archaeologists, and writers. Ignatius Donnelly’s *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World* (1882) was a bestselling pseudoscientific work based on Plato’s writings.

to do anyway, can Ozomoth's power be broken and Uzzane married to Talma. The biblical parallels of Eden's snake and Ozomoth are blunt.

Isikar, Talma's father explains that until meeting the expedition he believed his civilisation to be 'the only race left on earth' (p. 65), which Uzzane thinks may be 'the cradle of nations' (p. 72). This appears to derive from Warren's *Paradise Found*, locating the origins of humanity (and thus the Garden of Eden) at the North Pole. He is king of Heclades, a land never inhabited by a 'barbarian race' because it was this land 'that first cradled the human race'. Their language is described as 'Earliest Aryan' (p. 24), millions of years old. *The Divine Seal* is about uncovering human origins and the divinity of the soul. Orcutt's narrative is informed by contemporary religious/scientific beliefs – like that of Warren's *Paradise Found* – and Spiritualist mythology.

Crossing the glacial mountains, the ships begin to descend into the Polar depression. The geography of Orcutt's imagination recognises both this, and vast underground realms. The subterranean world is home of the ancients, sealed into vast caverns by time and tribulation. The first discovery is an underground city full of petrified people (p. 53), frozen in time in the midst of daily life. They name the 'desolate place' 'Happy Valley' (p. 41), and even though it is impossibly ancient, Uzzane refers to it as 'the new world' (p. 47). It is not one that can provide habitation, though, for a new population, or arable land, as even the trees are made of stone; what it possesses is mineral wealth in the form of gold and silver, and value in knowledge for 'the students of science' (p. 55). The expedition performs its imperialist duties, taking 'possession of the place in the name of [the] scientific society, sanctioned by the government', and then carrying away '[a]s many relics as [they] could conveniently take' (p. 138).

Arriving in Heclades, Uzzane and crew discover a sub-tropical paradise, an Eden cursed with the serpent Ozomoth. Isikar is a benevolent autocrat, but this is not a democracy, and he has power over life and death. Nor is this a land of scientific development; for all its millions of years of history, the cradle of humanity has not advanced beyond the technology and politics of Renaissance Europe. What they possess, what gives them a value worth

pursuing, is history, answers for the rest of humanity curious about their origins, about their divinely inspired creation.

When Zallallah finally appears, it is from beneath a dome of ‘silver and gold and pearls’ that rises up from the floor of a cavern (p. 303) in what can only be deific mandate. Though buried in the rock of aeons, ‘The Shrine of Zallallah’ is opened by ‘columns of the purest white’, and the inscriptions unmarred:

A glorious Angel of Light came and hovered over [Zallallah] for a moment and disappeared. Then came the Spirit of all Power and of all Good and stood by her side. He beheld the marvellous creation developed from his own wondrous beginning. The Spirit waved his wand above her, lightly touched her forehead, and dissolved into air. But He had left the impression of His own divine seal stamped upon her, and a new being was created.

Zallallah opened her eyes and the new soul just born within her, bore her into the wonderland of knowledge and beauty. This soul had been molded and fashioned till it came from the hands of its creator a peerless thing, forming the one link uniting the human with the divine... Her new soul led her... into Elysian fields of thought... (p. 307)

Adam did not come first then, but Eve. She was the first given a godly soul, conscious of her being and beauty and the divine. Zallallah goes on to find a man, and asks God to bless him with a soul as well, to bridge ‘the gulf which divided them’ (p. 308). Not only is ‘Adam’ second, but he would not have been fully human had woman not asked that he be. Talma and the other women in the narrative have demonstrated no autonomy, their motives and actions solely linked to their emotional attachments to men. For all of this, though, Orcutt inverts the order of Biblical creation and puts Eve first. Adam – called ‘La-rah-hin-ee’ in this mythology – is actually lost, and it is only commanded to ‘Keep the Zallallah’, the ‘Link between the Beast and the Being’ (pp. 86-7).

Though Bleiler missed Orcutt’s work in his study of early science fiction, it caught notice of contemporary reviewers, and Orcutt was already an author of some small reputation when she published *The Divine Seal*. The *San Francisco Call* remarked that the novel was ‘a “dip into the future,” not a good, sure plunge, but a sort of splashing around.’ It is surprising that this work has missed the attention of other hollow earth and early SF historians. Orcutt’s speculation that the Poles would not be reached for centuries (rather than just a few short years) while other technologies progressed demonstrates the frustration felt

by the public at the failure of so many Polar expeditions, but belief in the promise of technology. The subterranean aspects of Orcutt's novel, placing the oldest civilisations beneath the surface of the earth go towards explaining the inability of contemporary explorers and map makers to find Atlantis, Eden, and other traces of humanity's divine origins.

CONCLUSION

To understand the perception that Orcutt and others had of the last uncharted realms on earth, consider the following, published in 1907, not long before both the North and South Poles would be reached by explorers:

"LAND OF JOY" IN THE CENTER OF EARTH

Special to The Tribune.

PROVIDENCE. R. I., Aug. 20 – A land of Joy, located In the center of the earth, lighted by electricity, warm and balmy as a day In June, and generally a pleasant place of residence, is announced by no less an authority than Orville L. Leach. He has concluded that the earth is a hollow sphere, with the magnetic current flowing through it from the North Pole to the South Pole. He regards the northern lights as the reflection from the brilliantly-lighted Interior, which he believes is the "Golden City" of the Scriptures.

Professor Leach arrives at his conclusions in a unique way. Plunging a red-hot Iron rod into a jar of pure oxygen, he saw that the wire burns and shining black globules of oxide of iron fall to the bottom. "It will be seen," he says, "that when a portion of the oxygen is taken into the iron there is a vacuum in the jar, and consequently a reduced atmospheric pressure. Our earth, of course, is rolling along in a vacuum – in the ether of the universe, and it is deduced that our earth must be a hollow sphere, as the same laws apply to the microcosms or minute parts of the earth as to the microcosms of worlds."⁴³

Scriptural interpretation is still mingling with scientific deductions to give greater space to the globe than there is. Like Symmes nearly a century before, experiments performed on a microscopic level are implied to give knowledge of the world's structure on a macroscopic scale. Imagination then takes over, creating an entire world around (or within) the results seen in a jar or on a plate (see Symmes's Second Circular in chapter one for this).

Of all the aspects of nineteenth century *terra cava* that would continue into the next hundred years, it is the religious and the Spiritual that found an audience. Work like *Etidorhpa*, framed in such a way as to give the impression of prophecy rather than fiction, convinced readers of its veracity. The Theosophical Society and the Society for Psychical

⁴³ "Land of Joy", *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 21 August 1907, p. 1.

Research are still in operation, though their modern incarnations have de-emphasised the role of the hollow earth in their beliefs and studies. Others still believe in an inhabited, spiritual *terra cava*; Diane Robbins, a self-proclaimed telepathic communicator, published *Messages from the Hollow Earth* (2003), claiming to have had telepathic messages from a highly intelligent race living inside the earth. Certain nondenominational elements of Christianity still hold to the belief that the earth is hollow based on scriptural interpretation. More of this will be covered in the conclusion.

Chapter Four – Finding Utopia in *Terra Cava*

Nearly every *terra cava* narrative discussed before this point was utopic in some way; it is one of the general characteristics of the American hollow earth tale that an advanced race living in idyllic conditions may be found in the centre of the world. But these societies are either subject to the question of American imperialism or the influence of spiritual philosophies. The *terra cava* narratives in this chapter are directly related to political, social, and economic theories of the late nineteenth century. Some explore female equality (or even dominance) as part of the debate over universal suffrage, social alternatives which debate or question the status quo; others study the outcome of implementing certain alterations to governments and economies that mirror America's.

In an era of American writing about utopia, real world experience in easing the pressures of industrialised urban settings is seen as nothing more than a utopian dream without practicality. But it also highlights why so many *terra cava* narratives are detailed in their descriptions of population density, housing, landscaping, air quality, etc., meant to directly counter these everyday images. These utopias learn how to incorporate technology (i.e. industrialisation) into a healthy society, something which the surface world struggled to accomplish. It is the difference between Bellamy's *Looking Backward* and Morris's *News from Nowhere*; American hollow earth authors utilise the promise of industrialisation to liberate/eliminate the labouring class so that they may evolve into the more respectable position of the middle classes.

Jean Pfaelzer calls utopian fiction 'unavoidably...realistic', and American utopian fiction of the nineteenth century 'the dream of an alternative society which, unlike the new worlds of science fiction, exists in a familiar location.'¹ The hollow earth is not New York or Chicago as it is in the future utopia of the nineteenth century, but it is still familiar because of Symmes's widespread theory. Familiarity is reinforced with commentary about contemporary political and social movements, individuals involved in those movements, parallel histories between the US and the inner world, and current events (such as continuing

¹ Pfaelzer, *The Utopian Novel*, p. 15.

Polar exploration and the lost Franklin expedition). All of the following works draw upon these identifiable markers to relate the reader from the surface world to the utopia of the inner world.

I. THE FEMINIST UTOPIA

Among novels set in an idyllic *terra cava*, the realm of female equality, or even superiority, brings to the forefront the suffragette movement in the United States, championed by female writers and sympathetic male counterparts. What these women do not represent – outside the satirical – is the ancient vision of the Amazon, the mono-breasted warrior women of myth. These *terra cava* women have taken up science instead of the sword, establishing advanced civilisations, some with the presence of men, some without. As Pfaelzer enumerates, after the American Civil War ‘a “domestic revolution” was under way, which freed many women for pursuits other than housework’, including the wider availability of ‘gas lighting, municipal water systems, domestic plumbing, canning, the commercial production of ice, the improvement of furnaces, stoves, and washtubs’.² Women moved outside the household to work, but feminist utopias moved women forward in literature while waiting for social progress in the real world.

I.i – *Mizora*

Before Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *Herland* there was Mary E. Bradley-Lane’s all-female utopia *Mizora; A World of Women* (1881). Published in the *Cincinnati Commercial* (Murat Halstead, editor) as the memoir of Vera Zarovich, an exiled Russian aristocrat, it was a decade later that Bradley-Lane’s name attached to the story. Bradley-Lane’s attachment to the novel can only be attributed to the 1890 reissue of *Mizora* that listed her in the copyright, though little biography is known, and Halstead’s introduction states that the author ‘kept herself in concealment so closely that ever her husband did not know’.³ It is probably not a coincidence that *Mizora* originated in the land of Symmes (southern Ohio) where Bradley-

² Pfaelzer, *The Utopian Novel in America*, p. 141.

³ Mary E. Bradley Lane, *Mizora; A World of Women* (Lincoln, NE: Bison Books, 1999). Introduction by Joan Saberhagen, p. 5. All other citations from this edition in text.

Lane likely encountered the Symmes Theory after the publication of Americus Symmes's 1878 collection of his late father's work, if not before. Though Symmes's name is never mentioned, it is his geography being utilised for *Mizora*'s construction.

Jean Pfaelzer's introduction to *Mizora* provides more biographical information about Lane than any other source, including the fact that Lane was only married three years before writing 'such a trenchant antimale satire'.⁴ Thirty-four when she married, Lane never had any of her own children, but presumably would have liked to have a family, considering her novel's intense devotion to child-rearing. But as the daughter of and wife of military veterans, it is not hard to understand Lane's anti-war message, one which would have resonated with the majority of her readers.

Mizora is a novel told in the first person without a secondary author/narrator/editor, as there are in many other hollow earth tales. The subtitle and use of Vera Zarovitch as the purported author are the only extra-narrative framing given. Perhaps by virtue of being a female narrator in a female world, there is no romance, no action or adventure, no suspense; as Standish puts it, 'Once Vera gets to Mizora, virtually nothing happens... The only real plot question pulling a reader through the narrative is, What happened to the men?'⁵ Such is the fate of many utopian stories, where world building overtakes all other narrative considerations.

The full subtitle of *Mizora*, as listed in the reprint, should be given as 'A Prophecy. A MSS. Found Among the Private Papers of the Princess Vera Zarovitch; Being a true and faithful account of her Journey to the Interior of the Earth, with a careful description of the Country and its Inhabitants, their Customs, Manners and Government. Written by Herself.' The narrative frame being established is that of the fictive character as true author, whose manuscript is composed, as the opening lines attest, out of 'duty...to science' (p. 7) and 'duty...to truth' (p. 8), motivations seen in the framing of several other *terra cava* narratives

⁴ Jean Pfaelzer, 'Introduction: Utopians Prefer Blindes – Mare Lane's *Mizora* and the Nineteenth-Century Utopian Imagination', *Mizora: A Prophecy* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), p. xi.

⁵ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 194.

where disbelief is expected. Vera Zarovitch, like Adam Seaborn before her, has returned to the surface world penniless and friendless with only a fantastic story to tell that would benefit others to heed. But where Seaborn was an intentional explorer in quest of fame, wealth, and scientific answers, Zarovitch is a Russian exile (punished for speaking out against Czar Nicholas I's treatment of the Polish) who finds herself trapped in the Arctic due to an ill-fated escape. Taking a boat further north in hopes of finding civilisation, she is swept down a Symmes Hole and emerges in the country of Mizora, an all-female utopia. Zarovitch is always clear that she had no intention of making such a discovery, and appears to be offering the proverbial wink to her readers when she says, 'It does seem a little astonishing that a woman should have fallen by accident, and without intention or desire, upon a discovery that explorers and scientists had for years searched for in vain. But such was the fact' (p. 19).

The use of a woman, and a non-American at that, in the first American *terra cava* of the late nineteenth century, is intriguing. Men dominated the field, and imitated each other, but Bradley-Lane published the first post-Civil War hollow earth story to use Symmes's world view for narrative construction. She did not employ the semi-porous earth models of Verne and Bulwer-Lytton – well know popular fictions at this point – but Symmesian geography and technological superiority rather than a primitive lost race. Bradley-Lane's extreme eugenics, though, may be shocking to a modern reader. After a series of wars, the women of Mizora overthrow male dominance and chemically develop parthenogenesis, allowing for the male of the species to die out, as they are no longer needed. Not only is this a world populated solely by women, they are only blond-haired and blue-eyed, reference being made to innate criminality in brunette types: '[T]he highest excellence of moral and mental character is alone attainable by a fair race. The elements of evil belong to the dark race.' All the men and non-blondes in Mizora were, put bluntly, 'eliminated' three thousand years ago as a 'degradation of the human race' (p. 92). Naomi Jacobs considers this a reversal of 'the classic equation of men with culture and women with nature' since the 'Mizorans associate masculinity with the natural "grossness" and animality that they seek to

remove from every aspect of their culture.’⁶ This is not a utopia of the purely pastoral, but a technotopia in an edenic setting.

Upon Zarovitch’s arrival, the language used to establish the perfection of Mizora comes thick and fast; the sky is ‘bluer’, ‘the air balmier’, the grass ‘a carpet of rich green velvet’, ‘clouds...like precious gems converted into vapor’, and ‘truly a land of enchantment’ (p. 14). There is also no noise; ‘No animals were visible, nor sound of any. No hum of life. All nature lay asleep’ (p. 15). She immediately encounters the Mizorans, whose description of universal beauty is one often repeated in *terra cava*: ‘[Y]oung girls of the highest type of blonde beauty’ (p. 15), and never a ‘homely face or ungraceful form’ (21) among them. Zarovitch’s ‘long black hair’ (p. 15) is evidently not met with any particular revulsion, but she perpetually puts herself down in comparison to the Mizorans.

The architecture and landscaping of this utopia seems to be drawn from ancient Rome, that of white marble buildings and sculptures, fountains, roses and lush trees (p. 16), reminiscent of paintings rather than reality. But in an America suffering the growing pains of industrialisation, rapid urbanisation and population expansion, and little time for marble buildings when brick or wood would do, this imagery stands in stark contrast to what the readers of the *Cincinnati Commercial* would have seen on a daily basis in 1880. Zarovitch compared the atmosphere to ‘Italy’s favoured clime’ (p. 14), suggesting the late-nineteenth century infatuation with travel to Italy, which was beyond the reach of most Americans. It does not seem a coincidence that both the land and the architecture are comparable to Italy’s. Lane might also have read Bulwer-Lytton’s *The Coming Race*, which also compares the atmosphere of the Vril-ya’s vast caverns as ‘bright and warm as an Italian landscape at noon’.⁷

This utopia in the centre of the world – like all other utopias – is a stand-in for the perfectibility of American living conditions. Parallels with America’s history and

⁶ Naomi Jacob, ‘The Frozen Landscape in Women’s Utopian and Science Fiction’, *Utopian and Science Fiction by Women: Worlds of Difference*, eds. Jane L. Donawerth and Carol A. Kolmerten (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994), p. 195.

⁷ Edward Bulwer-Lytton. *The Coming Race*, ed. David Seed (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), p. 10.

contemporary events – i.e. the Civil War, president Ulysses Grant, the women’s rights movement, and the development of electricity and chemical engineering – establishes familiarity with Mizora for the reader. Flaws in the contemporary socio-political-economic system are revealed by the inverse, hyperbolic perfection of the fictional system. For Mizora, it is not simply the elimination of men and brunettes that results in their utopia: it is the fundamental application of universal education and science that revolutionises their world and frees women from their traditional domestic roles. What Zarovitch mistakenly believes to be a seminary is actually a ‘College of Experimental Science’ (p. 19), linking in the reader’s mind religious observances with scientific practice. At one point, Zarovitch asks if the Mizorans worship Nature (implying paganism) but is reprimanded for her ‘superstitious notions of religion’ (p. 120). When Zarovitch presses the point, emphasising the need for moral guidance, she is called a ‘daughter of the dark ages’ and told to ‘turn to the benevolent and ever-willing Science. She is the goddess who has led *us* out of ignorance and superstition’ (p. 121). Zarovitch pushes for the power with prayer, and is countered with ‘Prayer never saved one...from premature death’ (p. 121). Though the Mizorans first equate nature and god with each other, this also reorients science as divinity; nature and science must therefore be one in the same to Mizorans, but they have overpowered nature in the elimination of men, animals, and organic cultivation. In retrospect, it appears to be an untenable dichotomy of philosophy.

Though the extinction of men on the surface world is not a genuine suggestion for the improvement of daily life, the narrative offers an opportunity to reflect upon the possibility that men are not the only lords of governance and science. During her time in Mizora, Zarovitch is befriended by the Preceptress (one of the leaders) and her daughter, Wauna, who show her around a country that is resplendent with large, comfortable houses, institutes of learning, libraries and music halls, meeting various members of Mizoran society who show her the error of the surface world’s ways. Zarovitch remarks that Mizora ‘would be a paradise for man’, yet beings to wonder what ‘he is not here in lordly possession’:

In *my* world man was regarded, or had made himself regarded, as a superior being. He had constituted himself the Government, the Law, Judge, Jury and Executioner... He was active and belligerent always in obtaining and keeping every good thing for himself. He was indispensable. Yet here was a nation of fair, exceedingly fair women doing without him, and practicing the arts and sciences far beyond the imagined pale of human knowledge and skill. (pp. 21-2)

At no point does Zarovitch (and by extension Lane) push for a replication of *all* Mizoran practices – she had a husband and son that she never repudiates – but reflections such as these illuminate the female (or at least Lane’s) perspective on men in the world, an unflattering perspective. Male readers may at least be made aware of this view women hold, reconsider their dominant circumstance, and amend their ways accordingly.

In a surprising act of prescience, food and food preparation in Mizora is the result of applied chemistry; every cook is a chemist with a scientific method for the application of ingredients, preparation, and cooking. This is to ‘eliminate from... food the deleterious earthy matter’ which prevents disease and aging (p. 45); washing the soil from one’s vegetables is apparently insufficient. Living in an era of rampant food- and water-borne illnesses, the removal of such risk in daily consumption is a utopian dream. Lane elevates the perceived mundane role of family cook to that of respectable scientist, and the simple farmer to a synthesiser of nutrients. A household cook is actually ‘one of the most distinguished chemists’ in Mizora, who pursues the occupation of ‘cook’ only because it suits her to; the bread served is not made of flour, but reclaimed marble and limestone (p. 37). While feminist readers may lament the relegation of women to the traditional role of meal preparer, traditionally, the position of ‘chef’ was a masculine one; cooking for nobility was a position of celebrity reserved for men, and in Mizora, ‘cooking [is] an art’ and its practitioners ‘artists’ (p. 45). The Mizoran diet, besides fruits, consists almost entirely of synthesized products. It is – like most other *terra cava* diets – vegetarian (if one considers chemically prepared meat not derived from an animal vegetarian [p. 56]) with the result that there is no animal life in Mizora; it, like the men, is rendered extinct as an impure nature. The purity of food and environment is directly linked to the purity of the body, and thus, the body politic. That this purity also takes on racial components is a more difficult subject for

the modern reader, and obscure Lane's message of female scientific and political capability, child psychology and welfare, and the dangers of environmental pollutants.

Technology also frees women from the physical labour of traditional household chores, a development perceived by early feminists who championed the ability of machinery to improve their lots in life. Zarovitch calls Mizora 'a land of brain workers', where the 'whole domestic department [is] a marvel of ingenious mechanical contrivances' (p. 45). In this way, Lane accurately predicts that 'it would become the custom in my country to make machinery perform the laborious work' (p. 45). Among other inventions foreseen on Lane's part is the automobile – 'carriages...propelled by compressed air or electricity...with a mechanism that was simply pressed with the foot' (p. 54) – and plastic, or 'elastic glass' as Zarovitch terms it (p. 55).

Technology is also the key to male-free Mizoran reproduction, while lesbianism is never brought to bear on the situation, a step too far for contemporary readers. This could be one reason for Lane's concealment of her name at the time of initial publication. Sexual love is never referred to, and Wauna – Zarovitch's guide and companion in Mizora – states that there are no 'offspring of Lust' and that 'children come... as welcome guests through portals of the holiest and purest affection' (p. 130). What this 'portal' is meant to stand in for is never quite explained; the reader only knows that Mizoran chemistry is capable of parthenogenesis, and sexual love is replaced with maternal love. By removing sexual love from the social balance, women are no longer in a position to be dominated by the lust of another.

Of all the Mizorans' advancement, there is one subject about which they know nothing: astronomy, as there is no sun, moon, or stars to be seen in this particular hollow earth construction. Lane does not completely relegate her geography to the background after Zarovitch sails through the Symmes Hole. There is no internal sun, but natural light as a property of the atmosphere, as well as six months of reflected sunlight from the north – as Symmes proposed – and six months of illumination from the Aurora Borealis (p. 25). Zarovitch also proposes that the meeting of the earth's internal electrical currents and

external currents (the Aurora Borealis) is what provides the heat to maintain the (hypothesised) open Polar Sea (p. 26).

The political and social history of Mizora are framed as one on a parallel course – albeit thousands of years earlier – with the United States (rather than Zarovich’s Russia) especially with regards to the presidency and the Civil War. Mizora was once a Republic ‘diseased from its birth’ from the existence of slavery, which resulted in a civil war, ‘the primary cause of the extinction of the male race’ (p. 96). In the United States, a Civil War over slavery ended only fifteen years ago, and Reconstruction of the South was in tatters; General Ulysses S. Grant served two terms as president, and was being encouraged to run again. In Mizora, candidates for president must take a public test administered by the National College, which reveals the intellectual strengths and weaknesses of the candidate (p. 70). There are no disparaging remarks made, no votes bought, no lies; a utopic political aspiration in 1880 or the present. The last male Mizoran president – in a description undoubtedly meant for Ulysses Grant – is remembered as a ‘man of mediocre intellect and boundless self-conceit’, ‘egoism’, ‘selfishness’ and ‘corruption’ (p. 97). Consider that in comparison to an article by a female writer about Grant from 1880:

The country has paid him [Grant], ten times over, for all that he ever was or did as a soldier. Had it not, his civil administration would have annulled the last lingering fraction of a debt. Are the crowds adoring “the great soldier” now? Not at all. They are running after the man who, for two years and seven months, has made a public spectacle of himself around the entre globe, for the glutting of his own vanity...⁸

Grant’s presidential administration was generally considered a failure, plagued by corruption charges, economic instability, political inexperience, the failed annexation of the Dominican Republic, and the collapse of Reconstruction in the South. After leaving office, Grant and his wife went on a two-year world tour, from England to India and China, returning to the U.S. late in 1879 amid calls from political allies that he be named the 1880 presidential nominee. Ultimately, James Garfield of Ohio won the nomination, but at the time of *Mizora*’s writing, Grant’s reputation was in the proverbial gutter. Nearly the entirety of

⁸ Mary Clemmer, “Gen. Grant’s Claims”, *The Daily Cairo Bulletin*, 6 January 1880 (Morning ed.), p. 2.

chapter two in part II is given over to this parallel history of history of Mizora's politics that led to the extinction of men by women who had had enough; chapter three examines how women reformed the interior world into one of their preference, and the discovery of the 'Secret of Life' which allowed for parthenogenic reproduction (p. 103). For lack of her own scientific knowledge, or to spare the publisher from a scandal, Lane does not provide any detail as to how this 'Secret of Life' works.

The most prominent aspect of Zarovitch's reported observations in the hollow earth is how children are raised, a message that to modern readers seems overshadowed by Lane's eugenic construction of Mizora. All education is free, from the institution down to the books and supplies, while educators are compensated beyond any other position in the country: 'To be a teacher in Mizora was to be a person of consequence. They were its aristocracy.' (p. 23). (This observation also means that Mizora is not a communist state or an economy above the use of monies.) The purpose of Mizora's expansive educational system is explained in terms of social advancement:

[E]ducation is the foundation of our moral elevation, our government, our happiness. Let us relax our efforts, or curtail the means and inducements to become educated, and we relax into ignorance, and end in demoralization... We realize in its broadest sense the ennobling influence of universal education. The higher the culture of a people, the more secure is their government and happiness. A prosperous people is always an educated one; and the freer the education, the wealthier they become. (p. 24)

Zarovitch is quick to relate these revelations in Mizora as a system that 'might prove beneficial to other countries' (p. 25), in case the reader has not picked up on the implications. Again and again the benefits of universal education are revisited in the text, and how its application will cure nearly every ill in the world. American education reformer Horace Mann (1796-1859) began the push for the universal, free, sectarian education, which carried on throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. Mizora claims to be a land that is shaped by its purity of air, food, and climate – in addition to its purity of race. To which is more credit owed? Many scholars take issue with the latter, but as Zarovitch is a brunette and mother to a son – neither situation being one she feels the need to correct – it is surely the former path readers are meant to heed. Even the Preceptress, an educator, tells

Zarovitch, 'I could take a child of your people with inherited weakness of body and mind. I should rear it on proper food and exercise – both physical and mental – and it would have, when matured, a marked superiority to its parents' (p. 110). Superiority lies not with the genetics of the Mizorans, but with their child-rearing practices. The words 'child' and 'children' can be found no less than 63 times in this short novel; 'educat-' 68 times, 'health-' 27 times. This perpetual recurrence drums into the reader a message of health, education, and children as being the most important factors to Mizora's development, and the real world's necessity to reform.

In an unusual move for a *terra cava* narrative, Zarovitch departs the hollow earth, but not alone, bringing her friend and guide Wauna with her, which is a fatal mistake for the latter. It must be noted that Wauna's mission to the surface world is not one of racial or masculine extermination; she is sent to champion other aspects of Mizora's society; universal education, clean living, technological innovation, etc. Finding nothing redeeming in Europe, the pair travel to America, where Wauna is only moderately more impressed, hoping that the near future will make the New World 'the teacher of the Old in the great lessons of Humanity' (p. 145). But the barbarism even of the United States is too much for Wauna, and she soon sickens and dies, leaving Zarovitch like so many other returnees from the hollow earth, without family, funds, or home. Writing *Mizora* is not about correcting any of these maladies, though, but fulfilling the duty to science and truth; the second to last paragraph reads, 'The future of the world, if it be grand and noble, will be the result of UNIVERSAL EDUCATION, FREE AS THE GOD-GIVEN WATER WE DRINK' (p. 147) – Lane capitalises the final words to emphasise her message; not the elimination of men, but the promotion of education. Zarovitch has no conclusion to her story; her family and friends have all died, and she presumably settles in the Ohio Valley, as her papers are published in Cincinnati.

Academics interested in late-nineteenth century utopias, especially feminist ones, often single out *Mizora* for particular examination, and at times, condemnation. Karen A Bruce declares that 'while Lane and her contemporaries may have considered Mizora

utopian, a modern audience would be more likely to consider it dystopian.⁹ Bruce points out that ‘in a post-Holocaust world’ such sentiments must appear deeply disturbing.¹⁰ But the way in which *Mizora* is structured – and it should be noted that the Mizorans do not mistreat Zarovich, even though she has black hair (p. 15) – is not being championed as the only way for the surface world to organise itself; universal education and healthy living is the message Lane wants to get across, and there is nothing dystopian about that. Katharine Broad considers *Mizora* to be a ‘failure of feminism’ for its ‘repressive vision of reproductive and social engineering’.¹¹ But in the text itself, when Zarovitch asks the Preceptress how she may bring such social harmony to the surface world, the Preceptress answers:

Educate them. Convince the rich that by educating the poor, they are providing for their own safety They will have fewer prisons to build, fewer courts to sustain. Educated Labor will work out its own salvation against Capital. Let the children of toil start life with exactly the same educational advantages that are enjoyed by the rich. Give them the same physical and moral training, and let the rich pay for it by taxes. (pp. 41-2)

The Preceptress does not command the extermination of men and brunettes to achieve utopia; only universal education funded by those in a position to pay for it. This message appears to be lost in modern examinations of *Mizora*, placing all of the focus on the narrative’s racial construction, which does not carry over into the socio-political moral espoused.

In an unusual follow-up to the novel, someone used the name ‘Vera Zarovitch’ to publish a poem in the *Willmar Tribune* (of Minnesota) called ‘The Fool’:

There was a fool and he made his prayer
To a golden calf, erected where
Positions of state were bought and sold
Like bales of cotton, for so much gold.¹²

The poem goes on to criticise wealth, politics, and lamenting the position of the poor. If there had been a real Vera Zarovitch, the poem would undoubtedly have lived up to the

⁹ Karen A. Bruce, “Aryans in Utopia: Mary Bradley Lane’s *Mizora* as an Example of the Contemporaneity of the Utopian Form”, in *Topic: The Washington & Jefferson College Review* (2010), pp. 24-5.

¹⁰ Bruce, “Aryans in Utopia”, p. 28.

¹¹ Katherine Broad, ‘Race Reproduction, and the Failures of Feminism in Mary Bradley Lane’s *Mizora*’, *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Fall 2009), p. 247.

¹² Vera Zarovitch [pseud.], ‘The Fool’, *Willmar Tribune*, 28 February 1900, p. 4

message of her own work. Edward Bellamy, on the other hand, found himself at the end of a charge for plagiarising *Mizora* in 1889, which he firmly denied;¹³ it is entirely possible, though, that the suit was a publicity stunt. Bellamy's *Looking Backward* was an extremely popular and successful novel, and linking it in the minds of the reading public to *Mizora* could only have helped sale of the latter when it was reprinted the following year in book form.

I.ii – *Panteletta*, a Response to *Mizora*

From an author identified only as 'Mrs. J. Wood', *Panteletta: A Romance of Sheheland* (1882) is an anti-feminist anti-utopia that can be interpreted as a satirical response to *Mizora*. Bleiler proposes that the writer was 'probably a male journalist of the day',¹⁴ though gives no evidence for this supposition. Not until recent years has the identity of the author been proposed to be William Mill Butler (1857-1946), a newspaper editor from Rochester, NY.¹⁵ The front cover of the paperback declares it to be 'An American Satire', and provides the following advertisement on the inside from a friend of the author:

What Professor Gilmore says of "Pantaletta."¹⁶

- Joseph H. Gilmore, A.M., Professor Logic, Rhetoric and English Literature in the University of Rochester, a recognized authority upon literary matters, writes as follows concerning "Pantaletta:"

"The Public will find in 'Pantaletta,' under the thin disguise of fiction, a vigorous and effective satire on the 'Women's Rights Movement;' and, if I mistake not, will be interested in the adventures of General Gullible, and in the pen-picture of the state of things which would naturally exist where the true relation of the sexes has been subverted. The Republic of Petticotia is but a humorous exaggeration of what any civilized country might become, in which the rights of woman (in the sense which is too often attached to that much-abused phrase) were assured."¹⁷

From the outset there is no attempt at blurring the boundaries of fact and fiction; this is an obvious fiction, and a satirical one, with a distinct message for the 'Women's Rights Movement', as told to the reader by a professor of Logic, Rhetoric and English Literature.

¹³ 'Is "Looking Backward" a Plagiarism?' *Lawrence Daily Journal*. 13 October 1889, p. 1.

¹⁴ Bleiler, *Science Fiction*, p. 828.

¹⁵ 'Wood, Mrs J', *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/wood_mrs_j.

¹⁶ Joseph Henry Gilmore (1834-1918), held a degree in Arts from Brown University, and theology from Newton Theological Institution. Is somewhat remembered for composing the Baptist hymn 'He Leadeth Me, O Blessed Thought'.

¹⁷ J. Wood, *Pantaletta: A Roman of Sheheland* (New York: The American News Company, 1882), p. 2. All other references cited in text for this edition.

Already the credentials for the narrative are being well established; the hollow earth may not be real, but votes for women may certainly result in a world like one being presented. The only other example of a third-party providing an introduction to a *terra cava* novel is Julian Hawthorne for *The Goddess of Atvatabar* (1895) several years later. Such introductions remove the veneer of factuality that so many other *terra cava* narratives seek to establish, so it is a rare presentation. But in both instances, the third parties providing the introductions have been a name or position meant to lend the weight of importance to the work.

Structurally, there is an interesting break in the narrative on pages 97-8, with a footnote from one 'Jonathan Gullible', who claims to be editing the narrative 'in accordance with his father's private instructions', quoting a passage from Byron's 'Don Juan' in the scene when Gullible first dons women's clothing. Jonathan provided no introduction to himself, no editor's preface, and no conclusion, making his inclusion in the narrative rather clumsy.

The Women's Rights Movement began to swell after the Civil War, when freed slaves were given the right to vote, but women still were not. Organisations across the United States, such as the National Woman Suffrage Association, pressed for political change, and were met by resistance at all levels of society, from politicians to other women. Tracts against women, newspaper cartoons, editorials, and failed legal action occupied the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The issue was significant enough to warrant a mention in the 1887 edition of *Chambers's Encyclopædia*:

WOMEN'S RIGHTS. In 1851, an article in *the Westminster Review* attracted attention to the novel subject of the enfranchisement of women. Since that time, the agitation for women's rights has in this country [England], and to a still greater extent in America, attained the dimensions of a political movement. The subject has therefore become one of general interest.¹⁸

There would be no question on the part of *Pantaletta's* readers as to the nature of the subject or implied message, no mistaking the satire for a novel of honest delivery (even if the front cover did not say so). The author – whoever 'Mrs. J. Wood' was – draws upon the stereotype of the old, ugly, lunatic suffragette. The arguments offered in the narrative are no

¹⁸ 'Women's Rights'. *Chambers's Encyclopædia: A Dictionary of Universal Knowledge for the People*, vol. VIII (New York: Collier, 1887), p. 323.

different from the ones found in the columns of American dailies: ‘Suffrage is not a natural right, neither does taxation confer it, since minors and aliens who pay taxes may not vote. Such rights as are merely political, women should be relieved from in order that they may attend to greater and more complicated responsibilities’ (pp. 135-6). This is an argument that would still be used for decades: an article by Henry Stimson, the former Secretary of War, was called ‘Suffrage Not A Natural Right. Therefore, the question is whether admitting women to the vote would not worse confuse the work of government.’¹⁹

The protagonist, Icarus Byron Gullible, is burdened with a name to layer folly on folly; denied a career in aviation, he takes up the newspaper business, which quickly fails, ruining the family fortune. A good marriage and the rank of general during the American Civil War turns Gullible’s fortunes around, allowing him to pursue his first dream, flight. Constructing a mechanical aircraft called the ‘American Eagle’, Gullible flies to the Arctic, where he descends through a Symmes Hole. What he finds is the country of Petticotia, ruled by militant women who oppress men and force them to perform domestic chores while wearing women’s clothing. Even the terms ‘man’ and ‘woman’ have been outlawed in favour of ‘heshe’ and ‘shehe’, respectively. Calling the country ‘Petticotia’ disparages the uniquely feminine garment and women’s fashion, perhaps playing on the homonym of ‘petty’ as well, considering the condition of the country found.

Identifying *Pantaletta* as anti-utopian rather than dystopian signifies it as a ‘*utopian* [variant] that emerges from a *novum* generated by a “less perfect principle” of social organization’.²⁰ Both *Mizora* and *Pantaletta* use the same premise of a female-dominated land, a pastoral paradise compared to Eden, but to significantly different effect. (Standish, tongue firmly in cheek, refers to Petticotia as ‘a cross-dresser’s paradise, where transvestism has the rule of law’.²¹) Moylan breaks down the difference between ‘anti-utopia’ and ‘dys-

¹⁹ Henry L. Stimson, ‘Suffrage Not A Natural Right’, *The New York Times* (12 June 1915), p. 10.

²⁰ Tom Moylan, “Look into the dark”: On Dystopia and the *Novum*”, in *Learning from Other Worlds: Estrangement, Cognition, and the Politics of Science Fiction and Utopia*, ed. Patrick Parrinder (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), pp. 62-3.

²¹ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 200.

topia' as 'cynicism, despair' versus 'militant pessimism',²² and *Pantaletta* certainly expresses more cynicism than pessimism.

In the beginning, Gullible's descriptions read like most other *terra cava* narratives: 'I alighted upon a stretch of country where I could discover no human habitation for miles in every direction – a spot which rivalled the garden of our first parents in beauty' (p. 27). There is no internal sun, but 'a mellow, subdued light that was like the bloom upon a ripened peach: a dreamy and poetic illumination' (p. 28). This proverbial Garden is lush, fruitful, invigorating; the deviation begins with the arrival of the natives, 'beardless, short of stature... a marvellous resemblance to the Assyrian eunuchs' (p. 29); they are not the specimens of uniform beauty typically found, nor are they impressed by Gullible's declaration of bring a U.S. citizen. At one point he even goes so far as to raise the American flag in Petticotia, which, to his mind, signifies the 'formal possession of the territory', based upon the supposition that the native inhabitants have embraced 'wholesale lunacy' and must be 'honestly cared for by [white Americans] as is [the] noble red man on the remnant of his native land' (p. 58). This scene of futile imperialism must be interpreted with the same sense of irony as the rest of the narrative, indicating the author's anti-imperialist sentiments.

Gullible is captured by Captain Pantaletta, who led the emancipation of women – but lost the title of president, to her consternation (p. 34) – a woman with a 'face...so ugly it seemed fresh from hades' (p. 51). In the suffrage movement in the last nineteenth century, a variety of disparaging charges were levelled against the women who participated. Pantaletta is prone to multi-page soliloquies that combine a history of Petticotia with ego and madness, and bears the title 'the high she-dragon of the Imperial Order of Crowing Hens' (p. 107) – a designation as likely to induce a chuckle today as it did over a century ago, a send-up of the 'New Woman'.

Pantaletta's chief rival is the President of Petticotia, Lillibel Razmora (surely meant to be interpreted as 'Libel'), who also carries the extravagant titles of 'Shah of Sheheland', 'Defender of the Shehes', and 'Mighty Battle-Maid' (p. 62). The President, in love with

²² Moylan, "Look in the dark", p. 65.

Gullible, removes him to the Presidential residence, and comes to him ‘dressed in all a woman’s splendor’ (p. 81), and Gullible welcomes her as a lady. In all the instances of other *terra cava* narratives where the external male protagonist woos a woman of power, now a woman of power woos the external man, calling Gullible ‘handsome...like an angel from another world’ (p. 89). Lillibel desires him for a consort because he is not like ‘the degenerate puppies of Petticotia’, but ‘like the heroes of the old books’ (p. 90). This constant desire for Gullible, and smouldering distaste on the part of Petticotia’s women for the country they have become, is meant to undermine the female revolution. More than their satirical portrayal for trying to play the part of men, it is these remarks by the women betraying their own movement, which the author intends to be most damning.

Much fun is had at the expense of other women in the narrative as well; law enforcement officers described as ‘stout ex-cooks and washerwomen’ (p. 60) and the judges flat-chested with ‘insignificant physiques’ that ‘might have passed for a species of second-rate old men’ (p. 61). Women’s efforts at science are also derided, Professor Dixit (Latin for ‘he/she said’) filling the role of incompetent female scientist; she wears ‘funeral broadcloth’, glasses, and has a receding hairline (p. 101). Having filed a report that erroneously identifies the American Eagle as some unknown species of bird – rather than a mechanical device – Dixit cannot retract the claim: ‘As science cannot lie, we must uphold that report’ (p. 102). Gullible tries to find an engineer in Petticotia to help him repair the ship, but ‘not one possessed such knowledge and aptitude as... required’ (p. 106). Women in these masculine professions are not just physically inadequate, but mentally inadequate.

As for the men of Petticotia, they wear ‘ridiculous, yet gaudy apparel’, care for children, gossip, ‘cast coquettish glances’, stuff themselves with ‘hip and breast pads’ and are despondent unless they are wearing ‘the height of fashion’ (p. 70). All perceived deficiencies in women, the author shifts over to the men of the realm. It is the sight of this – and not his impending execution – affront to nature which causes Gullible to weep (p. 71). These men are a warning to the men of America of what they may become if they support the women’s rights movement; the satire shows a world in black and white, and rather than

finding a way for both men and women to live together, one must take on the perceived burden of shirt-wearing.

Gullible is charged with breaking the ‘dress-laws’ (p. 39) for wearing the attire of a man, but every woman he encounters, despite trying to live up to the letter of the law, falls in love with him, ‘a perfect specimen’ (p. 52). He is sentenced to death for his audacious wearing of trousers, but bribes his way into making a public speech, which he claims was not just for his life, ‘but for science and for the discovery of the Pole’ (p. 71). Even in the midst of unremitting satire, the author occasionally recalls the reader to the Symmsian geography that made Petticotia possible. But what truly saves Gullible is his long description of the military might of the United States, raining down on Petticotia if they dare to execute him, and he is pardoned (p. 74).

Strengthening the belief that the novel was written by someone in the newspaper business, there is a long passage dedicated to Gullible’s capture as – grossly – reported by the local newspaper, the *Evening Glory*, calling it ‘An almost Superhuman Combat – A Brilliant Victory’ (p. 47). Gullible himself is described as ‘nine feet in height, at least, with hair and beard falling in red, snake-like coils, coated with a greenish slime’ (p. 48). There are frequent interludes throughout the narrative with newspaper passages related by Gullible, all hyperbolic and vitriolic in nature.

The ‘sun’ of Petticotia is referred to as the ‘*downy-iris*’ (p. 43), which turns the atmosphere ‘soft and slumberous, while earth and sky [are] filled with a haze of seven colors’ and has a narcoleptic effect upon the local population (p. 55). Far from the energising atmosphere found in *Mizora* and others, Petticotia can drain its inhabitants of energy. It is one of the few details given about the nature of the interior world, but this is more a plot device – allowing the unaffected Gullible to perform mischief while Petticotia sleeps – than scientific speculation. Gullible is still eager to return to the surface because he needs to reveal his discovery of the ‘North Pole, which is in reality a bottomless gulf’ leading to the interior of the world (p. 210); in spite of everything, fame – if not fortune – still matters to Gullible.

The first man to be given a name and acquaintanceship with Gullible is Clarence Razmora (father of President Lillibel Razmora, inverting the tradition of fathers ruling their daughters) who warns Gullible of a plot afoot, led by Pantaletta and Dixit (pp. 107-8) to murder him and remove the president. He keeps a bird called Chatterbox, 'a philosopher whose equal it would difficult to find' (p. 114), who is fond of crying 'Woman, thou art the daughter of the devil!' (p. 113). Being a bird, Chatterbox is permitted the make audacious, offensive statements about women without repercussion from woman or reader. The third 'philosopher' is Sir Archibald Dandelion, a scholar with little to say.

Clarence delivers a history of Petticotia that, like *Mizora* before it, parallels the United States; it was a land of freedom, a republic that attracted immigrants from more repressive countries for a hundred years. Then an 'unholy spell' took hold of the 'emasculated citizens' in the guise of women 'endowed with masculine minds' (pp. 127-8). The downfall of Petticotia is related not just to the advancement of women, but to a country so progressive it would accept 'every fanatical tenet, every visionary theory, every -ism of the hour' (p. 129), ridiculing contemporary utopian and social movements as nothing more than a fad. Almost the entire pretence of being a satire set in another world is dropped as Clarence's history brings up the followers of Pantaletta as 'christian and atheist, Jew and Gentile, spiritualist and materialist, orthodox and heterodox...communism and free love' (p. 131). There has been no reason before this point – besides the odd profusion of the English language – to suppose any other relation to the outside world. This is not Petticotia the author is talking about; it is most certainly the United States. One striking divergence from ecumenical practice is that Churches of Petticotia teach that the first sin was not Eve eating the apple, but man yielding his judgement to woman (p. 137). The consequences of female rule and male degradation is stagnation of the industrial arts (p. 163), the collapse of public buildings designed and built by women (p. 169), men who 'devoted themselves to lives of voluptuous ease and fashion' (p. 171), and women who 'have inherited with the pantaloons all the vices and wickedness of men' (p. 176). For three chapters Clarence recounts the history of Petticotia's turn to female dominance; this is what the author was building

towards, not the conclusion, but this history of a country's downfall following the elevation of women to equal station with men under the law.

Gullible and his philosopher friends compose an ultimatum for the women of Petticotia: restore men to their proper place in society, or every man in the country will defect to the United States (p. 218). His plan to profit from his trip to the interior is in the manufacture of more American Eagle flying machines and bringing them to Petticotia, netting 'four or five hundred million dollars' (p. 219). He finally manages to effect his escape by substituting another man for himself. His closing lines to readers, in a manuscript to be delivered to the U.S., pleads 'may the day never dawn when amateur world-builders, or vainglorious demagogues, shall, out of thy matchless civilization, shape abortions like the shehes and heshes of Sheland!' (p. 239).

There is no contemporary criticism of *Pantaletta* to be found anywhere; even Bleiler says nothing more than 'A competent satire',²³ but that is higher praise than he gives many of the others. Possibly due to a lack of authorial interest, or a lack of reader interest, *Pantaletta* never found its way into any further editions.

I.iii – *Nequa*, the Pursuit of Equality for All

Published under the pseudonym Jack Adams (but copyrighted under the names Alcanoan A. Grigsby and Mary P. Lowe), *Nequa, or, The Problem of the Ages* was printed in Topeka, Kansas in 1900. Though fairly typical of other *terra cava* narratives concerned with exploration, spiritualism, and utopianism, there are a few unique features, not the least of which is a female narrator.

Deciphering the title and its meaning takes a little investigating. 'Nequa' is a feminised Latin form of 'nequis', or, nobody. Who this female nobody turns out to be is the author, Jack Adams, or, Cassie VanNess as s/he was born. (Cassie disguised herself as 'Jack Adams' in order to sail the world in search of a former lover, 'Adams' being another addition to the 'First Man' characters seen in *Symzonia* and *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*.) There two interesting paratextual statements, though, that spins the

²³ Bleiler, *Science Fiction*, p. 828.

question of authorship into further Gordian knots. First is the Dedication: ‘To all lovers of humanity, wherever found who believe that the application of the Golden Rule in human affairs would remove all the burdens that ignorance and greed have imposed upon the masses of mankind, this volume is respectfully dedicated by The Author’ (p. iii). But who is ‘The Author’? Is this from the true author, or another piece of characterisation? There is then the Explanatory, with this mysterious message:

The undersigned [Jack Adams] claims no credit for the concept of an “inner World” in which the great economic problems which now confront the people had been solved in the interest of humanity and ideal conditions established for all. This was the leading thought in a work by Dr. T.A.H. Lowe, deceased, which was placed in the hands of the writer by his widow, Mrs. Mary P. Lowe. It contains a glowing description of the ideal conditions which would prevail under the practical application of the principles of Freedom, Equity and Fraternity in human affairs but the author died before he had an opportunity to work out a practical system by which the masses of the people, situated as they now are, without even a clear understanding as to just what is the matter, could commence with existing conditions, and peacefully, effectually and speedily establish the much to be desired system of absolute justice in distribution which he described.²⁴

So, is ‘Jack Adams’ not the author, but a Dr. Lowe? And is Mary P. Lowe, then, who is credited in the copyright, a real person or a character figment, further blending the boundaries of reality and fiction? At present, Mark Esping, an independent scholar in Kansas, is trying to trace the history of *Nequa*, and believes that Dr T.A.H. Lowe – not Grigsby – is the author. Lowe, however, died four years before the novel was published, so Grigsby may have edited the novel in the meantime. One interesting fact about Lowe that Esping has uncovered – and perhaps lends some evidence to his authorship – is that Lowe attended the Eclectic Medical School in Cincinnati, Ohio and very likely came into contact with John Uri Lloyd.²⁵ (Esping picks up on the fact that Lloyd and Cyrus Teed also wrote

²⁴ Jack Adams [pseudo. Alcanon Grigsby], *Nequa, or, The Problem of the Ages* (Equity Publishing Company: Topeka, Kansas, 1900), p. vi. All other references cited in text for this edition.

²⁵ Mark Esping, ‘Tuesday, December 31, 2013’, *Nequa & Mark Esping*. <<http://markesping.blogspot.co.uk/2013/12/im-going-to-reprint-book-ive-been.html>> Accessed 18/06/2014.

hollow earth novels and were graduates of Eclectic Medical schools, and ponders what it was about this type of education that led to the writing of *terra cava* narratives.²⁶)

It is unknown who exactly wrote the introduction (there being at least three candidates), and by expressing the ‘Inner World’ as a ‘concept’, is this then a tacit acknowledgement that the hollow earth is a fiction, convenient for establishing a perfect society? Certainly the reader is led to expect the outline of an ‘ideal’ civilisation in the narrative to follow, and one that would be applicable to the contemporary world. *Nequa*’s framing raises more questions about authorship and authenticity than it answers. After ‘THE END’ on page 387 there is a notice:

EQUITY is a weekly paper devoted to the discussion of fundamental economics and the higher ethics of business, published at Topeka, Kansas.
NEQUA, the first volume of Equity Library series will be furnished at fifty cents in paper covers; one dollar in cloth; a liberal discount to the trade. Jack Adams, the author, will be a contributor to Equity and will answer correspondence addressed to the care of

EDITOR EQUITY,
Topeka, Kansas.

The pretence of Jack Adams being a real individual is carried on. Success seems to have eluded both ‘Jack Adams’ and Alcanoan Grigsby as there is no record of any further publications under either name, and nothing else to be found under ‘Equity Series’.

The first chapter does not begin from the perspective of Jack Adams, but a Dr Tomas H. Day (a change in surname, but perhaps a stand in for the Dr T.A.H. Lowe of the Explanatory) in Kansas City who receives a visitor, Leo Vincennes, bearing a message and manuscript from Jack Adams, a mutual acquaintance of them both. Vincennes tells Day that he encountered Jack at Cape Lisburne in Alaska, where Jack arrives in ‘a mechanical contrivance for navigating the air’ (p. 8). Jack proceeds to tell his old friend Vincennes about his travels ‘past the great ice barriers, and his discovery of a World of Truth beyond’ (p. 13) before presenting Vincennes with the manuscript to be taken to Dr. Day for publication, to be ‘broadcast over the world’ (p. 13). The theological theme is apparent from the beginning

²⁶ Mark Esping, ‘Wednesday, January 29, 2014’, *Nequa & Mark Esping*.
<<http://markesping.blogspot.co.uk/2014/01/the-eclectic-medical-institute-which-dr.html>> Accessed 18/06/2014.

in Vincennes's happenstance meeting with Jack, the latter paraphrasing Hamlet when he says 'if the Kingdom of Heaven can be established in us, there evidently is more in this mundane sphere than has ever been dreamed of in our philosophy' (p. 10). This reference to the establishment of heaven within is indicative of the Christian Science philosophies that are to follow. The letter Jack includes states, "In the name of civilization I ask that whoever may find this package shall place it in the hands of those who will publish the MS. Contained therein and have it scattered broadcast over the world, so that the discoveries recorded shall not be lost to humanity. Nequa" (p. 14). This is the same sort of appeal seen in many other *terra cava* frames, the record of exploration that needs to be heard by the entire world, not for any profit, but for purely philanthropic motives. Appearances of altruism are more likely to win the reader's trust, and their reception of a utopian message. It is the latter that is so often couched in the hollow earth novel, providing a theoretical landscape for a theoretical social structure.

Day also addresses the reader directly at the end of the chapter: 'And now, dear reader, I shall give you the contents of this remarkable manuscript, from the pen of my sailor comrade of years ago, Jack Adams, but known in his new home as Nequa, the teacher. Ponder well the lessons taught in these wonderful discoveries' (p. 15). Once more the reader is being urged to treat the tale as one of moral and intellectual instruction, from a 'Teacher'. Jack's identity as a female is also not revealed at this point by Day, so, I will continue to refer to 'Jack' in the masculine. As a narrator, Jack is presumed to be reliable via the personal details provided, the demonstration of education, intelligence and morality. The narrative itself is more dialectic than diegetic; Jack does not summarise events for the readers so much as analysing them via long chapters of dialogue and debate. The whole of chapter XII (38 pages) is a lecture on the historical, moral, economic, and spiritual development of Altruria into a utopia, a place that has finally solved 'the problem of the ages': poverty.

'Altruria' is an interesting choice of name for this particular utopia, as the American author William Dean Howells wrote the utopian story *A Traveler from Altruria*, published

serially in *The Cosmopolitan* from November 1892 to October 1893, well within the time frame to have influenced Lowe and/or Grigsby in writing *Nequa*. Howells was responding to the excesses of the Gilded Age by creating a utopia that has abolished money, ended the exploitation of labourers, and emphasises craftsmanship over cheap products. A utopian commune in California called Altruria was established in October 1894 by a Unitarian minister and several followers, but for financial reasons collapsed within two years. In calling the country inside the earth Altruria, it is as if the author is giving the community a second chance to thrive, proving the viability of the idea.

Chapter two is when we finally alight onto Jack Adams's voice, and will stay here for the rest of the narrative. There is no closing frame from Jack, Vincennes, Day, or 'Author' (whoever that may be). Jack's identity as a woman is subtly revealed three pages into his narrative: 'For the first time in years I had donned the habiliments of a woman. In masculine attire I had travelled without being discovered' (p. 18). Jack's secret identity is only a subplot, however, that occasionally rises to the reader's attention. The purpose of casting the narrator as a woman plays into the feminist themes of the novel. This is only a temporary condition, however, as Jack soon learns of a vessel, the Ice King, sailing for the Arctic under the command of Captain Raphael Ganoe, and she once more takes up her masculine identity. Jack's second life is only a subplot that occasionally rises to the reader's attention; her identity as a woman, living as a man, gives Jack the ability to speak to the social and spiritual roles women were seen to traditionally fill, while competently discussing science and politics like a man. 'Jack Adams' is really Cassie VanNess, who took to the seas fifteen years ago in search of her former fiancé, Raphael Ganoe, the same man who just happens to be leading the expedition to the North Pole. Upon finding him, though, Jack/Cassie does not reveal herself because Ganoe is still very bitter towards the memory of his former fiancé, who married his uncle, but only out of trickery on the part of the latter. This dichotomous existence for Jack is played out until the very end of the novel, so that her dual role of providing perspective for both male and female readers is maintained.

Jack's role on the expedition is that of science librarian and keeper of the scientific instruments. This role is all the more significant because Jack is a woman, and the role of women in the sciences was very limited in 1900, but growing through the development of women's colleges and coeducational university in the latter half of the nineteenth century. By putting Jack in a scientific role, it serves the dual purpose of giving us a scientifically fluent narrator and a woman whose mind is more than up to the task. Science and the spirit are synthesised in the creation of Altruria's utopia, just as they are in *Mizora* and *The Goddess of Atvatabar*.

As is common with so many of these tales of exploration, the geographic details are laid out for the reader to follow, tracing the lines of latitude and longitude into the unknown sections of contemporary maps; 'Our course, after passing through the [Behring] strait, was a little east of north to avoid the ice, until we reached longitude 165 degrees West of Greenwich, and then north' (p. 26). The reader is within the real world until passing that mark of *terra incognita* and the imagination of the author takes over. As has been so many times before, there is the oscillation of the compass (p. 98) which finally settles from due north to due south (p. 99), the subtle evidence of crossing the verge from the outer world to the inner. The science library provides the answer with a magazine article on the

"THEORE OF CONCENTRIC SPHERES"

by Captain John Cleves Symmes. "According to this theory" says the reviewer, "the earth is a hollow globe open at the poles. The diameter of the northern opening, is about 2,000 miles, or 4,000 miles from outside to outside. The south opening is somewhat larger. The planes of these openings are parallel with each other, and form an angle of twelve degrees with the equator. The shell of the earth is about 1,000 miles thick, and the edges of the shell at the openings are called verges, and the measure from the regular convexity without to the regular concavity within, about 1,500 miles." (p. 100)

Such an article does not actually exist as quoted; this is Adams's invention. It is a neat summary for readers who might have missed the occasional whisper of Symmes in the preceding century. Ganoe's remarks that "It now begins to look as if this theory had been rejected by scientists with the same unreasoning haste that every other new idea has encountered" (p. 101), giving an explanation for any absence of common knowledge about the theory. They continue to debate the Theory of Concentric spheres for several more

pages, providing more ‘evidence’ for readers drawn from other writing by or about Symmes, establishing the plausible geography of the narrative, but it is never mentioned again from this point. Symmes is not a co-star in the novel, but merely has a cameo for veracity. This use of him as a scientific authority is counter to Symmes’s experience in his own life time, when his *lack* of scientific authority distinguished him from the existing body of scientists. For *Nequa* a hollow, habitable earth is secondary to the existence of a utopia within the earth, a presumed ‘fact’ meant to give credence to fiction.

The word ‘fact’ is bandied about a great deal throughout the narrative. Binding facts and science to a tale of hollow worlds and utopic existence gives the latter some of the weight of truth bestowed in the former. When Jack mentions that the discovery of a hollow earth ‘will force scientists to abandon the wonderful history of creation’, Captain Battell states that

Every fact they have discovered will continue to be fact. We are here on this expedition to discover facts of scientific importance, and it now looks as if we are making a most wonderful discovery that will force scientists to abandon some of their long cherished opinions and revise others. If we find that this earth is actually a hollow shell, it will be a fact, that must in the very nature of things be harmonized with ever other fact that has been, or will be discovered. Facts are facts, and while they may not be understood, they cannot be set aside. It was to discover facts that might benefit the entire human race by increasing their knowledge that I sacrificed a whaling business that was paying handsome profits... I certainly did not join the expedition in order to either confirm or disprove, and of the theories which scientists have given to the world (pp. 105-6)

This is certainly a very conservative scientific view to make, one in line with the scientific method of observation, data collection, theory and fact. It is also, inversely, picking a fight with existing theory of the world and those who have rejected Symmes’s theory. Battell is also distancing himself from any accusations of partisanship, claiming to have no inclination one way or another in how the collection of data falls out, but is there merely to collect the data. The accumulation and dissemination of scientific information is important to the characters of both the internal and external worlds. When the Ice King is found, Jack makes an effort to show their rescuers around the science library, which impresses the visitors greatly. They also bring Jack aboard their flying vessel to show their own library of English

texts, including ‘a grammar, dictionary, small geography, a New Testament, hymn book and several introductory works on the natural sciences’ (p. 118); language, religion, and science.

When the disabled Ice King is discovered by a flying ship of women, part of the local Life Saving Service, these women attend the ill members of the crew in a most unusual fashion. Whereas the system of healing in the external world is also administered externally, the Altrurians ‘depend mainly on arousing the internal powers of mind and spirit, which alone can exercise any absolute control over the human organism’ (p. 127). This is very much in keeping with the philosophy of Christian Science, as defined by Mary Baker Eddy in her work *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, first published in 1875.

James ‘Mac’ MacNair is the go-between for the crew and Altruria, a Scottish-American sailor stranded in the inner world years before, and married to one of the natives. (And although it is never explained, they teach English in their schools, thus widening the populace with which Jack can converse.) Mac has both introduced the language and knowledge of America to Altruria, and he acclimates the crew of the Ice King from his own knowledge and experiences. He greets the Ice King, ‘How happy I am to welcome so many of my countrymen to this world of Truth, Justice and Fraternity’ (p. 120), with capital ‘T’, capital ‘J’ and capital ‘F’ that clearly inform the reader that this is utopia. Jack himself uses the word more than once to describe Altruria as such (p. 158). How this world became such a paradise is sprinkled throughout the text, a guide to reform for the outer world, but an interesting psychological theory for the spirit of cooperation is proposed: ‘the psychic conditions in a concave world, tend directly toward concentrated effort and co-operation, because the heads of the people all point toward each other and converge in a common center, while in the outer world they point outward, each in a direction of its own, tending directly toward individualism and the development of every selfish instinct’ (p. 169).

When Captain Ganoë begins to ask how the Ice King might repay the Altrurian for their rescue, Iola (Mac’s wife) claims to not understand this concept of obligation and debt. Ganoë attempts to compare this to the ‘Golden Rule’ but claims that this rule ‘is never applied to people in general, except by some cranky individual, who in popular esteem, is

regarded as a fit subject for a lunatic asylum' (p. 124). This is a rather bitter comment upon the state of altruism and philanthropy in the US. Iola chides him for this, claiming that the whole of their civilisation is based upon the application of this law for universal happiness, and that these principles are no different from those that she has seen in the New Testament and the teachings of Jesus (p. 125). The religion and philosophy of the Altrurians is often paralleled with external examples in order to orientate the reader to the author's meaning, going so far as to name the saviour of Altruria 'Krystus' (i.e. Christ). Humanity in the outer world (i.e. the reader) is criticised for not living up to the potential of Jesus, and not absorbing the lessons of the New Testament, which are referred to as 'allegories which were intended to teach a wonderful truth' (p. 132). Christian Science principles are further applied in this instructive dialogue with the crew of the Ice King:

Yes, this is a heaven provided you have heaven in you, the only place where you will ever find it. And this God-like character whom you call a Savior, is also in you, as it is in every other human being, just as soon as you permit it to be developed. This spark of Divinity – this Son of God – is latent in the human soul, and its efforts to make itself felt, is the source of every noble, pure and holy impulse to elevate our common humanity. Give the God that is in you a chance to develop, and you will become like unto Jesus, a 'God manifest in the flesh.' (p. 133)

In other words, become like God to save yourself and your race. The idea of the inner divine spark stretches back to the founding of the Quakers, and is key to Christian Science theology.

Like several other portrayals in *terra cava* literature, the atmosphere of this interior world 'is highly stimulating' (p. 139). But instead of making the characters feel alert and energised, in this case it leads to illness among the crew, because this excess of energy must be expelled via mental or physical exercise. Mental calisthenics, however, is the body's best defence, because 'if the active mind is trained to exercise its power to preserve the health of the body, there is no danger from disease' (p. 140). The founding principle of Christian Science is the denial of all materialism and that the physical body is entirely controlled by the mind and spirit; therefore, any deficiency of the body can be cured with the mind. Despite this being a world practising Christian Science, medical technology has also progressed, including 'electromagnetic optical instruments' that allow doctors to see into

their patients (p. 142). Electricity and magnetism are the solution to all technological needs in Altruria. Even the telephone has made its way into Altruria, though it occupies large rooms, and functions as a mirrored-projection so that speakers can actually see each other (p. 154), employing the same logic as that optical instruments used to see into the human body.

These mind powers allow the Altrurians to see through Jack's disguise instantly, though they do not expose her, and Jack eventually tells the sad history of 'Cassie Van Ness' to her Altrurian friend and guide, Oqua. In the inner world, God and the heart dictate marriage, not a priest or the law, negating the marriage 'Cassie' had with her guardian, Richard Sage, which took place under false pretences. When Oqua encourages Jack to reveal this history to Captain Ganoe, Jack responds that it is impossible because 'in him all the prejudices of the popular education of the outer world, its laws, usages and religious notions have crystallized' (p. 204). To reveal herself to him would be to lose him forever. The hypocrisies of outer civilisation are expounded upon, how Ganoe respects Jack's scientific achievements, but he could never respect Cassie Van Ness for the same. Without money and without male protection or family, Jack's only way of earning money in the world, and possibly finding her lost love, is to dress as a man. Oqua questions how Ganoe cannot recognise that Jack acted out of love, but as Jack explains,

You cannot, my dear Oqua, educated as you were in the most advanced thought of this altruistic civilization, realize the almost irresistible power of prejudices when they have been incorporated into the education of a people for thousands of years. They constitute a race belief, the correctness of which the people seldom, if ever, heard questioned. When I assumed male attire and associated myself with men in the ranks of labor, I knew that I invited not only social ostracism, but laid myself liable to arrest and imprisonment, if my disguise was discovered. And Captain Ganoe as a high spirited gentleman of the old school, could not unite his destinies with such a social outcast (p. 206).

Ingrained social classism, as well as sexism, is exposed in this soliloquy, including the legal ramifications, as 34 cities at the time of writing had laws against cross-dressing.²⁷ This makes the author(s) use of a cross-dressing protagonist to criticise contemporary culture even more profound. Not just American law, but the whole of Western culture, is under the

²⁷ Clare Sears, 'Electric Brilliancy: Cross-Dressing Law and Freak Show Displays in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco', *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* (Vol. 36, Nos. 3 & 4, 2008), p. 170.

microscope for its inherent repression of women. Oqua tried to encourage Jack to believe that the influence of 'truth' in Altruria will help to change Ganoë's perceptions and prejudices with time (which does not turn out to be the case). While providing the female perspective of marriage under false pretences, another (male) member of the crew, Huston, reveals that he also married under fraudulent circumstances a girl he'd never met, whose letters turned out to be written not by her, but by her ward, so the night after the wedding, Huston ran away to sea (p. 327). In accordance with Altrurian law, a marriage by fraud is no marriage at all, and Huston's desire to marry one of the internals is frustrated by Captain Ganoë, who knows of Huston's previous marriage, and no matter the circumstances, should stand according to US law. The Altrurians rule against Ganoë, stating that Huston was unknowingly married to 'an imbecile' who 'had no right to be married' and that he 'could not love and respect' the woman as a wife (p. 334). Jack reprimands Ganoë for his placing of human laws above 'the laws of God, which are implanted in the soul' (p. 336). Relating his own position as a woman forced into disguise and impoverished by fleeing a fraudulent marriage, Jack declares that 'when women are economically free, they will be able to select companions who will not trample love under the heel of antiquated wrong' (p. 336).

Economic independence was a rallying cry of early feminists in the nineteenth century.

Feminism is innately tied up into the establishment of this utopia, though many of the comments and perceptions can in themselves appear sexist. When asked why women take on the job of patrolling the oceans and skies for people in danger, the answer is that

the women of the outer world take the lead in all humanitarian work, because they are naturally more sensitive and sympathetic than men. The women of this inner world are even more inclined to extend a helping hand to the distressed, and they are not handicapped by usages which restrict the influence of the woman of the outer world. Here, both sexes are placed upon terms of absolute equality, and every individual has an opportunity to find the place that is best suited to his or her inclinations (p. 128).

So men and women are absolutely equal, and yet there is a natural inclination in women, more than men, to help others, according to the author(s). This is, however, not a unique aspect to *Nequa*, but one that has been seen in several other *terra cava* works, as the tempering influence of women seems to be the key to domestic paradise. In Altruria there

are no military institutions because ‘woman secured her true position in the world [and] she put an end to war by removing the vicious commercial, financial and governmental systems that enabled one class of people to oppress another’ (p. 129). The elevation of women in Spiritualist practice (as seen in chapter three) and the founding of Christian Science by a woman represent the fin de siècle perception of women as ‘more sensitive and sympathetic’, echoed in these *terra cava* narratives whose speculative nature allowed for fantastic portrayals of female characters.

In Altruria, this end to violence and equalising of the classes in society is attributed to ‘Mother-Love’, which is referred to in ecclesiastical terms as completing ‘the work of human redemption’ (p. 130). Mother-love has already played a large part in the development of Mizoran society, ‘the love that keeps the world in order.’²⁸ This ‘mother love’ extends back to gestational development, where communal homes are established to provide environments ‘calculated to produce the best possible pre-natal influences upon the unborn child’ (p. 218). The best is always provided for a prospective mother; as Oqua describes it, ‘in Altruria we commence the education of children before they are born’ (p. 284). This reflects the late-nineteenth century views of pre-natal development espoused in newspapers and journals, encouraging certain diets and exercise for pregnant women:

Some diseases are peculiar to degenerated families and races, and to pre-natal causes... If the child of a degenerated parentage escape the perils of birth and early infancy, they feel in after life the effect of degenerated or vitiated blood. Lack of proper food, or food that can not be converted into nutritious blood, either pre-natal or post-natal, is a leading cause of degeneration.²⁹

Evolution and the idea of ‘degeneration’ play a significant part in fin de siècle culture. Rampant disease and malnutrition in rapidly growing urban areas led to fears of ‘racial degeneration’, and attention to health and development became a new focus for social reformers.³⁰

²⁸ ‘The Greatest Love’, *The Day Book* (Chicago, IL), 11 May 1912, p. 13.

²⁹ ‘Causes of Disease’, *Iron County Register* (Ironton, MO), 13 November 1884, p. 3.

³⁰ For examples of concern about urban degeneration in the fin de siècle see James Cantlie’s *Degeneration Amongst Londoners* (1885) and Seebohm Rowntree’s *Poverty: A Study of Town Life* (1901).

Some of these themes come into play in *Nequa* much as they do in other utopian *terra cava* novels, especially as it relates to easing the social and environmental strain of modern American cities. From the skies, Jack notes

The most singular feature which attracted our attention, was, that notwithstanding all the evidences of a highly cultivated country and the most active traffic between the different sections, we nowhere discovered any indications of great cities; and while what appeared to be extensive manufacturing establishments existed in numerous localities, and the harbours along the shore lines were filled with shipping, nowhere did we see vast clouds of smoke such as vitiate the atmosphere in the large cities and manufacturing districts of the outer world. (p. 145)

As in so many other texts, Altruria has cured itself of the problem of mass manufacture and industrialisation accompanied by pollution. The squalid conditions of the urban slum have been eradicated by sensible urban planning, equal housing rights, and clean technology.

People are housed in large buildings, measuring a dozen stories tall, with wings hundreds of feet long, occupying spacious flats, and taking meals communally. Rooms are even upholstered to keep out sound (p. 153) and spacious enough that even with two thousand people living within this city-building, Jack notes that there is no overcrowding (p. 156), and there is room left over for offices, schools, libraries and museums, as well as the communal laundries and dining halls, where the communal meals do not include meat. Once again, vegetarianism is the rule for an inner utopia; chickens are only kept for eggs, cows for milk, and sheep for their fleece (p. 159).

The benefit of having a utopian society still seems to be demonstrated in the riches of a more material nature, however. Upon first encountering a flying ship full of natives, Jack goes into great detail about their appearance:

They wore soft felt hats, slightly turned up at the side, with broad silver bands... They wore embroidered slippers, with silk stockings, and pants that fastened just below the knee, attached to a loose waist with a short skirt. Around the waist was a broad silken girdle, fastened in front by a silver buckle... Their necks were bare but encircled by a golden chain to which was attached what seemed to be diamond set locketts, and at their girdles they wore watches of magnificent workmanship (p. 116).

Gold, silver, diamonds, silk; all the trappings of riches sought by the nations of the exterior world, all images of wealth traditionally seen in the lost races of *terra cava* narratives. This display of uniformity in rich dress also impresses upon the reader the power of these people,

just as much as their flying ship. Most importantly of all, these are *women*. As much as their action/adventure position is unique, no male is ever described as being so bedecked in fine raiment. Without divine or imperial leaders to bejewel, the female of the race becomes the mannequin on which to display wealth, even when this wealth has no intrinsic value or function.

The uniformity of these planned city-buildings and their districts are purely a function of utility, ascetics, and landscaping, but only up to the point of not infringing on usefulness (p. 164). At the same time, it is emphasised that people are permitted to individualise their dwellings, and if they do not feel like living communally, they have the option of residing independently: ‘The rule here is freedom’ (p. 165). Though people have the ability to live alone, most choose not to, preferring their communal lifestyle. However, these communities never grow into large urban cities, either. This is the same form of living the real world Altrurian community (and other utopian-based societies) employed, navigating the boundaries of the rural and urban.

Labour and the products of that labour are distributed in a communistic system: ‘No matter where the labor is applied, the product is added to the world’s supply and it does not signify where its equivalent is consumed. The evidences of useful service rendered to society... entitle the holder to food, shelter and raiment in any other part of the world’ (p. 152). Even the most trying of labour, however, is nowhere as arduous in Altruria as it is in the outer world. Two hours is all it takes to harvest a 30-mile strip of grain (p. 164) using machines that take it from the field to the storehouse to the mills without human tedium.

The agricultural regions, typically rural in the US and portrayed as existing on the fringes of society, are described as having ‘magnificent’ buildings and boulevards, connected by horseless carriages (powered by electricity) and filled with ‘parks, shaded driveways, miniature rivers, artificial lakes, fountains, ornamental gardens and orchards’ (p. 147). Fortunately for these people, they have discovered ‘that it takes very little physical labor to provide an abundance of every article of necessity, comfort and luxury’ (p. 148) so that they are free to enjoy the luxuries every day. Removing the need for human drudgery

and manual labour has been a goal of every utopia in the inner world, and nearly universally achieved via the application of science and technology, freeing people to fulfil other pursuits of a spiritual or artistic nature.

The consumption of these products is regulated not just by hours of labour put into useful work, but by the altruistic philosophies of the populace: 'We produce what we consume, and consume what we produce, without paying tribute to anyone else for the privilege of exercising these natural rights, as the people in the outer world are forced to do' (p. 232). No one consumes more than is necessary, and the nature of the environment – the supercharged atmosphere that sickened the prone sailors for lack of exertion – compels individuals to expend themselves for at least a little while every day in mental or physical tasks to maintain their health. Altruria is a world created to induce activity, and to weed out the lazy.

Education is another universal feature of the *terra cava* utopia. Even in the agricultural district where Jack arrives, everyone is 'trained in the mechanical arts and general business methods' (p. 157). The city-buildings are equipped with sound systems that pipe lectures to individual homes should anyone be interested in the subject, and even publishing houses to print the intellectual products of the inhabitants. Education is perceived as a lifelong pursuit, starting with children who are taught that 'that most important service they could render to themselves and to society was to educate themselves, physically, mentally and morally', and to this end, 'all facilities for improvement, books, papers, scientific instruments and instruction were...free' (p. 157). Attendance at school is considered the same as performing useful labour for society. As Oqua tells Jack, 'the blessings of a high state of civilization can only be preserved by educating the children of a country into a comprehensive understanding of the laws of progress by which these blessings are secured' (p. 210). The children of Altruria are capable of comprehending the machinery of civilisation better than the statesmen of the outer world, who are still struggling with the basics of food and housing. The elasticity of the mind of children is noted, and how it is imperative to start 'the child rightly, with correct habits of thought on

these vital matters, upon which its future weal, and that of every other human being depends' (p. 211).

Economics is a large part of the utopian interrogation of Altruria that fills the pages of *Nequa*, how Altruria moved from a profit-based economy to harmonious communism, via the establishment of 'Equity' (299) – an obvious reference to the name of the publishing house, and the attempt to establish a weekly paper devoted to the discussion of economics and ethics. 'Equitable exchange' moves products directly from producers to consumers, removing the middleman who benefits from the buying and selling of goods. To accomplish this, profits from production in a community must be pooled, and 'The profits on distribution will constitute an ample fund for socializing land and furnishing employment for a continually increasing number of people' (p. 305). An entire four-point constitution on the principles of Equity is put before readers, so that they might know how to implement it in the US (p 317-8).

To demonstrate what might happen to the US if they do not reform themselves, a field trip is taken to the abandoned city of Kroy, onetime land of the 'money kings', to 'complete the object lesson that records the victory of Equity over Greed' (p. 319). The first artefacts decried for waste is the mausoleums; 'More was often extended on a single tomb that could possibly have been earned in any useful service to society' (p. 342). Next are the ancient obelisks, imported from the 'Old World' at tremendous expense to 'compel the Past to proclaim their greatness and gratify their vanity' (p. 343). Then they pass into the ruins of a grand city, and Jack remarks that 'my heart grew faint and my head dizzy as I pondered upon the wonderful lesson spread out before me. Here had been a city, no less magnificent in its prime than New York, the great metropolis of America, and I asked myself the question, Could this ever be the fate of my native city?' (p. 344). In case the parallels have not been made clear enough for readers, Captain Battell goes on:

There ruins teach a wonderful lesson. It does seem...that human progress always leads up through similar channels of development. Here we are in what was once a city, every feature of which indicates very clearly the existence of the same conditions which now prevail in the great cities of the outer world. It had its day and passed away because it had served its purpose, and so must all great centers of pride

and fashion in which a few absorb the wealth created by the people and expend it for their own pleasure without regard for others. (p. 345)

The toppling of the proverbial bourgeoisie is marked as inevitable in *Nequa*. In the centre of this city are the banks, preserved, their vaults left standing open with piles of gold, the product of mortgages and interest, representing Altruria's discarded past. There is a double lesson in this for the reader: one, that gold is the path to ruin and holds no value in an enlightened society, and two, if they would like to get their hands on lots of unwanted gold, it is waiting in the interior world.

This use of technology to impress upon readers the superiority of the race in the interior of the world is upheld in the imagining of flying airships and electric cars for which '300 miles an hour is nothing extraordinary' (p. 135). The airships (which can be converted for use on land and sea) fly via positive magnetism repelling against the earth (as neither magnetism nor gravity were yet well understood) and are operated via electric keyboards (p. 137). No visible mechanism or machinery interferes with the sumptuous interior of these conveyances, eliminating the distasteful parts of travelling via railroad or early automobile in 1900, when noisy engines and pollution were the price of speed. The Altrurians even convert the engines of the Ice King from ones that burn to coal, to burning water utilising metallic cubes that effervesce the water into its constituent elements; 'We shall soon have steam without having vitiated the atmosphere with smoke, which in this country is regarded as a nuisance not to be tolerated' (pp. 324-5).

The immense communal houses are connected by telephone, not just within the complex, but across the world, foreshadowing the development of such communication in the real world. Batteries provide the power for the building's heat and lighting, and even manufacturing within the city-building. Beyond motor power, electricity is used to stimulate the growth of crops (p. 163) so that the fields never lay fallow.

Though the language spoken in Altruria it is not one derived from any existing on the surface (thus being able to apply Grimm's Law) it is a language of perfect reason and simplicity. Technology even plays an important role in language education, through the use

of a 'Phonographic Enunciator' (p. 160) which will pronounce the syllables for each word. Each character of the alphabet represents only a single sound. A simple dictionary of root words that make up every other word makes it easy to move onto compound words, and there are only four parts of speech: nouns, verbs, modifiers and connectives, all of this scientifically derived via 'carefully selected committees of eminent scholars, with a view to making it so easy to learn that it would become universal' (p. 160). The criticism of the complexities and absurdities of the English language is often fodder for these novels. This use of a scientifically perfected language universally accepted in the inner world is similar to Dr. Ludwig Lazarus Zamenhof's efforts to make Esperanto a global, politically neutral language at the end of the nineteenth century. The United States, though, is one country where the use of Esperanto did not take off, but certainly the idea of a logically perfected language readily learned is apparent.

The 'Library of Universal Knowledge' is described as 'the most highly finished and imposing' (p. 237) of the buildings – museums, really – demonstrating all of the accomplishments and industries of Altruria. Foreshadowing the development of tinted windows, its construction is of a 'semi-transparent material which shuts out direct rays of sun while it admitted a mellow radiance' (p. 237). This display of Altrurian knowledge focuses on the scientific, 'specimens of ores, metals, alloys and compounds of everything that goes to making a complete museum of natural history, and scientific methods in chemistry and the mechanical arts. Different stories are given to Archeology, Ethnology, Geology, Chemistry, Electricity, etc.' (pp. 237-8). Beyond the physical samples of their accomplishments are the library's books, catalogues by number, transported by pneumatic tube, all a smooth 'system' that 'moves along like clock work' (p. 238). Science and technology has turned nearly every facet of Altrurian life into clockwork.

History and progress are also described in terms of socio-political evolution. The parallels being established between Altrurian history and contemporary America are one facet of this. But when Jack and his companions visit the exhibit on Altrurian vehicular

development, including boats that resemble ‘Roman galleys and the ships of the Northmen’ (p. 293) on to sledges and ox-drawn carts, further explanation is needed:

This...only indicates that human development along every line of progress is determined by the constitution of the human mind. Knowing this, we have the key which explains all the mysteries connected with the progress of the race from lower to higher conditions. At every step it has been met by similar difficulties and hence the methods for overcoming these difficulties have been similar, because all have alike possessed the same mental constitution (p. 293).

A theory of psychological parsimony among humans; as the Altrurians call it, ‘the fundamental law of human progress’ (p. 294). Jack states that he has always ‘been deeply interested in everything pertaining to the progress of the race’ (p. 294), though does not specify if this is the human race, or just a smaller (whiter, more American) facet of it, and that the Altrurians have turned progress into ‘an exact science’ (p. 295). The conscious recognition of the human ability to progress, and therefore guide its own course of development, is a fundamental principle of Altruria, and this is a jeremiad for American readers, who must take control of the progress of the country and its populace if they want to advance rather than degenerate. While Jack laments this, he is encouraged to believe that the ‘constitution of the human mind is a guarantee of human elevation’ (p. 295). The text of *Nequa*, Jack’s action of writing this tale and endeavouring to take it back to the surface world, is part of this period of awaking to the consciousness of human evolution. (At least, according to the philosophy of the author). Specific mention is made about America being ‘ready for such an uplifting of the masses (p. 296), distinguishing them as a race separate from the rest of the world. America’s optimism and enthusiasm for progress is seen as a strong psychological force: ‘If your people earnestly desire better things for the masses and at the same time believe that better things are in store for them, your future is most hopeful, and the people cannot fail to find out how to attain the object they are seeking’ (p. 296) – *The Power of Positive Thinking*³¹ five decades early.

Eugenics once again appears in the *terra cava* narrative, this time in the last chapter of *Nequa* as Jack finally meets other inhabitants of Altruria from the Old World. He learns

³¹ Norman Vincent Peale, 1952.

that the interior world was once as racially diverse as the external, but now nearly everyone has light skin with blonde or brunette hair. Jack asks why ‘blonde...should ever become the ideal complexion among the dark races’ (p. 364). No direct scientific explanation is given (because there is not one understood by contemporaries, either, genetics being a few years away still) only the ideas of the character to which Jack is speaking: ‘My opinion... is that the influence of white missionaries created a new ideal in the minds of the people and especially in the minds of the mothers, who almost worshiped them’ (p. 365). Not religious missionaries, but economic ones, bringing material parity and freedom of knowledge to the dark races. By viewing these white missionaries as saviours, their colour became preferable, and with ‘Improved material conditions, together with scientific education, high ideals and ample time for development have produced all the changes which have been wrought out’ (p. 365). None of this, though, is really an explanation for the change in physical appearance, other than perhaps wishful thinking or the actual application of eugenic practices. Jack directly relates these individuals to ‘the people now occupying Central Africa and the South Sea Islands’ (p. 366), betraying the author’(s) and potential reader’s own contemporary prejudices. The practices of psychic powers such as ‘clairvoyance, clairaudience and telepathy’ (p. 367) are viewed as genuine sciences well understood in Altruria (which is how the first Altrurians who met the Ice King knew that Jack was a woman). These revelations of practices and beliefs derided on the surface come in the last few pages and are not well explored or explained. The author(s) seems to be bundling several fringe beliefs together, perhaps appealing to readers who have not been fully won over by the utopian or economic reforms explored, but look for acceptance of their more spiritual practices, perhaps achievable and understandable in a society like that of Altruria.

The Altrurian rejection of imperialism in their own history – and thus a teaching tale for American readers – is enmeshed in the story of the ‘Gold Powers’ who, having ‘secured universal dominion over all the nations of the earth and there being no other nations to conquer, in its inordinate greed, it continued to impose additional burdens upon the people’ (p. 276). Only through the disciples of Krystus (Christ), the ‘pioneers of a Diviner

Civilization' (p. 277) were the common people able to take control of society and its modes of production to create universal equality, via an economic system of 'DEBT-PAYING' rather than 'DEBT-CREATING' (p. 281).³² In case the parallels have been missed by the reader, Jack's own narration after the lecture clarifies:

I could not help but notice its similarity to the system which prevailed in the outer world. As he elucidated the international and seemingly unlimited power that had been exercised by the owners of gold, and how it would take all the gold in the world to pay a small fraction of the annual interest on the obligations held against the people, my heart sank within me (pp. 283-4).

Future happiness and uniformity of social position is mentioned frequently, not just to reform America, but as spreading across the globe. Mac states, 'as I understand it, influences are at work, which will ultimately compel the producing masses to come together as one family, in order to enable them to preserve any semblance of personal liberty and economic independence' (p. 165). As the Gilded Age came to a close in the US, and early labour movements were emerging, novels such as *Nequa* proselytised the end of the robber baron and the rise of the worker. A history of the workers' rise against their landlords and impoverished conditions is recounted to the visitors from the outer world (p. 166-8), a step-by-step to economic reform for readers to follow.

In creating verisimilitude between Altruria and America, there is a history of exploration and colonisation, in addition to the haphazard act of genocide. There is the same parallel of an 'old world' and a 'new world' (p. 171), and 'the almost total destruction of a warlike race of red men' (p. 172). The settlement of Altruria included the overthrow of monarchical rule and the establishment of a republic. However, in following the 'logical sequence' (p. 172) of history, the principles of Altruria have spread across the concave world. The next step in 'racial development' then, one that the author(s) is encouraging in the reading, is the 'regeneration' of the race (p. 176), as those in Altruria have been.

This comparison comes from Jack's observations of the luxurious living environment for the populace of the inner world, and contrasting it with the slums and decrepitude of New York City, and the generational impoverishment that was perceived to grip America. Large cities

³² These words are indeed capitalised in the novel.

are compared to ‘living hells’ (p. 175), responsible for the birth of ‘deaf, dumb, blind, lame, deformed [and] disfigured’ (p. 176) individuals. But here, in Altruria, where native populations of savages have been wiped out, large, rich lands have been opened to settlement, and enlightened policies have taken hold, there is evidence ‘that a physical regeneration of the race had taken place’ (p. 177).

The assignation of numbers (a precursor to Social Security or National Insurance Numbers) as an identifying marker for the populace is introduced, and Captain Ganoe is taken aback when it is revealed that the new arrivals have already been given theirs: ‘is it really necessary for us to be numbered and labelled?’ (p. 179). Numbers are conferred upon children at birth, entitling them to food, shelter, education, etc., and upon graduation they register a name with the state, making them full citizens. This is how Jack Adams gains the name ‘Nequa’ (186). As a citizen, Jack/Nequa, takes up a role as teacher, but for his own desires, ‘to gather gems of wisdom for the benefit of my own country’ (p. 186), and not simply to be a contributor to Altruria. The prospects of marriage and children are never mentioned, implying greater purpose for Jack’s life.

The *Science Fiction Encyclopedia* notes that ‘*Nequa* is a surprisingly enjoyable salutary tale’³³. Bleiler comments that while the ‘social messages overpower the narrative... the story as a whole is not as weak as in many comparable works.’ As a *terra cava* narrative, *Nequa* balances both the scientific theories of the hollow earth with a strong social and economic message aimed at readers of both genders, equalising the sexes in both political and economic power. Its intended purpose of inspiring ‘Freedom, Equality and Fraternity’ is never explicitly directed towards the suffrage movement, but it aspires to give women like Jack a purpose outside the household in the last place on earth where such a society might exist.

³³ ‘Adams, Jack’, *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, <http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/adams_jack>. Accessed 12/11/2012.

II. THE AMERICAN POLITICAL UTOPIA

What distinguishes these utopian texts from others is their application of contemporary American political thought to a utopian setting. The following *terra cava* narratives are designed as thought experiments to apply political theories to a setting that mirrors American politics. Works like *Mizora* may reference certain contemporary issues, such as the presidency of Ulysses S. Grant, but exterminating the male portion of the species was never intended to be a legitimate reform; these are experiments in the political utopia. By setting them in a hollow earth that in nearly every way resembles a perfected America, readers can empathise with the author's vision, while at the same time imagining that there is some truth to the hollow earth as well as the potential for these socio-political reforms. These utopias fall under what Jean Pfaelzer would categorise as the 'industrial-progressive', drawing on Bellamy's vision in *Looking Backward* (1888) of an America whose peace is perfected by technological development and social organisation.³⁴ There were movements afoot for the forty-hour work week, improved housing, access to clean water, and unionised work forces among other reforms, and industrialisation as part of the key to success.

II.i – *From Earth's Center; a Treatise on Tax Reform*

S. Byron Welcome's novel *From Earth's Center* (1895), subtitled 'A Polar Gateway Message', is a *terra cava* utopia set up with the found/delivered manuscript frame. Welcome was a resident of Los Angeles and opened the novel in the same city with the arrival of a messenger from inside the earth. Though one might mistake Welcome for being the 'I' in the Prologue, it is actually a character introduced later by the primary narrator, one Frank Hutchens who was meant to be on the expedition to the Arctic but dropped out at the last minute. The expedition was planned by Hutchens's close friend (and the primary narrator) Ralph Spencer, described as 'young, energetic and very ambitious', a man who 'loved America's free institutions, and gloried in the nation's liberality and prosperity'.³⁵ From the outset, this is to be a patriotic narrative of American potential. Spencer sends the proof of his

³⁴ Pfaelzer, *The Utopian Novel*, pp. 26-7.

³⁵ S. Byron Welcome, *From Earth's Center; A Polar Gateway Message* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1895), p. 5. All other references cited in text from this edition.

discovery and authenticates his manuscript via the messenger, Mr. Reubin, who claims to hail from ‘the inner world’ (p. 4), marvels at sunsets as a ‘remarkable phenomenon’ and brings with him a fortune in silver and diamonds (p. 7). Reubin takes Spencer to the airship he used to transport – or ‘smuggle’, to paraphrase Spencer (p. 8) – these goods that would normally have been subjected to a tariff to the tune of tens of thousands of dollars; but Spencer assures readers that ‘this man belonged to a nation too far advanced in the arts to be hampered by a protective tariff’ (p. 7). This barb is directly aimed at the American Custom House and the taxes they extract from created wealth, against the principles of a laissez-faire economy. Hutchens decides to publish Spencer’s unedited ‘Message’ as a book, rather than broadcasting the new of his discovery to the world, and assures the reader that he can ‘vouch for his [Spencer’s] absolute veracity’ (p. 9).

Spencer, in the company of two friends, Ricardo Flemming and Owen Redcliffe, commission and ship to go explore the Arctic in 1890 in a quest for glory and to ease their own ennui, as well as to test ‘Professor Symmes’ theory’ (p. 17), which proves quite correct when they are pulled through a Symmes Hole and into Centralia. To their great fortune, English is the native language and Christianity the only religion, both brought by a ship of English explorers in the fourteenth century (p. 30). More than anything, Centralia has perfected their technology and political systems to create an enviable utopia of perfect people in a setting that seamlessly merges the industrial and the pastoral. Nothing emphasises this point more than the gardens with their ever-blooming flowers, coated in a special varnish: ‘It is in a sense artificial, being a combined product of man’s ingenuity and nature’s bounty – a triumph in the science of cultivation’ (p. 32). While in many ways Centralia is similar to the United States, it is their economy, based upon the theories of Henry George, which allows them to surpass the former. George’s proposals, and the French Physiocrat political-economists of the eighteenth century, influence a great deal of the narrative. The Physiocrats espoused the belief that the wealth of a nation was derived from the value of its land and agriculture rather than gold and trade, which Adam Smith later countered with his *Wealth of Nations* (1776). Records reveal Welcome was active in

promoting George's ideas in and around Los Angeles; Welcome's only other written contributions seems to be newspaper articles arguing for a single tax system, *From Earth's Center* being his only foray into fiction.

The most prominent feature of Welcome's narrative is that it's hardly a narrative at all, but a treatise on the political ideology of Henry George and his proposal for a single tax system on land use. George published *Progress and Poverty: An Inquiry into the Cause of Industrial Depressions and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth: The Remedy* in 1879, attempting to explain the cyclical nature of industrial markets and the perpetuation of poverty despite technological development and the wealth created by the industrial revolution. He was particularly concerned with land values, and how land speculation increased prices faster than wage labour could compensate for, thus depressing the economy and the service of that land:

Take...some hard-headed business man, who has no theories, but knows how to make money. Say to him: "Here is a little village; in ten years it will be a great city – in ten years the railroad will have taken the place of the stage coach, the electric light of the candle; it will abound with all the machinery and improvements that so enormously multiply the effective power of labor..."

And if, under such circumstance, you take his advice, you need do nothing more. You may sit down and smoke your pipe... you may go up in a balloon, or down a hole in the ground; and without doing one stroke of work, without adding one iota to the wealth of the community, in ten years you will be rich! In the new city you may have a luxurious mansion; but among its public buildings will be an almshouse.³⁶

George's solution to this scenario is to introduce a single tax on the value of privately held land, a tax high enough to abolish all other taxes. The purpose is to force the land holders to use their property in the most productive way possible, offering jobs and creating wealth. All of George's proposals are put to the gedankenexperiment that is Welcome's novel. There are long passages about taxes and land-use, which often overpower the narrative, but the following, from a member of the inner world, reads similarly to George:

If your parents own land in America, it is evident that private ownership in land is there recognized; and where that institution exists, land rents are higher than they would be under a natural order of things; and, since rent, interest and wages must all

³⁶ Henry George, *Progress and Poverty: And Inquiry Into the Cause of Industrial Depressions and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth*, Fiftieth Anniversary Edition (New York: Robert Schalenbach Foundation, 1935), pp. 293-4.

be aid out of production, the more there is paid out in rent, the less there is left with which to pay interest and wages. So, you see, labor and capital are robbed by the landlord system in two ways; first, rents are unnaturally high; and, second, the rent proper is taken by the landlord – a drone – instead of all the people. (p. 222)

This is nearly the whole of George’s argument, distilled down into one paragraph for readers, though George himself is never given any credit. Perhaps it was meant to prevent any prejudice on the reader’s part from influencing their view of the narrative. But the very last line of the novel calls America ‘the land of “progress and poverty!”’ (p. 274), reinforcing George’s thesis.

Nearly every character in the novel has their name taken from a historical or contemporary figure. The purpose of these borrowings is to highlight the potential of economic speculations; rather than providing an index or post-script, Welcome builds his list of sources and information into the characters. Ralph Spencer’s own name is likely taken from the British polymath Herbert Spencer, who famously said of government, ‘the interference of man in external nature often destroys the just balance, and produces greater evils than those to be remedied, so the attempt to regulate all the actions of a community by legislation, will entail little else but misery and confusion.’³⁷ Spencer almost mentions that his ‘twice-removed grandfather...was a great student of political economy’ (p. 18), Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot (1727-1781) one of the prominent Physiocrats of the age. Spencer’s friend Ricardo Fleming derives his name from the British economist David Ricardo (1772-1823). The third American, Owen Redcliffe, described by Spencer as ‘a philosopher’ (p. 13) may have derived his name from the Welsh social reformer and utopianist Robert Owen. The great Centralian economist that formed the basis of their society, Quesney, was inspired by the Physiocrat François Quesnay (1694-1774). Spencer’s love interest, Celia Lathrop, may have been inspired by American social reformer Julia Lathrop (1858-1932), who worked at Hull House in Chicago in the 1890s and was the first secretary of the US Children’s Bureau. The Centralian father of ‘Universal Evolution’, Decanto (p. 86), is an obvious parallel to Darwin. A Centralian inventor, ‘Rufus Gilchrist’, introduced direct coal-

³⁷ Herbert Spencer, *The Proper Sphere of Government: A Reprint of a Series of Letters, Originally Published in “The Nonconformist”* (London: W. Brittain, 1843), p. 5.

to-electricity that removed the steam engine process (p. 98), and his name possibly derived from the British Gilchrist cousins, who developed a method to remove phosphorous from iron for the manufacture of steel.

Like many other *terra cava* utopias, this one is populated by teetotallers; ‘Everybody is well-dressed, sober, and industrious; and each person you meet presents a prosperous, intelligent appearance’ (p. 31); tobacco and alcohol are dismissed as ‘false stimulants’ (p. 41) and not to be found among the Centralians, alcohol referred to as ‘the juice of half-rotten grapes or corn’ (p. 229). Spencer, his companions and the ship’s crew, meanwhile, are referred to as ‘savages’, and accept the good-humoured jesting had at their expense. Overall, Spencer believes they are fortunate to arrive ‘among a people with seemingly few faults and many virtues’, and that Centralia is ‘almost Utopian’ (p. 40):

The whole affair was sparkling – the music inspiring – the costumes magnificent, without being gaudy. The grandeur, wealth, pride and beauty of the city were here. Nor was this all. Everybody was here – the highest and the lowest (measured by the American scale of social distinction) the workingman, the artisan, the mechanic, the merchant, the lawyer, the doctor – “the butcher, the baker, the candle-stick maker” – everybody, without respect to condition – all equal – all enjoying the privileges and pleasures, that under a less perfect system of economic government would be restricted to a chosen few! This was indeed the acme of civilization – civilization in the highest sense – the civilization which was aimed at in framing our Constitutions – the civilization which insures all honest men, whatever their station may be, those great fundamental rights, “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” (pp. 55-6)

This hyperbolic language, emphasising the perfection of Centralia and aspirations of the United States, is repeated often throughout the novel, with each new revelation of Centralia being another opportunity for literary ecstasy on Spencer’s part.

Centralia is more familiar with America than most other *terra cava* societies. Beyond the fourteenth century mariners who brought English and Jesus to Centralia, there was also a ship that brought with a copy of the U.S. Constitution (this is explained in a footnote, presumably from Spencer editing his own manuscript) which became a ‘guide’ for the Centralians; news of this sends Spencer’s ‘irrepressible patriotism’ into a fever pitch (p. 51). Though some American practices – such as drinking and smoking – are not favoured in Centralia, all other things American are, especially its political freedoms. Centralia is, for Welcome and his readers, an example of how much further the United States might progress

if they only agreed to adopt Henry George's politics and economics. But the point of the novel is not to disparage the author's country as irredeemable; it is still the best in the world, with room for further improvements: 'Spectators cheers from the galleries for "free America!" and we were gratified to know that here, in this remote country, where the love of freedom and free institutions is so deep, the name of America is associated with freedom' (p. 109). America possesses, 'all the natural gifts and advantages that exist' in Centralia, and yet are economically unequal; Spencer attributes morality among the Centralians, more than anything, to this superiority (p. 73). Only over time will he come accept that Centralia's success stems from its practice of Georgian economics; 'it is easier to make an honest living here [Centralia] than it is to steal a living in America' (p. 79).

Everyone who came with Spencer from the surface is free to seek their fortunes in this new world however they please, and all to rich reward. There is no interference into wages or the workplace, and all public services are performed on a contractual basis with private enterprises, renewed annually based upon cost effectiveness and performance. No governing body may interfere with what 'the individual or private company can perform' (p. 114). Though the nation be called Centralia, there is no central government (p. 111). Its American-sounding name (there is actually a Centralia in both Pennsylvania and Missouri) brings the narrative closer to familiarity for the intended reader. Taxation – according to both the Centralians and Henry George – is 'legitimate robbery' (p. 88). There are no patent rights because the restriction of the use of innovation to a single individual is seen as 'the rankest kind of monopoly' (p. 101). The functions of Centralia – be they business, transportation, education, etc. – are relegated to 'the survival of the best fitted' (p. 136), a phrase first used by Herbert Spencer to equate evolution with economics. Perpetual comparison between the United States and Centralia are made, from fashion statements to socio-political practice, the reader is never allowed to forget the narrator's point of origin and the country's deficiencies in the face of Centralia's perfection, a realisation of what America could be.

Concomitant with its other utopian aspects, Centralia is populated by physically distinguished people, the ladies being ‘beautiful, dignified and queenly’ (p. 42). These women are the equal of their male counterparts, moving about the public sphere and the workplace with as much competence and freedom as men. Spencer admires them for their ‘frankness and independence’, that women’s characters embrace ‘self-reliance and firmness’ (p. 56). This of course results in love affairs for Spencer and his companions, adding a romantic dimension to the narrative that is actually missing from many of these utopian *terra cava*s. Love affairs in other narratives have resulted in power, prestige and wealth for the men, but Spencer’s relationship with Celia Lathrop is an end unto itself. Her pursuit of a law degree meets with only praise from Spencer (p. 206) rather than contempt for taking up a traditionally male occupation, and he repents his former lack of ‘patience with that species of “crankism”,’ the suffragette (p. 207).

In an act of narrative caprice, Celia relates a story about her French ancestor, ‘Joseph Quesney’, who sailed into the interior of the earth, only to be followed by his lover, one Miss Turgot, as in Quesney and Turgot, the French economists. (Celia is, according to Spencer, ‘a fifth cousin’ of his (p. 152), though this does not impede their nuptials.) The now Mr. and Mrs. Quesney settled in Centralia, forming a new colony with their male and female crews, the latter having brought with her a copy of the U.S. Constitution, and the economic ideas of her ancestors. She becomes leader of the colony succeeding so spectacularly that the other nations of Centralia decide to unite around their political and economic system, becoming the thriving country Spencer discovered. It is an eighteenth century woman, wielding democratic powers, who created this utopia.

Women’s rights are presented in Centralia without the many fears expressed in *Pantaletta*; besides voting and education rights, there is even a movement to have boys bestowed with their father’s surnames and girls with their mother’s surnames, removing the patrilineal ownership of offspring (p. 199). Women are equally able to vote, be elected to Congress (p. 108) and work the polling stations (p. 183) – Welcome makes no secret of his sympathies for female suffrage. It is marked several times that voting is a ‘natural right’ (p.

187), directly contradicting an assertion by the anti-suffragists. Spencer laments that women of the surface world are often subjected to bad marriages in the name of economics, and subjected to ‘hymeneal misery’ (p. 153). He comments upon the mistrust that exists between lovers, especially when it relates to property rights, and that such misgivings cannot exist in Centralia, making his love and Celia’s all the more pure.

How technology and innovation in Centralia are put to use revolves around their philosophy of balance in ‘social machinery’ and ‘physical machinery’ (p. 104). Electricity is key to the smooth running of Centralia, down to the clocks and whistles that signal that start and end of the work day (p. 64), which ensure that no one is cheated on their working time. Electricity plays a role in almost every *terra cava* narrative, demonstrating the potential for this new power that was only beginning to infiltrate daily life in the real world. Women often bid for the local role of ‘time engineer’ (the person responsible for keeping all of Centralia running on time) because they are apparently better at it than men (p. 211). The furnaces which convert coal directly into electricity – without the steam-engine middleman – allow labourers to extract the same energy from one pound of coal that used to take eight (p. 100). Bypassing the steam engine in the nineteenth century was an engineering dream yet to be realised.

Newspapers, once again, come under fire in the *terra cava*, the local daily containing all noteworthy news, ‘editorials of the highest literary merit... but no advertisements – nothing, in fact, but sound, interesting reading matter’ (p. 33). Spencer is surprised by the journalist who interviews him, asking only ‘sociological and political questions’ (p. 34). Apparently, one of the keys to a true utopia, according to numerous *terra cava* narratives, is the reform of the newspaper business. There are frequent interludes from newspapers reporting on the doings of Spencer and his crew, while also providing the reader an external perspective into Centralia not filtered by Spencer, who is still always careful to praise the newspapers for their reporting: ‘No editor would think of advocating local interests to the detriment of the general interest’ (p. 229).

A large number of contemporary themes fall under Welcome's didactics and the proposed Georgian system of economy. The 'Greenbackers' (p. 66), a political party in America that was already in decline by the time Welcome published his novel, are mistrusted by Spencer and his cohort until they learn better from Centralian methods. Greenbackers favoured a paper-based currency not backed by gold, and a federally controlled currency rather than a medium of exchange controlled by private banks. The entirety of chapter nine is given over the examination of Centralia's currency, which circulates based upon a \$3/day value for unskilled labour (p. 158). The Centralians insist that '*money is not capital... but only the representation of wealth*' (p. 163), and therefore firmly controlled by the government as an equally accessible resource kept in circulation rather than hoarded. The question of access also relates to the practice of copyright, which is condemned as bad for the economy (pp. 101-2), limiting ingenuity and stifling competition through monopoly. Privately run railroad companies on publicly owned rails is seen as the 'model of perfection' (p. 92) because it is the service, and not the means, that competes. The election process is also more efficient than America's (p. 183), and the Post Office is superior (p. 210) Spencer also notes that if this 'faultless' system of 'individualism' were championed in the U.S., 'there would be no need of trouble with anarchists and socialists' (p. 130).

Commentary upon the healthcare deficiencies of the United States plays a small part in this utopia. When members of the crew fall ill, they are hesitant to go to a Centralian hospital because in the world above they are 'unreliable institutions, and few but the indigent and homeless ever think of going to them' (p. 63). In Centralia, the answer is to forego public hospitals in favour of private ones, 'where the most competent physicians and experienced nurses are regularly employed' (p. 64). Though the principles of Christian Science are not applied to health care as it is in *Nequa*, good health – or at least swift recovery – is a universal feature of the *terra cavan* utopia. In Centralia, physicians are kept on retainer rather like lawyers, paid stipends to keep the patient well, rather than charging for every visit and illness (p. 168). Doctors from the external world are roundly criticised for

their use of Latin terms rather than plain English, narrow-mindedness, and selfish secrecy about their trade (p. 170).

There is, of course, the wealth of Centralia – like all utopias – to be addressed. For once, precious metals and stones are not regarded with benign disinterest. Gold is, in fact, a rare metal in Centralia, a five dollar gold coin from the U.S. being exchanged for \$52 (p. 66). This is why Mr. Reubin arrived in the prologue with a ship full of silver and diamonds to exchange for gold; the first two being abundantly available in Centralia, are exchanged for gold in the surface world, and that gold can be brought back to the inner world for a tidy profit. But for Spencer, the true wealth is Centralia's utopia: 'I would never want to go back to America now – at least, not until I have learned everything there is to know about this country. Then what more glorious thing could a man do, than carry enlightenment to the outside-world!' (p. 232)

In the midst of all this political didacticism, some space is devoted to the narrative to cover the more scientific elements of Centralia's existence, a theme few *terra cava*s can afford to neglect lest the hypothetical plausibility of this world fall short. There is an internal sun that bounces from Pole to Pole on a daily basis, a ball of fire produced from a massive volcanic eruption; like a pendulum, this small sun is pulled between momentum and gravitational forces. This sun, and the aurora borealis, is fed from the occasional eruptions of volcanos in the north, near the Arctic Symmes Hole opening.

There is no closing to the frame of the narrative, its presence in reader's hands explained in the opening chapter. Presumably with the success of Mr. Reubin's flying vessel trading Centralian silver for American gold, both countries will be enriched and benefit from future exchange, both of wealth and socio-political ideals. *From Earth's Center* is a prophecy, alerting readers to the better future currently in development.

Bleiler remarks that the publisher of *From Earth's Center*, Kerr, specialised in 'social material', resulting in a novel that is a 'fictionalized tract on Henry George's single tax proposal, to which have been added other political-economic crotchets', and that it is of

‘no literary importance, but of some interest among turn-of-the-century utopias.’³⁸ If Symmes was to be proven right about the earth being hollow and containing vast tracts of arable land, then Henry George’s economic theory of the single-tax on land use would have appealed to George’s followers like Welcome. Writing this utopia required a setting large enough in which to put the single-tax system into practice, and Symmes’s hollow earth provided Welcome with just such a setting.

II.ii – *Mr. Oseba’s Last Discovery, or Symzonia Down Under*

Though written and published in New Zealand, *Mr. Oseba’s Last Discovery* (1904) is by the American George W. Bell, the US Consul to Australia for seven years. It is a *terra cava* narrative that mixes American social and political philosophies with New Zealand’s environs, which Bleiler calls a ‘piece of real estate promotion’.³⁹ Throughout the text there are photographs from around New Zealand (identified in the caption, so there is no attempt to pretend these are images from the interior of the earth), which the Index clearly states ‘do not conform strictly to the text’ (p. viii). Bell’s narrative is set in the hollow earth, but its purpose is to sell New Zealand as a utopia on earth, worthy of an advanced utopia inside the earth.

‘The Author’ offers ‘A Note’ about his visit to New Zealand in 1903, a colony ‘submerged with socialism’ among other attributes: “I found in the Press, a broad independence; in the people, a sturdy self-reliance; and in the statesmen, a feeling that they were the chosen servants of the public’.⁴⁰ Intrigued by what he found in New Zealand (and Bell even dedicates the novel to its people), he sets out to express his Anglo-Saxon pride ‘in a garb of fiction, that I might wrest from the reader the memories of the daily struggle with stubborn facts’ (p. vi). This ‘garb of fiction’ implies a façade for truth in the narrative, and Bells claims to have ‘adopted a style that... would be appreciated for its audacious novelty’ (p. vi), though in reality, Bell is trodding on well-worn literary grounds.

³⁸ Bleiler, *Science Fiction*, p. 795.

³⁹ Bleiler, *Science Fiction*, p. 48.

⁴⁰ George W. Bell, *Mr. Oseba’s Last Discovery* (Wellington, NZ: The New Zealand Times Co., 1904), p. v. All other references cited in text from this edition.

The narrative is framed around the posthumously read manuscript of Leo Bergin (a Virginian by birth), bequeathed to Sir Marmaduke, the secondary narrator/editor.

Marmaduke opens by saying

This, being a true story, with the slight deviations necessary to the preservation of a due sense of proportion, it is deemed proper to casually introduce the characters on whom we must chiefly rely for the truthfulness or otherwise, of a most romantic adventure. (p. 1)

In other words, the truth of the narrative rests in the judgement of the reader, but the editor cannot say one way or another if Bergin's tale is true. Having a past acquaintanceship, the dying Bergin leaves his dying declaration of his visit to "Symmes' Hole" (p. 13) to Sir Marmaduke, who declares that 'Leo Bergin was no dreamer' (p. 16). There are frequent interludes from Marmaduke throughout the text, playing Devil's advocate and the reader's own internal monologue as he reflects upon Bergin's own narrative, speaking at times in the present tense: 'Let us see what follows, for this is more interesting far, than a courtship' (p. 28). In other instances Marmaduke abridges portions of the text: 'Here is a lot of interesting detail – interesting if life were not so short – but I'll have to "boil it down," for "spice" is the word' (p. 40).

Mr. Amoorā Oseba is Bergin's cabin mate, 'the finest type of manly beauty... ever beheld' (p. 22), but also more than a little strange, claiming to come from the city of Eurania in the country of Cavitorus, inhabited by a people called Shadowas (p. 23). Unpacking this series of strange words, the name 'Amoorā Oseba' does not appear to have any linguistic relation (including a check of Māori names), while 'Cavitorus' and 'Shadowas' are obvious references to 'cave' and 'shadow' inhabitants. Only 'Eurania' has a traceable meaning, 'Urania' being the Greek muse of astronomy, and in nineteenth century terminology, 'Uranian' was indicative of homosexuality, but Bell gives no textual indications of this latter definition having any meaning to his hollow earth inhabitants. In only a few pages Oseba explains the structure of the world, verifying Symmes's theory and chastising those who did not believe in Symmes. While using Symmes's theory of the earth's formation, Oseba cites more recent Arctic exploration for evidence, including the observations of Lt. Adolphus

Greely of the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition (1881-1884) and the diary of Captain George Tyson, survivor of the Polaris Expedition (p.30). Oseba's lessons in geography are the most didactic since Seaborn's in *Symzonia*. After years of mingling among the 'Outeroos' (residents of the outer earth, a word that sounds derivative of the American slang 'buckaroos') Oseba is returning to report to his people, and decides to take Bergin with him. Bergin calls upon Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to give credence to his own doubts about Oseba and the Shadowas: 'There are more things in heaven, and earth, Horatio / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy' (p. 36). Symmes's theory is validated once again during Oseba's presentation of his travels, displaying a true model' of the earth, complete with a Symmes Hole in the north (p. 56).

The Shadowas have resided in Cavorus for 21,000 years (p. 57), exiles from a hostile takeover of their old kingdom on the surface of the world who floated on an iceberg to the interior, finding a fertile – and uninhabited – country to provide new succour (p. 35). This rich land soon led to an over-abundance of population, and controlling measures were put in place. Eugenics play a significant part in Shadowas culture, where the state is the 'universal mother' controlling all procreation (p. 37) so as to turn out 'the finest type of people mentally, morally and physically, that ever inhabited this planet' (p. 38). The utopian trope of a perfect people is hereby fulfilled; Bergin describes them on first sight as 'over-tall and very symmetrical in form, and they move as gracefully as trained actors' (p. 43). The inhabitants are not white, but 'slightly bronzed', though their non-Anglo-Saxon heritage is not a detriment to their accomplishments or advancement. What the Shadowas lack, though, are any extremes in emotions, neither 'gravity' nor 'hilarity' as 'all passion of the animal has gone', leaving only serene intellect (p. 43). Marmaduke does not seem to be as enamoured by these cool intellectuals as Bergin, saying that 'it makes me crawl' (p. 57) to contemplate a passive race so different from his own psychology. This perception may be influenced by Bulwer-Lytton's *Vril-ya*, when the narrator first encounters one of that race: 'a nameless something in the aspect, tranquil though the expression, and beautiful though the features,

roused that instinct of danger which the sight of a tiger or serpent arouses,⁴¹ triggering an autonomic response to an evolutionary threat.

Next to the beautiful people there is the beautiful city with its ‘statues of gold, and other eye-ravishing objects’ (p. 42), and besides the rich apparel of silks, ‘gold was too common, cheap and vulgar’ (p. 44). There is more gold than iron, more platinum than silver, and the gems shine brighter ‘owing to the peculiarities of the light’ (p. 48). Marmaduke only ever mentions in passing that Bergin does indeed go into scientific explanations for many of the phenomena in Cavorus, but never elaborates.

Bell appears to have borrowed liberally from the Māori in crafting the customs and practices of the Shadowas. This practice of being adopted by the State might be compared to the Māori adoption custom of whāngai, taken to the extreme of recognising the Shadowas as a single family unit. Rather than Christianity, they embrace a polytheism that demonstrates ‘not only hope for the future, but appreciation for the blessings of to-day’ (p. 52). In a moment of ‘conversation’ between author and editor, Bergin says ‘These people evidently made their Gods, for they admit it. I wonder if we made ours?’, to which Marmaduke replies ‘Careful Leo!’ (p. 52). The extensive use of dialogue – and editing – represents an attempt by Bell to forestall readerly doubt by seeming to provide a verbatim transcript in addition to contemporary sources and evidence. Herbert Spencer is referenced by Marmaduke (pp. 43-4) when the latter is considering a society in which family bonds do not exist, musing on the differences between the perception of what is ‘natural’ and what is ‘custom’ (this coming from Spencer’s *Man Versus the State*).

There is actually a strong anti-imperialism in Bell’s novel. The missionaries to China are heavily criticised for their conceited approach of cultural and religious superiority, while the Chinese are praised for being ‘industrious and frugal’ (p. 63). When asked if they are ‘an inferior race’, Oseba responds that they are only ‘different’ (p. 68). Bell’s experiences around the globe, and his involvement in international politics lent to him a broader perspective of the world than his home-bound contemporaries. The achievements of

⁴¹ Bulwer-Lytton, *The Coming Race*, p. 12.

continental Europe are attributed to its geography, ‘a garden and nursery for the most active, sturdy, intelligent, and emotional of all peoples on the globe’ (p. 67), who are prone to warring with each other over pretensions of superiority. The hypocrisy of European armies and European Christianity – ‘Thou shalt not kill’ – is highlighted in Oseba’s presentation to his people, to the great consternation of the audience (p. 69). The British Isles are hailed as ‘the best suited for the development of the ideal man.... And, having been peopled by sturdy tribes, all the suggestive hopes of Nature have been realised’ (p. 72). Though discounting on one page the idea of superiority and inferiority among race, on the next Bell still champions the Anglo-Saxon, beneficiary of good geography. Despite Bell’s message of anti-imperialism and sympathy for China and Japan, he champions Great Britain for its ‘conquests in the arts of peace’ (p. 73), planting the great colonies of America, Canada, “Australasia”, and “saving” India and Africa from themselves (p. 76). As for the United States, it is ‘the noblest country ever given by God to his children’ (p. 87) according to Oseba. This invocation of ‘God’ stands in direct contrast to the earlier statements about the Shadowas being polytheistic. For all the praise heaped upon America, Oseba also highlights its flaws, quoting Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s poem ‘The Cry of the Children’:

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
 Ere the sorrow comes with years?
 They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
 And that cannot stop their tears (p. 91)

Labelled as ‘scenes’ in the Table of Contents, ‘First “Discovery”’, ‘The British Isles Discovered’, ‘America “Discovered”’, and ‘Australasia Discovered’, these chapters quote population figures, land mass, industry, and their perceived traits of these regions. Bell writes reportage like the diplomat that he was. This large portion of the narrative is given over not to an examination of Cavorus and its utopia, but the supposed ‘alien’ perspective of the earth.

It turns out that Oseba has been touring the earth’s surface looking for a place where the Shadowas might establish a colony. China is rejected for its lack of ‘varieties’, Japan for its lack of space, Europe for its militarism, Britain for being nothing more than ‘a park for

her nobles', Africa for having 'the black plague', America for being 'owned by the trusts' and controlled by 'party bosses', and Australia for joining the Commonwealth (pp. 106-7). What does this leave for the Shadowas? New Zealand. Or, 'Zelania' in the Shadowas language (p. 107), and this is Oseba's 'last discovery'. How wonderful is New Zealand? Marmaduke relates the entire eight-page poem Bergin wrote in tribute. Oseba's relation of New Zealand's wonders fills the rest of the narrative. The true utopia, then, is not Cavatorus, but New Zealand/Zelania:

The State gives nothing. There is humiliating charity nowhere, but elevating justice everywhere. The State puts a man on a farm, loans him money, helps him uphill, and then demands that he pay the Hercules. It will loan him a spade – not to lean upon or to pawn, but to dig with – and he must keep it bright and pay for its use.

The idea in Zelania, my children, is to have no lords and no paupers – that all men shall be producers, and not vagrants; tax-payers, and not tax-eaters – and that every citizen shall become a sturdy democrat, who will honorably strive as a stock-holder in a paying concern. (p. 155)

The Māori are described as 'a fine race of romantic savages' (p. 130) who are 'intellectually... superior to any other tamed savage' (p. 131), thus making them seem, to readers, rather pleasant native neighbours to have, who won't kill you and eat your family. Bell even includes a picture of a 'Maori Beauty' to entice his male audience should words not suffice.

A short history of women, and women's rights, makes it into Mr. Oseba's address to his people, from the wooing of women 'with a bludgeon' (p. 182) to the growth of civilisation via 'the emancipation of women': 'How can a mother, with the feeling of inferiority, a feeling of subdued dependence, with no courage nor conscious individuality, bring forth brave, independent, high-minded offspring? Only by emancipated mothers can full-statured men be reared' (p. 184). Women in New Zealand were granted voting rights in the 1893 Electoral Bill (though they would not be eligible for legislative seats for decades), the first country to do so in the British Empire or America. Bell makes this part of his tribute to the country: 'in Zelania, women are "people"... and liberty and social rights are not limited to any particular cut of the garments' (p. 185). Women in Cavatorus are not burdened

with family matters because the state raises children in crèches, and the nuclear family does not exist.

There is no closing to the narrative from Marmaduke, no conclusion. He relates Bergin's own relations of Oseba's speech up until the last page. How the Shadowas act upon Oseba's report is never revealed; how Bergin returns to the surface world, or what he did in Cavorus, is never elaborated upon; Marmaduke never offers further commentary on what he learns in Bergin's manuscript. The existence of a lost race living in the hollow earth, accessible from the Poles, is of little consequence in comparison to the existence of New Zealand.

The extensive footnotes provided by Marmaduke outline the political progress in New Zealand for American readers to understand and potentially emulate. This stands in contrast to the Shadowas, who, with their lack of emotional expression, decentralised families, and strict population controls, seem alien to readers. The wealth and education of Cavorus are enviable, but the opportunities provided in New Zealand are seemingly the greater goal. There were many ways that a narrative championing New Zealand society could have been composed, but Bell opts for an alien perspective using the last alien place on earth, the inside of it.

II.iii – *Under the World*

Initially serialised as "Into the Maelstrom" in *Golden Hours* (7 July – 8 September 1894) by John De Morgan, it was reprinted as *Under the World, or, Pluck and Luck*, in 1906 by Street & Smith as part of their Bound-To-Win Library for juvenile readers. Born in Ireland, De Morgan started life as a political radical and teacher, who moved to the United States in 1880, taking up work as a tax collector in New York. De Morgan, like Welcome, was also an associate of Henry George, working for him politically in New York,⁴² making this the second Georgian economist to write a *terra cava* story. He also went on to work for the dime novel publisher Norman L Munro, and is known for writing other fantastic works in the vein

⁴² 'The George Men Ratify'. *The New York Times*, 12 October 1897, p. 3.

of Haggard such as *He, A Companion to She* (1887), and *King Solomon's Treasures* (1887),⁴³ but his *terra cava* narrative was distinctly his own.

Gerald Headley is a prodigal son who runs away to sea after the death of his mother. The majority of Headley's narrative is episodic adventures on the high seas while aboard various ships; there is no scientific or social commentary during this. Not until chapter twenty does Gerald go 'into the maelstrom' off the coast of Norway and emerge in a utopia under the world populated by other humans (mostly of British and American descent, making English the spoken language) sucked down through the ocean. He emerges in 'a new world, whose beauty could not be spoken of in the same breath with the splendors of tropical lands, for eye could not conceive or mind imagine anything more superbly perfect and grandly sublime as the sight I was witnessing.'⁴⁴ In less loquacious terms, he has emerged in an Eden.

De Morgan's life as a political activist surely played some part in the underground world he crafted. In this 'fairy realm' (p. 152) of castaways the government is led by an old man called Experience and a young girl called Innocence. Experience and Innocence are meant to complement each other for everyone benefit. Gerald tells young Innocence about 'utopia' and how her country is one (p. 169), just in case young readers cannot make the connection for themselves. Gerald remains among these castaways trapped inside the earth for six years, and is engaged to Innocence after her term of leadership is expired. Her loss of 'innocence' is tied to her maturity, as it Gerald's. After less than sixty pages Gerald is returned to the surface by the maelstrom that sucked him down into the world, forever cut off from utopia, his family, and his friends. Returning to his family in New Orleans, he is disbelieved by everyone, as is so often the case for returned explorers of the interior world.

Bleiler criticises the narrative for being 'choppy, infantile' and 'quite different from the somewhat elaborate factual background shown in *He*'.⁴⁵ De Morgan was capable of

⁴³ Bleiler, *Science Fiction*, p. 190

⁴⁴ John De Morgan, *Under the World, or Pluck and Luck* (New York: Street & Smith, 1906), p. 144.

All other references cited in text for this edition.

⁴⁵ Bleiler, *Science Fiction*, p. 191.

writing a narrative build upon research and facts, and there were certainly extensive resources he could have drawn upon for *Under the World*, but for some unknown reason chose not to utilise them. Because De Morgan had written other works which included exploration of the Poles – which did not contain any Symmes Holes – it is possible De Morgan did want to contradict his earlier writings if he really was as concerned with facts as Bleiler believes he was.

II.iv – *The Smoky God*

Among the shortest of *terra cava* narratives, Willis George Emerson's 1908 novella is, like *Etidorhpa*, occasionally mistaken for being truth among hollow earth adherents.⁴⁶ *The Smoky God, or, A Voyage to the Inner World* is presented with the weight of a dying testament and edited – presumably – by Emerson; it is the life story of ninety-five year old Olaf Jansen, a Norwegian sailor who settled in Southern California after a journey to the interior of the earth as a young man.

The 'Author's Foreword' – though it rightly should be called the 'Editor's Foreword' as Emerson is putting himself forward as amanuensis and editor for Jansen – opens with a quotation from Plato and the traditional disavowal of responsibility for the narrative's content:

I fear the seemingly incredible story which I am about to relate will be regarded as the result of a distorted intellect superinduced, possibly, by the glamour of unveiling a marvellous mystery, rather than a truthful record of the unparalleled experiences related by one Olaf Jansen, whose eloquent madness so appealed to my imagination that all thought of an analytic criticism has been effectually dispelled.

Marco Polo will undoubtedly shift uneasily in his grave at the strange story I am called upon to chronicle; a story as strange as a Munchausen tale. It is also incongruous that I, a disbeliever, should be the one to edit the story of Olaf Jansen, whose name is now for the first time given to the world, yet who hereafter must rank as one of the notables of earth.⁴⁷

Emerson is granted plausible deniability for content, while also asserting responsibility for being the bearer of glad tidings from the hollow earth. Emerson gives an extensive background of his association with Jansen as a neighbour in Glendale, California, an old

⁴⁶ For evidence of this, just pick up a copy of Timothy Green Beckley's edited edition of *The Smoky God: And Other Inner Earth Mysteries*, which is listed as 'nonfiction'.

⁴⁷ Willis George Emerson, *the Smoky God, or, A Voyage to the Inner World* (Champaign, IL: Book Jungle, 1908, reprint), p. 7. All other references to this edition cited in text.

man with strange notions of the earth's creation, including the belief that the earth was created 'for the "within"... while the outside surface of the earth is merely the veranda' (p. 12). If the exterior of the world is only window dressing, it means that the people who inhabit the exterior are of little importance to divine cosmology.

More could be said about the footnotes Emerson inserts than the length of the footnotes (or even the entire narrative) themselves. They are a studied combination of contemporary scientific articles, academic tracts, travel logs, history, mythology, etc. What other novel-length narratives scattered throughout dialogue and exposition, Emerson footnotes at length in his role of 'Editor'. Jansen does not have to go into detail about his evidence because Emerson will do it for him. Late nineteenth century speculation about the North Pole/Inner Earth being the seat of human origins are noted with references to both M. le Marquis G. de Saporta's "How the Earth was People" (*Popular Science Monthly*, 1888) and William F Warren's *Paradise Found; The Cradle of the Human Race at the North Pole, a Study of the Prehistoric World* (1885). The voyages of Sir John Barrow (p. 20), Captain Kane (p. 21), Captain Hall (p. 21), Captain Peary (p. 23), Nansen (p. 28) and more are referenced with quotes from their own post-voyage publications. There is, for once, no doubt about the author's sources and inspiration. The presentation of these 24 footnotes, like exhibits in a trial, is Emerson's defence against charges of madness, or worse, fiction.

For as short as Jansen's own story is, he actually goes into as much detail as Seaborn in order to provide readers with a retraceable narrative trail across the known world, starting in Stockholm, moving along the Scandinavian coastline, and up to Spitzbergen (a popular launching point for Polar explorations both real and fictional). Finding an open Polar sea, Jansen and his father decide to sail their fishing sloop further north, entering the Arctic Symmes Hole and emerging in an unnamed country of the interior world, where they are picked up by a race of giants: 'There was not a single man aboard who would not have measured fully twelve feet in height... The women averaged from ten to eleven feet in height' (p. 32). Stature is status in the world; these giants, though living in the same technological utopia as the Symzonians, are taller than average, where the latter were

shorter. All are beautiful and healthy in appearance, richly attired in gold, ‘the most common metal known’ (p. 32) as we’ve seen in nearly every other portrayal of the interior earth.

There is material wealth in Eden, but to be a paradise, it must not be desired for anything other than itself.

This utopia is healthful, its atmosphere suffused with electricity that gives Jansen greater vitality (p. 33), a feature shared with *Mizora*. The height and long life of the inhabitants is – according to the quote Emerson presents from Warren’s *Paradise Found* – reminiscent of the Old Testament, the Gog and Magog. Height is intimately connected to ideas of superiority (the High Priest of the internal world is taller than everyone) and to a lesser extent health and old age; these internal inhabitants possessed what all the money of the exterior world could not buy. If there is any doubt as to the divine origins of this internal country, Emerson allays them by identifying the capital city as “Eden” (p. 34), always using double quotation marks. The four rivers of the Book of Genesis that are said originate in Eden, Euphrates, Pison, Gihon, and Hiddekel, flow from the city of Eden inside the earth as they are written to have done in the Garden. However, Christianity is not given predominance; the ‘Smoky God’ is an electrified cloud at the centre of the world which provides twelve hours of illumination and darkness. Jansen points out, though, that while the natives consider this cloud to be ‘the throne of their Jehovah’, night and day are actually ‘produced by the earth’s daily rotation’ (p. 35). For all of Jansen’s failings by being human, short in height, short in life, and the product of a less-than-utopian society, he is redeemed by knowing *one* thing the internals do not know, a flaw in their dogma.

Like the people, the size of everything else is enlarged in the inner earth, with grape clusters ‘four and five feet in length, each grape as large as an orange’, and apples the size of a man’s head, while the ‘redwood trees of California would be considered mere underbrush’ compared to the forests of the internal world (p. 34). Jensen claims these trees are up to a thousand feet in height (p. 39), dwarfing the sequoia of California – a comparison undoubtedly made by the belief that size matters in all aspects of life as regards to value; the

great size of this vegetation means greater total product (and thus profit) is contained within each plant.

As part of the American quest to synthesise the appeal of the pastoral with the promise of the mechanical, *The Smoky God* presents ‘powerful’ yet ‘noiseless’ machinery (p. 33). A monorail travelling at high speeds via fly-wheels that disrupt ‘atmospheric pressure’ (pp. 35-6) – which is equated to gravity in this narrative, a profound scientific misunderstanding on Emerson’s part – moves the populace about with need for coal or steam, and engineering marvel. Agriculture is the primary occupation of the population, with hillside vineyards and grain-filled valleys as far as the eye can see (p. 34). No rudimentary huts or cabins will suffice for the agrarian population, though, whose houses are ‘large and beautifully constructed, and quite uniform in appearance, yet without sameness’ (p. 34). Why this caveat of uniformity without conformity? Because architecture too diverse would appear sloppy, but architecture too similar would remove all personality and appear dystopian, like row houses. The utopian middle ground is to identify the buildings as similar to each other, designating a race that is competent and civilised enough to coordinate their building projects, without demanding the erasure of all personality.

Part four of this short narrative gives its first part over to a brief on the utopian lives of the internals: men do not marry before seventy-five to one hundred years of age, and women about the same, because their life spans are generally six to eight hundred years long (p. 38). The natives are ‘exceedingly musical’ (so much so than entire decade of their long educations is entirely devoted to the study of music) as well as ‘learned to a remarkable degree in their arts and sciences’ (p. 39). Jensen also reveals two unique aspects of this hollow world: the internals raise cattle, and they build conveyances only for land and water (p. 39). In other words, these people are not vegetarians, and do not have airships, two things that have been common to so many other *terra cava* worlds. The extinction of several species from the earth’s surface are also explained by Jensen’s sighting of them inside the earth, indicating that they are not extinct but simply found ‘asylum in the “within world”’ (p.

40). It eases the conscience to believe that entire species have simply relocated rather than accepting their extinction at the hands of humans.

The framing structure employed by Emerson was effective enough to convince at least one person on earth (though there are likely more, since an audience is needed to consume such beliefs) that Jansen's narrative was real: Timothy Green Beckley edited a collection called *The Smoky God and Other Inner Earth Mysteries* that carries the following on its back cover:

A rare, but all-too-true book, THE SMOKY GOD, tells of a fantastic journey made inside the earth where the author meets a race of giants who befriend him. This valuable manuscript was believed lost for all time, but is now reprinted in its entirety, along with other incredible material that provides important evidence that our Earth is hollow and populated by a super race believed related to those who once resided on the continents of Lemuria and Atlantis.⁴⁸

The existence of this volume is, in its own way, more fascinating than any other piece covered in this chapter. Beckley encourages his audience to 'Read – Enjoy – Learn' (p. 4) about a conglomeration of modern mythologies about the hollow earth nearly a century after Symmes was ultimately disproved. Beckley includes information about UFOs and twentieth century exploration history and NASA photographs to *disprove* the solidity of the Poles.

Emerson, when compared to many of the other authors who wrote about the hollow earth, was actually a fairly successful writer who left behind more than this one tale. Bleiler states that *The Smoky God* is a '[f]ictional reconciliation of hollow-earth theories with eclectic Fundamentalism',⁴⁹ which is perhaps an unfair assessment of Emerson's almost pagan synthesis of Old Testament myth with a non-Christian society. 'Of no literary merit', Bleiler says, and finds it incongruous that Warren's 'science' from *Paradise Found* is used by Emerson, when Warren was making an argument for a temperate Polar depression, not a hollow world.⁵⁰ Standish, on the other hand, finds the story 'more charming than many, thanks to the narrator's voice'.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Timothy Green Beckley, ed., *The Smoky God and Other Inner Earth Mysteries*, 2nd Ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Inner Light Publications, 2013), cover material.

⁴⁹ Bleiler, *Science Fiction*, p. 222.

⁵⁰ Bleiler, *Science Fiction*, p. 223.

⁵¹ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 228.

The Smoky God was among the last of the hollow earth narratives to use Symmes's geography. Too many Polar explorers had reached latitudes beyond where Symmes's holes should have appeared, forcing a reconsideration of his theory by those who still believed. Emerson's work was able to survive this shift away from the *terra cava* narrative because of the complex structure he crafted for the relation of Jansen's dying declaration.

CONCLUSION

Utopia for women and a larger utopia for all, so central to many *terra cava* plots, slowly found its way into reality, through women's suffrage, expanded educational opportunities, and social reforms. Henry George's tax reforms never took hold, though, nor did Americans flock to New Zealand. The hollow earth itself among Spiritualists, Christians, scientists, and writers faded into the background. Many of the *terra cava* narratives that did follow, from Edgar Rice Burroughs to Richard Shaver, shifted away from the Symmes model, the utopia inside the earth, and the divinity of the hollow earth. The Conclusion to follow will explore how the shift away from the Poles and Symmes changed the *terra cava* narrative.

Terra Cava: A Coda

In 1909, Robert Peary reported the successful attainment of the North Pole, leaving behind a flag and a message in a bottle stating that he had ‘formally taken possession of the entire region, and adjacent, for and in the name of the President of the United States of America.’¹

Two years later, Roald Amundsen reached the South Pole, claimed it for no one, and admitted that it was not his life’s goal to reach the Antarctic because the ‘regions around the North Pole – well, yes, the North Pole itself – had attracted me from childhood, and here I was at the South Pole.’² But as Peary had denied him the glory of the North, Amundsen claimed the South as an unsatisfactory consolation prize. Literary exploration of the hollow earth did not end with the charting of the Poles or the scientific proof of a solid metal core surrounded by molten rock. Though Symmes was largely forgotten, as were the narratives he inspired, the question – or dream, for better or worse – of what exactly forms the land beneath our feet continues to find its way into the popular consciousness via multiple mediums, and to different ends.

I REED AND GARDNER

After approximately 1910, the hollow earth narrative dropped off precipitously (though the semi-porous earth was able to stagger on) from the newspaper announcements of newly published books. Archibald Marshall’s *Upsidonia* (1915) is sometimes considered a *terra cava* narrative,³ though there is nothing specific in its geography to believe so. Interestingly, the (pseudo) scientific defences of Symmes and the hollow earth had a resurgent popularity around this time as well.

When William Reed wrote his opus on the impossibility of the existence of a *terra firma* at the Poles in 1906, Peary was only three years away from the discovery of the North

¹ Robert Peary, ‘We Reach the Pole’, in *The Ends of the Earth: An Anthology of the Finest Writing on the Arctic and Antarctic, Vol. I – The Arctic*, ed. Elizabeth Kolbert (London: Granta Books, 2007), p. 90.

² Roald Amundsen, ‘Topsy-Turvy’, in *The Ends of the Earth: An Anthology of the Finest Writing on the Arctic and Antarctic, Vol. II – The Antarctic*, ed. Francis Spufford (London: Granta Books, 2007), p. 115.

³ Standish, for instance, in his list of hollow earth novels published between 1880 and 1915, pp. 200-202.

Pole.⁴ Unlike other works positing hollow or alternative Earth structures, Reed does not claim divine inspiration or invented pseudo-scientific evidence. *The Phantom of the Poles* is based upon the examination of scientific and explorative observations and drawing (in this case, very wrong) inferences about the nature of the world. Throughout the text he cites the reports of contemporary explorers such as Peary, Franklin, Nansen and Kane as he methodically dissects a series of observed phenomena and provides explanations for each, using their own texts as proof

beyond a doubt, that what I claim is true – that the Arctic and Antarctic oceans are bodies of open water, abounding with game of all kinds, and much warmer than further inland. If that is true, then why have the poles not been reached? The poles are but phantoms – the earth is hollow, or all principle of reasoning must fail.⁵

Reed entertained little doubt about his conclusion of a hollow earth, the only reasonable explanation, not for the failures of Polar expeditions, but to explain other scientific phenomenon. His reasoning was no different from Symmes's 87 years previous. He promises readers that '[a]s soon as you adopt the belief that the earth is hollow, perplexing questions will be easily solved, the mind will be satisfied, and the triumph of sensible reasoning will come as a delight never to be forgotten.'⁶ Reed articulates what other *terra cava* writers of both fiction and non-fiction want to give their audience: easy answers to complex questions, and the self-satisfaction of being right when everyone else is wrong.

In the chapter, 'What is in the Interior of the Earth?' Reed refuses to *speculate* because there is not enough evidence about its nature: 'It is not like the question, "Is the earth hollow?" We know that it is, but do not know what will be found in its interior.'⁷ This is an interesting frame to a speculative narrative meant to convince the reader that Reed had not been speculating all along, merely drawing out evidence from observations, but will not speculate now because he has no observations from the interior of the earth. This does not stop him, however, from actually continuing to speculate about tropical and temperate

⁴ In truth, Peary actually missed the North Pole by about 20 nautical miles (according to the Publisher's preface).

⁵ William Reed, *Phantom of the Poles* (New York: Walter S. Rockey Co., 1906), p. 274.

⁶ Reed, *The Phantom of the Poles*, p. 283.

⁷ Reed, *Phantom of the Poles*, p. 122.

environs, ‘sea monsters’ and ‘vast territories of arable land for farming purposes’, and as all profiteering explorers like to hear, ‘Minerals may be found in great quantities, and gems of all kinds.’⁸ Exploration is never disinterested, and new lands to be settled/exploited must flow with the proverbial milk and honey, as no one would leave their already comfortable homes and lives if there was not the chance to make a fortune by relocating.

So convinced was he of his work, Reed and several followers founded the William Reed Hollow Earth Exploring Club in 1908, ‘prepared to spend \$1,500,000 in its search for proof that there is no North Pole.’⁹ Reed claimed to have 40,000 or more followers, and was investigating the possibility of using dirigibles to reach the Poles. Interestingly, the article notes that not all of Reed’s supporters embrace the entirety of his hollow earth theory, but ‘they are nevertheless convinced from the writings of men like Nansen, Peary and Bernacchi, that something is wrong with the accepted scientific conclusions regarding the poles’.¹⁰ As to what exactly is ‘wrong’ with the science of the Poles, the article never specifies.

What is surprising is that despite Reed being proven wrong by Peary and Amundsen, Marshall B. Gardner went on to publish *A Journey to the Earth’s Interior: Have the Poles Really Been Discovered? Evidence for Hollow Earth* in 1913. A much longer work than his predecessor’s, *A Journey* mixes both scientific hypothesis and fanciful imagination, actually writing a chapter of speculative fiction – in the tradition of Verne – that ‘shall not invent any new facts or “make up” any mere tale of fancy, but...shall simply use the facts...gathered in a new way, grouping them together in the order in which an actual traveler would observe them.’¹¹ Gardner is also careful to lay out an entire chapter on why his theory is different from Symmes’s, such as dispensing with concentric spheres (which even Symmes himself did) and adding a central sun, a new hypothesis about gravity, and

⁸ Reed, *Phantom of the Poles*, p. 122.

⁹ Anon, ‘Going to Look For a Big Hole At the Top of the World, *Marion Daily Mirror*, Vol. XVI, No. 229 (25 April 1908), p. 9.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Marshall B. Gardner, *A Journey to the Earth’s Interior: Have the Poles Really Been Discovered? Evidence for Hollow Earth* (London: Forgotten Books, 2007), p. 191.

incorporating the nebula theory of planet formation. Gardner also provides readers with a long list of publications in a bibliography, daring readers to look at the evidence themselves.

Gardner made enough of an impact to earn himself an entire page of the *Chicago Daily*

Tribune:

Can it be possible that down in the middle of the earth there is another earth? That a few hundred miles or so away, separated from us by ground and rock and vapor and such things, there is a great country inhabited by a great race?

Scientists innumerable have discovered life, vegetable and animal, upon other planets. Long ago the seers and wise men peopled the heavens. Exploration has stretched out toward the truth in all directions save this one. It remains for an Illinoisan to lead us -- in theory -- in that direction -- down, down into the earth's innermost recesses and the wonders thereof.¹²

A Journey to the Earth's Interior is nearly three times as long as Reed's work, creating an extensive 'factual' frame for a speculative narrative.

Other contemporary works include Franklin Titus Ives's *The Hollow Earth...* (1904), which focuses on hydrology as the evidence of Symmes's theory. His chapters are broken down into icebergs, the Gulf Stream, springs, artesian wells, etc., with a few examining the traditional topics of volcanoes, meteors, and gravity. Though the main body is 102 pages, Ives includes a sixty-page appendix of newspaper articles, uncited reports, and anecdotes as the exhibits of his case.

II BURROUGHS'S HOLLOW WORLD

Pellucidar, the world invented by Edgar Rice Burroughs, arrives at the end of the *terra cava* wave of literature, and stands apart from the other hollow earth writings because it has no spiritual message, proposes no scientific or utopian idealism. This series of stories was designed for no other purpose than to make money for the perpetually-financially distressed Burroughs by cashing in the marketability of adventure and romance published in bulk in pulp magazines. He created Pellucidar around the same time that he did Tarzan and Barsoom, two more series that succeeded by catering to popular notions of Mars and darkest Africa. As Standish puts it (with tongue firmly in cheek):

¹² 'Is There a World Inside of the World?', *Chicago Daily Tribune* (3 August 1913)
<<http://www.erbzine.com/mag14/1446.html>>

[A]lthough they didn't disappear completely, stories set in the hollow earth began to seem too far-fetched once science established the geophysical impossibility of a hollow earth.

But one writer remained undaunted by facts to the contrary.¹³

Burroughs would go on write six novels and even more short stories set in his hollow world, one reached both by burrowing machine and Polar opening (the latter, at this point, even more scientifically implausible than the former). The first story – published in *All-Story Weekly* in 1914, early in Burroughs's career – was titled *At the Earth's Core* (which didn't appear in novel form until 1922), following a young, rich American, David Innes, and his inventor colleague Abner Perry. Perry's 'iron mole' is designed for mining prospecting, but instead becomes stuck on a straight-down path, which comes straight-up into Pellucidar. A land of dinosaurs and primitive races, Pellucidar is an amalgamation of Verne's *Journey*, Wells's *Lost World*, and contemporary pulps. Gregory Benford states that 'Pellucidar is most definitely a dreamland, and its literary invention must be evaluated by that fact.'¹⁴ The scientific knowledge of the day, and any sense of realism, are suspended: 'Burroughs is purely fun and not remotely realistic.'¹⁵

If there is anything in *At the Earth's Core* that can be related back to its *terra cava* predecessors, it is the American imperialism of the white male protagonists who see a primitive, unspoiled land awaiting their guiding power.

'Why, Perry,' I exclaimed, 'you and I may reclaim a whole world! Together we can lead the races of men out of the darkness of ignorance into the light of advancement and civilization. At one step we may carry them from the Age of Stone to the twentieth century. It's marvelous – absolutely marvelous just to think about.'

'David,' said the old man, 'I believe that God sent us here for just that purpose – it shall be my life work to teach them His word – to lead them into the light of His mercy while we are training their hearts and hands in the ways of culture and civilization.'¹⁶

¹³ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 242.

¹⁴ Gregory A. Benford, 'Introduction', *At The Earth's Core* by Edgar Rice Burroughs (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), p. viii.

¹⁵ Benford, 'Introduction', p. x.

¹⁶ Edgar Rice Burroughs, *At the Earth's Core* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), p. 95.

Phillip Burger actually compares Innes's 'empire building' to Roosevelt's American imperialism for developing and industrialising 'primitive' countries.¹⁷ It is counterproductive to the plot that Innes and Perry want to bring 'the wonders of the twentieth century [to] the Stone Age'¹⁸, when the adventurous aspects of Burroughs's creation is the complete lack of these twentieth century marvels: 'The problem with civilization is...that it gets in the way of high adventure, of the exotic, of the unknown.'¹⁹ Innes and Perry never completely succeed in this mission to civilize the internal world, as there are *numerous* hostile human non-human species that get in the way. At one point, Innes is captured by the pirates of Pellucidar and none other than Tarzan is dispatched to rescue him in *Tarzan at the Earth's Core* (1929/30); two of Burroughs's cosmologies are united, and two decades after Symmes was definitively disproved, Tarzan takes a zeppelin through the Arctic Symmes hole to rescue Innes.

The one unique feature of Pellucidar is how Burroughs handles the passage of time, which is inconstant. The central sun never sets, and this world of eternal day alters one's perception of time, so that characters are unsure if moments or years have passed. This is what gives Pellucidar its name, a world of uninterrupted light. Jack McDevitt calls this notion of celestially-linked time 'an intriguing and romantic concept but not one to be taken seriously.'²⁰ It is hard to take any of Pellucidar seriously unless introduced to it as a youngster, before literary tastes are formed. Burroughs Pellucidar stories deteriorated with his age, and one of the last, *Land of Terror* (1944) was rejected by every publisher, unreleased until Burroughs published it himself. For all the other Burroughs stories brought to the big screen, only one Pellucidar story was filmed, *At the Earth Core* (dir. Kevin Connor, 1976).

¹⁷ Phillip R. Burger, 'A Railroad through the Pleistocene; or with Roosevelt in Brightest Pellucidar', *Pellucidar* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), p. 159.

¹⁸ Burroughs, *At the Earth's Core*, p. 274

¹⁹ Jack McDevitt, 'Introduction', *Pellucidar* by Edgar Rice Burroughs (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), p. xiii.

²⁰ McDevitt, 'Introduction', p. xii.

Though the Pellucidar series wasn't as popular as some of Burroughs's other work, it still spawned several pastiches decades later, including *Mahars of Pellucidar* (1976) and *Red Axe of Pellucidar* (1980) by John Eric Holmes. The Pellucidar books themselves, though, seem pastiches of the hollow earth literature and adventure fictions that came before, collected by Burroughs and synthesised into an ungainly collection of storylines and creatures. Burroughs's later Pellucidar works were not nearly as science-centred as the early works, the science for the hollow earth crumbling with each passing year, turning the narratives increasingly to the purely fantastic.

III THE *TERRA CAVA* NARRATIVE AFTER 1920

Arriving somewhat late on the scene is Russian geologist Vladimir Obruchev, who wrote a Verne-inspired account of a trip down a Symmes hole in his novel *Plutonia*. So effect was his narrative that subsequent editions contained an Author's Note stating that numerous readers had written to ask about the next expedition to Plutonia: "I must say at the very outset that the voyage I have described in this book did not and could not take place, as there is no opening the earth's crust through which it would be possible to penetrate to the earth's core and enter a void which does not and could never exist."²¹ Obruchev's goal was to educate readers about geology and ancient flora and fauna, like *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*.

Beginning in 1914, the Russian scientist Trukhanov commissions a group of fellow intellectuals (a geologist, zoologist, meteorologist, and botanist) to explore the Arctic regions in the name of possessing them for Russia (before the Canadians get there). Trukhanov believes that there is 'at least one island, half the size of Greenland, which has not yet been discovered',²² which they name after Nansen. While crossing their new island the explorers discover a massive hole into which they descend, discovering the earth is hollow, and lit by an inner sun. Not only is the interior world inhabited by creatures from the Ice Age to the Jurassic, there is a primitive race of non-fire-capable cannibals. They sail

²¹ Vladimir Obruchev, *Plutonia* (Amsterdam: Fredonia Books, 2001, reprinted from 1924 edition), p. 7.

²² Obruchev, *Plutonia*, p. 14.

across an inner sea full of prehistoric monsters, just as Axel and company did in *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*. The explorers also find a vast field with millions in ‘gold right out in the open’, but are even more impressed with the veins of iron ore that could be dedicated to industry (p. 157). Like all *terra cavas*, Obruchev’s didacticism cannot forget the inducement of wealth. When the expedition finally returns they find that World War I had broken out and their ship – along with all the evidence of their discovery – is seized. ‘The author’ – presumably Obruchev – comes upon the diary of the zoologist and uses it to construct the novel (p. 325), closing a frame we did not know was opened. *Plutonia* did not find its way into an English translation until 1961. Bleiler calls *Plutonia* ‘dull and probably useless for educational purposes, since none of the life forms is really described or analysed in any detail.’²³

One of the more enduring cult classics of the hollow earth is known as the Shaver Mysteries. The first ‘story’ was actually published in the form of a letter in the December 1943 issue of *Amazing Stories*. Because of the massive feedback the letter elicited, ‘I Remember Lemuria’ by Richard S. Shaver was commissioned by editor Ray Palmer and published in *Amazing Stories* in March 1945. According to Shaver’s vision, aliens came to earth 12,000 years ago and constructed a vast subterranean civilisation to protect themselves from the sun’s radiation, but eventually abandoned earth to the human robots they’d created. We the surface dwellers are descendants of these drone workers, while the massive underground cities, are inhabited by two more branches of humanity (the *dero* and the *tero*). This is a permutation of the internal origins hypothesis seen clean back to *Symzonia*. Though it may not be divine creation, human origins are being connected to subterranean civilisation. Some 50,000 letters were sent to *Amazing Stories* by readers claiming to have experienced similar encounters with strange, subterranean creatures.²⁴ For two years the Shaver Mysteries appeared in *Amazing Stories*, culminating in the June 1947 issues dedicated solely to Shaver. What made the Shaver stories so intriguing to readers was the

²³ Bleiler, *Science Fiction*, p. 570.

²⁴ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 269.

intense belief Shaver expressed, because Shaver (prone to bouts of mental illness and the victim of many tragic circumstances) actually believed in what he wrote,²⁵ and Palmer exploited this to great success for *Amazing Stories*. The Shaver Mysteries undoubtedly play into the current fringe beliefs in a habited hollow world. Palmer was also the one who linked the appearance of UFOs to the Shaver stories, claiming they originated from the interior of the earth.

In his introduction to *I Remember Lemuria* Shaver placed himself and his beliefs before the reader, only not intending it to be a fictive framework. He puts forth the same defensive statements seen in so many of the nineteenth century *terra cava*, and only because of the plethora of information that survives about Shaver do we know that he was not being literary in the manner of John Uri Lloyd or Willis George Emerson:

I myself cannot explain it. I know only that I remember Lemuria! Remember it with a faithfulness that I accept with the absolute conviction of a fanatic. And yet, I am not a fanatic; I am a simple man, a worker in metal, employed in a steel mill in Pennsylvania. I am as normal as any of you who read this and gifted with much less imagination that most of you!²⁶

Shaver is establishing himself as a prophet fending off scorn or accusations of fantasy.

Shaver finds it ‘tragic’ that the only way to reveal humanity’s origins underground ‘is in the guise of fiction.’²⁷ Equally building on Shaver’s veracity is the ‘Editor’ (presumably Palmer in this case) including dozens of footnotes detailing his interrogation of Shaver and his narrative. However, in *The Return of Sathanas* Shaver includes his own footnotes, signed either ‘R.S. Shaver’ or ‘The Author’, as well as newspaper extracts and other exhibits of evidence. Shaver constructed a Lemurian alphabet and list of ‘English’ Lemurian words, which isn’t actually as logical as the ancient alphabet and language construction used in older works like *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*. The construction of the Shaver Mysteries, straddling the borders of ‘fact’ and fiction, has inspired believers for

²⁵ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 270.

²⁶ Richard S. Shaver, *I Remember Lemuria and The Return of Sathanas* (London: Forgotten Books, 2008), p. 1

²⁷ Shaver, *I Remember Lemuria*, p. 2.

decades. The mythology of Lemuria, a rumoured lost island like Atlantis, connects the *terra cava* with common myth for readers.

If the Shaver mysteries seem odd, consider the fringe belief that Hitler and the Nazis escaped to the centre of the earth. Shaver's stories and the conclusion of a brutal war led to all kinds of hypotheses about the fate of Nazis from people too afraid to stand down lest the Third Reich rise again. Without any evidence but hearsay, it is rumoured that Hitler was interested in finding the hollow earth – if such a place existed – and that when it became apparent that Germany would fall, escaped via a Symmes hole. In the 1970s German-Canadian neo-Nazi and Holocaust-denier Ernst Zündel published *UFOs: Nazi Secret Weapons?*, 'Secret Nazi Polar Expeditions', and 'Hitler at the South Pole'. Like Symmes, Zündel even proposed an expedition to find these surviving Nazis and their UFOs. Websites that can politely be described to occupy the fringe of current beliefs have kept the idea alive to the point that Asylum Studios (known for producing B-horror films) released *Nazis at the Center of the Earth* (written by Paul Bales) in 2012, in which a group of researchers in Antarctica are captured by ghoulish Nazis and subjected to the experiments of Joseph Mengele. Mick Farren pulls the supernatural into his novel about Nazis inside the earth with *Underland* (2002) when the NSA sends a vampire inside the earth to uncover modern day Nazis.

What is commonly shelved as 'New Age' in bookstores is a niche of fringe beliefs that carries on the tradition of the Spiritualists and Occultists, joined by Ufologists, Flat Earthers, and others, among them the last believers in the hollow earth. 'Dr. Raymond Bernard' belongs to this group, author of *The Hollow Earth: The Greatest Geographical Discovery in History, Made by Admiral Richard E. Byrd in the Mysterious Land Beyond the Poles – The True Origin of the Flying Saucers* (1964). Bernard was actually Walter Siegmeister, who changed his name after a legal run-in with the Food and Drug Administration; he was something of a shyster, but did indeed possess a PhD. While living in exile in Brazil he came across a Brazilian book, *From the Subterranean World to the Sky*

by the director of the Theosophical Society in Brazil, O.C. Huguenin.²⁸ Bernard translated this into English and began to study the hollow earth in earnest, publishing small articles wherever he could find a venue. Incorporating Reed and Gardner's work, as well as the Shaver Mysteries and UFO reports, Bernard created the amalgamation that became *The Hollow Earth*, his most enduring success.

Bernard dedicates his research to 'the Future Explorers of the New World that exists beyond North and South Poles in the hollow interior of the Earth.'²⁹ There is a defensive introduction to the book by one 'Robert Fieldcrest' – who may or may not have been the invention of Bernard: 'Statements in this publication are recitals of scientific findings, known facts of physiology and references to ancient writings as they are found' (p. 7). This is reminiscent of the types of editorial introductions found in the nineteenth century *terra cava* narratives; 'Whether you accept or reject the content of this book is your privilege' (p. 9). Bernard's chapters go into detail about Reed's and Gardner's books, the Eskimos, Agharta, and only spending a few short chapters to this UFO theory, more concerned with disproving the solidity of the Poles. Bernard wants his readers to venture to the interior of the world – much as Symmes once did – for the betterment of the surface world, now under threat of nuclear annihilation.

IV THE MODERN *TERRA CAVA*: PASTICHE AND HORROR

The latter part of the twentieth century saw two varieties of *terra cava* literature published: the pastiche and the thriller. Rudy Rucker borrowed heavily from nineteenth century sources to create *The Hollow Earth: The Narrative of Mason Algiers Reynolds of Virginia* (1990, 2006). Jeremiah Reynolds has his name appropriated for the narrator, Mason Reynolds, but the former still makes an appearance, as does his pamphlet "South Sea Expedition. John Symmes, already deceased by the events in the novel, is still featured posthumously via the reading of *Symmes's Theory of Concentric Spheres*. The U.S. Exploring Expedition and

²⁸ David Hatcher Childress, 'Introduction', *The Hollow Earth: The Greatest Geographical Discovery in History* by Dr. Raymond Bernard (Kempton, IL: Adventures Unlimited Press, 2009), p. ix.

²⁹ Dr. Raymond Bernard, *The Hollow Earth: The Greatest Geographical Discovery in History* (Kempton, IL: Adventures Unlimited, 2009), p. 5. All further references cited in text for this edition.

Lieutenant Wilkes, called a 'scheming pock-faced poltroon',³⁰ also earn a mention. A ship and a hot air balloon is used to reach the Antarctic Symmes hole, stopping off at the Falkland Islands like Seaborn did, and collecting seal skins along the way.

In a similar vein of pastiche, Thomas Pynchon has employed the history of hollow earth thought in both *Mason & Dixon* (1997) and *Against the Day* (2006). *Mason & Dixon* uses the hollow earth to examine human relations, the difference between people pointed *away* from each other – however minutely – on the surface, while 'in the Earth Concave, everyone is pointed *at* everyone else',³¹ thus altering how people interact with one another. This is the same idea espoused in *Nequa* to explain the spirit of cooperation.

Indiana Jones even managed to find his way beneath the earth's surface not once, but twice. First in *Indiana Jones and the Interior World* (1992) by Rob MacGregor, and again in *Indiana Jones and the Hollow Earth* (1997) by Max McCoy. The latter is more focused on historical and archaeological expertise to delve in the history and mythology of *terra cava*, and McCoy includes a short afterword with more details about the history of the hollow earth. Indy, after hearing a tall tale from a dying man about Ultima Thule, is pitted against Nazi occultists out to find a 'Vril crystal', combining nineteenth and twentieth century ideas about the hollow earth. It's not so much a Symmesian structure as a Vernian cavern accessed through the Arctic.

James Rollins published his first thriller in 1999, *Subterranean*, about a lost race beneath the Antarctic ice cap, millions of years old. Instead of ancient Sumerians or Egyptians, Rollins links this lost race to the Gagudja Aboriginal tribe of Australia. This race is also given the type of psychic powers seen in earlier works, as if subterranean isolation is a key to mental development. Prehistoric creatures evolved to unground living also make an appearance as they do in other *terra cava* tales. The threat posed in this world is not from the internals, but the externals; post-colonial thought in Rollins's narrative shifts peril from the unknown race to the human race.

³⁰ Rudy Rucker, *The Hollow Earth: The Narrative of Mason Algiers Reynolds of Virginia*, 2nd ed. (Austin, TX: MonkeyBrain Books, 2006), p. 56.

³¹ Thomas Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997), p. 741.

In the same year, Jeff Long published his horror novel *The Descent* (1999), in which the semi-porous earth and a cannibalistic lost race become a threat to all of humanity. More horror/thriller than scientific endeavour, Long's hadal are an ancient, brutal, mutated patchwork of a dying race, both repulsive and seductive to those explorers who come to know them:

Their seduction of her had begun. No great mystery there. It was the seduction of a storybook land, the seduction of becoming an expatriate. You fell for a place like darkest Africa or Paris or Kathmandu, and soon you had no nation of your own, and you were simply a citizen of time.³²

Where the *terra cava* of the nineteenth century became a place to conquer, to establish a colony, or to live in utopic paradise, Long's world is more like the dark realms of the dying and the dead, to be escaped, because the price of adventuring is too high. One of the leaders is referred to as 'Satan', and what is hell now may once have been Shangri-la. Long employs conflicting mythic imagery to construct his complex society of cavern-dwellers, both the good and the evil.

V THE HOLLOW EARTH IN OTHER MEDIA

The hollow earth narrative has come to encompass more than just the novel form. Film, games, and comic books have all offered their own interpretations of the *terra cava*, many of them built upon nineteenth century Vernian tropes, rather than Symmesian geography, as the former is more recognisable.

In terms of film, there have been *terra cava* narratives than new literary ventures, straddling the realms of adventurer and horror. With the looming threat of nuclear destruction, seeking refuge beneath the earth's crust seemed a somewhat plausible idea. *Unknown World* (1951, screenplay by Millard Kaufman) saw geologist Jeremiah Morley (played by Victor Kilian) build a device like Burroughs's 'iron mole' to make a new home for humanity underground. Without polar openings, drilling becomes the easiest way to control human descent and exploration of the interior world. The protection offered by the inner earth in a nuclear age was appealing.

³² Jeff Long, *The Descent* (New York: Jove Books, 1999), p. 551.

Mole-type races of various forms kept audiences entertained, from *Superman and the Mole Men* (1951) to *The Mole People* (1956); what makes the latter unique is its explicit mention of John Cleves Symmes amidst a history of hollow earth theory delivered by an academic character in a prologue. Standish declares that the film's narrative 'has absolutely no socially redeeming value, or intellectual resonance',³³ but such accusations could probably be levelled at most *terra cava* films. The advanced races of the nineteenth century are supplanted by races that evoke a sense of the grotesque from viewers, who associate underground creatures with anthropomorphic underdevelopment.

Journey to the Centre of the Earth found its ways onto large and small screens repeatedly, most recently in 2008 (Dir. Eric Brevig), in an era when one would think the idea of a hollow world too passé to sell to audiences. The screenwriters, Michael D. Weiss, Jennifer Flackett, and Mark Levin substantially alter the original material from Verne, including the characters becoming Americans in search of a missing man, set in the modern day. Entrance through an Icelandic volcano is consistent with the original text, as is the exit through another volcano in Italy. But science is no longer the focus of the narrative, replaced by adventure and appeals to modern concerns of family and loss.

There are a couple of films that are not structured around a hollow earth, or even a semi-porous one, but their narratives are reminders of the continued fascination with the rest of the non-visible world. *The Core* (2003, Dir. Jon Amiel) is a film that follows a group of scientists burrowing to the earth's core in order to detonate nuclear bombs that will restart the rotation of the earth's core when it becomes unable, disrupting the planet's magnetic field. Reminiscent of nineteenth century *terra cava* narratives, there is a massive diamond which the boring machine comes into contact with. Three years before there was a low budget, made-for-television film utilising the same premise called *Deep Core* (2000, Dir. Rodney McDonald): disaster can only be averted with a powerful drilling machine depositing nuclear bombs in the earth's core.

³³ Standish, *Hollow Earth*, p. 281.

In 2003 Frogwares Game Development Studio released *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, a computer game ostensibly set up as a sequel to Verne's original novel. Journalist, Ariane, is swallowed up by an earthquake near the Sneffels volcano in Iceland, entering a world of primitive creatures and lost civilisations. The giant forest of mushrooms and prehistoric creatures from Verne's novel feature in the game imagery. Five years later Nintendo released a game under the same title, but this one was designed to tie into the 2008 film of the same name.

Exile Game Studios released a roll playing game, *Hollow Earth Expedition* (2006), which is set in the 1930s with villainous Nazis, once more pulling Third Reich occultism into a *terra cava* narrative. Multiple races, riches, and prehistoric animals draw on Verne, Haggard, and Burroughs. With the success of the first game, expansion texts were subsequently released, including *Hollow Earth Expedition: Secrets of the Surface World* (2008), *Hollow Earth Expedition: Mysteries of the Hollow Earth* (2009), and *Hollow Earth Expedition: Perils of the Surface World* (2013). Like the realms of Dungeons and Dragons, the hollow earth is a source for the mythic adventure rather than scientific explorations.

Between 1996 and 1997 Vision Comics released three issues of the anthropomorphic comic book series, *Walter Kitty in...the Hollow Earth*, featuring a feline humanoid, Walter Kitty, the fox-like Dr.Foxx, and his daughter Catherine, who journey to 'Mongrolia' (i.e. Mongolia) where they discover an entrance to the world underground. The imperialistic language of 'priceless scientific discoveries' in a 'Land of enchantment, mystery – and danger'³⁴ is employed by writer Mark Shaw. Though a longer storyline was planned, the series stopped after just three issues.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has attempted to present as comprehensive a history as possible (where physical distance from materials did not hinder) of the nineteenth century American fascination with the hollow earth, and its European influences, while providing detailed pre- and postscripts about the evolution of the genre. While the early hollow earth narrative

³⁴ Mark Shaw, *Walter Kitty in... the Hollow Earth*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (July 1996) [Vision Comics], p. 13.

emerged outside of the United States, John Cleves Symmes, Jr., his followers, the American press and the American reader sustained the idea of a hollow, habitable earth for one hundred years. As the goals of continental conquest were met, as cities became socially restive centres of overpopulation, as the Gilded Age destabilised American economics, and as Spiritualism called into question every matter of faith and human consciousness, the existence of a hollow earth, even only hypothetically, provided space and setting for writers to exercise their hopes and fears for the future of the U.S. In time the *terra cava* was supplanted by other destinations, but the moon, Mars, and beyond, but contemporary cultural products have demonstrated that the idea is not completely forgotten. As copyrights expire and royalty-free reprints find their way into the market, it is important to provide a context for the existence of these works in the nineteenth century, and how they continue to influence literary and cinematic creators today. It is likely that even more works than are known today will emerge from archives and attics, and this study will hopefully help to establish the significance of the *terra cava* narrative in America.

APPENDIX – Other *Terra Cava* Narratives

I WORKS TO RECONSIDER

There are a few works often listed as hollow earth narratives that should be reconsidered because close reading of the texts would indicate the authors were not actually putting forward a *terra cava* setting to tell their stories. These are listed as hollow earth works in such studies as Standish's *Hollow Earth* and Bruce A. Walton's *A Guide to the Inner Earth* (1983).

I.i – *Beyond the Palæocrystic Sea, or, The Legend of Halfjord*

Listed as a hollow earth novel, A.S. Morton's *Beyond the Palæocrystic Sea* (1895) is an Arctic lost race novel, delivered in the form of a found manuscript written by Pierre Vacheron of New Orleans. Pierre and his friend Morton (alluding to the author, though this is never fully explained) sail on the Elisha Kane expedition in 1853 to find out what happened to the missing Franklin expedition. Unfortunately, Pierre ends up adrift on an iceberg and while he worries about “the ancient fables that the Pole was nothing but a great hole through which the waters unceasingly rushed but to be turned into steam by the unquenching fires beneath...”¹, he does not mention Symmes, nor does he end up inside the earth. Instead, Pierre ends up in a tropical Polar Depression, crowned and deified by the local population: “Here I was, then, king of an unknown race, god of an untaught people, spending my days in an unsought, unexplored country” (p. 35-6). Pierre provides a few details about the race and their culture, but does not explain any more about the environment or firmly set its location inside or outside the world. After only fifty-four pages of framing and Pierre's narrative, ‘The Legend of Halfjord’ fills out the bulk of the novel, ‘a romance...to while away the tedious hours’ (p. 54). This tale, told as a Norse-like myth, does not include any reference to the hollow earth, and does not have any concluding frame. Morton's novel is two separate narratives, with a lost explorer among a lost race setting up the second part. But there is nothing to distinguish it as a *terra cava* narrative.

¹ A.S. Morton, *Beyond the Palæocrystic Sea, or, The Legend of Halfjord* (Chicago: Printed Privately, 1895), p. 19. All other references cited I text for this edition.

I.ii - *Intermere*

One primary text that is often catalogued under ‘hollow earth’ is William Alexander Taylor’s *Intermere* (1901-2), but I want to take a moment to present evidence refuting that categorisation. Though David Standish and David Seed have made reference to it as such, Bleiler does not, and some of the phrasing in the narrative would lead me to agree with the latter. Parsed down, Inter+Mere means ‘Between the Waters’, and the references to the blue sky and stars above (pp. 13, 105-6) – astronomy being distinctly absent in *terra cava* stories – is suspicious. If one was not told in advance to read the narrative as an example of the hollow earth, the idea would never likely come to the reader that the setting was anywhere but some lost island on the surface of the earth. That narrator, Giles H. Anderton, describes nearly drowning, but ‘rising toward the surface’ (p. 13), where he is picked up by the Intermerans and taken to their islands of paradise. The story follows many of the same tropes already discussed: a beautiful, racially uniform population, advanced technology, utopic governance, spiritual perfection, telepathic powers, etc. At no point does he describe a Symmes Hole, an aurora borealis, or any other geographic feature found in *terra cava* novels. Instead, besides an abundance of stars in the sky, Anderton observes ‘an unobscured sun’ (p. 15) but is kept from the nation’s borders ‘because it might have enabled [him] to form some idea of the geographical location of Intermere’ (p. 75), implying that it is a place that can be found on the earth’s surface. It is easy to see how some of the text might be confused for being *terra cava* in nature; Anderton is rescued from ‘the remote and outer ocean’ (p. 60), but this is not a metaphor for ‘outer’ world, simply waters beyond Intermere’s borders and gentle seas. A character offers to give Anderton the news of the ‘outer world’ (p. 61), but this is possibly only a reference to the world beyond Intermere. ‘Almost literally speaking’, Anderton says, ‘there is no night in Intermere’ (p. 105) but not because there is an internal sun, but because the use of electric lights is so profuse.

Anderton is told by one of his instructors that ‘Edison and other electrical discoverers are more than a cycle behind us, and have as yet but touched the outer surface of the great secret’ (p. 69). This is not the ‘outer surface’ of the globe; Intermere’s ‘great

secret' is *not* that they live *inside* the world, and the mention of Edison's name is a very specific clue. Though other *terra cava* narratives mention electric, invigorating atmospheres, Intermerer's 'great secret' is 'the electric current which [they] take directly from the atmosphere at will... To command that is to command everything' (p. 128). There is too much contradictory visual evidence presented in the text to carry on believing that *Intermerer* is a hollow earth story.

Other Works

There are several works that, while known or assumed to be about the hollow earth, have been untraceable any archive, are missing from those which list them in the catalogue, or were beyond geographic or financial reach. Archives visited include The University of Liverpool (Foundation Collection), the Ohio State University, University of California Riverside (Eaton Collection), and the U.S. Library of Congress. These excluded items could not be found at any of the four.

- 'In the World Below' (*Golden Hours*, 1897) – Fred Thorpe
- *Arqtiq: A Story of the Marvels at the North Pole* (1899) – Anna Adolph
- 'Land of the Central Sun' (*Argosy*, July 1902 to January 1903) – Park Winthrop
- 'My Bride from Another World: A Weird Romance Recounting Many Strange Adventures in an Unknown World', *Physical Culture* (Sept. 1904) – Rev. E.C. Atkins
- *The Land of Nison* (1906) – C. Regnus [Charles Sanger]. Listed but lost at UC Riverside's Eaton Archives.
- 'Through the Earth; or, Jack Nelson's Invention' (*Brave and Bold Weekly*, 1909) – Fred Thorpe

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