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PERSUASIVE IRONIES: UTOPIAN READINGS
OF SWIFT AND KRASICKI

Katarzyna Bartoszyńska

The ostensible goal of the utopian novel is to serve as the fictional embodiment of a theoretical ideal, the dream of a perfect society brought to life. This is especially true in the age of Enlightenment, a time that seemed to particularly believe in the emancipatory power of reason and its ability to rationally organize human existence. The novel is an obvious handmaiden to the utopian project, rendering the brave new world tangible and familiar while also acting as its advocate, persuading readers of its virtues. It seems surprising, then, to find two eighteenth-century utopian novels that not only critique utopian ideals but also call into question fiction's ability to deliver utopianism's message, or indeed, any kind of lesson at all. Yet the two novels I discuss in this article, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and Ignacy Krasicki's *Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadki* (*The Adventures of Mr. Nicholas Wisdom*) (1776), do exactly that. Krasicki and Swift illustrate the ultimate disjunction between the human and the abstract, a problem that is at the heart of political theory itself. The inability of the universal to meaningfully encompass the individual casts doubt on political projects of universal freedom, which must ultimately be a freedom of the individual, and of self-determination. What makes their novels of particular interest is the way in which they simultaneously illuminate the limits of fiction's powers of political pedagogy and its ability to portray those limits through its use of irony.

Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadki is often considered to be the first Polish novel, and a typical text of the Enlightenment. The novel tells the story of a young man, Mikołaj, and his upbringing in Sarmatian Poland. Forced to leave the country because of financial problems, he travels to France, which he must also eventually flee because of money troubles.

A shipwreck lands him on the island of Nipu, which most critics read as a fairly straightforward embodiment of Enlightenment principles, in line with other European visions of utopia.¹ After leaving Nipu, Mikołaj travels to the New World, and ultimately returns to Poland. Studies of the novel focus on its advocacy of Enlightenment values (though more recent criticism has begun to complicate this picture, as Teresa Kostkiewiczowa points out in a broad overview of this issue), but as I make clear here, the novel lends itself to a very different reading.² Swift was undeniably an influence on Krasicki: in fact, the narrator of Krasicki's subsequent novel, *Historia*, is a character from *Gulliver's Travels*, an immortal Strudlbrug from Luggnag, of Gulliver's third voyage. Read alongside *Gulliver's Travels*, the critique of Enlightenment values in *Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadki* becomes far more apparent. Both novels not only articulate a similar problematic at the heart of utopian thought but also reflect more specifically on the role that fiction plays in illuminating these critiques.

At the center of both texts is an interrogation of the disjunct between theory and practice, between the particular and the universal. The universal has, of course, long been a problem for utopian thought, particularly for its fictional representations. The universal as a category is necessarily abstract and formal in nature: if it is to contain everyone, it cannot be too particular. But this is precisely what cripples the fictional efforts: the category becomes so broad that it loses sight of the individual. Fredric Jameson complains, for instance, that in utopian literature "the perspective is utterly anonymous. The citizens of utopia are grasped as a statistical population; there are no individuals any longer, let alone any existential 'lived experience.'"³ The characters become a uniform, undifferentiated mass, no longer recognizable as human. It is a curious conundrum, for this is the very problem that fiction ought to ameliorate, rendering the experience of utopian life tangible. Moreover, this tendency to paint humanity in its elementary forms also opens onto the dangers inherent in utopian planning; the slippage into totalitarianism that is so common in these works. To lose sight of the individual, it seems, is also to lose sight of the cost of human life. Utopias, by virtue of being "perfect," are singular entities that struggle to accommodate pluralism.

As a problem, this difficulty in depicting individuals in universal terms—and universals in individual terms—becomes a fascinating manifestation of the disjunction between the human and the theoretical. The intriguing aspect of Swift's and Krasicki's texts is that they make this issue central to their novels, turning them into reflections on the problem as such. Their works actively grapple with, and comment on, the difficulties inherent in the encounter between abstraction and reality, theory and practice.

This disjunction between abstraction and reality also lies at the center of the paradox of travel literature, a subgenre that has particularly strong ties to utopian fiction. Travel writing is an obvious model for utopian literature: the structure of travel narrative offers the perfect justification for devoting so much attention and detail to the inner workings of a fictional society (indeed, the premise of the utopian novel practically requires an audience conceived of as foreign, for why else would the descriptions be necessary?). But here the paradox takes hold: as a genre, travel literature attempts to deliver virtually what it simultaneously insists must be experienced personally—the experience of travel. This contradiction is made particularly explicit when authors complain about the damage wreaked by other travel narratives that have been propagating false information about a given locale and argue vehemently that literature is not to be trusted. These are works that insistently privilege lived reality over abstract—or literary—knowledge, simultaneously attempting to make the experience of reading a novel akin to the act of travel and protesting the impossibility of their task.

Many texts simply ignore this paradox and take it as given that *their* work will not suffer from such flaws. They acknowledge the problem and proceed as if their own accounts are faultless, because at very least they have shown themselves as conscientious and aware of the potential dangers that lie ahead. The narrator in Krasicki's later novel, *Historia*, is a representative example: he not only makes a point of correcting stereotypes about the places he visits but also derides written histories and warns readers never to trust official accounts.⁴ In other words, he dives into paradox with hardly a backward glance: historical narratives are unreliable and their misleading accounts have dangerous effects, but his own work can be relied on to provide a faithful account. In *Gulliver's Travels* and *Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadki*, Swift and Krasicki treat the issue in somewhat more complex ways, using travel writing's inherent problematic as an opening onto the broader question of the clash between abstraction and reality and what it means for utopian thought.

Pedagogies of Travel

Early on in *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift shows Gulliver to be simultaneously aware of the virtues of travel—its ability to educate and enlighten—and immune to its effects. When his description of England to the king of Brobdingag is met with horror, Gulliver's own faith in his homeland is not shaken. Rather, he says,

But great allowances should be given to a King who lives wholly secluded from the rest of the world, and must therefore be altogether unacquainted with the manners and customs that most prevail in other nations: the want of which knowledge will ever produce many *prejudices* and certain *narrowness of thinking*; from which we and the politer countries of Europe are wholly exempted.⁵

The potential wisdom to be gained from a journey lies in its ability to unsettle one's views, leading to the acknowledgment of a different perspective. Gulliver, unable to distance himself mentally from the politics of his home and recognize them as flawed, can readily dismiss the king's view precisely because the king has *not* traveled widely, never mind the fact that Gulliver's own voyages have served only to reinforce previously held beliefs. The irony here is readily discernible and makes it quite clear that simply going to a different place does not automatically confer wisdom on the traveler.

Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadki takes a different approach, though a similarly problematic one. Mikołaj, in an encounter reminiscent of that between Gulliver and the king of Brobdingag, takes the criticisms to heart, even if he is not fully persuaded. Rather than attributing the disagreement to his companion's lack of travel, Mikołaj is impressed by his friend's wisdom despite this lack:

Upokarzał mnie rozum Xaoo; nie mogłem tego skombinować, jak to człowiek, który w Warszawie nigdy nie był, Paryża nie widział, mógł przecię rozsądnie myśleć, mówić i konwinkować nawet człowieka, który nierównie więcej od niego i widział, i słyszał.

(Xaoo's reasoning humbled me. I could not fathom how a person who had not been to Warsaw and had not seen Paris was able nonetheless to think and speak sensibly and to be convincing, even in conversation with someone who had both seen and heard incomparably more than he).⁶

Here, Mikołaj simultaneously illustrates the merits of travel—allowing one to encounter others whose ideas may be persuasive—and also implies that it is not necessary, for after all, Xaoo has attained this wisdom without ever leaving home. Perhaps it is simply a matter of reading the right books after all? Travel, in these two scenes, is shown as either insufficient or unnecessary: hardly a glowing endorsement for the genre of travel writing.

Mikołaj's further adventures deepen the problem. The novel can be read as a narrative of conversion (or education), whereby Mikołaj moves from naiveté to wisdom as he learns about the world. The most obvious marker of change in the protagonist is in his attitude toward money. In the early portions of the text, most of Mikołaj's problems are of a financial nature, and his desire for money threatens to destroy him. When he arrives at the island of Nipu, he is seemingly educated out of this love for gold until he discovers a shipwreck that contains, among other things, a pile of treasure. It is here that we see the limits of abstract intellectual argument, for despite his better judgment, he simply cannot resist the allure of money, the very thing that nearly ruined him in the first place:

Złoto, lubo w tej wyspie do niczego niezdatne, ułudziło mnie zupełnie. Stałem się chciwym bez nadziei zysków, trwożnym w zupełnym bezpieczeństwie. . . . Jużem się był przyzwyczaiał do sposobu życia Nipuanów; jużem zaczynał doznawać skutków szacownej spokojności. Kruszec złoty nie dość że mnie uczynił nieszczęśliwym w Europie, dogał za światem. . . . [W]idząc, że się żadnym sposobem przewyciężyć nie mogę, przedsięwziąłem na owej zachowanej z okrętu łodzi puścić się na zgubę oczewistą prawie, byle z tej wyspy wynieść. (140–41)

(The gold, though valueless on Nipu, had utterly beguiled me. I became greedy without hope of profit, and I felt anxious while enjoying complete security. . . . I had actually grown accustomed to the Nipuan way of life. I had begun to value the sacred tranquility of the place. But that metal known as gold was not content to make me miserable in Europe alone; it now pursued me the world over. . . . Realizing that I could not prevail over myself, I resolved to leave the island in the boat I had salvaged from the wrecked ship, even though I was almost certain that this would bring about my ruin. [101, translation modified])

Although greed and the desire for luxury are faults explicitly derided by the Nipuans, and although Mikołaj seems to agree with their teachings on an abstract level and enjoy a world without money, when confronted with the glint of gold he is overwhelmed by what even he can recognize as an irrational desire. He flees the island without a word of goodbye, as though he were escaping a prison instead of a paradise. Although he will later claim

that it was patriotism and a yearning for home that led to his departure, the baser motive is far more credible. Clearly, abstract knowledge can only go so far: human caprice is far more powerful.

He eventually frees himself of his greed once and for all, but the means of his conversion is not rational discourse of the sort he had been exposed to in Nipu: after leaving Nipu he is enslaved and forced to work in the mines, which leads to a painful awareness about where wealth comes from and the suffering it causes. If the lovers of gold were made aware of how much suffering people undergo to provide them with this metal, he argues, they would change their ways (151/110). Although he quickly converts his suffering into a life lesson via abstract reasoning, it is clear that it is the physical pain that has changed his mind, again casting doubt on the power of literature to deliver, in writing, lessons that are bought with experience.

One could say that the problem is not literature and whatever powers it may possess but rather human nature. Indeed, Mikołaj is practically a poster child for human intractability. Despite myriad educational experiences, he repeatedly reverts back to his previous beliefs and must be trained out of them anew. This is most clear in his persistent tendency to stereotype people. For example, his initial encounters with the Nipuan lead him to think they are a rather primitive race, and he decides that he can best express his gratitude for their hospitality by making them aware of their own barbarism. As he is on the verge of doing so, however, they turn the tables, praising his progress in becoming more civilized and adapting to Nipuan culture (93–94/66–67). He is thunderstruck with astonishment, and so begins the novel's long-running critique of developmental notions of human civilization. I return to the political implications of this aspect of the text later, but for the moment, its relevance is to illustrate Mikołaj's stubborn immunity to any form of education. Although he does ultimately recognize that the Nipuan are not savage, this fails to translate into a broader cultural relativism or even to an increased self-awareness of his own assumptions about others. When he arrives in the New World and a tribal native offers him assistance, Mikołaj declares himself "zdziwiony takowym procederem dzikiego człowieka" (152) ("surprised that a savage would act in such a manner" [111]). The irony of the scene is not lost on the reader, particularly because the "native" immediately offers a lengthy disquisition on the topic, which is later repeated by the Margrave de Vennes. Not only does Mikołaj need to be reminded of it again by the Margrave; upon hearing it, he remarks that he is surprised to hear such profound ideas from a man who looks, at first glance, like a dandy—launching the Margrave into yet another lecture.

The novel thus finds itself in a somewhat paradoxical position, striving to educate its readers at the same time that it attempts to illustrate the limitations of abstract argument. While Krasicki shows that reasoned discourse cannot guarantee a lasting transformation in his protagonist, he seems to retain some faith that, if repeated often enough, it may ultimately convert his readers. The novel therefore attempts to form its claims in a dual fashion: not only by abstract argument but also through vicarious experience. While the reader cannot be made to work in the gold mines, for instance, he can, perhaps, be moved through fiction to a new understanding. The power of such a plea, however, is ambiguous at best and is dependent on the extent to which the reader can identify with Mikołaj and his experiences. At the same time, Mikołaj is also clearly a *negative* example in some cases, whom the narrator is gently mocking for his narrow-mindedness and inability to learn.⁷ Thus, the novel must likewise contain long passages of didactic screed (delivered by other characters) to set the reader on the correct path. In other words, the novel simultaneously asks the reader to identify with the protagonist *and* read him ironically. This is precisely the paradox of travel writing and, more broadly, the problem at the heart of literature's pedagogical potential: it has two strategies of persuasion, and they are at odds with each other.

The Citizens of Utopia

Mikołaj's resistance to rational argument underscores a fundamental problem with the utopian premise: the recalcitrance of human nature. The utopian dream is based upon the ability of humans to lead a rationally organized existence, but as Mikołaj's adventures—and the end of the novel—make clear, it is not always possible to persuade people to do what is good for them. And yet this is precisely what utopian fiction strives to do, and indeed must do, for the citizens of utopia must be committed to the principles on which it is founded. What then, are we to make of a utopian novel that illustrates the impossibility of convincing someone via abstract argument?

While the conclusion of the work speaks to the difficulties in persuading people to change their own system of government to a superior one—to enact a utopia—it cannot be ignored that Mikołaj was not banished from Nipu but left of his own volition, and for wholly irrational reasons. The problem in this case is not only how to convince people to create a utopian world but also how to persuade them to stay put once they have one. As Krasicki shows, this is a difficult proposition, for human nature is fickle. Swift likewise speaks of such

human caprice: describing the island of Laputa in the third voyage, Gulliver notes that travel is strictly regulated, for the female inhabitants would otherwise flee. While this may be read as simple Swiftian misogyny (Frank Boyle, referring specifically to this episode, offers a defense against this charge), it nonetheless further speaks to the impossibility of a rationally organized life:⁸

The wives and daughters lament their confinement to the island, although I think it is the most delicious spot of ground in the world; and although they live here in the greatest plenty and magnificence, and are allowed to do whatever they please, they long to see the world, and take the diversions of the metropolis, which they are not allowed to do without particular license from the King; and this is not easy to be obtained, because the people of quality have found by frequent experience how hard it is to persuade their women to return from below. (155–56)

Here, we see again the irrational desire to leave “the most delicious spot of ground in the world,” even for a life of misery. Although Gulliver deduces from this that “the caprices of womankind are not limited by any climate or nation, and that they are more uniform than can be easily imagined” (156), one cannot help but notice that Gulliver himself is cursed with a similar capricious wanderlust; “the thirst I had of seeing the world, notwithstanding my past misfortunes, continuing as violent as ever” (143), “my insatiable desire of seeing foreign countries” (67), “I continued at home with my wife and children about five months in a happy condition, if I could have learned the lesson of knowing when I was well” (213). Human beings’ instinct to roam, it seems, is unconquerable, making them ineligible for a tranquil utopian existence.

The question of whether people are suited to paradise is one that troubles utopian writing. For a perfect world would seem to require, in turn, perfect inhabitants, and as these texts make clear, people fall rather short in this regard. This problem is articulated by the Margrave de Vennes in *Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadki* in much simpler terms, as pertains to the difficulty of making friends:

Nie trzeba wyciągać po ludziach ostatniego stopnia doskonałości, bo takim sposobem nie znajdziemy żadnego, którego byśmy uznali godnym naszego przywiązania; ... [n]ie znajdziesz waszmśc Nipuanów w Europie; musisz jednak żyć z ludźmi. ... Mniej niedoskonały niech tylko będzie celem troskliwości takowej—będziesz szczęśliwym, bo znajdziesz przyjaciół. (163)

(If we require the highest degree of excellence in people, we will not then find anyone deemed worthy of our affection. . . . There are no Nipuans in Europe, but you must live among people. . . . Grant a few imperfections in those you care to know well, and you will be happy, for then you will find friends. [119])

Collective existence demands compromise and a willingness to accept the faults of others. Reading over these words, one also thinks of poor Gulliver returning home from his voyages and settling into a deeply misanthropic existence, unable to bear even the scent of his wife and children, spending most of his time attempting to chat with his horses. But this speech by the Margrave is not simply a guide to making friends; it is also an implicit claim about human nature as such and the realities of collective life. A utopian society is one that requires “the highest degree of excellence in people”; conformity to a standard of perfection that humankind is incapable of.

It is noteworthy that in his speech, the Margrave draws a distinction between Nipuans and people. One could replace Nipuans with Houyhnhnms and arrive at a conclusion as to the moral that would be equally applicable to *Gulliver's Travels*. The implication is that Nipuans and Houyhnhnms are a different sort of creature from humans, able to achieve a standard that people cannot. Indeed, it is not whim that sends Gulliver back to England in the final voyage of Swift's novel; rather, it is an inadequacy of a different sort: he is not a Houyhnhnm. This would seem to be a further confirmation of humankind's inadequacy to utopian life, but in fact, it opens onto a somewhat different interpretation.

Utopia—or Else!

It is not exactly because Gulliver is not a Houyhnhnm that he cannot remain in their country; rather, it is because he occupies an ambiguous position in the organization of Houyhnhnm society. Somewhat too refined to be a Yahoo, he is nonetheless not a Houyhnhnm and never will be. He therefore does not meet the requirements to be a true citizen of Houyhnhnmland and, as such, becomes a threat. The Houyhnhnm assembly decrees that it is “not agreeable to reason or nature” (273) for him to live in a Houyhnhnm home as a companion and that it is dangerous for him to be placed among the Yahoos, for his rudimentary powers of reason could lead him to organize the Yahoos in rebellion. Thus, he is exhorted to leave. Rather than being a

claim about humankind's qualifications (or lack thereof) to inhabit a utopia, this is an example of a flaw in the utopian scheme: its inability to tolerate ambiguity. In a rationally ordered society, matters are black and white: there can be no third term.

We see manifestations of this problem in both Krasicki's and Swift's novels. The rigid organization of the utopian world makes any possibility of difference or change dangerous. What these works illustrate, furthermore, is the way in which anything that does not belong to the utopian scheme becomes wholly negative, an embodiment of evil. This is evidenced by the Laputans' paranoid study of astronomy in the society encountered in Gulliver's third voyage. The Laputans fear that which they can neither control nor fully calculate. It is here that utopia's totalitarianism, and violence, emerge.

Krasicki subtly points to the violence in the utopian scheme through the character of Laongo, who serves as a condensed version of all threats posed by otherness. Laongo, we are told, traveled to distant islands and returned with plans of reform. When these plans were discovered, he and his followers were stoned to death. A pile of rocks marks the site, and a ballad keeps its lessons alive for future inhabitants. Just how strongly engraved the memory of this primordial violence is on the minds of Nipuans is made clear when Xaoo, recoiling in horror at Mikołaj's descriptions of a corrupt European legal system, cries "Bądźcie błogosławione, święte ręce, któreście stosami kamieni przywaliły Laonga i towarzyszków jego! Takich by nas zbrodni nauczyli wezwani od niego cudzoziemcy!" (129) ("Blessed be those sacred hands that crushed Laongo and his accomplices with stones! The outlanders he summoned would have taught us to commit the crimes you describe" [93]). The brutality of the language, and the matter-of-fact way in which it is uttered, is jarring, forcing the reader to confront the violent repression necessary to any utopian scheme, its inability to tolerate dissension in any form.

It is not only explicit rebellion that Nipuans fear but innovation more generally—and therefore travel. Laongo's crime is his attempt to foment rebellion, yet the cause is clearly located in his voyages to other countries. Here the problematic union of travel writing and utopian literature becomes clear, for while it is obvious that Mikołaj can benefit from his voyages because they bring him to Nipu and allow him to learn about their way of life, it is also apparently obvious that the Nipuans, believing they have found the ideal way of life, can in no way benefit from encounters with others.

Xaoo initially asks Mikołaj a series of questions, striving to find out as much as he can about the European way of life. Having learned about Mikołaj's way of thinking, he then proceeds with his own lessons, the project

of “civilizing” Mikołaj. Gulliver’s Houyhnhnm master is also eager to learn about Europe, mostly because he is astonished to discover a Yahoo with some grasp of logic. He likewise, however, seems more intent on explaining the flaws of these systems to Gulliver than entertaining them as genuine alternatives. This curiosity on the part of certain utopians—surely akin to the caprice and wanderlust of the protagonists, albeit in a more restrained form—is notable, hinting as it does that travel (both to and from utopia) truly *is* a threat to their way of life. Xaoo states this explicitly, saying that foreign places will either be better or worse than one’s home, and if they are worse, what good does it do to see them, and if better, what does one gain from seeing them other than a newfound discontent with one’s own lot? Though he agrees that one may indeed learn things that will benefit one’s home, he claims that this will inevitably lead to the importation of foreign vices as well, for evil is more appealing to the weak human spirit than is virtue (125/90). This statement is particularly striking, for it is an implicit acknowledgment that humans are not naturally virtuous creatures—they must be disciplined in order to be good. While travel does hold out some possibility for improving a person, this is outweighed by its potential harm. There is an interesting political undertone to this argument as well: Xaoo argues that travel is the privilege of the wealthy, a luxury small—or minor—nations cannot afford. The costs are too high, and not only in terms of expenditure; travel also deprives society of useful members: “Im kraj uboższy—szkoda większa, a jeżeli nie ma w sobie takich okoliczności, które by do podobnych podróży zwabiały cudzoziemców—nienagrodzona” (125) (“The poorer a nation, the greater the costs. Moreover, if a nation has nothing to attract visitors, the costs are not repaid” [90]). More importantly, Xaoo says, travel feeds man’s restlessness rather than satisfying it, making it clear that a successful utopian society depends on the suppression of human passions in favor of a virtuous existence. It requires discipline and complete submission to its laws and principles. An encounter with different forms of life leads one to question these norms and is therefore a threat to the entire society.

This danger is apparent even in the highly disciplined society of the Houyhnhnms. Commentators on Swift such have pointed out that, in his willingness to play the role of host, Gulliver’s Houyhnhnm master violates local customs.⁹ Though he explicitly derides Gulliver’s beliefs, declaring him a “perfect Yahoo” (229), he nonetheless seems to enjoy his company and conversation. This suggests that he is not wholly impervious to outside influence. What is more, though he ultimately accedes to the assembly’s ruling and bids Gulliver depart, there is a trace of regret in his final words.

The leniency he had verged on exhibiting validates the utopian fear of outsiders, showing as it does that even a perfectly reasonable creature can become personally attached to a Yahoo.

The aberrant nature of this fondness is vividly clear when compared to the fate of the other Yahoos. In Houyhnhnmland, anxiety about otherness moves toward a terrifying extreme. Set against the race of Houyhnhnms, the Yahoos come to represent all that is evil, and indeed, are portrayed as thoroughly nasty creatures. This can be seen even in Houyhnhnm language: "The Houyhnhnms have no word in their language to express anything that is *evil*, except what they borrow from the deformities or ill qualities of the Yahoos" (269). This distinction, however, is not cast in racial terms but in terms of rationality: whereas the Houyhnhnms are creatures of pure reason, the Yahoos are bestial and irrational. The terms of the debate are set as those of reason itself, wholly impersonal. "So compelling is Houyhnhnm reason that it is presented as entirely other than force": passionless, disinterested, and impermeable to argument.¹⁰ With such variables, the validity of the plan to exterminate the Yahoos brooks no disagreement. Even Gulliver, biologically kindred to them (to an extent that he develops a strong sense of repulsion toward himself, though self-immolation never seems to cross his mind), thinks nothing of using Yahoo skins and tallow to outfit his boat (275–76). The murder of the Yahoos is not a matter of personal distaste but a logical conclusion. Indeed, the Houyhnhnms "have no conception of how a creature can be *compelled*, but only advised, or *exhorted*; because no person can disobey reason without giving up his claims to be a rational creature" (274), and Gulliver's master, though he hates the Yahoos, "no more blamed them for their odious qualities, than he did a *gmnayh* for its cruelty, or a sharp stone for cutting his hoof" (240). In contemplating the massacre of the Yahoos, they are merely acting out the dictates of reason. In this final episode, the utopian argument is raised to its horrifying logical conclusion: genocide.

By defining the ideals of the Houyhnhnms as reason itself, Swift makes their society the essence of utopianism. The horses are faithful devotees of universal reason, a principle seemingly removed from any particular culture or location. In other words, the structure of Houyhnhnm society is theoretically a timeless, universal template. It is not only a rationally ordered world but also one that is structured around pure logic. By illustrating the flaws in this society, its inhuman face, Swift casts doubt on the utopian dream at large. As Seamus Deane has argued, Swift illustrates that any theorization of universality is always rooted in a particular time and place and is thus never genuinely universal.¹¹

Ironic Resolutions

Swift's purpose in book 4 of *Gulliver's Travels* is not to completely renounce reason itself. Reconstructing the claims nested in this voyage, however, is not so simple. Certainly, the argument is not for a wholly irrational, anarchic society. The satire is more open ended: it doesn't formulate an argument so much as it articulates a problem, one that it cannot provide a solution for and perhaps one that cannot be solved. Swift simultaneously reveals the tyranny of reason—its tendency to slip into totalitarianism—and its potential benefits. The Houyhnhnm mode of life is not entirely disavowed or held up as a purely negative example. Swift insists upon the specific merits of this alternative vision, even as he exposes its flaws. However, unlike his "Modest Proposal," which does (ironically) gesture to some legitimate steps for reform (for example, in paragraph 29: "Therefore, let no man talk to me of other Expedients: Of taxing Absentees at five Shillings a Pound: Of using neither Cloaths, nor Household Furniture except what is of our own Growth and Manufacture: Of utterly rejecting the Materials and Instruments that promote foreign Luxury," etc.), no such affirmative message can be clearly gleaned from *Gulliver's Travels*.¹²

The same is true of *Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadki*. Krasicki never suggests what could be changed about Nipu that might convince Mikołaj to stay there, nor does he ever articulate a specific critique of it as a place. In fact, up to the very end, Mikołaj continues to see it as perfect, but without ever expressing any intention of returning. Agnieszka Śniegucka has argued that Mikołaj's departure from Nipu is precipitated by his realization that utopia makes self-realization impossible, but while one could say that the novel opens the possibility of such an epiphany in the reader, there is no evidence of any conscious awareness of this in Mikołaj.¹³ These novels illustrate, rather, that "absolute standards are unattainable by fallen man, and even if they could be achieved would prove unattractive and unsatisfactory. Moreover, all attempts at middle-ground solutions involve a certain amount of self-rationalization and hypocrisy"—they refuse the possibility of a middle way, even as they show that the extremes are unacceptable.¹⁴ Indeed, how can one logically map out a solution that is capable of accommodating a certain amount of irrationality—precisely that which cannot be understood, or predicted, via reason?

The problem with utopian modes of government is their attempt to map out an all-encompassing logical system that will apply universally. The argument these two novels make is that when theory and experience collide, the

results are unforeseeable. The individual cannot be fully encapsulated within the general except by brute conquest: the demand for freedom exceeds the best laid plans.

This critique is not only found in the content of these texts but is also performed by them. The open-ended nature of their form of satirical argument highlights the very blind spot of utopianism that they critique. Satire is not simply a different way of articulating a logical claim. It operates ironically, never stating its arguments openly. A utopian society, however, is predicated on transparency and clearly articulated premises. It is unable to tolerate ambiguity, which is satire's proper residence. Satire is, in this way, utopian—not in the literal sense, as we have seen, but in the metaphorical one, for it is a curious aspect of the term “utopian” that its literal meaning refers to a given (fictional) place but its more popular metaphoric usage implies the awareness of the impossibility of such a place. Satire represents a kind of hope in the face of impossibility. Gesturing ironically to the hidden meanings behind its claims, it suggests that there *is* an ultimate resolution to the problems that it articulates, albeit one that cannot be simply stated. But while this kind of ironic resignation may be possible for an individual (or a novel), it cannot function as the basis for governing society.

While this lesson condemns poor hapless Gulliver to a rather unfortunate ending, Mikołaj's prospects seem rather cheerier, albeit also somewhat half hearted. Mikołaj returns from his travels brimming with wisdom and an ardent desire to apply it to the troubles that have beset Poland. Eager to bring about reform, he travels to Warsaw and attempts a career in politics, but with no success. People are unpersuaded by his arguments. He is surprisingly unperturbed by his failure, saying simply, “Nie udało mi się w Warszawie: ale ja się dlatego ani na Warszawę, ani na rodzaj ludzki nie gniewam. Każdy człowiek ma swój właściwy sposób myślenia; mój nie godził się z Warszawą, pojechałem więc myśleć do Szumina” (187) (“I did not succeed in Warsaw, but this did not make me angry at Warsaw or the human race. Everyone has his own approach to things. Mine was not in agreement with Warsaw's, so I went to Szumin to think” [136]). He returns to his estates and attempts, as much as possible, to live life in accordance with the Nipuan principles he has learned to value. This is a surprising turn in the text, an extremely anticlimactic moment: the narrative momentum is completely deflated, as all the travels would seem to be for naught. Yet the novel concludes with an insistent note of contentment, albeit on a small scale. Travel *has* conferred benefits on Mikołaj, but they are of an individual, rather than collective, nature. Rather than attempting

to force his views on others and enact political change, he returns to his estates to live out his own concrete particularity. Sante Graciotti sees this ending as a moment when utopian ideals are confronted with reality: the result is not the dissolution of utopian principles but rather a shift whereby they are kept alive in the individual's mind and personal life.¹⁵ Graciotti acknowledges that this weakens the utopian claims that the text makes but argues that this loss is compensated by the increase in realism. Such a reading, however, fails to account for the flatness of the ending. The sense that *il faut cultiver son jardin*, that there is no possibility of enticing the collective to pursue a better life for all, is not merely a shift but also, in an important sense, a failure. Though it may appear unsatisfying to many readers (indeed, I share Agnieszka Śniegucka's view that the sudden appearance of the romance plot at the end of the novel seems obviously compensatory), the finale of the text is a necessary conclusion to Krasicki's overarching argument and a vivid illustration of the coercive lining of dreams of universal freedom.¹⁶

Postcards from the Edge of Europe

In an essay on nationalism and irony, Terry Eagleton argues that it is precisely those who are politically oppressed under the guise of the Enlightenment's notions of abstract universal equality who come to understand what such universalism truly represents. Universalism, he writes, must emerge from the particular and be consented to and internalized. In places that are politically oppressed, universalism will appear visibly alien, external to the individual, as a threat to local particularity. Upon being brutally dispossessed of their local culture, an oppressed group becomes alienated from itself and therefore poised to assume the transcendent cosmopolitan subjectivity that the Enlightenment allegedly represented—in order to claim their right to self-determination. The oppressed subject begins with the perception of a lack that renders it non-self-identical, which opens onto a broader social dimension that poses the question of what general conditions are necessary for the fulfillment of their particular needs. Mediated through the general in this way, individual demands become relativized, transformed by an awareness of the particular within the general. The paradox of bourgeois Enlightenment, Eagleton argues, is that its universalism is enshrined in a right to particularity: "The only point of enjoying such universal abstract equality is to discover and live one's own particular difference. The *telos* of the entire process is

not, as the Enlightenment believed, universal truth, right and identity, but concrete particularity.”¹⁷ To become aware of this, however, is to be forced into the recognition of an ironic dialectic that “cannot be *lived* as simple, seamless unity.”¹⁸ This ironic awareness is precisely what is achieved in Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* and Krasicki’s *Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadki*, albeit in somewhat different ways from each other.

Swift’s and Krasicki’s resistance to the utopian promise is perhaps less surprising when we take into account that these authors were not citizens of France, or Britain—the two nations with the most entrenched colonial enterprises and the most prodigious output of literary utopias—but of Ireland and Poland. In 1726, when Swift was writing, Ireland was a colony and under the penal laws, a particularly harsh set of strictures that deprived Catholics (who composed roughly 80 percent of the population) of most of their rights. Swift, though himself a member of the ascendancy, was the author of a multitude of tracts and pamphlets on the Irish condition, bemoaning the system of agriculture, the consumption of imports instead of domestic products, the greed and corruption of landlords, and Ireland’s subordinate position vis-à-vis Britain. Krasicki was likewise an avid contributor to political debates, a cofounder of the *Monitor*, a newspaper in the spirit of England’s *Spectator* (which Swift was a contributor to), which criticized Sarmatian culture and advocated for reform. The *Monitor* played an important role in bringing the intellectual currents of Western Europe to a Polish audience: “The names of Galileo, Descartes and Newton came into cultural circulation once again, and Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau and Diderot became well known to the readers.”¹⁹ In 1776, when *Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadki* was published, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had just undergone its first partition (in 1772). It ceded substantial portions of Polish territory to the Prussian, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian empires, making the threat of political conquest far more visible and pressing and bringing issues of patriotism and the nation to the forefront (the later two partitions, in the 1790s, would wipe the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth off the map entirely).²⁰

In other words, when these novels were written, both Poland and Ireland were in dire straits politically, victimized by the imperial underside of Enlightenment discourse. That they were so oppressed is perhaps more obvious in the case Ireland, given the abundance of colonial discourses on it, but it is also clearly manifested in the fact that both Poland and Ireland figure heavily in travel writing of the time as barbaric outposts of civilization.²¹ There is a long history of travel writing about Ireland, mostly written from the perspective of British visitors, many of whom were employed by

the British to provide reports on the territory. Amusingly enough, an earlier traveler, Fynes Moryson, had even compared Poland and Ireland in his sixteenth-century *Itinerary*:

In truth, myself having in *Poland* and *Ireland* found a strange cheapnesse of all such necessities, . . . this observation makes me of an opinion much contrary to the vulgar, that there is no more certaine signe of a flourishing and rich commonwealth, then the deare price of these things (excepting the yeeres of famine), nor any greater argument of a poore and weake State, then the cheap price of them.²²

Swift himself noted the entrenchment of negative stereotypes about the Irish: "What we call the Irish Brogue is no sooner discovered, than it makes the deliverer, in the last degree, ridiculous and despised; and from such a mouth, an Englishman expects nothing but bulls, blunders and follies." He also commented on the perception of the country as a distant, savage sort of place: "As to *Ireland*, they know little more than they do of *Mexico*; further than that it is a country subject to the King of *England*, full of Boggs, inhabited by wild *Irish Papists*. . . . And their general opinion is, that it were better for *England* if this whole island were sunk into the sea."²³ Although accounts of Poland were not uniformly derogatory in nature—Warsaw was a glittering, decadent capital, a destination for adventurers such as Cagliostro or Casanova—there were enough negative anecdotes circulating to solidify a stereotype of Poland as a wild, uncivilized place.²⁴ "But when one enters Poland, one believes one has left Europe entirely; . . . dirty villages; cottages little different from savage huts; everything makes one think one has been moved back ten centuries," wrote one traveler.²⁵ Indeed, as Larry Wolff argues, the contrast between the decadence of the nobility and the poverty of the peasants seemed to heighten the idea of the place as "a curious land of nonsense and paradox"—a land ripe for conquest.²⁶ Poland and Ireland were thus forcibly positioned at the fringes of Europe, making Swift and Krasicki ideally poised to perceive the flaws in the dream of Enlightened Reason. In fact, they were both between two worlds in some sense, Swift living in Britain and Krasicki in Warmia (which became part of Prussia after the first partition), calling to mind the persistent links to exile in the consciousness of both cultures.²⁷

It is important not to forget, however, that even the fringe is part of the whole. The point is often made in discussions of both Poland and Ireland: Joe Cleary mentions it in an important piece on whether Ireland can be considered postcolonial, and R. F. Foster likewise writes that "a glance at

social conditions in Ireland at the onset of the eighteenth century reveals that Ireland was a truly European society—both by virtue of its structure and because its development was constricted by factors that were general in Western Europe,” though he qualifies this remark by saying that “Ireland in 1700 bore all the marks of a highly centralized European kingdom, albeit a kingdom that was subsidiary to the kingdom of England.”²⁸ Similarly, Piotr Wandycz argues that East Central Europe should not be seen as wholly external to Europe and, specifically, that it should not be understood as having simply “imported” the Enlightenment:

Even if East Central Europe had undergone a certain orientalizing and turned its back on the West in the course of the seventeenth century, even if Sarmatism and the “extra Hungariam non est vita” (there is no life outside Hungary) attitude prevailed, the region was an integral part of Europe. The stimuli it had received in the past, whether Christianity, Renaissance, Reformation, or Counter-Reformation had been fully absorbed. . . . [T]he issue was not that of transplanting foreign and incompatible ideas, but rather of receiving and digesting them without risking loss of its own identity.²⁹

Both places were part of Europe and in dialogue with Enlightenment theory, but their approach to those theories was also strongly informed by their experiences of political domination, creating a very particular perspective.

The effects of this paradoxical position are particularly in evidence in the forms of irony one finds in travelogues written by Polish and Irish authors. Although travel writing has been strongly linked to imperialism in its framing of the image of a given place as lacking in civilization and, as Edward Said put it, beseeching dominance, Vergil Nemoianu has argued that this critical equivalence betrays a certain provincialism that ignores the output of writers from the peripheries and how the genre of travel writing could serve as a resource.³⁰ Ina Ferris has written specifically about the ways in which early Irish novels were in dialogue with English travel literature, arguing that these works frequently both recycled and parodied the tropes of the travelogue, and Joep Leerssen examines how these works continued the practice of portraying Ireland as both exotic and other.³¹ Krasicki and Swift are exemplary in this regard, evincing a clear awareness of travel literature’s potential for harm while also appreciating its benefits.

Alongside their abstract critiques of utopian systems, both novels contain more explicit reflections on their own political moment.

Indeed, Gulliver devotes his final pages to reflections on colonialism, indicting the colonial project and then exempting the British from his accusations in a passage in which Swift's sarcasm overwhelms Gulliver's sincerity. Swift cleverly manages to make Gulliver of two minds on the issue. On the one hand, he is wholly devoted to the Houyhnhnms and would support them should they choose to intervene in the affairs of Europe: "Instead of proposals for conquering that magnanimous nation," he says, "I rather wish they were in a capacity or disposition to send a sufficient number of their inhabitants for civilizing Europe" (288). On the other hand, however, he argues against a British project to occupy the places he has visited in his other voyages, in words that would ring true even in a nonfictional context: "As those countries which I have described do not appear to have any desire of being conquered, and enslaved, or murdered or driven out by colonies; nor abound either in gold, silver, sugar, or tobacco; I did humbly conceive they were by no means proper objects of our zeal, our valour, or our interest" (289). Here Swift lays bare the fundamental drive behind the colonial enterprise, greed, and the violence that accompanies it. This is the most explicit moral of the text's critique of colonialism, one that is easily discernible. There is a second, more potent one, however, that is less apparent.

The real irony of the text is that at the novel's conclusion Gulliver can be read as the ideal colonial subject, a state of affairs that serves as the text's most strident indictment of colonialism.³² He unquestioningly sees himself and those of his kind as inferior to the more "civilized" race, with a conviction that overturns even his familial bonds, and worships his masters to such a degree that he even serves their representatives in his home country, though they are clearly inferior to the real thing. The mute equines of England seem a humorous presaging of Albert Memmi's argument that it is the "mediocre" colonists who remain.³³ In his complete dismissal of his wife and children—his repulsion towards them, even—Gulliver can be seen as having totally internalized the structures of (colonial) authority. His despondent existence is thus the logical conclusion of the colonial system: banned from the utopian center because of his species, he wastes away miserably at the periphery. And compelling as Gulliver's explicit critique of colonialism in the final pages may be, it is this subtle ironic twist that serves as the more powerful condemnation. Swift does not use Gulliver's own voice to articulate arguments against Houyhnhnm society—quite the opposite. You have to read Gulliver ironically to understand the point. At the same time, however, to read Gulliver in a purely ironic light is also not sufficient: if you dismiss him entirely, the force of the critique is partly lost. In other words, as in

Krasicki's text, the reader is required to both identify with the protagonist *and* maintain a certain detachment from him.

Although the argument against universal reason in Swift is a general one, it has strong political resonances that are made clear if one focuses on the third section of the text, the voyage to Laputa. Barring a few notable exceptions, this section has been almost completely ignored by critical studies of the novel.³⁴ The inhabitants of the flying island share a number of features with the Houyhnhnms in their rational approach to the world (most clearly, in their experiments with language). The satirical thrust of this section, however, is far more clear: it is a political allegory of Irish colonialism. Although the initial focus appears to be a mockery of Laputan abstraction, the details of the island's functioning gradually shift to more explicitly political meanings. The intellectual endeavors of the Laputans are fueled by the labors of others: the floating island is also an imperial center that collects tributes from the continent below. The political allegory is extremely explicit here, the account of the revolt of Lindalino being a veiled description of the Wood's half-pence affair, which Swift also wrote about in *The Drapier's Letters*. What is at the forefront of this account is the tenuous position of the colonizing force: their threats of extermination are not actually feasible, for to crush the town would destroy the island. And when the townspeople call the king's bluff, he is forced to submit. The penultimate sentence of the chapter carries a veiled warning: "I was assured by a great minister that if the island had descended so near the town as not to be able to raise itself, the citizens were determined to fix it forever, to kill the king and all his servants, and entirely change the government" (164). The episode is related without commentary: its implications would have been obvious enough to Swift's contemporaries. The use of satire is more familiar here: it serves in its more typical role of permitting the author to state ironically what would be politically unacceptable if asserted outright.

Gulliver's travels in the metropolis Lagado, the realm below the island, have further resonances in an Irish context. Gulliver notes the poor state of agriculture in Lagado and learns that this is a result of political reforms instituted by people inspired by Laputan theory: "About 40 years ago certain persons went up to Laputa, either upon business or diversion, and after 5 months continuance came back with a very little smattering in mathematics, but full of volatile spirits acquired in that airy region" (169). Gulliver's host, Lord Munodi, is considered a kind of well-meaning imbecile who insists on clinging to the old ways, a sign of his backwardness. This is a clear reference to politics of Swift's time. Nicholas Canny describes the way that

British landowners expanded tillage farming and introduced technological innovations into eighteenth-century Irish agriculture, noting that native landowners would often follow suit:

While the changing character of the physical environment was closely related to the spread of British landowners and settlers, it was not completely dependent upon this factor. Native proprietors also saw the need to promote innovation, both because they wanted to be considered worthy subjects of the Crown and because innovation could add to their wealth.³⁵

This situation gives rise to Swift's more explicitly political writings, in which he castigates the mismanagement of Irish land and argues that Ireland is capable of supporting four times its current population, claiming that as a result of flawed rule, "Ireland is the poorest of all civilized countries in Europe, with every natural advantage to make it one of the richest."³⁶ This is not a critique of the tyranny of reason so much as its blind stupidity and inefficiency: those who are wedded to theory lose sight of the tangible purpose it was initially meant to serve.

The final portion of this section, which describes the Academy of Lagado, makes this danger of theory even more clear. When read as political allegory, what would seem to be its absurdist humor becomes a pointed critique of the dangers of ruling people by abstractions. Gulliver visits the academies erected by reformers and finds them attempting to build houses from the roof down and constructing machines to transform feces into food. The satire here is so exaggerated that its humor softens, perhaps, its ferocious bite. It is nonetheless a powerful attack on political rule from afar. Indeed, Declan Kiberd argues that one of the most radical moments in the text is "the implication that Balnibari has been martyred not to political hatred but to demented, misplaced theory. . . . Out of touch with reality, [the Laputans'] ruling elites feel free to weave crazy administrative fantasies. Balnibari is sufficiently distant for them to feel no need to check the theories against human experience: hence its ruinous condition."³⁷ The intellect concocts ever more bizarre schemes for the organization of human life: its power unchecked, it runs headlong into ruin. The absurd satire of the work may muffle its political undertones, but they are nonetheless vividly present.

Thus, what initially appears to be a fanciful fiction of a strange island ruled by theory comes to be seen as an allegory of Britain itself. Although critics have largely overlooked the third voyage, it serves two important purposes. Firstly, it lays the groundwork for the final voyage and the

reflections on Houyhnhnmland, doing much of the explanatory work for various aspects of their society, such as their language. Secondly, however, it grounds these abstract arguments in a real world context, indicating to readers that the subsequent depictions of talking horses may have more relevance to their lives than they might have thought.

The first section of *Mikołaj Doświadczyńskiego przypadki* explicitly discusses Poland, offering a satirical view of Sarmatism and its impact on Polish society. While there are some positive aspects in the portrayal of Sarmatism, as Krystyna Stasiewicz has pointed out, Krasicki relentlessly mocks the backwardness and superficiality of Polish society, its mindless adoption of foreign fashions, and hopelessly corrupt and mismanaged legal and educational systems.³⁸ But if the opening of the novel is a satire of Polish Sarmatian society as it existed then, the Nipuan section can be read as a satire of what it imagined itself to be. What appears as the Nipuan's humble resignation to their own lot is a clear castigation of Polish insularity, and the Nipuan love of agriculture weds conventions of utopian literature (which often privileges such simple forms of existence: the Houyhnhnms, for example, share this trait) with the pastoral tradition in Polish writing. This, however, is a somewhat subtle use of satire. The more explicit reflections on colonialism are to be found in the sections that take place in America.

The supposedly utopian New World, where Mikołaj arrives as a slave sent to work in the mines, conjures up thoughts of hell rather than paradise, particularly in the repeatedly subterranean imagery; the bowels of the ship, the depths of the caves, and so forth. When he befriends a Native American and describes Nipu to him, the man's response is that it must certainly have been founded by his early forefathers fleeing from colonialism. Whether or not this is the case, he says, it is clear that the Nipuan's embody the principles of early American society before the arrival of the Spanish (152/III). Krasicki here contrasts colonialism and utopian aspirations: the Spaniards are not attempting to create a better world; instead, their sole motive is greed. The critique is carried further with descriptions of slavery's atrocities and its inhuman treatment of people. The New World, after an encounter with the Europeans, is a nightmarish sort of place: the quest for the perfect society is a project for its exiles.

Krasicki thereby again reiterates his critique of "savagery" and the political uses such judgments are marshaled toward. After his experiences in the New World, Mikołaj, who is pushed to question his own assumptions about how civilized the people he encounters are throughout the novel, seems on the verge of simply reversing his previous conceptions and seeing the Europeans as brutal and Nipuan's as perfect. Here again the Margrave de Vennes intercedes,

noting that even among the seemingly perfect Nipuans, “i tam znaleźli się tacy, których musiano ukamieniować” (163) (“there have been men who had to be stoned” [118–19]). This corrective hints at the larger problems of Nipuan society—which Mikołaj remains unconscious of—but also reinforces the text’s ultimate argument about cultural relativism. To simply reverse the terms and see the Europeans as savage and Nipuans as civilized is not sufficient. Rather, it is the dichotomy itself that must be amended.

These more explicit political interventions remind us that these authors are not idly engaging in abstract speculation. They are a reminder that for both Swift and Krasicki, there were concrete stakes in the fictional exploration of these philosophical questions. While their novels should not simply be reduced to the historical conditions of their origins, it is undeniable that those local contexts informed their works in meaningful ways.

Conclusion

Utopian literature is meant to be an embodiment of a philosophical argument that also serves as a necessary corollary to it. If the ideas are sound, then one should be able to put them into practice, and fiction is a means of doing so. These novels, however, do precisely the opposite: they show that it is in their embodiment that the ideas of utopian society are revealed as untenable. Lived reality, rather than neatly embodying the abstract, has an unfortunate tendency to exceed or contradict it. Irony ultimately deals the death blow to utopianism, for the clearly reasoned tenets of utopian society prove unable to countenance irony, the playground of human caprice and thus the locus of freedom.

Moreover, it is through fiction that the true limitations of the utopian project can emerge. Although literature would seem to provide a unique opportunity to make the utopian argument in a different way, through vicarious experience rather than reasoned discourse, the paradox of travel literature reveals the contradiction inherent in this approach, namely, the use of literature to bestow experience that the text insists that words cannot convey. Nonetheless, these novels *do* impart certain philosophical lessons to their readers, precisely through their portrayal of protagonists who fail to learn. The argument made by these books depends on a blend of irony and identification, revealing the limitations of straightforward realism for political critique. These novels simultaneously show the problems that beset fiction’s efforts to persuade and illustrate fiction’s unique capabilities to use irony to reveal those problems. It is precisely because these authors were

writing from the peripheries of Europe, in nations that had been oppressed under the auspices of universal values, that they were uniquely primed to perceive the paradox inherent in the promises of the Enlightenment. Their novels masterfully illuminate these ironies, measuring the distance between center and periphery, home and paradise.

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Notes

1. Helena Goscilo, introduction to Ignacy Krasicki, *The Adventures of Mr. Nicholas Wisdom*, trans. Thomas Hoisington (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1992), xv, xx; Teresa Kostkiewiczowa, "Kilka uwag o Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadkach," *Rocznik Towarzystwa Literackiego Im. Adama Mickiewicza* 26–27 (1991–92): 7; Roman Tokarczyk, "Polska myśl utopijna: Trzy eseje z dziejów" *Utopian Studies* 4.2 (1993): 128–43; Roman Wołoszyński, *Ignacy Krasicki: Utopia i rzeczywistość* (Wrocław: Zakład narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1970).
2. Teresa Kostkiewiczowa, "Krasicki a oświecenie," in *Studia o Krasickim* (Warsaw: Instytut badań literackich, 1997), 135–62.
3. Fredric Jameson, "The Politics of Utopia," *New Left Review* 25 (Jan.–Feb. 2004): 39.
4. See Ignacy Krasicki, *Historia*, in *Pisma wybrane*, vol. 4 (Warsaw: Państwowy instytut wydawniczy,) 1954. To my knowledge, this work has not been translated into English.
5. Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1964), 132, emphasis in original. Hereafter cited parenthetically by page number.
6. Ignacy Krasicki, *Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadki*, ed. Mieczysław Klimowicz (Wrocław: Zakład narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1973), 99; Ignacy Krasicki, *The Adventures of Mr. Nicholas Wisdom*, 71. Hereafter cited parenthetically by page number.
7. See Roman Doktor, "Komizm unaiwniony Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadków," *Ruch Literacki* 35.3–4 (1994): 219–32.
8. Frank Boyle, *Swift as Nemesis: Modernity and Its Satirist* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 43.
9. James Clifford, "Gulliver's Fourth Voyage: 'Hard' and 'Soft' Schools of Interpretation," in *Quick Springs of Sense: Studies in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Larry S. Champion (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1974), 44.
10. Claire Colebrook, *Irony* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 60.
11. Seamus Deane, *Foreign Affections: Essays on Edmund Burke* (Dublin: Field Day Press: 2005), 52–53.
12. Jonathan Swift, *A Modest Proposal and Other Writings*, ed. Carole Fabricant (London: Penguin, 2009), 237.
13. Agnieszka Śniegućka, "Dyptyk z Adamem i Ewą, czyli o Alegorii i Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadkach Ignacego Krasickiego," *Prace Polonistyczne* 60 (2005): 183.
14. Clifford, "Gulliver's Fourth Voyage," 47.
15. Sante Graciotti, "Utopia w dziełach Ignacego Krasickiego," *Przegląd Humanistyczny* 16.4 (1972): 1–16.
16. Agnieszka Śniegućka, "Kilka uwag o wątku romansowym w Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadki Ignacego Krasickiego," *Ruch Literacki* 51.4–5 (2010): 373–80.
17. Terry Eagleton, "Nationalism, Irony and Commitment," in Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, Edward Said, *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press in association with Field Day, 1990), 30, emphasis in original.
18. Eagleton, "Nationalism, Irony and Commitment," 38.

19. Henry Hinz, "The Philosophy of the Polish Enlightenment and its Opponents: the Origins of the Modern Polish Mind," *Slavic Review* 30.2 (1971): 341.

20. Piotr Wandycz, *The Price of Freedom: A History of Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 127.

21. See Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland* (London: Penguin, 2006), Edmund Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1970), and *The English Traveller in Ireland: Accounts of Ireland and the Irish Through Five Centuries*, ed. John P. Harrington (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1991).

22. Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary Containing His Ten Yeeres Travel: Through the Twelve Dominions of Germany, Bohmerland, Sweitzerland, Netherland, Denmarke, Italy, Turkey, France, England, Scotland and Ireland* (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1908), 102, emphasis in original.

23. Jonathan Swift, "On Barbarous Denominations," in *Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, 14 vols., ed. Herbert J. Davis (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1957), 4:281; Jonathan Swift, *Drapier's Letters and Other Works, 1724–1725*, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford, UK: Shakespeare Head Press, 1941), 103.

24. See Iain McCalman, *The Last Alchemist: Count Cagliostro, Master of Magic in the Age of Reason* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2004), Giacomo Casanova, *History of My Life*, 12 vols. trans. William R. Trask (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1997), and Mary Lindemann, *Liaisons dangereuses: Sex, Law and Diplomacy in the Age of Frederick the Great* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

25. Louis-Phillippe, comte de Ségur, qtd. in Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 19.

26. Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 20.

27. See Kostkiewiczowa, *Studia o Krasickim*, 29, and Kinga Olszewska, *Wanderers Across Language: Exile in Irish and Polish Literature of the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, UK: Legenda, 2007).

28. See Joe Cleary, *Outrageous Fortune: Culture and Capital in Modern Ireland* (Dublin: Field Day Press, 2007), esp. "Irish Studies, Colonial Questions: Locating Ireland in the Colonial World," 14–46, and R. F. Foster, "Ascendancy and Union," in *The Oxford History of Ireland*, ed. R. F. Foster (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 128, 130.

29. Wandycz, *The Price of Freedom*, 108–9.

30. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), 9; Virgil Nemoianu, *The Triumph of Imperfection: The Silver Age of Sociocultural Moderation in Europe, 1815–1848* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 165.

31. Ina Ferris, *The Romantic National Tale and the Question of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination: Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press in association with Field Day Press, 1997).

32. Ann Laura Stoler has written compellingly on the threat that familial attachments pose to colonial authority and of the struggle on the part of those authorities to police domestic sentiment; see her *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), esp. chap. 3, "Habits of a Colonial Heart," 57–104.

33. See Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, trans. Howard Greenfeld (New York: Orion, 1965), esp. 48–51.

34. See Colebrook, *Irony*, Declan Kiberd, *Irish Classics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), Claude Rawson, *God, Gulliver, and Genocide: Barbarism and the European Imagination, 1492–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), and Śniegucka, "Dyptyk z Adamem i Ewą, czyli o Alegorii i Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadkach Ignacego Krasickiego."

35. Nicholas Canny, "Early Modern Ireland c. 1500–1700," in *The Oxford History of Ireland*, 116.

36. Jonathan Swift, qtd. in Louis Landa, "Swift's Economic Views and Mercantilism," in *Essays in Eighteenth Century English Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 22–23.

37. Kiberd, *Irish Classics*, 93.

38. Krystyna Stasiewicz, "Potępienie czy gloryfikacja? Ignacego Krasickiego stosunek do sarmatyzmu," *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warminskie* 2 (1996): 305–13.