

**FINDING, SEEING, THINKING, AND OBSERVING IN
ENGLISH UTOPIAN LITERATURE: TOWARDS AN
UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELEVANCE OF “NP + XP”
COMPLEMENT CONSTRUCTIONS IN THE MORPHOLOGY
AND GRAMMAR OF J. SWIFT’S *GULLIVER’S TRAVELS*¹**

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This article is concerned with showing the relevance of the meaning and form properties of verbs of sensory and cognitive perception (*i.e. find, see, think, and observe*) in conjunction with those of their complement clauses as a specific linguistic medium in shaping the dystopian discourse of J. Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* as an overwhelmingly intellectual narrative form. To this end, the following linguistic parameters are also shown to be relevant: (i) occurrence of the matrix verb in the active or passive voice, (ii) occurrence of first person or non-first person subjects and (iii) occurrence of a reflexive or non-reflexive intervening nominal. In addition, it is argued that the choice and use of these verb complementation structures in *Gulliver’s Travels* can be regarded as being iconically-motivated by three of the main thematic devices around which the morphology and grammar of the utopian discourse revolves, namely, (i) the voyage and the figure of the traveller, (ii) the eye-witness technique and (iii) the satiric use of an apparently straightforward, matter-of-fact description.

Gulliver is a splendid observer bemused though he is by much of what he sees. No traveller has ever had more experience of utopian modes of life than he. (Elliot 1970: 23)

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of whether utopian literature *can* be regarded as a literary genre *per se* with its own morphology and grammar has always been somewhat controversial, although currently there seem to be consistent arguments to postulate its existence as a literary genre.² As Fortunati has put it:

It can be said that the utopian genre exists, because experimental analysis does show that there is a number of [literary] conventions, that this network of formal and thematic characteristics, that this 'grammar of Utopia' does indeed exist. (1979: 14; my translation)

With regard to the essentials of the utopian genre, perhaps the most concluding feature is, as Fortunati argues, that it is "a narrative of ideas, a narrative of an intellectual kind" (1979: 31; my translation). Needless to say, this narrative of ideas had to be provided with a new language whereby this mode of existence could be properly expressed. This, in turn, leads us to pose the question of how the utopian genre can be best characterized as far as the language used is concerned. In this regard, it is often claimed that "Utopia is *par excellence* the place of nominalisation rather than of verbalisation" (Bony 1977: 6; my translation).

While it is true that proper names (and their symbolic etymological meanings) are powerful devices whereby utopia can be presented to the reader in contradictory terms, this article will be mainly concerned with showing that the meaning and form properties of the matrix verbs used to create utopian fiction as well as those of the specific states of affairs/processes/actions encoded in their complement clauses also play a crucial role in shaping the morphology and grammar of the utopian genre.

1. TOWARDS A CHARACTERIZATION OF THE MEANING AND FORM PROPERTIES OF NON-FINITE AND VERBLESS COMPLEMENT CLAUSES IN ENGLISH

In the area of verb complementation, functional research has proved not only the futility of non-semantic approaches to unveil the intricacies of English grammar, but has also contributed to endorse a view of both form and function as being intrinsically meaningful and inextricably connected³ By way of illustration, consider the examples below:⁴

² This should by no means be taken to imply that the definition and scope of the utopian genre is still without problems. See Martínez López (1997a) for a critical discussion of the definition of utopia in relation to its twentieth century variations and facets, and Martínez López (1997b: 328-33) for an outline of the evolution of the classic Morean definition of utopia in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.

³ See, among others, Bolinger (1968, 1974, 1977), Kirsner (1977), Dixon (1984,1991), Langacker (1987), Wierzbicka (1988), Mair (1990), Duffley (1992), Barlow & Kemmer (1994), and Goldberg (1995).

⁴ Examples adapted from Borkin (1973: 44).

- 1.a. I found *the chair to be uncomfortable*" [NP + XP (=to-inf clause) encoding]
 1.b. I found *the chair uncomfortable*" [NP + XP (=AP) encoding]

According to Borkin (1973, 1984), the differences in syntactic encoding above are also coupled by differences in meaning and interpretation. Thus, example 1.a conveys "a direct report of an experience based on indirect evidence", while the 1.b variant conveys the speaker's own personal experience of the state affairs in the embedded clause.⁵ Therefore, it can be concluded that in the case of verbs of opinion/cognition (e.g. *find, think, consider, believe, deem*, etc.) the process of morphosyntactic compression in the embedded clause parallels a trend towards the expression of personal, direct and subjective opinion or judgement by the speaker.⁶

At a higher level of delicacy, in those cases where there is a choice between a *to*-infinitive and a bare infinitive encoding, alternation can also be said to be meaningful. Consider the pair of examples reproduced below:

- 2.a. I saw *them arrive*" [NP + XP (=bare infinitive clause)]
 2.b. I saw *him to be obnoxious*" [NP + XP (= *to*-infinitive clause)]⁷

According to Duffley (1992: 30ff), the bare infinitive encoding conveys coincidence in time between the process of perceiving and what is perceived, whereas the *to*-infinitive encoding emphasizes the "afterness" or subsequence of the conclusion drawn from what has been seen or perceived.⁸ Thus, in the case of perception verbs, a difference between a bare infinitive and a *to*-infinitive can be said to correspond to a difference in interpretation between direct and indirect perception, respectively.⁹

With regard to the definition of direct and indirect perception, we shall take the former to convey that the subject-perceiver (*Experiencer*)¹⁰ is in a direct (*hic and*

⁵ See González (1997, 2000), among others, for an alternative, though nevertheless compatible, interpretation of these meaning differences in terms of a two-fold modality contrast.

⁶ See González (2000) for a construction-based account of the semantico-pragmatic features of verbless clauses after cognitive and volitive matrix verbs.

⁷ Example taken from Bolinger (1974: 66), quoted in Duffley (1992: 30).

⁸ In much the same vein, Jespersen argues that *see* with the bare infinitive denotes "immediate perception", whereas with the *to*-infinitive encoding the meaning conveyed is that of "inference" or "logical conclusion" (1940: 158, 180).

⁹ See Gee (1975: 254, 364), Kirsner & Thompson (1976: 205), Miller & Johnson-Laird (1976: 588), Akmajian (1976: 452), Wierzbicka (1980: 120), Declerck (1982: 86), Dik & Hengeveld (1991: 237), and Alm-Arvius (1993: 63), among others. A descriptively compatible account has also been recently developed within the Minimalist approach by Felser (1999: 41), whose line of reasoning is as follows: "The level of directness of perception decreases as the structure of the complement clause becomes more complex. Since structural complexity is directly related to finiteness, one could, alternatively, state that the directness/indirectness of perception corresponds to the degree to which the complement is finite or non-finite (see also Palmer 1987: 162): the highest degree of finiteness corresponds to the highest degree of indirectness, and *vice versa*".

¹⁰ The labels *Experiencer* and *Theme*, as used to refer to the subject and object arguments here, are taken from Garrudo (1999: 181-82).

nunc) relation to the perceived object or event (*Theme*), as encoded in the complement clause as a whole (Guasti 1993: 6), while the latter will be taken to imply direct perception as well as inferential activity on the basis of both what has been perceived and the speaker's knowledge of the world.¹¹

Anticipating the results of a far more detailed discussion to follow, we shall show that the vast majority of the matrix verbs in our corpus fall into the following two semantic classes: *verbs of mental perception (or cognition)* and *verbs of physical perception*.¹² In the former, we find verbs such as *find* (40), *think* (32), *take* (8), *know* (8), *suppose* (6), *believe* (4), *look on/upon* (4), *conclude* (3), *conceive* (2), *apprehend* (2), and *consider* (2), among others. In the latter, we have verbs such as *see* (38), *observe* (27), *hear* (10), *behold* (3), *perceive* (1), and *view* (1).¹³ Furthermore, these two groups of verbs make up approximately 75% of the total amount of matrix verbs attested in our corpus, that is, 196 occurrences out of 265, which makes it plausible to claim that these semantic classes of verbs *do* play a significant role in the making of the morphology and grammar of the utopian genre, at least in the case of *Gulliver's Travels*.

2. AN OVERVIEW OF THE MOST OUTSTANDING THEMATIC AND/OR TECHNICAL DEVICES SHAPING THE DYSTOPIAN DISCOURSE IN J. SWIFT'S *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS*

(I) The technical device of *the voyage* makes it possible for the traveller to escape from his own society (in which he no longer feels at ease) and search for a different place, a better place that bears little or no resemblance at all to his society of departure. However dangerous and risky the voyage may become, both the traveller and the reader know that it is only by voyaging through imaginary, unknown utopian worlds that we can *find ourselves*.

(II) The technical device of the voyage is unambiguously connected with what can be called *fictional realism*, that is to say, an overriding concern for emphasizing that the reader is being told the truth. As Gulliver himself claims at some stage in

¹¹ See Kirsner & Thompson (1976: 231ff) for an interesting discussion of the relevance of pragmatics to determine the "correct" syntactic analysis and interpretation of both types of perception. It must also be noted that the distinction between both types of perception should not be seen as clear-cut, since indirect perception may be based on visual experiences (Huddleston 1969: 264; Bolinger 1974) and that a direct perception interpretation can also be invoked when a *to*-infinitive or a *that*-clause encoding is used (Spears 1977: 78ff; Declerck 1983: 31; Alm-Arvius 1993: 71ff).

¹² An important methodological note is in order here regarding the choice of non-finite and verbless constructions as the basis of our sampling. As Maacek (1965: 198) rightly observes, the range of matrix verbs selecting both types of complement clauses is semantically heterogeneous, thus embracing not only verbs of perception and cognition, but also those of volition (e.g. *want*), causation (e.g. *make*), as well as volition and causation combined (e.g. *order*). This observation can thus be taken to guarantee that our sampling is not biased from the very start.

¹³ The numbers in brackets refer to the frequency of occurrence of the matrix verb followed by an NP + XP string in our corpus. The edition of *Gulliver's Travels* used in the compilation of our corpus is the Penguin edition by Peter Dixon and John Chalker. See Table 1 for an inventory of all matrix verbs reflected in the syntactic frame here and their distribution.

the novel, "I imposed on myself as a Maxim, never to be swerved from, that I *would strictly adhere to truth*". Fictional realism is achieved mainly through the *eye-witness* technique (*i.e.* "I know you will find it hard to believe, but *I was there and I saw it with my own eyes*")¹⁴ and an overriding concern for providing the reader with an exhaustive account of the narrator's inner and outer reality. In so doing, visual perception in general and seeing in particular become the most immediate ways in which Gulliver can gain access to outer reality (Fortunati 1979: 100).¹⁵ Indeed, it is essential that we have a vision of outer reality, for only then will we have *a vision of ourselves*.

(III) While accepting that utopia is both genetically and formally linked to satire (Elliot 1970: 23), it must also be borne in mind that in *Gulliver's Travels* satire takes on a specific form, which Swift himself, using the familiar simile of optical instruments, defines in *The Battle of the Books* as a sort of glass wherein beholders generally perceive everybody else's face but their own. Thus, Gulliver's description of the Yahoos, for instance, is objective because he has not yet realized that these animals will soon become his nightmare. It is not until Gulliver is judged sexually attractive by a female Yahoo that he finally *sees* in the Yahoo's disagreeable face *his own face*. Therefore, it is through this satiric use of an apparently objective, matter-of-fact description that Swift's virulent attack against human nature and human behaviour is substantiated by man's erroneous *appreciation* of his own nature.

We shall now examine how the three thematic/technical devices above are shaped through specific non-finite and verbless complementation structures after visual and cognitive perception verbs, thus giving rise to an *iconic* morphology and grammar of the utopian genre as a narrative of ideas in *Gulliver's Travels*.¹⁶ To this end, the linguistic parameters in (i)-(iii) below will be singled out for discussion:

(i) The active-passive voice contrast will show, among other things, whether the propositional content encoded in the complement clause must be explicitly attributed to a specific person which takes the form of its *subject* at a morphosyntactic level (as in the active voice) or whether the source of the perception

¹⁴ This technique finds its grammatical reflection in the predominance of narration in the first person (preferably an *I*-subject), as noted among others by Fortunati (1979: 95).

¹⁵ In this regard, Empson (1950) has argued that Gulliver the narrator impersonates the point of view of estrangement in *Gulliver's Travels*. The close connection between estrangement and physical perception has been aptly characterized by Sklovskij (1976: 12) in the following terms: "Estrangement basically consists in 'transmitting the impression of object as a vision, rather than as recognition'", quoted in Graziano (1982: 113-114, my translation).

¹⁶ It must be emphasized that the term *iconicity* is used here in the general sense outlined, among others, in Haiman (1980, 1985), and is therefore taken to embrace cases of isomorphism (*i.e.* a bi-unique correspondence between *signans* and *signatum*) and motivation (*i.e.* the structure of language directly reflects some aspect of the structure of reality). As it stands, this use of the term can be regarded as an extension of the original Peircean definition to convey any type of non-arbitrary relation in the language (Newmeyer 1998: 115). For an outline of the relevance of iconicity in literature in general and translation in particular in the context of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, see González (in press).

and/or opinion/evaluation encoded in the NP + XP complement is unknown or irrelevant, and may, accordingly, be left out (as in the passive voice).¹⁷

(ii) The contrast between an *I*-subject and any other type of non-first person subject (*i.e.* *you/he/she*-subject) is of crucial importance here. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that, within the discourse of *Gulliver's Travels*, the *I*-subject is unambiguously identified with a narrator who acts as the eye-witness *par excellence*. Accordingly, a relatively frequent occurrence of *I*-subject can thus be expected to emerge as one of the main iconic resorts around which the morphology and grammar of *Gulliver's Travels* revolves.

(iii) The contrast between a reflexive and non-reflexive intervening nominal gathers significance when combined with the two other contrasts outlined so far.¹⁸ Thus, those instances with a reflexive nominal can be said to imply that the subject of the sentence (*i.e.* the narrator, the traveller) is at the same time the experiencer and the object of contemplation, thus conveying *self-perception*. By contrast, those instances in which the postverbal slot is not occupied by a reflexive pronoun would convey the narrator's perception of people, things and events in the outer world rather than self-contemplation.¹⁹

2.1. Find

Let us start off by examining the different types of *finding* in our corpus in terms of the iconic principles outlined above. The matrix verb *find* has a total of 40 occurrences, *all of them* in the active voice, 31 of which take an *I*-subject and 13 also selecting a reflexive direct object.²⁰ Before proceeding to interpret the above data, we need to draw a distinction between two general meanings of *find*, as it is used by Swift in *Gulliver's Travels*.

¹⁷ More specifically, the active-passive contrast involves a number of further nuances with verbs of opinion/cognition and those of physical perception. Thus, in the former case, the passive voice brings with it a shift from the expression of the speaker's own personal opinion to a generally accepted fact or opinion (Wierzbicka 1988: 46), thus making it clear that the speaker is not taking any responsibility for the truth of the assertion in the embedded clause (Lysvag 1975; Lakoff 1968: 215). In the latter, the use of the passive is taken to imply that "the interest is not in perceptions, but in impersonal facts" (Bolinger 1974: 86-87), thus favouring an epistemic reading (Higginbotham 1983: 124), that the perception process is accidental, that the event perceived was not intended by its agent to be witnessed (Kirsner 1977: 173).

¹⁸ The theory-neutral label "intervening nominal" has been syntactically interpreted in the literature as direct object (Quirk *et al* 1985: 1202) or the subject of a single clausal complement (Palmer 1965: 170; Suzuki 1988, *inter alia*).

¹⁹ Within a schema-based approach, Barlow (1996) motivates the occurrence of reflexives in this syntactic frame in terms of "viewing relations". More specifically, he shows that *find* commonly occurs with a reflexive in written corpora (with *see* outranking *find* in spoken corpora). These productivity differences with the reflexive are also borne out in our corpus data.

²⁰ Within the Functional-Lexematic Model (FLM henceforth), Faber & Mairal (1999: 187) propose the Principle of Lexical Iconicity (*i.e.* The greater the semantic scope of a lexeme, the greater its syntactic variation) to handle the close interrelation of syntax and semantics in matrix predicates. This principle is particularly useful to account for the rich syntactico-semantic behaviour of *find* (and *see*). See also González (2000) for a treatment of the constructions in 3.1-3.3 as a case of constructional polysemy.

2.1.1. *Finding oneself in a given state/place*

Broadly speaking, *find* can be characterized in the following instances as having a *factual* value rather than a judgmental one. *Find* is primarily used in the examples below to convey the narrator's reporting of his being in a given state/place without his intending it.²¹ Closer examination of the range of states and places encoded in the complement clause after *find* shows that most of the occurrences in this group denote either a negative state or a hostile place, thus contributing to *iconically* depict the adversity, the contingency and the pain the traveller has to face when embarking upon the voyage:

- 4.a. [I] *found* myself alone in a vast room. (II.i.267-68)
- 4.b. I *found* myself not very well. (II.viii.55)
- 4.c. I *found* myself suddenly awaked with a violent pull upon the ring.
(II.viii.62-63)
- 4.d. I then *found* myself hoisted up by degrees at least three foot higher than I was before. (II.viii.160-61)

Furthermore, the above examples display an overriding concern for specifying the locative reference in as accurate a way as possible, which finds its iconic representation in the following linguistic features: (i) placing of a time or place adjunct in absolute initial position²² and, (ii) use of linguistically heavy NP's, which serve the purpose of further specifying the referent of the NP in question, thus being iconic to the so-called "eye-witness" technique characteristic of utopian discourse.

2.1.2. *Finding as a personal opinion/evaluation predicate*

Thus far we have been concerned with a *factual* type of *find* construed with a reflexive intervening nominal and a predicative XP. However, *find* may also be construed with a judgmental interpretation, as below:

²¹ The identification of the subject of the *find*-constructions with the narrator in the discourse of *Gulliver's Travels* is supported by the high occurrence of *I* subjects with this matrix verb (31 out of 45 occurrences), which ties up nicely with Borkin's finding that (non-finite and verbless) constructions of this type favour "first"-person subjects (Borkin 1973: 45-46). However, it must be noted that the iconic preference for this type of subject is certainly stronger with *find* than with *see*, *think*, and *observe* in our corpus (see Fig. 1 for more details).

²² It must nevertheless be emphasized that the initial adjunct in question need not be a place adjunct, but can also be a time adjunct, as in the examples below:

- (i) "In a little time I felt something alive moving on my left leg..." (I.i.98-99).
- (ii) "Here we entered, and I saw three of those detestable creatures, which I first met after my landing, feeding upon roots, and the flesh of some animals, which I afterwards found to be that of asses and dogs, and now and then a cow dead by accident or disease" (IV.ii.59-63).

Thus, the occurrence of both time and place adjuncts in the above examples can be easily accounted for if these are seen as explicit markers of the internal succession of events in time and place around which the utopian discourse is constructed. Both the fronting and the internal ordering of the locative and temporal phrases above correspond to the order in which the different events encoded in the sentence should be sequenced. These are examples of what Enkvist (1981, 1990) has called "experimental iconicity".

- 5.a. I *found* the demands of nature *so strong upon me*. (I.i.169-70)
- 5.b. I *found* all my labour *to little purpose*. (I.viii.20-21)
- 5.c. I *found* it *in vain* to do so any longer. (III.x.155)
- 5.d. I *found* my error *gradually lessened*. (IV.xi.223-24)

The above examples can be said to convey the expression of the speaker's direct, personal opinion/evaluation of the state of affairs encoded in the NP + XP complement, and emerge as the most prototypical realization of the lexical domain of cognition in the morphology and grammar of *Gulliver's Travels*.

2.1.3. *Finding* as a cognitive perception (“inference”) predicate

A third type of complementation attested by our corpus is that in which the XP is made up of by a *to*-infinitive clause headed by a stative or dynamic predicate:

- 6.a. I found the object to approach nearer by force of the tide. (I.viii.5-6)
- 6.b. I measured the tail of the dead rat, and *found* it *to be two yards long*. (II.i.291-93)
- 6.c. I already *found* my spirits *to revive by the influence of her Augustean Presence*. (II.iii.59-61)
- 6.d. This is the Court style, and I *found* it *to be more than a matter of form*. (III.ix.60-61)

All four examples above, unlike sample 7, express the discovery of a fact, the *to*-infinitive marker being required to signal that the knowledge of the state of affairs in the NP + XP complement comes after the mental process of assessing the situation denoted in the complement. By contrast, the encoding with a bare infinitive expresses “a direct experiencing of, and so contemporaneity in time with, an occurrence and can often be replaced by *see* or experiential *have*” (Duffley 1992: 47), as in (7) below:

- 7. [I] found my interest decline very fast with the Emperor himself. (I.vi.346-347)

However, the fact that the meaning of the “bare”-infinitive encoding is that of direct, immediate perception should not be taken to imply that the overall interpretation of the sentence is that of direct perception, too. In this respect, it is important to note that the abstract or metaphorical interpretation of the specific lexical semantics of the complement clause in samples 5 above gives rise to a blending of physical and cognitive perception.²³

²³ Alm-Arvius argues in this respect that “although it would appear difficult to disregard the visual aspect in the interpretation of these sentences, ... we may simply have to content ourselves with observing that they are at any rate atypical principal sense uses with bare infinitive complementations in that they need not be taken to describe events that can be directly seen” (1993: 71).

2.1.4. A closing comment

By way of conclusion of our discussion of the relevance of *find* in the morphology and grammar of *Gulliver's Travels*, let us consider what is unequivocally the most iconic example attested by this matrix verb in our corpus:

In his right waistcoat-pocket, we found a prodigious bundle of white thin substances, folded one over another, about the bigness of three men, tied with a strong cable, and marked with black figures; which we humbly conceive to be writings. (I.ii.211-15).

Through a skilful exploitation of modification, the narrator succeeds in providing once more an exhaustive, detailed account of the utopian world. In instances like the one above, Swift's mastery of the English language to shape so accurate a description is indeed at its best,²⁴ as is the filtering (or selection) of information presented to us.²⁵

2.2. Think

Let us start off by giving an overview of the general distribution of *think* with the above-specified complementation structures in terms of our iconic parameters of analysis. *Think* is found 31 times in our corpus, 30 of which are in the active voice, and only 1 in the passive. Moreover, 21 select an *I*-subject and only 5 occurrences a reflexive intervening nominal. As far as the lexical semantics is concerned, *think* has a prominent judgmental value, which can be glossed as follows: "believing or judging something to be true, but without being completely sure about it".²⁶ Thus, for the sake of illustration, consider the following examples:

- 9.a. I *thought* it *the most prudent thing* to lie still. (I.i.134-36)
- 9.b. If I had not *thought* it *necessary* to justify my character in point of cleanliness to the world. (I.ii.27-29)
- 9.c. We *thought* it *best* to hold on the same course rather than turn more northerly. (II.i.56-57)
- 9.d. I *thought* it *more consistent with prudence and justice* to pass the remainder of my days with my wife and family. (III.ix.112-14)

²⁴ The example in question also illustrates Fortunati's statement that "the language of Swift is that of experience, of concrete examples" (1979: 101).

²⁵ Moreover, it should be emphasized that other similar examples featuring this or other syntactic patterns have been found in our corpus, which suggests that the above-mentioned linguistic devices are exploited by Swift in order to present the discourse in *Gulliver's Travels* through the filtering of conscientious observation. In this regard, particularly telling are the following examples:

(i) "In the large pocket on the right side of his middle cover ... we saw a hollow pillar of iron, about the length of a man, fastened to a strong piece of timber, larger than the pillar" (I.ii.222-26);

(ii) "... when bending my eyes downwards as much as I could, I perceived it to be a human creature not six inches high, with a bow and arrow in his hands, and a quiver at his back" (I.i.101-03).

²⁶ Under the FLM analysis proposed in Faber & Mairal (1999: 192), *think* would be a near-synonym of *consider* and could thus be regarded as a troponym of *believe* as a superordinate term in the lexical domain of cognition.

In view of the above sampling, it seems that the “lack of certainty” implicit in the evaluative sense of *think*, when construed with an NP + XP string, should be understood here as explicitly signalling the fact that what follows is but *the narrator’s personal justification for a choice in the course of his action*, and, accordingly, something disputable which should therefore be taken in relative terms only.

It should be noted here that there exists an important distinction regarding the productivity of the voice contrast with *think*. This matrix verb tends to occur for its most part in the active, with the exception of one occurrence in the passive. In order to better understand the relevance of the low frequency of the passive voice in the case of *think* (next to verbs of visual perception, like *observe*) within the morphology and grammar of *Gulliver’s Travels*, let us consider the example below from our corpus:

10. This, however, is *thought* to be a mere strain upon the text.
(I.iv.147-48)

It can be plausibly concluded that the voice contrast here not only brings with it a shift from personal justification/evaluation to a statement of fact, but also a shift in the source of the attribution, that is, from the voice of the narrator/eye-witness to an anonymous source.²⁷ Moreover, the low frequency of instances in the passive voice ties in neatly with the fact that (i) the utopian discourse revolves around the figure of the narrator (the meaning of the passive thus clashing with such an egocentric colouring) and (ii) that the narrator himself cannot be expected to frequently utter sentences for whose propositional content he himself does not take any responsibility.

2.3. See

We shall start off by describing the main distinctive semantic qualities of the principal sense of *see*. These can be briefly specified in (a)-(d) as follows: (a) *individual(s)*, (b) *perceive(s)* (i.e. (i) *pick(s) up*, (ii) *make(s) up*), (c) *external phenomena*, (d) *visually*.²⁸ The general distribution of *see* in terms of our iconic parameters is as follows: The matrix verb in question has a total occurrence of 38 instances, *always* in the active voice, 19 times with an *I*-subject, and never with a reflexive pronoun as intervening nominal.²⁹ Thus, it is not difficult to see how both

²⁷ The shift in question here is but the semantic correlate of the fact that verbs such as *think*, *know*, *say*, *feel* and the like have a different meaning when they are in the active voice from that which they have in the passive voice. In this regard, R. Quirk has referred to both the active and passive patterns as being paradigmatically, rather than syntagmatically, related, thus giving rise to a “serial relationship” (Quirk 1965: 212) or different constructions (Wierzbicka 1988: 47).

²⁸ The qualities specified under (a) and (c) correspond to a broad semantic characterization of the subject and object arguments. Those in (b) and (d) can be taken as a simple analytical rewording of the standard lexical semantics of the verbal core of the predicate (Alm-Arvius 1993: 17).

²⁹ The non-occurrence of a reflexive intervening nominal after *see* can be easily explained if we bear in mind that such an occurrence is heavily constrained by the semantics of the English language. Thus,

the lexical semantics of the verb and the network of features outlined above can be made to fit in with the most prominent thematic and technical devices in the utopian discourse of *Gulliver's Travels*, in particular, the *eye-witness* technique:

- 11.a. I saw him wet the tip of his little finger upon his tongue, and take up one of my largest pieces, and then another. (II.i.115-16)
- 11.b. I *have seen* this whole body of horse upon a word of command *draw their swords at once, and brandish them in the air*. (II.vii.211-13)
- 11.c. That I had seen them blow up a hundred enemies at once in a siege and as many in a ship. (IV.v.105-06)

The predominance of the perception verb complement clause with an infinitive in contrast to the other two clausal encodings available (*i.e.* the *that*-clause and the verbless clause)³⁰ is indeed meaningful and can be plausibly related to the thematic and technical devices at hand here in the following terms:

(i) It implies that the speaker (*i.e.* the narrator) was there and saw what is being reported with his own eyes (the encoding itself being, therefore, iconic to the eye-witness technique), as shown among other things by the grammatical constraint that the time of the matrix clause has to coincide with that of the embedded clause (*e.g.* **"I saw him having blown up a hundred enemies at once"*).³¹

(ii) Moreover, the choice of a nonfinite clause (unlike that of the *that*-clause, for instance) brings with it the structural disintegration of the embedded-clause in two parts, represented by the postverbal NP and the non-finite clause, respectively. Using the optical simile previously alluded to, the structural and focal salience of the postverbal NP resulting from its being raised can be said to be iconic to a sort of *camera-like close-up* in which the object of contemplation is made to stand out.³²

we normally see or hear things in the outer world, but we do not normally see or hear ourselves. Thus, it has been argued that instances such as: "I saw myself do a thing like that" are pretty awkward in the English language and, if they ever occur, would have to be understood as self-contemplation or introspection (Wierzbicka 1988). However, we have found only one example of physical perception verbs followed by a reflexive intervening nominal to convey the narrator's own introspection: "I now observed myself to be less terrified than I had been in the morning" (III.vii.73-74).

³⁰ See Faber & Mairal (1999: 191) for a detailed characterization of *see* in relation to other matrix predicates within the typology of visual perception.

³¹ See Dik & Hengeveld (1991: 238), Faber & Mairal (1999: 130-32), and Felser (1999: 38-39).

³² It is often assumed in the literature that the so-called "accusative with infinitive" encoding implies a direct perception of the referent of the postverbal NP. Thus, Postal (1974: 356ff) was among the first to note that raising structures convey two assumptions not conveyed by their unraised counterparts (*e.g.* *that*-clauses), namely, (i) the speaker has perceived the referent of the raised NP (the direct object, under the raising analysis), and (ii) the judgement expressed is a function of that direct perceptual experience. In much the same vein, Borkin (1984: 44) and Davidson (1984: 813ff) argue that the more specific, definite the referent of the postverbal NP, the more felicitous it will be in the raised object slot, the reason being that this type of NP fits in more nicely with the pragmatic characterization of object of experience required by the construction at hand here. Mair (1990: 198) takes the semantico-pragmatic characterization a step further when he notes that the "VP + NP+ *to*-infinitive" structure, by destroying the syntactic integrity of the embedded proposition, highlights an entity to be judged (O in SVOC) and

(iii) In addition, the non-finite clause typically spells out a justification (usually in superlative terms) of the relevance of the event/process/state of affairs attributed to the object of contemplation, which again endorses the idea of the utopian narrator's eye as being overwhelmingly selective.

(iv) The narrator often places the adverbial material providing the justification for the reporting not in an unmarked (*i.e.* normal) position as in the examples above, but rather between the NP and the non-finite form. Thus, the structural disintegration of the NP + XP string through the fronting or interpolation of adverbial material, can also be said to be iconic to the narrator's justification of his own visual percept of the utopian world. The same can be said to hold for matrix verbs other than *see*:

- 12.a. In the meantime, I felt at least forty more of the same kind (*as I conjectured*) following the first. (I.i.104-05)
 12.b. ... but conceived it (*perhaps erroneously*) rather to be rigorous than gentle. (I.vii.216-17)
 12.c. And [he] found the natives in both these kingdoms *very hard* to believe that the fact was impossible. (III.x.161-62)
 12.d. And lastly, that he observed every animal in his country *naturally* to abhor the Yahoos. (IV.iv.112-13)

As can be seen, the italicized parenthetical and non-parenthetical adverbial material in sentences 12.a-d is the linguistic reflex of the narrator's visual account in terms of both verisimilitude and relevance. The narrator himself warns the reader at some stage that there is a gap between events in the real utopian world and the events as presented in his visual percept. This gap is spelled out through parentheticals in which the narrator's account is either explicitly balanced against previous perceptions (*i.e.* "(as I conjectured)" in 12.a) or called into question (*i.e.* "perhaps erroneously", as in 12.b). The effect of this self-qualification by the narrator is to reinforce the overwhelming verisimilitude of his visual percept as well as to pacify or appease the *judicious* and *candid* reader to forgive him for any eventual inaccuracy or mistake.

In the last instance, what these parentheticals seem to convey is the existence of a tension between things as they exist in the real world and things as they exist in the fictional world. Moreover, the very existence of this tension between contrary impulses echoes that in life, thus endowing the dystopian discourse of *Gulliver's Travels* with a *dynamic* character (see Mezciems 1977: 11). However, more important still is that this tension enables us to catch a glimpse of the very essence of *Gulliver's Travels* not as a realistic novel, but as an anti-utopian work, and

the speaker's judgement (C in SVOC), an insight which is echoed by Ureland (1973: 288-9), Maxwell (1984: 370) and Steever (1977: 591)." More recently, Langacker (1995: 36) has characterized the object-raising construction in terms of the focal prominence of the postverbal NP as a salient participant in the process encoded in the complement clause. See, however, González (1999), for a critique of Langacker's treatment of raising constructions in connection with the notion of transparency.

accordingly, as an *intellectual* bridge between the real and the imaginary (see Eliav-Feldom 1982: 1).

2.4. Observe

Observe occurs 29 times in our corpus, its specific distribution being as follows: it appears almost exclusively in the active voice (26 times).³³ Its occurrence with an *I*-subject is lower here than in the case of the other matrix verbs examined so far (12 occurrences), while the occurrence with a reflexive intervening nominal is confined to one example only. All occurrences of *observe* in our corpus can be arranged, following the iconicity parameters, into a four-stage scale as follows:

(i) Instances with “I”-subject and matrix verb in the active voice which emphasize the narrator’s individual vision of reality (whether sensory or cognitive):

- 13.a. Yet I could never *observe* this maxim to be put in practice by any nation, except that of Lilliput. (I.vi.74-75)
- 13.b. I *observed* the country all barren and rocky. (II.i.71-72)
- 13.c. I *observed* a huge creature walking after them in the sea as fast as he could. (II.i.77-78)
- 13.d. But my comfort was, that I *observed* such accidents very frequent, and little regarded. (III.ii.174-75)

(ii) Instances with “we”-subject and matrix verb in the active voice conveying a choral vision (whether sensory or cognitive) of which the narrator himself is the spokesperson:

Here the narrator is not presenting the visual account of reality in exclusively personal terms, but rather in terms of a collectivity. And yet, within that collectivity, the voice of the narrator can still be felt to be prominent, although not as prominent as in group [1]. Now the narrator is more a spokesperson than an eye-witness proper, so to speak, which has its grammatical reflection in the occurrence of the less iconic we-subject, as shown in 14 below:

- 14.a. We *observed* a girdle about his waist made of the hide of some prodigious animal. (I.ii.267-68)
- 14.b. For we *observe* no animal to be fond of it but man. (IV.ii.183-84)

(iii) Instances with subjects other than “I” or “we” (usually “he” or “she”) which convey the narrator’s reporting of what a given entity (usually a person) does or has in mind:

The downgrading of the prominent role of the narrator is taken somewhat further here. In fact, the narrator no longer has any direct involvement in the

³³ Faber & Mairal point out an interesting distinctive feature of *observe* with respect to its superordinate terms *watch*, *look*, and *see*, namely, the fact that it involves “watching carefully, often in order to learn something” (1990: 190).

perception encoded in the complement clause, as shown by the fact that the subject of the sentence is no longer I (the narrator as the eye-witness par excellence) or we (the narrator as a choral eye-witness and spokesperson), but some other member of the utopian society in which the narrator is immersed (linguistically encoded as he, she, or they). Thus, it seems that the narrator is basically reporting what other people observe in the utopian world, this observation being either concrete (as in 15.a and 15.b) or abstract (as in 15.c below):

- 15.a. [he], *observing* me not to look wildly, nor talk inconsistently. (II.viii.221-22)
- 15.b. ... who *observed* my limbs to be perfect and finished. (II.iii.117-18)
- 15.c. He *observed* every animal in his country to naturally abhor the Yahoos. (IV.iv.112-13)

(iv) Instances with the matrix verb in the passive voice which convey a commonly accepted state of affairs or a maxim:

The above-noted trend towards minimizing the narrator's personal involvement in the perception of the propositional event as an eye-witness in favour of a more aseptic role is at its best here. Moreover, the narrator's personal detachment is crucial to understand the satiric effect underlying the statements in the following examples:

- 16.a. the winds, which in those areas *are observed* to blow a constant equal gale between the north and west from the beginning of December to the beginning of May. (II.i.12-15)
- 16.b. ... for as human creatures *are observed* to be more savage and cruel in proportion to their bulk. (II.i.143-45)
- 16.c. ... because the Yahoos ..., with some appearance of cunning, and the strongest disposition to mischief, were *observed* to be the most unteachable of all brutes. (IV.iii.40-44)

The satiric effect in question embodies a ferocious attack against human nature and human behaviour and can take on different degrees of explicitness, being either clearly explicit (as in 16b) or latent (as in 16c), where the narrator's personal detachment from the propositional content of the complement clause is also iconic to the very fact that Gulliver has not yet realized that he himself is a Yahoo. It is not by chance that the narrator has skilfully used the most objective, matter-of-fact syntactic encoding available in the English clause system (sensory perception verb in the passive) as a vessel for so ferocious an outburst of misanthropy.³⁴ Thus, the use of this syntactic encoding by the narrator should be seen as contributing to present the most subjective feeling of misanthropy in the most objective, straightforward terms, thus being one of the most effective tools whereby satire is

³⁴ As Rodino (1991: 1056) has put it, "language conceals even as it reveals".

achieved in the utopian fiction of *Gulliver's Travels*.³⁵ It is at this point that we begin to see Swift himself speaking through the *persona* of Gulliver.³⁶

Swift's primary concern when writing *Gulliver's Travels* was to *vex and unsettle our minds*. As he himself acknowledged in a letter addressed to Pope (dated 29th September 1725), the aim of the book was "to vex the world rather than to divert it" (1965:III: 103), as he wanted to show that the human being is not a rational being (*animal rationale*) but merely capable of reasoning (*rationis capax*).³⁷ In this regard, this outburst of misanthropy is indeed one of the thematic sustaining threads in the utopian fiction of *Gulliver's Travels*. In fact, as Mezcicems has put it,

Thematically, *Gulliver's Travels* is an attack on human pride, a satire on civilized society, an exposé of the truth about human nature *as Swift saw it*, an analysis of the quality of human reason. (1977: 3; emphasis added to the original).

The ultimate satire lies in presenting to the reader as a conventional, commonly-accepted view what in fact is Swift's own personal, subjective and distorted vision of the human race. And this, it should be emphasized, is achieved through an extraordinary *manipulation* of the English clause system, as shown by the juxtaposition of example 16.a with examples 16.b and 17.c. Thus, while 17.a does indeed express a conventional state of affairs, 16.b and 16.c do not. However, by using the very same syntactic encoding, Swift imposes his own vision on us, readers, thus altering our own senses of perception.

3. CLOSING REMARKS

We have attempted to demonstrate in the preceding pages that utopia is not only the art of nominalization but of verbalization *stricto sensu* as well. The overwhelmingly intellectual fingerprint of utopian fiction in *Gulliver's Travels* has been empirically shown to be shaped through a network of physical and cognitive perception verbs construed with NP + XP complementation structures. More specifically, the relatively wide range of linguistic configurations encoding the universe of perceptions in this work has been analyzed in terms of three iconic parameters, namely, (i) choice of an *I*-grammatical subject or any other type of subject, (ii) presence or absence of a reflexive intervening nominal, and (iii) occurrence in the active or passive voice. Moreover, these linguistic parameters can be said to be iconically-motivated by the most outstanding thematico-technical devices in the utopian discourse, namely, (a) the voyage, (b) the eye-witness technique, and (c) the satiric use of an apparently straightforward description.

³⁵ It must be borne in mind that the passive of sensory perception verbs implies an impersonal, factual semantic nuance which their active counterparts lack (Bolinger 1974: 86-87; Lysvag 1975: 131; Higginbotham 1983: 124; Palmer 1987: 189; Duffley 1992: 37-47).

³⁶ In the words of Rodino (1991: 1055), "Swift speaks his own mind through Gulliver, who is a satirical device, not a novelistic character".

³⁷ Cf. Crane (1962: 243-53), quoted in Trousson (1992: 149).

The universe of perceptions in *Gulliver's Travels* never narrows down to a single, homogenous, rational account of the utopian world. Instead, we find an intricate amalgam of voices and perceptions reaching out in different directions, echoing the mirror games of the Baroque and guiding as well as confusing the reader from the very start. Thus, we have found, roughly speaking, four types of perceptions in *Gulliver's Travels*: (a) the narrator's individual perception of the outer reality or himself, (b) choral perception of which the narrator is the spokesperson, (c) the narrator's reporting of what others perceive or have in their minds, and (d) the apparently impersonal reporting of a commonly accepted fact. Roughly speaking, perceptions (a), (b) and (c) would correspond to perceptions of the utopian world by Gulliver the character, seen as one of Swift's satiric devices. The type of perceptions in (d), by contrast, reveal Swift as a brave satirist giving vent to his own feelings of misanthropy and manipulating our senses of perception more effectively than ever. Swift's skilful manipulation of the linguistic resources in shaping a narrative of ideas which serves the purpose of a satiric denunciation of mankind as being below the capability of reasoning is indeed exceptional. He wanted to vex and unsettle our minds, and vex and unsettle our minds he did.

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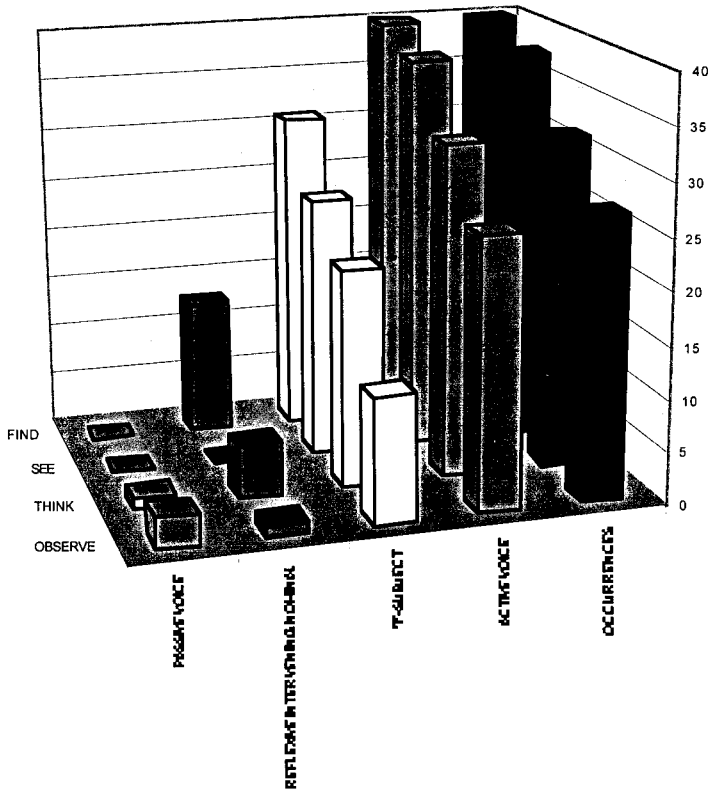
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Figure 1: Distribution and frequency of iconicity parameters in NP + XP constructions in *Gulliver's Travels*



- PASSIVE VOICE
- REFLEXIVE INTERVENING NOMINAL
- 'I'-SUBJECT
- ACTIVE VOICE
- OCCURRENCES

Table 1: Matrix verbs followed by an “NP + XP” complement in *Gulliver’s Travels* (in descending order of frequency)

MATRIX VERB	“I”-SUBJECT	REFLEXIVE INTERVENING NOMINAL	ACTIVE VOICE	PASSIVE VOICE	OCCURRENCES
FIND	31	13	40	0	40
SEE	25	0	38	0	38
THINK	21	5	30	1	31
OBSERVE	12	1	26	3	29
MAKE	16	0	23	0	23
HEAR	7	1	10	0	10
FEEL	8	0	8	0	8
TAKE	8	0	8	0	8
KNOW	2	0	5	3	8
CALL	2	1	7	0	7
SUPPOSE	1	1	5	1	6
BELIEVE	4	0	4	0	4
GET	3	0	4	0	4
LOOK ON	4	0	4	0	4
BEHOLD	3	0	4	0	4
RECKON	1	0	1	3	4
DISCOVER	2	0	2	0	2
CONCEIVE	2	0	2	0	2
APPREHEND	1	0	2	0	2
CONSIDER	0	0	2	0	2
LEAVE	0	0	2	2	2
AVOW	1	1	2	0	2
RENDER	0	0	2	0	2
DESPISE	0	0	2	0	2
PERCEIVE	1	0	1	0	1
VIEW	1	0	1	0	1
DECLARE	1	0	1	0	1
APPROVE	1	1	1	0	1
ACKNOWL	1	1	1	0	1
SHOW	1	1	1	0	1
DESIRE	0	0	1	0	1
DESCRY	1	0	1	0	1

Table 2: Distribution and frequency of iconicity parameters with *find*, *see*, *think*, and *observe* in *Gulliver's Travels*

MATRIX VERB	"I"- SUBJECT		REFLEXIVE INTERVENING NOMINAL		ACTIVE VOICE		PASSIVE VOICE		OCCURRENCES
FIND	31	77.50	13	32.50	40	100	0	0	40
SEE	25	65.79	0	0	38	100	0	0	38
THINK	21	63.64	5	15.15	32	96.97	1	3.03	33
OBSERVE	12	44.38	1	3.45	26	89.66	3	10.34	29
TOTAL									
									138
									51.7 %
OVERALL									
									265

